

Original Documents.

NOTICES OF A REGISTER OF THE ACTS OF JOHN DE RUTHERWYKE, ABBOT OF CHERTSEY IN THE REIGNS OF EDWARD II. AND EDWARD III.

IN POSSESSION OF THE RIGHT HON. LORD CLIFFORD.

THE recent examination of the vestiges of the church and conventual buildings of Chertsey Abbey, one of the most ancient and important monasteries in the counties adjacent to London, has excited no slight interest in its history and the traces of its former greatness. The members of the Institute were indebted not long since to the kindness of Mr. Shurlock, of Chertsey, and of Mr. Angell, who has lately fixed his abode within the conventual precincts, in bringing before the Society an interesting narration of the results of excavations earnestly prosecuted under their direction with the encouragement and co-operation of the Surrey Archæological Society, and of the Society of Antiquaries. With the impression of the evidence thus brought to light fresh in remembrance, demonstrating, as it has done, the ancient architectural importance of the fabric, and the remarkable character of its accessory decorations, shown by the shattered relics recently disinterred and brought for our inspection, the kindness and courtesy of Lord Clifford cannot fail to be the more cordially appreciated, in entrusting for examination the valuable Register of Chertsey in times of its greatest prosperity. We desire also to acknowledge our obligation to the friendly mediation of the Very Rev. Canon Rock,—ever ready to contribute to our gratification,—through whose request on our behalf Lord Clifford has consented to send the MS., which has been preserved in his library at Ugbrooke Park, Devon.¹

The foundation of the monastery of Chertsey may perhaps be dated from Saxon times; Frithewald, *subregulus* of Surrey, and Erkenwald, afterwards Bishop of London, are reputed to have been the founders; confirmation charters were granted by Offa and Æthelwulf. After ravages by the Danes in the ninth century, Æthelwald, Bishop of Winchester, is believed to have been the "*reparator*" of the wasted monastery. Its possessions were augmented by Edward the Confessor, and on many other occasions it enjoyed royal favor. At no period, however, it is believed, was the prosperity of the convent more amply established than in the times of Abbot John de Rutherwyke, during the reigns of Edward II. and Edward III. He was chosen in 1307, and died in 1346. The volume under consideration contains a circumstantial record, year by year, of the

¹ This Register is not noticed in the recent edition of Dugdale's *Monasticon*. Mention is made of it in the List of

Cartularies compiled by Sir Thomas Phillippa, Coll. Top. vol. i., and in Sims' *Manual for Genealogists*, &c., p. 16.

greater part of his energetic administration; it justifies the eulogies expressed elsewhere, regarding this "religiosissimus pater, prudentissimus et utilissimus dominus," of whom it is said that he was "quasi dicti loci secundus fundator, et omnium substantialium bonorum reformator, et maneriorum substantialis reparator."² In 1341 Edward III. with his court had visited Chertsey Abbey, and he appears to have shown special favor towards the abbot and the religious community. It will be no matter of surprise that minute records were preserved of every transaction in the times of an abbot who seems to have ever been on the watch to promote the welfare of the monastery. Besides the MS. in Lord Clifford's possession, another and somewhat more complete transcript of the acts of John de Rutherwyke is preserved in the British Museum, in Lansdowne MS., No. 435. It commences from his election as abbot, Aug. 9, 1307, and ends in 1344. An abstract of some of its contents, which are identical, throughout the corresponding years, with those of the Register in Lord Clifford's library, may be found in the *Monasticon*, Caley's edition, vol. i., p. 424, where a few extracts of remarkable miscellaneous entries are also given. A curious little figure of the abbot, seated and holding a crosier in his right hand, a book in his left, is introduced in the initial letter on the first page.

Some years have elapsed since the MS. before us was submitted to the careful examination of our late venerable friend, the Rev. Dr. Oliver, whose labors have done so much to illustrate the monastic and ecclesiastical antiquities of the West of England. We avail ourselves with pleasure of a note from his pen, prepared for a local periodical to which he was frequently a contributor.

"The folio MS. consists of 153 leaves, and has been fairly preserved. Owing to the ignorance of the binder the series of events has been dis-united and thrown into some confusion,³ and unfortunately some leaves have perished. The principal part of the MS. relates to the acts of John de Rutherwyk, who was abbot during the greater part of the reign of Edward II., and certainly for 19 years of the reign of his son Edward III. A few deeds which belong to his predecessors, Alanus, William, and Bartholomew, are copied into the MS. One cannot sufficiently admire the precision and method with which these Chartularies were kept, with what diligence the crown grants, and purchases and exchanges were registered, and the yearly events of the monastery recorded. The MS. bears intrinsic evidence of the zeal and ability which distinguished the government of John de Rutherwyk. He appears to have been unwearied in improving agriculture, draining marshes, sowing acorns, inclosing lands, building stone bridges, repairing the farm-houses, erecting mills, and adding to the Abbey estates."

The prudent care of the abbot in purveying for a growth of oak timber is not undeserving of notice; it might be interesting to some persons familiar with the neighbourhood of Chertsey to ascertain whether any

² Leiger Book of Chertsey, in the Queen's Remembrancer's Office in the Exchequer; this valuable record appears to have been written in 10 Henry VI. Considerable use has been made of this record by Mr. Manning, *Hist. of Surrey*, vol. iii. p. 210.

³ The volume, as now disarranged, commences with the year 1330, and continues to 1342, after which occur the acts of 1313 to 1329, inclusive, followed by those of 1344 and 1345, to which are appended some documents apparently of a later time and in a different hand.

venerable tree, the produce of an acorn set by Abbot John in the fourteenth century, may still be found in one of the sites here mentioned. In the Lansdowne Register it appears that, in 1307, he planted oaks and sowed acorns at Herdewyche in Chertsey, and that he planted a wood called South Grove.

Under the year 1331, in Lord Clifford's Register, the following entry occurs (f. 2, vo.): "Eodem anno seminavit glandias (*sic*) inter Wynesrude et le Calewestoubby." In 1339 also—"Abbas fecit seminare cum glandibus quamdam placeam apud Herdewych vocatam Calewstobbyrude."

We may commend to our friends in those parts of Surrey, who take an interest in the growth of ancient trees, to pursue the inquiry; so favorable an occasion, possibly, for fixing the precise age of some ancient oak may rarely have occurred.

The Abbot of Chertsey held lands by knight-service, and appears in the *Liber Niger* as owing to the king three knights. In 1314, when Edward II. mustered the force of his realm against the Bruce for the succour of Stirling castle, and the English fell in multitudes at the bloody fight of Bannockburn, the Abbot appears to have rendered his service by Raulinus de Waltham, possibly of White Waltham, Berks, where the monastery of Chertsey had possessions; Raulinus perished in that fatal slaughter under the walls of Stirling, as recorded in the following entry, under 7 Edw. II.:—"Eodem anno isdem Abbas fecit servicium guerre in Scocia per Raulinum de Waltham, qui occubuit apud Stryvelyn, cujus animam Deus absolvat; amen." (f. 51.)

The following note under the year 1326 may deserve mention:—"Et memorandum quod vicesimo nono die Januarii ejusdem anni dominus Edwardus tercius post conquestum incepit regnare, quamvis annus vicesimus patris ejus in multis rotulis Compotorum continuatur usque ad festum sancti Michaelis proxime sequens." The deposition of Edward II. appears to have occurred on Jan. 20, and on Jan. 24 Edward the Third's peace was proclaimed, stating that Edward II. was deposed; Edward III. received the Great Seal on Jan. 28, and the writs to the sheriffs acquainting them with his accession were tested on the 29th.

On f. 129, vo., there are a few entries by a later and different hand; the following has been noticed by Dr. Oliver, in his short account of this register, above-cited, and also by a subsequent writer on the history of the Abbey. It is, however, of such interest as a contemporary record regarding the fall of the tower of the conventual church, in 1370, that it may here be repeated.

"Ruina turris nostri magni de Certeseia.—Memorandum, quod anno domini millesimo ccc.^{mo} lxx.^{mo}, nonis Julii, videlicet feria iiij.^a, in crastino deposicionis Sancti Swithuni Episcopi, immediate post capitulum, dum conventus staret ad incipiendum parliamentum, media pars campanilis nostri in maceria ruebat ad ymum terre, ad dampnum irrecuparabile dicti monasterii nostri."

In 1345 William de Rutherwyke, of Egham, granted to the Abbot and Convent of Chertsey certain lands in Egham, at that time held by Avicia de Rutherwyke for her life. This transaction is recorded in the Exchequer Leiger, as briefly mentioned in Manning and Bray's History of Surrey, vol. iii., p. 215. The parties in question were doubtless related to the Abbot; William de Rutherwyke had licence for a chapel in his mansion at Egham, 12 June, 1346, as appears by Bishop Edindon's Register at Winchester,

and it was renewed in March, 1351. These lands may, it is supposed, have been part of the Trottesworth estate; there are a wood and meadows at Bakeham, in Egham parish, now called Rutherwyks.⁴ The origin of the family is not known; their name may have been taken from Rotherwick in Hampshire. In the arrangement successfully negotiated by the Abbot with his kinsman (as supposed), on this occasion, and fully recorded in the Register entrusted to us by Lord Clifford, one remarkable feature is a Corrody, granted by the Abbot and Convent to the said William de Rutherwyke and Alicia his wife, being a stated allowance of meat, drink, and clothing, &c. to them or the longer liver, in consideration of certain monies paid to the said Abbot and Convent. The documents, which are entered in the Register (f. 134, *et sequ.*), under the year 1345, 19 Edward III., are as follows:—

1. Conveyance by William de Rutherwyke of all his lands and tenements in Egham and Thorp to the Abbot and Convent of Chertsey in fee simple. Dated at Egham on Sunday next after the feast of St. Simon and St. Jude. (Oct. 30, 1345.)

2. Gift of all the goods and chattels of him the said William to the said Abbot and Convent. Dated on the same day.

3. The grant of a Corrody. (Given at length hereafter.)

4. General release of the same lands and tenements by the said William to the said Abbot and Convent. Dated at Chertsey on Wednesday after the feast of All Saints, 19 Edw. III. (Nov. 2, 1345.)

5. Lease (in French) by the Abbot and Convent of the same lands and tenements to the said William and Alicia, his wife, for their joint lives and the life of the longer liver. Dated in the chapter at Chertsey on Sunday next after the feast of All Saints, 19 Edw. III. (Nov. 6, 1345.)

6. Defeasance (in French) of a bond for 60*l.* given by the Abbot and Convent to the said William, for securing 40*l.* to the first-born issue of the said William, in case there should be any. Dated at Chertsey on Monday after the feast of St. Simon and St. Jude, 19 Edw. III. (Oct. 31, 1345.)

7. Inquisition *ad quod damnum* in order to obtain a license from the king for the said William to alien the said lands and tenements to the said Abbot and Convent; namely, three messuages, 120 acres and a half of land, 10 acres of meadow, 12 acres of pasture, 20 acres of wood, 12 acres of heath (*bruere*), 3 acres of alder-car (*alneti*), and 12*s.* 5*d.* of rent, with the appurtenances, in Thorp and Egham; also one messuage at "La Strode" in Egham, held by Avicia atte Strode, sister of the said William, for her life with reversion to the said William in fee. Dated at Kingston on Saturday after the feast of St. Luke, 19 Edw. III. (Oct. 22, 1345.)

8. The King's License. Dated at Westminster on Oct. 24, *a. r.* 19 (1345.)

The grant of a Corrody presents so curious an illustration of monastic usages, that it has appeared of sufficient interest to be given at length; it will be found appended to these notices. We are not aware that any document of this description has hitherto been printed, which sets forth in such full detail the conditions of such a transaction; and we have sought in vain for any similar instrument in the large collection of charters given by Madox in the *Formulare*. A Corrody, as may be well known to some of

⁴ Manning and Bray, vol. iii. p. 255.

our readers, was an allowance of food and clothing for life or for a certain period, from an abbey or other religious house. Corrodies were due to the king from religious houses of royal foundation, towards the sustenance of such persons as he was pleased to bestow them upon; of common right also, a Corrody was due in like manner to the founder of a monastery, provided that the foundation were not in free alms. Corrodies were, however, granted to other persons, generally, in consideration of services to be rendered or of payments made, as in the case before us; and it is probable that, although such sales or grants of *liberationes* were strictly prohibited by the Constitutions of the Legate Othoboni, in the reign of Henry III.⁵, these transactions were of common occurrence. The Legate sets forth in strong terms the evils occasioned by a practice which appears to have become, through the cupidity of the heads of conventual establishments, inconveniently prevalent in this country. Dugdale gives, in the Monasticon, the grant of a Corrody in 1415 by the Abbot and Convent of Haghmon, Shropshire, to Robert Lee, at the special instance of Thomas Earl of Arundel, a descendant of the founder. In that instance the grantee appears to have been living in the monastery, as one of the *armigeri* of the abbot, with one groom or *garcio*, and two horses⁶.

Two other examples of grants of the like nature, which occur in the Chartulary of Lewes Priory, Cott. MS. Vesp., F. xv., have been cited by Mr. Blaauw in his valuable Memoir on the early History of that Monastery; Sussex Arch. Coll. vol. ii., pp. 15, 16. Margaret, widow of Robert de Glydele, gave up her dower to the prior about 1280; the convent in return engaged to give her food and clothing, with a suitable house, for life, namely, every day a loaf of convent bread and one "*panem militum*," a gallon of beer, a *ferculum* from the guests' kitchen, and every second year a furred dress, &c. In 1307, also, the record is found of a corrody surrendered by Sir William de Echingham on receipt of £100 from the priory. The privileges which had been conceded in this instance were very singular, and doubtless proved extremely onerous to the monks of St. Pancras, who, besides allowances of food and clothing, and the maintenance of a *garcio* with a palfrey through the whole year, were charged with two young hounds, a youth in the prior's kitchen to learn the business of cook, &c., and, moreover, were bound to receive the knight, his wife, family, and horses, four times every year, for himself and his wife to be blooded, and to sojourn three days at the priory at the expense of the monks.

According to the minutely detailed conditions of the subjoined Corrody, the Abbot and Convent of Chertsey granted to William de Rutherwyke and Alice his wife for life, and to the longer liver of them, a daily allowance of two loaves called "*miches*,"⁷ two called "*knyghtloves*," probably of somewhat better quality and such as were provided for the *armigeri*; two gallons of convent ale; and two messes from the Abbot's

⁵ Tit. 48, Quod nulli religiosi vendant vel assignant aliis liberationes.

⁶ Mon. Angl., vol. vi. p. 110, Caley's edit. The date is erroneously printed "*decimo quinto*" Henr. V., but that sovereign only reigned ten years. In orig. edit., vol. iii. p. 933, it is printed "*quinto*."

⁷ Chaucer, Rom. of Rose, v. 5535, says

that he that hath "*mitches tweine*" lives more at ease than the niggard with a barn full of grain. Tyrwhitt explains the term as signifying fine bread, manchet, but it was probably of common quality, Fr. *miche*, *petit pain*, Lat. *micha*. In the Promptorium we find "*mychekyne, pastilla*," p. 336. See the note, *ibid*.

kitchen, either flesh or fish, according to the day. They had the option of receiving the entire week's allowance at one time, instead of from day to day. Moreover, to the said William at Christmas a gown of the suit or *secta* of the *armigeri*, with sufficient fur for a super-tunic and hood, and to his wife at the same season a gown *de secta clericorum*, with fur of "stranlynge," or squirrel,^s for her super-tunic, and of menyvere for her hood; also, yearly, two cart-loads of good hay, and one weigh (*waga*), or about 250 lb., of good cheese and undecayed, to be conveyed at the cost of the monastery to the residence of the said William and Alice, at Rutherwyke, distant from the abbey, as supposed, about three miles; and further, a stirk value 6s., three fat hogs of the value of 10s., and 16 lb. of candles "de cotone," probably with cotton wicks, at Martinmas, yearly. The amount of the sum paid to the abbot and convent by the said William and Alice, in consideration of these yearly allowances, is not stated; evidently however this Corrody was part of the general transaction between Abbot John de Rutherwyke and his kinsman, regarding the conveyance of his lauds and tenements and the gift of his goods and chattels to the Abbot and Convent, as set forth in the various documents above mentioned, by which the following grant of the Corrody is accompanied in the MS. Register.

ALBERT WAY.

CORRODIUM WILLELMI DE RUTHERWYKE.

Pateat universis per presentem indenturam quod nos, Johannes Abbas de Certeseye et ejusdem loci Conventus, unanimi assensu et voluntate dedimus, concessimus, et per presentes pro nobis et successoribus nostris confirmavimus Willelmo de Rutherwyke de parochia de Egeham in Comitatu Surr' et Alicie uxori ejus pro toto tempore vite eorumdem, et eorum alterius diucius viventis, quoddam corrodium capiendum de Abbathia nostra predicta, videlicet quolibet die in septimana duos panes vocatos Miches, duos panes vocatos Knyghtloves, duas lagenas cervisie conventualis, et duo fercula de coquina nostri predicti Abbatis, sive carnis sive piscis secundum die[s] exigenciam, aut quatuordecim panes vocatos Miches, quatuordecim panes vocatos Knyghtloves, quatuordecim lagenas dicte cervisie, et quatuordecim fercula carnis sive piscis, secundum quod dies expostulaverit, de Coquina predicta, semel in septimana pro septimana integra, secundum voluntatem predictorum Willelmi et Alicie; preterea concessimus pro nobis et successoribus nostris prefato Willelmo ad totam vitam suam unam robam de secta armigerorum nostrorum cum fururis competentibus pro supertunica et capucio percipiendam eidem Willelmo quolibet anno ad festum Natalis domini; et unam robam dicte Alicie de secta Clericorum nostrorum cum furura de Stranlynge pro supertunica, et de menyvere pro capucio, videlicet, terciam partem unius panni de colore, percipiendam annuatim eidem Alicie ad

^s This fur is not mentioned in the ample lists in Strutt's *Dresses*, vol. ii. pp. 11, 101. In the Ordinance of the Pelterers, *Liber Custumarum* of the City of London, 26 Edw. I. a price is fixed "pro stranglino et polan, et cujuslibet alterius nigri operis." *Liber Albus*, vol. ii. p. 94. According to a note in *Liber Horn*, Mr. Riley observes in his Glossary,

strandling was the fur of the squirrel between Michaelmas and winter. In the *Historia* of Barth. Cotton, edited by Mr. Luard for the series of *Chronicles*, &c. under direction of the Master of the Rolls, mention occurs of the retinue of the Duke of Brabant, in 1290, clad "cum penulis de grisibus et stranlingo."

totam vitam suam ad festum Natalis domini supradictum; concessimus eciam pro nobis et successoribus nostris prefatis Willelmo et Alicie ad totam vitam eorundem, quolibet anno, duas carectatas boni feni, et unam Wayam boni casei et incorrupti, de Abbathia nostra predicta capiendas et carandas sumptibus nostris propriis ad domum eorundem Willelmi et Alicie apud Rutherwyke, ad festum sancti Petri ad vincula;⁹ et insuper concessimus pro nobis et successoribus nostris prefatis Willelmo et Alicie ad totam vitam eorundem, et eorum alterius diucius viventis, unum bovettum precii septem solidorum, tres porcos incrassatos precii decem solidorum, pro larder¹ ipsorum Willelmi et Alicie, simul cum sexdecim libris cande de cotone, eisdem Willelmo et Alicie quolibet anno ad festum sancti Martini in yeme de Abbathia nostra predicta percipiendos; Pro quadam summa pecunie per predictos Willelmum et Aliciam nobis pre manibus soluta, quam in usum et utilitatem nostram ac dicte domus nostre plenarie et integre fatemur fore conversam. Ad quam quidem dicti corrodii et aliorum proficuorum predictorum prefatis Willelmo et Alicie ad totam vitam eorundem, et eorum alterius diucius viventis, solucionem modo predicto fideliter faciendam, nos predicti Abbas et Conventus obligamus nos et successores nostros, et domum nostram antedictam, et omnia bona nostra et bona dicte domus nostre mobilia et immobilia, ecclesiastica et mundana, presenciam et futura, ubicumque existenciam. In cujus rei testimonium huic parti hujus indenture penes dictos Willelmum et Aliciam residenti nos predicti Abbas et Conventus sigillum nostrum commune apposuimus: altera vero pars ejusdem penes nos remanet sigillis eorundem Willelmi et Alicie sigillata. Datum apud Certeseye die dominica proxima post festum beatorum apostolorum Symonis et Jude, anno regni Regis Edwardi tercii post Conquestum decimo nono. (Oct. 30, 1345.)

⁹ August 1.

¹ The conventual seal of Chertsey has been figured, Trans. Surrey Arch. Soc., vol. i.; Monast. Angl., edit. Caley, vol. i. pl. v., and in Britton and Brayley's Hist. Surrey, vol. ii. p. 182. A more perfect impression, however, than was used for those works, has been found by Mr.

Ready, who will supply casts on application at the British Museum. Seals of two of the Abbots have been figured in this Journal, vol. xv. p. 292; and the seal of the Prior, erroneously given as that of Southwick Priory, may be seen in vol. iii. p. 222.