

# THE LAST SUSSEX ABJURATIONS

By R. F. HUNNISETT

In the Middle Ages any felon who had taken sanctuary in a church, chapel or churchyard could remain there unharmed for forty days, during which time he could send for the local coroner, confess his felonies and abjure the realm, swearing to leave England by a stated port. He was entitled to make his way to the port and leave the kingdom with impunity, but the normal penalty for straying from the direct route or for later returning to England was death.<sup>1</sup>

The medieval Sussex abjurations of the realm have been thoroughly examined in earlier volumes of these *Collections*. H. M. Whitley made an analysis of the 13th century cases from the eyre rolls, and the present writer has printed and discussed the surviving coroners' returns of 14th and 15th century abjurations.<sup>2</sup> There are only six of these, since in the later Middle Ages Sussex coroners were never obliged to compile and submit formal rolls, and records of abjurations were only summoned into a superior court, usually King's Bench, on those rare occasions when an abjurer was found at large in the country.

By contrast, eleven Sussex abjurations, recorded by the coroners, survive from the years 1515-1533. This can be attributed to a statute of 1487 (3 Henry VII, c.2), which required coroners to produce all their indictments of homicide regularly before the justices of gaol delivery; the accused who were in gaol were to be tried by the justices as before, while the indictments of those who were not were to be delivered by the justices into King's Bench. By the early 16th century it had become the normal practice for coroners to submit to the gaol delivery justices a record of all their inquests, whether concerning homicide or other types of death, and also all their abjurations. The vast majority are today among the King's Bench records in the Public Record Office. It is therefore likely that the eleven Sussex abjurations calendared at the end of this article were the only ones received after 1515 by Sussex coroners outside the liberty of the Cinque Ports, from which such returns were not made.<sup>3</sup>

There was, however, an interesting case of sanctuary seeking in 1521 which did not result in abjuration. On 9 April two Chichester

<sup>1</sup> I have dealt with this subject in detail in *The Medieval Coroner* (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 37-54.

<sup>2</sup> *S.A.C.* 61, pp. 80-91; 96, pp. 17-20, 23-26.

<sup>3</sup> For a reference to an early Tudor confession made by a Somerset man who had taken sanctuary in Rye church, see *The Records of Rye Corporation*, ed. R. F. Dell (Lewes, 1962), p. 66.

labourers, William Gogen and Simon Saunder, were indicted of burglary before the J.P.'s at Chichester and the next day they were found guilty and sentenced to death. Exactly a week later Richard Sutton, the sheriff's deputy, escorted them to the gallows on Broyle Heath near Chichester and hanged them. In the process, while jumping from a ladder placed against the gallows, William fell to the ground still half-alive, the weight of his body having broken the rope. Richard promptly rearrested him, but before he could hang him again six Chichester men—Richard Inskipp, a pardoner, Hugh Lasselles, Hugh Lyberd and Humphrey Taylour, clerks, and Humphrey and Benet Holmes, friars—with a physician named John Fesisian of Downley and others assaulted Richard and the bailiffs, serjeants and ministers who were helping him, rescued William from them and took him to Chichester cathedral. What became of him afterwards is not recorded, but of the rescuers Richard Inskipp and Humphrey Holmes were outlawed in the county court held at Lewes on 31 August 1525 and John Fesisian, Hugh Lasselles, Hugh Lyberd and Humphrey Taylour, having surrendered, appeared in King's Bench and went *sine die*.<sup>1</sup>

Because of their great inherent interest, from the human, social, legal and many other points of view, it is regrettable that so few Sussex abjurations survive from the later Middle Ages. Fortunately, however, the period which is amply documented, the reign of Henry VIII, is much more interesting than any other. It was the time during which the law relating to sanctuary and abjuration was frequently changed as part of the gradual Tudor campaign against the privileges of the medieval Church and culminated in the virtual abolition of the practice of abjuration. The story embodied in the relevant statutes has been worked out.<sup>2</sup> These Sussex cases show how the changes were applied.

First, however, there are certain aspects common to all eleven cases which call for comment. One is that the ten men and one woman concerned confessed to having committed ten homicides, one assault and five burglaries or thefts. By contrast, in the Middle Ages many more abjurors confessed to burglary or theft than to homicide. The comparison is interesting, but too much significance should not be read into it, eleven being a very small sample. Another point of contrast between these Tudor abjurations and the medieval ones is that only six of the eleven abjurors confessed to having committed felonies in or near the place where they took sanctuary; these were all committed shortly before, and undoubtedly they took sanctuary in order to avoid arrest. The other five confessed to felonies committed in Essex a fortnight before taking sanctuary

<sup>1</sup> King's Bench Ancient Indictments (K.B. 9) 486, mm. 9, 10; King's Bench Controlment Roll (K.B. 29) 153, m. 18d.

<sup>2</sup> By I. D. Thornley, 'The Destruction of Sanctuary' in *Tudor Studies presented . . . to Pollard*, ed. R. W. Seton-Watson (1924), pp. 198-207.

(No. 1 below), in Cumberland, Rutland and Norfolk some two years before (Nos. 5, 7, 8) and at Berwick upon Tweed eleven years earlier (No. 2). With the possible exception of the first, these five men must have had some other reason for seeking sanctuary than the felonies to which they confessed. Some of them may have committed another more recent and more local offence, although it is strange that they did not mention it as they had nothing to lose by doing so. Only six of the abjurors were natives of Sussex. Two were Londoners (Nos. 6, 7), one from Essex (No. 1), one from Kent (No. 2) and one from Bristol (No. 10); but only three of these five confessed to distant offences alone, although the other two (Nos. 6, 10) had committed felonies in Kent and Norfolk before committing others in Sussex for which they took sanctuary. The other two distant felonies, in Cumberland and Norfolk, were committed by Sussex men.

In other respects our Tudor abjurations are more like the medieval ones. They present the typical Sussex feature of only a very short delay between the taking of sanctuary and abjuration. Philip Cooper, a county coroner, did not record the date of taking sanctuary in the four cases at which he officiated (Nos. 3, 7, 9, 10), but, from the dates of the felonies confessed to, it could not have been more than eight, eighteen and nine days respectively before the abjuration in three of them. He was one of the two contemporary county coroners and his district was large enough to explain a delay of a few days in arriving at the church. Elsewhere, the Chichester and Battle coroners had no travelling problem and the coroner of Hastings rape a smaller one, and the time lapsing between taking sanctuary and abjuration in their areas was normally only two or three days. The longest gap was of eight days (No. 4) in Chichester, but the felon may have confessed before the coroners some days earlier. One abjuration in Hastings rape (No. 5) occurred on the day sanctuary was sought. Whether the fact that none of the abjurors exercised their right of remaining in sanctuary for forty days before abjuring means that Sussex churches at this time were so well guarded that escape was unlikely or that the coroners discouraged delays, it is impossible to say. It is not stated in the records exactly who was responsible for the guard duty and for its organisation.

In only three cases are we told exactly where within the sanctuary the ceremony of abjuration occurred: once it was in the church itself (No. 11) and twice at the gate—of Chichester cathedral and Ninfield church (Nos. 6, 8). A group of local men was always required to attend the ceremony and in Sussex in the later Middle Ages it seems to have consisted of twelve freemen of the hundred, including the constables. This probably continued to be the practice under the Tudors, but only two of our records give any direct information. In the one Battle case (No. 2) it is stated that four named men and

others were present, while the record of the final Chichester abjuration (No. 11) has a space for the insertion of witnesses' names and it was assumed that the first would be a constable. Unfortunately this document, which was compiled in piecemeal fashion, was left uncompleted. In those cases in which the coroner committed the abjurator to a tithingman and his tithing or to the constable of the hundred, as discussed below, these must also have witnessed the abjuration. There is no evidence that these or other groups ever confirmed the confessions, as sometimes happened in the Middle Ages, but they probably continued to be asked the value of the abjurors' lands and goods. Our eleven abjurors, probably because so many were from other parts of the country, had even less property than their medieval counterparts; none is said to have had any lands or goods, although only two (Nos. 7, 9) are specifically said to have had none.

It is now possible to turn to the changes introduced in the reign of Henry VIII. The courts then maintained that a homicide who took sanctuary before his victim had died could be removed from sanctuary before the death with impunity, since he had not committed a felony until death had occurred.<sup>1</sup> One of our abjurors (No. 4) might have been removed from sanctuary under this ruling, but was not.

The first statute to change the law relating to abjurations was promulgated in 1529 (21 Henry VIII, c.2). It introduced two innovations. One empowered coroners to appoint a day and time for abjurations, felons refusing to depart at that time losing the benefit of sanctuary and being removed to prison to be dealt with for their offences. This could be interpreted as allowing coroners to forbid abjurors to spend the customary forty days in sanctuary. Certainly, as already noted, Sussex abjurors spent comparatively little time in sanctuary, but so they did before 1529 and there is no evidence that they were later forced to leave sanctuary before they were ready.

The second innovation of 1529 was that immediately after his confession every abjurator was 'to be marked with an hote yron upon the brawne of the thombe of the right hande with the Signe of an A. to the entent he may the better be knowen amonge the Kynges Subjectes that he was abjured.' Previously abjurors had seldom reached their ports not only because they were usually unescorted but also because their appearance was unremarkable. No mention is made of the dress of our eleven abjurors, but the later medieval practice was almost certainly continued: they were allowed their ordinary clothes, provided that they were bare-headed and bare-foot. Before this statute the other medieval practice of giving the abjurator a cross as a sign of the Church's protection was invariably

<sup>1</sup> *Tudor Studies*, p. 198.

maintained, it being placed in his right hand by the coroner (Nos. 1-5); but this was easily disposable. Hence the branding of the right hand, to make it more dangerous for abjurors to escape and remain at large in the country. All the subsequent Sussex cases record that the abjurors were branded as required. The first of these (No. 6), a Chichester case of 1530, mentions both the branding and the delivery of the cross, but, with the exception of the other Chichester case (No. 11), no mention is afterwards made of the cross. It would seem that most Sussex coroners regarded the branding as a substitute for it, although its purpose was quite different.

A much more drastic change came in 1531 (by 22 Henry VIII, c.14). This was nothing less than the abolition of abjuration of the realm and the substitution for it of abjuration to one of the newly appointed sanctuaries within England. The abjurer was to be directed to the sanctuary of his own choice by the coroner and escorted there by constables and other officers. He still had to be branded with the letter A and had to swear to remain in his chosen sanctuary for the rest of his life, death being the penalty for being found at large outside it without the king's special pardon and licence, as it had previously been for an abjurer found within the realm.

Our eleven abjurations fall naturally into two categories—those made before and those made after the passing of this Act. The first six are abjurations of the realm, like all medieval abjurations. But whereas in the Middle Ages, in Sussex and elsewhere, some abjurors chose their ports for leaving the country while others had theirs assigned to them by the coroner, none of these Tudor abjurors was said to have been given a choice. Rye was assigned to three, Portsmouth to two and Hastings to one. Portsmouth was assigned to Chichester abjurors, Rye and Hastings mainly to those from the extreme east of the county. The Sussex coroners thus continued their medieval practice of naming only nearby ports, in contrast to the practice in most other counties, but Rye had displaced Winchelsea in popularity since medieval times. The oath of abjuration before 1531 was exactly the same as in the Middle Ages and our six records emphasise that the abjurors were never to return to the kingdom 'without the king's special licence and forgiveness.' The two abjurations (Nos. 1, 5) recorded by Nicholas Tufton, coroner of Hastings rape, use instead the phrase 'without the special licence and forgiveness of the *present* king,' a limitation for which there is no trustworthy legal support.<sup>1</sup>

The five abjurations made after the 1531 statute are markedly different. The abjurors were all allowed to choose the sanctuary in which to spend the rest of their lives and all chose Beaulieu abbey in

<sup>1</sup> *The Medieval Coroner*, p. 45.

Hampshire, but their choice may not have been very free. Whereas most felons would have known the names of several ports, the new sanctuaries were not only few in number but also very recently established. Beaulieu was the nearest to Sussex, but the coroner may often have had to tell the abjurors of this. There is some uncertainty in our records as to the new form of the oath, but by this date Tufton's saving clause (No. 8) was no different from the rest.

In the matter of escorting abjurors to their destinations the statute of 1531 seems to have made obligatory what was already being done in some cases. In the Middle Ages the Sussex abjurors, like those from most other counties, were not escorted to their ports and it is therefore unlikely that many ever reached them. In 1527, however, Philip Cooper committed an abjurer to the tithingman and tithing of Poling with instructions that they were to lead him 'from town to town by the right road towards the port,' which was Hastings (No. 3). No other Sussex coroner is known to have taken such a precaution until required to do so by the 1531 statute. Thereafter in only one case (No. 8) is this not said to have been done and that was in the year 1531. It may be significant, however, that three of the other abjurations (Nos. 7, 9, 10) were received by Philip Cooper, a coroner who was already converted. He committed each abjurer to one of the constables of the hundred to lead him to Beaulieu. What was probably intended in these cases was what was ordered in the final Chichester case (No. 11), when the abjurer was committed to the constable of the parish 'to lead him from constable to constable to the sanctuary without injury or danger to his life.' Escape *en route* was in these circumstances much less possible than in the Middle Ages and it may be significant that none of the five escorted abjurors was later found at large in the country, although one of them (No. 11) was subsequently arrested and then given a charter of pardon because the homicide to which he had confessed as to a felony was found to have been committed in self-defence. By contrast, of the other six, one (No. 6) was later found and hanged and another (No. 4) was later outlawed.

The last known Sussex abjuration was made in 1533. In 1538, during the dissolution of the monasteries, Beaulieu abbey was surrendered to the Crown and its sanctuary rights virtually came to an end. There were then 32 sanctuary men there. The debtors were allowed to remain there for life and one homicide obtained a pardon.<sup>1</sup> None of the Sussex abjurors is known to have been there at that time. Some or all may never have arrived or been admitted; the rest may well have escaped or died before 1538.

It is understandable that in these ever-changing conditions sanctuary seeking and abjuration should have died out, especially after 1540, in which year a statute (32 Henry VIII, c.12) abolished all

<sup>1</sup> Victoria County History, Hampshire, ii, 58-59, 145.

sanctuaries except churches, chapels and churchyards, setting up eight 'places of privilege' instead. Men could still abjure from churches, chapels and churchyards to these 'places of privilege,' but not for wilful murder, rape, burglary, robbery, arson, or for aiding and abetting such felonies; and no 'place' was to hold more than twenty abjurors at the time. Westminster was the nearest to Sussex, but is not known to have been used by Sussex men. In 1547 Protector Somerset restored the privilege of sanctuary to all felons as at Henry VIII's accession except for wilful murder and aggravated theft (1 Edward VI, c.12, para.9), but this statute did not mention abjuration. After one ambiguous Act (1 James I, c.25, para. 7), the privilege of sanctuary was finally abolished in 1624 (21 James I, c.28, paras. 6-7).

The following Appendix consists of a translation of the original abjurations, with the omission of much of their repetition and common form and with the dates and place-names given in their modern forms. Vernacular words have been retained and printed in single inverted commas. Anything relevant which occurred after an abjuration is noted beneath it in square brackets. In most cases this is merely the delivery of the record to the gaol delivery justices and then on to King's Bench. Philip Cooper was the only coroner to submit his abjurations in the form of letters to the justices. Of the officiating coroners and the other Sussex coroners of this period I hope to write on another occasion.

#### APPENDIX

1. On 14 Jan. 1515 Richard Screvener late of West Horndon in Essex, 'laborer,' took sanctuary in Salehurst parish church and asked for the coroner of Hastings rape. Thereupon Nicholas Tufton, coroner of George Hastings, knight, lord of Hastings, of his rape of Hastings, went to him and on 16 Jan. Richard voluntarily confessed before him that on 30 Dec. 1514 he, with William Joynkelyn late of Farningham in Kent, 'laborer,' assaulted John a Wode with a staff worth 1*d.* at West Thurrock in Essex, beat, wounded and ill-treated him so that his life was despaired of, and stole a 'blewe' coat worth 5*s.*, a red cap worth 12*d.*, a sword worth 16*d.*, a shield worth 20*d.*, a dagger worth 8*d.*, a shirt worth 12*d.*, and 3*s.* in money belonging to him there; for this felony he sought to abjure the realm and thereupon did so, never to return without the special licence and forgiveness of the present king. The port of Rye was assigned to him for leaving the kingdom and a cross was placed in his right hand according to the law and custom of England.

[Delivered by the coroner to John Butler and John More, gaol delivery justices, at East Grinstead on 17 July and by Simon Fitz in John Butler's name to King's Bench on Wednesday after Michaelmas three weeks.]

*King's Bench Ancient Indictments* 469, m.83.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. mm.80d., 91d.

2. On 29 May 1520 John Malpas late of Tonbridge in Kent, 'laborer,' took sanctuary in the church of Battle abbey within the abbot of Battle's liberty and asked for a coroner. Thereupon Edward Field, coroner within the liberty, went to him and on 1 June John voluntarily confessed before him that on 20 Sept. 1509 he and three other men slew a man whom they did not know with swords and bills at Berwick upon Tweed; for this murder he sought to abjure the realm and thereupon did so, never to return without the king's special licence and forgiveness. The port of Rye was assigned to him for leaving the kingdom and a cross was placed in his right hand. John Wylegose, John Adams, John Kyngeswell, John Berde and others were present at the abjuration.

[Delivered by the coroner (called *one* of the coroners of the liberty) to John Fyneux and John More, knights, justices in Sussex, and by John More to King's Bench on Monday after Michaelmas three weeks.]

*King's Bench Ancient Indictments* 482, m.105.<sup>1</sup>

3. Letter of 5 Jan. 1527 from Philip Cooper, county coroner, to the king's justices. On 5 Jan. Thomas Wulvyn the younger, late of Ferring, 'laborer,' who was in sanctuary in the chapel of St. John the Baptist at Poling, confessed before the coroner that he was a felon and thief in that on 28 Dec. 1526 he assaulted Thomas Grenehill at Ferring, striking him on the head with a staff so that he immediately died; for this and many other offences he sought to abjure the realm and to be assigned a port. The coroner granted this request, received his oath according to the law of England, assigned him the port of Hastings for his voyage, gave him a cross in his right hand and committed him to the tithingman and tithing of Poling to lead him from town to town by the right road towards the port.

[Delivered to King's Bench by John More, knight, gaol delivery justice, on Wednesday, Michaelmas three weeks.]

*King's Bench Ancient Indictments* 504, m.108.<sup>2</sup>

4. On 28 March 1527 Thomas Goffe late of Chichester, 'capper,' fled to the church of the Friars Preacher in Chichester for sanctuary and asked for a coroner to record what he wished to confess. Thereupon William Royse and John Cressewellor the younger, Chichester city coroners, went to him and of his own free will Thomas confessed that he was a felon and murderer in that between 8 and 9 p.m. on that day he assaulted Richard Barbor at Chichester with a knife worth 1*d.* which he held in his right hand, striking him on the left side of his stomach and giving him a wound of which he died within two days. For this reason he took sanctuary and on 5 April

<sup>1</sup> Cf. m.111*d.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. m.125*d.*



abjured the realm before the said coroners, never to return without the king's licence and special forgiveness. The port of Portsmouth was assigned to him for leaving the kingdom and a cross was put in his right hand according to the law and custom of England.

(Delivered to King's Bench with No. 3. On 30 March the same two coroners held an inquest on the body of Richard Barbor of Chichester, 'capper,' when it was found that he was assaulted as above by Thomas, who had come to his house in the parish of the Subdeanery, and died about 9 a.m. on 30 March. Thomas was ultimately outlawed on a writ of exigent in the county court held at Chichester on 17 Dec. 1528.]

*King's Bench Ancient Indictments* 504, m.110.<sup>1</sup>

5. On 9 Aug. 1529 Thomas Bauxere late of Robertsbridge, 'laborer,' took sanctuary in the church of the abbey of St. Mary at Robertsbridge within the liberty of Thomas earl of Wiltshire and Ormond of his rape of Hastings and asked for a coroner. Thereupon Nicholas Tufton, coroner within the liberty, went to him and on 9 Aug. Thomas voluntarily confessed before him that on 10 Oct. 1527 he assaulted Richard Bauxere at Greystead in Northumberland (*Craysted in Cumberland*), striking him on the head with a sword worth 20*d.* which he held in both hands and giving him a wound of which he immediately died; for this reason he sought to abjure the realm and thereupon did so, never to return without the special licence and forgiveness of the present king. The port of Rye was assigned to him for leaving the kingdom and a cross was put in his right hand according to the law and custom of England.

[Delivered by the coroner to John More, knight, and Thomas Inglefeld, Lewes gaol delivery justices, at Horsham on 21 July 1530 and in their name by Richard Lyndesell, clerk of assize in Sussex, to King's Bench on Monday after the morrow of All Souls.]

*King's Bench Ancient Indictments* 514, m.79.<sup>2</sup>

6. On 16 May 1530 Henry Danby late of London, 'baker,' took sanctuary in Chichester cathedral and asked for a coroner before whom he wished to confess. Thereupon William Roysse and John Cresseweller, Chichester city coroners, went to him on 18 May and of his own free will he confessed before them that he was a felon and murderer in that on 24 Aug. 1529 he assaulted a Friar Minor whom he did not know at Gadshill in the parish of Higham in Kent with a staff worth 2*d.* which he held in both hands, striking him on the left side of his head and giving him a wound to the brain of which he immediately died; also on 15 May 1530 he broke William Jupe's house and close near Horsham and broke and entered the house and close of John Colyn of Washington, stealing 'coottes,' 'dublettes,'

<sup>1</sup> Cf. m. 109; K.B. 29/159, m.19.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. m.83d.

'gerkyns,' 'kerchers,' 'gyrdelles,' 'taches' (*sc.* buckles or straps), 'nysetes' (*sc.* nycettes, neck-cloths), 'aprun' and other things worth 40s. For these reasons he sought to abjure the realm and thereupon did so before the coroners at the cathedral gate, never to return without the king's licence and special pardon. In witness of this abjuration Henry was marked with the letter A on the inside of his right hand under the thumb according to the statute enacted in the parliament held at Westminster in the year 21 Henry VIII. The port of Portsmouth in Hampshire was assigned to him for leaving the kingdom and a cross was put in his right hand by the coroners according to the law and custom of England.

[Delivered to King's Bench by John Creseweller on Saturday after the Quindene of Easter 1532. Henry was later arrested and hanged in Michaelmas term 1532.]

*King's Bench Ancient Indictments* 519, m.147.<sup>1</sup>

7. Letter of 14 Nov. 1531 from Philip Cooper, county coroner, to the Lewes castle gaol delivery justices. John Flexston late of the parish of St. Margaret the Virgin in 'le Oldbayly' outside Ludgate in the city of London *alias* John Flexston late of London, 'taylour,' who was in sanctuary in the parish church of St. Nicholas in Itchingfield, confessed before the coroner on 14 Nov. that he was a felon and thief in that about 11 p.m. on 14 Feb. 1530 he, together with Thomas Fowle late of . . . <sup>2</sup> in Kent, 'servyngman,' and Randal Platte late of Greenwich in Kent, 'barbour,' broke and entered William Wylkynson's close and dwelling-house at Burley in Rutland and assaulted John Digge late of Burley, 'laborer,' so beating and wounding him that he died at Burley within six days; also on the same day and in the same company he stole £32 in money belonging to William Wylkynson which they found in a chest in his chamber in the house. John refused to come before the justices for these felonies but asked to be abjured by the coroner from all the liberties of the realm and for the sanctuary of Beaulieu in Hampshire to be assigned to him by his own choice according to the recent statute. On John's taking the oath according to the statute and when he had been marked with the letter A on his right hand, the coroner committed him to Richard Hill, one of the constables of Singlecross (*Shyngil-crosse*) hundred,<sup>3</sup> to lead him to the sanctuary where he was to stay according to the statute. John had no goods or chattels.

[Delivered by the coroner to Thomas Inglefeld, knight, and Christopher Hales, attorney-general, Lewes gaol delivery justices, at Horsham on 17 July 1532 and by [Richard]<sup>4</sup> Lyncell, clerk of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. K.B. 29/165, m.1.

<sup>2</sup> A space is left unfilled here.

<sup>3</sup> According to *The Place-Names of Sussex* (E.P.N.S. vi, 221) this hundred was first mentioned in 1650.

<sup>4</sup> A space is left unfilled for the Christian name.

assize, in their name to King's Bench on Tuesday after Michaelmas three weeks.]

*King's Bench Ancient Indictments* 521, m.84.<sup>1</sup>

8. On 30 Nov. 1531 John Sawyer of Playden, 'carpenter,' took sanctuary in Ninfield parish church and asked for the coroner within Hastings rape. Thereupon on 1 Dec. Nicholas Tufton, coroner within the said liberty, went to him and John in the legally appointed form voluntarily confessed before him that he was a felon and that on 30 May 1529 he assaulted Thomas Boode at East Dereham in Norfolk with a dagger worth 2*d.* which he held in his right hand, striking him on his right arm and giving him a wound of which he died within two days; for this he sought to abjure the realm and thereupon did so at the gate of the church, never to return without the king's licence and special pardon. In witness of this abjuration he was marked with the letter A on the inside of his right hand under the thumb according to the statute enacted in the parliament held at Westminster in the year 21 Henry VIII. He chose the sanctuary at Beaulieu monastery in Hampshire, which was assigned to him by the coroner, to stay there for life according to the statute.

[Delivered by the coroner to Horsham and then to King's Bench with No. 7.]

*King's Bench Ancient Indictments* 521, m.83.

9. Letter of 18 May 1532 from Philip Cooper, county coroner, to the Lewes castle gaol delivery justices. Clemence Smyth late of Broadwater, 'spynster,' who was in sanctuary in the church of the Assumption of St. Mary in Broadwater, confessed before the coroner on 18 May that she was a thief and felon in that about noon on 30 April she killed her baby girl, a child which had no father, in a remote (*secreto*) place called 'Calowsgarden' in Broadwater by crushing its body under her feet. She refused to come before the justices for this murder, but sought to abjure all the liberties of the realm and to be assigned by her own choice the sanctuary of Beaulieu in Hampshire according to the recent statute. On her taking the oath according to the statute and being marked on her right hand with the letter A, the coroner committed her to the constable of Brightford (*Byrtford*) hundred to lead her to the sanctuary where she was to stay according to the statute. She had no goods or chattels.<sup>2</sup>

[Delivered by the coroner to Horsham and then to King's Bench with No. 7.]

*King's Bench Ancient Indictments* 521, m.82.

10. Letter of 12 Aug. 1532 from the same coroner to the same justices. On 12 Aug. William More late of Bristol, 'maryner,'

<sup>1</sup> Cf. m.90d.

<sup>2</sup> The last sentence was added after the attestation.

who was in sanctuary in the church of the Nativity of St. Mary at Lancing, confessed before the coroner that he was a felon and thief in that on 18 July he assaulted an unknown man at Great Yarmouth in Norfolk with a 'botehoke,' striking him on the top of his head and giving him a wound of which he immediately died; also on 3 Aug. he broke and entered the close and house of Simon Combes at Lancing and stole a 'violet' coat worth 6s. 8d. and a knife called 'an hanger' worth 8d. belonging to Simon. William refused to come before the justices for these felonies and asked the coroner to be abjured from the realm and all its liberties and to be assigned by his own choice the sanctuary of Beaulieu in Hampshire according to the recent statute. On William's taking the oath and being marked on his right hand with the letter A, the coroner committed him to Walter Barbour, one of the constables of Brightford (*Birtford*) hundred, to lead him to the sanctuary where he was to stay according to the statute.

[Delivered by the coroner to Thomas Inglefeld, knight, and Christopher Hales, attorney-general, Lewes gaol delivery justices, at Horsham on 16 July 1533 and in their name by Richard Lyndesell, clerk of assize, to King's Bench on Monday, the Quindene of Michaelmas.]

*King's Bench Ancient Indictments* 525, m.146.<sup>1</sup>

11. On 7 Sept. 1533 Edward Holand late of Chichester, 'taylor,' took sanctuary in the church of the Friars Preacher in Chichester and asked for a coroner because he wished to confess. Thereupon on 10 Sept. William Royse and John Creseweller, Chichester city coroners, went to him and he voluntarily confessed before them that he was a felon and murderer in that before midnight on 5 Sept. he assaulted William Skyenner in South Street, Chichester, with a large stone which he held in his right hand, striking him on the top of his head and giving him a wound to the brain of which he died within two days. Because of this Edward took sanctuary and on 10 Sept. sought to abjure all his liberties, possessions and free habitations within the realm. He voluntarily chose to go to the sanctuary of Beaulieu (*Bewdeley*),<sup>2</sup> there to stay and never to leave it without the king's licence and pardon according to the recent statute. Thereupon Edward voluntarily abjured in the church. He was marked on his right hand with the letter A according to the statute and committed to the constable of the said (*sic*) parish to lead him from constable to constable to the sanctuary without injury or danger to his life, and a wooden cross was put in his right hand according to the law and custom of England. Witness..... constable.....<sup>3</sup>

[Delivered by the coroners to William Shelley, knight, and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. mm.147d., 155d.

<sup>2</sup> *Bewdeley* is inserted in a space left blank.

<sup>3</sup> These are two of several gaps left unfilled towards the end of the membrane.

Christopher Hales, attorney-general, Lewes gaol delivery justices, at Horsham on 3 Aug. 1534 and by Richard Lyndesey in their name to King's Bench on Thursday after Michaelmas three weeks. On 10 Sept. 1533 Richard Awdeby, one of the coroners of the liberty of Robert bishop of Chichester, William the dean and the cathedral chapter, held an inquest at 'le Canon Gate' in Chichester on the body of William Skynner *alias* Hobbys, late the servant of the said bishop and keeper of his palace at Chichester. It was found that on 7 Sept. William had been drinking and making trouble with Edward and others in a Chichester inn called 'le White Horse.' About 1 a.m. Edward left the inn and went to the city square. William followed him, drew his sword and tried to kill him. Edward fled until cornered and then in legitimate self-defence crushed William's head with 'a flynt stone' on the king's highway in the upper ward of 'le Southestrate.' Edward immediately fled to the said church. William died of his wound in the palace of Chichester about 7 a.m. on 10 Sept. The jurors knew nothing of Edward's goods or lands. This inquest was delivered to King's Bench on Wednesday after Midsummer 1534 by John Pace in the coroner's name on a writ dated 12 May 1534. Edward was arrested and then received a charter of pardon.]

*King's Bench Ancient Indictments* 529, m.117.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. K.B. 9/528, mm.58-59; K.B. 29/167, m.14.