

# LENTON PRIORY AFTER THE DISSOLUTION: ITS BUILDINGS AND FAIR GROUNDS

by

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Lenton Priory was founded in about 1106 or 1107 as a house of the Cluniac order, and remained under the jurisdiction of the parent house at Cluny, Burgundy, until 1393. It was richly endowed by William Peverel with his whole manor of Lenton except for four mills, together with all his lands in *Keighton*, Morton and Radford, and many other townships and manors. Many of William Peverel's homagers or feodaries bestowed further property on the Priory, which became one of the wealthiest of the Cluniac houses. Its net annual income of £320–£350, over half derived from 'spiritualities', was of the same order as that of Much Wenlock and Castle Acre, though much lower than that of Lewes, the first priory of the order in England (1077). The Cluniac order was noted for the size and magnificence of its churches, and the well established plan of the great church of Lenton Priory shows that this was larger than Southwell Minster. The examples of Lewes and Much Wenlock show that the conventual buildings of Cluniac houses were planned on a comparably ambitious scale, and although nothing now remains of those at Lenton the scale of the church suggests that this priory was no exception.

## PREVIOUS THEORIES

In his *History of the Parish and Priory of Lenton* of 1884, J. T. Godfrey remarked that the documentary history of the buildings of the priory was fragmentary, and he had met with only two contemporary references to the conventual buildings.<sup>1</sup> Later writers about the priory such as Ginever and Green added little, though much evidence with some bearing on the plan and materials of the buildings was amassed through occasional excavation and chance finds.<sup>2</sup> The published accounts of the demolition and decay of the buildings of the priory are almost entirely non-specific, and are based on assumptions derived from accounts of the fate of other religious houses after their suppression. For example, Robert Mellors wrote: 'After the Dissolution no attempt was made to utilize the buildings, which became for generations a fine quarry from which to carry away the rich tracery and every adornment that the wealth, art and piety of over four hundred years could produce. When the work of pillage and destruction began where would it stop?'.<sup>3</sup> Such rhetoric owes little to established fact in the case of Lenton.

According to Godfrey most monasteries were partly if not completely demolished immediately on the Dissolution, in line with general instructions issued by the king's commissioners 'for the destruction of such conventual buildings as could not be converted into farm buildings'. John Freeman wrote to the Lord Privy Seal about the razing of the abbeys in Lincolnshire: 'The King's Commission commandeth me to pull down to the grounde all the walls of the Churches, stepulls, cloysters, fraterys, dorters, chapter howsys with all other howsys, saveyng them that be necessary for a farmer'.<sup>4</sup> This may represent only Freeman's own interpretation of the wishes of the commission since no such order is known to have been issued for any other county. 'Farmer' at this date would have meant 'lessee' rather than 'husbandman', so that the qualification of usefulness for the survival of a building could have been given a wide interpretation, and in practice it appears that the more valuable materials such as lead were removed, and the unwanted remains left to decay or to be casually quarried. Freeman described how, because of the cost of demolition, it was decided in Lincolnshire to take down the bells and lead, pull down roofs and battlements and stairs, and 'lete the wallis stande, and charge som with them as a quarre of ston to make salys of, as they that hath nede will fetch'. Godfrey thought that the populace at large appropriated whatever materials they could lay their hands on, so many grantees placed persons in charge

to sell ready-worked stones to the best advantage, and he presumed that this would be the case at Lenton in view of the scarcity of good building stone in the neighbourhood, and the very scanty remains of the buildings of the priory.

Godfrey admitted that there was no evidence of the demolition of the conventual buildings at Lenton prior to 1551, thirteen years after their desertion by the monks.<sup>5</sup> In that year Sir Richard Sackville wrote to the porter of the king's castle of Nottingham on 11th May directing him to deliver the lead in his custody at Nottingham Castle to William Hever, servant to the Lord High Treasurer (the Earl of Wiltshire), to be removed to London for the king's use, and two days later the Earl of Wiltshire himself and the Earl of Rutland addressed letters to John Pottes, porter of Nottingham Castle to the same effect. Letters of 5th March 1555 and 24th March 1555 questioned the disappearance of some lead that had been delivered to the castle from Lenton Priory, since of 198 fadders (approximately 198 tons) only 160 had been delivered by Pottes to Hever.<sup>6</sup> The buildings of the priory were evidently stripped of this large quantity of lead at some time before early 1555, and apparently they had not been particularly vulnerable to theft during the preceding decade. Nevertheless it will be suggested below that part of the cloister complex of Lenton Priory had been destroyed before 1550, and probably very soon after the Dissolution.

Ruthless destruction of monasteries by her father's orders or by those of his officials after the Dissolution, and probably a renewal of demolition in the 1550s, led to a proclamation by Queen Elizabeth in 1560 forbidding any further instances of 'churches and places spoiled, broken and ruined, to the offence of all noble and gentle hearts': but especially in respect of churches this intervention came much too late to save many fine examples of medieval art and architecture. In a recent address Dr. H. M. Colvin described what happened as 'a ruthless, cynical and barbarous operation of destroying a whole category of cultural expression—the greatest act of vandalism in English history'. But at Lenton, although the church was badly damaged and partly demolished 'some considerable portion of the conventual buildings' were still in existence when the Assizes were held there in 1573—and on several other occasions in Elizabeth's reign—possibly on account of gaol fever or some other disease in Nottingham together with the continued availability of suitably large rooms in former priory buildings, though not elsewhere in the village.<sup>7</sup> The baptism of Thomas, the son of one Andrew Bradford on 26th November 1601 was recorded in the parish register of Lenton with the note that 'Th/om/as natus erat in monasterio, in domo Th/om/as Birche'.<sup>8</sup> This has been cited as proof that some conventual buildings still survived in 1601, though such a ceremony would be more likely to have been held in a rebuilt chapel of the Hospital of St. Anthony within the priory site. This church was probably in use by 1552, the date of a certificate of church goods belonging to the parish, and the year of the first record of churchwardens. By 1677 Thoroton could describe 'only one square steeple left of the monastery which not long since fell down, and the stones of it were employed to make a causey through the town'.<sup>9</sup> Yet the priory gatehouse—the outer gatehouse on the evidence of a description of about 1554 to be examined below—was still in use over a century later, and survived into the 19th century. The overseers' accounts for 1791 included a payment of 6s. 9d. to a glazier for 'repairing windows at the abbey gatehouse', and the Peverel Court was held in the room over the archway for a short time after the removal of the court to Lenton towards the end of the 18th century.<sup>10</sup>

As evidence of the use of the priory buildings as a stone quarry Ginever recorded that in Lenton there was 'a tradition that Wollaton Hall was partly built of remains from Lenton Priory in 1580'. The Hall was faced with stone from Ancaster, which is not known to have been present in the priory buildings for which the local Magnesian Limestone (Bulwell stone), Millstone Grit and other rocks from the Carboniferous and Triassic series were used. A search of the Wollaton Hall building accounts of the 1580s has yielded no evidence of the use of any materials from the priory site although stone was obtained from quarries other than those of Ancaster, presumably for filling and interior walls.<sup>11</sup> After the completion of

Wollaton Hall in 1588 however there are many records : for example on 8th May 1591 Sir Francis Willoughby paid 'to Richard Gamble and his fellow for gettunge 60 ell of stonne at Lenton Abbie, at 3d. the ell, xv s.'. According to Ginever stone in a wall near Wollaton Park lake was identified in the 1920s as having come from the priory, and this would not be surprising, since there is evidence that Sir Francis Willoughby was the tenant of the site and demesne of the priory in the early 1590s, and perhaps from 1588 until his death in 1596. Although the reversion of the lease of the site and demesne of the former priory was granted to John Harrington, a courtier of the queen, in 1563, he did not take possession until at least 24 years later, after the death of Dame Anne Stanhope in 1587.<sup>12</sup> A notebook on Wollaton estate matters in 1589–1595 includes entries such as: 'Nov. 1st Mr. Harrington, 1591 550'; 'November 1st to Mr. Harrington 550 etc.'; and 'Michaelmas: to Mr. Harrington £550. Quere if this may be continued'.<sup>13</sup> These jottings suggest that Sir Francis Willoughby may have rented the former priory lands, though such a large sum would probably include arrears or additional property. As occupier of the priory site Sir Francis might be expected to utilize for estate purposes quantities of ready worked stone, as might his successor at Wollaton, Sir Percival Willoughby who leased the priory lands from Sir Michael Hicks, Harrington's successor as owner, from 1608 to 1639.

#### A RENTAL OF c.1554

These scattered references and presumptions are brought sharply into context by a description of the buildings and site of the former Lenton Priory in about 1554, some 16 years after the Dissolution, which is to be found in a document among the Public Record Office Rental and Surveys.<sup>14</sup> The relevant part of the manuscript is transcribed as Appendix 1, and presents a fairly detailed description of the condition of various buildings on the site and in the precinct of the priory. The document (which will be called here a rental after the title on the cover of the manuscript) is undated. Although the cover sheet is marked 'Eliz. ?' several facts help to establish the date as several years before Elizabeth's accession. The owner of the property was Dame Anne Stanhope of Shelford: at least she was the presumed holder of the Crown lease, since it appears that she refused or was unable to produce for inspection the Letters Patent that should have validated her claim. Her husband, Sir Michael Stanhope, was granted a 41-year lease of the site of the priory and the major part of its demesne on 3rd February 1539.<sup>15</sup> At the same time he was granted the office of bailiff of the manors and lands in Lenton, Radford and Nottingham town that had belonged to the priory. Sir Michael was imprisoned for political intrigue in 1549, and was executed at Tower Hill in 1552, upon which his 41-year lease would have been forfeit like his lease of a lesser part of the priory demesne granted to him in 1540.<sup>16</sup> However, in 1542 the main Crown lease of the priory site and demesne had been converted from one of 41 years to Sir Michael to one of 'life in survivorship' to Sir Michael and Lady Anne, and she therefore continued to enjoy the major part of the demesne, including the site and precinct of the priory until her death in 1587/8.<sup>17</sup> One among many sub-leases granted by her was that of 1573 for the mill and mansion house (discussed further below) 'joining upon the late monastery of Lenton', with the Kiln House Yard, Little Pond Yard etc., 'situated within the precinct aforesaid'.<sup>18</sup> The rental of about 1554 records that Anne Stanhope's lease was for three lives, but this information was added after the original writing of the document, with neither date nor grantor given, and the grant of the reversion to John Harrington proves that the entry was incorrect.

The minor demesne lease is more significant in respect of the date of the rental of about 1554. It is surprising to find that Anne Stanhope was granted a lease of this property for life almost immediately after her husband's execution in 1552. This was conveyed to Alexander Wright by Anne Stanhope's indenture of 2nd March 1553;<sup>19</sup> and it appears that Wright surrendered Anne Stanhope's lease to the Exchequer and was himself granted a 21-year lease from Michaelmas 1555.<sup>20</sup> The rental records the grant of this property to Alexander Wright

by Letters Patent of 1553–4—one of only two leases mentioned as late as that date. It is concluded that the date of the rental was probably 1554 or early 1555, and it is therefore described here as *c.*1554. This would be in agreement with the evidence of the letters mentioned earlier relating to the removal of lead from the priory buildings taken together with the description of the condition of the surviving buildings, with their lead still in place, to be found in the rental.

In summary the schedule set out in Appendix 1 gives details of the condition of the priory's conventual buildings, excluding the great church which is mentioned only as a source of freestone, other buildings within the site or court of the priory, further buildings in the precincts of the priory but across the river Leen in the area called the Abbey Closes on Richard Smythe's map of 1632,<sup>21</sup> and a distant house called Aspley Hall. After a general paragraph the conventual buildings are described in five paragraphs, and close reading suggests that three distinct buildings are in question and that the first three items formed the east range of the cloister. They include 'the mansion', containing two large parlours on the ground floor (as parlours invariably were) and two chambers (first floor rooms) above them, then two chambers, one above the other, and two further chambers adjoining them, with two fair parlours beneath them. The group ends with 'houses of office', the usual term at this time for the reredorter or *necessarium*, built over a running stream, in this case the river Leen. This arrangement closely resembles the plan of Thetford Priory, another Cluniac house, where the east range of the cloister beyond the chapter house included an inner parlour and a warming house, both heated, and ended in a reredorter. The second building, a 'fair great lodging' of brick and timber, must have been the prior's lodging, possibly built by the same prior who built the brick tower at Aspley. The third building was another 'lodging', adjoining, with a hall open to the roof and eight chambers. All the buildings were more or less 'decayed'.

Other buildings within the site of the priory were as follows:

1. The inner gatehouse, with three rooms above, was also decayed.
2. The outer gatehouse, with a hall above and an inner room 'where the courts are held'. This is known to have been situated near the junction of Abbey Street and Wilford Road (Gregory Street).
3. The fair booths, which according to other records were 'next to the Anthony house', the hospital whose chapel dedicated to St. Anthony was extended to become the parish church.<sup>22</sup>

On the north-east bank of the river Leen, near to the conventual buildings and the church, but across Abbey Street, was the prior's mill, attached to which was a mill-house, a large barn and a kiln, all tiled and in a reasonably good state of repair. West of the Leen was the 'dayhouse' (that is, the dairy house) with a room of three bays over it and a tiled stable alongside. Three further buildings standing in an acre of ground are also thought to have been west of the Leen—a great barn of nine bays of building, a large dovecote, and a tithe barn of seven bays which was let with the tithes.

#### PROBLEMS IN LOCATING THE BUILDINGS

It is possible to suggest functions for the buildings described in the rental by analogy with other Cluniac houses, but such speculation is hazardous in the case of Lenton for several reasons. First, it is probable that these buildings are the survivors of a larger number that existed at the Dissolution. Fyfe (1856), Mellors (1912) and others gave long lists of buildings to be expected in a 'model' Cluniac priory, and even if some of the buildings in the rental were multifunctional it must be assumed that others had been totally destroyed. Godfrey, however, gave details of Cluniac monasteries which varied considerably from those of other writers, and bore no relation to the conditions at Lenton.<sup>23</sup> Lenton Priory was relatively wealthy, did not decline substantially in the numbers of its members, and would be expected

to have a full range of amenities. At its foundation it had 25 canons, and in the 16th century there were about 26 members: there were 22 monks and two lay brothers in 1262, 27 plus four lay brothers in 1275; 32 in 1405 and 22 in 1450.<sup>24</sup> Some of its buildings apparently find no mention in the description of c.1554 and it is supposed that they may have been already dismantled, together with the church, which may be implied by the reference in the rental to 'the freestone of the church of the abbey being ratyd and other places of the abbey being also ratyd beinge a great quantytye'.

A second difficulty in identifying the buildings is that apart from the great church no other single building has been located and identified, and no plan of the priory is available. The archaeological evidence in the form of scattered pieces of worked masonry, bones, coins and other artefacts led Lowe to conclude that 'the fragments of masonry which have been exhumed prove that the greater part of them were of early Norman workmanship'.<sup>25</sup> Entries in 13th-century priory accounts refer to building operations on the church and five other buildings—the dormitory (roof in 1229), refectory (roof in 1231), infirmary (repairs in 1239), chapter house (1244) and the prior's chambers.<sup>26</sup> But it is not known which of these buildings, with their roofs of wooden shingles, survived over 300 years later. Lowe suggested that 'the cloisters appear to have been on the north side of the nave'; but since they were now 'almost entirely occupied by the group of cottages which stand between the churchyard and the small village street known as Old Church Lane' they cannot have been commensurate in extent with the size of the priory. 'The Chapter House probably stood at the eastern end of the cloisters adjoining the north transept of the great church'—which seems to imply that cloisters extended westwards from the north transept towards Abbey Street and were not, in fact, confined between the churchyard and Old Church Lane. 'At the opposite end of the cloister evident traces of a large building have been found standing at right angles with the church'. Beyond, in Abbey Street, a profusion of bones, all of sheep and oxen had been turned up, 'leaving but little room to doubt that the building referred to was the refectory, which invariably stood in close contiguity with the monastic kitchen and slaughterhouses'. Other fragments of stonework uncovered 'near here' probably indicated the situation of the *locutorium* or parlour of the monks. 'Between the church and the river Leen stood the Prior's house . . . and the offices, which in a rich monastery like Lenton would be very extensive, were placed at the back towards the curve of the river'. Part of 'the hospital', probably a reference to the chapel of the hospital, had been altered and partly rebuilt to form the parish church.<sup>27</sup>

Fyfe in 1856 rightly described the position of the great church, with its south aisle and transept extending over Priory Street; but apparently influenced by Stretton's guess early in the century, he placed the prior's hall and residence south of the church and the cloister complex to the north of it.<sup>28</sup> His detailed model of the 'regular' Cluniac abbey included its church; its 'great cloister attached to one side of the nave (which at Lenton appears to have been the northern)'; the dormitory over the western side of the cloisters—a long range distinguished by 'dormer' windows, one to each cell; a refectory opposite the church, with cellar beneath; the *locutorium* or parlour of the monks, next to the refectory, with kitchen and office beyond, and buttery and lavatory adjoining; a chapter house always in the centre of the eastern side of the cloister, with library and *scriptorium* above; and the prior's separate accommodation.

Ginever in 1930 reproduced a 'conjectural' plan of the priory buildings 'as approved by the late Rev. M. E. C. Walcott, F.S.A.' which was similar to that proposed by E. A. Beresford and H. M. Leman in 1893.<sup>29</sup> This showed a cloister complex on the south side of the conventual church; but because the remains of the north wall of the church were taken to mark the position of the southern side of the cloister quadrangle, both church and cloister complex were placed much too far north, occupying most of the graveyard. The bases of the pillars of the apsidal end of the church, of which the remains of two survive near the corner of Priory Street and Old Church Street, were then thought to be part of a *calefactorium*,

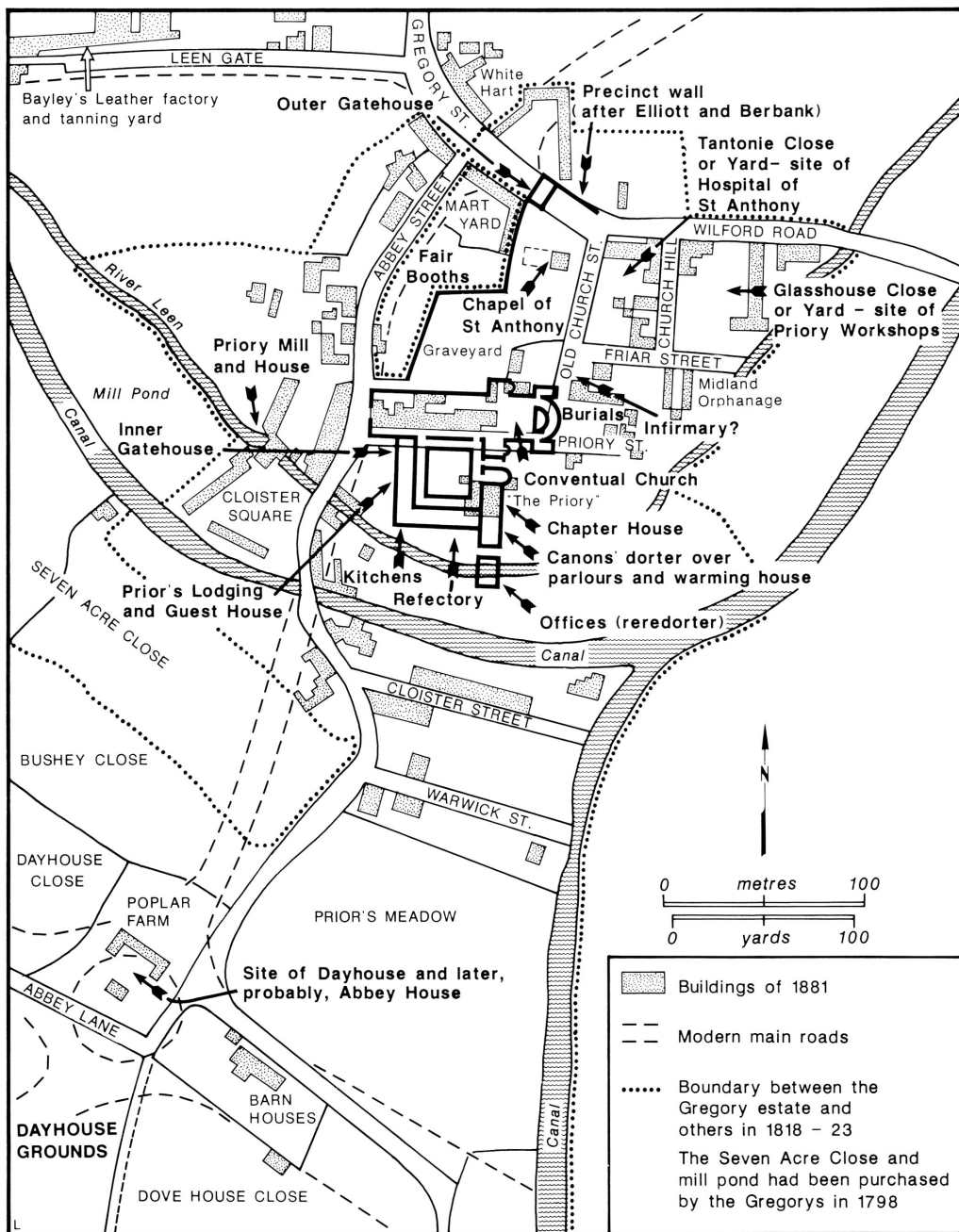


FIGURE 1  
Lenton Priory: conjectural reconstruction of medieval plan

following Godfrey, and thus possibly part of a cloister complex. Since no evidence exists from which the foundations on the site of William Stretton's house called 'The Priory' (built in the early 19th century) could be identified as those of the prior's lodging, Ginever suggested that they might be the remains of a detached building, probably the infirmary.

Green's careful work of 1935–6 could do little more than confirm and extend in some respects the location and form of the conventual church.<sup>30</sup> Stretton's reputed plan of the priory buildings based on his own excavations—if it ever existed—was both unpublished and lost, but his conclusion that the cloister buildings lay south of the church was thought by Green to be correct, though he gave no reasons. It is disappointing to find that Stretton's surviving notebooks do not contain any useful notes on the priory buildings, and none are referred to in Stretton's own index to his notebooks although a 'sketch' of the Priory is mentioned—but in a notebook now missing.<sup>31</sup>

While opinion from the 1890s onwards seems to have returned to Stretton's original view that a cloister complex lay south of the church, doubt may still arise because of the restricted area between the church—the south side of Priory Street—and the river Leen (not to be confused with the canal beyond it into which the river has been diverted). However a small fenced copse shown on large-scale maps on the south bank of the Leen directly south of the house built by Stretton is suggestive of the location of the reedorter with a building spanning the stream. Even though the graveyard north of the church is unlikely to have been occupied by large buildings, there is ample space east and west of the church for the sites of at least some of the conventual buildings which were not part of the cloister complex.

Documentary as distinct from archaeological sources may yield useful information. Among former priory property taken over by Sir Percival Willoughby from Gervase Eyre within his 21-year lease of 1608 was a close or parcel of land called 'Glasshouse Close' or 'Glasshouse Yirde' (Yard) which extended to three or four acres and was worth 20s. a year in rent.<sup>32</sup> An earlier document of the later middle 16th century establishes the location of 'Glasshouse Yard'—bounded eastwards by other closes and the river Leen; northwards by the road (Wilford Road) and Lenton parish land; southwards by 'the site of the late Priory' and by a close called 'Tantonie Close' (*i.e.*, St. Anthony's Close).<sup>33</sup> The Crown lands survey of 1608 gave 'Glasshouse Close' four acres, and showed that it was let as an individual close not attached to a particular holding.<sup>34</sup> 'Tantonie Close', otherwise 'Tantonie House Yard', was bounded eastwards by 'Glasshouse Close' and westwards by 'the foundation of the wall of the cemetery of Lenton'.<sup>35</sup> Together these two 'yards' or closes occupied the area south of Gregory Street between the churchyard and the River Leen as far south as Friar Street, and it is apparent that the site of the priory extended eastwards from the conventual church south of Friar Street, perhaps as far as the River Leen. It is possible that conventual buildings, and perhaps even a minor cloister complex with the infirmary were situated in this area. It is also probable that St. Anthony's Hospital was situated in 'Tantonie Close' or Yard, separated from its chapel, which became the parish church, by Old Church Street. 'Glasshouse Close' is a name that suggests that workshops of the priory were located in this north-east corner of the priory site. Wood's map of the Gregory estate in about 1820 showing the boundary between the land of the Gregory and the former Milward estate in effect marks out the boundary of the fair grounds, and leaves the former priory land west of Abbey Street towards the mill on which buildings could have been situated, in the area where Lowe suggested that the refectory and kitchens might have been located.<sup>36</sup>

The most recent description of the 'claustral buildings' by Elliott and Berbank in 1952, from which the suggested plan of the priory buildings in Figure 1 is taken, is very brief indeed. It contains a suggestion that Stretton built his house on the probable 'site of the dormitory and part of the east alley of the cloister' and that Mr. H. H. Brittle had indicated 'rubble foundations 3 feet wide and about 12 feet long on the west (*sic*) bank of the Leen south of the refectory site'. These last foundations were probably part of the river bank control work using materials from priory buildings as described by Godfrey in 1884.

Even if these suggestions have merit, the lack of any coherent plan of any positively identifiable conventual building other than the great church means that the functions of the buildings described in the rental of *c.* 1554 have to be deduced solely on the evidence of the size and nature of the buildings themselves, and comparison with the established plans of other Cluniac houses of a similar character. In advancing the following hypotheses (Fig. 1) two reasonable assumptions are made: first, that the buildings in the rental are described in clockwise order starting at the eastern end of the church, and second that the eastern range of the cloister at Lenton closely resembled in functions the eastern range at Thetford Priory.<sup>37</sup>

The eastern range at Lenton was constructed of stone and timber, mainly on two storeys, and was about 50 yards long. The reredorter at the southern end provides a reasonably certain fixed reference point. By analogy with Thetford Priory the chapter house was probably near the northern end of the range, where the two 'parlours', each of dimensions 36 feet by 24 feet, would be of adequate size, and where the similarly large chambers above may well have been the canons dorter or dormitory. If there was a library that would also have been in these buildings. The smaller parlours to the south, with further chambers above them, probably included a warming house, since chimneys were described there in the rental. The rooms here were 18 feet square. The suggested chapter house building had seven glazed and two unglazed windows. This range retained its lead-covered roofs, but although the building to the north was in reasonable condition by implication, the remainder of the range was 'decayed'.

The two-storeyed 'fair great lodging' of brick and timber construction—probably the newest of the buildings described—had plastered ceilings and six framed windows. It was almost certainly the Prior's lodging. At Much Wenlock the prior's lodging was a long, timber-framed range outside the cloister to the west, described by Pevsner as one of the finest examples of domestic architecture in England;<sup>38</sup> but at Lenton it probably formed part of a western range of cloister buildings. By *c.* 1554 it had lost its roof, and was suffering damage as a result. The other 'lodging' adjoining, also two-storeyed, and also decaying, was almost certainly the guest house, with its hall and eight chambers, though it is a little surprising to find all the windows unglazed. Earlier 'Lenton Priory possessed in all probability a finer set of guest chambers than any that could be found in the town of Nottingham'.<sup>39</sup> The entertainment of royal guests can be taken to confirm this in respect of the 13th and 14th centuries—for example, Henry II in 1230, Edward I in 1303 and 1304, Edward II in 1307 and 1323 and Edward III in 1336—though these dates were 200 to 300 years earlier than the rental of the mid-16th century, and times may have changed. It is supposed that this guest house formed another part of the western range of the cloister.

Neither the site nor the precise function of the inner gatehouse are known beyond those implied by its name, but it was presumably situated on the boundary between an inner court containing the main conventual buildings, and the outer court to the north which included the fair grounds, the parish graveyard and the hospital of St. Anthony, accessible through the outer gatehouse at the north-western extremity of the site. The most likely location seems to be immediately south of the south-west end of the conventual church, at the northern end of a western range of the cloister, giving access to the cloister and its buildings and the side doors of the church. The church's parochial functions might require the main west door of the church to be outside the inner court.

The hypotheses advanced in identifying the buildings described in the 1554 rental do not take account of the need to identify such buildings as an infirmary, a major item of monastic provision, detached and often built round its own cloister as at Thetford, with its own hall and chapel. No refectory and kitchen, or associated store, or buttery or cellar has been mentioned, and neither has a dormitory other than the rooms in the eastern range which may have been insufficient for the needs of up to 30 monks in addition to *conversi*, *corrodions*, *famuli* or other lay workers. Yet separate buildings called refectory, dormitory and infirmary were mentioned in earlier times, and the same facilities must have existed at the Dissolution;



it is suggested that some of these facilities had not survived to 1554. In particular a southern range of cloister buildings appears to have gone, and the 1554 rental did describe a great quantity of freestone additional to that from the church. Lowe pointed to evidence that the kitchens and refectory were near to Abbey Street, but it is likely that they formed a southern range together with cellar and buttery, their invariable position in priory plans. By 1554 they must have been too severely damaged to merit description as buildings.

The area walled off in the south-east corner of the graveyard was suggested by Lowe to have been part of a cloister, and this area extending over Old Church Street may have been the site of the infirmary, lying immediately south and south-west of the probable site of St. Anthony's hospital, and north of the monks' burial ground. The area must have been excluded from the parish graveyard because it contained priory property, and the situation would not be unsuitable for the infirmary.

Some parts of the priory had been demolished by 1554, but the surviving conventual buildings were in decay through disuse and neglect over some 16 years rather than through vandalism or robbery. The advanced state of demolition of the church had probably been reached under the supervision of Sir Michael Stanhope's agents, and any parochial functions had been assumed by a new parish church of the Holy Trinity, in part an enlargement of the chapel of St. Anthony's hospital. In 1552 a certificate of church goods was signed by the vicar, Robert Gaybone, the churchwardens Avery Walker and John Bowser, and two parishioners, Anthony Weston and John Leicester, who appear in contemporary rentals as substantial husbandmen of Lenton.<sup>40</sup> When this building, 'done in the Tudor style of architecture' was partially demolished in 1843 it was apparent that much of the building material had come from the conventual church. Godfrey wrote in 1884 that 'in taking down part of the walls of the old parish church previous to its restoration . . . it was found that the stones of which the walls had been built were pieces of worked masonry placed with their flat sides out to form the face of the wall, the interior being filled up with mortar and rubble. These stones appear to have formed some part of the interior of the priory church, the chiselling being as clean and sharp as it was on the day when it was done. They are principally of the Perpendicular period, and probably formed part of the stone stalls in the choir or chapter house'.<sup>41</sup>

Although all the priory buildings described in about 1554 seem to have been in various stages of dereliction at least one of them was occupied for rent, for in the rental of the demesne that forms part of the same document as the description of the priory site we find 'Robert Bell, certeyne chambers of the scite sore decayd and an orchard, parcell of the same parcell of my Lady Stannops lease', with a marginal note 'bildinge decayd'.<sup>42</sup> Bell also occupied part of 'Littling Meadow', which lay on the west side of 'Blotoff Dyke' (now followed by the Beeston Canal) south of Dunkirk.

By 1677, according to Thoroton, the conventual buildings had disappeared. The survey of Crown lands in 1608 recorded Gervase Eyre as the occupier of the site of the manor, but this comprised in buildings only a mansion house of three bays with an orchard, backside etc. covering four acres (later called the 'Churchyard Close'), a house of one bay called the 'Brickhouse', and two other dwellings, each of one bay of building, and thus no more than very small cottages.<sup>43</sup> It is thought that the mansion house was one of the buildings described in the 1554 rental, and that the other more modest houses were the remains of once larger buildings. Another document, also dated 1608 and recording the lease of the priory demesne by its new owner Sir Michael Hicks to Sir Percival Willoughby of Wollaton Hall, reveals that the property occupied by Gervase Eyre included a cottage called the 'Brickhouse', another cottage occupied by Widow Smedley, and a third occupied by William Bosworth, and the schedule concluded 'Excepted always unto Sir Michael Hicks one olde house, the tyles and lead whereof is already taken down and disposed of at the will and pleasure of the said Sir Michael Hicks'.<sup>44</sup> By the following year all that was left of this old house was 'Ground where

one decayed tenement lately did stand'.<sup>45</sup> The old house was probably the 'mansion' of the 1554 rental.

The Brickhouse Cottages or Brickhouse and cottages figured in Sir Percival Willoughby's rentals throughout his lease from 1609 to 1630. In 1610 it was 'A tenement or cottage called the Brickhouse', and 'Ye Brickhouse tenement, Widow Smedley's tenement and Bosworth's tenement'. In 1630 no tenants were named for 'The Brickhouse Cottages and gardens', rent £1 16s. 7d'.<sup>46</sup> These cottages may well have survived in some form into the early 19th century. In 1648 the tenants of cottages which were probably the Brickhouse cottages, though not so designated, were Widow Walter, John Dumbleday and Richard France: in 1743 they were William Shelton, Edward Crowcroft and John Alling; and in 1798 they were Mr. Black of Lenton, John Beardsley and Phillip Wheatley, not necessarily in order, each occupying an 'ancient cotte'.<sup>47</sup> Including their gardens the three cottages together occupied only about one rood, and unlike nearly all cottages in Lenton they had no other land attached to them, and enjoyed no grazing rights.

The names Brickhouse and Brickhouse Cottages are strong pointers to the origins of at least one of them. It is generally understood that all residential buildings before the end of Elizabeth's reign or the beginning of James's were constructed of timber and plaster 'except for King's palaces, barons' mansions and religious houses', and according to Deering the first brick house in Nottingham was built in 1615.<sup>48</sup> This was said to be the former Green Dragon Inn on Long Row, later rebuilt as the Derby Arms. If only for this reason the Brickhouse on the site of Lenton Priory, so named as early as 1608, was probably a surviving part of a conventual building—presumably the brick building thought to have been the prior's lodging—or was built from its materials; and all three cottages may have originated in the same way, possibly incorporating part of the adjoining former guest house. Chapman's map surveyed in 1774 is on too small a scale to depict individual cottages, though it does indicate the outer gatehouse which had become a cottage, and a building or buildings on the north side of Gregory Street.<sup>49</sup> The earliest map known that could have been expected to show such individual small buildings is Sanderson's 2 inches to 1 mile map of 1835,<sup>50</sup> and the most likely site for the cottages had they survived so long would have been west of the site of the house called The Priory built by William Stretton in the early years of the 19th century. It appears that they had not survived, and they may have been demolished when Stretton developed the site.

#### THE FAIR AND THE FAIR BOOTHS

Much of the north-western part of the outer court of the priory, where the fair booths were described in the rental of about 1554, was let by the Crown after the Dissolution with the Martinmas fair, which was 'letten for terms of yeres to (the) first who payes yearly the some of £26. 13s. 4d'.<sup>51</sup> As its large post-Dissolution rent suggests, this seven-day fair was one of the leading fairs in England in the Middle Ages, and attracted merchants of all kinds from many parts of the country as well as from the local area. Its infrastructure was therefore substantial, as it necessarily included 'houses called booths' with penthouses behind them in which stallholders could lodge for the period of the fair with their goods. It is unlikely that even in its heyday the fair extended outside the court of the priory.

Originally the profits of the fair accrued to the priory, and as early as 1387, at £35, they represented nearly a quarter of the priory's income from temporalities. The privileges of the fair, which included a ban on trading at Nottingham during the period of the fair, were jealously guarded, and they continued in theory after the Dissolution. As part of the confiscated property of the priory on its suppression in April 1538, the fair was granted on a 21-year lease to date from Michaelmas 1539 to Michael Stanhope<sup>52</sup> who also held the two leases covering the site and demesne lands of the former priory as well as 'the office of bailiff of the manors and lands in Lenton and Radford, Notts., and in the town of Notyngham belonging to the said late Priory'.<sup>53</sup> The lease of the fair did not lapse in 1552 on the attainder

and execution of Sir Michael Stanhope because in 1549 he 'bargained and sold his right and interest in the said lease to Alice Withers, widow', (subsequently) the wife of Jasper Fisser, citizen and goldsmith of London 'as appears by his writing'.<sup>54</sup> She appears to have remained in possession until 1560, when the original Stanhope lease would have expired, but in 1557 the fair was granted by the Crown to Ralph Pryne, 'citizen and grocer of London . . . for divers merchandises received'.<sup>55</sup> Pryne's lease 'upon his petition and in full satisfaction of the said debts' of various attainted persons, was 'of the 'bothes' and other profits of the said fair of Lenton except forfeitures accruing to the Crown, for 21 years from Michaelmas 1560 or earlier determination of the said patent to Stanhope at the yearly rent of £26 13s. 4d.'. In June 1572 a further lease of the fair, this time for 31 years from the termination of Pryne's lease, was awarded to William Gorge, 'a gentleman pensioner'.<sup>56</sup>

These transactions serve to show that the lease of Lenton fair was in keen demand as a profitable investment through the 16th century, and its importance was maintained. The successive leases were, in effect, both licences to trade under protected conditions, and rent of the fairground and its facilities, especially its booths. The words used in the leases—'all houses called 'bothes', stallage, tallage and other profits'—indicate that the 'bothes', called houses, were permanent structures, and must have been kept in good repair year to year, either by the Crown or the leaseholders. Even as early as 1297–98 the priory accounts show that a thatcher worked on 60 fair booths over a period of ten weeks at a cost of 12s., with 1600 laths and 1500 nails bought for the purpose, and there is no indication that this was the full number of booths. Two carpenters made six new booths for 2s. 3d., and spent five days repairing old ones. The booths were enclosed by six rods of wall whose construction cost 1s. 8d.<sup>57</sup> Stevenson visualised the fair as 'a town of booths or canvas tents', but booths were sometimes described as shops, with 'a penthouse in the rear in which the so-called merchants no doubt lodged and slept'.<sup>58</sup> Although in about 1300 the fair booths, arranged in rows, were only 8 or 10 feet square 'saving to the same merchants the appenticia' (penthouses),<sup>59</sup> they varied later, and an agreement of 1517 provided that the prior was to grant preference to the mayor, sheriffs and burgesses of Nottingham who should desire to have any shop, booth or stall. A variety of facilities is also suggested by an extract from stallage rates at the Dissolution printed by Godfrey, which referred to stalls in the Vestment Row at the north-west end of the church; towards the south; near the churchyard gate; at the end of Cross Lane; and in Lenton Lane. The agreement of 1517, which included the rent schedule for shops, stalls and booths, 'reveals that the site was now laid out on a definite plan, with substantial buildings'. Goldsmiths' Row had four bays, ten feet long, with a rent of 4s. a bay, and Saddlers' Row had five bays, four let at 20d. and the fifth at 2s. 0d.. But the first 'shop' in Mercers' Row was 35 feet long and 18 feet deep, with a rent of 19s. 6d., and other shops with frontages of from 9 to 12 feet yielded rents averaging 10s. 0d.. In 'The Draperie' there were 14 bays on the south side and 13 on the north.<sup>60</sup>

Stevenson mentioned the Vestment or Goldsmiths' Row, the Saddlers' Row and the Causeway Row, which extended a great distance, the Mercers' Row, where the Court chamber, the hospital of St. Anthony and the outer gates were mentioned, and there were the Skinners' Row, Fishers' Row and the Drapery. There were numbers of bays in 'the beddars' and in the 'Lundelen Row'. The rows of booths along the causeway must have extended some 100 yards northward from near the north-west corner of the conventual church, parallel to and extending over part of the present widened Abbey Street. Further north were shorter rows in the same direction, and in the north, in the area of Mart Yard, others running east to west or south-east to north-west. These alignments are probably reflected in the more recent layout of the fair grounds area, and in the shape of the west wall of the graveyard, built in 1811 but determined by the former boundary of the fair ground preserved in the form of a property boundary.

Wood's map of the Gregory estate surveyed in 1818–1823 shows that it included the frontage area along Abbey Street southwards from its junction with Gregory Street almost

to Priory Street, and the salient of Gregory estate land into the site of the priory must have been entirely occupied by fair booths.<sup>61</sup> The annual fair rent was included in William Gregory's rental at Michaelmas 1631, the year after he purchased the Crown manor of Lenton, and with it the lease of Lenton fair, which was never thereafter surrendered, so that the fair grounds in the outer court of the former priory became part of the Gregory estate. Towards the middle of the 17th century the fair must have been showing signs of decline, for in 1663 George Gregory took legal action in a vain attempt to enforce the ban on trading in Nottingham during the week of the fair, which was now widely ignored. His only redress was the grant of a second seven day fair. The real reasons for the decline of the fair included the erosion of its miscellaneous trade through the growth of wholesaling and retail shops, and the improvement in communications. During the first half of the 17th century the 'houses called booths', permanent structures, must have become redundant in increasing numbers.

We can probably identify as former fair booths the premises referred to in the two following references. In a survey and rental of the Gregory estate in 1651–52 'The tenants within the Abbey Yard' heads a list of 18 names (two deleted) and 16 rents (one shared between two widows).<sup>62</sup> Eight of the tenants were widows, and most paid a rent of 3s. 4d. a year. The deed of surrender of a Gregory jointure in 1693 includes the item: 'Eighteen small houses in Lenton, let to the town habitations for the poor . . . —that is, pauper dwellings.'<sup>63</sup> These were evidently the same small cottages as those mentioned in the rental 40 years earlier, and there can be little doubt about their origins. Again, fair booths and their penthouses were probably the forerunners, if not the same structures, as the shops that comprised the appropriately named Mart Yard in the 18th century. According to Stretton the last of the shops at Mart Yard were taken down in 1791 and cottages were built on the site, surviving until demolished as recently as the 1950s.<sup>64</sup> A terrier of George Gregory's estate in 1725 includes the holding of a Mr. Field, who paid an annual rent of £10 for 'a workhouse and several shops occupied by him at Lenton', and this property was probably part of Mart Yard, or the buildings opposite to it across Gregory Street.<sup>65</sup> In 1768 Joseph Castles, who farmed 24½ acres, occupied Mart Yard Garden, which lay south of Mart Yard, at an annual rent of £2.<sup>66</sup> It is thought possible that this garden had been the site of the paupers' cottages mentioned above in the 17th century, then called Abbey Yard.

#### OUTLYING BUILDINGS

Other buildings included in the description of the priory in *c.*1554 survived longer. The mill, rebuilt by Sir Percival Willoughby under the terms of his lease, remained in use in various guises into modern times. Although the 'dayhouse' has not been identified with certainty in 17th century documents it is thought that it became the farmstead called Abbey House. The dovehouse and the barn of nine bays may also have been converted to other uses, and survived until the end of the 18th century. In a document of the 16th century which described so-called 'concealed lands' one item reads:

'Farm of one roadway and the herbage of the same extending from the site of the Priory of Lenton towards the common called The Greens, and westwards as far as the Conningre, and one barn, one dovecote, one cowhouse, one house called Dayhouse and one garden in the further part of the said way next to the said common and also next to the close called Dayhouse Close situated—12 pence.'<sup>67</sup>

The 'Dayhouse' was situated at the southern end of the 2½-acre 'Dayhouse Close', and very near to the present ring-road flyover at the southern extremity of the University Hospital and Medical School site, where Poplar Farm was built in the 19th century.<sup>68</sup> This is not to be confused with the 'Day house ground' to be found south of the position of the 'Dayhouse' on the 1609 map of Sherwood Forest, in an area that embraced a number of closes such as 'Cause Close', 'Calf Close', 'Rushy Close' and 'Doe or Doar Park' and extended westwards as far as the 'Keighton Closes'.<sup>69</sup> In fact the dairy farm of the priory probably comprised virtually the whole area between the River Leen in the north-east, the Blotoff dyke in the east, the Tottle Brook south, the *Keightons* west, and that part of the Abbey Fields called the 'Conningre' or Warren, and the open arable field called the 'Beck Field' in the north-west.

This is the area labelled 'Lenton Abbey Closes Together' on Smythe's map of 1632,<sup>70</sup> and it included to the north and north-west of the 'Dayhouse' such closes as 'Oxhouse or Bushy Close' (adjoining 'Dayhouse Close'), 'Brome Close', 'Matthews Close', 'Spring Close' and 'Seven Acres Close'. Abbey House, which succeeded the 'Dayhouse', was marked and named on Chapman's map surveyed in 1774. It was occupied from 1775 until 1799 by Thomas Stevenson, who farmed much of what later became Lenton Hall park after its purchase at the break up of the Milward estate in 1798 by John Wright, the banker.<sup>71</sup>

It is thought that the dovecote and barn were probably situated within or adjoining the nearby 'Dove House Close', where the 'Barn Houses' later stood. Indeed the 'Barn Houses' were converted from a barn described by Godfrey as 'huge', which had the date 1698 in brickwork on the gable end—perhaps recording its renovation and conversion. Whether the 'double dovecote' was incorporated into the Abbey House farmstead or the 'Barn Houses' is not known. It was unprofitable in its original use. It was rented in the early 17th century by Rowland Danne, gent., who also occupied the 20-acre Brome Close, and by 1608 by Christopher Sprintall, who also rented a close called Highfield.<sup>72</sup> Later, during the 21-year lease of Sir Percival Willoughby, Robert Nixe had the dovecote, but its future must have been placed at risk by the report that 'The dovecote cost at the first £5 to repayre it and never was worth 5s. in pidgeon, but is and hath been for the most parte in olde Mr. Nixe's hands, the proffitt beinge not answerable to the charge of repayre'.<sup>73</sup>

Finally, among the priory buildings at Lenton, the outer gatehouse survived into the 19th century, and may have been demolished for the purpose of road widening. According to Godfrey it 'stood across the Wilford Road near the end of Abbey Street', but Green suggested that a more likely position would be on the south side of Wilford Road.<sup>74</sup> His opinion may have been influenced by Chapman's map of 1774 which marked a building, then occupied as a cottage, on the south side of the road, and he may have been unfamiliar with Fyfe's statement in 1856 that Councillor Kirke Swann of Nottingham, a reliable witness, had recently stated that 'the old Abbey gateway, within the memory of man, actually stood across the commencement of the Wilford-road betwixt the White Hart Inn and the present entrance to the old Churchyard, and overarched the way'.<sup>75</sup> Swann could remember the gatehouse being pulled down; and he had met an old lady 'who stated that she had actually resided in the old Abbey gatehouse' within the period 1782 to 1805 'when the late Rev. W. Gill was curate of Lenton'. It was, incidentally, Kirke Swann who 'purchased a garden at the corner of Church Street and Priory Street Lenton which contained the only remains of the once great Priory of Lenton solely with the object of their preservation'.<sup>76</sup>

The last item in the c.1554 description of the buildings of Lenton Priory was Aspley Hall, situated in a salient of Radford parish into Wollaton, and two miles from the main body of the priory demesne, though regarded as part of it. This is the subject of a separate paper by Professor Maurice Barley.

## CONCLUSION

Whatever use was made subsequently of the materials and sites of buildings within the priory site, little was left by 1609 to represent conventual buildings in any recognisable form. No doubt they had been quietly 'taken down and disposed of at the will and pleasure' of one or other of the Crown lessees, Anne Stanhope and her husband Sir Michael before her, John Harrington or Sir Michael Hicks.<sup>77</sup> Indeed the rental of about 1554 seems to imply that Lady Stanhope was actively engaged in their destruction, and Lowe offered a plausible reason why this should be so, writing that 'the greater part of the monastic buildings appear to have been demolished shortly after the Dissolution, very probably at the time of that general panic which seized the lay owners of monasteries on the attempt made by Queen Mary to restore the monks to their cloisters'.<sup>78</sup> Mary came to the throne in 1553, and the comments of the surveyor of the rental of c.1554 can be understood in this context. He was clearly critical of Lady Stanhope's failure to produce Letters Patent, perhaps suspected subterfuge, and was

certainly concerned that she might be intending to fell and sell many of the trees on the former demesne lands, of which he recorded a field-by-field count in the rental. It might be supposed that his suspicions would have arisen from observation of her 'waste' of the surviving buildings of the priory. A marginal note alongside the schedule of the main demesne estate in the rental of c.1554, apparently in the same hand as the rest of the document reads: 'The lease of thes cannot be seene, for the want whereof many things stande in dowte. And many things under the collor of the same lease ar incroched spoylyd and wastyd as yt is thought as hereaftre maye appere'. The surveyor thought it right to advise his superiors of the need to instruct Lady Stanhope about how she should dispose of the remaining materials from the buildings, since she was expected to proceed 'without impeachment of waste'. It was recommended that freestone from the buildings, including the conventual church, should be reserved for repairs at Nottingham Castle, which was easily accessible across low ground now traversed by Castle Boulevard. The ruinous condition of the castle in the second quarter of the 16th century, and the repairs effected in the decade 1560–1570 were detailed by Green, who gave no indication as to whether any materials from Lenton Priory were used.<sup>79</sup> It was also suggested by the surveyor of c.1554 that the nearby former demesne lands could conveniently supply hay and corn to the castle as they had once supplied them to the priory, but the subsequent tenurial history of the priory demesne gives no hint that anything of the kind ever materialized.

#### APPENDIX I

##### *Rental of Lenton Priory site, c.1554.*

###### *Marginal notes*

- Item: my Lady Stannop hathe the priory or house callyd the Abbey House as she sayth without impechement of wast, with the churche gathous(e)s bernes stables oxhous(e)s dovecootes garners and all other edificions with mylnes waters pounds stanges fische and fishing gardings orcherds and all other commodities and proffetts
- (a) within the precinct or circuyt of the same scyte with all and singler medowes pastures closours fedings ro(u)nd(s) comens what so ever which were in the tenure and occupac(i)on of the late prior of the sayd monastery of Lenton as parte or parcell of the demanes belonging to the same with all the commodities and proffetts of the same without eyther rent or accompt or any other service to bee done for the same, which house ys sore spoylyd and decayd as folowyth.
- (b) Fyrst the mansion or abey maconrye yn the same, vii wyndows glasyed havinge xliii barres of iron in the same and ii windows unglasyed with xviii barres of iron therin. In the same mansion ii fayre p(ar)lours of xii yardes of lengthe all of fre(e)stone and tymber and of bredith viii yerds.
- (c) Item: ii chambers of the same lengthe and bredith over the same beinge coveryd with leade.
- Item: ii chambers more one uppon an other and ii chambers more joyninge to them the lengthe of them vi yerdys apace and of lieke bredyth with ii fayre parlours under the same rowfyd or cov(er)yd with leade beinge all of fre(e)stone and good tymbre with chimneyes and hous(e)s of office and in decaye muche.
- (e) Item: One fayre great lodginge with ii storyes the p(ar)lers therof playstryd above hede and the chambers beinge all of fayre bryck and very fayre newe tymber with vi fayre
- (f) framyd windows havinge neyther iron ne glasse in them ne yet ne(i)ther tylyd above thackyd nor coveryd to bothe the distrucc(i)on and decaye of the sayd lodginge and of the sayd tymbre playsteryd p(ar)lores etc.
- Also one other lodginge or p(ar)tic(i)on adjoyning to the same manner havinge an halle with ii hights or storyes of chambres to the nombre of viii chambres with viii windows in them wher in sted of iron and glasse ar nothyng but latthes all which ar coveryd with tyle beinge in great decaye for lacke of repa(ra)c(i)ons.
- And iii chambres more over the gatehouse coveryd with tyle decayd for lacke of repa(ra)c(i)ons.
- Item: One house with a mylne wherin a mylner dwellyth with a barne of iiiii bayes and a kylne in reasonable repa(ra)c(i)ons coveryd with tyle.
- Item: An other house callyd the Day House with a chamber to the valew of iii bayes and a stable coveryd with tyle in iii bayes.
- Item: An other great barne of ix bayes in decaye.
- Item: A dovehouse ii bayes.
- Item: In the same scite an orchard to the valewe of an aker.

*Marginal notes*

Item: ii pounds yards and other vacant ground within the sayd scyte conteynth ii acres with one asshe before the face of the sayd mansyon with an other pece of vacant ground to the vallewe of an acre wherin the tythe barne conteyning vii bayes letten with the tythe severally from my Lady Stannop with the forsaid berne of ix bayes and the dovehouse standythe, all which p(ar)cell my seyde lady hath ut d(icitu)r sine impediment vast etc.

The bo(o)thes of the fare within the owter courte conteyn ii acres with Landers Grene also callyd the lether fare ar letten to Raufe Prune from the p(ar)tic(u)(ar)es of my sayd Ladye Stannop.

- (g) The owter gatehouses with an hall above the same and an inner chamber etc. wherin the courts ar kept coveryd with tyle ar in great decaye.
- (h) The freestone of the church of the abbey being ratyd and other places of the same abbey beinge also ratyd beinge within lesse then a myle of the same and in great decaye which stone ut d(icitu)r my Lady Stannop ought to gyve sell and put away as she hath done and dothe.
- (i) The woodde also growinge in and upon the sayd demanes ut d(icitu)r she may liekwise take and spoyle without impresshement of wast and althow she so do and that I make restraynt whilst she showe hir L(ette)res Patente quo ime etc. yet she neyther ceasyth ne will showe cause whye ne hir L(ette)res Patente.
- (j) Yt ys thought by worshipfull [members?] of the cou(r)tier and wyse that the sayd manor with the members of the same therto nighe with the pastures medowes and etc. ar so mete and so comodious a thinge many wayes for the sayd castle of Nottingham that I thought yt my duetye to gyve informac(i)on of the comod(it)ies of the same as also of the decayes bothe for the provic(i)on of haye and corne as for the cariages of dyvers things to the sayd castle the Queen havinge not many suche manors with mene and husbands etc. spe(c)ially beinge so nighe the castle and towne of Nottingham as the same.
- (k) Also ther is an house about ii myles from the sayd Lenton nighe unto the manner of Radford with an hall kytyng p(ar)lers and chambers coveryd with tyle and a tower of brick adjoininge to the same of iii sto(r)yes of vi yerds length and bredith coveryd with leade, the sayd house beinge sore decayd and almost utterly ruynyd wherunto ther belongyth a gardinge and an orchard and a backyerde cont(ain)ing one acre. A barne in the same decayd and ruynyd as also an other lytle house and also ther belongs to the same one close of arrable grounde conteyning viii acres, which house was for the pryor in the tyme of plages etc. beinge in my Lady Stannops lease ut d(icitu)r.
- (l) And adjoininge to the same ther ys a yonge woodd callyd Asshpley Woodd the most p(ar)te therof of yong asshis and underwoodd with a fewe okes beinge left as wayers, which wood conteynth about l acres.
- (m) vi s. viii d. the rente.

*Marginal notes*

- (a) Suche p(ar)cells as my Lady Stannop clamyth without impresshement of wast. These p(ar)cells in decaye ut se(qui)t(u)r.
- (b) Windows glasyed.
- (c) Bares of iron in windows.
- (d) Suche chambers as are ledyd or coveryd with leade.
- (e) Decayes and wastes.
- (f) The lodgings and buildings within the scite and of the waste and decayes of the same.
- (g) Decaye of the gatehouse wherin the courts ar kept.
- (h) Decayes and spoyle of the stone of the abbey.
- (i) Decayes and wasts of the trees of the demanes.
- (j) An informac(i)on ut infra.
- (k) Asshepley Halle and the close p(ar)cell of my Lady Stannops lease ut d(icitu)r.
- (l) Sore wasted and decayd.
- (m) Asshepley Woodd—the arbage and pannage is letten to Edward Southwarthe for xxi yiers.

*Public Record Office, Rentals and Surveys,  
Portfolio 24, no. 12 ('Lenton Monastery—Rental, Eliz. ?')*

## REFERENCES

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- <sup>2</sup>E. D. Ginever, *The Parish and Priory of Lenton*, (1930); H. Green, 'Lenton Priory', *Trans. Thoroton Soc.*, xl (1936), 29–90; R. H. Elliott and A. E. Berbank, 'Lenton Priory Excavations, 1943–1951', *Trans. Thoroton Soc.*, lvi (1952), 41–53; B. W. Beilby, 'Excavations at the Cluniac Priory of the Holy Trinity, Lenton, 1962–1964', *Trans. Thoroton Soc.* lxx (1966), 55–62.
- <sup>3</sup>R. Mellors, *Lenton: Then and Now*, (1912), 7.

- <sup>4</sup>Godfrey, *op. cit.*, 217, quoting Sir H. Ellis, *Original Letters*, 3rd series, iii, 269.
- <sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 218.
- <sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 218–220.
- <sup>7</sup>Given to Justices in Eyre at the Assize held at Lenton, 2 gallons of wine and 11b. of sugar—5s. 8d.'. From accounts of the chamberlains of Nottingham for 1573: *ibid.*, 221; see also A. E. Lawson Lowe, *The History of the Hundred of Broxtowe*, (Foreword dated 1871) 27.
- <sup>8</sup>Ginever, *op. cit.*, 83; Godfrey, *op. cit.*, 221. Birch, a member of the commission responsible for the 1608 survey of Lenton's Crown lands, occupied a house and smallholding in Lenton village in the estate of Philip Hanmer, and probably not in the precincts of the priory. P(ublic) R(ecords) O(ffice), L(and) R(venue) 2/211 CP2940, 106, 128. For the chapel see Godfrey, 233–244, and Ginever, 45–50.
- <sup>9</sup>R. Thoroton, *The Antiquities of Nottinghamshire*, (1677), 219.
- <sup>10</sup>Godfrey, *op. cit.*, 221.
- <sup>11</sup>N(ottingham) U(niversity) M(anuscripts) D(epartment), Mi A 60/1–7; Wollaton Hall building account: N.U.M.D. Mi A 61, Wollaton accounts 1583–1585: N.U.M.D. Mi A 60/5, 'The Building Book at Wollaton'.
- <sup>12</sup>*Cal. Pat. Rolls, Elizabeth, 1560–1563*, (1948), 510.
- <sup>13</sup>N.U.M.D., Mi E 1/3 (1589–1595).
- <sup>14</sup>P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys. Portfolio 24, No. 12, 'Lenton Monastery—Rental (Eliz?)'. Undated, 15 mss.
- <sup>15</sup>*Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, xiv, part i (1539) 403, 36. See also Godfrey, *op. cit.*, 193, following Lawson Lowe, 'Descent of the site of Lenton Priory since the Dissolution' in J. P. Briscoe, *Old Nottinghamshire*, (1881), 25–26. Michael Stanhope, armiger, appears as farmer of the site and demesne of the priory in a rental dated 30th May 1538—a 24-foot long parchment—N.U.M.D. Mi 1/38/31.
- <sup>16</sup>N.U.M.D., Mi 1/38/2: 'Ye King grants to Mic Stanhope several lands for 21 years forfeited by ye treason of Nic Heath Prior'. The date 2 Henry VIII is assumed to be an error for 32 Henry VIII.
- <sup>17</sup>*Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1560–1563*, (1948), 510.
- <sup>18</sup>N.U.M.D., Mi 1/38/14 (15 Eliz.).
- <sup>19</sup>*Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1555–1557*, (1938), 300–3301, reciting title.
- <sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, (24th April 1555).
- <sup>21</sup>'A mappe of ye Lordshippe of Lenton and Radford taken the tenthe day of Julye anno 1632 by me Richard Smythe surveyor'. N(ottinghamshire) A(rchives) O(ffice), RD 3 L.
- <sup>22</sup>*Nottingham Borough Records*, iv, 349 et seq. See Green *op. cit.*, 84.
- <sup>23</sup>W. W. Fyfe, *Rambles round Nottingham*, (1856), 123–134; R. Mellors, *Lenton: Then and Now*, (1912); Godfrey, *op. cit.*, 60–61.
- <sup>24</sup>D. Knowles and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, (1953), 97.
- <sup>25</sup>Lawson Lowe (1871) *op. cit.*
- <sup>26</sup>F. B. Stitt, 'Lenton Priory Estate Accounts, 1296 to 1298'. *Thoroton Soc. Record Series*, xix (1959), xiv.
- <sup>27</sup>Lowe, *op. cit.*
- <sup>28</sup>Fyfe, *op. cit.*
- <sup>29</sup>E. A. Beresford and H. M. Leman, *Some account of the history of the Priory of Lenton*, (1893), 5.
- <sup>30</sup>Green, *op. cit.*, 77.
- <sup>31</sup>N.A.O., DD.TS 6/4/4 and 15/2–6.
- <sup>32</sup>N.U.M.D., Mi 1/38/17(i) (1608); N.U.M.D., Mi 1/38/41(iii) undated: early 17th century.
- <sup>33</sup>N.U.M.D., Mi 1/38/40(ii).
- <sup>34</sup>P.R.O., L.R. 2/211, CP 20/40 (1608).
- <sup>35</sup>N.U.M.D., Mi 1/38/40(ii).
- <sup>36</sup>Map of the estate of Gregory Gregory Esq., in the Lordships of Lenton and Radford in the county of Nottingham'. Surveyed by H. M. Wood in the years 1818 to 1823. N.A.O., RD 4 L.
- <sup>37</sup>R. Gilyard-Beer, *Abbeys*, (1958), fig. 12.
- <sup>38</sup>N. Pevsner, *Shropshire* (Buildings of England, 16), (1958), pl. 41b.
- <sup>39</sup>*Victoria County History, Notts.*, (1910), 95.
- <sup>40</sup>Ginever, *op. cit.*, 44–50.
- <sup>41</sup>Godfrey, *op. cit.*, 225.
- <sup>42</sup>P.R.O., Rentals and Surveys, Portfolio No. 12, fol. 18.
- <sup>43</sup>P.R.O., Misc. Books Land Revenue, 211, 105–158, 'Lenton and Radford, Survey of the Manor' (1608), especially 118–120.
- <sup>44</sup>N.U.M.D., Mi 1/38/17(i), 14th March (1608–9).



- <sup>45</sup>N.U.M.D., Mi 1/38/18(i), 1st June (1609).
- <sup>46</sup>N.U.M.D., Mi 1/38/37(i): N.U.M.D., Mi 1/38/37(ii), 10th April, 1630. N.U.M.D., Mi 1/38/18(i) (1610).
- <sup>47</sup>N.U.M.D., Mi 3/E/4 (1684) : N.U.M.D., Wadsworth 21 (copy of 1743): N.U.M.D., Wadsworth 52 (copy of 1798).
- <sup>48</sup>C. Deering, *Nottinghamia Vetus et Nova*, (1751), 6; T. Bailey, *Annals of Notts.*, (1853), 590–1.
- <sup>49</sup>J. Chapman, *Map of Nottinghamshire*, (1785, surveyed 1774).
- <sup>50</sup>G. Sanderson, *Map of the country 20 miles round Mansfield*, (1835, surveyed 1830–34).
- <sup>51</sup>P.R.O., Rental and Surveys 24/12 6591, p. 14 (7c) undated.
- <sup>52</sup>*Cal. Letters and Papers Henry VIII*, (1896), xv, 612, 20. *Cal. Pat. Rolls 1555–1557*, (1938), 1556, 255 (26 Dec.).
- <sup>53</sup>*Letters and Papers Henry VIII 1539*, i, 403, 36.
- <sup>54</sup>*Cal. Pat. Rolls. Ph. and Mary 1555–1557*, (1938), 255.
- <sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>56</sup>*Cal. Pat. Rolls 1569–1572*, (1966), 2679, m.39.
- <sup>57</sup>Stitt, *op. cit.*, xiv, 1–48.
- <sup>58</sup>W. Stevenson, *Bygone Nottinghamshire*, (1893), 181.
- <sup>59</sup>*Records of the Borough of Nottingham*, i, 61. Printed in both Godfrey and Stevenson, *op. cit.*
- <sup>60</sup>Godfrey, *op. cit.*, 312.
- <sup>61</sup>N.A.O., RD 4 L.
- <sup>62</sup>L(incolshire) A(rchives) O(ffice), 2 PG 3/1/9 (1651–2).
- <sup>63</sup>L.A.O., 1 PG 3/3/1/13 (23 December 1693).
- <sup>64</sup>G. C. Robertson, ed., *The Stretton Manuscripts*, (1910), 197.
- <sup>65</sup>L.A.O., 2 PG 3/1/10 (1725).
- <sup>66</sup>L.A.O., 2 PG 3/1/10 (1768).
- <sup>67</sup>N.U.M.D., Mi 1/38/40(ii), undated. 'A copy of ye particulars for concealed land in Notts.'. 'Parcel of demesne land and possessions of the late Prior of Lenton, attainted of high treason'.
- <sup>68</sup>See survey notes, undated, of the early 17th century in N.U.M.D., Mi 1/38/40(ii).
- <sup>69</sup>P.R.O., MR 1142, photograph in N.A.O., XF1/1–6.
- <sup>70</sup>N.A.O., RD 3 L. The field names in this paragraph derive from an unpublished study of the history of the University campus.
- <sup>71</sup>N.U.M.D., Mi 1/16/1a (1823).
- <sup>72</sup>P.R.O., M.B.L.R., 211, 119. The entries in the document for the dovecote and barn were additions at the foot of a page.
- <sup>73</sup>N.U.M.D., Mi 1/38/37(i).
- <sup>74</sup>Green, *op. cit.*, 84–85.
- <sup>75</sup>Fyfe, *op. cit.*, 158.
- <sup>76</sup>J. T. Godfrey and J. Ward, *The Homes and Haunts of Henry Kirke White*, (1908), 106–7.
- <sup>77</sup>Words from N.U.M.D., Mi 1/38/17(i), (14th March 1608) referring to Hicks.
- <sup>78</sup>Lowe, (1871), *op. cit.*, 13.
- <sup>79</sup>E. Green, 'Nottingham Castle', *Archaeological Journal*, lviii, Second ser. vol. viii (London 1901), 365–397.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Professor Maurice Barley for giving of his extensive expertise in discussions over the location of the priory buildings, and also Mr. Chris Lewis for drawing the plan. The transcript of a Crown-copyright record in the Public Record Office appears by permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.