

II.

THE HISTORY OF BREADSALL PRIORY.*

By the REV. J. CHARLES COX, LL.D., F.S.A.



WITH regard to the foundation of this small priory of Breadsall or Breadsall Park, it has always hitherto been stated that it was in its first origin an establishment of Austin Friars or Friars Eremites. This statement has been made in consequence of the entry on the Patent Roll of 1266 to the effect that Henry III. granted to the Eremites of Breadsall a messuage and twenty acres of land in Horsley and Horston, for which they were to render yearly half a mark to the bailiff of the royal manor of Horston.† There must, however, be some slip of the scribe in making this entry, for the Austin Friars, in common with the other mendicant orders, were not allowed to accept any benefactions of land other than the site of their house. Instead of ever being a house of Austin Friars, this priory was clearly a priory of Austin Canons, otherwise such a donation as this would have been an impossibility; moreover, a house of friars was invariably placed amid a considerable population. All that can be said of its origin is that it was clearly well established before 1266, and that it had been founded in the same century by one of the Curzons of Breadsall, either Richard de Curzon, son of Henry Curzon by the heiress of Dunne, or by Sir Robert Curzon, the son of Richard.

* Condensed and considerably amended from *Churches of Derbyshire*, iii., 67-78.

† Pat. R. 50 Henry III., m. vii., No. 17.

The possessions of this small priory, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, were valued by the Taxation Roll of 1291 at £5 19s. 0d. per annum. The twenty acres at Horston, in the adjoining parish of Horsley, produced 10s. a year, whilst twenty acres round the house at Breadsall, with a dovecot,* were worth £2. The priory also held rents in Breadsall and small plots of land in Morley and Horsley, whilst the yearly profits on the farm stock averaged £2 5s. 8d.

The royal bequest of the Horston acres was farmed for the priory from an early date. In 1328, license was obtained from the Crown by the prior of Breadsall Park to lease this land for a term of forty years to Thomas de Goldyngton and his heirs.†

The first prior of this house named in the episcopal registers was Hugh de Mackworth, who was appointed in 1306, under the patronage of Richard Curzon.‡ The endowments of this house were so slender that it seems never to have had more than two canons besides the prior. It therefore came about that a canonical chapter election was an impossibility, and hence the simple nomination of the hereditary patron was usually accepted.

The patron of the priory was the lord of the manor of Breadsall Overhall, who was also the patron of the rectory of the parish church of Breadsall. It was held by the Curzon family for eight generations, but passed in the reign of Richard II. to the Dethick family, through the marriage of William Dethick with Cecilia, daughter and heiress of Thomas Curzon.

In 1309, Hamund de Merston, canon of the house of the Holy Trinity of the Park of Breadsall, was admitted to the rule of the same, at the presentation of Richard Curzon.§ The same prior was re-admitted by Bishop Norbury in 1322, at the presentation of Henry Curzon.||

* See page 135.

† Pat. R. 2 Edw. iii. 2d. number, m. 30.

‡ Lich. Epis. Reg., Langton, f. 65.

§ *Ibid.*, f. 71.

|| *Ibid.*, Norbury, i., f. 63.

The next prior was William de Repyndon, a canon of Breadsall. He resigned in October, 1347, and the bishop commissioned the abbot of Darley to act for him in the business of the election of Thomas de Castello, with the result that this was duly confirmed.*

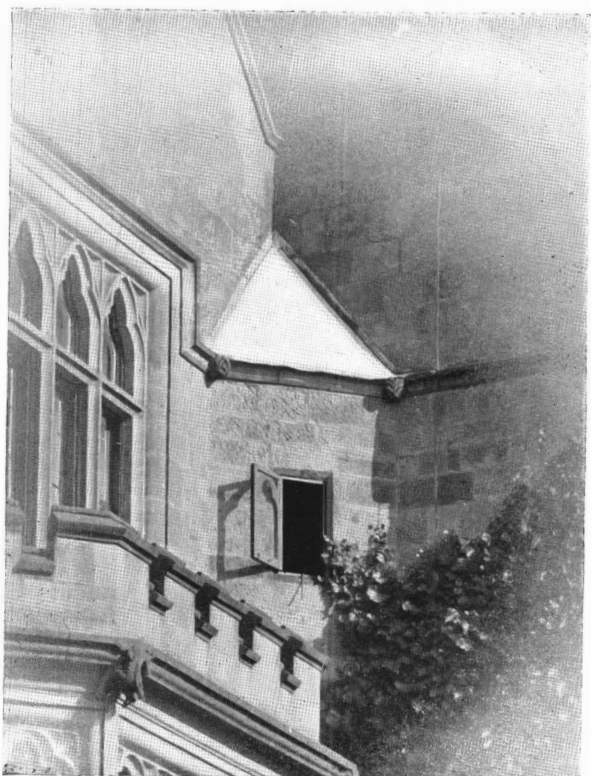
In 1365, after a long vacancy, the bishop collated as prior, Thomas de London—a curious and exceptional appointment, for prior Thomas had been a monk of Burton-on-Trent.† Geoffrey de Stafford, after a short interval, was the next prior, and on his resignation in 1370, Thomas Lewes, one of the canons of the house, was made prior. The entry of Lewes's institution in the episcopal register names Robert Molde, rector of Breadsall, Henry Adderley, and John de Twyford, vicar of Spondon, as patrons of the house. This triple patronage would arise through the true patron being an infant.

Four or five of the subsequent priors had previously been canons of the house; but the appointments in 1442 and 1487 were from among the Austin Canons of Darley Abbey, and in 1456 from those of Repton priory. When Roger Upton was appointed prior, in 1384, Sir Thomas Wendesley was the patron, but only *pro hac vice*. Sir Thomas was a Derbyshire knight of some renown; he was killed at the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403; his effigy is in the south transept of Bakewell Church. It is not clear why he presented on this occasion, but it may possibly have been in return for some specific benefaction by arrangement with the rightful patron.

On the Friday after Lady Day, 1392, an inquisition *ad quod damnum* was held at Derby, when the jury found that it was not to the damage of the king or others if licenses were granted to Henry Cotton, clerk, to assign to the prior and canons of Breadsall Park a messuage and one acre of land in Derby of the clear annual value of 5s.; to Henry Barber, of Derby, and Edmund Townley, to assign two messuages and two cottages in Derby of the annual value of 6s. 8d.; and to

* Lich. Epis. Reg., Norbury, f. 130.

† *Ibid.*, Stretton, f. 37d.



A. Victor Haslam.

BREADSALL PRIORY.
A CORBELLED ANGLE OF THE TOWER.

John Rosell, of Little Eaton, Henry Cotton, and Edmund Townley, to assign the reversion of a cottage in Derby then held for life by Agnes, the wife of Stephen Cotiler.

By another inquisition held at the same time and place, but before another jury, it was found that licenses might be granted to Thomas Frances, clerk, Henry Cotton, Thomas Wombwell, and William Heynour, to assign to the priory ten acres of land in Horston, which were parcel of the royal demesne of Horston manor, and held of the king by service of 4s. 2*d.* and by appearance at the two great courts at Easter and Michaelmas, and which were of the clear annual value of 10*d.*; to Frances, Cotton and Wombwell, to assign a cottage and eight acres of land in Chaddesden and Spondon held of the Duke of Lancaster of the annual value of 4s.; to Robert Kniveton, vicar of Dovebridge, Thomas Waterhouse, and Thomas Wade, to assign a cottage in Duffield of the annual value of 2s., and a toft with twenty acres of meadow and ten of pasture at Windley, all held of the Duke of Lancaster, and of the clear annual value of 13s. 4*d.*; to Frances, Cotton, Wombwell, Heynour, and Rosell, to assign two acres at Breadsall, of the clear annual value of 4*d.*; to John Hardy, of Morley, to assign a toft and an ox gang in Morley of the yearly value of 4s.; to Robert de Ferrers, of Chartley, to assign a toft in Breadsall, worth 2*d.* a year, on the yearly service of a rose; and to Kniveton, Wombwell, Waterhouse, Wade, and Henry Cooke, of Hazelwood, a toft of the clear annual value of 1*d.**

In return for the small benefactions particularised in these inquests, it was stipulated that daily masses should for ever be celebrated within the priory church, for the good estate whilst living and for the souls after death of the various donors.

In 1402 there was another inquisition relative to the further endowment of the house, when it was held that it would not be to the prejudice of the King to allow William Dethick to

* Chanc. Inq., 15 Ric. II., Pt. II., No. 134.

assign to the prior and convent of Breadsall Park one rood of land and a mediety* of the rectory of Mugginton; the land was valued at 3*l.* per annum, and the mediety of the rectory at £5. The jury found that William Dethick, the son of William Dethick by Cecilia, the heiress of Curzon, had an income of a hundred marks beyond this gift.†

William Dethick, though he obtained the sanction of the inquest for this alienation, neglected to procure letters patent to warrant the evasion of the Statutes of Mortmain, and on his death in 1411 his executors and trustees were mulcted by the Crown in the heavy fine of twenty-five marks for license to continue to the priory the alienation of the rood of land and the mediety of the church of Mugginton.‡ It is stated in this license that the gift was made to the priory for the augmentation of divine worship there, and for prayers for the souls of William Dethick and Alice, his wife, and their posterity and ancestry. It was further stipulated that a suitable sum was to be given to the poor of Mugginton out of the fruits of the living of the prior, in accordance with the provisions of the statute 15 Ric. II., cap. VI., and that he should also see to the sufficient endowment of a vicar for that parish.

William Dethick procured this mediety of the rectory of Mugginton and the rood of land in 1401 from Peter de la Pole and his wife, Elizabeth (heiress of Chandos), in exchange for land in Radburne, Dalbury Lees, and Heanor. For about a century and a half Mugginton was served by a rector, and by a vicar on behalf of the mediety belonging to the priory; on the suppression of Breadsall priory in 1536, this right of presentment to Mugginton was transferred to Darley Abbey, but in less than three years the abbey also fell into the hands of the Crown, and it was granted to Thomas Babington.

* *Medietas*. The mediety was sometimes used for the middle, or feudal "third-penny." Rents of cities and counties were divided into three equal parts, of which the grant of the "third penny," or part, carried with it the feudal privileges.

† Inq. ad. q. d., 3 Hen. IV., No. 2; set forth *in extenso* in *Churches of Derbyshire*, iii., app. 3.

‡ Pat. R. 11 Hen. IV., pt. ii., m. 7.

John Jaddysdene, a canon of this house, had the honour, in May, 1402, of being appointed one of the papal chaplains to Boniface II.*

In 1444 there was a suit between the Dean and Chapter of the newly-formed collegiate church of St. Mary, Leicester, who were the appropriators of the rectory of Duffield, and the Priory of Breadsall Park, as holder of one mediety of the church of Mugginton, and Richard Bec, the holder of the third mediety of the same church, concerning the tithes of a certain field called Hethfield. The decision of the arbitrator, Roland Thornton, licentiate of laws, official of Lincoln, was in favour of the Leicester College, because the field was proved, from various fines and old documents, to be within the bounds and limits of the parish of Duffield. Rector Bec, who held the living from 1426 to 1469, was condemned, for contempt of Court of Arches, to pay to the Leicester Chapter the sum of 40s.†

In the year 1448, during the time that Thomas Breadsall was prior (1442-1456), certain charters and evidences pertaining to the priory, which particularly affected the interests of William Dethick as hereditary patron, were stolen. On the complaint of William Dethick, the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield issued his mandate to the rectors of the churches of Breadsall and Morley, to the vicar of Horsley, and to the chaplain of All Saints', Derby, directing them to warn, during High Mass on the next three Sundays and feast days, all concerned in this theft to restore the muniments within fifteen days under pain of the greater excommunication.‡ Whether this ecclesiastical threat secured the return of the purloined deeds cannot now be ascertained.

An agreement was entered into on October 31st, 1453, between Thomas Breadsall, prior of Breadsall Park, and John Statham, of Morley, by which the prior undertook, in

* Pap. Reg., iv., 315.

† Lich. Epis. Reg., Heyworth, f. 194b.

‡ The muniments of Mr. Hugo Harpur-Crewe—*Journal of Derb. Arch. Soc.*, xvi., 179-181.

consideration of a gift by John Statham of seven marks for the roof of the priory church and for glazing the (clerestory) windows of the same, that the prior, or a canon-priest of the priory, should celebrate an annual mass for the souls of Goditha, Thomas, Elizabeth, Cecilia, and John Statham, on the feast of the Eleven Thousand Virgins.* Goditha, heiress of Morley, died in 1418, having brought the estate to her husband, Ralph Statham; their son Thomas married Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Lumley, and the issue of this marriage was John Statham, who took to wife Cecilia Cornwall. John Statham died the year after his benefaction to this priory, and was buried at Morley.

On March 28th, 1454, Bishop Boulders granted license to John Derby, canon of Breadsall Park, for a year's absence from the priory to administer the sacraments and discharge all clerical offices (*sacra et sacralia*) in parish churches throughout the diocese, but he was always to wear the habit of his order.† He was evidently licensed to discharge the duties, in modern parlance, of a special missionary, and was probably a gifted preacher.

In October, 1456, the bishop confirmed the appointment of Robert Burton, a canon of Repton priory, to be prior of Breadsall, by the express consent of Sir William Dethick, patron of the same, with whom, it was stated, rested the providing of a superior when the priory was vacant. The vacancy occurred through the resignation of Thomas Breadsall, the late prior.‡

When the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* was drawn up in 1535, there were small temporalities in Breadsall, Duffield, Windley, and Horsley, and the mediety of Mugginton rectory was valued at £5 6s. 8d.; but the clear annual income was only £10 17s. 9d. William Pendylton was prior, and had simply to rule himself, for there was no brother canon.

* B.M. Add Charters, 5243. The charter is in admirable condition, and sets forth the three collects to be used by the celebrant at the obit.

† Lich. Epis. Reg., Boulders, f. 96.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

On the suppression of the lesser monasteries in 1536, this small priory came to an end. William Pendylton, the prior, obtained in 1537 the small pension of five marks.*

There is a small fragment of the seal of Breadsall priory attached to a document of 1453;† enough remains to show that its subject was a representation of the Holy Trinity beneath canopied work.

LIST OF PRIORS.

Hugh de Mackworth	1306	Lich. Epis. Reg., Langton, f. 65.
Hamund de Merston	1309	Lich. Epis. Reg., Langton, f. 71. Merston seems to have been a second time admitted in 1332, <i>Ibid.</i> Sede Vac, f. 63.
William de Repyndon	1347	<i>Ibid.</i> , Norbury I., f. 180.
Thomas de Castello	1347	<i>Ibid.</i>
Thomas de London	1365	<i>Ibid.</i> , Stretton, f. 37d.
Geoffrey de Stafford	1370	
Thomas Lewes	1370	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 41 ^b .
Roger Upton	1384	<i>Ibid.</i> , f. 49 ^b .
Thomas Holand alias Bakster	1431-1442	<i>Ibid.</i> , Heyworth, f. 92b.
Thomas Breadsall	1442-1456	
Robert Burton... ..	1456-1487	<i>Ibid.</i> , Boulers, f. 32.
Henry Halom	1487	<i>Ibid.</i> , Hales, f. 77.
John Alton	1519	<i>Ibid.</i> , Blythe, f. 37 ^b .
Thomas Beyston	1519	<i>Ibid.</i>
William Pendylton	1535	<i>Valor Ecclesiasticus.</i>

The detailed accounts of the Crown's plunder of the smaller monasteries, 1536-7, show that the manor or priory of Breadsall Park was farmed by Lawrance Holland, of Belper; that he paid a rental of £16 7s. 8d. for the farm of the house of the late priory, with ten acres of arable land; £2 12s. 6d. for twenty-four acres of meadow and one of pasture; £2 for an acre of pasture in Windley; 12d. for a toft and garden in Duffield; 12d. for an acre of meadow in Belper; 6s. 8d. for land and tenements in Derby; and 2s. for land and tenements in Chaddesden and Spondon.‡

A copy of the indenture between the King and Lawrence

* Aug. Off. Books, ccxxxii., f. 19b.

† Add Chart. 5243.

‡ *Minister's Accounts*, 27-28 Hen. VIII., No. 82, f. 5.

Holland, dated February 28th, 28 Hen. VIII., at the Public Record Office, leases to him the site of the priory, *cum omnibus edificis, orreis, stabulis, ortis, pomariis, et gardinis*;* from which it would appear that the house had been well encircled with gardens and orchards in the days of the canons.

The following is Holland's return to the Crown, made at Michaelmas, 1538:—

“The manor or late priory of Breadsall Park. The accompt of Lawrance Holland, Farmer there during the term aforesaid.

“Farm of the site of the late priory there, with the demesne lands to the possession of the same priory appertaining.

“But he answers for £16 7s. 3d. for the farm of the house and site of the late priory there and 10 acres of arable land, 24 acres of pasture, and one acre of meadow to the same late priory appertaining, £2 12s. 6d., together with one acre of pasture in Wyndilly, one toft and one garden in Duffield, one acre of meadow in Belper, and all lands and tenements with the appurtenances in the town of Derby, tenements and certain lands in Chaddesden, lands and tenements in Spondon, two tenements and certain lands in Bradsall, one tenement and certain lands in Horsley, one tenement with the appurtenances in Wyndilly, one close called Long Close in Morley, one close called Rye Close, one close called Retherndyke, one tenement in Darley, and one tenement in the tenure of Robert Stanley, £8 8s. 6d. And also the moiety of the rectory of the parish church of Mugginton, with all tithes, oblations, and profits and emoluments whatever to the same moiety of the rectory appertaining or belonging, £5 6s. 6d., except and entirely reserved all great trees and woods and the advowson of the church of Mugginton aforesaid, so demised to the aforesaid accomptant and his assigns by indenture under the seal of the Court of Augmentations of the Revenues of the Crown of the Lord the King, the date whereof is Westminster, the 26th day of February, in the 28th year of the reign of the aforesaid King,

* Misc. Books, ccix., f. 31b.

for the term of 21 years, payable at the terms of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Michael the Archangel equally, and it shall be lawful for the farmer to take, receive, and have sufficient hedgebote, firebote, ploughbote, and cartbote of in and upon the premises, and the same farm shall be exonerated of all yearly pensions and rents issuing out of the premises during the term aforesaid, as in the said indentures more fully is contained, this being the first year of his term.”*

From the sum of the receipts (£16 7s. 3d.) there had to be deducted a pension of 40s. due to William Dethick, gentleman, and 40s. to the auditor's clerk.

The priory estate remained in the hands of the Crown till May 16th, 1542, at which date it was granted by Edward VI. to Henry, Duke of Suffolk, the father of Lady Jane Grey; the particulars of the grant specify a vinery at Windley. The grant also included the mediety of Mugginton rectory, which had originally been granted to Darley Abbey when the smaller houses were suppressed.† No sooner, however, had the Duke obtained this and other monastic property from the boy king than he procured another license to enable him to dispose of such property. The Breadsall Priory estate was almost immediately sold to Thomas Babington, of Dethick and Kingston, son and heir of Sir Anthony Babington by Elizabeth Ormond.

The subsequent changes in the ownership of this picturesque priory estate were remarkably frequent. It was sold in 1557 to Thomas Hutchinson, and in 1573 it passed from Hutchinson to John Leake, uncle of “Bess of Hardwick.” Towards the end of Elizabeth's reign it was purchased by Sir John Bentley, who converted the ruined priory into a dwelling-house, and resided there until his death in 1621. There is a brass plate to his memory in Stanley Chapel.

Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John, and eventually his sole heiress, brought Breadsall Priory to her husband, Sir Gervase

* Add MSS. Brit. Mus., 6687, f. 67.

† Pat. R., 6 Edw. VI., pt. ii.

Cutler, knt., of Stainburgh, Yorkshire. Sir Gervase was killed at the siege of Pontefract Castle in 1645. By his will, dated 1638, he left his body to be buried in the chancel of Silkston church. His daughter Mary brought the priory to her husband, Sir Alfred Moseley, Bart., of the Hough, Lancashire. By this marriage there were one son and two daughters. The son, Sir Edward Moseley, of the Hough, Bart., died without issue in 1665, and that baronetcy became extinct. He left, however, the Breadsall and other estates by will to his distant cousin, Sir Edward Moseley, of Hulme, knt.; and it was this Sir Edward's sole daughter and heiress, Anne, who married Sir John Bland, Bart., of Kippax Park, Yorkshire, in 1685.

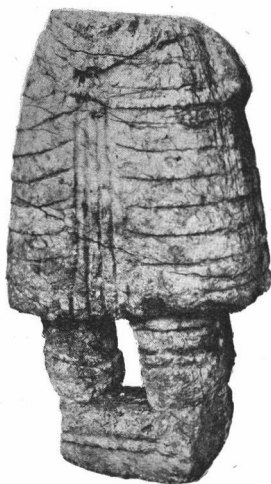
During his lifetime, namely, in 1693, Sir Edward Moseley granted the estate of the priory of Breadsall to his son-in-law, Sir John Bland. In 1702 Sir John Bland sold this property for £1,675 to Thomas Leacroft, of Wirksworth. In the following year Thomas Leacroft parted with it for a like sum to Andrew Greensmith. Andrew Greensmith died intestate, and the property passed to his brother, Robert Greensmith. The latter, by will of 1734, left this part of his estate to his wife, Hannah. Hannah Greensmith died in 1740, whereupon Herbert Greensmith, the eldest son, entered upon the real estate, including Breadsall Priory. By Herbert's will, dated 1750, this property was left to his wife, Anne, who died in the following year. The Priory next passed to Herbert Greensmith, the only son of Herbert and Anne. The estate then became mortgaged, and in 1771 was sold by Herbert Greensmith, subject to the mortgage, to Samuel Beard. Herbert Greensmith, Beard and his brothers sold the property in 1799 to Erasmus Darwin, of Derby. Among the Wolley MSS. of the British Museum is a long abstract of the title to the Priory estate from 1693 to the end of the next century. Owing to frequent changes and mortgages on this and other parts of the property of the Greensmiths and Beards, the title had become much involved, and counsel's opinion had to be taken prior to the sale of 1799-1800.*

* Add. MSS. 6688, f. 364-388.

Dying soon after the purchase, Mr. Darwin bequeathed the priory to his father, Dr. Darwin, the distinguished poet, philosopher, and physician, who resided there until his death on April 18th, 1802.

After the death of Sir Francis Darwin, the estate was sold in 1858 to Mr. Francis Morley, who resided there for some years. After his decease, his trustees disposed of it to Mr. Wood, who sold it in 1892 to Captain Rothwell. From Captain Rothwell it was purchased in 1897 by its present owner, Sir Alfred Seale Haslam, M.P.

There is in the priory grounds a headless and otherwise mutilated alabaster effigy of a man in armour kneeling on a pedestal. This was most improperly turned out of Breadsall church, and placed here about 1840, at the same time that the beautiful chancel screen was broken up and other mischief done. From the MS. accounts of Breadsall church, given by Messrs. Lysons, Meynell and Rawlins, prior to that vandalism, it appears that this figure formerly knelt on an octagonal pedestal against the east wall, to the north side of the altar. The pedestal was ornamented round the cornice with rudely-carved roses. It was then not a little broken and disarranged, for Mr. Meynell, in a drawing, shows that the head and trunk had been turned round to face the feet! The date of this monument is not earlier than towards the close of the sixteenth century. It may be compared with the kneeling figure at Chesterfield to Sir Thomas Foljambe, 1604. It would be sure to commemorate some person of importance in the parish, and we have little doubt that it is to the memory of the last of the Breadsall Dethicks, John Dethick, who died in 1594.



A. Victor Haslam.
Breadsall Priory. Fragment of
kneeling effigy in alabaster,
late XVI. century.