

**NORTHILL COLLEGE  
and  
ST ANNE'S CHANTRY**

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## Abbreviations

BARS	Bedfordshire Archives
Beds	County of Bedfordshire
<i>BHRS</i>	Bedfordshire Historical Record Society publication
<i>Cal. Close R.</i>	<i>Calendar of the Close Rolls</i>
<i>Inquis. p.m.</i>	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem</i>
<i>Cal. Pap. Reg.</i>	<i>Calendar of Papal Registers</i>
<i>Cal. Pat. R.</i>	<i>Calendar of the Patent Rolls</i>
Northants	County of Northamptonshire
Shrops	County of Shropshire
TNA	The National Archives
<i>VE</i>	<i>Valor Ecclesiasticus, temp. Henry VIII</i>
<i>VCH Beds</i>	<i>Victoria County History: A History of the County of Bedford</i>
Yorks	County of Yorkshire

# 1 NORTHILL COLLEGE

## Introduction

Land was at a premium by end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The Cistercian monasteries of Wardon and Woburn, together with the Gilbertine priory of Chicksands, had dominated the central Bedfordshire countryside for more than 250 years, and with other religious houses and secular lords exercising control over the remaining assets, prospects of any single individual finding sufficient resources to sustain a new religious institution were slim.

Costs had rocketed since the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. Edward I had passed the Statutes of Mortmain (1279 and 1290) which aimed to preserve the kingdom's revenues by preventing land from passing into the hands of the Church, thus avoiding the payment of taxes and circumventing other obligations. Any such gifts of land were therefore conditional upon the donor purchasing an expensive licence from the Crown.

Natural disasters hit the whole of Europe during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The Great Famine (1315-17) proved devastating, and plague came to Bedfordshire in 1349. The population declined countrywide, and there was a general shift from rural to urban settings. This affected the recruitment of monks into established monasteries, while the pool of potential lay brothers was effectively wiped out.

Yet in common with their forebears, those with sufficient wealth remained determined to found religious houses where prayers would be offered for the welfare of their souls. Circumstances however called for an alternative approach and Northill College was one of thirty-five English collegiate churches first established in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Rather than building afresh, fifteen of these, including Northill, appropriated the parish church, placing the existing building at the heart of their religious observances.<sup>1</sup>

All medieval collegiate churches would have been endowed at their foundation with income-yielding property, commonly rents or parochial tithes. Arrangements for the chantry college at Northill provided for the canons (classified as 'fellows' or 'chaplains') to receive a fixed stipend income, conditional upon maintaining prayers and saying masses for the repose of the founders' family.

A large number of the chantry colleges survived beyond the dissolution of the monasteries (1536-40), but the heads of many English collegiate churches saw it as expedient to surrender their colleges to the Crown. Of those which did not capitulate voluntarily, most, Northill being one of them, were compulsorily dissolved in 1547 by the Protestant king, Edward VI.

## Foundation of Northill College (1400-1411)

Early documents confirm that Northill College was founded for the welfare of the souls of Sir John Trailly and his son Reginald (Reynold),<sup>2</sup> while a papal bull of 1405 noted permission had been sought for the inclusion of 'all faithful departed'.<sup>3</sup> Sir John Trailly died on 18 June 1400 and an inquisition held in Bedford on 12 August 1400 established that at the time of his demise,

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<sup>1</sup> Bere Ferris (Devon) 1330; Lowthorpe (Yorks) 1333; Ottery St Mary (Devon) 1337; Bristol, All Saints c. 1370; Cotterstock (Northants) 1339; Bunbury (Cheshire) 1387; Irthlingborough (Northants) 1388; Maidstone, All Saints (Kent) 1395. Northill (Beds) 1405; Battlefield (Shrops) 1410; Fotheringhay (Northants) 1410; Hemingborough (Yorks) 1426; Lingfield (Surrey) 1431; Manchester, St Mary St Denys and St George (1421); Newport (Shrops) 1442.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. Pat. R., Henry IV*, vol. 2, p. 479; The foundation deed of the College of Northill dated 9 November 1406 [BARS, HY91].

<sup>3</sup> 'Lateran Regesta 120: 1404-1405', in *Cal. Pap. R.*, vol. 6, *British History Online*, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-papal-registers/brit-ie/vol6/pp22-35>>. The bull described Reginald as 'the late Reginald his son, donsel,' meaning that the young man was unmarried. The same papal register uses 'damsel' when referring to an unmarried woman of high birth.

he 'held in his demesne as of fee: Northill, the manor and advowson, of the king in chief by knight service; annual values, manor 20 marks, advowson 40 marks'.<sup>4</sup>

On 8 July 1401 Reginald, heir to his father's estates, paid 10 marks (£6 13s 4d) to Henry IV for a licence 'to enfeof Gerard Braybrok, 'chivaler', the younger, Thomas Peyure, Edmund Hampden, John Hervy, John Warde, parson of the church of Northyevell, and John Herteshorn of his manor of Northyevell, except one acre of land in it which he [the king] wishes to be reserved that Reginald may be his tenant, and the advowson of the church of the same town, held in chief'.<sup>5</sup>

Elsewhere, Sir John Trailly had held from the king two messuages, 120 acres and a fishery in Quy, as parcel of the manor of Quy. The rest of the manor (held from the bishop of Ely) was placed into the hands of 'John Warde, clerk, and Ralph de Pokelyngton'. After Ralph's death, John Warde (rector of Northill) granted it to Reynold de Grey, lord of Wexford and of Ruthin, Gerard Braybroke, knight, junior, Reynold Ragoun, John Hervy and John Herteshorn.<sup>6</sup> Reginald released his rights in the manor to them, retaining only the parcel held from the king.<sup>7</sup> Further to a charter issued by his father, Reginald also granted all his rights in the manor of Carlton (Beds) to the same six men, to be held for the lifetime of his mother Joan (d. 1432).<sup>8</sup>

Unlike his father, Reginald was not knighted. He had no siblings, and died a childless bachelor on 18 October 1401 aged just 23 years. An inquisition held in Bedford on 16 December 1401 established that at the time of his death, Reginald 'held in his demesne as of fee: Northill, 1 a., of the king in chief by knight service, parcel of the manor, which with the advowson, except the 1 a., he granted by his charter' of 8 July 1401 to the six named individuals and their heirs, and the tenants attorned to them. The acre was said to be worth 6d yearly.<sup>9</sup>

Hull (1956) observed that 'The chantry certificate (*supra*) speaks of Sir John and Reginald Trailly as the founders and it seems likely that Braybrook and the rest were only acting as trustees of their wishes, though it is not certain, as the wills of Sir John and Reginald do not seem to have survived'.<sup>10</sup> Having died without issue, Reginald was the last of the de Trailli line. It is therefore conceivable that by founding Northill College, he and his father intended the gift not only for the salvation of their own souls, but as a means of leaving a permanent memorial to the family which stretched back to Geoffrey de Trailli and his wife Albreda, [half] sister of Walter Espec, the founder of Wardon Abbey.

On 2 November 1402 Sir Gerard Braybrok the younger and his five colleagues paid 20 marks to Henry IV for a licence to grant the manor of Northill (less the acre) and the advowson to John Wakeryng (clerk), William de Bergh (clerk), John Broghton, Robert Whytyngnam, John Whetele, John Shryngton (clerk), Henry Kays, Richard Stacy, John Pountfret, William Wanstall, John Craddok and Robert de la Chambre.<sup>11</sup>

Two years later, on 8 December 1404 at Westminster, Sir Gerard and the others paid the king for another licence, allowing them to retrieve the advowson and change the church into a college. Headed by a master or warden, the establishment would have as many fellows,

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<sup>4</sup> 'Inquisitions Post Mortem, Henry IV, Entries 51-102', in *Inquis, p.m.*, vol. 18, 'JOHN TRAILLY, KNIGHT' (101). *British History Online*, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/inquis-post-mortem/vol18/pp20-35>>.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. Pat. R., Henry IV*, vol. 1, p. 523.

<sup>6</sup> *Inquis, p.m.*, vol. 18, 'JOHN TRAILLY, KNIGHT' (100).

<sup>7</sup> 'Inquisitions Post Mortem, Henry IV, Entries 620-677', in *Inquis, p.m.*, vol. 18, 'REYNOLD TRAILLY' (643). *British History Online*, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/inquis-post-mortem/vol18/pp203-227>>.

<sup>8</sup> *Inquis, p.m.*, vol. 18, 'REYNOLD TRAILLY' (644).

<sup>9</sup> *Inquis, p.m.*, vol. 18, 'REYNOLD TRAILLY' (644).

<sup>10</sup> P. Hull, 'A Note on the Foundation of Northill College in 1406', *BHRS*, 36 (1956), 2 (Footnote (9)).

<sup>11</sup> *Cal. Pat. R., Henry IV*, vol. 2, p. 178.

chaplains and other ministers as they thought fit to pray for the souls of Sir John and his late son. They would then grant the advowson to the master and fellows in perpetuity, free of all secular obligations, and in turn, those chaplains would appropriate the assets of the church to support themselves. In recognition of the family link with Quy, the master and fellows would also be obliged to pay an allowance of 5 marks annually to a chaplain who would celebrate divine service in the chapel of the manor of Quy for the aforementioned souls.<sup>12</sup>

The advowson was recovered on 12 February 1405, and a mandate sought from Pope Innocent VII for the establishment of the collegiate church.<sup>13</sup> On 7 May 1405 Pope Innocent VII issued a bull to [William] the abbot of Wardon detailing the provisions by which the parish church would be changed into a church for a master or warden and four or more chaplains. A later document confirmed that the statutes also allowed for two choristers. The community would have at its disposal the resources belonging to the church, the value of which did not exceed 80 marks, and pious offerings from the 'said patrons and other faithful'. The patrons would direct which ordinances (rites, services) would be observed, and in the event that the resources proved insufficient, they would augment them as necessary. It was also mandated that on the resignation or death of the rector, John Warde, the master and chaplains would take possession of the church and have it served by one of their number, who would have 'cure of souls of the parishioners'.<sup>14</sup>

On 18 December 1405 Innocent VII addressed a decree to John Warde, noting that Henry IV had given the 'customary assent' to the proposals, and orders given to the abbot of Wardon to 'erect it [the church] into a collegiate church'.<sup>15</sup> For reasons unspecified, the abbot was not able to obey the papal bull of 7 May 1405 personally (*personaliter intendere non valebat*) and a deed dated 3 March 1406 entrusted William Hunden, archdeacon of Rochester, with carrying out the bull in his place.<sup>16</sup>

On 11 July 1406 the pope agreed that if John Warde were to be appointed master of the collegiate church, he might hold a second benefice at the same time, although he would be required to reside within the college, thus avoiding the parish being served by a non-resident parson, a frequent occurrence. However, the pope died before letters of dispensation were made out, leaving his successor, Gregory XII, to confirm the terms in writing on 19 December 1406.<sup>17</sup> On 30 September 1406 John Warde quit-claimed to Braybrook and others 'all right to the advowson etc.' meaning that he formally renounced all of his rights in their favour.

More than five years having passed since the death of Reginald Trailly, a deed of 9 November 1406, witnessed by Baldwin Pigot knight, William Boson, John Launceleyg (?), Thomas Stacy, and John Boteler was sealed. The document confirmed that archdeacon William Hunden, Sir Gerard Braybrook and the others had set up the college of Northill, where John Warde was to be the first master. They appointed four chaplains who were to obey the master, and who together were to perform divine services. Warde and his successors were to govern the college and perform the ordinances of the founders.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Latin version of the king's licence dated 8 December 1404 recited in full in *Mon.*, vol. 6 pt. 3 (1849), pp. 1399-1400; *Cal. Pat. R., Henry IV*, vol. 2, p. 479; Copy Letters Patent making Northill Church collegiate [BARS, HY90].

<sup>13</sup> Foundation deed [BARS, HY91].

<sup>14</sup> 'Lateran Regesta 120: 1404-1405', in *Cal. Pap. R.*, vol. 6, *British History Online*, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-papal-registers/brit-ie/vol6/pp22-35>>; *BHRS*, 36, 1.

<sup>15</sup> 'Lateran Regesta 128: 1406-1407', in *Cal. Pap. R.*, vol. 6, *British History Online*, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-papal-registers/brit-ie/vol6/pp101-113>>.

<sup>16</sup> Foundation deed [BARS, HY91]. The copy held in Bedfordshire Archives has been much mutilated, all the margins and seals having been cut off. Wherever the word "Pope" occurs it has been obliterated.

<sup>17</sup> 'Lateran Regesta 128: 1406-1407'.

<sup>18</sup> Foundation deed [BARS, HY91].

On 10 April 1408 Pope Gregory XII confirmed that the 'collegiate church of the parish church of North Yevell' had been established under the supervision of William, archdeacon of Rochester, acting under commission from the abbot of Wardon.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps all did not go smoothly with the foundation at first, for a bull of Gregory XII on 21 May 1408 to the archdeacon of Bedford ordered those 'sons of iniquity' who had taken away lands and possessions of the college to make full satisfaction to the archdeacon under threat of excommunication.<sup>20</sup>

In spring 1411 Pope Gregory reconfirmed the establishment of the collegiate church, noting that 'the warden or master shall be elected by the chaplains'. He added 'that the bishop and the archdeacon of Bedford may take the fruits at each voidance', referring to a payment made to the Church hierarchy by the new incumbent of a benefice.<sup>21</sup>

### **Masters, fellows and choristers**

There is nothing to suggest that number of chaplains ever exceeded a master and four fellows. The statutes called for the master to receive food and drink for himself and one servant, and sufficient fodder for two horses, while the four fellows were to have food and drink provided by the college, as well as their wages. The college was also required to give the two choristers food and drink, clothing and education.<sup>22</sup>

The chaplains had the right to select the master, but were not presented or instituted themselves. The process involved the fellows nominating their chosen candidate for the post, after which he was instituted and inducted by the bishop of Lincoln into both college and parsonage. Responsibilities therefore clearly extended not only to the college and its ordinances, but also the parishioners' spiritual welfare.<sup>23</sup>

In July 1422 Richard Heth, rector of Shillington, was elected to the post of master by chaplains William Chorlton, Simon Paxswayn, John Brumpton, and John Newman.<sup>24</sup> In 1526 the master, John Underhill, received a stipend of £7 6s 8d, while the chanter and three fellows each received annual stipends of £6 bringing the wage bill to £31 6s 8d. The master's income remained unchanged in 1547, but with the stipends of the four fellows reduced to £3 6s 8d apiece, the cost dropped to £13 6s 8d.<sup>25</sup> Shortly before the dissolution in 1547 the master was named as the Reverend Thomas Grene, who had been in post for at least 10 years. The four fellows were Dominus John Lynne, Master William Sweetbone, John Cater Clerk, and Dominus Robert Grene.<sup>26</sup>

A list of known masters is at Appendix 1.

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<sup>19</sup> 'Lateran Regesta 131: 1407-1408', in *Cal. Pap. R.*, vol. 6, *British History Online*, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-papal-registers/brit-ie/vol6/pp128-147>>.

<sup>20</sup> *BHRS*, 36, 3-4.

<sup>21</sup> 'Lateran Regesta 145: 1410-1412', in *Cal. Pap. R.*, vol. 6, *British History Online*, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-papal-registers/brit-ie/vol6/pp205-212>>.

<sup>22</sup> 'Records of Northill College No. II', trans. C. Gore Chambers, *BHRS*, 2 (1914), 119; *BHRS*, 36, 1.

<sup>23</sup> *BHRS*, 2, 119-20.

<sup>24</sup> *BHRS*, 36, 4.

<sup>25</sup> *BHRS*, 36, 1.

<sup>26</sup> *BHRS*, 2, 112; *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, vol. 4, p. 199.

## College precinct

The parish church was situated on the west side of Church Lane [TL 1490 4655] with the College precinct of about 5.22 acres opposite [TL 1503 4650]. A description of the infrastructure dating to 1545/47 shows:

### On the south side within the college precinct

[Upper floor] Four chambers (The Master's Chambers)

[Upper floor] Parlour

[Ground floor] A library with a chapel beneath the parlour

[Ground floor] Hall

[Ground floor] Four chambers outside the door of the hall

[Ground floor] Buttery

[Upper floor] Four chambers (The Fellows' Chambers)

[Ground floor] A chamber and a storehouse underneath The Fellows' Chambers<sup>27</sup>

A malthouse, kiln house, two stables, a hay house, three barns and five chambers for storing grain, and a granary for storing malt.

### On the north side

A kitchen with brewery and bakehouse

### On the east side

A small building for geese, chickens and other fowls

An old barn in the outer yard

An orchard (estimated to be 1 acre) containing a dovecote, 3 ponds and a small well.

The above assets would be worth 40s pa if let.

Also within the precinct was a horse-mill and mill house let to William Wood on 20 September 1545 for 13s 4d annually, while a close of meadow called Pear-tree close (estimated to be 1 acre 3 roods and a half of land) was valued at 6s 8d if it were to be let.<sup>28</sup>

## Asset management

The earliest available evidence of a grant of land, over and above the endowments given when the college was founded, dates to 1419/20 when Thomas Stacy, lord of half of the lordship of Beeston, granted pasture at Beeston to St Mary's College, Northill.<sup>29</sup> It is likely that Thomas was either the same individual or the heir of the Thomas Stacy who witnessed the foundation deed for the college on 9 November 1406.

In 1421/22 'John Warde, Master, and the brethren of the College of Our Lady, Northill, parsons of the parish church of Northill, granted the wastes of Beeston to the abbot of Wardon and Thomas Stacy. Henry Godefrey was named as the lord of the manor of Northill, and William Cherleton [Chorlton], Simon Paxsweyn [Paxswayn], John Newman, as 'priests of the said college'.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> It is not known whether the master's dwelling and accommodation for the fellows were within the same building.

<sup>28</sup> *BHRS*, 2, 111-13.

<sup>29</sup> Grant to the College by Thomas Stacy in 7 Hen. V [TNA, C 148/92].

<sup>30</sup> Grant by John Warde, Master, to the Abbot of Wardon and Thomas Stacy 9 Hen V [TNA, C 147/238].



In [?1511/12] Augustine London, abbot of Wardon leased lands in Ickwell to Robert Boteler, brother of the college of Northill, who was acting on behalf of John Underhill, master of the college.<sup>31</sup> On 12 January 1517 'Simon Assheley, John Heryng, and William Hale, late feoffees of the lands hereafter named to the use of John Hunderhyll, clerk, dean of the college of Wallingford, co. Berks to John Hunderhyll, master of the college of St. Mary of Northill and the follows [sic] there: Manor of Budna (Bodeho alias Budenhowe alias Buddenho Berelles and Frenches) [in Northill]; lands in Thorncote (Thoroncote) [in Northill], Northill (Northyevyll): Beds'.<sup>32</sup>

A survey of the college dated to 1534-35 sheds light on the use of commons, tithes and income from oblations (offerings).<sup>33</sup>

### **Commons**

They [the master and fellows] could graze the following animals on the common land throughout the year: 300 sheep, 6 cows and a bull, 4 carthorses, and 30 pigs.

### **Tithes**

They [the master and fellows] were to receive 'the tithes of all the towne [of Northill]', estimated to be 30 loads of hay annually, 120 quarters of barley, 30 quarters of beans and peas, wheat [?10] quarters, 8 quarters of rye, and 3 quarters of oats.<sup>34</sup>

They have also the tithe of wool, usually 10 stone (63½ kg) and tithe lambs, generally 40 animals.

They also have 'tithe pigges of the town the number wherof by yere' is 30; 20 tithe geese yearly, and tithes of eggs, flax, wax, honey and other produce.

### **Oblations**

They [the master and fellows] were to keep all of the oblations assessed to be in the region of £3 annually.

Six shillings were anticipated on each of the four 'offering daies' bringing the expected total to 24s each year.

The offerings at marriages, purifications of women, christenings and other oblations were also retained by the college.

## **Valuation of the Church (1535)**

When Henry VIII ordered a valuation of the Church's estate in 1535, the gross income of Northill College was recorded as follows:

### **Spiritualities**

Rectory of the collegiate church including 11s 4d for the tithes of the rectory  
**£50 11s 4d**

### **Temporalities**

Rents and farms in Northill	£4 4s 2d
Rent from the late Edward Stacy in Northill	£6 4s 0½d
<b>Total in Northill</b>	<b>£10 8s 2½d</b>

<sup>31</sup> Lease by Augustine London, abbot of Wardon to Robert Boteler [TNA, C 146/10316].

<sup>32</sup> Grant [TNA, E 41/360].

<sup>33</sup> *BHRS*, 2, 124-25.

<sup>34</sup> One quarter of wheat = 4½ cwt (228.61 kg). S. Coleman and J. Wood, *Historic Landscape and Archaeology. Glossary of Terms* ((Bedfordshire County Council, 1985), p. 49.

Rents of free tenants in Tempsford	13s 3½d
Rents of tenants 'at farm' in Tempsford	£6 13s 4½d
Rents of tenants at will in Tempsford	33s 4d
<b>Total in Tempsford</b>	<b>£9 0s 0d</b>
Woodland and underwood containing 8½ acres	8s 6d
Fines, amercements and perquisites of the court	6s 8d
<b>Other income</b>	<b>15s 2d</b>

Taxes were based on turnover rather than profit, but certain expenses were deducted to give a net figure on which tax was levied:

**Rents resolute** due to the abbot of Wardon 17d;<sup>35</sup> and by custom to the prior of St John of Jerusalem 23½d; Francis Pygott 2s 7½d; George Barnardiston 2s 5½d; Magister [Master] Clubnoll 4s 6d; Dno [Dominus] Vaus<sup>36</sup> 20d. Payment to the Lord King for the certainty of Budno 3s 4d;<sup>37</sup> and likewise for the certainties of Ickwell and Caldecote 6½d. **(Total 18s 6d)**

**Tithes etc** Earl of Pembroke for Stacys land in Northill 53s 4d; tithes payable to the rectory of Sandy, and tithes of grain and hay in Beeston payable to the parish of Sandy £4; archdeacon of Bedford for synodals, and for holding the collegiate church 10s 6d. **(Total £7 3s 10d)**

**Salaries** paid to the seneschal (steward) Sir William Gascoigne 13s 4d; Henry Tyngey, bailiff of Tempsford 6s 8d; and William Fletcher, bailiff of Northill 6s 8d. **(Total 26s 8d)**

The tax bill for Northill College was calculated as follow:

Spiritualities	<b>£50 11s 4d</b>
Temporalities	<b>£20 3s 4½d</b>
	<b>= £70 14s 8½d gross income</b>
Less allowable expenses	<b>£9 9s 0d</b>
	<b>= £61 5s 8½d net income</b>
Tax due	<b>= £6 2s 7d<sup>38</sup></b>

<sup>35</sup> **rent resolute**: rent payable to Crown and others from the lands of religious houses, and still payable after dissolution.

<sup>36</sup> Occurs elsewhere as Dominus Thomas Vaus of Harrowden.

<sup>37</sup> **certeinté**: Anglo-Norman word meaning a fixed amount of money.

<sup>38</sup> *Valor ecclesiasticus temp. Henr. VIII: autoritate regia institutus*, 6 vols, ed. J. Caley, (London, 1821), vol. 4, p. 196, 'NORTHYELL COLLEG', <[https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Valor\\_ecclesiasticus\\_temp\\_Henr\\_VIII\\_auct/fCZDAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1](https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Valor_ecclesiasticus_temp_Henr_VIII_auct/fCZDAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1)>.

### **Impact of the Dissolution of Wardon Abbey (1537)**

Wardon Abbey was suppressed on 4 December 1537 and all of its assets surrendered into the king's hands. The Court of Augmentations accounts for 1537/38 show the 'Master & Society of the College of St Mary of Northill' holding the following resources formerly belonging to the abbot, and for which rents were now due to the Crown:

- Certain land in Northill, 17d (freehold). No further details, but the payment occurred as an allowable expense in 1535;<sup>39</sup>
- A small area called le Hempland in Ickwell, 8d (tenants at will); and<sup>40</sup>
- Drewelles Wood in Northill with all profits from the wood, which was leased to the college on 2 June 1526 for 40-year term, 10s (fixed term rent).<sup>41</sup>

Further to an agreement made between the abbot and the master on 1 October 1486, the monks paid 6s annually to the college in lieu of tithes derived from a field called Trayleystockyng or Trayley Field and New Close in the parish of Northill.<sup>42</sup>

### **Dissolution of the Chantries (1547)**

The Abolition of Chantries Act signed by Edward VI in 1547 saw the closure of chantries and guild chapels. Enquiries were made to determine all of their possessions, and their assets seized. Part of a rental dated to about that time offers an insight into the assets held by the college in Northill, which totalled £21 7s 1¼d plus half a farthing (Appendix 2).<sup>43</sup> The college was dissolved that year, its assets confiscated by the Crown, and the church returned to ordinary parochial status.

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<sup>39</sup> 'Court of Augmentations Accounts for Bedfordshire – I', ed. Y. Nicholls, *BHRS*, 63 (1984), 98 (129).

<sup>40</sup> *BHRS*, 63, 99 (130).

<sup>41</sup> *BHRS*, 63, 100 (131).

<sup>42</sup> *BHRS*, 63, 100 (132).

<sup>43</sup> *BHRS*, 2, 113-19.

## 2 ST ANNE'S CHANTRY

### Foundation of St Anne's Chantry (1494)

St Anne's Chantry was established above the church porch at Northill almost 90 years after Northill College was founded. There is no evidence to suggest that the porch was rebuilt to accommodate the chantry. Indeed, the small endowment would not have supported such a project, which suggests that existing space was repurposed.

A charter sealed at Thorncote on 16 September 1494 explains the background, beginning with events nearly 31 years earlier.<sup>44</sup> On 26 June 1463 William Risley and John Percell, lately of Beeston, had granted (among other things) to Ralf Bromesale and Thomas Mylward, and to John Buttler gentleman of Meppershall, Thomas Carter, Henry Coke, and John Hawkyn of Beeston, and Robert Butler of Northill (deceased) 'All those lands, tenements, meadows, grasslands and pastures, woods, and rents and services in the towns and fields of Beeston, Thorncote, and Hatch called Juells'.

In his will, William Risley bequeathed all of the lands and other premises to his daughter Agnes for the term of her life, stipulating that after her death, they were to pass to her son and heir, William Fitz. William Fitz then left the lands to his wife Elizabeth, to be held for her lifetime. William predeceased his wife, and Elizabeth remarried, becoming the wife of John Taylard. It was confirmed by decree and judgement in chancery on 26 June [in the time of Henry VII, 1485-1509] that arrangements to transfer the lands to Elizabeth Taylard had been completed.

William Fitz determined that after Elizabeth's death, the lands were to pass to John Gray, Nicholas Coke, John Ussher, Thomas Carter, William Taylor, John Tittesmersh, William Tittesmersh, William Gylmyn, their heirs and assigns, [with the income used] for the support of some respectable Chaplain in the Chapel of St Anne above the porch of Northill church. The chaplain was to celebrate divine services there and to pray for the soul of William Fitz, that of his grandfather, William Risley, and the souls of William's family and friends. The charter was sealed by Ralf Bromesale and Thomas Mylward in front of witnesses Thomas Grey, gentleman, and others.

An undated memorandum states that 'The chantry was founded by the last will of William Fitz who willed certain lands to his wife for the term of her life, and the remainder to certain persons to find a priest to sing in a chapel over the porch of the parish church of Northill. A priest had been found, and would be funded from the revenues of the lands up to a maximum of £3 1s 11½d [per annum]. There is no manse, goods or chattels belonging to the chantry'.<sup>45</sup>

### Asset management

When Thomas Gylmyn of Milton Ernest made his will on 26 June 1506, bequests included 20d to 'the chapter house of Wardon [Abbey] and the same amount to 'the brotherhood of St Anne "in the chapel of Wardon"'. However, the latter relates not to Old Warden parish church or the abbey, but to St Anne's Chantry in Northill, and it is suggested that Thomas was either the brother or cousin of the William Gylmyn documented in 1494.<sup>46</sup>

A memorandum confirms that the aforementioned William Gylmyn and John Tittesmershe were still alive in 1528, when they, with others, 'by their deed given 9 November 1528, delivered, demised and enfeoffed to Nicholas Harding, George Barnardiston gentleman, Reginald Titchmersh, William Fletcher, and others, all the lands, tenements and possessions

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<sup>44</sup> *BHRS*, 2, 122-23.

<sup>45</sup> *BHRS*, 2, 121.

<sup>46</sup> The will of Thomas Gylmyn of Milton Ernest is transcribed in 'English Wills 1498-1526', ed. A.F. Cirket, *BHRS*, 37 (1957), 31-32. Details concerning the foundation of St Anne's Chantry are found in the 'Records of Northill College, No. II', trans. C. Gore Chambers, *BHRS*, 2 (1914), 120-24.

expressed in the aforementioned indented deed. To have and to hold to the aforesaid Nicholas Harding etc for the support of some respectable Chaplain in the Chapel of St Anne [etc as above].<sup>47</sup>

The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (1535) declared the taxable income of the Chantry in the collegiate church of Northill founded in honour of St Anne to be £4 14s 2d with tax of 8s 1½d due.<sup>48</sup> The figure does not agree with a later entry in the same document, which shows income from the Chantry of St Anne in Northill, as £4 1s 2¼d.<sup>49</sup> Set against the net income of £61 5s 8½d derived by Northill College, the chantry was clearly a small affair with limited means. It did, however, have a business relationship with the monks of Wardon Abbey, and the Court of Augmentations accounts for 1537/38 show that the Guardians of the Fraternity of St Anne in Northill had been paying the abbot of Wardon 2s 6d for land in Thorncote, monies that were subsequently due to the Crown.<sup>50</sup>

### **Dissolution of the Chantries (1547)**

St Anne's Chantry suffered the same fate as Northill College in 1547, and a rental thought to have been produced around that time offers a picture of its holdings, then worth £4 3s 3d plus 2½ acres of woodland which had only been planted the previous year (Appendix 3). The rental also noted a sum of 2s payable to 'John Bromsale, collector of rents belonging to the Lord King, lately to the monastery of Wardon, arising from the close called Roxtons'. The transcriber noted that there were 'one or two other rents resolute, for example one from the tenement called Jack Budnoo',<sup>51</sup> which probably all pertained to the lands in Thorncote noted in 1537/38. After its Dissolution, St Anne's Chantry served as a schoolroom until 1850, and has been used in recent years as a museum for the church and parish (Appendix 4).<sup>52</sup>

Future researchers may wish to consult the other documents relating to Northill College, which are available in The National Archives (Appendix 5).

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<sup>47</sup> *BHRS*, 2, 123-24.

<sup>48</sup> *VE*, vol. 4, p. 196, 'VILLAT' DE NORTHYELL'.

<sup>49</sup> *VE*, vol. 4, p. 199, 'NORTHYELL CANT'IA'.

<sup>50</sup> *BHRS*, 63, 98 (129).

<sup>51</sup> *BHRS*, 2, 120-21.

<sup>52</sup> J. Chadwick, [Guide to] *St Mary Virgin Northill* (1972; revised 1997), p. 13.

## MASTERS OF NORTHILL COLLEGE

In accordance with the statutes, the master of the college was also parson/rector of Northill.<sup>53</sup>

1406	John Warde (formerly parson of Northill; died 31 July 1422)
1422	Richard Heth (formerly rector of Shillington)
1443	William Graveley
1460	Thomas Greneley
1474	Thomas Taylard
1493	William Porter
1494	Thomas Randolfe
1498	Andrew Beustede [Bensted]
1507	John Underhill
1529	Robert Gostwick (Resigned as Master, and instituted rector of West Horndon in Essex on 31 July 1534. In his will dated 15 July 1541, he left his <i>Book of Degrees</i> to the college at Northill) <sup>54</sup>
1534	Thomas Grene
1535	John Cater
1545/47	Thomas Grene

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<sup>53</sup> 'Records of Northill College No. I', trans. C. Gore Chambers, *BHRS*, 1 (1913), 249-68 (p. 257), <[https://archive.org/details/publicationsofbedf\\_0/page/256/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/publicationsofbedf_0/page/256/mode/2up)>; J. Chadwick, [Guide to] *St Mary Virgin Northill* (1972; revised 1997), pp. 23-24.

<sup>54</sup> Robert Gostwick was the uncle of Sir John Gostwick of Willington and Robert Gostwick of Wardon. He died in December 1541 and was buried before the high altar of St Mary's, Bedford. *BHRS*, 36, 55-56 and pedigree.

## NORTHILL COLLEGE: LANDS IN NORTHILL (1545/47)

Details	Acres - rods	Value per acre (d)	Value pa if let
le peretre close	1 acre		6s 8d
Cowe Close	8a. ½r.		13s 6½d
<b>Demesne</b>	<b>9a. ½r.</b>		<b>£1 – 2½d</b>
			<b>Value</b>
le Halle Orchard	4 acres	12	4s
le Barre Close	6a. 1r.	32	16s 8d
4 pightells land called together Shepecoote Pightelle	3a.	40	10s
Morres Close	4a. 3r.	28	11s 1d
Beane Close let this year. Close is in common every year from Michaelmas to the Purification	8a.	18	12s
le Horse Close	5a. 3r.	20	9s 7d
le Cooke Orchard, near site of College on the south (per le acre 8s 4d)	1a. 1r.		4s 2d
a close adjacent on south of Cooke Close, from Michaelmas to the Purification	2a.	16	2s 8d
Piece in common meadow called Longelake	2a. ½r	32	5s 8d
Piece in common meadow called Milnhome	6a.	32	16s 8d
Piece in common meadow called Calcote mede	3a.	24	6s
Seven pieces of meadow in Beeston	1a. 3r.	32	4s 8d
<b>Let to tenants</b>	<b>47a. 3½r.</b>		<b>£5 2s 6d</b>

Table 1. Meadow

Details	Acres - rods	Value per acre (d)	Value
Beeston Field	31a. ½r.	9½	23s 5d
Calcotte Fields	22½a.	9½	17s 9¾d
<b>Demesne</b>	<b>53ac. 2½r.</b>		<b>£1 17s 2¾d</b>

Table 2. Arable

Details	Acres - rods	Value per acre (d)	Now worth	No. years' growth	May be sold after x years for		Rent
Drewes Wood, lately belonging to Wardon Monastery, held by the College of the King	8a.						10s
Stacyes Grove	9a.	16	20s	9	11	33s 4d	
Beane Grove near Beane close	1a. ½r.	16		1			
Morres Close hedgerow	3r.						
A small Grovett on the site of Stacie's House now ruined and totally wasted	1½r.			4	8 or 9	12s	
Shepecottes Grove next le Shepecotte of the College; not sold for more "because many thorns and brambles are growing there"	1a.			1	14	20s	
Hedgerow between Carreols and Stacy's Wood	1a. 3r.				5	£2 6s 8d	
Hedgerow in Cowe Close (in Beeston pasture)	1½r.			10	5	9s 10½d	
Parcel of trees between Calcote common field and the stream called Small brooke containing 30 trees in a clump, namely Elmes, equal to 6 or 7 cartloads of wood							
<b>Total</b>	<b>22a. 1½r.</b>						

Table 3. Woodland

Name	Message	Croft	Cote / cot / cottage	Garden	Hemp yard	Pasture	Meadow	Arable	Rent
Robert Tyngay	1						✓	✓	6s 8d
Robert Tyngay	1						✓	✓	6s 8d
Robert Probyn	1	1					✓	✓	6s 8d
John Salmon	1						✓		6s 8d
Thomas Gerybrande	1	1					✓	✓	9s 8d
Robert Probyn						✓		✓	25s 2d
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>							<b>£3 1s 6d</b>

Table 4. Copyhold tenants



Name	Message	Cote / cot / cottage	Garden	Hemp yard	Pasture (acres)	Meadow (acres)	Arable (acres)	Rent
William Wood <sup>55</sup>								13s 4d
Thomas Symonde	1					Close	60	46s <sup>56</sup>
Thomas Kible	1				1½		1	30s 10d
Thomas Strynger		1						6s 8d
William Soclyne?		1		1				5s
Henry Garrett		1		1				6s 8d
Elizabeth Rede (widow)		1		1				5s
Margaret Pake		1					1	8s
John Tibye		1	1					12s
Robert Bell		1						5s
Thomas Smythe	1				1		1	14s 4d
William Hawkyns					1		7¼	7s 8d
William Fletcher						1½	42½	10s 10½d
John Carter							3¾	2s 11d
John Hawkyns						2	17	13s 2d
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3½</b>	<b>&gt;3½</b>	<b>133½</b>	<b>£9 7s 5d</b>

Table 5. Tenants at will

<sup>55</sup> Horse mill and mill house within the precinct, lease effective 20 September 1545.

<sup>56</sup> Plus 4s 6d payable to John Harding.

Name	Details	Message	Arable (acres)	Rent	Remarks
Henry Makewilliam	Lands			14d	Pays yearly at the feast of St Michael the Archangel
Robert Butler	Close in Calcootte called Spritten Close			3s	and one ' <i>precaria</i> ' of a single man for reaping in Autumn <sup>57</sup> or 4d
Robert Butler	Free tenement of ½ acre of land in Spritten furlong				¼lb of wax or 1½d
Richard Tichermerche	Lands in fields of Calcotte and Beeston			2¾d	
Reginald Tichermerche	Messuage in Ower Calcotte	1		4s	and 2 capons
William Fletcher	Northill	2		1s 6d	
William Fletcher	Beeston Fields		½	1d	
John Brumshall	Agges lond; selion which was Stacy's; ½ a. above Clay Hill			5½d	
William Brumshall	Beeston Fields			1½d	
John Hawkyns	Beeston Fields		1r.	half farthing	
William Fowler	Thorncote	1	3r.	12d	
John Carter junior	Farrers in Hatch	1		1d	
John Carter senior	Beeston Fields: Clay Hill furlong, Bakenhedge furlong			1¾d	
Sir John Gascoigne, Robert Spencer & William Fletcher	Beeston Fields			2½d	
Church warden of Sandy	Close in Beeston Fields			12d	
Church warden of Fraternity of St Anne within the church of Northill	Piece of one messuage in Thorncote	1		2s	formerly Fytz's
Sir John Gascoigne	Graunge croft			3s	
John Bromesall	Beeston Fields		2	1d	
Master of the College	Beeston Fields		2	1d	
Walter Pertesall	Beeston Field			1d	
<b>Totals</b>		<b>6</b>		<b>18s 3d</b>	<b>plus half farthing</b>

Table 6. Free Tenants

<sup>57</sup> *precaria*: contract granting use of a revenue-bearing ecclesiastical property for a specified period, principally in return for services rendered to the Church. It could be revoked at any time, making it 'precarious'.

APPENDIX 3

ST ANNE'S CHANTRY, RENTAL (1537/47)

Name	Details	Message	Pasture (acres)	Meadow (acres)	Arable (acres)	Rent	Remarks
John Risley	Capital message in Thorncote in the vill of Beeston; arable in the common fields of Beeston; meadow in the common meadows of Beeston; pasture called Roxtons in Thorncote; pasture near Pynswell Lane in Beeston	1	2a. + 1a. 1r.	3a. 1r.	64	58s 4d	paid in two instalments at the feasts of the Annunciation (25 March) and of St Michael (29 September)
Thomas Carter & John Carter junior	Message called 'Jack's Budnoo' in Thorncote; arable in the common fields of Beeston; meadow in the common meadows of Beeston	1		1	24	22s 7d	
John Carter junior	Close called 'Budnoo' near le Frenches Lane in the fields of Beeston		3a.			5s	
John Carter junior	Pightle beside Shepecote Lane in Beeston		½a.			20d	
William Fletcher	Calcote Field				1½	8d	
<b>Totals</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>6¾a.</b>	<b>4a. 1r.</b>	<b>89½a.</b>	<b>£4 3s 3d</b>	

Table 1. Tenants at will

Details	Acres - rods	Value per acre (d)	Now worth	No. years' growth	May be sold after x years for
Holcots Grove	1a. 1r.			1	16 33s 4d
Budnoo Grove near Frenches Lane	1a. 1r.			1	16 33s 4d
<b>Total</b>	<b>2½a.</b>				

Table 2. Woodland

**NOTES ON THE 15<sup>th</sup>-CENTURY FEATURES IN THE CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, NORTHILL**

The parish church of St Mary the Virgin was first listed on 31 October 1966.<sup>58</sup> The list entry for the Grade 1 building notes that the **south porch** was much restored in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is of two storeys with the vaulting and **parvis**<sup>59</sup> added in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The vaulting is in two bays with three carved bosses, one showing the arms of Sir John Trailly. The upper floor is accessed by stairs on the west side. The parvis has a 4-light opening onto the south aisle, a 2-light south window and embattled parapet. The top stage of the three-stage **west tower** is dated to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The 19<sup>th</sup>-century **rood screen** includes some 15<sup>th</sup>-century work, as do the **choir stalls** and the **parvis stair door**.

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<sup>58</sup> 'Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Ickwell Road'. *Historic England*, <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1221856>>.

<sup>59</sup> **parvis**: an enclosed area before the entrance to a church, or a room over the porch used as a schoolroom. M. Child, *Discovering Church Architecture. A glossary of terms* (Shire Publications, 2018).

**DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES (TNA)**

- Northhill College papers. Blank, undated [TNA, SP 46/88/fo293-296d]
- Copy (1604) from the registers of the bishop of Lincoln of presentations of masters of Northhill College, 1348-1534 [TNA, E 135/22/57]
- Northhill College Manor. Court roll, 1380-1406 [TNA, SC2/153/33]
- [Broomhill], (Promhelle), South Newland: List of tenants of Northhill College [Bedfordshire] and their holdings, showing the amount of a new wall to be kept in order by each tenant, 11 Hen VI [TNA, SC 12/1/34]
- Northhill College Manor. Court roll, 1417-1441 [TNA, SC2/153/34]
- Northhill College Manor. Court roll, 1458-1462 [TNA, SC2/153/34]
- Northhill College Manor. Court roll, 1477-1479 [TNA, SC2/153/34]
- Northhill College Manor. Court rolls (2), 1493-1524 [TNA, SC2/153/35-36]
- Remembrance granting the right to holding of two leets per year in Northhill and three in 'Tempsford' and regulating their conduct, [1516-1739] [TNA, SP 46/188/182]
- Northhill College Manor: Court Roll, 1530-42 [TNA, SC2/153/36]
- Northhill College Manor: Survey, 1534-35 [TNA, SC12/23/46]
- Northhill College: Survey of the college, 26 Hen VIII [1534/35] [TNA, SC 12/23/46]
- Grant Parties: Thomas Grene, Master of Northhill College; John Gostwyk esq., and John Towek concerning Northhill and Tempsford, 31 Hen VIII [1539/40] [TNA, E 211/490]
- Description of Courts: Courts of the Master of the College of St. Mary, Northhill, 1541-42 [TNA, SC 2/153/36]
- Northhill College Manor. Rental, with other manors, 1546-47 [TNA, SC12/2/1]
- Copy of account of Thomas Gurney of lands in Northhill College, after 1547 [TNA, SP 5/1/87]
- Northhill, Tempsford, Leighton Buzzard, Bedford: Detailed rental of divers colleges and chantries, Edw. VI [TNA, SC 12/2/2]
- Bedfordshire chantry certificate: copy of portion relating to Northhill College and chantry of St. Anne's Northhill, 1548 [TNA, C 270/40]

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