

Wymondham Abbey Resources

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See end for list of Priors, Abbots and details of seals.

THE ABBEY OF WYMONDHAM

The Benedictine priory of Wymondham, dedicated to the honour of the Blessed Virgin, was founded early in the reign of Henry I, by William de Albin, chief butler to the king. By the foundation charter, Wymondham was made a cell of the great abbey of St. Albans, under certain specified conditions. These provided that the monks of Wymondham, on a vacancy, were to elect a new prior out of their own convent, and present him to the founder or subsequent patron. When the abbot of St. Albans came to the priory he was to be honourably entertained, and the prior, as a token of dependence, was to pay a mark of silver yearly to the abbot on the festival of St. Alban. The charter further provided that if the founder, or the king, or any of their successors should hereafter secure the conversion of the priory into an abbey, that then all tokens of subjection to St. Albans should cease. A near relative of the founder, Richard de Albin, was at that time abbot of St. Albans (1097-1119), and gave his formal assent to this arrangement.

William de Albin, the founder, and Maud his wife, who was the daughter of Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, richly endowed the priory with lands, churches, tithes, and rents, chiefly at Wymondham, Buckenham, Happisburgh, and Snettisham. Soon after the completion of the church, the founder showed his practical interest in the worship there conducted, by augmenting his original grant so that the monks should hold the meadows and lands before their church doors, and thus escape molestation during the time of divine service by the noise of passengers. For this purpose he obtained the royal licence to divert the highway which ran close by the church, and turned it by his own house.

William de Albin, the grandson of the founder, confirmed all the original foundation, together with the considerable additions made by his father, which included the advowson of the church of Besthorpe, and liberty of fishing one day and night in all his moats and new fisheries, namely the day and night before the anniversary or obit of the founder. (fn. 2)

The taxation of 1291 assigned to the priory an annual income of £153 1s. 2½d.; at that time it held property in no fewer than forty-three Norfolk parishes.

Boniface IX in 1399 sanctioned the appropriation to the prior and convent of Wymondham (whose endowments were formerly sufficient for twenty monks, but were then greatly reduced) of the perpetual vicarage of St. Mary's, Wymondham. The value of the vicarage did not exceed thirty marks, and that of the priory 600 marks. Upon the resignation or death of the vicar, they might have the church served by one of their monks, or by a secular priest, removable at will by the prior. (fn. 3)

The Valor of 1535 gives the clear annual value of the abbey at £211 16s. 6¼d.

Nigel, the first prior, is named in the charter by which the founder gave to the monastery his manor and church of Happisburgh. This was granted at the time of the interment of his wife, and he confirmed his donation by offering upon the high altar a silver cross in which were many precious relics, including a fragment of the true cross.

Ralph de Miers, a monk of St. Albans, was chosen prior in 1160, through the influence of Robert, the eighteenth abbot of St. Albans, and imposed upon the priory. With this direct violation of the charter of the founder of Wymondham began the unhappy strife that kept breaking out for the next three centuries between the great abbey and its strenuous vassal. Ralph is described by the chronicler of St. Albans as a religious but passionate man. Soon after his appointment the tenants of Happisburgh refused their dues and services to the prior, upon which Ralph, with the convent servants, and aided by the servants of William de Albini, earl of Arundel, the founder's son, broke open the doors of the tenants, and seized the goods of some and the persons of others. Whereupon the tenants, with their broken locks, set off for St. Albans to represent their case to the abbot as their superior lord. The abbot proceeded to Wymondham with a considerable retinue and forcibly entered the priory, and was in his turn resisted by the earl of Arundel. Very full details of the dispute and of the consequent actions are given by Walsingham; but the result was that the abbot mostly gained his way, set at defiance the enactments of the founder of Wymondham, and boldly claimed the right of the abbots to visit Wymondham just as often and as long as they pleased, and to appoint the priors, whom they henceforth nominated or recalled almost at pleasure, without reference to the convent of Wymondham or their patron. (fn. 4)

In the time of Stephen, the prior obtained the grant of a three days' fair at Wymondham on the eve, day and morrow of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, and also a confirmation of the weekly market.

In 1217 Alexander de Langley was appointed prior by William, twenty-second abbot of St. Albans, at the instance of the Earl of Arundel, but was soon recalled on the plea of unfitness for the post. In the place of Alexander the abbot appointed Ralph de Stanham, who was often called Ralph of Whitby, as he had formerly been a monk and then prior of that house. (fn. 5)

Soon after Ralph de Whitby's appointment, Abbot William visited Wymondham, with the result that Prior Ralph was speedily recalled on the plea of wasting the revenues of the cell, and courting the favour of the Earl of Arundel, the patron. Ralph retired to a hermitage assigned to him by his old priory of Whitby, and there ended his days after some years of holy living. (fn. 6) In the place of Prior Whitby, the abbot appointed William de Feschamp, but he was successfully objected to by the Earl of Arundel, as patron of the house. Thereupon Thomas Mead (usually called Thomas Medicus or Thomas the Physician) was appointed prior about 1224. He had accompanied the earl's father in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and brought back his body from the East, giving it reverent interment in the priory church of Wymondham. (fn. 7)

In 1228 an agreement was entered into between the bishop of Norwich and the abbot of St. Albans, as to the jurisdiction of the diocesan in the cells of Wymondham and Binham, whereby it was arranged that the priors of both houses should be presented for institution to the bishop and should attend his synod and sit with the other priors. (fn. 8)

William of St. Albans, who had been appointed prior in 1257, took part in the election of Roger de Norton as twenty-fourth abbot of St. Albans in 1260, and accompanied the abbot when he presented himself before the king, (fn. 9) he died on St. Gregory's day, 1262, and was buried in the choir of the church. On his death Isabel de Albini, countess of Arundel, claimed the sole power of confirming the prior of Wymondham, in accordance with the foundation charter. The abbot of St. Albans resisted, and a long suit began in the Roman courts. Eventually, on 14 September, 1264, the countess entered into a compromise with Abbot Roger, whereby William de Horton (her own nominee), was to be appointed prior, and on all future vacancies the countess and her heirs were to name three monks of St. Albans, one of whom was to be presented by the abbot to the bishop. (fn. 10) A joint letter, dated 8 November, was sent by both parties to their proctors at Rome, ordering them to stay further proceedings.

In April, 1300, a commission was appointed on the complaint of Abbot John III, of St. Albans, touching the persons who prevented him from visiting Wymondham priory, a cell to his abbey, as his predecessors had always been wont to do. (fn. 11) This was in consequence of the active resistance of Sir Robert Tateshall, the then patron. Hearing of the intended visitation, Sir Robert entered the priory and closed its gates as well as the doors of the church, and not only prevented the entry of Abbot John III, but refused permission to the prior or any representative to leave the priory to speak with the abbot. (fn. 12) Abbot John IV succeeded as twenty-fourth abbot of St. Albans in 1302, and in September of that year was present at the inaugural feast of the abbot of Bury St. Edmunds, where he met Sir Robert Tateshall. The abbot thought it prudent to put an end to all disputes, and by way of pacification restored to Sir Robert as patron of Wymondham, the livery of bread and ale from that priory, of which he had

been deprived. The result was that the patron treated the abbot with great courtesy and there was peace for a time, although the abbot did not really recognize Tateshall's right to the patronage of the priory, which he had claimed on the death of the Countess Isabel. (fn. 13)

Prior Pulleyn died on 25 December, 1303. The St. Albans annalist complains that during his rule he had complied more with the wishes of the patron than the abbot. On his death the escheator of the crown, acting in the name of the son and heir of Sir Robert Tateshall, who was under age and the king's ward, took possession of the priory, with a large following, seizing the keys and placing wardens at the gates and in all the offices. The convent pleaded that they held in free alms, but William Curzon, the escheator, persisted in taking possession. He also seized the grange at Happisburgh and inflicted various hardships on the tenants. At last on 5 March, 1304, at the prayer of the abbot of St. Albans, a temporary arrangement was made till the matter could be brought before the courts, and the abbot presented John de Stevenache, one of his monks, to the priory. Finally the abbot obtained from the justices of the King's Bench at York a formal declaration as to the exemption henceforth of the priory of Wymondham from the authority of the escheator, and the temporalities were restored to John de Stevenache. (fn. 14)

An order was entered on the Close Rolls in March, 1309, to deliver to Thomas de Cailli, kinsman and co-heir of Robert Tateshall, a tenant in chief of the late king, in whose wardship he died under age, the knights' fees and advowsons of the inheritance. The advowson of the priory of Wymondham was one of the possessions thus transferred, and with it was included the bread and ale that the lord was wont to receive each time he visited Wymondham. (fn. 15)

In the beginning of the reign of Edward II the priory was in money difficulties, and the prior obtained a loan of 100 marks from Walter de Langton, bishop of Lichfield, the king's treasurer. When Langton was in disgrace with the king, the crown took into its own hands debts due to the bishop, and as there was a sum of 140 marks due from the crown to one William Inge of Norfolk, for arrears of wages and compensation for the loss of horses in the Scotch war, the king transferred to Inge, in part payment of the 140 marks, this debt of 100 marks from the prior of Wymondham. (fn. 16)

John de Hurlee was appointed prior in 1317, by Abbot Hugh (1308-26). This abbot was grossly extravagant and ostentatious, and left the abbey burdened with all kinds of pensions and corrodies. As an example of his freehanded 'generosity' with the community's possessions, it is recorded that on one occasion when visiting the priory of Wymondham the abbot was pleased with the courtesy and hospitality of Sir Simon de Hethersete, a magnate of the district. Noticing Edmund, his infant heir, in the cradle, he conferred on the child the pension of 40s. due yearly from the priory to the abbey. Edmund de Hethersete lived to enjoy the pension for fifty years. (fn. 17) When Richard de Wallingford was chosen abbot in 1326, prior John de Hurlee was one of the electors. It was customary on the election of a new abbot for the priors of the various cells to make handsome offerings; but owing to the extravagance of the last abbot all the cells were embarrassed. The handsomest gift received from the cells by Abbot Richard was ten marks from the prior of Wymondham. (fn. 18)

In 1334 Richard de Hethersete, almoner of St. Albans, was appointed prior, and soon after his appointment was made collector of fleeces and corn for the king. Partly through his own negligence, but more through the fault of his colleague, Prior Hethersete by undertaking this work involved his house in considerable loss. The prior, who had done long and faithful service as almoner of the abbey, was so overcome with grief that it hastened his end. One good result was that the prior and other obedientiaries of the abbey were henceforth forbidden to act as proctors or executors, or to be collectors even in obedience to royal mandates. (fn. 19) In 1380 there was a grant made by the clergy of the province of Canterbury, of a subsidy to Richard II, and the bishop of Norwich was enjoined to find collectors for his diocese. The bishop ordered the prior of Wymondham to collect, whereupon Abbot Thomas removed the prior from his office and declared that he was exempt from the bishop's jurisdiction. Thereupon there was a brisk interchange of legal hostilities between the bishop and the abbot, involving several appearances of both litigants before the king's council. Eventually victory rested with the abbot, and on 1 August privilege was granted that neither the abbot nor the priors of his cells should be collectors or assessors of any grant or subsidy. (fn. 20)

Michael, twenty-ninth abbot of St. Albans, died of the pestilence in 1349, which at the same time carried off both prior and sub-prior. The choice of the convent at first fell on Henry de Stukeley, the prior of Wymondham, but on his definitely refusing to take upon himself the office of abbot, they elected Thomas, prior of Tynemouth. The new abbot set out for the papal court, and chose Prior Stukeley and

William de Dersingham, as the most religious and learned of the monks, as his companions. At Canterbury Dersingham was suddenly seized with plague, died, and was there buried. (fn. 21)

On the withdrawal of Nicholas Radcliffe from the priory in 1380, the abbot sent in his place to be prior William Killingworth, archdeacon of St. Albans. Nicholas, in his turn, became archdeacon; he lived to a great age, took an active part in the election of John, the thirty-first abbot, was an active controversialist (expugnator fortissimus) in the Wycliffe strife, was buried at St. Albans, under a costly marble tomb, and obtained an honourable place in their book of benefactors. (fn. 22) Killingworth was at St. Albans at the time of the Peasants' Rising in 1381, and when it had collapsed and the terrified townsmen were endeavouring to appease the abbot and purchase his favour he was sent as the abbot's deputy to receive an ancient chartulary back from them which had been stolen during the rising. (fn. 23) Whilst Killingworth was prior of Wymondham, seven of the monks of St. Albans and its cells joined the crusade in Flanders in 1383, under Henry le Spencer, bishop of Norwich. Among them was William York of Wymondham Priory. The prior of Hatfield Peverel, in Essex, who was one of the number, died in Flanders; the rest returned, but none of them regained their former health, having suffered much from the heat and from foul water. (fn. 24)

Thomas Walsingham, the historian, was appointed prior in 1394. He was one of the electors who chose John de la Moote as abbot in 1396, and that abbot recalled him to the abbey very shortly after his installation.

About this time a return was made of the annual contributions of the different cells to the mother abbey. From Wymondham there were three yearly payments, namely, 10s. for scholars at Oxford, 20s. as the subjection fee, and 26s. 8d. towards the expenses of the provincial chapter. (fn. 25) The cellarer's accounts for 1382 show that at this time there were sixteen monks in the priory (fn. 26) and the same number appears in 1423. (fn. 27) This had fallen to fourteen besides the prior in 1447, (fn. 28) and to eleven in 1500. (fn. 29) The income of the monastery during this period seems to have averaged about £350, and the expenditure was usually slightly in excess of that amount.

In 1446 a remarkable and ambitious man, Stephen London, D.D., was appointed prior of Wymondham by Abbot John VII. Stephen had been acting for some time as archdeacon of St. Albans, and had incurred the active dislike of Abbot John Stoke in consequence, it is said, of his plainness of speech in pointing out his superior's faults. In order to procure his removal from St. Albans the abbot caused Prior Waleys to resign Wymondham on the ground of old age and put Stephen in his place. The new prior speedily won the affections of his house, and more especially of Sir Andrew Ogard, the patron. Within a year of his appointment the abbot visited Wymondham, and apparently through jealousy ordered Stephen to resign the priory. This was not only distasteful to the prior but still more so to Sir Andrew Ogard, and in 1447 they jointly petitioned the king to sanction their application to the apostolic see to convert Wymondham into an abbey. Their case was an exceedingly strong one, for the action of the abbots of St. Albans, for more than two centuries, in the nomination and removal of priors was in absolute contradiction to the foundation charter; and it will be remembered that that charter expressly reserved to the crown or to the founder's successors power to transform the house into an abbey. The king gave his consent, and in 1448 Pope Nicholas V granted a bull in compliance with the letters supplicatory. (fn. 30)

On 26 November, 1449, Prior Stephen was formally elevated to the dignity of an abbot. Robert, bishop of Grado, suffragan of Norwich, with the various diocesan officials, and a great concourse of folk of all classes, both of the district and from a distance, assembled at Wymondham. Pontifical mass was sung with all solemnity at ten o'clock. After the reading of the gospel, Thomas Mikkelfelde, sub-prior, and William Westegate, clad in copes, conducted the prior to the steps of the high altar, whereupon Master Symon, the registrar, read in a loud voice the Latin charter of the king, followed by the papal bull. He was followed by Master John Wiggen hall, as vicar-general, who briefly and clearly explained all the circumstances in the vulgar tongue. Then the bishop gave the prior his blessing, and by virtue of the bull declared him abbot. At the conclusion of the mass the bishop conducted the abbot to the quire and there installed him. The convent at once reassembled in the chapter-house, where a record of the proceedings, duly witnessed, was inscribed by Master Godfrey Joye, notary public, and all the members of the chapter promised due obedience to their abbot. The company thereupon adjourned to the frater. (fn. 31)

Henceforth till the dissolution, Wymondham was an independent abbey; the abbots were elected out of the monks of the convent unless all consented to a contrary course; they were admitted by the bishop and presented to the patron, who could refuse none unless for notorious offences. It is anything but creditable to their first abbot, Stephen London, that, in the moment of his triumph, he addressed to the abbot of St. Albans a monstrous letter, which for bitter insults could not well be surpassed. Scriptural allusions to the stories of Doeg, Dathan, and Abiram, Susanna, and Pilate, are all pressed into his service to give point to his boundless abuse; the epistle thus ends:—'Vale et mores in meliores stude convertere.' (fn. 32)

At the time that he granted the bull of transference of the priory into an abbey, Pope Nicholas V took the very unusual step of issuing another bull to four monks of St. Albans authorizing them to leave that abbey without the assent of their abbot and to move to Wymondham. When William Albon, abbot of St. Albans, was visiting his Norfolk cell of Binham on 28 February, 1467, the prior showed him a copy of this bull whereby Richard Langley, Edmund Shenley, William Godered, and William Wysebeche, were permitted to leave St. Albans for Wymondham. The register of Abbot Albon states that Langley and Shenley dragged out their conventual life in the new abbey in the greatest misery, and that Langley died in a state of destitution. Godered declined to act on the apostolic letter and remained at St. Albans, while Wysebeche speedily repented and desired to return to St. Albans, and earnestly sought the abbot's leave. This was granted on 1 March, 1467, when Abbot Albon wrote to Abbot Bokenham giving the necessary sanction. (fn. 33)

Bishop Goldwell visited the abbey on Saturday, 13 October, 1492. The report thus enumerates the numerous sad irregularities discovered—that the divine offices are celebrated grudgingly (morose); that the monks buy and sell like merchants, contrary to religion; that the precinct walls are not well repaired; that the monks lawlessly hunt with dogs and nets; that after prime, the brothers mix with the seculars in the south part of the church; that the brothers are not in cloister at the customary hours; that they do not receive clothes but money from the chamberlain; that the frater is not properly guarded; that the buildings of the dorter and farmery are not repaired; that certain brothers leave the cloister for recreation without the abbot's leave; that they do not exercise themselves in the study of letters but are too fond of ease, and that the abbot has not presented a balance sheet to the monks for many years.

On the morrow of the exposure, the bishop compelled Abbot John to give up the administration of affairs and committed them to the charge of William Batell, one of the monks. (fn. 34) It was arranged that the abbot should leave and reside at the manor of Downham Hall, according to the form and conditions upon which John Nele lately held the manor, namely by paying £4 a year to the monastery. The £4 was to be deducted from the pension of the abbot. He was to receive each week for himself and three servants eighteen loaves of the best bread and eighteen loaves of 'Trencherd breede,' and eighteen flagons of customary ale, and every day a dish for dinner and another for supper of the better sort such as would serve for four monks in hall, and another dish not so good for his attendants. He was also to be supplied with candles and fuel, both for his chamber and kitchen, and other necessaries at the charge of the cellarer. If the abbot chose to live elsewhere than at Downham Hall, in any other honest quarters, he was to receive 7s. 4d. a week in lieu of provisions. Each of the three servants was to receive 20s. a year. The abbot was also to have, at the charge of the monastery, four shod horses, with saddles and bridles, and to have his expenses when he rode on business of the monastery or for its defence in the spiritual or temporal courts. Possibly the bishop consented to this liberal treatment of the exiled abbot as some kind of punishment to the convent at large, for so large a pension must have proved a heavy burden. It is noteworthy to observe that this businesslike agreement was drawn up on the Sunday. When it had been accepted by the abbot and convent, the bishop adjourned the visitation to the following day, and then again to the Thursday. Returning on the Thursday the bishop enjoined on the monks that none of them should dare to defame another, under pain of excommunication, and then further adjourned the visitation until the last day of the following May. (fn. 35) By thus keeping the visitation open, the diocesan was entitled to return and use more extreme measures with the monks, if the case demanded it, without any dilatory preliminaries.

When Bishop Nicke visited this house in June, 1514, the condition of things was, if possible, more disgraceful than in 1492. The abbot, Thomas Chamberlain, stated that the monks had broken the cloister bolts, and that the prior and other monks had broken open the evidence chest. William Bury, the prior, made a great variety of charges, divided into twenty heads, against those under his rule, serious and trivial, such as against Richard Cambridge for inveighing against the doctrine of the resurrection, or John Cambridge for furtively hiding a cookery book in his cubicle. On the other hand there was much

recrimination against the prior, who seems to have acted occasionally like a madman, and was indeed charged with fits of lunacy. He was accused of drawing a sword on one monk, striking two others with a stone in the cloister, maliciously breaking John Hengham's claricord, and not attending mattins oftener than once a month. Other evidence proved general disorder and discomfort, such as bad language, two cases of drunkenness, the occasional presence of women, general neglect of mass and mattins, the revealing of confession, ruinous state of some of the buildings, and disgraceful condition of the church vessels and ornaments. The immediate action of the bishop was the dismissal of the prior and an injunction to the convent to elect a successor within a month. (fn. 36)

Before the record of the next visitation Wymondham had the good fortune to be ruled by an abbot of much learning and of high character. To Thomas Chamberlain in 1517 succeeded John Bransforth, D.D., and in 1520 John Holt, titular bishop of Lydda, and a suffragan-bishop of the diocese of London, was elected. He was the tutor and friend of Sir Thomas More and the author of the first Latin grammar that was printed in England, about 1497. (fn. 37) He was an old man at the time of his election, but his influence for good over a notoriously unruly house must have soon made itself felt.

When the suffragan-bishop of Chalcedon and his brother commissioners visited Wymondham on 29 June, 1520, the abbot's only complaint was a neglect on the part of the monks to sing the Lady Mass for six or eight days. The prior, James Blome, stated that some of the windows of the church were broken, and that pigeons entered and defiled the books. William Bury, their prior, was then precentor, and charged one monk (Richard Cambridge) with absence from mattins, and another with drunkenness. Richard Cambridge said that they had not a washerwoman, a barber, or a clock. As compared, however, with the last two visitations, the condition of things was satisfactory. The injunctions made by the visitors ordered the glazing of the church windows, the rendering of an annual account by the abbot to the senior monks, the providing of two secular servants to see to the lighting and bell ringing, &c. (fn. 38)

When the abbey was visited in July, 1526, the improvement begun under Abbot John was more than maintained under his successor, William Castleton, a monk from Norwich, who had been elected that year. Even William Bury, once so riotous, and now restored in his old age to the office of prior, had now no other complaint than that the monks did not proceed in a body to the dorter after compline. Richard Cambridge was still there, but instead of breathing forth complaints about his brethren, he merely asked a question of the visitors as to a pension due to them from the abbot and convent of Langley. The injunctions provided that the monks were to retire to their dorter in a body after compline, and to depart in the same way to prime; that the quire books should be repaired; and that a tutor be provided for the instruction of the novices. (fn. 39)

Abbot Castleton resigned in 1532, and became prior of Norwich, and subsequently the first dean of the new establishment. His successor, Eligius or Loys Ferrers, D.D., elected in 1532, was the last abbot. On 31 August, 1534, the abbot and ten of the monks subscribed in their chapterhouse to the king's supremacy. (fn. 40)

According to the scandalous comperta of Legh and Ap Rice presented early, in 1536, four of the Wymondham monks confessed their uncleanness. (fn. 41)

On 22 August, 1537, Abbot Loys wrote to Cromwell acknowledging the receipt of his letter desiring them to grant a lease of the manor and parsonage of Happisburgh to William Clifton. The abbot stated that there was nothing he could ask that they would not willingly perform unless it was against the benefit of their monastery, as this would greatly be. The lordship had never been let, and they got many beneficial things from it, such as wreck and fish, and they had no other pasture for their sheep whereby they maintain hospitality according to the king's injunctions. The letter was signed by the abbot, Thomas Thaxted, cellarer, Thomas Lynne, subprior, John Harlyston, third prior, Edward Saame, chanter, Richard Cambridge, sub-chanter, Robert Colchester, sacrist, and three others. On 13 September the abbot sent another letter in reply to an answer from Cromwell, wherein doubt had been thrown upon his previous statements. The abbot was sure that hospitality was better maintained for both rich and poor under the present arrangement. If they had to leave Happisburgh they would be compelled to sell their sheep and buy mutton in the market. He boldly asked Cromwell to prefer the maintenance and profit of a multitude 'to the particular commodity and preferment of this one person, William Clifton.' (fn. 42)

On 30 January, 1538, Abbot Loys again wrote to the lord privy seal, saying that after his return from London he had told his brethren of Cromwell's great goodness, notwithstanding the sinister and untrue

reports of William Clifton. The convent agreed to grant him an annuity of 53s. 4d., and the patent of this he sent by the bearer, together with a 'portegewe of gold.' (fn. 43)

Priors of Wymondham

Nigel, (fn. 44) occurs c. 1115

Alexius, (fn. 45) occurs 1136

Galienus (fn. 46)

Ralf de Miers, (fn. 47) occurs 1160

Nicholas (fn. 48)

Raymund, (fn. 49) occurs 1187

Donatus, (fn. 50) occurs 1190

Alexander de Langley, (fn. 51) occurs 1217

Ralph de Stanham alias Whitby, (fn. 52) occurs c. 1218

William de Feschamp, (fn. 53) occurs c. 1218

Thomas Medicus, (fn. 54) occurs 1224

William de St. Albans, (fn. 55) died 1262

William de Hortone, (fn. 56) 1264

Roger de Hare (fn. 57)

Adam Pulleyn, occurs 1285, (fn. 58) died (fn. 59) 1303

John de Stevenache, (fn. 60) occurs 1304

William de Somerton, (fn. 61) elected 7 February, 1317

John de Hurlee, (fn. 62) elected 3 February, 1317

Nicholas de Flamstede, (fn. 63) elected 1323

Richard de Hedersete, (fn. 64) elected 1334

Henry de Stukeley, (fn. 65) elected 1337

Henry de Stukeley, (fn. 66) reappointed 1347

Nicholas de Radclyf, (fn. 67) elected 1360

William Killingworth, (fn. 68) elected 1380

Thomas Walsingham, (fn. 69) elected 1394

William Wyndruch, (fn. 70) elected 1396

John Savage, (fn. 71) elected 1400

William Boyden, (fn. 72) elected 1405

John Isham, (fn. 73) elected 1416

William Alnwyk, (fn. 74) elected 1420

William Boyden, (fn. 75) reappointed 1420

John Hatfield, LL.D. (fn. 76) elected 1425

Peter Waleys, (fn. 77) elected 1437

Abbots of Wymondham

Stephen London, (fn. 78) elected 1446

William Dyxwell alias Bukenham, (fn. 79) elected 1465

John Kertelyngge, (fn. 80) elected 1471

John Shilgate, (fn. 81) elected 1508

Thomas Chandler, (fn. 82) elected 1511

Thomas Chamberlain, (fn. 83) elected 1514

John Bransforth, D.D., (fn. 84) elected 1517

John Holt, bishop of Lydda, (fn. 85) elected 1520

William Castleton, (fn. 86) elected 1526

Eligius Ferrers, D.D., (fn. 87) elected 1532

Priory Seals

A fragment of the first twelfth-century seal (about 3 in. by 2 in.) shows the seated Virgin with Holy Child on left knee. Only the letters WIM remain of the legend. (fn. 88)

The fine circular (2½ in.) fourteenth-century seal bears the seated Virgin and Holy Child, with cruciform nimbus, under an elaborate canopy. On each side is an angel on one knee censing; below there is the head and hand of an angel on each side upholding the platform of the throne. In the base is the half-length kneeling figure of the prior.

Legend—

SIG CLESIE . ET: CONVENTUS SC WYMUNDEHAM (fn. 89)