

THE REGULAR CLERGY OF DERBYSHIRE AND THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES

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The monastic houses of Derbyshire were notable neither for their number, size nor wealth. The county boasted a mere eight independent institutions and three dependencies.¹ Only one of these was assessed in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* as having an annual income above £200.² Despite their lack of distinction the Derbyshire monasteries contained a sizeable group of religious. The aim of this essay is to assess their number and character on the eve of the Dissolution and to trace their careers after it.

1. The Number of Regular Clergy

An accurate assessment of the number of regular clergy in Derbyshire during the Dissolution is not possible because the surviving sources all have limitations and so fail to provide an accurate census. However, enough information can be gleaned from them to provide a well-informed estimate. The surviving evidence can be divided into two categories; first, sources produced during the Dissolution and, second, sources produced before.

In the first category are witness lists to deeds of surrender of monasteries to the Crown, lists of pensions and rewards granted to heads of houses and their subordinates after the surrender of their houses, and capacities and dispensations, granted by the Faculty Office, permitting regulars to abandon their habits and monastic vows (saving chastity) and to hold benefices. Forty-five names occur on surrender deeds, but only Repton, Dale, Darley and the friary in Derby submitted in this way to the Crown.³ Forty-two religious received pensions, yet they were paid only to the heads of houses dissolved under the terms of the act of 1536 and the religious, except mendicants, who surrendered their houses to the king thereafter.⁴ The pension lists exclude the communities of Gresley, King's Mead, Beauchief and the friary in Derby and the beneficed canons of Dale.⁵ Capacities were granted to sixty-one Derbyshire religious but record of such grants do not exist for the nuns of King's Mead Priory, the prior of Breadsall Park and the prior of St James, Derby.⁶

These sources do not reflect the possibility that communities were reduced in size during the years immediately before the Dissolution. The injunctions of the royal visitation of 1535-6 forbade the profession of religious under the age of twenty-four years, an instruction which the visitors interpreted as retrospective. Those under the legal age of profession were liable to be dismissed. The visitors were also empowered to grant capacities to those petitioning for release from their vows.⁷ Nicholas Page of Repton was the only Derbyshire regular recorded as desiring such release, and, as he disappears from the records of his house, his wish was presumably granted. John Draycott of Dale and Michael Clerkson of Beauchief, ordained acolytes on 15 May 1532, disappear from records thereafter. Perhaps they were dismissed as under age by the visitors.⁸ Though the impact of the visitation on the size of communities and recruitment to them cannot be fully assessed, one cannot suppose that it was other than harmful.

Statistics of monastic communities can be gleaned from earlier visitation records. Records for

the houses subject to archiepiscopal and episcopal visitation survive for 1496, 1518, 1521 and 1524. Bishop Redman's register contains visitations of the two Premonstratensian houses of Dale and Beauchief between 1472 and 1501.⁹ These sources are open to two criticisms. First, they record conditions some years before the Dissolution, though one might argue that the size of monastic establishments had become settled and were thus fairly stable. Second, visitation records do not survive for Breadsall Priory, and the Dominican Friary and the Cluniac Priory of St James in Derby. Despite these defects, these records give some indication of the variations in the size of communities.

House	Period of Visitations	Variation in size
Beauchief	1478-1500	12-16
Dale	1475-1500	14-17
Darley	1496-1524	13-16
Gresley	1496, 1524	4- 5
King's Mead	1496-1524	6- 8
Repton	1496-1524	13-18

By combining the sources emanating from the Dissolution and earlier visitation records one can estimate the size of communities just before and on their dissolution. The best starting point are the capacities for they were granted to some who were neither pensioned nor surrendered their houses to the Crown.

House	Number of Capacities
Beauchief	8
Dale	19
Darley	13
Derby, Friary	7
Gresley	5
Repton	9
	Total
	61

To this total one needs to add the canon of Repton who was pensioned but did not receive a capacity and two members of Darley Abbey who were rewarded at its dissolution but who did not receive pensions. Of the houses for which records of capacities do not survive, King's Mead possibly contained around the same number of nuns as it did in the visitations of 1521 and 1524 and there is no evidence that the priories of St James and Breadsall Park contained more than one member each, both of whom were pensioned.¹⁰ Thereby a total of up to 74 is reached.

When one compares the number of capacities with the figures of the size of convents at earlier visitations, the communities of Beauchief and Repton seem suspiciously reduced by the time of their dissolution while the community at Dale seems slightly enlarged. These changes of size can be for the most part explained without invalidating the calculations made for the total of religious in Derbyshire at the time of the Dissolution.

At Repton the community was reduced at its dissolution because the prior had died three days before. In 1535 the visitors found one canon wishing to leave religion and accused four as sodomites. Three of the latter disappear thereafter, possibly having left their house or died in the mean time. Therefore the community had probably numbered 15 in 1535, around its usual

establishment, but had presumably been unable to recuperate its losses before its dissolution.¹¹

Abbot Sheffield of Beauchief died shortly before the dissolution of his house. Thomas Gilbert, vicar of Norton 1519-47, and a canon of the house, was not granted a capacity, presumably because he had already been adequately dispensed to hold a living. As noted above one canon might have been dismissed by the visitors in 1535. John Shermoulde, ordained acolyte in 1532 as a member of Beauchief, was a member of the community at Dale by 1538. When Beauchief was dissolved in 1535 he presumably had sought a transfer rather than a release from the religious life, in turn helping to explain the slight enlargement of the convent at Dale.¹²

The comments above re-emphasise an earlier point that the number of religious before the attack on the monasteries began was larger than the numbers who survived to the dissolution of their houses. Before the visitation of 1535-6 there were probably over eighty regulars in the monastic houses of Derbyshire.¹³

Although the members of the regular orders before the Dissolution formed a minority of the clerical population of Derbyshire, it was a substantial one. Two hundred and seventy two secular clergy were named and listed under their livings as taxable in a clerical subsidy list of 1533.¹⁴ The list is not complete as several chapelries, known to have existed, are not mentioned in it. Nor does it refer to secular clergy who were not liable to taxation. Yet, even when allowances are made, the likelihood is that the religious formed between 20% and 25% of the county's clericality.

Beauchief, Dale, Darley and Repton contained the largest ecclesiastical establishments in the county. All Saints, Derby, the only collegiate foundation in the county, was staffed by a sub-dean, six prebends and six 'vicars, chaplains and stipendiaries' according to the clerical subsidy list of 1533. Chesterfield parish church had a staff of thirteen, including the vicar, parish curate, gild priests and chantrists. The establishments of the parish churches of the market towns of Ashbourne, Wirksworth and Bakewell varied between seven and eight.¹⁵ In a county of relatively small-scale ecclesiastical institutions, the Derbyshire houses possibly had more significance, and their disappearance more impact, than their modest scale at first suggests.

2. The Regular Clergy on the Eve of Dissolution

Controversy has raged on the issue whether or not the religious of the 1530s deserved their fate. The detractors of English monasticism have found ample evidence of the moral turpitude of the religious in the *Compendium Compertorum* of the visitors of 1535-6. The findings of Doctors Layton and Legh for the houses of Derbyshire suggest, at first sight, a disturbing degree of scandal. Thomas Rede, Thomas Leycestre, Thomas Dawes and Robert Ward, canons of Repton, were named as *sodomites per voluntarias pollutiones*; Thomas Gainsborough, prior of St James in Derby and John Stanton, abbot of Dale were both declared guilty of incontinence with a single and a married woman and William Bramston, a canon of Dale, guilty of the same offence with five married women.¹⁶

However, the *Compendium* is not a satisfactory guide to the condition of monasticism in Derbyshire. First, it is not complete; the friars were not visited and notices are lacking on Breadsall Priory, Beauchief Abbey and Darley Abbey. The findings for Gresley Priory and King's Mead Priory contain no whiff of scandal. Second, the *Compendium* is not a complete survey of the quality of monastic life. The visitors were only interested in those guilty of offences against the vow of chastity, the names of those who wished to be released from their vows, the relics, objects of pilgrimage and 'superstitions' associated with religious houses, the name of the founder of each house and their income and debts.¹⁷ Their purpose was to find material of use to Cromwell in his campaigns against monasteries, relics and pilgrimages rather than to assess

the quality of religious life in each house.

A full report was hardly to be expected of the royal visitors. Layton and Legh were at Lichfield on 23 December 1535 and at York by January 1536 after visiting the houses of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. After their meeting at Lichfield and before the end of February 1536 they had reported on at least 121 houses. In comparison Bishop Blyth's visitors visited twenty-seven houses in his diocese between July and December 1521 and thirty-one houses between July and October 1524.¹⁸ Legh and Layton lacked the time to be thorough.

Doubts have been raised about their methods of collecting information; on how much they gained from malicious rumour and gossip, how much they received from the religious themselves and how much they invented. The visitors almost certainly did not invent names (if not accusations), for those that they accused can be traced. Of the canons of Repton named in the Compendium Thomas Dawes had been a member of the community since at least 1496, Thomas Leycestre and Thomas Rede, as canons of Repton, had been ordained acolytes in 1503 and 1505 and Robert Ward ordained subdeacon in 1528. Nicholas Page, who requested release from his vows, is first recorded as a novice at Repton in 1518. Thomas Gainsborough was pensioned as 'the prior of Derby' from Bermondsey Abbey in 1538. William Bramston of Dale Abbey is the most difficult to identify. A William Beduston from the abbey was ordained subdeacon 23 September 1521 and might have been the same person. If so, Beduston was possibly the alias of William Smith who was ordained acolyte 20 September 1520 and then disappears from the Lichfield ordination lists only to emerge still a canon of Dale upon the surrender of his house. Stanton was the alias of John Bebe, the last abbot of Dale. He had certainly been guilty of a sexual lapse for when Bishop Redman visited Dale in 1494, he found John Bebe, then a deacon and subsacrist, guilty of incontinence, having begotten a child upon Margaret de Halle, and punished him.¹⁹

Because the visitors' reports are so terse, there is insufficient indication whether the people named in them had lapsed occasionally or frequently, or when in orders or out of orders, or recently or long ago or whether they had repented and become model canons or remained inadequate to the demands of their order. The case of Bebe indicates that the visitors were probably interested in reporting lapses which had occurred long before. Because it was so long ago, perhaps it was Bebe himself upon his conscience who reported his fall, being one of the few who could remember it. This suggests the further possibility that the source of the visitors' information stemmed from the willingness of the religious to confess their shortcomings; that their integrity rather than their vices was being reported and used against them.

In total the visitors accused seven men of having lapsed against their vow of chastity at least once in their careers. Excluding the friars there were probably over seventy regulars in Derbyshire at the time of the visitation; that is, about 10% were accused of sexual irregularity. In Lancashire the proportion of regulars accused of similar misconduct was 17.07% and in the province of York as a whole 25.4%.²⁰ Four of the accused were described as *sodomites per voluntarias pollutiones* which Knowles has interpreted as 'solitary sin' rather than acts of homosexuality: lapses which one might consider far less seriously.²¹

The comperta of 1535-6 beg more questions than they answer. The most that can be concluded from them is that a minority of inmates in the houses of Derbyshire had broken their vow of chastity on one or more occasions. Other evidence of the condition of these houses during the 1530s is even more slight.

Only one canon asked for release from vows during the visitation of 1535-6, yet during the course of the dissolutions of 1536 capacities were granted to the prior and four canons of Gresley

Priory and eight canons of Beauchief Abbey. One canon from Beauchief might have transferred to Dale. No grant of capacities to the nuns of King's Mead is recorded but no trace of their transfers elsewhere has been detected. Perhaps about two dozen religious were affected by the closure of the smaller Derbyshire houses. Thirteen received capacities, the prior of Breadsall Park received a pension but there is no record of any capacity granted to him, one was already a beneficed clergyman, and perhaps eight or so were nuns whose fate is unknown.²²

One might interpret this evidence as evidence of a lack of commitment to the monastic life as a majority of religious in 1536 seems to have preferred the option of a capacity rather than a transfer to another house. On the other hand only one showed any desire to leave the religious life. In those counties where the certificates of the commissioners for closure survive, a majority of regular clergy expressed their desire for a transfer or to remain in their own house as long as it could be exempted. In Lancashire there is some evidence that regulars were forced to take capacities.²³ Such evidence sounds a warning note that one should not too readily assume in Derbyshire, from which similar evidence does not survive, that the regulars readily abandoned their habits.

The communities of Dale and Repton were sufficiently anxious to continue that they purchased costly exemptions from the act of 1536. Perhaps other Derbyshire houses might have wished to have done the same but all came well within the definition of a smaller monastery set by the act and probably lacked the resources to buy exemptions. Sir Anthony Babington beseeched Cromwell that Beauchief might be exempted but its chances of survival were undermined by the death of its abbot in April 1536 when it most needed determined leadership and the existence of Dale, a larger house of the same order, in the county to which canons might have transferred in theory.²⁴

Evidence from the 1530s fails to give a clear impression of the condition of monasticism in Derbyshire. Resort is inevitable to earlier visitation material to fill the gap. A cautionary note has to be sounded not only because of the obvious fact that evidence of earlier conditions does not necessarily reflect the conditions of the 1530s but also because the visitation material itself suggests that standards in houses could deteriorate or improve quickly over short periods. In 1488 Bishop Redman found little to reform at Dale. By 1491, owing to the imbecility and impotency of Abbot Stanley, discipline had rapidly declined. Stanley resigned soon afterwards and a new abbot was elected. In 1494 Redman had to punish two canons for incontinence but praised the new abbot's rule. Three years later Redman found nothing to correct apart from minor observances of ritual. In 1518 and 1521 Bishop Blythe's visitors found Repton Priory in a mediocre state, yet conditions had improved considerably by 1524.²⁵

Earlier visitation material has further limitations. First the visitors were interested in discovering what was amiss; their primary aim was to collect material about defects and then to issue injunctions to remedy them. The records therefore lack balance in so far as they tend to focus on what was wrong rather than on what was right. In their reports heads of houses usually struck a more positive note in assessing the state of their houses, but one might suspect that this practice stemmed from a measure of self-interest as too much criticism might have reflected badly on their management of affairs.

Second, the two sets of surviving material are not directly comparable. Bishop Redman's register contains the *comperta* and injunctions of his visitations whereas Bishop Blythe's visitation book contains the *detecta* recorded from interviews with regulars and some *comperta* and injunctions. Redman's register reveals the visitor's view after listening to complaints, sifting them and coming to judgement. In Blythe's book are the complaints of the regulars themselves

as summarised by scribes and edited in so far as they cut out needless repetition. The Premonstratensian canons are seen through Redman's (albeit probably perceptive) eyes whereas the religious of Blythe's visitations are encountered at closer range, an obvious advantage but also a disadvantage in that our view of them might be distorted by their individuality and private grievances.

Third, certain historians have suspected that some visitation material is distorted by conspiracies of silence among brethren or by their being 'economical with the truth'. One cannot judge from Redman's register but such is the volume of complaint from the canons of Darley, Gresley and Repton that suppression of the truth and conspiracies of silence seems unlikely.²⁶

Despite such limitations, the visitation evidence provides insight into the condition of some of the monasteries of Derbyshire during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

The mainstays of the religious life were the vows of poverty, obedience and chastity and the maintenance of the *Opus Dei*. Failure to sustain them would be profound criticism of the state of monasticism. Because sexual scandal was such a feature in the case against the monasteries during the 1530s the attention of the historian is inevitably drawn towards such evidence in visitation material; yet it is scarce. In reports covering nearly thirty years Redman recorded only four cases of sexual incontinence. The canons of Gresley claimed in 1524 that Joan Cooke had lain in the prior's chamber for three nights, that he was suspected with three other women of the parish and that the priory's cook was his mistress. Thomas Wirksworth, canon of Darley, had been indiscreet in serving the cell of St Helen's, Derby, by frequenting James Wood's house nearby when his wife was there. He was also suspected with a woman who brought food for him to buy. On the other hand the prioress of King's Mead, abbot of Darley (except in 1524) and prior of Repton in each of Blythe's visitations vouched for the continence of their convents. Such paucity of evidence confirms the analysis of the *Compendium Compertorum*.²⁷

Comment cannot be made on homosexuality and masturbation, referred to in the *Compendium*, because, as Knowles points out, "At no visitation before or since [1535-6] has a visitor been canonically empowered to elicit [such information]". The most that can be said is that the abbot of Darley and prior of Repton reported that boys were not allowed to sleep in the dormitories, thus reducing the opportunities for pederasty.²⁸

The record of obedience, at first, seems less impressive. Redman had to deal with nine canons at Beauchief who failed to appear before him at visitations, one apostate and three accused of disobedience. At Dale he dealt with one disobedient canon and one apostate. In 1518 the prioress of King's Mead brought a schedule against Agnes Vyse 'the occasion of much evil and scandal'. Humphrey Glapwell, canon of Darley, was reported in 1518 to have brought offensive weapons into the precincts and in 1524 there were complaints about the bullying behaviour of Thomas Wathe of the same house. The prior of Gresley in 1524 reported that there were conspirators against him and that John Cowhopp was disobedient, incorrigible and seditious.²⁹

Yet this full list of cases tells us nothing about the causes of these problems. One also has to appreciate the difficulties, tensions and claustrophobia which can affect individuals living in small, closed societies. There were certain individuals like Agnes Vyse who had obvious difficulty in fitting into their tight communities. Robert Wulfet of Beauchief and Richard Blackwall of Dale were twice condemned as disobedient and rebellious. One might criticise their abbots for allowing them to proceed from their noviciate to full profession, ignoring their temperamental unsuitability, yet one might also cite cases of the disobedient, contumacious, rebellious and seditious adjusting themselves later to communal life. William Darneton, an apostate from Beauchief in 1500, must have returned because he received a capacity as a canon

of that house in 1536. John York, who had apostasised from Dale c.1480, was persuaded to return by his abbot and continued to appear as a canon in Redman's register until 1497. Agnes Vyse, the cause of so much ill-feeling in 1518 on account on her behaviour, was listed as a sister of King's Mead in the visitation records of 1521 and 1524 without comment. Obedience and communal living could be learnt by the most difficult members of a community.³⁰

The visitation records provide some insight on the attitude of the religious towards their material conditions and implicitly on their regard for their vows of poverty. In 1491 Redman ordered the canons of Beauchief to retain no more than twenty shillings a year for themselves and warned them of the spiritual dangers of money. In 1478 he advised the abbot of Dale to provide sufficient bread and drink and to pay the canons' salaries to avoid grievances growing among them. Ten years later the canons of Dale were ordered not to buy or sell anything. The supprior of Repton in 1518 reported that, owing to the inadequacy of the priory's brewer, the canons were forced to procure drinkable ale in the village at their own expense, and Thomas Rede complained that the canons' salaries were paid late. Three years later the prior of Repton criticised his canons' neglect of the refectory, presumably to avoid its dietary regulations. The canons, in turn, complained that the obedientaries received no emoluments, salaries were still not paid according to the visitors' injunctions of 1518 and that their food was reduced in quantity when they had guests. At Darley Leo Tatershalle in 1521 complained of the poor quality of food and drink there and the variation in the size of portions given to the canons as well as the lack of reward for instructing the novices. In 1524 the canons of Gresley complained about the quality of their bread and ale.³¹

One might justly criticise the canons, cited above, for failing to rise above worldly matters in the spirit of their vow of poverty, yet one must not take such criticism too far. The canons of Repton, Gresley and Darley were members of the Augustinian Order, not noted for rigid austerities. Salaries had long been governed by well-established traditions so that the canons of Repton were only demanding to what they felt entitled. The bishops' visitors agreed that they had cause for complaint for they ordered the prior in 1518 to sack the priory's brewer, appoint a new one and in the mean time provide palatable ale as well as to pay salaries on time.³²

The visitation records suggest that the quality of worship varied from house to house and from time to time. Redman's chief concern at Beauchief and Dale was to regulate and adjust ritual and liturgy in order to preserve the purity of his Order from accretions rather than to prevent and punish neglect. The only evidence of deficiencies stem from his order to the canons of Dale to sing their offices less hurriedly (1482) and more devotedly (1491) and his encouragement of the canons of Beauchief to sing their psalms more exultantly (1497). More serious neglect was uncovered at Repton in 1518. John Ashby complained that the offices were said regularly by only three of the community. Thomas Pratt noted that even the novices were among the absentees from choir. The abbot of Darley in 1518 complained that 'religion and divine worship' were not well-observed through the deficiencies of the prior and supprior. John Okeley of Gresley in 1524 complained that worship was defective owing to the canons' lack of instruction. On the other hand the prioress of King's Mead reported that divine office was well-observed on all three recorded visitations of her house, and the abbot of Darley and prior of Repton in one (1524) of the three visitations.³³

Silence in the accustomed places was not always well-maintained. At Beauchief three canons were reported as breakers of the silence in 1488 and Redman issued injunctions at Beauchief in 1479 and Dale in 1482, 1488 and 1491 ordering its maintenance, suggesting some deficiency. At Darley there were complaints that silence should be better observed in 1518, 1521 and 1524,

yet in each of these years the prioress of King's Mead and the prior of Repton reported that silence in their houses was adequately maintained.³⁴

The visitation records give disturbing insights into monastic life in areas other than the maintenance of the three vows, the *Opus Dei* and the silence. Repton, Darley and Gresley each seem to have had their own particular problems. At Darley the constant complaint was the superfluous number of servants and boys dependent upon the abbey. In 1518 fourteen boys lived in the abbey, yet only only five of them sang at the offices. The problem seems to have beyond the powers of the abbot and diocesan authorities to solve. Injunctions were issued in 1518 and 1524 for the removal of the excess number of dependents, but at its dissolution Darley still contained fifty-seven servants who were rewarded, compared with twenty-nine at Dale and twenty-three at Repton.³⁵

The superfluity of servants had a harmful impact upon the community's life, for it broke down barriers between life within the precinct and the world outside. At worst it caused scandal. Thomas Bankes and Thomas Foster had both slept with women inside the monastery. Foster had also struck Humphrey Glapwell, a canon, with a fork handle, probably explaining why the latter had brought weapons into the precincts. Foster was also insolent, saying that he would live religiously if, and to the extent, the brothers did the same (1518). Providing for excess boys and dogs resulted in the reduction in the amount of alms available for distribution (1521, 1524). As these animals are not stated to have belonged to the canons, they presumably belonged to the laity in the house. The prior in 1524 complained that the dogs were fouling the church, cloister and other parts of the monastery.³⁶

The canons of Darley seem to have had more contact with the outside world than other religious in Derbyshire, presumably on account of Darley's proximity to Derby and the existence of St Helen's, its cell, within the borough. In two visitations the canon celebrating at St Helen's was reported for entering James Wood's house. In 1518, 1521 and 1524 the access of canons to an alehouse in the precincts was a cause of complaint and in 1518 and 1524 injunctions forbade the sale of ale in the monastery. Furthermore the abbot complained of the canons using recreation days to meet lay people, going out too much under the pretext of meeting friends and playing games after meals (1521) and of wandering where they wished after dinner (1524). To ensure free access and egress Canon Thomas Wathe was reported as having his own set of keys to the abbey which he said that he used at the request of others.³⁷

Other Derbyshire houses had problems with canons indulging in unseemly entertainments or of having undue contact with the outside world, but not to the same extent as Darley. At Dale Redman forbade gambling in 1482 and ordered the canons to remove pet dogs and puppies in 1491. Injunctions in 1491 and 1501 were issued forbidding brothers from leaving the precincts of Beauchief without the abbot's permission. At Repton in 1518 some canons neglected divine office to accompany the vicar of Ashbourne to the alehouse. They were still frequenting alehouses in 1524. At the same time the prior of Gresley accused his canons of frequenting alehouses and conversing with woman on Sundays as well as other days.³⁸

Much depended on the quality of leadership for the maintenance of high standards of monastic life. Bishop Redman was able for the most part to commend the rule of the abbots of Beauchief and Dale but, when at Dale the abbot became physically and mentally incapable standards declined dramatically. Problems of leadership were at the heart of troubles at Repton and Gresley, yet where the rule of the head of the house was generally commended, such as the leadership provided by the prioress of King's Mead, few, if any, problems were reported.³⁹

By 1524 there was a complete breakdown in relations between prior and convent at Gresley.

The former accused one canon of disobedience and sedition, believed that there were conspirators against him, accused the canons of conversing with women and commended his financial administration of the priory's properties. The canons countered accusing the prior of sexual misdemeanours, failing to keep the priory in repair and to provide suitable bread and ale and sufficient instruction for the canons, of financial maladministration and nepotism. Canon John Cowhopp added that the prior did not confess to any one in the priory, his confessor being unknown. The full case does not survive for the investigation of the priory was continued after the visitation, yet went unrecorded. Therefore it is difficult to come to any firm conclusion apart from suspecting the existence of scandal.⁴⁰

Poor relations between the prior and the canons caused problems at Repton in 1518 and in 1521. Prior Young seems to have attempted to acquire greater administrative and financial control of the priory's affairs by not appointing obedientaries and running their offices himself, a cause of complaint in 1518. The canons also complained that he did not pay them their salaries at the accustomed times nor grant them days for recreation and visiting relatives. He caused greatest offence by failing to consult the canons about business matters but, instead, taking the advice of secular priests, especially the rector of Barlborough and vicar of Ashbourne. Three years later the canons still complained that the prior had not appointed obedientaries and was not paying salaries. As in 1518 he had failed to render an account but now they complained that he had reduced the amount of their food. By 1524 problems between prior and convent had clearly been worked out for Canon John Wyrkesworthe, one of the oldest members of the community, reported that he had not known greater love between the brothers.⁴¹

Complaints also stemmed from the deficiencies of leadership among subordinate officers. The abbot of Darley complained that the lack of observance of the office in 1518 and silence in 1524 was the result of the incompetence of the prior and supprior. The visitors upheld complaints against the prior in 1524 by ordering his removal. In 1521 the poor administration of the subcellarer was giving cause for concern. At Repton the supprior in 1518 was accused of being negligent and in 1521 his successor of being indiscreet and, instead of acting as an intercessor between the prior and canons, causing the prior to hand out punishments for minor offences. The visitors ordered him to be more charitable and discreet in future upon pain of removal from his office.⁴²

The visitation evidence has to be used cautiously and the conclusions that it provides are limited in scope. First, the evidence suggests that serious scandal was comparatively rare, but the standards found at any given time in a monastery could vary considerably. Much depended on the current leadership for the quality of worship, discipline and life. The monastic vows and the *Opus Dei* seem, on the whole, to have been maintained, even if standards were not always high. The quality of the Derbyshire houses also seems to have varied considerably. The nunnery at King's Mead, Derby, seems to have been orderly, under good leadership, and fulfilling its purpose well despite its small size and poverty. At the turn of the century the county's two Premonstratensian houses were well-administered and orderly, though conditions might have changed by the 1530s. On the other hand there is evidence of mediocrity, at times, among the White Canons as well as at Repton and Darley and of conditions approaching breakdown at Gresley in 1524. The evidence from Repton suggests that such conditions were reformable yet that from Darley suggests not. Perhaps Darley was in an exceptional position. Its greater wealth and proximity to the county's largest town probably made the task of keeping outside influences at bay and under control more difficult and beyond the capacity of its leaders.

The overriding impression of the county's monastic houses shortly before the Dissolution

seems to be one of general mediocrity, conditions varying at different times and places from the good to the scandalous. Yet it would be unwise to assume that this was the result of a long decline in standards. The county's houses had possibly always been somewhat mediocre, though admittedly sufficient evidence is lacking for an effective comparison to prove that the religious at the Dissolution were any worse (or better) than their predecessors. The early history of Dale Abbey and Depedale Priory, however, is suggestive. Its examples of fervour, mediocrity and scandal sound a cautionary note about any glib generalisation concerning the decline of monasticism during the late Middle Ages.⁴³

Whether the religious houses of Derbyshire were seen by contemporaries as inadequate and moribund is also difficult to judge. A number of clues suggest that they did not. Monastic life had not become so unattractive as to deter recruits. Certainly at Repton and Darley in 1518 the monastic establishments were incomplete, but the cause was probably failure to recruit rather than attract recruits. By 1524 Repton and by 1521 Darley both had four new novices. Shortly before Bishop Redman visited Dale in 1500 the community had been reduced by plague, but the bishop expressed his confidence in the abbot's ability to bring numbers to the previous level, a confidence justified by the presence already of four novices.⁴⁴

The diocesan ordination records reveal evidence of the level of recruitment to the Derbyshire houses, except of course, King's Mead nunnery. Beauchief, Dale, Darley and Repton regularly sent novices to be ordained and Derby Friary and Gresley Piory did so on occasion.

Numbers ordained subdeacon	1503-10	1511-20	1521-30
Beauchief	4	2	5
Dale	5	6	5
Darley	4	5	7
Derby Friary	0	0	1
Gresley	0	3	0
Repton	5	6	4
Total	18	22	22

During the same periods 139, 203 and 119 secular clergy were ordained subdeacon to Derbyshire titles, but these figures do not suggest that vocations to the regular life were regarded as less attractive. There were no restrictions on numbers wishing to enter the ranks of the seculars but entry to the monastic orders had become restricted as houses had regulated the number of religious according to the level that their revenues could support.⁴⁵

In ordination registers from the 1490s onwards the surnames of the canons of Darley are generally places-names, often of places near the vicinity of the abbey or in or near abbey estates or both — Hazlewood, Glapwell, Derby, Quarndon, Nottingham, Clifton, Duffield, Windley Bradley, Wirksworth, Callow.⁴⁶ If these surnames represent the canons' places of origin, the abbey (and perhaps other Derbyshire houses) seems to have recruited on a restricted basis.

How the laity regarded the abbeys is difficult to ascertain. During the years prior to the Dissolution the dying of Derbyshire seldom left bequests to religious houses, reflecting either a measure of disinterest or doubts about their future. Out of 327 wills noted between 1531 and 1538 only thirty-four contain such bequests, two to Beauchief, five to Dale, fifteen to the friars of Derby, four to Repton and twelve to houses outside Derbyshire. However, these bequests to the monasteries came from people who lived near them or their estates, suggesting that these houses retained restricted local loyalties. For example, the abbey of Dale attracted legacies from

inhabitants of Elvaston, Ilkeston, West Hallam, Spondon and Kirk Hallam. The Friars of Derby drew bequests from a wider area. Localised loyalty is also suggested in Sir Anthony Babington's letter to Cromwell 2 May 1536 in which he begged that the abbey might be exempted from the recent act of suppression as it was the burial place of his wife's ancestors. In return he offered the secretary a gift of lead and his daily service.⁴⁷

Although the moral standards in the houses might seem too variable and occasionally too low to twentieth century observers, outside they were probably lower. Full ecclesiastical court records for this period are, lacking. Only an impression can be given of the state of morality of the laity. When Thomas Legh visited the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield in 1537 he was shocked to find that the leaders of society gave such a bad example to the poor by living openly with their concubines and bastards, and putting away their wives. Blythe's visitation book reinforces Legh's report, as it contains cases against Sir John Leake for his adultery and Humphrey Harrison rector of Pleasley for living with Agnes Symkyn. During the 1560s the earl of Shrewsbury reported to the Privy Council the unacceptable incidence of bigamy in the counties of York and Derby.⁴⁸

3. The Pensions and Later Careers of the Regular Clergy

The adequacy of the pensions and the fate of the regular clergy after the closure of their houses has been a matter of controversy and changing historical interpretation. Gasquet's pessimistic assessment at the turn of the century was succeeded by Baskerville's optimistic approach during the 1930s. To the latter pensions were generous and he was able to trace the careers of some who after the dissolution enjoyed a previously unsuspected degree of comfort and affluence. A.G. Dickens, G.A.J. Hodgett and G.W.O Woodward during the 1950s and 1960s redressed the balance, pointing out that the average pension of £5 was regarded by contemporaries as a poor income for a curate, that the pensions were subject to the payment of administrative fees and taxes and the fate of the unpensioned regulars, of whom there were many, was obscure and possibly more harsh than of those in receipt of pensions. The main difficulty in drawing up conclusions is that it is seldom possible to trace the later careers of the religious after the Dissolution, particularly those who adopted secular occupations rather than careers in the Church. The regular clergy of Derbyshire prove no exception and only an impressionistic assessment can be made.⁴⁹

There were no rules set for determining the level of pensions but suppression commissioners seem in a rough and ready way to have followed general criteria in deciding the amount an individual should receive. Account was taken of the wealth of each house, the number of inmates and the age of each canon and seniority of his position.⁵⁰

The pensions of heads of houses were graded according to the revenues of their houses. Thomas Ragg, abbot of Darley, the richest Derbyshire house, was awarded £50 a year whereas William Pendleton, the prior of Breadsall Park, the poorest, received a mere 5 marks a year. The abbot of Darley, abbot of Dale and prior of Gresley were awarded slightly under twenty per cent of the annual net revenues of their houses (as assessed in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*) as pensions; the prior of Breadsall Park enjoyed thirty per cent of the net revenues of his house. As the abbot of Beauchief and prior of Repton died shortly before the dissolution of their houses, the Crown was spared the cost of awarding them pensions. No record of any pension, awarded to the prioress of King's Mead, Derby, has been traced.⁵¹

Most of the canons of Darley, Dale and Repton received pensions of variable amounts. The canons of Darley were awarded between £5 and £6/13/4d a year, the canons of Repton between

£4 and £6 and the canons of Dale between 16/8d and £5/6/8d. That seniority of position was accounted for is shown by the larger pensions accorded to the priors and supriors of these houses. William Stanbanke, prior of Darley, and Ralph Clerke, supprior of Repton, were granted £6/13/4d and £6 a year respectively, pensions greater than those received by their colleagues. Richard Wheatley, prior of Dale, received a pension of £5/6/8d, the same amount as five other canons of his house. Younger canons usually received small pensions or none at all, presumably on the assumption that they were young and fit enough to fend for themselves. Thurstan Broune and Thurstan Bowseforth were given rewards as members of the community upon the dissolution of Darley Abbey but not included in the list of pensioners. As no one appears in the Lichfield ordination registers with the name 'Thurstan' from Darley upto the time they peter out in 1532, they were presumably new members of the community. At Dale John Shemoulde, Robert Wilson and James Chenyholme were awarded £3/6/8d each, James Cleyton and James Bateman £2 each and Robert Jerrett a mere 16/8d. Shemoulde was ordained an acolyte 15 May 1532 whereas the others do not appear in the surviving Lichfield ordination records. Again the likelihood is that they were the younger members of this community.⁵²

Of those pensioned, the canons of Dale fared least well and the canons of Darley best of all. Excluding the pensions of the heads of houses, the average pension at Darley was £5.50, at Repton £5.07 and at Dale £4.12. The variations are accounted for by their differences in revenue and size of community. The net annual revenues of Darley in 1535 were £258/13/5d, Dale £144/12/0d and Repton £118/8/6d. However, the canons of Repton were more generously pensioned than those of Dale because there was no head of house to provide for there and their numbers were depleted (10 pensioned whereas 16 canons of Dale were). Despite the lack of generosity to the canons a greater proportion of the net revenues of Dale were allotted for pensions (61.2%) than of Darley (44.7%) and Repton (42.5%).

Three canons of Dale received no pensions because they had benefices. Two of them were better off than their fellow canons as the net annual revenues of their benefices were £5/7/9d and £8 respectively while the third, with £4/9/5d a year from his vicarage, was better off than the six least generously pensioned canons⁵³

A pension of £5 offered little more than a subsistence allowance once the fees and taxes, charged on them, were removed. The nine canons who received less than £5 a year would have found their pensions difficult to survive upon, especially with the increasing inflation of prices during the 1540s and 1550s. A further problem was that payments of pensions fell into arrears during the early 1550s when the government teetered on the edge of bankruptcy. The commissioners investigating pensions at Derby 6 November 1552 found that out of the twenty-two surviving monastic pensioners six had arrears of half a year owing to them and ten arrears of one year.⁵⁴ The pensioned religious, aspiring to any degree of affluence, had to acquire another income. The unpensioned, those receiving capacities after the dissolutions of 1536 and the friars and nuns of Derby, were presumably in an even more difficult situation.

The ex-religious, with the exception of nuns, were faced with the choice either of accepting retirement or seeking secular employment or promotion within the church. So far, no one from a Derbyshire house has been traced in any secular activity, though this is because surviving documentary evidence is weighted so heavily in favour of those pursuing ecclesiastical careers. All that can be said of the nuns of King's Mead is that the lists of their names in Blythe's visitation book show that they often came from local gentry families. If they returned to their families, perhaps their lot was not too uncomfortable.⁵⁵

The prospect of profitable preferment for ex-regulars in the local church was limited. The

archdeaconry of Derby at this time was for its size an area of comparatively few benefices, 105 in all, and even fewer well-endowed ones.⁵⁶ The turnover of incumbents in them was slow. During the decade 1531-40 there were on average 4.6 institutions a year, during 1541-50 5.3 and during 1551-60 6.1.⁵⁷ Had ex-regulars been instituted to benefices within the archdeaconry as they fell vacant, it would have taken over ten years to have provided for all of them.

Such a figure does not account for competition for benefices from the secular clergy who found the struggle to gain them in Derbyshire an uphill one. Between 1521 and 1530 the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield or his suffragan ordained 142 priests to Derbyshire titles. Of these only fifteen at the most can be traced later as incumbents in the archdeaconry. Six or seven of them were beneficed by 1533 but others had to wait much longer. John Scholles, ordained priest in 1524, was instituted as rector of Stanton by Bridge in 1545. In addition competition came from the regular clergy of dissolved houses outside Derbyshire; at least four such men gained benefices within the archdeaconry.⁵⁸ Against this background it was unlikely that many of the ex-religious from Derbyshire houses would gain benefices in the archdeaconry, even if they had wished.

There was a sudden national decline in the number of ordinands from the mid-1530s, thereby reducing the competition for preferment and, in theory, aiding the prospects of the ex-religious. Whether this trend affected the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield cannot be proved because ordination lists end in 1532. Other records indicate that ordinations were held in the diocese during the rest of the decade and the 1540s and 1550s but the number of candidates ordained cannot be ascertained.⁵⁹ This decline probably did not work its way quickly enough through the system to be of much help to the ex-religious.

Together the Derbyshire houses held the patronage to eighteen livings within the archdeaconry. On their dissolution five of them were already held by canons.⁶⁰ Before their dissolution some houses elsewhere in the country made grants of the next turns of presentation to their benefices to parties who could be trusted to present ex-regulars as soon as the livings became vacant. The abbot and convent of Darley before its dissolution made grants of presentation affecting seven of the nine advowsons that it owned, Dale one of its three advowsons, Beauchief one of its three and Gresley a grant of its only advowson. Yet these grants seldom benefited the ex-religious of these houses. Of the seven grants made by Darley Abbey only one was used for the benefit of an ex-canon — William Stanbanke, the ex-prior, presented in 1552 to the vicarage of St Peter's, Derby. There are only two more similar cases. On 3 November 1536 Roger Jolye, an ex-canon of Gresley, was instituted to the vicarage of Lullington by the grantees of the priory for this turn only. Michael Brockwell (identified with Michael Bredewell alias Eccleshall ex-canon of Beauchief) was instituted by the grantees of the abbey on the death of Thomas Gilbert, another ex-canon.⁶¹ Clearly those who received grants of the next turn of presentation felt free to bestow their patronage upon their own choices.

Probably three further ex-religious were instituted to benefices within the archdeaconry. Richard Bright, ex-canon of Beauchief, might have been the Richard Bright, vicar of Norton c.1560-79 and vicar of Bradbourne c.1561-72. George Coke, ex-canon of Dale, might have been the George Cocke admitted to the vicarage of Tideswell in 1547. William Remyngton, an ex-Dominican of the friary in Derby, was instituted to the vicarage of Barrow upon Trent in 1555.⁶² In addition two ex-canons who probably had benefices before the dissolution, gained further preferment. Richard Banks, ex-canon of Dale, might be the same person as the Richard Banks who resigned the rectory of West Hallam in 1539 and was instituted as rector of Eastwood, Notts, in 1538 and vicar of Crich in 1543. Roger Page, ex-canon of Dale and vicar of Kirk Hallam until

1569, was rector of a mediety of Trowell, Notts, 1554-6 and rector of Strelley, Notts, 1556-72.⁶³

Overall the number of ex-religious from Derbyshire houses who acquired benefices within the archdeaconry was not impressive. Of the five who had benefices before the dissolution, one resigned to make way for a younger ex-colleague (Jolye at Lullington) shortly after the closure of his house, another probably resigned his benefice to gain another and three retained theirs until their deaths. Five other ex-religious probably gained benefices in the years following, but had long waits until 1547 (2), 1552, 1555 and c.1560 respectively.

There were, of course, other types of ecclesiastical preferment in the archdeaconry of Derby open to the ex-religious. The chantry rolls, drawn up in 1546, list fifty-two foundations of various type, providing employment for over seventy clergymen.⁶⁴ There were around a dozen churches which had been appropriated but in which vicarages had never been endowed, as well as about fifty chapels with full parochial rights yet still dependent on mother churches, and probably nearly as many chapels of ease without full parochial rights. In addition to this pool of employment there were posts as assistant curates in parish churches and domestic chaplaincies as well as temporary positions during busy festival seasons and to say requiems and undertake other traditional funeral rites. The problem in tracing the ex-religious in these types of posts is the lack of documentation in comparison with that for benefices. Chantrists are fairly well-documented as some had to be instituted by the bishop to their livings and because the dissolution of the chantries produced further evidence such as chantry rolls and pension lists. However, those in other types of posts, lacking the freehold tenure and legal security of incumbents, more rarely intrude into sources.

Four ex-religious were chantrists by the time of the dissolution of the chantries in 1548. Again they had to undergo the trauma of dissolution but, at least, they were all pensioned. James Cheyneholme, ex-canon of Dale and chantrist of St Nicholas' chantry in St Peter's Church, Derby, and Richard Machyn, ex-canon of Darley, were already pensioned as regulars. The former's pension of £3/6/8d as a canon and his chantrist's pension of £2/13/4d left him still unprosperous. Machyn fared better with a pension of £6 from Darley and £4 from his chantry. Michael Bredewell, ex-canon of Beauchief and chantrist of Monyash, and Laurence Smith alias Sponer, the ex-Dominican prior of Derby and chantrist of St Mary's Chapel within All Saints, Derby, were pensioned for the first time.⁶⁵

The canons of Dale, Darley and Repton had served certain chapels in their vicinity, canons from Dale serving Stanton by Dale, canons from Darley, Allestree, and canons from Repton, Repton itself, Bretby, Foremark and Ingleby.⁶⁶ Ex-religious remained in some of them. John Cadman (Dale) served Stanton by Dale, Thomas Harryson (Darley) Allestree and John Wirksworth alias Wood and Thomas Pratt (Repton) Repton and Bretby respectively.⁶⁷ Ex-religious have also been traced in other chapelries. Ralph Harryson (Dale) was serving Sandiacre in 1554, Ralph Clerke (Repton) Newton Solney in 1560 and Richard Machyn (Darley) Osmaston-by-Derby in 1558.⁶⁸ Henry Trypet, probably an ex-canon of Beauchief, witnessed wills as the assistant curate in Pleasley between 1545 and 1547 and in his will William Sowter, ex-canon of Darley, desired to be buried nigh Our Lady's Altar in Allestree Church where he said mass. Eight other ex-religious can be found witnessing wills, but whether they were in regular clerical employment is not clear.⁶⁹

All in all the number of ex-religious who gained any type of permanent living within the archdeaconry of Derby was limited. Five already had benefices before the dissolution of their houses and sixteen continued in or gained various types of livings afterwards. Of these ten were pensioned and six were not, yet forty-two had received pensions and twenty capacities without

pensions. Perhaps more names will be added to the list as further evidence emerges. The ex-religious of Derbyshire might have found livings in other archdeaconries but searches for them would be subject to the law of diminishing returns, especially as one feature of the ex-religious, when traced, is how close most lived to their old homes.

Most information survives for the canons of Dale, Darley and Repton. Ten of the nineteen canons of Dale have been traced at some point in their later careers in settlements within a five mile radius of the abbey whereas five others have been traced further afield at Tideswell, Dronfield and probably Crich within the county, Rothley in Leicestershire and Alton in Staffordshire. Eight of the canons of Darley have been traced in Derby and the surrounding villages of Allestree, Osmaston by Derby, Duffield and Mackworth whereas two have been traced further afield at Youlgreave and Glapwell, where the abbey had possessed estates. Five of the ten canons of Repton have been traced in Repton, Newton Solney, Bretby and Ticknall.

The failure of most ex-religious to gain clerical employment suggests either that some were content to retire on their pensions or seek alternative employment or that such was the continuing competition for livings that many lacked success before their deaths. Death soon made inroads on the former communities. Of the seven heads of houses surviving the dissolution, Thomas Ragg, abbot of Darley, was buried at St Alkmund's, Derby 19 Feb 1541, John Bebe, Abbot of Dale, died at Stanley Grange on 12 March 1541 and William Pendleton, prior of Breadsall Park, died in All Saints Parish, Derby, 28 Nov 1545. Laurence Sponer, prior of the Dominicans in Derby, survived into the 1550s, last listed on Cardinal Pole's roll of pensioners, and John Okedy, prior of Gresley, was reported to have died c.1568. The deaths of the prior of St James, Derby, and the prioress of King's Mead have not been traced.⁷⁰

The numbers of pensioners quickly diminished. In the commission on pensions of 1552 twenty-two of the original forty-two pensioners were listed. When Cardinal Pole's pension roll was drawn up the number had diminished to nineteen. Fourteen were listed as pensioners liable to pay the second part of the clerical subsidy due on 1 October 1558. By Michaelmas 1558 eleven still survived. In Bishop Bentham's return of pensioners to the Exchequer, dated 16 June 1576, only one pensioner, Ralph Clerke, the former supprior of Repton, was reported as alive.⁷¹

Of the beneficed ex-regulars, the last two to die were probably Richard Bright, vicar of Norton, buried there 4 March 1579, and Richard Banks whose successor was instituted to Crich on 10 July 1579. Before that, William Stanbanke, vicar of St Peter's Derby, had been buried 10 April 1572.⁷² Despite being unable to trace the deaths of most of the unpensioned ex-regulars, the evidence suggests that the monastic communities of Derbyshire had probably become extinct by the 1580s.

Though the ex-religious lived through times of rapid religious changes, they provide virtually no evidence of their reaction to them. Those that were beneficed, like the majority of beneficed clergy in Derbyshire, accommodated themselves to the changes of religious settlements.⁷³ Not one ex-regular has been traced as having married, suggesting either the effects of age or a degree of conservatism.

Little assessment can be made of the economic condition of the ex-religious at the time of their deaths as only four wills with probate inventories have been traced. None of the inventories suggest great affluence. The most extensive personal estate was that of William Sowter, ex-canon of Darley, who died in 1544, valued at £14/12/8d, £6 in ready money, his ecclesiastical vestments and corporals at £3/13/8d and his other clothing at £1/13/4d. The personal estate of John Cadman, ex-canon of Dale, was valued in 1558 at £9/17/5d. Of this sum £6/11/6d was in ready money, his clothing, bedding, furniture and utensils being worth a mere £3/5/11d. The

personal estate of George Coke, formerly of Dale, was valued in 1557 at £6/11/-; £2/10/- represented his pension owing to him from the last Lady Day, the rest of his estate consisting of clothing, bedding and books. When the goods of Walter Raye, ex-canon of Darley, were inventoried, they were valued at no more than £3/0/8d.

The bequests in their wills were conventional but lack any distinctive pattern. William Sowter gave vestments and corporals to local churches, made bequests to three of his ex-colleagues and provided for traditional funeral rites for himself. The other four wills do not follow this pattern, largely because by the time that they were made traditional funeral rites had come under attack, as had ecclesiastical vestments and other church goods, and most of their ex-colleagues had died.⁷⁴

General Conclusions

Although few in number and of limited wealth, the monasteries of Derbyshire were among the largest ecclesiastical institutions of the county and their inmates a significant portion of its clergy. Therefore their disappearance was bound to have an impact, especially in their vicinity, for one feature which stands out is their localism. They probably recruited from their estates and neighbourhoods, which largely coincided. Though they did not attract many bequests from the Derbyshire laity in general, they sometimes were remembered in the wills of neighbours. After their dissolution, many of the ex-religious lived nearby their old homes.

During their last decades conditions within these houses were variable, but scandal seems to have been the exception rather than the rule. On the whole their inmates maintained their vows and the Opus Dei, even if evidence of their fervour is lacking. At times the regulars appear petty and mediocre, but such is the nature of the surviving evidence that their innermost thoughts and spiritual states are lost to us. Enough can be learnt to suggest that glib generalisations about the decline of monasticism during the late Middle Ages and its deserved fate during the 1530s owing to its defects are insupportable. Although the regulars had their weaknesses, their behaviour within the precincts, according to the standards of the time, was probably much better than the laity's outside.

The suppression of religious life in Derbyshire does not seem to have been welcomed, least of all by the regulars. For them the Dissolution did not, on the whole, offer release into a brave, new and more comfortable world. For those that received them, pensions usually offered subsistence rather than affluence. No evidence (possibly for want of record) has been found that any ex-regular became destitute but signs that any enjoyed much wealth are also lacking. For those that wished to stay in the neighbourhood and pursue a career in the church, the archdeaconry of Derby offered limited opportunities and only a minority can be traced in any sort of ecclesiastical living, let alone a benefice. The ex-religious adapted themselves to the changing religious world as best they could and lived out the rest of their lives in varying degrees of obscurity.

REFERENCES

Abbreviations

B.L. = British Library

L.J.R.O. = Lichfield Joint Record Office

L & P Hen VIII = *Calendar of Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII* (J. Gairdner and R.H. Brodie, eds), 10-14 (1880-96)

P.R.O. = Public Record Office

V.C.H. = *Victoria County History*

V.E. = *Valor Ecclesiasticus, temp Henrici VIII, auctoritate regia institutus* (J. Caley and J. Hunter eds.), (1810-34)

1. The eight independent houses were Breadsall Park Priory, Beauchief Abbey, Dale Abbey, Darley Abbey, the Dominican Friary in Derby, King's Mead Priory outside Derby, Gresley Priory and Repton Priory. St Helen's Hospital was dependent upon Darley and the cell at Calke upon Repton. St James's Priory in Derby was a cell of Bermondsey Abbey in Surrey.
2. The net annual incomes of the independent houses in V.E. were:-Breadsall Park £10/17/9d, Beauchief £126/3/4d, Darley £258/13/5d, Dale £144/12/0d, King's Mead £18/6/2d, Gresley £31/6/0d, Repton £118/8/6d, V.E., iii, 153-7, 162-3, 172-3
3. The prior of St James, Derby appears in the surrender deed of Bermondsey. Breadsall, Beauchief, Gresley and King's Mead, Derby were closed under the terms of the Act of 1536 and did not surrender individually to the king, so necessitating the production of a witnessed deed of surrender.
4. My figures do not agree with those given in A.M. Johnson, 'The Reformation Clergy of Derbyshire, 1536-1559', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal* C (1980), 49.
5. Roger Page vicar of Kirk Hallam who signed the surrender and William Carter vicar of Ilkeston and possibly Richard Banks rector of West Hallam.
6. D.S. Chambers, *Faculty Office Registers 1534-1549* (Oxford, 1966), 75, 78, 160, 161, 182
7. J. Youings, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries*. (London, 1971), 151; D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, iii *The Tudor Age* (Cambridge, 1959), 277, 279, 282; G. Baskerville, *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries* (London, 1937), 136
8. L & P Hen VIII, 10, 138; L.J.R.O., Bishop Blythe's Ordination Register B/A/14ii, n.f.
9. P. Heath, *Bishop Geoffrey Blythe's Visitations c.1515-1525* Collections for a History of Staffordshire Fourth Series, 7 (1973), *passim*, appendix 1; F.A. Gasquet, ed., *Anglo-Premonstratensia*, Camden Society, 3rd Series, x (1906), 54-71, 172-185
10. P.R.O., Accounts of the Commissioners for Dissolution E315/172, 54, 74, Warrants for Pensions E315/244, 15; V.C.H., *Surrey* ii, (1905), 74
11. L & P Hen VIII, 10, 138; 113 part 2, 261; P.R.O., State Papers SP1/102, 91
12. L & P Hen VIII, 10, 331; L.J.R.O., B/A/1/14ii, n.f.; P.R.O., E315/172, 67; S.O. Addy, *Historical Memorials of Beauchief Abbey* (Sheffield, 1878), 130; owing to the loss of the papers of the Derbyshire commissioners for the closures of 1536, details of those who sought transfers are lacking.
13. Cox in V.C.H. *Derbyshire* ii, 80 suggested that the friary in Derby contained about thirty friars and that the community was reduced considerably in the years before the dissolution. He provides no support for his claim; nor has any been found. On the claims of a general withdrawal of Dominicans to the Continent see Baskerville, 242
14. B.L. Harleian MS, 124v-131
15. B.L. Harleian MS, 124v, 129
16. L. and P Hen VIII, 10, 137-8
17. G.W.O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), 33
18. Knowles, 286, 477; Heath, 50-85, 115-159
19. Heath, 10, 172; L.J.R.O., B/A/1/14ii, n.f.; V.C.H., *Surrey*, ii, 74; L.J.R.O., B/A/1/14ii, n.f.; P.R.O., E315/172/67; Gasquet, 182, 185

20. C. Haigh, *The Last Days of the Lancashire Monasteries and the Pilgrimage of Grace*, Chetham Society, 3rd series (1969), 26
21. Knowles, 296-7
22. Chambers, xlii, 75, 78; Thomas Gilbert vicar of Norton, a canon of Beauchief
23. S. Jack, 'The last days of the small monasteries in England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, XXI (1970), 98; Haigh, 46
24. L and P Henry VIII, 10, 787; 12, part 1, 310 (40), part 2, 191 (10)
25. Gasquet, 177-84; Heath, 8-10, 65-7, 149-51
26. Heath, xxxii-xxxiv
27. Gasquet, 66, 68, 182; Heath, 63, 148-9,
28. Knowles, 297; Heath, 8, 21, 24, 61, 62, 66, 150, 153
29. Gasquet, 57-8, 62, 65, 68, 70 (2), 175, 177, 180; Heath, 21, 148, 152
30. Gasquet, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 175, 178, 179, 180, 181, 183 (2); Chambers, 75; Heath, 61, 154
31. Gasquet, 64-5, 174, 178; Heath, 8, 9, 63, 66
32. Heath, 10
33. Gasquet, 68, 173, 175, 180, 184; Heath, 9-10, 21, 23, 60, 149, 150, 151, 153
34. Gasquet, 57, 63, 175, 178, 180; Heath, 8, 23, 24, 61, 62, 66, 150, 151
35. Heath, 22, 23., 61-4, 151-3; P.R.O., E315/172, 54-6, 64-572, the parish priest of Stanley has been excluded from the total of Dale's servants and 'the five men that found certain plate' and 'a guide from Repton to Gracedieu' from Repton's total in the belief that they ought not to be considered regular servants of these two houses.
36. Heath, 22, 63, 151-2
37. Heath, 21-3, 62-3, 151-3
38. Gasquet, 65, 71, 175, 180; Heath, 9-10, 148, 150
39. Gasquet, 180; Heath, 23-4, 60-1, 153-4
40. Heath, 148-8
41. Heath, 8-10, 65-7, 150
42. Heath, 10, 21, 62, 66, 67, 151, 153
43. A. Saltman, ed., 'The History of the Foundation of Dale abbey or the so-called Chronicle of Dale', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal* LXXXVII (1967), 31, 32-33, 37
44. Heath, 64, 151; Gasquet, 183
45. L.J.R.O., Blythe's Ordination Register B/A/1/14ii
46. L.J.R.O., Registers of Smith, Arundel and Blythe B/A/1/13, B/A/1/14ii
47. L.J.R.O., Wills 1531-8 B/C/11; L and P Henry VIII, 10, 787
48. L & P Henry VIII, 11, 349; Heath 45, 46, 48; *Acts of the Privy Council* VII, 189; Gasquet, 449-70; Baskerville, 246-58, 285-6; A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (London, 1964), 204-8; G.A.J. Hodgett, 'The unpensioned Ex-Religious in Tudor England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* XIII (1962); Woodward, 139-57
50. Knowles, 406
51. P.R.O., E315/172, 57; E315/244, 15
52. P.R.O, E315/172, 54, 57, 58, 66-7, 74; L.J.R.O., B/A/1/14iii, 4v
53. V.E., iii, 157-62 Page signed the deed of surrender while Page, Banks and Carter were all assigned capacities.
54. P.R.O., Commission and Return on pensions and their arrears, Derbyshire E101/76/12
55. Heath, 23-4, 61, 153-4; P.R.O., E178/3239, 8
56. R. Clark, *Anglicanism, Recusancy and Dissent in Derbyshire 1603-1730* (Oxford D.Phil thesis, 1979), 4
57. These statistics are based on information drawn from the Lichfield episcopal registers, L.J.R.O., B/A/1/14iii-iv, B/A/1/15 which exclude the peculiar jurisdictions and in places are clearly defective. The sede vacante register for the vacancy between the death of Bishop Blythe and election of Bishop

Lee is incomplete, no institutions to Derbyshire benefices being recorded between 7 July 1532 and 22 April 1534. Therefore the figure for the average number of institutions between 1531 and 1540 is an under-estimate. The register of institutions for the late 1550s is also defective, and so has been supplemented with information from the Composition Book P.R.O. E334/7. Even so, further unrecorded institutions have been traced.

58. L.J.R.O., Ordinations Register B/A/1/14ii, Bishop Sampson's Register B/A/1/14iii, 53v, 54; Arthur Meverell, prior of Tutbury, vicar of Tideswell 1544-7; Richard Arnold (Tutbury) vicar of Heanor 1547-66; John Bucklande, (Worksop) vicar of Tibshelf 1543-55; Hugh Scheppey (Leicester Abbey) rector of Weston upon Trent 1548-64
59. M. Bowker, 'The Henrician Reformation and the Parish Clergy' in C. Haigh, ed., *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge, 1987), 78-80; L.J.R.O., Liber Cleri 1584 B/V/1/15 reveals a number of clergymen in the archdeaconry of Derby ordained during the late 1530s, 1540s and 1550s.
60. William Carter vicar of Ilkeston, Roger Page and probably Richard Banks rector of West Hallam (Dale); Thomas Gilbert vicar of Norton (Beauchief); John Cowappe vicar of Lullington (Gresley).
61. Baskerville, 294; Knowles, 409; L.J.R.O., Bishops' Registers, B/A/1/14iii, 26, B/A/1/14iv, 55, 56v
62. L.J.R.O., *Liber Cleri*, 1560, 1561 B/V/1/4, 5; Dean and Chapter Act Book, iv, 144; Bishop's Register B/A/1/15, 17
63. K.S.S. Train, *Lists of the Clergy of Central Nottinghamshire*, Thoroton Record Series XV (1955), part 1, 45, part 3, 27, 45; L.J.R.O., Bishop's Register B/A/1/14iii, 28v
64. P.R.O., Chantry Certificates E301/13/45-78
65. P.R.O., Grants of pensions to chantrists, 1548 E101/75/8
66. Gasquet, 172-85; Heath, 22, 62, 66, 150, 151, 152
67. L.J.R.O., *Liber Cleri* 1558 B/V/1/2, wills B/C/11 Thomas Standley 1542 and Robert Toone 1556 of Bretby, Roger Vernon 1534 and Geoffrey Speyde 1541 of Repton; P.R.O., Return to Exchequer on Pensioners E178/3239, 2, 3
68. L.J.R.O., Wills B/C/11, William Williamson of Sandiacre 1554; *Liber Cleri* 1558, 1560 B/V/1/2, 4
69. L.J.R.O., Wills 1541-60 B/C/11
70. P.R.O. Commissions on Pensioners E101/76/12, E178/3239; Clerical Subsidy Roll E179/19/503; B.L., Pole's Pension Roll Additional MS 8102
71. P.R.O., Commission on Pensioners E101/76/12; Clerical Subsidy Roll E179/19/503; List of Pensions etc E135/10/42; Return of Pensioners to Exchequer E178/3239; B.L., Pole's Pension Roll Additional MS 8102, 49v-50
72. L.L. Simpson, ed., *The Parish Registers of St James' Church, Norton co Derby 1559-1812* (Derby, 1908), 378; Lambeth Palace Library, Archbishop Grindal's Register II, 431; D.R.O., General Register, St Peter's, Derby, 1558-1692
73. William Carter vicar of Ilkeston, Roger Page vicar of Kirk Hallam, Richard Banks vicar of Crich, William Stanbanke vicar of St Peter's, Derby
74. L.J.R.O., Wills B/C/11 William Sowter 1544, Walter Raye 1549, George Coke 1557, John Cadman 1558.