



The Last Days of Hurley Priory.

(PRIORY DISSOLVED IN 1536.)

IN "Lands and Tythes of Hurley Priory" (1909) I was misled by the 1817—1830 Edition of Dugdale's *Monasticon* into assigning the year 1535 as the date of the dissolution of our Priory, whereas the true date is 1536, as I gave it in the opening chapter of "S. Mary's, Hurley" (1898).

In the Edition of the *Monasticon* to which I refer, Messrs. Caley, Ellis and Bandinel, as Editors, inserted the following remark, viz.: "The priory of Hurley was suppressed among the lesser monasteries in the 26th of Henry VIII A.D. 1535." But, as a fact, this gratuitous insertion, as to date, by these 1817—1830 Editors is unquestionably wrong. The Edition of the *Monasticon* originally issued by Dugdale (in Latin) was published in 1655—1673.

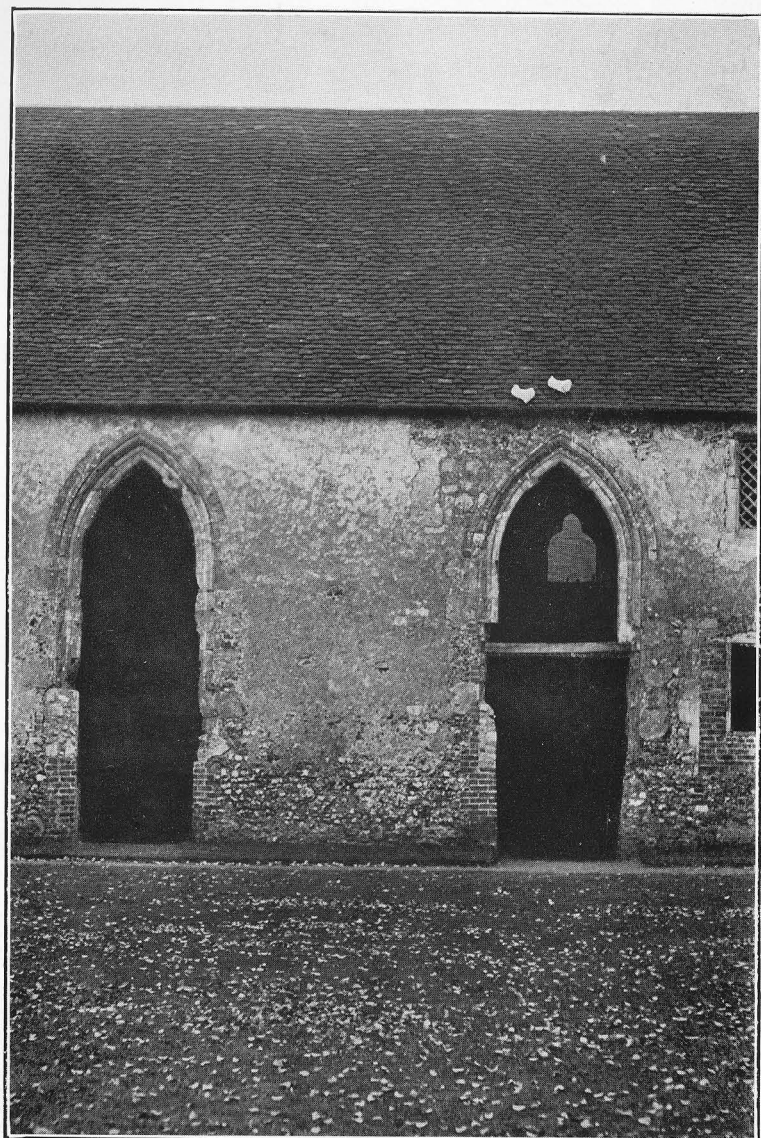
The Act of Parliament which dissolved the greater monasteries, entitled "An Act for the Dissolution of all Monasteries and Abbies" [31 Hen. VIII c. 13], expressly refers to the Act of 27 [not 26] Hen: VIII [c. 28] which was passed during the session of the prorogued Parliament which *opened on February the fourth in the year 1536, and which suppressed the lesser monasteries; and inasmuch as the 27th year of Henry VIII commenced on 22. April 1535 and ended on 21. April 1536, it is obvious that the lesser monasteries, such as Hurley Priory, i.e. all those religious houses valued by commission at less than two hundred pounds in yearly value, were suppressed by this earlier Act of Parliament at some date between the fourth of February and the twenty-first of April, which latter date was the conclusion of Henry VIII's 27th year; that is—in the historical year 1536.

Hurley Priory was worth at the time of the dissolution, according to Dugdale £121 18 5: according to Speed £134 10 8.

In monastic days, Accounts and records of every description were kept with the most punctilious accuracy and completeness.

* See *Parliament Roll*, 27 Hen: VIII, in the Calendar of State Papers. The Parliamentary Rolls are at the Public Record Office.

HURLEY PRIORY.



THE REFECTORY—NORTH SIDE.

We find amongst the Westminster Series of Hurley Charters and Deeds (still at the Abbey) grants and leases of such small pieces of property as—for example—the Grant of a messuage with enclosure, etc., in Hurley; to hold at the rent of a pair of gloves or one penny at Midsummer [Edw. I]; while another is a Grant by Reginald ate Hale to Thomas Turry, of White Waltham, of several pieces of land in Little Waltham [Waltham S. Laurence], “in parochia de Hurley,” at a yearly rent of a grain of wheat [1329]; and a third is a Lease by John, Prior, [John de Tothale] and the convent of Hurley to Isabel, widow of Geoffrey de Hurle, of a messuage called le Stonhous “in hameleto de Hurle,” to hold for her life at a rent of twopence at Michaelmas, twopence at Easter, and one red rose at Midsummer [1344].

These deeds, and hundreds of others, were lodged for safety within the walls of Hurley Priory, until at the time of the dissolution of the lesser monasteries in 1536, including our Monastery, they were hurried off to Westminster—the Mother Abbey; and there, at any rate, nearly six hundred remain up to the present day, while numerous others, we may believe, have disappeared from decay or from some other cause.

Within the last few months I have been fortunate in securing from the Public Record Office a number of Accounts in connexion with the last days of the Priory, of great interest, and I print the following by way of making dry bones live once more.

It will be noticed amongst the quaint Receivers' accounts which I subjoin that fees, wages, corodies and annuities are referred to (Bundle 95. Nos. 3, 4). The monasteries were nothing if not hospitable. Besides their complement of monks, there were always guests as inmates of each monastic establishment. Each of the brethren had his daily ‘commons’ called a corody (*con-rodere*). In Jacob’s “New Law Dictionary” (1772) we read “The difference between a corody and pension seems to be that a corody was allowed towards the maintenance of any of the King’s servants in an abbey: a pension is given to one of the King’s chaplains, for his better maintenance, till he may be provided of a benefice. . . . It is also apparent by 34 and 35 Hen: VIII cap. 26 that corodies belonged sometimes to bishops and noblemen from monasteries: and in the ‘New Terms of Law’ it is said that a corody may be due to a common person by grant from one to another; or of common right to him that is a founder of a religious house not holden in frankalmoine.” Corodies, moreover, were negotiable: thus we find, amongst Hurley Deeds, an

Acquittance from John Smyt of Maydenhuth to Dom William Bromleyge Prior of Hurley [1365—1374] of three quarters and two bushels of wheat and three quarters and two bushels of barley for his corody, in 1373. At Westminster when one of the brethren died his daily 'commons' were allowed for a whole year after his death as though he were still living. These constituted a fund to pay for a year's masses for his soul; and in this mediæval custom our Priory followed the example of its nursing mother at Westminster.

Land Revenue. Receivers' Accounts.

Bundle 95. No. 1.

28 Henry VIII [1536—37].

(John Danaster, receiver.)

The late Priory of Hurley,

Possessions.

The receiver accounts for £12 16 10 received of Richard Warde, esq., collector of rents and farms in Clare [a hamlet of Pyrton, Oxfordshire], Henley, Molsey, Rey and Harfilde: pensions and portions of tithes in Shepham, Compton Magna and Argaston [Esgar's ton = East Garston], due to the King for the year ending Michaelmas 28 Hen. VIII [1536], with £5 the last moiety of the farm of the rectory of Warfelde, for half a year, £61 4 1½, part of the issues received by William Southwell, late [the last] prior there, due at Lady Day 1536: also £48 19 3 received by William Boston [the last] abbot of Westminster [1532—1540], due at Michaelmas 1536; by virtue of letters patent* dated 3 July 1536. Charged with £7, half of the yearly rent of the site of the late priory [of Hurley] and its possessions granted to William Boston as aforesaid reserved to the King. Therefore the sum of the possessions of the priory, (besides the £61 4 1½ received by the prior, and £48 19 3 granted to the abbot of Westminster),

£19 16 10.

Pensions.

£16 a year granted to William Southwell late prior of Hurley, by letters patent.†

The abbot of Westminster for the moiety of the tenth part or yearly rent of all those possessions of Hurley granted to him of rent reserved to the King.

£7

* See Letters Patent 28 Hen. VIII. Part 2. m. 5.

† For the said letters patent, see Augmentations Office. Miscell. Books. Vol. 232. Pt. 1 fol. 36.

Thomas† Warde, esq., collector of rents and farms as

aforesaid	£7 16 10
						Total	...	£14 16 10

Bundle 95. No. 2.

28 Henry VIII [1536—1537].

Hurley.

In moneys paid to the monks there being, in alms of the King:—to the prior £4; to John Sledge, sub-prior, 53s. 4d.; to two others [monks] (£2 each) £4; Charity [a monk] 35s.; and to three other monks (30s. each) £4 10s. ... Total ... £16 18s. 4d.

To Richard Mellowes, clerk, chaplain of the chantry of Maidmenham, for the quarter ending Midsummer, 1536 ... 23s. 4d.

To the servants of the monastery, for stipends due for the quarter ending as above ... £14 10s.

To divers creditors of the monastery, in full payment of debts ... £4 9s.

And in moneys allowed to divers persons for the buildings and other things sold (except the bells, vessels, silver, jewels, utensils, grain and chattels delivered to the abbot of Westminster) ... £27 11s

Total ... £64 11s. 8d.

With reference to the bells, vessels, silver, jewels, &c., delivered to the Abbot of Westminster, it is worthy of mention that when, sixteen years later, Sir Philip Hoby of Bisham Abbey, who was one of the Commissioners for Berkshire appointed by King Edward VI, gave orders for the Inspection of the goods of Hurley Church on 1 August 1552, the assessor (Thomas Dyane) found amongst “all thies pcelles hereafter pticularly declared,”—a Chalice and iij belles a Cope of White Damaske a cope of red damaske a Cope of blew satten a vest^{mt} of Crymson veluet embrodered a Red vest^{mt} embrodered a white vest^{mt} of satten of Briges a vest^{mt} of blacke satten of Briges a vest^{mt} of red satten of briges ij frontes for the Hye alter of satten of briges another fronte of dornix an olde fronte of white satten of briges a Crosse of latten w^t the fote iij alter clothes iij olde small Candlesticks an olde paier of Sensors a shipp and iij old Crewettes of tyne.

These goods were entrusted to the Churchwardens of Hurley, Thomas Haies and Thomas Davie, “to be forthcoming at all tymes

† *Sic* : called Richard Warde, in earlier entry. But in other Rolls *Thomas*.

hereafter." And, as a result, it is abundantly evident that so far as the Church bells were concerned two of them were appropriated ere long by the Commissioner for the King's Exchequer, whilst one was left in the belfry at Hurley, and there it still hangs, striking the chimes of the Church clock, and ringing as 'second' bell each Sunday. This (second) bell, which is 31 inches in diameter has "Scte Sebastia[n]e" embossed round the waist, with the Winchester arms—a sword crossing two keys, above. This conjunction is curious, for a Berkshire Church. Moreover, Hurley Church is in no way that I am aware of connected with St. Sebastian, except in this one instance. The small black lettering upon this bell is in the style of John Saunders a well-known bellfounder who, although not originally a Reading man, worked in Reading from 1539 to 1559 according to Mr. A. H. Cocks, who tells us in "The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire," that Saunders almost certainly came to Reading to succeed a man named Christian White in the foundry there; and, while commenting on Saunders' probable connexion with Winchester and London, he thinks it possible that he may have been one of "the men of london" who met "White of Reading" at breakfast at Thame one morning in 1538-9. In the Churchwardens' accounts of S. Laurence's, Reading, for the year ending Michaelmas, 1559, there is an entry as follows, viz. :—

The Great Bell—Itm for the good man Saunders knyllxx^d.

The Best Pawle—Itm for the good man Saunders buryall ...vj^d.

Graves—Inprimis for the good man Saunders grave..... vij^s. iiij^d.

Careful search has been made amongst the Winchester archives for any trace of Saunders as a bellfounder anterior to his arrival in Reading in 1539, but without success. Mr. Cocks, it is right to mention, expresses a doubt as to whether certain two bells in S. Peter's, Cheesehill, Winchester, which have the same small black lettering on them as are found on Saunders' bells, as well as the Winchester arms, were not cast by a Winchester rather than a Reading man, and, if so, was it the man under whom Saunders learnt his trade, or was it Saunders himself, working there before he went to Reading? And, of course it is unnecessary to observe that these remarks by Mr. Cocks apply equally to the history of our Hurley second bell as to that of the two Winchester bells of which he writes. The two other bells now hanging in Hurley belfry were cast, one in 1602 by Joseph Carter, of Reading, and the other by T. Mears, Junr., of London, in 1829. The deep toned tenor bell by Carter bears his usual device on the waist four times repeated, viz:

a crown and orb surmounting two crossed olive branches, on either side of which is an E and an R for Elizabetha Regina, the whole being, as it is thought, a reversed shield. Its diameter is 35 inches. The following is on the back:—"This bell was made 1602." "Joseph Carter, of Reading."

Land Revenue, Receivers' Account.

Bundle 95. No. 3.

29 Henry VIII. [1537—1538].

The late Priory of Hurley.

John Danaster, receiver, answers for £17 16 10 of Thomas Warde, collector of rents and farms in Clare, Henley, Molsey, Reye and Harfelde; also pensions of Comptoune Magna and the rectory of Warfelde; also tithes of Goryng, Shexham [*sic*] and Argaston [Esgar's ton = East Garston]; of the issues of his office due to the King at Michaelmas 1537. He is charged with £14 for the yearly rent of the site of the said Priory and the lands thereto belonging (granted to the abbot of Westminster), payable by equal portions at Michaelmas and Lady Day at the Court of Augmentations.

Total of the lands and possessions of the said priory, (besides certain allowances on the account of the said Thomas Warde) £31 16s. 10d.
Fees, wages and corodies. In an annuity to William Graunte, [last prior, except one, (1504—1510)] granted to him for life by the abbot and convent of Hurley, and allowed by the Court of Augmentations ... 26s. 8d.

Due from the abbot of Westminster [William Boston] for the moiety of the tenth part of the annual rent of the lands of Hurley granted to him, for the half-year ending Michaelmas, 1536 £7

The like rent for the whole year ending Michaelmas, 1537 £14

Thomas Warde, collector in Clare, &c., also pensions and portions of tithes in Shepham, Compton Perva and Algaston [Esgar's ton = East Garston] for arrears due Michaelmas, 1536 £7 16s. 10d.

The said Thomas for a whole year, due Michaelmas, 1537 £15 13s. 8d.

Total ... £44 10s. 6d.

Bundle 95. No. 4. 30 Hen. [1538—1539].

Fees, wages, corodies and annuities.

Paid to Matthew Hanmer for his corody granted to him by the late abbot [*sic*] and convent of Hurley, and ratified by the Court of Augmentations, 26s. 8d. yearly, for 2½ years ending at Michaelmas, 66s. 8d.

Respited.

53s. 4d. for a certain yearly pension lately paid by the late abbot of Walden issuing out of Compton Magna, above charged under the title of Hurley within, a sum of £15 3s. 6d.

Due from Richard Warde, esq., collector in Clare, Hurley [*sic*], Molsey, Rey and Harfelde; also of pensions, &c., in Shyphain, Compton Magna and Argalston [Esgar's ton = East Garston], at Michaelmas 1538, £8 3s. 10d.

Bundle 95. No. 5. 32 Hen. VIII. [1540—1541].

The receiver (John Carleton) accounts for £8 19 6 received of Richard Warde, collector of the rents of Hurley. And for £14 reserved rent from the abbot of Westminster he does not account, forasmuch as it is in the hands of the King by reason of the dissolution of Westminster Abbey [16 Jan. 1540].

Stipends of chaplains.

An annual pension from the late monastery of Hurley, to wit, of Warfylde to the dean and chapter of Salisbury (2s. yearly), for 4 years ending Michaelmas 1540 ... 8s.

[William Southwell's yearly pension of £16 does not appear after Bundle 95. No. 4.]

Bundle 95. No. 7. 34 Hen : VIII [1542—1543].

Hurley.

Annuity to William Graunte 26s. 8d.

Stipend paid to Thomas Bayly, clerk, curate of Maydenhed belonging to the late priory of Hurley, for one year, allowed this year as last £4 13s. 4d.

Total ... £6

Bundle 96. No. 1.

3 Edw. VI [1549—1550].

George Wright, receiver.

Hurley Priory.

The receiver accounts for 20s. of Joan Boyer, widow, for the King's tithe of the rectory of Warfeilde, due at Michaelmas 3 Edw. VI [1549].

Annuity.

William Graunte, 26s. 8d. Cancelled because not paid this year or last year.

Fee.

Richard Warde, esq., bailiff and collector of rents in Hurley, 53s. 4d. granted by letters patent 6 Dec. 31 Hen. VIII [1539]. Allowed.

Stipend of curate.

Thomas Baylye, curate of Madenhed, £4 13s. 4d. Allowed.

Pensions.

The bishop of Salisbury, yearly pension issuing out of the church of Warford [called lower down Warfeild] granted by letters patent 8 Nov. 38 Hen. VIII [1546].

3s. 4d. Allowed.

Procurations and Synodals.

The archdeacon of Berks, of divers churches appropriated to the late monastery of Hurley, at 42s. 3½ yearly, granted 10 May 35 Hen. 8 [1543] for 13 years ending Michaelmas 3 Edw. VI [1549], to wit, from the time of the King's possession; £27 10s. 10½d. Allowed.

Total ... £35 os. 10½d.

Bundle 96. No. 3.

5 Edward VI [1551—1552].

Late priory of Hurley.

Rectory of Warfeild.

George Wright, receiver, accounts for 20s. received of Richard Scicill' for the King's tithe, due at Michaelmas 5 Edward VI [1551].

State Papers. Henry VIII.

28 Hen. VIII. No. 202 (4).

An Abstract of Letters Patent granted 3 July [1536] to William Boston, abbot of Westminster. The site, &c. of the late priory of St. Mary, Hurley, Berks, with all houses, closes, gardens, &c., in and about the said site, and all those manors, &c., in Esthamstede,

Berks, with the rectories of Hurley, Waltham [Waltham St. Laurence] and Stretely, and the advowsons of the vicarages of Hurley and Waltham [Waltham St. Laurence]; the tithes of Knoll Hyll, now in the tenure of Ric. Andrewes, parcel of the said rectory of Hurley : a pension of 4s. a year issuing from the church or rectory of Esthamsted ; a messuage and certain lands in Kyngham, Oxon, now in the tenure or occupation of Nich. Waters, the Manor or lordship of Hurley, Berks, a water-mill with all other lands, &c. in Hurley, which were parcel or appurtenances of the said house or priory with views of frankpledge, &c., in the said manor or vill of Hurley ; with reservation of a great wood in Hurley called Hurley wood, near the wood called "the Thykkt" ; which premises came into the King's hands as parcel of the said late priory by Act 27 Hen. VIII. To hold by an annual rent of £14.

This grant is in exchange for the following, granted to the King by a charter of the said abbot and convent, dated 1 July 28 Hen. VIII [1536], viz. the site, &c., of the Manor of Neyte [&c.].

In the original Charter, now preserved at Westminster, granting the above lands, &c. to the Crown from the Abbey, we find that the following occur amongst many others, viz. : three acres of meadow in Chelscheth, the advowson and patronage of Chelseth Church—the manors of Totynton, with the advowson and patronage, tithes, etc., the site, etc. of the manor of Hyede [now enclosed in Hyde Park] with lands belonging thereto, the manor of Eyebery ; two banks [ripas], one from Totehyll to the Thames, the other between Markett Mede and the Thames ; three pieces of the meadow called Markett Mede between the Thames and Totehyll "et unum Le More abbuttantem super Sherdyche ; . . . a tenement, etc., at Charyngcrosse ; an annual rent of the Swan Inn at Charyngcross : an annual rent from lands of the Abbot of Abington in Charyngcrosse feld ; a rent from a close at Colman Hedge, Westminster, several other rents in Westminster ; a rent of £4 from the manor of Chelseth, and three closes in Estgrenewyche.

The above mentioned exchanges were fully ratified by Act of Parliament.

It is interesting to notice in this connexion that amongst the archives of Westminster Abbey the farm of the Manor of "Hide" occurs as an estate which had been much improved by Nicholas Litlyngton when he was Prior of Westminster [1352-1362]. The rent of Hyde appears for the first time in 1390-1 at Westminster.

When reference is made above to "the reservation of a great wood called Hurley wood, near the wood called 'the Thykktet,'" it should be noticed that the reason why the wood in question is not included in this deed was because just a month earlier, viz. : on 1st June 28 Hen. VIII. [1536] the Abbey had conveyed Covent Garden, *i.e.* the garden of their convent, to the King along with other land, in exchange for this Hurley Great Wood.

The history of the four shillings referred to in the Royal Charter of 3rd July, 1536, as being then granted to the Abbot and Convent of Westminster by the Crown is as follows: Whilst Ralph de Arundel was Prior of Hurley, from c. 1173 to the end of 1200, he had charged the Church at Easthampstead, Berks, with that amount annually in order that the Sacrists of the Priory might have sufficient to supply "honorifice et plenarie" wax tapers to burn at the mass of S. Mary in Hurley Church. This grant was evidently continued regularly until the dissolution of the Priory, and at that time the four shillings was conveyed by the Crown to Westminster Abbey.

It will have been noticed from the foregoing Receivers' accounts [Bundle 95 No. 2, 28 Hen. VIII., 1536-37] that at the time of the dissolution of our Priory the number of Monks then on the books was only eight, including the Prior. The only other occasion on which I have come across any mention of their number is in a Deed of 1300, when there were fifteen Monks, in addition probably to the Prior.

When our mother Abbey at Westminster surrendered to the Crown, on 16th January, 1540, the Deed of Surrender was signed by William Boston, Abbot; Dionisius Dalyons, Prior; and twenty-three others of the brethren, including a monk named Armell Hurley.

On 30th November, 1908, an almost perfect skeleton of a tall, apparently young, man was discovered close to the vaults in Lady Place, the site of Hurley Priory, whilst some gardening excavations were in progress, which I believe to have been the remains of a Benedictine Monk.

A LIST OF HURLEY PRIORS.

	EARLIEST KNOWN OR PROBABLE DATE.	LATEST KNOWN OR PROBABLE DATE.
Æiric	before 1141	
William	not later than 1144	
John de Rocella	1166 at earliest	
William Seger		
*Ralph de Arundel	not later than 1173	1200
Robert	1200-1	
William de Stanford	1221-2	
†Richard le Gras	1231	1236
Sanson de Eswelle	1236	
Theobald	1247	1255
Geoffrey	1258	
John de Lyra	1274	
Walter de London	1279	1285
Adam	1292-93	1295
Richard de Waledene	1299	1304
Alexander de Neuport	1305	1309
Henry	1311	1313
Richard de Coleworth	1320	1336
John de Tothale	1340	1349
Thomas de Cumbrok	1352	1363
William de Bromle	1365	1374
William Ypeswyche	1377	1400
John Feryng	1409	1415
William Pulburgh	1416	1417
John Saffrey	1420	1452
Edmund Downe	1461	
Thomas Ruston	1468	1480
John Hylston	1487	1497
John Hampton	1501	
William Grawnt	1504	1510
William Southwell		1536

*Ralph de Arundel, elected Abbot of Westminster on 30th November, 1200, and blessed by the Bishop of London at St. Paul's on 17th December, 1200. He was deposed by order of the papal legate 23rd January, 1214.

†Richard le Gras, Abbot of Evesham, 1236, the King [Henry III.] having given the royal assent to the confirmation made by Alexander Stavenby, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, by authority of the Pope. He was holder of the Great Seal. He died in France when he was about to be consecrated as Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry.

F. T. WETHERED.

HURLEY VICARAGE,
BERKS,

December, 1909.