

“Withering on the Vine”

**The Connectivity between the People of
Lincolnshire and their Monastic Houses:
1500 to 1540.**



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for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.**

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**This Thesis is Dedicated
to the Memory of Continuing Education
at the University of Nottingham (1922-2009),
and especially to its many Tutors
who Bestowed upon me the Joy of Learning
and the Encouragement to Succeed.**

Thank You All.

-o-0-o-

**To Mum and Dad, my late wife Jill, sons Liam and Paul,
and granddaughters Laura and Libbie.**

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of how the Lincolnshire population interacted with their monastic houses during the period 1500 to 1540, when the Tudor Church was witnessing considerable transformation. Lincolnshire was chosen because of the substantial number of religious houses, and the abundance of available sources, especially surviving wills on which the majority of the research was based. Data extracted from these testaments will uncover the destination of patronage not only towards monasteries, but also parish churches, the cathedral, religious guilds, charity to the poor and for the upkeep of the infrastructure. Maps, graphs and tables will illustrate from which of the numerous parishes patronage originated and its eventual destination.

This information is linked into the theme of localism, revealing how restricted or otherwise monastic patronage was. Connectivity between monastery and parishioner will be analysed through monastic landholdings and activities such as land reclamation and salt extraction, both intertwined with the Lincolnshire landscape. A detailed study of one specific aspect of the transport infrastructure will also be undertaken, revealing financial problems that concerned a particular monastery, and its connections with the local population.

Other documents consulted included the few surviving churchwarden's accounts, but more importantly the episcopal visitation reports. These reveal the day-to-day workings within some of the county's monasteries and the pressures that the close-knit communities had to overcome to retain stability, both financial and spiritual. In addition, the deanery visitations reveal interactions between not only clergy and congregation, but also between monastic proprietors and their tithe paying parishioners. The accumulated data will give a greater understanding of the connectivity between parishioner and monastery within the second largest county in England, during a period of considerable change within a belief system that had been sustained and largely cherished for nearly one thousand years.

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Total Number of Words:- 104,020.

N/B – A digital copy of the “Pinchbeck Map” is in a wallet at the back of the volume.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abrev.	TITLE
<i>CChR</i>	<i>Calendar of Charter Rolls</i>
<i>CClR</i>	<i>Calendar of Close Rolls</i>
<i>CIMisc</i>	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous</i>
<i>CPL</i>	<i>Calendar of Papal Registers: Papal Letters.</i>
<i>CPR</i>	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls.</i>
D&C	Court of the Dean & Chapter of Lincoln.
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , 60 Vols. (Oxford 2004), also www.oxforddnb.com .
EpR	Episcopal Registry (Wills).
Foster I	Foster, C. W. (ed.), <i>Lincoln Wills Listed in the District Probate Registry at Lincoln, Vol. I, A.D 1271 to A.D 1526</i> , Lincoln Record Society, Vol. 5 (1914).
Foster II	Foster, C. W. (ed.), <i>Lincoln Wills Listed in the District Probate Registry at Lincoln, Vol. II, April 1505 to May 1530</i> , Lincoln Record Society, Vol. 10 (1918).
Foster III	Foster, C. W. (ed.), <i>Lincoln Wills Listed in the District Probate Registry at Lincoln, Vol. III, A.D 1530 to A.D 1532</i> , Lincoln Record Society, Vol. 24 (1930).
<i>Heads II</i>	Smith, D. M., London, V. C. M (eds.), <i>The Heads of the Religious Houses: England & Wales, II, 1216-1377</i> (Cambridge, 2001).
<i>Heads III</i>	Smith, D. M (ed.), <i>The Heads of Religious Houses: England & Wales, III, 1377-1540</i> (Cambridge, 2008).
Hickman	Hickman, D. (ed.), <i>Lincoln Wills, 1532-1534</i> , Lincoln Record Society, Vol. 89 (2001).
<i>HMCR</i>	Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports.
LAO	Lincolnshire Archives Office.
LCC	Lincoln Consistory Court.
<i>L&P</i>	Brewer, J. S., Gairdner, J., Brodie, R. H. (eds.), <i>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII 1509-1547</i> , 21 Vols. (London, 1862-1932).
LRS	Lincoln Record Society Publications.
<i>Mon. Ang.</i>	Dugdale, W., Dodsworth, R., Stevens, J., Caley, J., Ellis, H., Bulkeley B., Taylor, R.C. (eds.), <i>Monasticon Anglicanum...</i> , 7 Vols., (London, 1817-1830).
<i>MRH</i>	Knowles, D., Hadcock, R. N., <i>Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales</i> (Harlow, 1971).
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> . www.oed.com .
PCC	Prerogative Court of Canterbury.
PRO	Public Record Office.
<i>RO</i>	Knowles, D., <i>The Religious Orders in England</i> , 3 Vols. (Cambridge, 1948, 1955, 1959).
<i>State Papers</i>	Record Commission, <i>State Papers, King Henry VIII</i> , 11 Vols. (London 1830-1852).
<i>Statutes</i>	Luders, A., Tomlins, T. E., France, J., Taunton, W. E., Raithby, J., (eds.), <i>The Statutes of the Realm</i> , Record Commission, 11 Vols. (London, 1810-1834).
Stow	Court of the Archdeaconry of Stow.
Thompson I	Thompson, A. H (ed.), <i>Visitations of Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln</i> , Lincoln Record Society, Vols. 7, 14, 21 (1914, 1918, 1929).
Thompson II	Thompson, A. H. (ed.), <i>Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln, 1517-1531</i> , Lincoln Record Society, Vol. 33, 35, 37 (1940, 1944, 1947).
TNA	The National Archives.
<i>VE</i>	Caley, J., Hunter, J. (eds.), <i>Valor Ecclesiasticus...</i> , 6 Vols. (London, 1810-1834).
<i>VCH</i>	<i>The Victoria Histories of the Counties of England</i> . (Various county editions).

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

That time of yeeare thou maist in me behold,
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, doe hange
Vpon those boughees which shake against the could,
Bare rn'ud quiers, where late the sweet birds sang.

William Shakespeare, Sonnet 73.¹

This thesis explores the two themes of connectivity and localism in the context of Lincolnshire, its religious houses and population within a crucial period of English religious history; the period 1500 to 1540. Its main thrust is to reveal these connections via two key research questions. First, how did the monasteries interact with the local population, and conversely how did Lincolnshire parishioners view the county's monastic houses? Secondly, how is localism evidenced in the quantity and distribution of patronage towards religious houses and how does this compare with that given to other sectors of the Church? These two themes of connectivity and localism are linked by geography and an analysis will also be made of the county's varied landscape and how this affected 'spiritual investment'.

To answer these and additional secondary questions, surviving testaments, churchwarden's accounts, and visitation records along with financial and landscape studies were used to illuminate this relationship. Local relationships with the other sectors of the Tudor Church, the religious guilds, cathedral and notably the parish church were also considered in order that comparisons can be made between patronage directed at these institutions and that of the monasteries. Added together the research will help enlarge from a county perspective an understanding of what was in hindsight one of the most significant episodes in the history of English Christianity since the conversion period of the seventh-century.

By expanding the investigation into under-researched areas, this work will explore why monasticism in the county could be obliterated so completely with little

apparent opposition, save for the Lincolnshire Rising of October 1536. Although only mentioned where relevant to the discussion, this short-lived revolt was the first open opposition to the doctrines of the newly established State Church, with Henry VIII as its Supreme Head. Although there were other factors, evidence will uncover whether or not the rebellion was motivated by resentment towards policies emanating from the Reformation Parliament, largely enforced by the king's Vice-Gerent in Spirituals, Thomas Cromwell (ex1540). Importantly, was it ultimately initiated to save parish churches from closure or to rescue the monasteries from suppression?

Lincolnshire was chosen for the investigation largely due to the small amount written evidence concerning the county's monasteries; no single volume has been compiled that deals specifically with the subject of their suppression.² Consequently there is a research gap, especially in the use of testaments as an investigative tool. This study will rectify the anomaly by analysing both the general state and importantly the local influence of the Tudor Church as a whole and of monasticism in particular, thereby revealing the connectivity between Lincolnshire testators and their religious houses during this period.

The focus of the research lies in an endeavour to answer questions by examining them primarily from the perspective of Lincolnshire parishioners: other than the regulars themselves, those most affected by religious changes emanating from the centre. This will provide new insights into the spiritual life of the county's communities and their relationship with a Church undergoing a period of religious instability. Central to the analysis is an examination of the factors that characterized the amount and destination of religious patronage and how this reflected the changing state of religion during the period under discussion.

Emerging from the investigations were several secondary research questions that will expand the discussion. For example, is there evidence that Lincolnshire people bemoaned the suppression of the monasteries and friaries? If so, what does this

reveal concerning the overall reaction to the Dissolution process, and previous relationships with the religious houses? Which was perceived as spiritually more beneficial, the parish church or the monastery? Similarly, how were the monasteries viewed by local people; were they seen as centres of spirituality or the monks just as landlords? Conversely, how did the monasteries view their secular neighbours? Did the monks perform a duty of pastoral care towards them as appropriators of the parish church or did the relationship just revolve around tenancies and tax? These questions will help establish the connectivity between monk and parishioner.

In order to further appreciate this relationship, the thesis will also investigate whether the Tudor Church was nationally moribund and locally ineffectual, or alternatively vibrant and respected within the spiritual life of Lincolnshire communities. In reaction to religious changes, was there a latent fear amongst parishioners concerning the survival of their belief system, notably prayers for the dead, together with concerns that churches may possibly close? After the suppression of a religious house, unless used for parochial purposes, the building was often speedily demolished. Was this a mark of indifference to or even resentment of monasticism, or were local people seizing an opportunity to take whatever remained following the departure of the religious?

The under-researched theme of localism, especially from an ecclesiastical viewpoint, will be closely examined. This in particular will concern the spread or otherwise of patronage beyond the boundaries of the county's three districts: the 'Parts of' Lindsey, Holland and Kesteven. Was there perhaps a sense of indigenous connectivity within the respective district: its neighbouring area seen as a distant entity? This topic will be expanded through a study of four specific religious houses to illustrate how far monastic patronage extended within the second largest county in England. The distance between a monastery and a donor settlement will be calculated to demonstrate geographical links between parish testators and monastic recipient.³ Was patronage predominately local or originating from further afield, and was it confined to within the three districts?

Nevertheless, patronage with regard to the mendicants sometimes came from a distance. Did this reflect the mendicant's peripatetic nature, resulting in attaining donations from distant settlements? Was the friar's alleged superior education, supposed poverty or apparently greater spirituality attracting larger numbers of gifts compared to the enclosed orders? Possibly the mendicants were perceived as having greater spiritual involvement, with monks and nuns perhaps seen as 'arcane' and 'out of touch', therefore an unwise spiritual and especially economic investment. In addition to the friars, the monastic orphanage of St. Catherine in Lincoln received gifts predominantly from the Holland district. The possible reasons for this geographical patronage will be discussed perhaps suggesting that parishioners possessed a wider outlook concerning spiritual investments than previously supposed.

An important issue is the extent to which religious changes at national level had on the parishioners of Lincolnshire and how this was reflected in their patronage especially towards the monasteries? Both religiously and socially was it just a case of 'do as others do': a resigned conformity towards the status quo? Importantly, were parishioners still retaining the concept of prayers for the dead, the primary motive behind the original monastic foundations? Which of the different categories, monks, friars and nuns were the most popular destinations for these gifts, and why? Detailed testament analysis will reveal whether post-obit donations to religious houses were still an economic priority, or giving to the other sectors of the Church was a more realistic option.

Detailed analysis of testaments from the period 1532-40 was undertaken to reveal local patronage towards the Church, both secular and monastic. These data will also include charitable donations and gifts to maintain the infrastructure (e.g. roads and bridges), to uncover any significant variations in patronage. The research will be analysed to discover the connectivity between the regulars and the other facets of the Church with the local population, giving a deeper understanding of the problems that faced the Lincolnshire people during this religiously unstable period.

Although additional questions emerged during the research, these principal enquiries are the foundation of the investigation. The research questions will be answered primarily through the analysis of the surviving testaments of Lincolnshire parishioners. Although small in percentage numbers compared to the size of the county's population, these are vital research tools in understanding the state of the Church within the period under discussion. Testaments however need to be managed with some caution: Norman Tanner suggesting that they 'provide evidence of piety, not of irreligion or anti-clericalism'.⁴ The rationale behind the composition of wills was in part peoples' concerns regarding the afterlife. Were testaments therefore outright declarations of religious faith or just a legal document containing details of spiritual requirements and financial bequests?

It is essential that the overall investigation is placed within the context of previous research on the subject as a whole, both at national and local levels. The 'Literature Review' in Chapter Two will discuss the vast amount of published material concerning both the Dissolution and Reformation, dating from the sixteenth-century onwards. Works by historians of the Tudor period will be closely examined with reference to monasticism and the Suppression process. The Rising is also noted along with the reactions of commentators at the time. These writers, originating from both sides of the religious divide allow an insight into the national politics of the period and their opinions concerning monasticism.

The influence of the Tudor historians on commentators writing in succeeding centuries will also be considered. These later works will be analysed to discover differing approaches to monasticism in relation to the religious and political mores of their respective periods. A recurring theme amongst modern writers was whether the Church in the early part of the sixteenth-century was moribund and waning in spiritual stature in comparison with the new reformist doctrines. Analysis of testaments will demonstrate the validity or otherwise of this argument. Volumes relating to Lincolnshire from writers such as Margaret Bowker, Francis Hill, Gerald Hodgett, Kathleen Major and Dorothy Owen will also help to illuminate the county's

monastic history and the Dissolution process. Local historian Anne Ward describes the parish church in the early sixteenth-century as 'an intermingling of civic pride, money, piety and aesthetic satisfaction...'.⁵ The veracity of this argument will be considered by analysing parish visitation documents and churchwarden's accounts.

Any study of monasticism would be incomplete without taking into account episcopal visitations. Fortunately, in Lincolnshire, reports from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are extensive, sometimes featuring lengthy accusations and rebuttals from within the Chapter House. Although generally negative, these important documents throw considerable light on every-day life within a monastery, especially in relation to their governance. The results will be used to illustrate the condition of monasticism in the county and the extent to which the monasteries were competently run or poorly administered. Did the investigations reveal financial intrigues, divisive internal politics and underlying tensions within some of the county's religious houses? Were the findings indicative of all Lincolnshire establishments or were those visited just the 'bad apples'?

Significantly the visitations uncovered the monks' rapport with the local population, a recurring theme within the bishop's deliberations. Did the secular world continue to encroach, despite frequent pronouncements to secure the cloister door? Accounts of misconduct could possibly be disclosed to outsiders, thereby compromising regular patronage and also respect for the whole ethos of monasticism. Equally important, the documents reveal the differing policies of the successive bishops of Lincoln in their ongoing struggle to uphold monastic discipline. The visitations will help reveal whether or not monastic houses retained the respect of the local population. Alternatively were they mistrusted due to a perceived lack of spiritual integrity and mismanagement of their resources: the latter particularly affecting the local, mainly agricultural communities?

The process also disclosed economic activities, including the administration of monastic property, adding to greater understanding regarding their activities within

the county's landscape. This will help illustrate connections between religious houses and local populations within both geographical and economic perspectives. Did geography also reflect local patronage in addition to agricultural activities vital to the community's economies? The early fifteenth-century Pinchbeck Map, probably commissioned by Spalding Priory, will reveal a geographical separation of communities into their respective districts, in this case Kesteven and Holland, largely disconnected by boggy fenland.

The landscape theme will be expanded to uncover how the monastic economies interacted with the local population. The production of foodstuffs and other agricultural produce will be examined, along with the connection between tenant farmers and their monastic landlords. Other factors will include population changes, income from rectorial tithes, agricultural revenue, crops grown and livestock reared. This raises the question of the economic significance of the monasteries by the sixteenth-century, and the extent to which it had changed from its previous situation. The county's salt industry will also be studied in order to reveal the influence monasteries had acquired through the possession of salterns and associated turbaries. This theme will also include aspects of land reclamation, uncovering connections with the affected local settlements and the extent of the expansion and contraction of monastic estates.

The function and maintenance of the county's infrastructure; roads, bridges and the important drainage system will also be discussed. Some Lincolnshire abbots and priors were given the title 'Commissioner of Sewers', but were they efficient in preserving the county's banks and dykes from periodic inundations? Did the religious houses of the sixteenth-century still abide by their original charters to maintain communications, or was this increasingly entrusted to the local population? The Gilbertine priory of Bridgend will be used to illustrate the activities of a small monastery maintaining a vital causeway across the sometimes treacherous fenland linking Kesteven with Holland. Evidence exposed a sometimes fraught relationship between local settlements and the priory over squandered toll income

and inadequate maintenance: an example of localised disharmony between secular and monastic?

There will be an analysis of the condition of the Church in the early sixteenth-century, to gain an understanding of its affect on local parishioners. Was doctrine and liturgy being well maintained, or was the structure in decline with spiritual connectivity via preaching virtually absent? How did these factors influence local patronage, both via wills and also lifetime donations? These questions will be analysed using testaments, but also the parish visitation documents dating from 1519. Although undertaken fifteen years prior to the Act of Supremacy, these findings to a certain extent disclose the condition of the parish clergy and their relationship with parishioners. These, along with the few surviving churchwarden's accounts of the period, reveal the day-to-day organisation of the local church. However, similar to the monastic visitations, the prerogative of the visitor appears to have been to reveal culpability, not issue praise: the results therefore need to be analysed with caution.

Answering these important questions will open a window on Lincolnshire people's reactions to events at local level relative to the changes in religious policy within the national arena. It will also fill some research gaps relative to monastic studies, which have largely concentrated of the national picture rather than from a local perspective. As in the rest of the country, Lincolnshire monasteries were at the epicentre of this controversy and all would share the same fate. Whether the county's parishioners were troubled over their demise and how they reacted during the process is a major element of the thesis.

The requirements for this research have been outlined and the major themes that provide focus for the discussions established. The following chapters will open a wider examination of Lincolnshire people's relationship with monasticism and the Church in general. As revealed in the Literature Review, the Reformation is one of the most extensively documented periods of English history, of which historians

have taken full advantage throughout successive centuries. Added together this work will bring a greater understanding of local events that occurred during the dissolution of the monasteries and its effects on the population of Lincolnshire.

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NOTES – CHAPTER ONE

¹ Schoenfeldt, M (ed.), *A Companion to Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Oxford, 2007), 466.

² The only exception is the 'Religious Houses' section in the Lincolnshire VCH. Page, W (ed.), *Victoria Country History, Lincolnshire, Vol. II* (London, 1906, Reprint, 1988).

³ All distances noted in the thesis are calculated in a straight line using Google Earth.

⁴ Tanner, N. P., *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich* (Toronto, 1984), 138.

⁵ Ward, A., *The Lincolnshire Rising, 1536* (Nottingham, 1996), 7.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This chapter explores historical narratives relating to the Dissolution period composed from the sixteenth-century through to the modern period, uncovering the differing influences and approaches towards the subject. By bringing together works by writers from the Tudor period and melding their works with later texts, research gaps relative to the themes of localism and connectivity regarding monastic houses will be revealed.

Most historians from whichever period wrote from a national perspective. This is understandable as power generally radiated from the centre. It is only largely since the late eighteenth-century that commentators have concentrated their thoughts towards local studies. This was generally through volumes of 'county histories', such as Leicestershire by John Nichols and Lincolnshire by William Marrat. Later the Victoria County Histories series added considerable weight to local history within a detailed and closely referenced narrative; notably concerning the religious houses. Nevertheless, there is a considerable research gap within local ecclesiastical history especially from the parish viewpoint. This work will aim to rectify the discrepancy.

When analysing historical narratives it is vital to understand the political and religious circumstances in which the historians wrote. This is especially important when discussing both the Dissolution and the Reformation processes, occurring when the writing of propaganda was a weapon in the armoury of both Church and State.¹ A critique of any historical account ought therefore to be supplemented with an understanding of the nature and reliability of written material. Most importantly, the political outlook and especially the religious stance of the writer towards the period under discussion should be clearly understood: a study of the Dissolution of the monasteries in Lincolnshire is no exception.²

(a) Tudor Historians.

Prior to the Tudor period composers of historical texts were largely monk-chroniclers, writing within an era where the past was portrayed as an expression of divine will, an example being Abbot Ingulph's *Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland*: dating from the twelfth-century.³ By their very nature, members of religious orders belonged to tight-knit communities that based their existence and consequently their literature solely on the theology of the Christian faith, largely reflected from the viewpoints of a monk. Written in Latin, their texts were aimed specifically at clerical congregations and the educated elite, not the general population.

Monastic literature increasingly featured the history of the author's convent, mainly regarding property rights: the 'Crowland Continuator' being an example.⁴ These works also helped bolster monasticism against growing criticisms of greed and worldliness. Later, historical narratives began to be compiled outside the *scriptorium*:⁵ monks becoming largely isolated from the centre of religious and philosophical debate. History became increasingly secular, mainly written in English and effectively London based, with the nation's interior poorly represented.⁶

Despite its title, one notable exception was '*The Chronicle of the Greyfriars of London*', which briefly notes the Lincolnshire Rising and the execution of the rebels.⁷ The herald Charles Wriothesley (d1562) in his *Chronicle* also comments on the revolt as having 'tow captaines, the one being a monke [Mackerell] and the other a shoemaker ... [who were] drawne to Tyburne and there hanged and quartered'.⁸ Contemporary information concerning the suppression of Lincolnshire's monasteries has therefore to be obtained primarily from government sources rather than local historical narrative: thus laden with concerns over partiality.

During the early sixteenth-century many states in Northern Europe saw that the acceleration of religious changes could bring political advantages.⁹ In England, this course of action was reversed. Here the state instigated the process of change via

legislation using both historical works and Common Law. The 1533 'Act in Restraint of Appeals', commenced with the words 'where by divers sundry old authentic histories and chronicles...': some works obtained from monastic libraries.¹⁰ Thus, historical narrative became a catalyst by which ecclesiastical reform was given provenance, legal status and royal patronage.¹¹

Printing was vital in disseminating religious and political propaganda. This new development facilitated a greater production of texts, secular and ecclesiastical, and at times both treasonable and heretical. Monks appear to have largely rejected the technology, although printed books were readily available within religious houses.¹² Many influential writers were high officials of both Church and Court; consequently, they acquired access to important documents in addition to the machinery of distribution. The works of monastic historians were therefore being gradually replaced by political and religious debate through the printed works of Tudor intellectuals. Discourses on doctrine from both sides of the religious divide were vigorously debated, albeit within a selective and scholarly audience.

The Tudor period witnessed an advance in religious scholarship. Reformist commentators such as John Bale (d1563), Edward Hall (d1547) and John Foxe (d1587), compiled narratives from a reformist perspective. The conservative group was represented by amongst others Thomas More (ex1535) and Bishops Stephen Gardiner (d1555), Edmund Bonner (d1569), John Longland (d1547) and Cuthbert Tunstall (d1559). Unfortunately, few discussed monasticism in any positive detail, suggesting perhaps that the cloister was becoming largely irrelevant within the spheres of the Tudor intelligencia.

Lincolnshire was mentioned by some writers, but generally within a negative context. The continuator of the chronicler Robert Fabyan (d1513) wrote that in 1536, 'begane a folishe comocion in Lincolnshire...by means of ye Lorde Huse, whiche only by ye king his wisdom & his prudet cousaill were appeaced without blooded shedyng'.¹³ Historian John Stow (d1605), discreetly described the Rising as 'the

people made an insurrection', and relates the execution of a butcher who had described the Lincolnshire men as 'good fellows'.¹⁴ Again, little is written about the state of monasticism, both in Lincolnshire or nationwide.

With the exceptions of More and Foxe, the poet and antiquary John Leland was one of the best-known commentators of the period. According to May McKisack, he 'laid the foundation of medieval historical studies in sixteenth-century England'.¹⁵ In c1533, Leland was commissioned,

...to peruse and dyligentlye to searche all the lybraryes of monasteryes and collegies of thys your noble realme, to the intente that the monuments of auncient writers...mighte be brought owte of deadely darkenes to lyvely lighte.¹⁶

Leland's monumental task took over six years. It was a detailed historical and topographical investigation, including descriptions of dissolved monasteries whose *bibliotheca* once contained volumes of theology and philosophy. However McKisack has suggested if Henry wished to preserve these works he would have given the relevant instructions. The visitation articles of 1536 and 1538 contain no references to books, libraries or learning.¹⁷ Leland during his travels however observed collections in 137 monastery libraries, including many now missing works of monastic historians. Researching the volumes known to have existed in the county's monasteries may reveal the standard of scholarship prior to the Dissolution.¹⁸

The Royal Library expanded significantly during the Suppression period, rising to 1,450 works by c1543, thirty-five originating from Lincolnshire monasteries.¹⁹ Unfortunately, it is difficult to date Leland's various expeditions, but he traversed the western edge of the county on a journey to Yorkshire in the early 1540s.²⁰ Lincolnshire's religious houses are mentioned, but whether Leland visited them all is uncertain. Although he was no academic historian and most monasteries had already been plundered of their literary valuables, his '*Itinerary*' is still a priceless source of local history and geography.²¹

Leland's contemporary, Edward Hall (d1547), was a member of the Reformation Parliament, eye-witnessing political activities within the Tudor court. Geoffrey Elton writes that his *Chronicle* 'brought...the acid of a Londoners anticlericalism...and a humanist desire for church reform...'.²² Hall cleverly melded continental historiographical techniques with local history originating from London chroniclers. This revealed considerable detail that other historians neglected in favour of opinionated analysis.²³ Hall was also one of few writers who mentioned the Dissolution, albeit with little empathy for the regulars.

And in this tyme was geuen vnto the kyng by the consent of the great and fatte abbottes, all religious houses that were of the value CCC. marke and vnder, in hope that their great monasteries should haue continued still: But euen at that tyme one sayd in the parliament house that these were as thornes, but the great abbottes were putrified olde Okes and they must nedes folowe...²⁴

As a Member of Parliament, Hall was possibly present when the acts of Suppression were promulgated, but his political bias concerning monasticism is clearly revealed.

Hall's opinion of Lincolnshire people following the enactment of the Ten Articles is however unequivocal.

In this booke is specially mencioned but iii Sacramentes, with the whiche the Lyncolneshyremen (I meane their ignoraunt priestes) were offended, and of that occasion depraued the kynges doynge.²⁵

On the subject of the Pilgrimage, Hall is vocal in support of his monarch, and as a Londoner, his description of the Northern rebels is far from objective.

...the inhabitauntes of the North partes being very ignorant and rude; knowing not what true religion meant; noseled in supersticion and popery, and also by the meanes of certayne Abbottes and ignorant priestes not a litle stirred and provoked for the suppression of certayne Monasteries, and for the extirpacion and abolyshynge of the bishoppe of Rome.²⁶

Here is an example of the long-standing opinion of southerners, notably from London, that people from the North were largely 'hairy barbarians'.

In Hall's version of Henry's reply to the Lincolnshire rebel's demands, the king reproaches them,

...ye cannot fynd in your hartes...but to rebel and unlawfully ryse agaynst your prynce, Sirs,...shame not your native countrey of England nor offende...your undoubted kynge and naturall prince, whiche always hath shewed him self most loving unto you, and remember your dutie of allegiance, and that ye are bounde to obey youre kynge, both by Goddes commaundement and lawe of nature.²⁷

Despite denouncing the Six Articles of 1539 as 'a bloody statute', Hall was first a loyal subject and Member of Parliament and secondly a reformist.²⁸ He nevertheless noted the actions of the protagonists on both sides of the religious divide, and although he possessed obvious preconceptions, his stance was clear concerning the Dissolution.

Whereas Hall's histories of the Tudor monarchy could be obsequious, no such accusation can be laid against the martyrologist John Foxe (c1516–1587). Republished many times, his work *Acts and Monuments* (1563) linked Tudor religious history and philosophy to the succeeding centuries. Foxe was born into a Boston mercantile family, and later entered Oxford. There he took a strong reformist stance within a predominantly conservative establishment. Although composing theological treatises, it was the *Acts and Monuments* by which he is mostly remembered. The text relates the activities of Protestant 'martyrs', but also offers a notional insight into the circumstances of the Lincolnshire Rising. Using Hall's text almost verbatim, Foxe's stance in opposing the rebels is clearly revealed. In reporting the king's reply to their demands, he writes,

I never have read, heard or known that princes...should be appointed by rude and ignorant common people...the rude commons of one shire, and that one of the most base of the whole realm, and of the least experience, to find fault with your prince.²⁹

Foxe suggests that the Ten Articles fermented the rebellion, along with,

...the alteration of certain points of religion... and many abbeys began to be suppressed. For this cause the rude multitude of Lincolnshire, fearing the utter subversion of their old religion, wherein they had been long nursled, did

rise up in great commotion....having for their captain a monk, called doctor Mackerel.³⁰

Due to the popularity of the *Acts and Monuments* and despite publication of many later highly edited editions, the work nevertheless retained its influence into the nineteenth-century.³¹

(b) Antiquarians and Later Historians.

The seventeenth-century witnessed the growth of antiquarianism. The Suppression not only bequeathed considerable documentation, but also the remains of monastic structures. This influenced John Weever (d1632), illustrator of ruins and monuments, the cartographer, John Speed (d1629), and the antiquarians William Camden (d1623) and Robert Cotton (d1631).³² In addition, Roger Dodsworth (d1654) and the herald William Dugdale (d1686) jointly edited the *Monasticon Anglicanum*.³³ This contained a detailed record of documents, notably charters, with later volumes relating details from the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535. The *Monasticon* established the importance of charters as primary source material for monastic studies, also illustrating the immense scale of monastic landholdings. Using the *Monasticon* as its basis, in 1695 Thomas Tanner (d1735), Bishop of St. Asaph, composed the *Notitia Monastica*, a shortened catalogue of the monastic houses, but nonetheless an important composition, giving rise to later research on the subject.³⁴

Two writers having connections with the works of John Foxe were the historians John Strype (1643-1737), and Bishop Gilbert Burnet of Salisbury (1643-1715). Strype utilised Foxe's papers extensively for his '*Ecclesiastical Memorials*' of 1721; a study of the Reformation.³⁵ He also gained access to many documents subsequently lost in the 'Cotton Fire' of 1731. Strype suggested that 'I have gone to as near the fountain-head as possible: that is to archives, state papers, registers and original letters'.³⁶ Befitting the period, he nevertheless possessed considerable hostility towards the Catholic Church. Marginalia in the *Memorials* concerning the Pilgrimage suggest, 'The clergy of York are poor and ignorant', and 'The clergy in the north great friends

to the pope'. A chapter heading suggested that 'The northern clergy [were] backward...some of them taken up for seditious preaching'.³⁷ Strype also noted that rejecting the Act of Supremacy 'put many of the religious men especially into a terrible concern, being persons so devoted to that foreign prelate'.³⁸

Gilbert Burnet, in his *History of the Reformation* of 1679, quotes the Bishop of London, John Stokesley (1475-1539) who stated, '...These lesser houses were as thorns soon pluck'd up, but the great Abbots were like putrefied old Oaks; yet they must needs follow'.³⁹ Burnet, although supportive of Henry's actions, gives a fairly balanced discourse on the reasons why the monasteries were dissolved and the problems that ensued. These related especially to that of

...friends [that] must now lie in Purgatory, the Poor that fed on their daily Alms, were deprived of that supply, [and] the Piety of their ancestors had dedicated to God and his Saints, was now invaded and converted to secular Ends.⁴⁰

He also gives a short account of the Rising, blaming both the regulars and seculars, 'where a Church-man, disguised into a Cobler, and directed by a Monk, drew a great body of men after him'.⁴¹

The period bridging the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was represented by the social reformer William Cobbett (1763-1835), who travelled throughout Lincolnshire in 1830. He described the means employed by the Tudor state to dispossess the English poor, beginning with the crown's appropriation of monastic land following the Dissolution.⁴² Cobbett held little admiration for Henry, recounting the king as a 'ferocious tyrant, a ruffian and the shame of after ages'.⁴³ Described as a 'non-Catholic Catholic Emancipationist', Cobbett perceived the pre-Reformation period as Utopian, 'an Eden in which the poor classes...were lovingly cared for by a selfless Church'.⁴⁴ Cobbett was writing during a period of re-emerging Catholicism, radicalism and nationalism with added industrial and social developments. Accordingly, the Dissolution period witnessed 'socio-economic sin symbolised in the

destruction of the monasteries, subsidising of married clergy with tithes and the creation of a *nouveaux riche*'.⁴⁵

This period witnessed the emergence of a radical movement that significantly affected the study of history down to the present day: that of Marxism. Ian Hazlett suggests that Marxists 'tended to understand the Reformation as a...manifestation of economic decline, occasioned by inflation, price-rises and accompanying social unrest'. The new religious creeds came 'on the back of the rising bourgeoisie, which always profits when the majority artisan, labouring and peasant classes fall on hard times'.⁴⁶ Although these theories are clearly influenced by nineteenth-century secular philosophies, rather than sixteenth-century religious doctrines, Marxist historians nevertheless unlocked a debate notably concerning the landed gentry who profited from monastic lands.⁴⁷ Within a sixteenth-century context however, Protestants were religious evangelists promoting Christian ideals of fiscal restraint and social modesty, not economic profiteers of confiscated lands and oppressors of the poor.

A monastic historian who bridged the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was Francis Gasquet (1846-1929), Prior of Downside, later raised to the cardinalate. His work, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* (1893-95), was noted as being 'more distinguished by good intentions than by erudition'.⁴⁸ George Coulton (1858-1947), described both as a historian and also a controversialist, challenged Gasquet, whose works he often accused of possessing 'habits of literary dishonesty'.⁴⁹ Gasquet emphasised a 'romantic ideal' of the medieval period, epitomised by the 'Gothic Revival', along with social contentment through Catholic devotion. Coulton demanded 'an absolute commitment to truth...scrupulous dependence on contemporary sources, accurately cited, and unleashed furious broadsides of reproof for those who transgressed against this basic standard'.⁵⁰ He nevertheless suggested that,

The differences between a Roman Catholic [and] a Protestant...could be far more tolerantly discussed if only all the parties could agree: ...the widest

dividing gulf is the suspicion...of careless misstatements, or even literary dishonesty.⁵¹

Despite this notional *volte face*, Coulton gives 'a rough list of nearly 200 blunders and misstatements...of most of the Cardinal's books'.⁵²

(c) Modern Historians.

As suggested previously, an historians' interpretation of the Tudor period could be coloured by his or her religious beliefs, categorised as Catholic, Protestant, or within the '*via media*' of Anglo-Catholicism.⁵³ Christopher Haigh suggests 'it sometimes seems that Reformation history is just a convenient battlefield in the struggle for the soul of the Church of England'.⁵⁴ However, the nature of historical deliberation gradually changed from the traditional model of anti-Catholicism into one that 'appreciated the social coherence and spiritual vitality of the religious system' of the early sixteenth century.⁵⁵

This 'revisionist' approach was in response to writers such as Geoffrey Dickens, a devout Protestant,⁵⁶ of whom Felicity Heal wrote that he 'told the story of religious change from above... but its originality lay in its concern with the impact of reform from below'.⁵⁷ Charles Williams writes,

...the questions in dispute in religion and politics [were] a challenge to the most intimate beliefs of the individual, evoking emotions which quickly flared up into passion, making it impossible for even the most ordinary topics to be treated objectively.⁵⁸

Thus, historians such as David Knowles, Geoffrey Dickens, John Scarisbrick, Geoffrey Elton, Christopher Haigh, Eamon Duffy and Patrick Collinson, to name but a few, took differing positions concerning the social, religious and political philosophies of the Reformation period, largely based on personal religious values.

Dom David Knowles (1896-1974) was one of the more impartial historians of the Dissolution; treading 'closely in the footsteps of Froude, Gasquet, Coulton and Baskerville'.⁵⁹ In the three volumes of '*The Religious Orders in England*' (1948, 1955, 1959), Knowles portrays the gradual but continual decline of the monastic life to 'an

indefinable spiritual rusticity'.⁶⁰ In the Epilogue to his work, he writes 'whereas the monk...of the twelfth century would have needed to take deliberate action to escape the full regular life, the monk of the late fourteenth-century would have needed equal determination to remain within its ambit'.⁶¹ However, Knowles acknowledges that the desire to depart was largely influenced by changes outside: they were 'unable either to accompany that change or to adapt themselves to the demands and necessities of a different world'.⁶²

Geoffrey Baskerville's work *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries* (1937) still stands scrutiny today. He poses two questions relevant to this thesis. First, 'what was the chief value of the monasteries to the ordinary person?', and secondly, 'how far at the time of their fall were they carrying out their legal obligations'?⁶³ He suggests that the Suppression was primarily for financial reasons, but stressing the monk's legal obligations to pray for people beyond the cloister. He makes extensive use of visitation documents, some newly published at the time. In this Baskerville stresses 'that the regular life was so much disturbed by the laity': a recurring theme of visitations.⁶⁴

The study of the Dissolution of the monasteries *per se* exercised the minds of many historians up until the 1970s with Joyce Youings offering being the last full volume of the genre.⁶⁵ In her work, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (1971), she suggests,

Communities of men and women religious were never in so many words, actually dissolved. Nowhere in the formal instruments were they forbidden to pursue their corporate existence, to follow their liturgical routine, or indeed adhere to their Rule.⁶⁶

Following the Act of Supremacy, which most regulars endorsed, if reluctantly, the surviving monasteries became essentially 'reformed' houses. Youings also defends Cromwell and notably his commissioners Thomas Legh (d1545) and Richard Layton (d1544) from the opprobrium generally heaped upon them.⁶⁷ She also reveals the activities of local hierarchies in providing intelligence to Cromwell concerning

monasteries, and no doubt profiting from the result. The process would be 'orderly and methodical', especially following the Rising and Pilgrimage.⁶⁸

Subsequent to Youngs work, the subject of the Dissolution became incorporated within numerous volumes concerning the Reformation or in papers relating to specific monasteries. Patrick Collinson wrote that 'until the 1960s the Dissolution of the monasteries was the only aspect of the Reformation to be thoroughly researched at every level...from Cobbett to Gasquet and Baskerville. Exhaustion set in and...the topic tends to be relatively neglected [in] more recent Reformation scholarship'.⁶⁹

Geoffrey Elton (1921–94) presented the Dissolution as one aspect within a continuous and rapid restructuring of the Church during a period when England was moving from the Medieval to an Early Modern environment. The Reformation process was carried through initially by Elton's champion Thomas Cromwell, culminating in '...the fact that by 1553 England was almost certainly nearer to being a Protestant country than to anything else'.⁷⁰ 'Looking out on England from behind Cromwell's desk', Elton suggested that the Reformation consisted of the political 'nationalization' of the Church and at local levels the eradication of superstitions based on conservative doctrines.⁷¹ With a largely centralised Tudor administration, threats against the Crown could only ensue 'from local or regional concentrations of power under effective magnate leadership'.⁷² The Rising was an example of the failure of this theory with the local aristocracy largely ineffective.

Christopher Haigh suggests that reform was to be enforced by Cromwell's treason laws along with instructions for people to 'watch one another'; thereby instituting 'if not a reign of terror, at least a reign of nervousness'.⁷³ To Cromwell, the speed of these changes, especially at local level was unacceptable, with conservative prelates 'not being proponents of reform'.⁷⁴ Haigh, a 'revisionist' historian, who described himself as 'a kind of Anglican agnostic', suggested that Protestant policies took hold, not through local pious endorsement, but via 'recognition of the power and prestige of the monarchy'.⁷⁵

Works on the Reformation from a local standpoint are numerous: Christopher Haigh in Lancashire, Susan Brigden on London, Geoffrey Dickens with York and Caroline Litzenberger discussing Gloucestershire.⁷⁶ However, a research gap becomes apparent as few of the writers examine monasticism in any great depth; the Dissolution itself being just an integral part of the Reformation process. The main stance is described as a reluctance to accept change, associated with attempts to formulate and stabilize religious policy to the advantage of the local hierarchy. This model logically differs considerably throughout the country. The more radical Southeast is documented by Peter Clark in his study of Tudor Kent. Here both Cromwell and Cranmer diligently pressed forward through selective patronage the process of reform within a county that also possessed a strategic element *vis-à-vis* proximity to the continent.⁷⁷ Clark suggests that this factor required Henry near the conclusion of his reign to commit himself to the Protestant cause.⁷⁸

However, it was the Catholic writers John Scarisbrick and Eamon Duffy along with Christopher Haigh who opened a wider discussion by disputing Geoffrey Dickens's theories of a 'moribund' medieval Church in comparison to the supposed 'vitality' of the newly reformed model. Scarisbrick writes, 'on the whole English men and women did not want the Reformation, and most of them were slow to accept it when it came'.⁷⁹ He also suggests that the gentry' entrepreneurs, whilst opposing the Dissolution were actively exploiting it: they may have been largely conservative, 'but they were not fools'.⁸⁰ Similarly, Haigh wrote that 'monasteries were good things, but a share of the spoils made their loss more bearable'.⁸¹ Although monasticism *per se* was never legally abolished, once stripped of their estates and patronage, religious houses became economically unviable. This factor, alongside pressure from Cromwell's commissioners, forced them to close. Within this financial equation, religion inevitably came a poor second.

Although generally viewed from a parish perspective, Eamon Duffy, in his influential work *The Stripping of the Altars* (1992), stresses that the medieval church

was vigorous, adaptable and popular, with criticisms either the work of Lollards or later Protestant apologists.⁸² Margaret Aston writes that, 'two-thirds of the book concerns forms of traditional religion: the last third shows how this structure of belief was dismantled and eventually displaced'.⁸³ The gradual replacement of conservative worship, largely respected by Lincolnshire parishioners, was accelerated by the 'Ten Articles' of 1536: the *via media* of liturgical observance.⁸⁴ The assault on traditional religion eventually succeeded due to the effectiveness of Tudor government: 'whatever the Crown commanded, the people, for the most part, did...it is safer to do in religion as most do'.⁸⁵ Although Duffy rarely mentions the monasteries, it was partly this supposition that condemned the religious houses.

Largely pioneered by Dickens, another vital aspect of research was the investigation of documents from parish and diocesan archives, attempting to understand how people reacted to the changes taking place during the Dissolution.⁸⁶ This is best illustrated in Duffy's *The Voices of Morebath* (2001). This reveals largely through churchwardens' accounts, life in a Devonshire village throughout the Reformation period, witnessed by the long-serving priest and his long-suffering parishioners. The book gives a detailed insight into sixteenth-century village life, including the suppression of Barlinch Priory in Somerset, holder of both the Morebath advowson and the manor. Largely due to its poverty, the priory was parsimonious in regards to the upkeep of the chancel. The monastery did however 'contribute' a stained glass window. This was donated after its suppression by the new lord of the manor, Hugh Paulet, incongruously 'to pray for hys soul'.⁸⁷

Also using churchwardens' accounts, *The Shaping of a Community* (1996) by Beat Kümin, discusses how the social and economic organisation within the parish was gradually transformed both before and during the Reformation period.⁸⁸ This included an increasing lay participation in parochial administration from the fifteenth-century onwards, encompassing most social classes within the parish. The accounts also suggest there was increasing financial support via local fraternities for

the upkeep of the church and its internal arrangements: the Louth guilds being a Lincolnshire example.⁸⁹ However, Haigh suggests that every parish was unique, with successions of local priests and squires each imposing their will on the community: ‘...every parish had its own Reformation’.⁹⁰ Lincolnshire was no exception, with the yeoman class playing a prominent role in the socio-religious life of their villages and during the Rising, bridging the considerable social gap between the gentry and commons.

(d) Lincolnshire.

Lincolnshire’s monastic history has been to some extent neglected with considerable research gaps *vis-à-vis* connectivity with local parishioners. This is despite Dorothy Owen’s work on the county’s medieval Church and Margaret Bowker’s study of the Reformation in the extensive diocese of Lincoln.⁹¹ Owen discusses the economic and domestic activities of the monasteries which owned at least half the livings in the county. She concludes that generally Lincolnshire parishioners were spiritually contented: the Rising being an aberration.⁹² Bowker’s studies suggest that the Lincoln diocese was far from a moribund organisation. The authorities were diligently correcting their personnel and imposing discipline on the parishes and monasteries, notably during the episcopacy of John Longland.⁹³

The majority of books and papers that relate to the Dissolution period in Lincolnshire discuss the Rising within the context of the Pilgrimage, but little was written about the monasteries concerned during the revolt. The first writers to attempt to unravel the twin rebellions were the Catholic historians Madeline and Ruth Dodds in *The Pilgrimage of Grace, 1536-1537 and the Exeter Conspiracy* (1915). Using the recently published *Letters & Papers of Henry VIII*, they relate an account suggesting a variance in the overall aims between the gentry and commons, whose only mutual interest was that of religion.⁹⁴ Within Richard Hoyle’s interpretation of the Rising in *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Politics of the 1530s* (2001), little is written about the regulars and nothing at all concerning one of the main participants in the

Rising, Matthew Mackarell, abbot of Barlings. Although taking the view that northerners *per se* were not a 'horde of rebellious barbarians' as sometimes portrayed by Tudor commentators, he is largely uncritical of government documents mainly featuring interviews and confessions extracted for the most part under duress.⁹⁵

Mervyn James discusses the Rising in considerable detail, examining the leaders of the revolt. However, he too consigns the regulars to the sidelines.⁹⁶ Steven Gunn suggests that in James's analysis of the revolt, 'the clergy, the lower orders and the county elite combined in protest, but the gentry of the area cloaked their treasonable disobedience with rituals of coercion by the commons'.⁹⁷ Margaret Bowker's analysis suggests 'the Lincolnshire gentry...were far from being the powerless group which they were made out to be...they had the power to suppress the rebellion which they chose not to use'.⁹⁸ Geoffrey Dickens's perfunctory dismissal of the Rising would not impress Lincolnshire readers. He writes disdainfully,

The Lincolnshire Pilgrimage seems...confused and unattractive...[and] we good Yorkshiremen...cannot resist a snigger over the King's address to these Calibans of Lincolnshire.⁹⁹

George Bernard in *The King's Reformation* (2007) argues that the rebels rose primarily in defence of the monasteries, something with which this research into Lincolnshire testaments will dispute in favour of the retention of the parish churches.¹⁰⁰

Local historian Ann Ward in *The Lincolnshire Rising* (1996) consulted the original documents rather than the calendared *Letters & Papers*. Here she analysed the detailed depositions of participants arrested by the authorities. She melds the people involved into the county's political landscape within a period of heightened instability, both religious and social. Monastic input into the event is clearly described, which gives the impression that despite later statements they were relatively minor players in the proceedings.¹⁰¹ A review of Gerald Hodgett's volume, *Tudor Lincolnshire* (1975) suggests that 'after irrupting violently into national politics in 1536...Lincolnshire seems to have settled down to a relatively peaceful religious conservatism': a pacifistic attitude that was probably a true reflection of the period.¹⁰²

Some writers have concentrated on the religious position of the testator, largely through interpretation of the preambles.¹⁰³ A number of these also used testaments which included aspects similar to this work, but approached from different angles. B. A. Walker discussed the period 1534-59 using preambles as the basis of his arguments, but little was included concerning monasteries other than their connection as rectors.¹⁰⁴ Dating from 1480 to 1536, and using a smaller number of wills (1,828), John Ketteringham gave detailed tables and analysis of bequests to the various Church sectors including the monasteries.¹⁰⁵ An important investigation by Mary Lucas explored the role of Lincolnshire testators from five major centres in the county during the period 1520-1600.¹⁰⁶ Although monastic houses were cited, this work mainly discussed the changes in Church doctrine reflected within local testaments. Although she did not include the Prerogative Court of Canterbury wills, Lucas's thesis gives considerable insights into working with testaments and extracting the relevant detail from these revealing documents.¹⁰⁷

Gerald Hodgett produced an M.A. thesis in 1947 on the Dissolution in the county, chiefly concerning the fate of the ex-religious and the distribution of monastic property.¹⁰⁸ Researching the visitation documents of four Lincoln bishops from 1431 to 1547, Hodgett, similar to other authors, came to the conclusion that,

The general apathy of regulars towards religion forms the most serious charge that can be brought against them. Their decline in numbers and fail[ure] to reach their high ideals are apparent. The monastic houses were not fulfilling their proper functions and...the majority had not for a century prior to 1535....¹⁰⁹

He rightly concludes that, 'the[ir] morals should be viewed against the background of the sixteenth-century and not by twentieth century standards'.¹¹⁰

In discussing these works, considerable research gaps emerge. What is absent is an understanding of the relationship between the monasteries and the people they most affected: the local tithe and rent payers and manor court petitioners. The concept of connectivity via localism is missing from the agenda. This will be rectified by

merging these two primary themes through the use of Lincolnshire parishioner's testaments. Chapter Three will therefore outline the methodology used in researching the thesis: thereby hopefully achieving these objectives.

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NOTES – CHAPTER TWO.

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- ²¹ Williams, *Documents*, 90.
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CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

As seen from the Literature Review, much has been written and discussed about monasticism since the Dissolution. This includes the foundations and suppressions, the religious themselves, their writings and political activities, buildings they inhabited and the land they owned. By taking an alternative approach, this thesis will look into Lincolnshire parishioners' connectivity with both the regulars themselves and monasticism in general during the period of religious change in the early sixteenth-century century. Contrary to the approach of some historians, this work will essentially be a 'bottom up' scenario rather than 'top down', thereby filling a research gap in this important field. It was therefore essential to compile a comprehensive database using the only type of documentation left by Lincolnshire people of the period: their wills and testaments.

Within this work, the term connectivity is applied to explore the relationship between the varying social classes and religious institutions. This connection was especially at risk during the 1530s when alterations to doctrine initiated from above were used to implement new spiritual ideals on those below. These changes especially affected the religious houses, whose very existence came under threat. Using testaments as the primary source, the research will reveal how sections of the local population reacted through their patronage to the new doctrines, and especially how these changes affected their relationship with the county's monks, nuns and friars. To explore this connectivity and its impact at a local level this thesis makes considerable use of wills; details of individual bequests revealing the range of religious institutions that benefited from this patronage. Consequently the main value of these documents is in demonstrating the final wishes of a small section of the Lincolnshire population sufficiently wealthy and influential to compose a will.

The principal reasons for choosing Lincolnshire as a research vehicle were threefold. First, the close proximity to my hometown of Nottingham, with easy access into the

county by both road and rail. Secondly, the large number of monastic houses (sixty-five) which survived to the Dissolution period, compared with the surrounding East Midland's counties.¹ Thirdly and most importantly however was the huge amount of surviving documentation, particularly testaments, mostly written in English. Within their wills the deceased not only donated their wealth but also vital information concerning their relationship with the Church and their principle aims regarding the afterlife. The records chart key aspects of Lincolnshire people's relationship with their monastic houses, but specifically their reaction to the purported waning of monasticism up until the final suppression. These documents will form the backbone of the research, increasing an understanding of the Dissolution from a local viewpoint rather than as usual from the national perspective.

Also examined were the episcopal visitation records, both monastic and parochial. These were scrutinized in order to understand the state of the Church as a whole during the period prior to the Dissolution. The monastic visitations embrace twenty-four Benedictine and Augustinian monasteries and nunneries, six Premonstratensian houses and seven nominally Cistercian convents.² These will reveal the activities of close-knit monastic communities, where pressures of daily life may have reflected the secular world beyond the cloister walls. Importantly the records expose connections with the outside, both legitimate and proscribed, and the affect these had both inside a monastery and in its relationship with nearby settlements.

Certain similarities between the two sets of visitation documents, monastic and parochial, were revealed. They both attempt to discover fault rather than bestow praise, and both divulge aspects of financial, social and also sexual misdemeanours. The parish visitations are useful in understanding the relationship between the clergy and their congregations relative to spiritual provision and administration of the local church. Interestingly, in all the 367 parishes scrutinised there is no mention of non-payment of tithes, something noted regularly in testaments in terms such as

'negligently forgotten'. Unfortunately, the results of the visits are unknown and consequently no indication of the penances prescribed. They do however reveal connections between parishioners and monastic houses through the latter's obligation to maintain the chancel of an appropriated church. Both sets of visitations illuminate the daily realities of the religious, the parish clergy and also the activities of local parishioners: together allowing greater understanding of the workings of the Church, both within and beyond the cloister.

In order to obtain further information concerning the local parish, churchwarden's accounts were also studied. Of the few surviving examples, those of Louth and Wigtoft are the most comprehensive. These give an understanding of the administration of two of the county's churches, one urban the other rural, and their contacts with monastic houses. Crucial information within these documents were references to gifts given during the lifetime of a parishioner. The Louth accounts additionally give details of the construction of the present spire, just one of a number of church building projects in the county during the period immediately prior to the religious changes. This, and other major building projects, challenges the view of some historians who consider the Church of the period to be declining and ineffectual.

The Lincolnshire Rising of October 1536 provides additional evidence of the attitudes of local parishioners towards monasticism within the county. This revolt, although short-lived, was the precursor to the Pilgrimage of Grace; the latter threatening the very existence of the Tudor state. The Rising will however only be discussed where it is relevant, other authors having examined it in considerable detail.³ Nevertheless, aspects of the uprising will be used to illustrate the Lincolnshire population's attitude towards the religious in comparison with their parish community.

In Louth, where the revolt initially began, parishioners had previously amassed considerable debt in order to embellish their church. Although little of the rebellion

is noted in the churchwarden's accounts, they do reveal a small number of contacts with religious houses, notably Louth Park. This was principally to provide building materials during the construction of the spire: an economic relationship rather than spiritual. This possibly reveals local anxieties concerning the parish church that were lacking concerning the nearby monastery.⁴ This evidence, along with that from testators, will be used to suggest that monastic houses had largely lost their influence upon local populations and that attempts during the revolt to resist their closure was only a gesture: the emphasis being on saving the parish churches.

The study also made use of state papers to illustrate the politics of the Dissolution period at national level. These documents might reveal that during the Rising Lincolnshire people were willing to physically defend their place of worship and spiritual investment. The papers note the names of incumbents at the Suppression which complement the pension's listings noting the fate of the county's ex-religious. These were used to discover relatives within monasteries who had previously received gifts from family members. Along with testaments, state documents allow a greater understanding of the factors that defined patronage to specific religious.

During the Rising there was local animosity directed towards the ecclesiastical hierarchy, largely in the form of the diocesan, John Longland. Evidence from wills also revealed that decreasing contributions to the cathedral and its shrine of St. Hugh were mirrored by those to the monasteries and also the guilds: both probably affected by the unstable religious politics. The research may reveal a divided Church, encumbered with the political ramifications of the changing theology at its centre. In addition, opposing factions from the ecclesiastical and secular intelligencia launched invectives at one another from the pages of lengthy dissertations. This was notably between Thomas More and William Tyndale concerning the latter's translation of the Bible, with Bishops John Fisher and John Stokesley locked in dispute over the divorce and the break with Rome.

By contrast, at local levels in Lincolnshire, with the exception of the short-lived Rising, religious stability appeared largely to reign. Testaments suggests that the parish church was still being gifted throughout the period with considerable amounts of patronage in return for the later outlawed Placebos, Diriges, Requiems and other prayers for the dead. Evidence therefore will attempt to show that the Church as a body was still relevant in people's lives, but built on more localised foundations than perhaps previously understood.

Although gifted in smaller amounts than that to the Church in general, charitable giving within testaments appeared to remain largely stable. These donations came in two categories. First, those mentioned in the text along with a gift, invariably to the poor. Secondly those generally noted at the end of the document as a nonspecific declaration to aid the soul. A typical example is to 'dispose the reste of my goodes in charitable warkes, to the pleasur of God and proffyt of my soule'.⁵ These statements have been discounted from the calculations because no specific donation is mentioned. They nevertheless would have constituted a considerable amount of local patronage, revealing that local charity was perhaps replacing that previously donated by monasteries as part of their original remit.

A small percentage of donors, mainly local, gave to the upkeep of roads and bridges. The main reason for including gifts relating to the maintenance of the county's infrastructure is as an example of connectivity between testators and their local environment. As Lincolnshire has so few monastic remains, it is also important that a structure closely associated with a monastery be used aid an understanding of the participation of religious houses within the local economy. One particular construction was the Bridgend or Holland Causeway administered by Bridgend Priory. This significant highway connecting Holland with Kesteven carried both agricultural produce and also the products of local salterns. This will be used in a study to reveal activities of both religious and secular in maintaining this vital

highway linking many parts of Lincolnshire with the sea at Bicker Haven, Boston and Spalding.

Salt extraction was an important economic resource notably in the east of the county. Along with the associated turbaries, some of these workings were owned by local monasteries, originally providing considerable income until the later emergence of cheaper imports. A study was made concerning the activities of the monastic houses associated with this once extensive industry. Results were used to illustrate relationships, not only between tenants and their monastic landlords but also between religious houses competing over increasingly limited agricultural resources.

Also discussed will be the monastery's administration of lands reclaimed from the sea and marsh and the legal confrontations that ensued. Evidence from testaments will be used to reveal activities affecting ongoing patronage towards institutions that were perhaps perceived as visibly wealthy and overtly litigious: principally Crowland and Spalding, the two richest houses in the county. There was also the regulars' perceived isolation from the sometimes harsh realities of the landscape environment: notably in the inhospitable Holland fenlands. The two studies will illustrate that communications, landscape and centres of population cannot be separated from the activities of the monastic 'corporations'. These examinations will therefore demonstrate the 'hands on' approach of monastic houses to their local surroundings, answering questions concerning their relevance to local communities.

A major piece of evidence also associated with the 'spiritual landscape' comes in the form of the Pinchbeck Map, probably commissioned by Spalding Priory in the early fifteenth-century. Expanding the theme of localism, this was used to analyse both agricultural activities and also connections between donor settlements and monastic recipients. The map and associated documents additionally reveal the activities of both local and central authorities in the governance of the fenland area situated between Kesteven and Holland. It also exposed a marked separation of the two districts, physically emphasised by the fenland area containing the boundary. The

map therefore provides pictorial evidence for the geographical separation of communities: people on one side of the fenland apparently having little connectivity with those on the other.

The subject of localism will be extended with studies of four monastic houses: Crowland, Kirkstead, Sempringham and the Grantham Franciscans. The data revealed the distance of the donor settlements from the monastery, the numbers of wills, types of donation and also the timescale between each gift to uncover any significant gaps during the period under discussion. This aids an understanding of the range of both the economic and social influences that affected patronage within different areas of the county. It will also give a detailed breakdown of the authority each house had on the surrounding area, whether it was local or at some distance. These factors, combined with evidence from testaments will help answer questions concerning how localised the connections were between monastery and parishioner.

Evidence suggests that other than to St. Catherine's, few donors gave to monastic houses outside their respective districts. However, a considerable minority donated to religious houses, notably friaries, situated more than ten miles from the donor settlement. Superficially, this suggests that patronage was spread further than previously supposed. However, the fact that the mendicants received the majority of this provision perhaps illustrates their peripateticism compared with the notional isolationism of monks and nuns. Data from the testaments will expose these variations and endeavour to ascertain testators reasoning behind their patronage.

Deeper analysis of the wills may uncover whether some districts in the county gave more than others. Testators from Holland and the surrounding hinterland within Kesteven and Lindsey gave small but numerous gifts to the orphans of St. Catherine's in Lincoln: a considerable number donating to no other monastic house. Conversely, testators from Lincoln Borough and the Stow archdeaconry in West Lindsey gave little or nothing to the orphanage. The reasoning behind this 'selective patronage' will be investigated to uncover possible connections, both spiritual and

possibly educational. Added together the data will illustrate the differing proportion of patronage within the three districts and the evident imbalance in overall wealth.

In addition, just over 10% of Lincolnshire testators left donations to monasteries outside the county. This could be seen as an indication of extended patronage based on regional rather than local benefactions. However, the data reveal that most of the 'foreign' monasteries concerned were within a thirty mile radius of the donor settlements. This factor is important to the research, especially regarding a county alleged by some historians to be geographically isolated.

Lincolnshire wills provide the major component of evidence upon which the thesis is constructed.⁶ Most individuals left no paper trail whatsoever in a period prior to the official certification of baptism, marriage and burial. The surviving testaments therefore are of significant importance despite representing only a tiny percentage of the county's inhabitants: ranging annually from zero to 0.7% of an estimated population of approximately 100,000.⁷ These documents were evaluated to reveal the extent of patronage originating from local parishioners, allowing a deeper understanding of the part played by the monasteries and other sections of the Church within the huge, largely rural county.

All the testaments originate from places within Lincolnshire itself and are noted even if the testator leaves only to monasteries outside the county. Excluded are wills that originate from beyond the county, despite donating to Lincolnshire houses. Of those studied from the local ecclesiastical courts, many were printed within four volumes of the Lincoln Record Society (LRS) containing a total of 1,606 testaments.⁸ The first three, containing wills dating from 1500 to June 1532 are slightly précised: unfortunately omitting most preambles. These are however incorporated into the fourth volume, which ranges from early 1532 to October 1534, and are transcribed verbatim from the original documents.

Vital to the study were the testaments housed in the Lincoln Archives Office (LAO).⁹ The majority of these were originally deposited in the county's two archdeaconry courts, Lincoln and Stow, and were known as 'registered copies': duplicates of the long-lost originals.¹⁰ Some are in bound volumes, the remainder in loose sheets: all approximately 8"x 12½" (20.5cm x 31.75cm). They were written on rag paper using iron gall ink, inscribed in generally legible Secretary Hand by Church court officials. These date mainly from 1535 to 1540, although there are some earlier examples unpublished in the LRS volumes. For reasons unknown, a small number of wills appear twice within different registers, but cross-referencing takes this into account. Also from the LAO are wills originating in the Court of the Dean & Chapter and those in the Episcopal Registers. These give insights into the workings of the cathedral and also the destination of bequests emanating from the higher clergy and their servants.

The choice of the early starting date of 1500 was to accommodate the wills originally deposited at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC), now in the National Archives (TNA). These 212 documents emanated from testators who held assets worth over £10 in more than one diocese. They were included in the research due to the economic, political and social influences that most of the testators probably retained. This was in addition to their knowledge of national, and in the case of the merchants of Calais, international affairs. The politics of the Court would be generally understood, thereby giving foreknowledge of any changes in political circles, but also in religious doctrine that could equally affect their souls. Although they decreased in number compared with a notable increase from the local courts, they are vital in understanding the destination of patronage from the wealthier sectors of the county's society. Analysed overall, the testaments represent a cross-section of Lincolnshire society, allowing an impression of their wealth and social standing within parish communities, but importantly their patronage of both monastic houses and other sectors of the Church.

Although there are exceptions, the composition of sixteenth-century wills was comparatively formulaic, with most being written in English. First the testator wrote that his testament was composed 'In the name of God', to discourage legal disputes with suggestions of divine intervention. This was followed by the common statement, 'beyng of a hole mynde and perfyte remembraunce', used to forestall claims of insanity during the preparation of the document.¹¹ Occasionally the testator was unwell; consequently the statement was amended to 'seke in body and hole in mynde'.¹² Next came the preamble where the soul was generally bequeathed to God, Mary and the saints. This is noted in the vast majority of Lincolnshire wills of the period, providing evidence of unchanging attitudes regarding the soul.

The place of burial was then cited, usually within the local parish church or 'churcheyerde'. There were occasionally requests for interment within a religious house, but these were in a considerable minority. Payments were made not only for 'buryal', usually 6s. 8d., but also to the High Altar for 'tithys forgottyn', generally 12d: dying in debt to the Church was not seen as appropriate. Few mortuary payments to the priest were made during this period, doubtless due to changes in legislation: the general statement being 'as the lawe and custome admyt'.¹³ Further gifts to the local church usually came in the form of donations for the illumination of saintly images and to repair and adorn the various altars. There were also regular donations to maintain the bells and also to the 'workes' for the 'reparacion' of the building, most being hundreds of years old.

Some testaments featured specific requests for ceremonies such as Dirige, Placebo and Trentals. These services were sometimes performed in guild chapels situated within the church, but also represented displays of wealth and influence, featuring processions of poor men clutching candles: payment for whose attendance was noted in the will. These donations were usually followed by gifts to the cathedral, both for the High Altar but also for general maintenance via gifts to the 'Works

Chantry'. Patronage towards monastic houses of all kinds was then listed: a regular feature being to 'the pore children at St. Catheryn's withowt Lyncoln'.¹⁴

Following on from contributions to the Church, gifts to the testator's family were noted, generally forming the bulk of the will. These itemized particulars of livestock, 'schepe, yowes and hogges' and details of 'houshold stuff' including 'pottes, panes and dyshes'. Because there were few inventories attached to the wills, these particulars are useful in understanding the wealth of an individual donor along with his social position. The conclusion of the testament lists the supervisor and witnesses, a few being monastic, along with the date of probate granted by the Church court, usually written in Latin.

Vital to the research was the amount and type of donation, either money or goods, but also included the holding of land or property from a monastery. The district in which the settlement was located was also noted to allow an impression of the spread of patronage throughout the county. In addition, an analysis was completed of testaments written by a minority of people who noted their social rank in order to uncover the destination of patronage from especially the gentry, esquires, yeoman, women and merchants of the county. Testaments are hugely significant documents, filled with crucial information, not just for research into ecclesiastical activities, but also into the social and economic spheres of Lincolnshire.

The enormous amount of data gathered from the wills forms the basis of the research undertaken for this thesis. The research covered a period of forty-one years. At first bequests and other details relating specifically to monasteries were noted from the 4,139 written and printed testaments used in the study. These were titled Monastic Wills, totalling 1,433 (34.6% of the overall number). The tables included the name, his or her social position or occupation and date of composition (not the probate date). As the wills were dated using the Julian calendar, with its 'New Year' on Lady Day (March 25th), this system was retained in order to preserve the context within other documents. In Chapter Seven, the testament of one Lincolnshire parishioner,

John Alcockson of Friskney, will be frequently noted as a model for the period. It contains most of the elements discussed in the text and therefore helps illustrate the conditions (religious, social and economic), during this period of transition. Added together the Monastic Wills give a broad understanding of the will-making sector of the population and their relationship with the county's religious houses.

A few years into the research revealed that a more extensive investigation was required to gain a broader perspective of the interaction between the Church in general and local communities. This data covered the period between 1532 and 1540, encapsulating in greater detail changes in the political and religious spheres along with the Dissolution process. To distinguish them from the Monastic Wills, these were termed Parish Wills and consist of 2,933 documents. Comprehensive tables and graphs were compiled to illustrate the proportion of gifts within six designated spheres. These were the religious houses already noted in the Monastic Wills, along with parish churches, the cathedral, religious guilds, charitable donations generally to the poor, in addition to the infrastructure, specifically 'cawseys' and 'brigges'. Dividing these calculations firstly into three-year segments, 1532-34, 1535-37 and 1538-40, and then annually, made analysis of the donations far more precise.

The Parish Wills also greatly widened the scope of the research, revealing precise details of patronage and any fluctuations that occurred, both prior and subsequent to the emergence of the '*Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*'. Evidence will reveal the extent of donations throughout this nine year period illustrating the changes occurring as legislation issuing from the Reformation Parliament was disseminated. These statistics and others will be used to suggest that Lincolnshire parishioners were largely content with the religious status quo, and displayed little empathy towards alternative doctrines of the new state run church.

In addition, records were made of unorthodox preambles. Much work has been published on this subject: some attempting to uncover reformist inclinations.¹⁵ An

archetypal preamble consisted of 'I bequeth my soule unto God allmyghtty, and Hys blessyd mother Our Lady St. Mary and to all the celestiall cumpeny of heven', or similar expressions.¹⁶ To be classified as 'orthodox' all three elements needed to be in place. Some however reverted to simply 'Almighty God' with others omitting Mary but mentioning the saints. This maybe the result of abbreviations by the court's scribes or a growing religious uncertainty: testators 'hedging their bets' by dedicating their souls primarily to God covering most eventualities. Research will determine whether testators leaving an unconventional preamble also left donations for the soul and associated prayers for the dead, or just left the matter 'in the hands of God'.

Added to these gifts were those to churches other than in the donor's parish, probably reflecting the testator's extensive landholdings. As with the 'home' parish these included payment for 'neglected' tithes, finance for building projects and also gifts to the poor for their prayers. Most of the donations were however within a ten mile radius, therefore relatively easy for executors to monitor. Together, the two sections of wills, Monastic and Parish, will illuminate a largely under researched period of Lincolnshire history.

The following chapters will each enlarge an understanding of the relationship between Lincolnshire parishioners and the county's monastic houses. The landscape, discussed in Chapter Four, will link the monasteries economic activities with those of the local population in relation to the geography of the county. It will also investigate the maintenance of the transport infrastructure, and also the salt industry linked to reclamation of land along the coast. The 'Pinchbeck Map' will be used to illustrate a geographical division of the county that also reflects local testator's patronage towards monasteries and other aspects of the Church.

Chapter Five will discuss the condition of the Church prior to and during the period of change. The structure and organisation in earlier times will be compared with those of the Tudor period. Extensive use will be made of the parish visitations of

1519 relating especially to the administration of the county's parish churches. These, along with the surviving churchwardens' accounts will be used to discover whether the Church was as moribund as some historians have suggested. Aspects of charity and education will be investigated to give an understanding of the role the monasteries played in this arena. Linked together they will provide greater understanding of the activities of the Church prior to the Dissolution.

Chapter Six reveals the internal activities of the county's monasteries through the detailed visitation reports of the episcopal visitors. Bishop Alnwick's investigations in the mid fifteenth century will be compared with those of Atwater and Longland's in the early sixteenth, to reveal changes within the relationship between monk and laity within the social, economic and spiritual spheres. The rapport between abbot and monk is also highlighted, including the ongoing struggle by the bishops to retain stability within the religious houses. The deliberations will be analysed in order to understand people's perspective of the monastic orders at a time when the whole genre was under scrutiny and vital patronage under threat.

Chapter Seven involves a concentrated analysis of testaments deposited by Lincolnshire parishioners. Although representing only a tiny fraction of the total population, they are vital in understanding the destination of patronage towards monastic houses and the Church in general during this period of transformation. The wills fill an important gap in monastic research, answering the question as to whether religious houses retained the support of local communities, or were just seen as economic entities, similar to secular landlords. Although testaments suggest that the local parish was the primary destination of patronage, there is still much to be discussed in order to understand why other sections of the Church failed to retain a loyal following. Gathered together, the assembled data will reveal new information concerning the last days of monasticism in Lincolnshire and the reaction of parishioners to the changes in religion.

This author, as a non-believer will take neither the side of the conservative nor of the reformist, but of the people of early sixteenth-century Lincolnshire in their struggle to come to terms with the shifting religious politics of the period. The ensuing instability challenged the beliefs and attitudes of a population who largely desired only peace and consistency within their lives. The work therefore will probe into neglected spheres of research concerning Lincolnshire monasteries and their connectivity with the people of the county. Analysing the testaments of thousands of the county's parishioners will also reveal an understanding of the interactions between the Tudor Church and their 'flocks'. Added together, the four focal chapters will disclose both the spiritual and economic connectivity and also localism through patronage that connected Lincolnshire parishioners with their county's monastic houses and other religious institutions. Religious houses, which for good or bad had long been part of the county's 'spiritual landscape' ultimately 'withered on the vine'. Whether Lincolnshire people welcomed, regretted or were unconcerned over the loss will be discussed in the following chapters.

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NOTES – CHAPTER THREE

¹ This figure discounts hospitals and Knights Hospitaller commanderies.

² Thompson, A. H (ed.), *Visitations of Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln*, Lincoln Record Society, Vols. 7, 14, 21 (1914, 1918, 1929). Thompson, A. H., *Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln, 1517-1531*, Lincoln Record Society, Vols. 33, 35, 37 (1940, 1944, 1947). Page, W (ed.), *Victoria Country History, Lincolnshire*, Vol. II (London, 1906, Reprint, 1988). Gasquet, F. A., *Collectanea Anglo-Premonstratensia*, Camden Society, 3rd Series, 3 Vols. (1904-6). Unfortunately no similar documents are available for the friars, Cistercian male houses, Carthusians or the Gilbertines.

³ Ward, *Rising*. James, 'Obedience and Dissent. Bowker, 'Lincolnshire 1536'.

⁴ A letter from the Earl of Shrewsbury to the king notes the rebels 'had taken your Grace's surveyors at the priory of Lowth park, and burnt their books before their faces. *L&P*, XI, 536. 4th October 1536.

⁵ Thomas Tedde of Coningsby. Hickman, 43. 4th August 1532.

⁶ Unless otherwise stated the thesis will concentrate on wills purely from Lincolnshire and not from other parts of the large medieval diocese. The major settlements of Louth, Sleaford, Caister and Kirton in Lindsey were Peculiars with their own courts, and unfortunately few wills from the period survive.

⁷ John Beckett suggests a population of 110,000 in 1563. Therefore, the calculations propose around 100,000 for the period under discussion. Beckett, J. V., *The East Midlands from AD 1000* (London, 1988), 355.

⁸ Foster, C. W., *Lincoln Wills*, Lincoln Record Society, Vols. 5, 10, 24 (1914, 1918, 1930). Hickman, D., *Lincoln Wills, 1532-1534*, Lincoln Record Society, Vol. 89 (2001).

⁹ Listed in the Bibliography.

¹⁰ The original will or a copy was submitted to the ecclesiastical court and transcribed into a register: later noting the date of probate. Original wills generally only survive post c1550. Foster, II, xiv-xv.

¹¹ Thomas Tedde of Coningsby. Hickman, 43. 4th August 1532.

¹² Helen Howet of Ingoldsby. Hickman, 38. 9th July 1532.

¹³ 'An Acte concerninge the takinge of Mortuaries or demaundinge receivinge or clayminge of the same'. 21 Hen VIII, c 6. Robert Chambers of Doddington. Hickman, 331. 14th May 1534.

¹⁴ Robert Houde of Weston. Hickman, 335. 21st May 1534.

¹⁵ Zell, 'Religious Preambles'. Spufford, 'Villagers' Wills'. Lucas, Thesis.

¹⁶ Brian Cryar of Swineshead. Hickman, 29. 18th June 1532.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Spiritual Landscape

Ramsey, the rich of gold and fee.
Thorney, the flower of many a fair tree,
Croyland, the courteous of their meat and drink,
Spalding, the gluttons as all men do think,
Peterborough the proud,
Sautrey, by the way,
That old abbey,
Gave more alms in one day than all they.¹

(Anonymous: s.d.)

This unknown author was expressing his opinion of monastic houses in the fenland areas of Lincolnshire and beyond, nevertheless they cannot be viewed in ‘splendid isolation’. Four of the monasteries, Ramsey, Thorney, Peterborough and Sawtry were outside the county, but retained connectivity through ownership of Lincolnshire churches and estates. Likewise, Crowland retained assets in the counties of Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Cambridgeshire, with Spalding holding an estate at Hotham in East Yorkshire. Consequently all these houses had authority over local populations through their ownership of property and their use of manor courts. This chapter will reveal the impact Lincolnshire monasteries had on the economic lives of local parishioners, mirrored through the county’s varied geographical landscape. Here connectivity and localism were intertwined through the management of the coast and countryside through interaction between the religious and local communities.

(a) Geography and Geology.

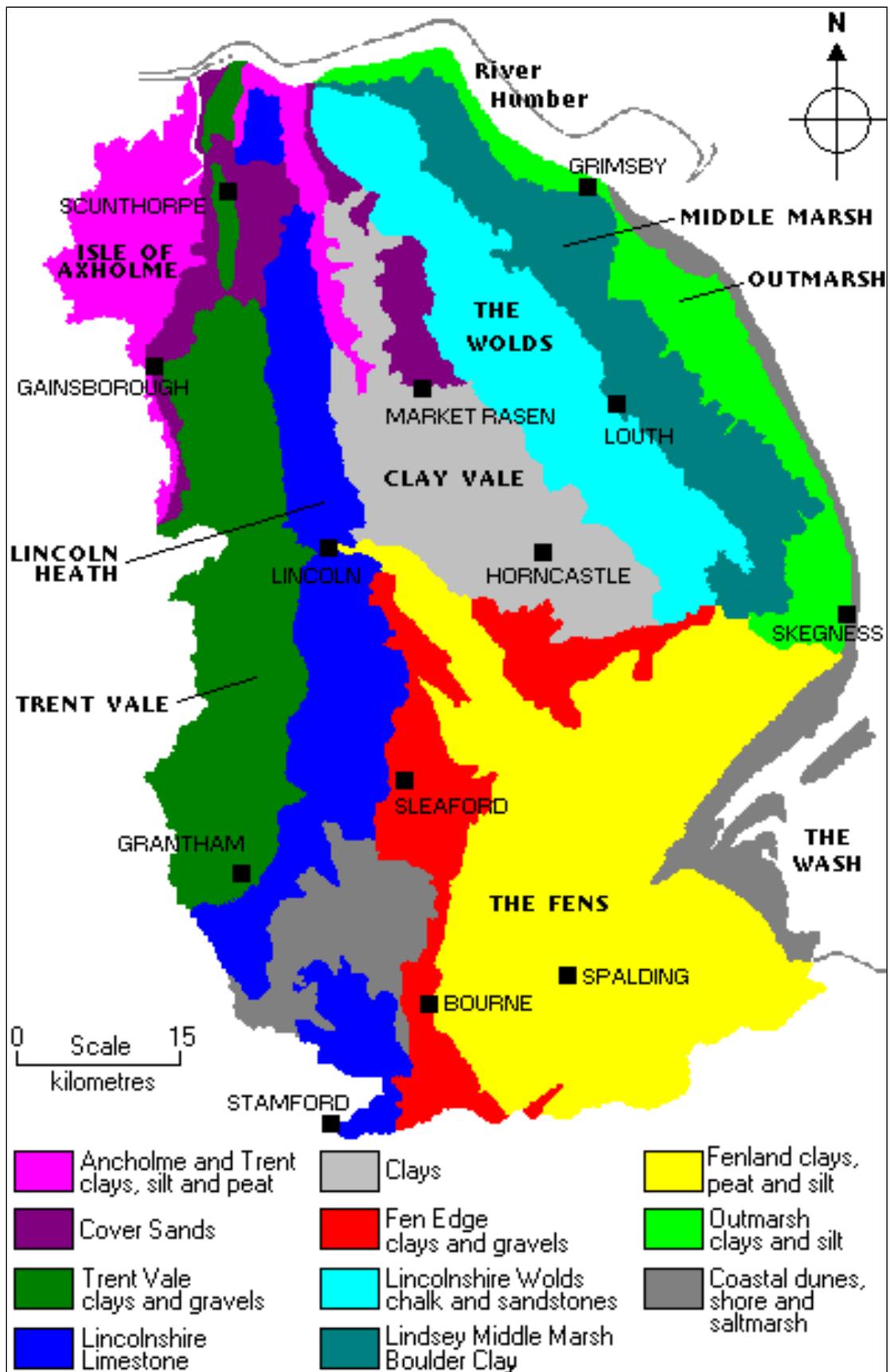
Geography was a vital factor in the foundation of monastic houses. Sheltered surroundings and a reliable water supply were crucial: consequently, river valleys became the home of many Lincolnshire religious communities. Waterways provided means of transportation for the initial building programme and for subsequent trade: the Witham valley in particular retaining a considerable number

of monasteries. Most were built on 'islands' rising almost imperceptibly above the now drained landscape. Catley, Tupholme, Haverholme, Stainfield, Kyme, Kirkstead, Bardney, Stixwold, Barlings and St. Mary Magdalene outside Lincoln were mostly constructed along the five-metre contour, largely protected from the Witham floods.

Further south however, the 'Crowland Continuator' writing in 1467, states that '...in January there was so great an inundation of waters...[that] in Hoyland especially there was scarcely a building but what the streams of water...flowed through it'.² Crowland was originally constructed in the pre-Conquest period on a site regularly threatened by floods, possibly brought about by changes in climate and the ever shifting topography. Later monasteries were built on slightly higher ground, with the eleventh-century Bardney Abbey possibly on a more elevated site than its Saxon predecessor.

The varied stratum of the county's landscape naturally affected agricultural production: closely bound to the monastic economy. (**Map 4:1**). The geology of the central and north-eastern areas of Lindsey slants predominantly south-east towards the Wash. It consists of the Clay Vale centred on Market Rasen and Horncastle, the chalk and ironstone Wolds to the east with Spilsby sandstone, used in some church construction to the south.³ Further east are areas of Boulder Clay, with silts, dunes and saltmarsh in the coastal district, with the Outmarsh Clays in the Humber area used for brick making.

Western Lindsey, the Isle of Axholme along with most of Kesteven has variants of sands, gravels, clays and limestone heath-lands: the latter extending the length of the county. This forms a distinctive ridge continuing southwards towards Grantham, parted only by the Lincoln Gap through which flows the Witham. Holland, South Lindsey and the eastern parts of Kesteven consists mainly of fenland clays, gravels,

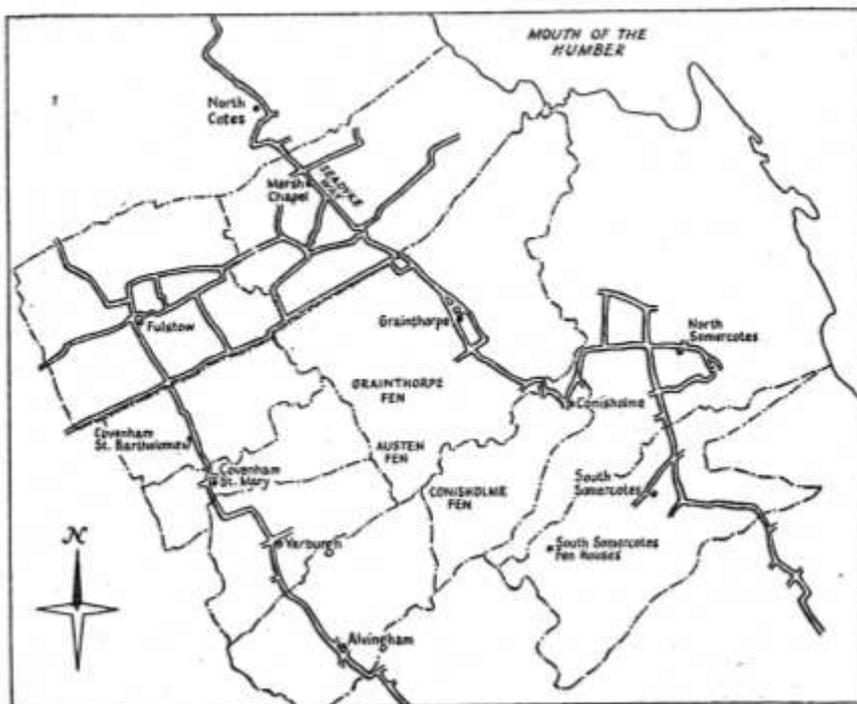


Map 4:1. Geology Map of Lincolnshire.
<http://www.lincstrust.org.uk/reserves/nr/geology.php>

peat, silt and marshlands. Only vestiges remain of original undrained fenland much derided by chroniclers and travellers.⁴ These change, especially in the shifting coastal topography affected landholdings in the east of the county, with the monasteries assuming an important role in land reclamation. Geology also determined the geography of settlement. Joan Thirsk writes,

...in the fenland and other parts of Lincolnshire, the parishes are shaped so as to include two or three different types of soil: in the marshlands from Tetney to Anderby, the parish boundaries follow the line of the geological divisions.⁵

Thirsk concludes that this was determined in earlier periods by the rate of growth, the timescale of settlement and original homeland of the settlers. The unclassified road connecting Fulstow, Covenham, Yarburgh and Alvingham represents a line of original settlements that formed parishes stretching eastwards into the marshlands. Later reclamations enabled the road from North Cotes via Marsh Chapel, Grainthorpe and Conisholme to North and South Somercotes to be constructed parallel to the then coastline.⁶ (Map 4:2). However, sea defences were sometimes overwhelmed: the *Louth Park Chronicle* noting that in October 1253 'a great flood...came up as far as Alvingham': a former Gilbertine nunnery and settlement now seven miles inland.⁷



Map 4:2. Reclamation of Farmland. The road from Fulstow to Alvingham contains the earliest settlements. That from North Cotes to South Somercotes was the original shoreline, prior to reclamation. (After Thirsk, 1953, 53).

(b) Land Reclamation

Earlier activities need to be examined in order to understand the economic influence of Lincolnshire's religious houses within the sixteenth century landscape. During the foundation period monasteries moved to secure and retain landholdings, both against rival claimants but also the actions of nature. This is especially true along the east coast and Wash areas which witnessed a constant struggle to wrest and secure good quality land from the sea. There was also the added problem of climate change which seriously affected monastic economies. From the eleventh to the late thirteenth-centuries, the weather was temperate. This gradually deteriorated until by the early fourteenth and into the fifteenth-centuries, cold and wet conditions destroyed crops and caused disease amongst livestock. The increasing precipitation also flooded fenlands and rising sea levels inundated reclaimed coastal areas, thus reducing salt production, salterns being overwhelmed by the encroaching waters.⁸

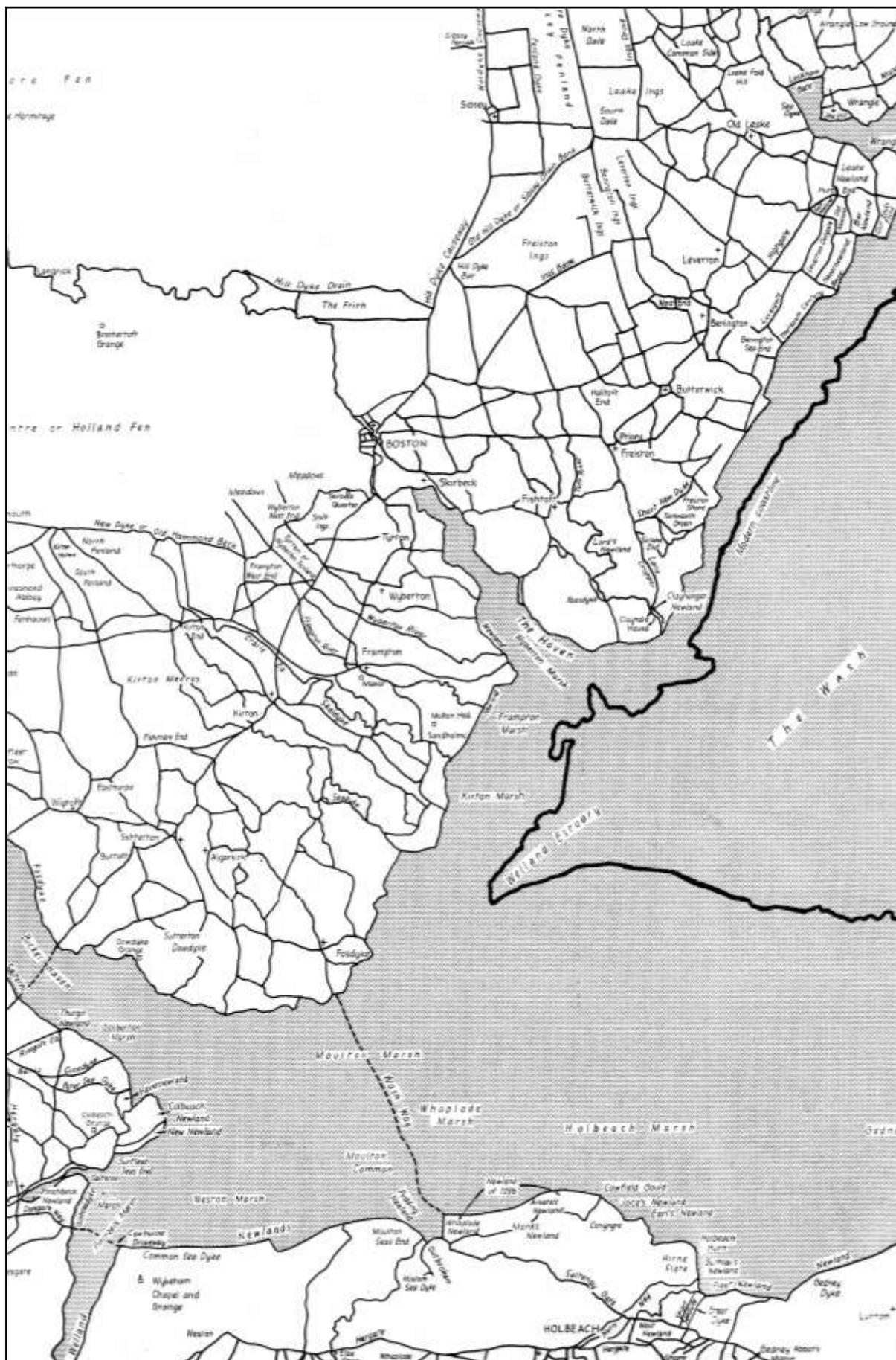
These problems affected monastic income from estates in areas reclaimed from the sea. The rectory of Saltfleetby St. Peter's was owned by Legbourne with Barlings retaining the manor. Saltfleethaven, with its outlet to the sea, was a manor held by Louth Park, as was Marsh Chapel, situated within a major salt producing area further north, production from which lasted well into the late sixteenth-century.⁹ In 1411, Bishop Repingdon gave licence to the inhabitants of Saltfleethaven to have services in the Chapel of the Holy Cross, '*super le sande*'.¹⁰ Bardney and Stixwould possessed the moieties of Wainfleet St. Mary until the nuns' attained full ownership in 1208.¹¹ Revesby also owned a Wainfleet manor and Bury St. Edmund's Abbey held an island chapel at Seilholm (Sailholme): later pensioned to Stixwould for 40 sesters of salt.¹² Waltham Abbey in Essex retained both manors and churches in saltmarsh areas, including Wrangle, Old Leake and Mumby: villages originally possessing adjacent inlets protected by sea defences.¹³

These banks were constructed on the edge of firm land: the saltmarsh beyond being regularly inundated by the spring tides. Deposits containing large quantities of salt

gradually built up enabling the now slightly higher land to be enclosed: firstly to be used for salt extraction, then pasture and later arable.¹⁴ After the sea no longer encroached, a new bank was constructed further out: the process taking approximately ten years from saltmarsh to fresh water fen. This action was repeated, gradually pushing these 'Newlands' eastwards.¹⁵ It has been estimated that between 1170 and 1240, fifty square miles of land in the Elloe Wapentake alone was reclaimed: double that amount if the remainder of Holland's coast northwards is included.¹⁶

This expansion subsequently gave rise to legal disputes between monastic landholders. In 1342, Swineshead indicted Peterborough over 200 acres of disputed marsh in Gosberkirk (Gosberton). Swineshead claimed land rights, 'by Custome of the Country, because [it] has increased and grown...in addition of land which the sea had by its flowings cast up...insomuch as by that means coming to be firm land'.¹⁷ Peterborough won the argument, but it was noted in the findings that, 'as to the future increase of ground, which might happen to either party that it should be enjoined by him to the whole land it did lye most contiguous'.¹⁸

Lincolnshire's coastline is over 100 miles in length from the Trent to the Nene estuary.¹⁹ Silting was especially prevalent in river outlets, notably those emptying into the Wash. In Bicker Haven and the tidal entrances of the Witham and Welland, deposits accumulated: the waterways subsequently silting-up or changing course. **(Map 4:3).** Reclamation was particularly prevalent in the Elloe Wapentake of Holland, with the patrons of monasteries noting the continually changing landscape. In 1186 Gerard de Camville (d1214) and his wife Nicolaa de la Haye (d1230) confirmed to Castle Acre Priory the church at Long Sutton and its associated chapel at Lutton, 'with conquest of sea and marsh, both made and to be made'.²⁰ In the early thirteenth-century, Roger de Moulton similarly gave Crowland eight acres and two salterns, 'and all the marsh, with additions if any accrue...outside the sea dyke'.²¹



Map 4:3. The Wash c1307, with the outlets from the Welland, Bicker Haven, Boston Haven and Wrangle. (After Hallam, 1965).

It was through donations such as these that monastic houses increased their wealth and influence within reclaimed areas. Crowland, Spalding, Thorney and distant houses such as Bridlington were all engaged in the economics of land reclamation in Lincolnshire. Consequently, village populations with the encouragement of their monastic overlords gradually overcame the sea and the marsh.²² In 1229-36, the hundreds of Whaplode, Holbeach, Fleet, Gedney, Long Sutton, Lutton and Tydd St. Mary divided the reclaimed fen between them. It was in the interests of all parties that the farming economy should expand and sea defences be kept in repair. At the end of the twelfth-century, the town of Spalding was divided into four manors. These were held by the Priory, St. Nicholas of Angers, the monastery's motherhouse, Crowland and Thomas de Moulton. Cooperation through their respective manor courts secured and expanded the physically unstable environment surrounding the settlement.²³

Both Spalding and Crowland possessed estates in newly reclaimed lands. The latter's chronicler stated that Abbot Richard de Bardney (1236-48) 'brought forth from the great waste of the fen that new land that is called Aswyk'.²⁴ However, despite this collaboration, disagreements arose. In the late twelfth-century, because of the expansion of reclaimed land, used mainly for arable, there was a shortage of pasture for livestock. In 1189, according to *'Ingulph's Chronicle'*, the 'Men of Holland' led by Gerard de Camville invaded the Crowland estates, possibly with the connivance of Nicholas, the Prior of Spalding. Ingulph wrote, 'their own marshes had dried up...[and] they thought they could easily overcome the poor abbot of Crowland and his little house'.²⁵

The changing weather conditions of the fourteenth-century affected the monastic economy, especially in coastal areas. The increasingly cold, wet climate resulted in sea defences being overwhelmed and reclaimed land inundated. Consequently, by the fifteenth-century Crowland's manor in Spalding was in economic decline. To

counter this problem the abbey's *compotus* of 1478-9 revealed that rents were lowered, probably to attract incomers into the area. Ready cash was in short supply, which, along with increasing floods and a depressed agricultural economy all added to the problem.²⁶

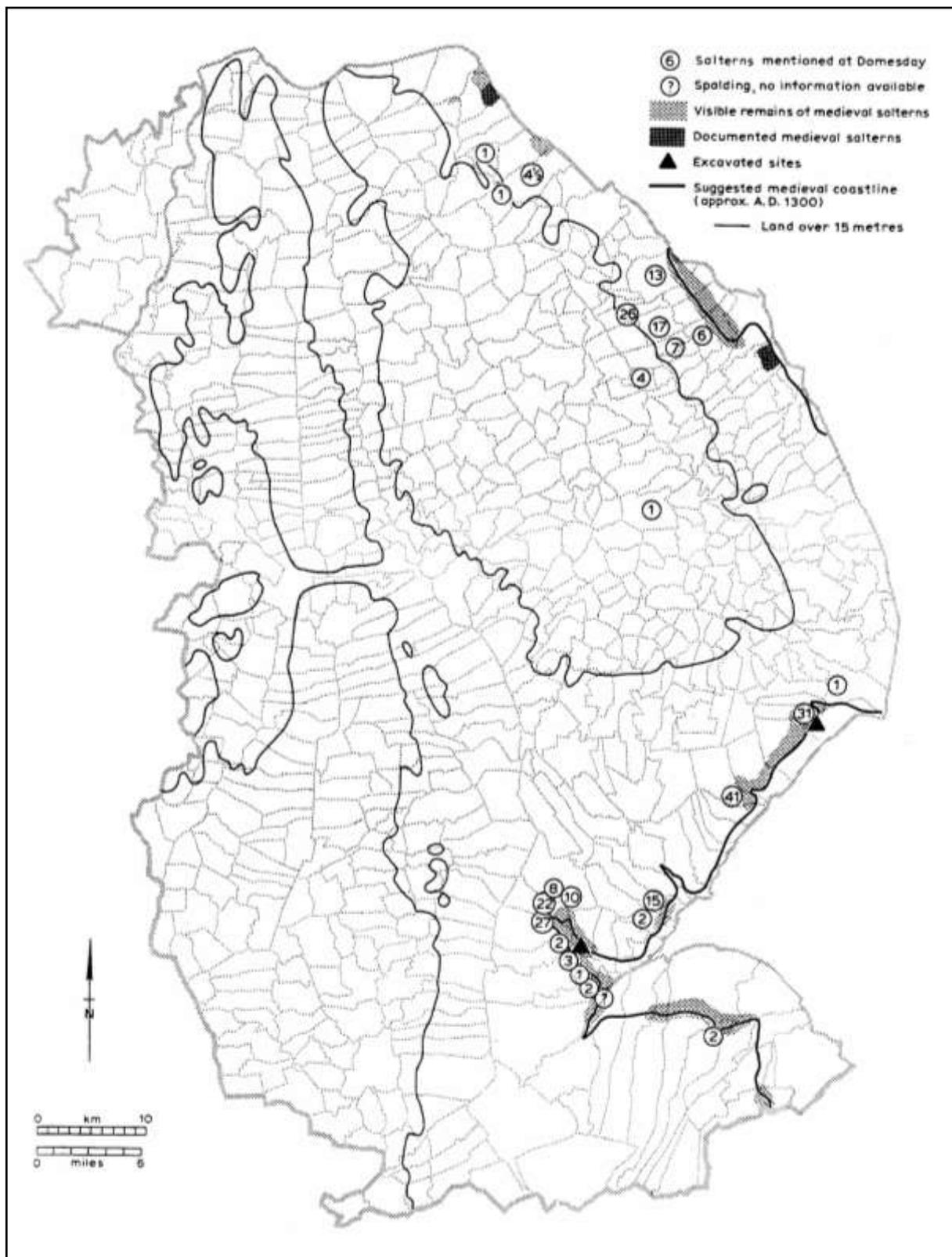
Despite these problems, monastic houses appeared outwardly to maintain a modicum of financial stability, aided by trading in the vital commodity of salt. This industry provides a useful example of monastic economies and can be used to unpick the connections of the salt-producing houses and their local populations. It also adds a practical dimension to this assessment of the impact of the Dissolution upon the county.

(c) Monastic Connections with the Salt Industry.

Whilst the regulars profited by renting highly-productive reclaimed land, they also gained from the production and trading of salt. Initially, income from salt improved the overall revenue, and provides a good example of financial connectivity between monasteries and the local population, especially in the donating and receiving of rents for working the salterns.

Salt was vital for preserving meat and fish but also within the tanning process.²⁷ Although originating from earlier periods, Lincolnshire salt workings were first documented in the Domesday Book. Crowland owned in the 'Berewick of Draitone [Drayton] 4 salt-pans rendering 5s. 4d.', and Peterborough possessed sixteen pans in 'Duninctune' [Donington] paying 20s.²⁸ Donington had twenty-seven pans in total and Bicker twenty-two, but Old Leake, nearer the coast, retained forty-one.²⁹ In 1086, three of Bicker's salt pans are noted as waste, suggesting a pre-Domesday presence: the area surrounding the Haven appearing to possess the most extensive production.³⁰ **(Map 4:4).**

Salt processing required considerable quantities of peat turves, used primarily for fuel but also during the filtration process.³¹ Consequently, along with salterns, gifts



Map 4:4. Salt workings at the time of Domesday, mostly confined to around Bicker Haven and coastal areas further north. (After Bennet & Bennet, 1993).

to monasteries of turbary were not unusual. In 1273, the Court Roll of Abbot Ralf de Marsh of Crowland (1254-80) contained a list of '*Venditori turbarium*': turbary sellers.³² Remains of salterns are still evident in the county's landscape, notably around Bicker Haven at Gosberton, where Swineshead and Sempringham both had interests. Further north, the monasteries of Louth Park, Sixhills, North Ormsby, Alvingham, Thornton, Newhouse and Greenfield all profited from gifts of salterns in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.³³

Monasteries outside Lincolnshire were also involved in the trade. In c1200, Conan, son of Ellis gave a number of salterns and turbary to Bridlington Priory.³⁴ Castle Acre in Norfolk owned the church and local salt workings at Fleet.³⁵ In 1166, Richard de Fleet donated to Walsingham 'one midd of salt', and Sawtry in Huntingdonshire obtained a saltern from Joce Maletere.³⁶ Launde and Croxton in Leicestershire, Stamford, St. Michael's and Pipewell both in Northamptonshire, along with Thorney in Cambridgeshire also profited. One of the largest concentrations of production was at Wrangle, a manor of Waltham Abbey in Essex. This was described in documents as *portum de Wrengle*, where Kirkstead also retained interests.³⁷ Waltham possessed a grange at nearby King's Hill from where turves were shipped to Wrangle via a sizable inlet, now silted.³⁸ Clearly, this industry attracted many local and 'foreign' monastic investors, thereby displaying wide-ranging economic influences.

Importantly for this study, salt production directly affected the local population in their relationship with monastic houses. In 1327, Bourne Abbey was given an 'area' to make a saltern by Thomas de Pinchbeck, and Alexander de Pointon 'gave a measure of salt with carriage yearly from his saltern'.³⁹ In the early thirteenth-century, Spalding granted a saltern at Pinchbeck and obtained considerable 'salt rents' from the manor. In 1477, Prior Thomas de Moulton (1474-93?) received payment of thirty-seven strikes of salt: income also coming from carriage through Spalding at ½d. per wagon.⁴⁰ In 1532-3, the Crowland Rental notes, 'from Simon

Clerke for le Saltecotte, 40s.', with the Kirkstead Rental relating that William Helvys of Grainthorpe leased two salt coats, the rent including half a quarter of salt.⁴¹

However, in the late fifteenth-century, the trade declined. This was largely caused by inundations, along with the gradual silting notably of Bicker Haven but also other inlets along the coast.⁴² There were also cheaper Iberian imports, where salt was sun dried rather than using peat, and similarly from Scotland but utilising coal.⁴³ The loss of irreplaceable turbary and the later conversion of the remaining reclaimed land to arable was also probably a factor.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, although clearly in decline, mention of monastic salt workings continued until the Suppression. Lincolnshire monasteries endeavoured to remain an influential if gradually diminishing part of the county's economic life. Salt making was just one part of that process. This involved not only the ever-shifting landscape but also local people who daily grappled with the elements in order to eek out a living from one of the most prosperous but agriculturally demanding areas of the country.

(d) Transportation - The Case of the Bridgend Causeway.

Although salt was clearly an important part of the county's economy, the moving of commodities was also a vital factor. Without an adequate transport infrastructure, increased prosperity was problematical. From the earliest periods Lincolnshire monasteries were integral in the maintenance of the county's communications, vital both to their income and the local populations. Within their original charters, Stainfield, Bardney and Topholme, all had responsibility to maintain the Witham, with connecting canals and causeways.⁴⁵ Communications could also be profitable. A Patent Roll of 1337, requests that because

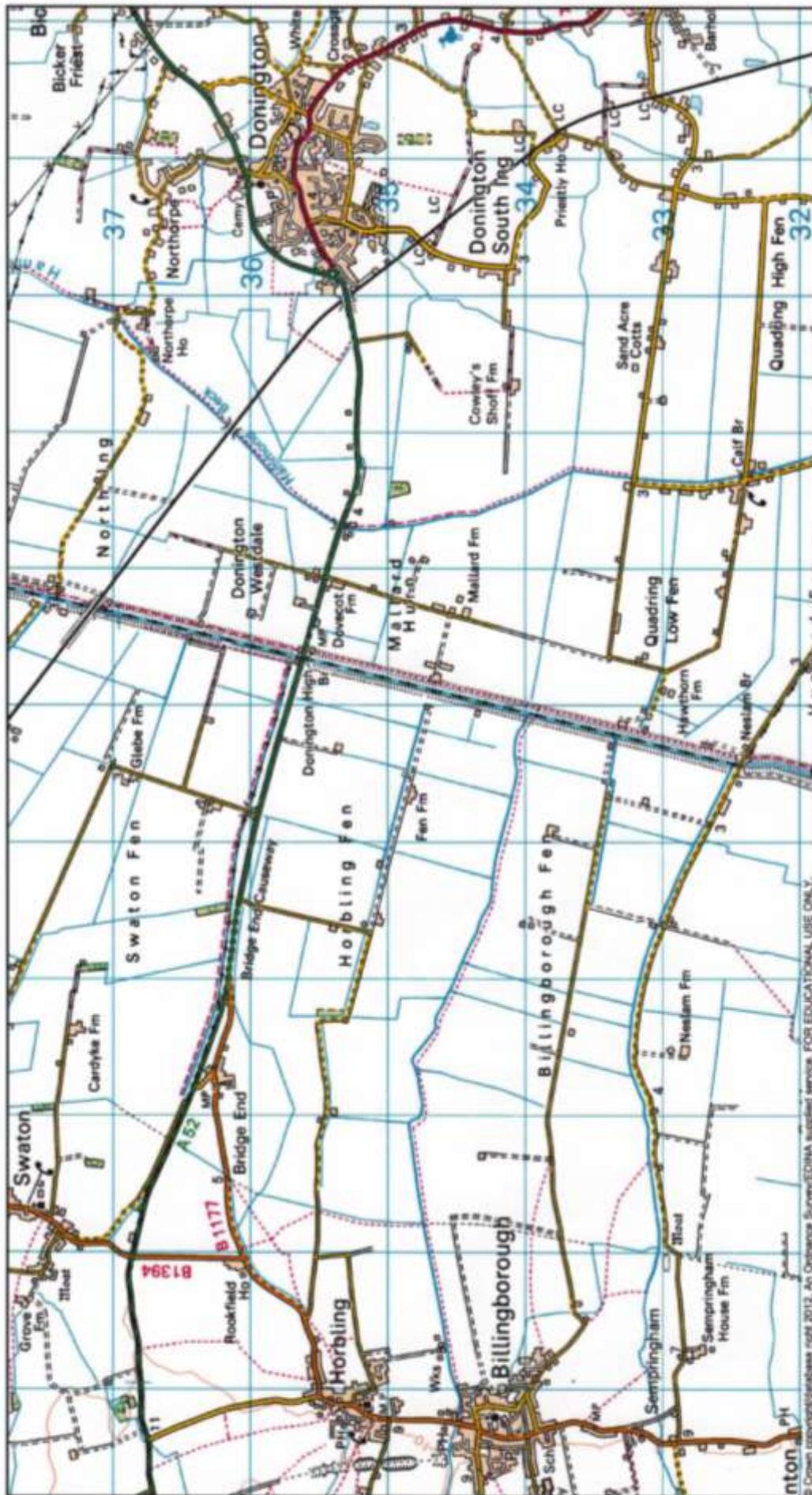
...the ways between the towns of Croyland and Spaldyng were in a very dangerous state and that this could be remedied by the abbot of Croyland making a causey on his soil between Croyland and 'le Brotherhous' on the understanding that he and his successors should take tolls for making and maintaining it from the persons using it.⁴⁶

Although some religious houses may have abided by their foundation charters to maintain local communications, this appears to have been increasingly entrusted to the local population, evidenced by donations in their testaments.

Linking the local population with the workings of the county's infrastructure involves sourcing earlier documents and also testamentary analysis to uncover gifts donated to maintain the highways and bridges. Together they reveal an understanding of the problems that faced both local users and monastic maintainers. Lincolnshire being largely devoid of monastic remains, the causeway is one of the few surviving examples of engineering associated with the county's monasteries. The following study of the Gilbertine priory at Bridgend will analyse the activities of a small monastery relating to the maintenance of a vital causeway across the fenland linking Kesteven with Holland. This exposed a sometimes troubled relationship between local settlements and the priory: an example of localised disharmony between secular and monastic.

In the late twelfth-century, a monastery was established at Bridgend in Kesteven, near the border with Holland, specifically to maintain a vital part of the county's communications.⁴⁷ The Priory of St. Saviour was founded pre-1199: later becoming a cell of Sempringham following a fire in 1445.⁴⁸ Its founder, Godwin Dives "the Rich" of Lincoln, had strong connections with Sempringham, having been previously received by St. Gilbert himself into its confraternity.⁴⁹ Part of this covenant was possibly the establishment of Bridgend situated a few miles to the north of the motherhouse. **(Map 4:5).**

The structure was almost certainly extant in the late twelfth-century: alternatively titled in documents *Holandbrigge*, *Brygdyke* or *Ponte-Aslaci*.⁵⁰ The latter possibly relates to Aslac, whose name in Domesday is associated with the village of Aslackby, five miles from Bridgend.⁵¹ Although there is no direct evidence, Aslac may have been the original builder of the causeway.⁵² However, suggestions of earlier structures have been made, possibly connected with salt extraction.⁵³



Map 4.5. Ordnance Survey Map showing the Bridgend Causeway, running from Bridgend in Kesteven to Donington in Holland.

Using evidence from excavated salterns, the Iron Age coast was possibly close to the Car Dyke a few hundred yards west of the priory. The later Roman shoreline roughly corresponded with the Mid-Fendyke, now known as the South Forty-Foot Drain.⁵⁴ Some form of communication to the slightly higher ground where Donington is now situated, may therefore have existed from at least the Roman period and possibly earlier.⁵⁵

The structure itself consisted of a roadway and associated bridges, and as one of the few roads running east-west, this major feature was clearly vital to the local economy. It originally consisted of a series of thirty bridges and associated embankments crossing Horbling Fen and the Mid-Fendyke: the latter forming the boundary between Kesteven and Holland. Today it is approximately four miles in length, linking Grantham, Lincoln, Stamford and Bourne with Donington, along with Bicker Haven, Boston and Spalding and their outlets to the sea.

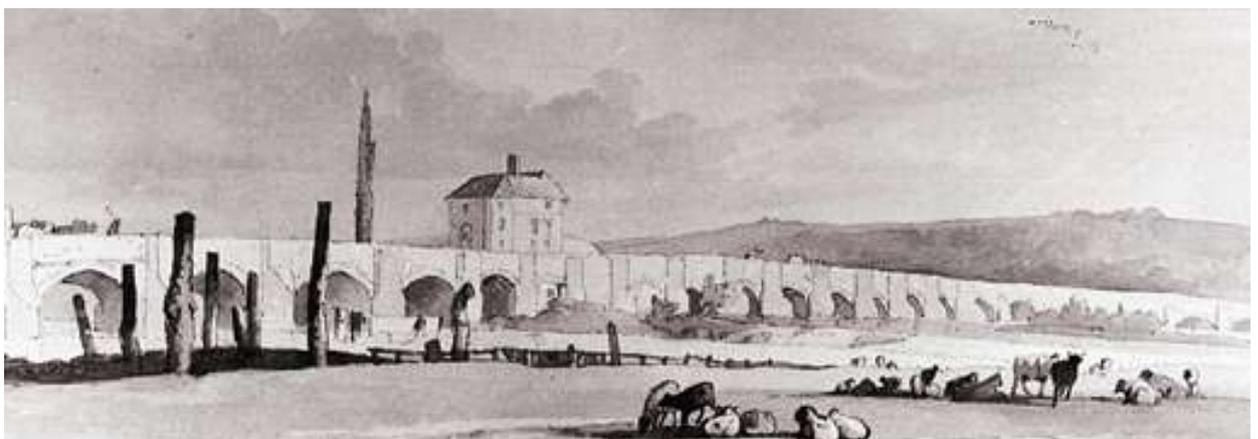
The only similar extant structure is Swarkestone Bridge and causeway in south Derbyshire. Spanning the Trent floodplain, it is three-quarters of a mile long with seventeen stone arches, and is the oldest survivor of its type in the country.⁵⁶ It had connections with Repton Priory, whose prior was the surveyor of tolls and also provided a priest for the bridge chapel.⁵⁷ **(Plate 4:1)**. A similar structure at Burton upon Trent, demolished in 1863, consisted of thirty-six arches, again spanning the Trent. It also retained a bridge chapel with a hermit and was partly controlled by Burton Abbey.⁵⁸ **(Plate 4:2)**.

Bridgend Priory, although at first technically independent from Sempringham, was perhaps seen by the order's motherhouse as a business opportunity, maintaining the export of monastic produce in addition to providing a spiritual and social service for the local community.⁵⁹ In its foundation charter, part of the priory's remit was to sustain the causeway in conjunction with the inhabitants of Donington at the eastern end. **(Map 4:6)**. However, constant maintenance was required leading to numerous legal disputes. A commission in 1295 stated that, 'Landholders within Donyngton



Plate 4:1. Swarkestone Causeway looking north, crossing the Trent floodplain with fourteenth-century arches in the background.

Plate 4:2. The bridge of thirty-six arches over the Trent at Burton, surmounted by the bridge chapel. (<http://www.burton-on-trent.org.uk>.)





Map 4:6
The early fifteenth-century 'Pinchbeck Map' showing Bridgend Priory on the left and Donington church on the right. They are linked by the Bridgend Causeway (in brown), also noted in inverted Black Letter text. TNA, MPCC, 17.

ought to repair the causey of Holland with little bridges and likewise ditches...from the said town to the new ditch...and the prior from the said ditch to the town of St. Saviours'.⁶⁰ The boundary was at Hammond Beck (New-Fendyke) bordering the 'New Inham' or *Innome*, an area of reclaimed land to the west of the town.⁶¹

In 1321, an Inquisition at Swineshead heard similar disputes between the priory and the people of Donington, who possibly had reasons other than trade to maintain the road.⁶² The parish church of St. Mary and the Holy Rood is alleged to have possessed a fragment of the 'True Cross'. Although there is no documentary evidence, the relic was perhaps displayed in a chapel attached to the east wall of the chancel. Although this building has gone, there are two blocked doorways beneath the fifteenth-century east window. In addition, in the north wall there are stairs that possibly led to a 'watching loft'.⁶³ **(Plate 4:3).**

Although originally belonging to the Knights Templar from at least the early thirteenth-century, the advowson was later held by the nuns of Minchin Buckland in Somerset, probably following the Templar's suppression in the early fourteenth-century.⁶⁴ Buckland was the only house of the Sisters of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England.⁶⁵ The relic may therefore have brought to England from Constantinople after the Fourth Crusade of 1204, or possibly from the Holy Land itself. To aid visiting pilgrims and secure the proceeds, cooperation between Donington and Bridgend was vital in order to maintain the thoroughfare.

A further enquiry of 1331 revealed the formation of the causeway. Its thirty bridges were each ten-feet broad and eight-feet high, thirteen of which were then 'out of repair': the prior to pay £5 per annum towards upkeep.⁶⁶ It is unknown if the bridges were situated at various points along the causeway as at Swarkestone, or were constructed in a line of fifteen either side of the High Bridge crossing the Mid-Fendyke. Whether they were constructed of stone or timber is also unclear. Although the latter would have been cheaper to maintain, a reason for the constant



Plate 4:3. The Chancel of St. Mary and the Holy Rood, Donington. The two doorways either side of the altar may have lead to a chapel containing a piece of the 'True Cross'. The stairs set into the north wall were possibly those of a 'Watching Loft', where a member of the clergy stood guard over the relic.

repairs could be due to timber decaying in the moderately saline water of the fenland due to encroachment by the sea. The monastery's financial problems were largely due to inadequate initial endowments. Godwin's original donation was probably to sustain the priory, with tolls used to repair the roadway. This appeared to be adequate until c1245 when a severe flood damaged the original structure and subsequent problems increased. A document of 1263 notes that,

the canons of that Priory had obtained a Bull...to exhort the people of the country to contribute towards the repair of that causey, by means whereof they collected much money, with which, and the rents of the land, they used to repair the same, till 20 years last past, when they were hindered by a flood and could not do it, since when they had appropriated the money to other purposes.⁶⁷

Clearly the local population are contributing to the upkeep of this important thoroughfare, but the canons were not fulfilling the contract. The bridge tolls were probably collected by lay brethren or appointed officials, but avoidance by the local communities must have taken place. Users would also have had to pay Donington, therefore local guides may have been employed to pilot people and livestock over the dangerous swampy fenland. Poorer inhabitants would nevertheless have found the tolls onerous, especially in later periods when the weather deteriorated and agricultural production fell. Together these charges would increase the costs of merchants in competition with other routes, notably via the Witham and by sea to Boston and Spalding.

The priory had acquired assets at its foundation to maintain itself and the causeway. A *Coram Rege* Roll of 1331/32 states that the,

Liability of the prior of St. Saviour's hospital at the head of Holland Bridge, by reason of certain messuages, a chapel with its oblations, four bovates of land, a place of meadow, a windmill, a free fishery, a court of his tenants in the town of St. Saviour, a rent in Birthorpe and a messuage in Lincoln; to repair the causey of Holland from the said chapel to the Newdyk called le Innome of Donington.⁶⁸

However, following its suppression, the Minister's Accounts relate that the monastery only had, 'rents in Bryggend [and] cottages and a house, lands in

Belyngborowe [Billingborough] and Horbelyn [Horbling], messuage and lands in Quadrynge [Quadring] and a fishery under the bridge there and a house in Ledenham [Long Leadenham], with demesne lands...'.⁶⁹ There were no advowsons, and income from these properties was too little to constantly maintain the huge structure.

A later confirmation charter suggests that any pontage tolls went primarily to pray for the benefactors, secondly to support the canons and only thirdly towards maintenance.⁷⁰ A document of 1331/32 stated,

The prior...pleaded that the oblations were spiritualities, and only so much of the other revenues of his house as remained over after the intentions of the various benefactors of the house had been fulfilled and the brethren properly sustained could be properly devoted to the maintenance of the said causey and bridges.⁷¹

In 1334, a grant was given, '[f]or repair of the cawsey of Hoyland and of the bridges across it, of the following customs on goods passing over these, to wit':

- On every sack of wool, 1d.
- On every cart load of merchandise, 2d.
- On every horse load of merchandise, ½d.
- On every horse, ox or cow for sale, ¼d.
- On every six swine for sale, ½d.
- On every man carrying merchandise to the value of 20s., ¼d.
- On every half dozen wethers, ¼d.
- On every cart load of lead for sale, 1d.⁷²

Lead came generally from Derbyshire for sale at Boston fair or export from coastal outlets. An earlier document stated that 'floods have inundated the causeway and surrounding lands and fields, to the great peril of those passing that way, which is the common passage to the fair at Boston'.⁷³

Despite this increased income, repairs to 'Holandbrigge' were apparently incomplete two years later. A commission noted that 'touching the accounts of the pontage lately granted by the king to the prior of St. Saviour's for repairing the causey...the prior ha[s] not applied it to the purpose for which it was granted'.⁷⁴ This situation

appeared to continue until 1356-7 when Bridgend was granted a market and fair, probably to secure income following the Black Death. 'Grant of special grace, to the prior of St. Saviour, Holandbrugge of a weekly market on Thursday at the town of Holandbrugge...and a yearly fair there on the day of St. Mary Magdalene'.⁷⁵ Importantly, the fairs and markets were 'to be held in the town'. This signifies a considerable settlement now largely disappeared. The fair was also possibly to compensate for the worsening climate during the fourteenth-century, causing a downturn in agricultural production, possibly resulting in fewer people using the causeway.

In c1378, a licence was given 'for the Prior at the Briggs End...to beg for seven years throughout England, for money towards the repairing of xvi brigges and brigge-ditches to which the house was bound...by the foundation thereof'.⁷⁶ Further documents note continuing grants of pontage with little evidence of any significant improvement in maintenance, and in the late fourteenth-century matters reached an impasse. In 1396, to extend its financial position, the monastery was to 'expend the money by the supervision of Albin de Endreby', suggesting that matters had largely been removed from the monastery's ambit.⁷⁷ This situation continued until at least November 1406, although subsequent improvements go unrecorded. Following the fire in 1445, the priory became an official cell of Sempringham and unfortunately documentation largely ceases.⁷⁸

The testaments of local parishioners however offer some evidence connecting the priory with the surrounding settlements. Although an episcopal testator gave 3s. 4d. to the 'prior and convent of St. Saviour at the Bridge', by the 1500s the monastery only attracted a small number of wills generally donating 'towards mending of the highways', and not for sustaining the canons.⁷⁹ They came almost exclusively from Swaton, a mile from the monastery, and consisted of three wills donating 20d., 3s. 4d. along with one bushel of barley.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, of the nine Swaton testators noted in the Parish Wills, only two left specifically to the 'Brygdyke' itself: one

subsequent to the monastery's closure.⁸¹ Sir Robert Whyham, Vicar of Helpringham, two miles from Swaton, also donated a 'seame of malte' for 'mending the highway at Brygdyke'.⁸² These two settlements are to the north of the causeway and the waterways at that period may have flowed southwards as the Swaton Eau does today.⁸³ If the bridges were not maintained they could be blocked with debris, the villages then flooding. Donating to the priory or directly to the causeway could be seen as both practical, saving the local communities from inundations, but also spiritual, giving to 'good causes', securing the soul.

Salvation could also be achieved by other means. In 1524, Robert Pell of Folkingham left 'to the Armett of Brygdyke to say v messis xxd.'. ⁸⁴ A similar term signifying a hermit is mentioned in the accounts of Sir Henry Willoughby of Wollaton Hall, where 12d. was given 'to the armytt Egertun...for reward'.⁸⁵ Pell's will relates to a hermit in 'St. Bothi's Chapel', noted in late nineteenth-century O/S maps as being approximately 250 yards east of High Bridge over the South Forty-Foot Drain. The hermitage was possibly situated at the eastern end of the bridges prior to the main span over the Mid-Fendyke, the remaining structures being on the Kesteven side.

This chapel is also probably illustrated on the early fifteenth-century 'Pinchbeck Map', discussed below. This may have been a bridge hermitage, the recluse praying for travellers crossing the causeway: a notion consistent with those at Swarkestone, Burton and Cromford, and any income possibly helped maintain the central span. Today the possible sight is occupied by a former Primitive Methodist chapel dating from 1904, orientated east-west, perhaps suggesting the reuse by the non-conformists of a previously sacred site.⁸⁶

Following Bridgend's closure, repairs to the infrastructure passed from monastic administration into secular hands, but similar problems persisted. The Court of Sewers noted,

...that the Hiebrigg upon Brigg Dyke is ruynouse & in decay...and from Seynt Sayvours at Brigende (whiche was late a sell to the late dissolved

monasterie of Sempryngham) to the hiebrigg at Donyngton is defective as well. Soundrie briggess in the causey ought to be repared by the persons that have the possession of the seid late sell of the priore of Seint Saviers.⁸⁷

In 1575, a complaint to the queen stated,

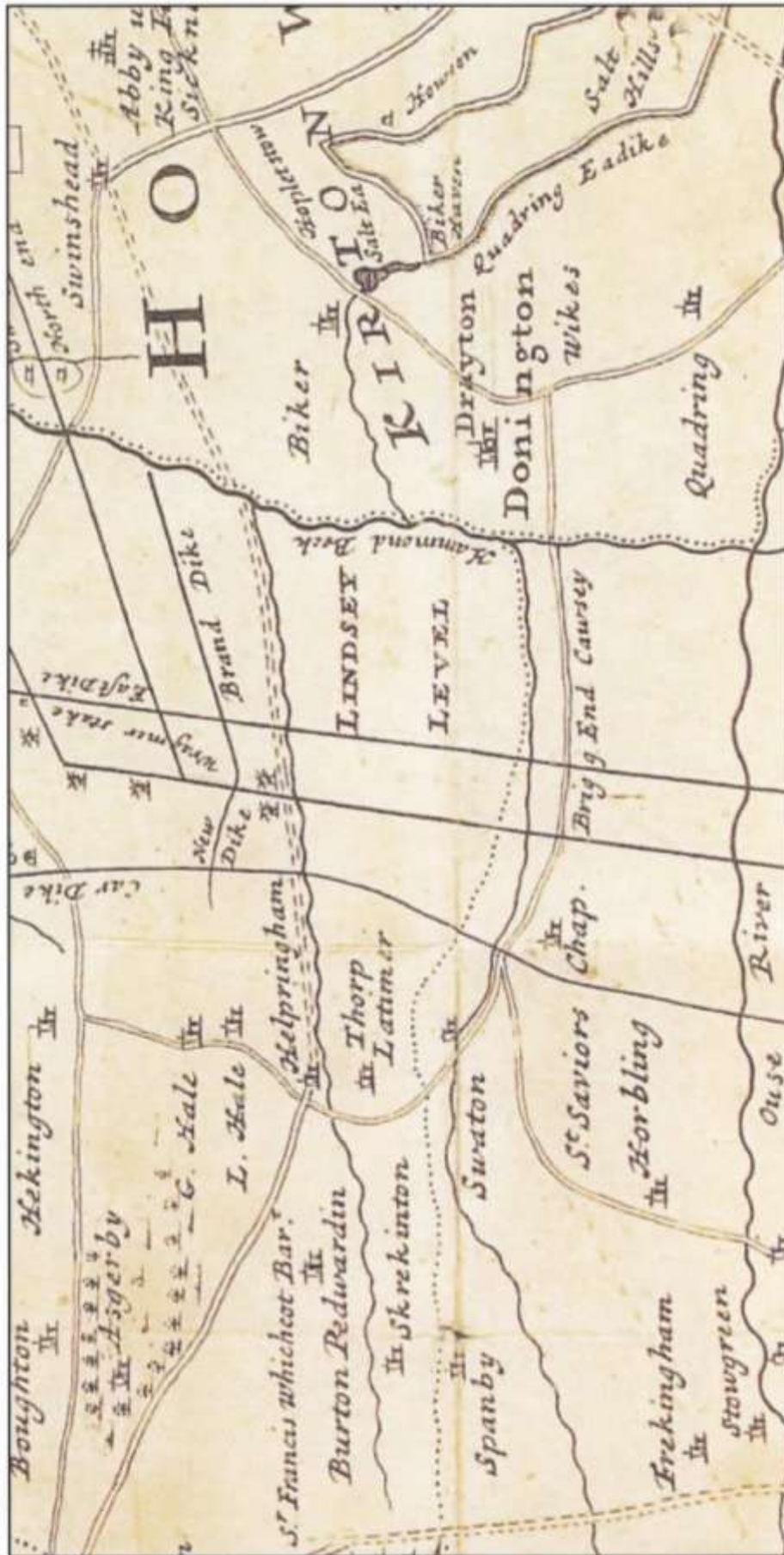
...that the causeway called Brigdyke leading from Kesteven to Boston is in great decay, for since the dissolution of the priory of Sempringham it has had no repair, as the lands charged with its maintenance then came into the possession of the queen's father.⁸⁸

By 1563 the population of Bridgend had fallen considerably, with only eight households within a 'hamlet'.⁸⁹

Numerous references were made concerning repairs to the causeway in the mid-eighteenth-century.⁹⁰ The original bridges may have been demolished or buried when the road was turnpiked in c1756, with the fenland enclosed and Bridgend itself 'bypassed'.⁹¹ William Stukeley's map of 1723 shows the main route passing through the village and then northwards towards Swaton, Helpringham and Sleaford. **(Map 4:7)**. There is no highway illustrated going westwards as shown in the 1824 O/S map, as this section was turnpiked in 1804, giving improved access westwards.⁹²

The Stukeley map also shows a chapel at Bridgend noted as St. Saviours, as does the Blaeu map of c1645 and that of the antiquarian William Dugdale (1605–1686), in his *'Imbanking'* volume of 1662. This perhaps suggests the monastery's church survived the suppression as William Marrat writing in 1813 suggests that the 'original building was taken down about forty-five years ago, and a large farm built out of the old materials'.⁹³

The Bridgend Causeway was a vital thoroughfare almost certainly pre-dating the monastery, and as the A52 is still a major route today. It was unique in Lincolnshire in that the monastery was founded specifically to safeguard the thoroughfare. This linked other parts of Lincolnshire with outlets to the sea, and helped sustain the local economy: the trade in salt and agricultural produce vital to the wealth of the area. The causeway aided the movement of livestock from the surrounding villages across



Map 4:7. William Stuckeley's Map of 1723. This important document illustrates the road system approximately thirty years prior to turnpiking. Bridgend is shown as having a chapel dedicated to St. Saviour and may have been the surviving monastery church. Also illustrated is Bicker Haven, long silted but noting the 'Salt Hills' still visible today. What is not shown is a road leading to Grantham, perhaps at this period only a rough track?

the fenland to markets in both Holland and Kesteven. No doubt in drier periods enterprising locals drove their stock across the fen, thereby avoiding tolls. This may partly account for the priory's inability to maintain what was a very expensive structure. In a 'Catch 22' situation, if the bridges became unsafe, people would refrain from crossing, no tolls would be taken and maintenance could not be undertaken. Inevitably the task was too burdensome for the poorest house in the county: its value in 1535 being only £5 1s. 11½d.⁹⁴

Following the priory's closure, maintenance problems appear to have persisted until this vital causeway was turnpiked in the mid eighteenth-century. The changeover from monastic to secular owners appears to have made little difference to the situation. Evidence suggests that whether monk or layman, maintaining this major structure was a considerable drain on local resources. However, Bridgend and its causeway are a good examples of connectivity between the landscape, the local population and a religious house, albeit as toll collectors rather than as savers of souls.

(e) Localism within the Landscape.

Bridgend illustrates the concept of localism, not only concerning nearby settlements but also relating to the county's three districts. Localism can be interpreted as a close connection to a particular locality's identity, and the interactions emerging from such associations. This concept could relate to aspects of the Church but also to economic and social activities. Uncovering connectivity via the patronage of religious houses is therefore a major factor in understanding their relationship with local populations. As monasteries played a considerable part in the administration of the Lincolnshire landscape, geography would also have reflected localised patronage in addition to the agricultural activities vital to local community economies. This discussion will therefore reveal the extent of localism within the second largest county in England.

Further evidence of district localism, again from Kesteven and Holland, comes in the form of an early fifteenth-century map of the fenland area. The 'Pinchbeck Map' was probably commissioned by Spalding Priory as part of a survey of their local estates.⁹⁵ **(Map 4:8)**. It is orientated north-south and bounded by Bridgend causeway to the north and the River Welland in the south. Local churches and monasteries are illustrated on the slightly higher ground in both Kesteven and Holland, scattered respectively along the western and eastern peripheries of the fen. Twenty-eight local churches and chapels are shown, nineteen in Kesteven and nine in Holland, some illustrated in considerable detail. There are depictions of the monasteries at Sempringham, Spalding, Crowland, Bourne and Bridgend.⁹⁶ **(Map 4:9 - a, b, c, d, e)**.

The central segment of the map represents largely undrained fenland: possibly swamped by the wetter conditions during this period. This section also includes the Kesteven-Holland boundary, which although not illustrated, ran north-south roughly down the centre of the map. Where this dissects the Bridgend Causeway a large inverted cross is illustrated. This would be a visible structure in time of flood, but also conceivably signifying a boundary sanctified by God, and possibly guarded by the faint image of the hermitage noted above.

The map's *raison d'être* was possibly to attain an understanding of the amount of common land utilized by five Kesteven villages within the area around Pinchbeck in Holland, largely within the remit of the fen reeves of Spalding priory.⁹⁷ Written on the Kesteven side of the map in Latin is, 'these five villages common in the marsh of Pinchbeck: namely Rippingale, Dunsby, Haconby, Morton and Bourne'.⁹⁸ The practice of intercommoning, whereby livestock from numerous villages was grazed on unfenced common land, was widespread in the area from at least the twelfth-century onwards. This was especially prevalent following the exploitation of drained marshland for crops, leaving a shortage of pasture for livestock.



Map 4:8. The Fifteenth-Century 'Pinchbeck Map'. It is orientated north-south with Kesteven on the left and Holland on the right separated by fenland shown in green. The now lost monasteries of Bridgend, Spalding and possibly Sempringham are also illustrated. TNA, MPCC, 1/7.



Map 4:9
(a) Sempringham.



(b) Spalding



(c) Crowland

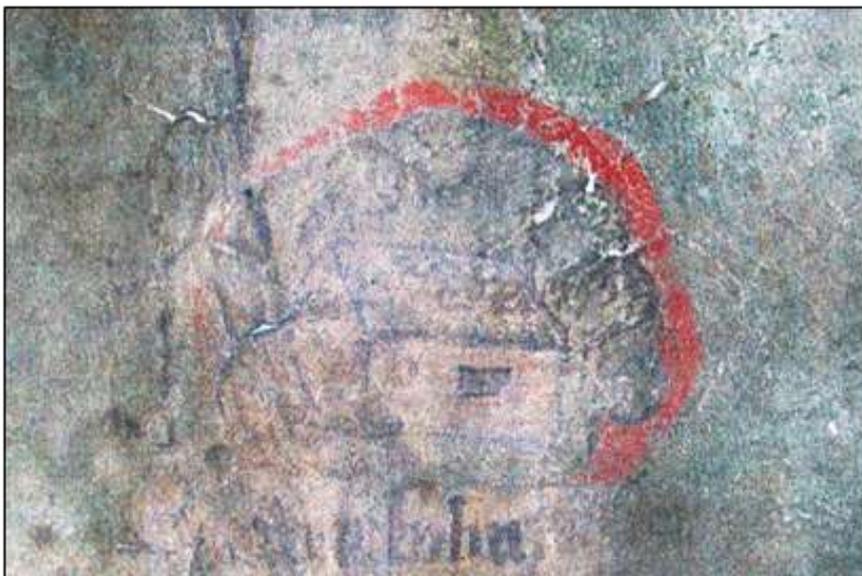


Map 4:9

(d) Bourne



(e) Bridgend



(f) Possible illustration of the hermitage of St. Botolph on the

Later this led to protracted legal disputes, exacerbated by indistinct boundaries in the undrained fenlands. The map was therefore partly an attempt to address these problems, and displays some notion of cross-boundary co-operation within the geographically complex fenland.

However disputes arose. Boundary markers, such as the cross on the Bridgend Causeway and a comparable structure called 'Kenulph's Cross' to west of Crowland, were used to ascertain borders and secure land ownership.⁹⁹ In 1390, an investigation was carried out to enquire into suggestions,

... that divers dissensions have arisen between men of the parts of Holand and those of Kesteven because the metes and bounds...can hardly be seen in a marsh extending between the waters of the Weland and the Wythum, by reason of inundations of fresh waters and accumulations of sand. They are to erect stakes, dykes, stone crosses or other sufficient landmarks in the places where such were formerly placed to mark the bounds.¹⁰⁰

A more detailed enquiry in 1435 ordered a further survey of boundary markers.

Whereupon the sheriff was commanded to have twenty-four knights and others at the stone cross on 'le Brigdyke' on the confines of the parts of Holland and Kesteven, Donyngton in Holand and Seint Sauvours in Kesteven...to attend the making of the delimitation. As to the metes and bounds in the southern parts of the marsh that is in a place called Kenulfston now, within the water of Weland, it was stated that the ancient metes bounds [are] now under water, and that stone cross stood there, the body of which has been destroyed; by a flood and tempest, but the foot still lies there under water and that this place is about two miles west of Croyland and it is considered that two crosses should be set up the one of wood and the other of stone, on the east, of Croyland.¹⁰¹

The base of Kenulph's cross submerged in the Welland is shown on the map. These two documents illustrate the problems, political and also physical concerning land ownership, encountered by local people in the county's fenland areas.

There appears to have been a strong sense of 'localism' towards the respective district, its neighbouring area being a distant entity: hence the usage of the terms 'Men of Holland' and the 'Men of Kesteven'. The former expression was used by the Crowland Chronicler in describing enemies of the monastery.¹⁰² Hollanders

therefore perhaps saw themselves as physically detached: proud independence bred of geographical separation. It is as though dealings between people of separate counties rather than one single entity. There appears to be little sense of the 'Men of Lincolnshire': horizons were limited to the respective locality. Donations to monasteries also appear to be localised within a specific district, with testators in the respective area giving largely to that particular district's monasteries: a theme discussed in Chapter Seven.

(f) Mending the Highways.

It was not only Holland that suffered inundations; western parts of Kesteven were also affected. The Witham rises near South Witham, flows northwards via Grantham to Lincoln then southeast to Boston, a distance of approximately seventy miles. The area southeast of Newark lies within the river's western floodplain, meandering around the villages of Long Bennington, Westborough, Dry Doddington and Claypole. This section of the river may formerly have been navigable. In 1382, Commissioners were sent,

...to survey the rivers Wythom and Brant and certain dykes between Cleypole and running into the Withom, move obstructions therein and cleanse and widen...so that there is a width of 40 or 30 feet and a depth of 10 feet.¹⁰³

These dimensions suggest activities other than drainage, possibly transportation on flats or in small boats.

As in the fenlands, there was a requirement in Kesteven for good communications: the causeways and bridges needing regular investment for maintenance. The wills of two married couples from Dry Doddington, William and Parnell Cooke and John and Catherine Jackson, illustrate the communication problems facing people in lowland Lincolnshire.¹⁰⁴ After donating to local parish churches and the friars of Grantham, Newark and Lincoln, both William, Parnell and John contributed to the 'repayryng of Dodyngton brygges'. This was probably the bridge over the Witham, situated to the west of the village on the road linking the settlement with the Great North Road.

This was an important route to Newark, with its bridge over the Trent: the last before reaching the Humber. Southwards the North Road passed through Grantham with access to Stamford and thence to London. Parnell additionally gave 6s. 8d., 'to the new cawsy at Westburgh', presumably the road running north across the floodplain rising up towards Doddington, situated on the forty-metre contour. With both contributors near to death, the need to obtain spiritual provision from the church at Westborough, to which Doddington was a chapelry, was perhaps a guiding factor behind the donation: the vicar, Stephen Howlett featuring prominently in both wills.¹⁰⁵

Most donations to the local infrastructure usually centred on the testator's settlement: sometimes specifying the actual road to be repaired.¹⁰⁶ Parishioners of Long Bennington, situated on the North Road, contributed to the village's communications. Isabel Alyn donated 3s. 4d. 'to the cawsey of Benyngton', along with 'amending the lane from cawsey to chapel ward, iijs.'. She also gave 6d. to 'Fen Brig': presumably over the Witham towards Westborough.¹⁰⁷ The roads in Horncastle must similarly have been in considerable disrepair. Two wills leave to the 'mending of Thimbleby Lane at Horncastle town end': Robert Pockocke, Parson of Hatton donating 3s. 4d., and Robert Halgarth of Horncastle, 6s. 8d.¹⁰⁸

Thomas Fen of Edenham specifically gave 'vj lode of stonys layd in the street of Grymsthorpe at my coste and charys'.¹⁰⁹ Isabel Benet of Donington in Holland was equally precise, giving 6s. 8d. 'to reparacions of the cawsy before my dore'.¹¹⁰ John Akey of Boston, in addition to donating to the Dominicans also specified, 'the house be sold...by Ouer Ladie's gild...to bestowe it in mending of highwas...and the calcye in the Shod Freer's Layn as far as my housynge goeith'. Sir Thomas Bekytt, Prior of the Dominicans, along with 'Freare' Aleyne Echard were witnesses.¹¹¹

Disputes arose with monasteries concerning lack of 'reparacions' to the local infrastructure. In 1262-3, a jury was informed that 'two men carrying a Corps from

Stickney to Sibsey to be buried in the Churchyard there, drowned it on North dyke Causey', the alleged responsibility of Revesby.¹¹² In 1527, the abbot was prosecuted by the same village's parishioners, both manors of the monastery, concerning maintenance of the bridge at Northdyke. The court found against the abbey because the twelfth-century foundation charters specifically gave free tenancy to 'where the hermitage stands by the bridge...or some other sufficient man' to oversee repairs.¹¹³ These actions would not endear the monastery to the parishioners as rent paying tenants: nobody from the two settlements gave to Revesby.

Similar to Bridgend, it was not unusual for hermits to be associated with bridges and highways. A document of 1347 notes,

Protection for two years, for brother William de Epworth, hermit of the chapel of Staynford Brigg, repairer of the causey which leads through the moor called 'Barneby More,' who is seeking alms about the realm to enable him to finish the work.¹¹⁴

The fourteenth-century bridge over the River Idle at Mattersey in Nottinghamshire and the connecting roads were built with alms collected by a hermit.¹¹⁵ In 1335, Edward III issued,

...protection for two years for brother John le Marechal, a hermit...about the making of a causeway between Blyth and Mardersey and a bridge for the town of Mardersey, who is dependant upon Charity for the sustenance of himself and the men working at the causey and bridge, and [who] is going to divers parts of the realm to collect alms.¹¹⁶

Although some testators donated to local anchorites, both male and female, few hermits are noted in Lincolnshire wills. Richard Longton, priest of Thurlby bequeathed to, 'Sir John Grawe, the hermit at Gate Bryngs off our Lady Chapel [to] have vs. for other half [of a Trental]'.¹¹⁷ Joseph Beneson, Merchant of the Staple of Calais from Boston left 'to Robert beneson my brother, hermyt, have to by hym habittes with all xxvjs. viij*d*'.¹¹⁸ This testament suggests that hermits came from reasonably wealthy backgrounds and were not the ragged ascetics of legend.

(g) Communications.

Hermits maintained a small part of the infrastructure of a county that possessed considerable transportation problems. As in previous periods, communications within Lincolnshire during the sixteenth-century were still difficult, with access from outside at times almost impossible. In winter months, the county became virtually a peninsular, severed by waterlogged fens, flooded rivers, tidal surges and raging seas.¹¹⁹ William Camden (1551–1623), wrote in 1586,

upon the East side, where it bendeth outward with a brow fetching a great compasse, the German Ocean beateth on the shore. Northward it reacheth to Humber, an arme of the sea. On the West side it butteth upon Nottinghamshire, and on the South it is severed from Northamptonshire by the river Welland.¹²⁰

The North Sea, especially in winter was perceived as treacherous, with regular storms along with threats of piracy. In 1527, a ship from Danzig sailing in the Humber was attacked by French ‘pyrattes and see theves’, taken to Whitby where the abbot allegedly helped dispose of the cargo.¹²¹ Despite such incidents, there were strong contacts with the continent from the ports and inlets along the east coast, especially following the formation of the Hanseatic League in the late twelfth-century. However, the havens at Bicker, Tetney, Saltfleetby, Wainfleet, Surfleet and Wrangle, amongst many others slowly began to silt up. By the sixteenth-century, with the possible exception of Grimsby, Boston remained the only sizable port along the Lincolnshire coastline.

Lincoln itself could also be rendered inaccessible during inclement weather: the Witham regularly flooding low-lying areas of the city. In addition, the Roman Fosdyke canal connecting Lincoln with the Trent at Torksey had by the early fourteenth-century largely silted up.¹²² The prosperity of Torksey relied almost entirely on this waterway. Noted in Domesday was a requirement that ‘if the king’s messengers should come thither, the men of [Torksey] should conduct them to York with their ships and other means of navigation’.¹²³ In 1086, the settlement, although probably already in decline was economically second only to Lincoln and Stamford:

later supporting two monasteries.¹²⁴ The canal was rebuilt by 1121 allowing traffic from Lincoln to enter the Trent, thereby opening trade to Yorkshire and beyond. Fosse nunnery, founded c1184 by the townsfolk was built alongside the canal and was dedicated to Mary and St. Nicholas, patron saint of sailors. Along with Torksey Priory, it was furnished with gifts from Lincoln, reflecting the town's importance as an entrepôt.¹²⁵

After finally silting up in the early fourteenth-century, the Fosdyke remained dilapidated for many centuries despite numerous attempts at restoration, supported by the two monasteries. This naturally affected the cost of transportation. Around the early fourteenth-century the bursar of Durham Priory sold wool and also purchased goods at the Boston fair: in 1299 spending £125 11s. 5¾d. plus £7 13s. on transport. Of that total, £26 0s. 1d. was spent purchasing '5 cloths for clerics', along with 120 pieces of parchment for £1 3s. 6d., and an unspecified number of hair shirts for 9s. 1d.¹²⁶ These products were shipped to Lincoln via the Witham, but because of the poor state of the canal, travelled overland to Torksey and thence by boat to Aldwick (Aldwark) on the River Ure for onward shipment by cart.¹²⁷

The canons of Bridlington similarly patronised Boston fair between 1290 and 1325, travelling entirely by sea, probably due to the Scottish wars.¹²⁸ A Patent Roll of 1335 notes,

A Commission...setting forth that the dyke called ' Fossedyke ' from the city of Lincoln to the river Trente is so obstructed that the passage of boats and ships is no longer possible, to survey the same, to enquire...how and when it became obstructed, and to compel the persons interested to cleanse the same.¹²⁹

Consequently, in 1336, a consignment went by sea directly to Newcastle, but by the mid fourteenth-century goods generally travelled to Lincoln by water and thence by road to Barton and across to Hull.¹³⁰

In the sixteenth-century, further efforts were made to reopen the canal to aid Lincoln's failing economy. John Leland wrote that 'Bisshop Atwater began to clense

Foss Dik, and brought to the middle the cleansing of it from Torkesey side, in hope to bring vessels to Lincoln'.¹³¹ However, the bishop died in 1521 with the work uncompleted. Fifty years later Lincoln again petitioned to reopen the canal, stating,

Within the county of Lincoln, timber, coal, thakk and turf...have been almost clearly felled consumed and spent by greedy persons, owners of the same since the Dissolution of the Monasteries to the great decay of Lincoln...yet there is plenty of timber &., within counties adjoining.¹³²

The Torksey monasteries probably mirrored the decline of their settlement. Leland wrote that 'the ruines of Fosse Nunnery [are] hard by the stone bridge over Fosse Dik there hath his entering ynto Trente'.¹³³ Although the temporalities were rated at £23 3s. 4d. in 1291, at its suppression Torksey St. Leonard's total value was under £15, and Fosse was described by Dr. London as 'a beggarly power ruynose howse'.¹³⁴

The most reliable access into Lincolnshire, especially during winter was via the Great North Road. This entered the county at Stamford and exited east of Newark. An alternative was to travel north along the limestone Heathland via Bourne and Sleaford to Lincoln. The king, on his progress to York in summer 1541, came to Stamford, journeying to Grimesthorpe to convene with Charles Brandon and thence to Sleaford and Lincoln, leaving the county at Gainsborough. On his return, he crossed the Humber to Barrow, stayed two days at his new foundation at Thornton College then journeyed southwards to Stamford via Caenby, South Carlton, Lincoln and Nocton.¹³⁵ Clearly, travellers passing through Lincolnshire preferred to journey on the western side of the county: Holland and the eastern ridings of Lindsey were probably perceived as inaccessible and hazardous, at least by road.

Whilst composing his *Itinerary*, Leland travelled through Lincolnshire using approximately the same route.¹³⁶ Although he overlooked considerable parts of the county, he garnered information from local influential families to expand his narrative. In Lincoln he noted the friaries, along with SS. Catherine's and Mary Magdalene, in addition to Fosse, Torksey, Vaudey and Axholme, some of which were in ruins.¹³⁷ Unfortunately, he leaves little impression of the Lincolnshire

countryside other than 'champaine grounde, fertile of corne and grasse' or 'the hethe about it is very good for shepe'.¹³⁸

Like Henry, Leland crossed the Trent into Nottinghamshire at Gainsborough. Forming part of the county's western boundary, the river was nevertheless dangerous during floods, with the only bridge downstream past Nottingham being at Newark. There were however a number of ferries at Burton Stather, Kinnard (Owston) Ferry, Lea, Torksey, Gainsborough, Dunham, Stockwith and Littleborough. William Ashton, rector of Belton, after endowing the friars of York, Doncaster, Tickhill and Pontefract, gave 'to the makinge of elande calsey xs' and to the makinge of ferye calsey, xls.': the latter probably leading to the Trent at Butterwick.¹³⁹

At Domesday, ferries crossing the Humber to Yorkshire sailed from Grimsby, Barton, South Ferriby and Winteringham.¹⁴⁰ From the thirteenth-century, the main crossing was between Barton and Hessle: the ferry being attached to the Barton manor, owned until 1298 by the Gant family. Gilbert de Gant (1123-56) was also a benefactor of Bardney, Crowland, Kirkstead, Thornton, Sempringham, Spalding and Vaudey.¹⁴¹ The Humber crossing was plagued with dangerous waters and strong tides, with crews allegedly charging excessive tolls. Daniel Defoe (c1660-1731) discovered that crossing the Humber was still unpredictable.

Barton [is] a town noted for...an ill-favoured dangerous passage over the Humber to Hull, where in an open boat, in which we had about fifteen horses, and ten or twelve cows, mingled with about seventeen or eighteen passengers; we were about four hours toss'd about on the Humber.¹⁴²

A number of monasteries owned Humber ferries. The Yorkshire houses of Guisborough retained Hessle with Bridlington possessing Barton and South Ferriby.¹⁴³ Thornton and Bardney, both of whom had property in Yorkshire also owned ferries at Barton. Nun Cotham had free use of the crossing and the rights to export their goods, no doubt mostly wool, from the ports of Hedon and Paull.¹⁴⁴

On his journeys, Leland noted five ferries crossing the Witham: Short Ferry, Tattershall, Dogdyke, Langrick and Boston.¹⁴⁵ In earlier periods, the Witham may have flowed from Dogdyke into the Wash at Wainfleet, but after numerous inundations prior to the twelfth-century the river changed to its present course.¹⁴⁶ It may alternatively have flowed to Bicker Haven, with a port of Drayton.¹⁴⁷ This may account for the positioning of Swineshead Abbey, situated five miles south of the present course. Here the canalised river turns sharply eastwards at Langrick Bridge, replacing an earlier meander shown on the Stukeley map. The consequence of this possible deviation was that Boston gradually grew in prosperity. This wealth supported a large parish church, numerous religious guilds and four friaries: benefiting from the patronage of firstly Hanseatic and later the Staple merchants.

(h) Monastic Commerce.

In the thirteenth-century, Boston began to emerge as the primary entrepôt of Lincolnshire. Although the date is disputed, Lincoln possibly held the wool Staple from at least 1291, passing to Boston in 1369, possibly due to the silting of the Fosdyke.¹⁴⁸ In the 'Fifteenth' tax of 1205, Boston was second behind London followed by Southampton and Lincoln. Out of the thirty-five ports listed, five were in Lincolnshire: Barton, Immingham and Grimsby being the other three.¹⁴⁹ In the fifteenth-century, Boston was second only to London in export of wool,¹⁵⁰ but a century later the process reversed, the harbour silting up and trade diverted to ports further south. This was largely due to the change from wool exports to that of manufactured cloth.¹⁵¹

English monasteries have always been associated with the production of raw wool, generally for export to continental cloth merchants. The product was prized for use in high quality clothing products, and the Lincolnshire landscape was well suited to sustain vast flocks of sheep in the predominantly Cistercian, Premonstratensian and Gilbertine granges. The so-called 'Pergolotti List' of c1315 gives an idea of the

amount of wool exported: in total about 92 tons per annum from Lincolnshire monasteries. (Table 4:1, below).¹⁵²

Sacks (each)	Monastery	Sacks (Total)
40	Kirkstead, Revesby, Spalding.	120
35	St. Catherine's.	35
30	Louth Park, Stainfield, Crowland.	90
25	Barlings, Sempringham.	50
24	Vaudey.	24
20	Newsham.	20
18	Bullington, Sixhills, North Ormsby.	54
15	Haverholme, Stixwould, Bardney.	45
12	Markby.	12
10	Alvingham, Newstead on Ancholme, Nun Cotham, Wellow.	40
8	Tupholme, Thornholme.	16
7	Catley.	7
6	Swineshead.	6
5	Hagnaby, Humberston, Deeping, Bourne	20
4	Nocton.	4
2	Grimsby, St. Leonard's, Heynings.	4
7.6	Newbo, Legbourne, Elsham. ¹⁵³	23
		570

Table 4:1. Number of Sacks from thirty-six Lincolnshire Monasteries. (Everson and Stocker, 2011, 304).

Although this number is disputed, a sack may have contained anything from 100 to 240 fleeces depending on the size of the sheep and thickness of the wool.¹⁵⁴ Paul Everson and David Stocker have suggested 100 fleeces, with Barlings farming about 4,000 head in the early fourteenth-century, at about twenty-four Marks per sack.¹⁵⁵ In 1313, Thornton possessed twenty-seven farms on which 7,934 sheep grazed, producing fleeces for eighty-six sacks, slightly over ninety-two per sack, worth just under £500. Earlier, in 1284, 11,208 sacks were exported from Boston, not just from Lincolnshire but from other wool producing areas of the country.¹⁵⁶

Monasteries built warehouses to store fleeces for sale at the Boston fairs. Kirkstead, Revesby, Louth Park and Stixwould, along with Whitby, Malton and Bridlington in Yorkshire, and Furness in Lancashire all retained facilities.¹⁵⁷ A confirmation charter to Louth Park of 1314,

...the gift of John Samuel of a share of land in Boston, as inclosed by a dike and wall from the court of the said John to Barredic [Barditch] to build on and to keep their goods in through the year with free access through the said court [*curia*]...[and] the gift of William son of John Samuel of a share of land in Boston, being ninety-five feet long and twenty-three feet wide, with a house built on the same land...¹⁵⁸

However, with the changing climate, frequent conflicts, international politics and increased taxation, wool exports decreased considerably over the succeeding centuries and by the 1500s were much reduced. This was once a vast industry that supplied many monasteries with the bulk of their income. The downturn must have considerably affected income at a time when some Lincolnshire houses were struggling to survive. This, along with the threatened closures must have influenced the way people patronised the Church, both economically and spiritually within the uncertain times.

Boston and particularly Grimsby increasingly relied on sea fishing for income, thereby challenging the river fisheries, some owned by monasteries. Lincolnshire's rivers were also used extensively for transportation. This was largely because of the poor roads, with construction materials for monasteries, churches and secular buildings generally conveyed by water. The early fenland monasteries acquired most of their building material from Barnack in Northamptonshire transported via the Welland.¹⁵⁹

However, in the early sixteenth-century, the Louth churchwardens acquired Ancaster stone for their new spire. This was carted from the quarry at Wilsford to Appletreenes Wharf on the River Slea: the first navigable stretch. The cargo travelled by water via the Kyme Eau to the Witham at Dogdyke, thence by road to Coningsby or Horncastle, where the stone was stored until needed in Louth.¹⁶⁰ The Kyme Eau was seen as an important route, linking Kesteven with Holland and Lindsey. Haverholme Priory, which owned land in Ewerby, was responsible for its upkeep from Appletreeness to South Kyme since at least 1316, when the prior was prosecuted for refusing to maintain the river.¹⁶¹

Rivers were an obvious asset to religious houses, not only for transportation but also for fishing. However, disagreements arose between monasteries over shipping, weirs and angling rights. A document of 1323 notes a,

...complaint by the prior of St. Katherine's without Lincoln that John [de Louth], abbot of Kirkestede and others took away four ships of the said prior of the price of £40 in the water of Wyme [Witham] at Tymberlond, co. Lincoln, which he kept for his ferry...over the said river, and 10 nets of the price of 40s. placed in his fishery there and [also] assaulted his men.¹⁶²

Kirkstead, which appeared to be accumulating income from a ferry, was also indicted for 'appropriating a place called Calfcroft on the Witham, where ships were wont to load'.¹⁶³ No doubt the 'ships' were in reality flat-bottomed river barges, but the mention of four owned by a single monastery illustrates the amount of traffic concentrated on the Witham.

Kirkstead was prosecuted continually over a period of forty years for obstructing river passage for fisheries. The monastery's Rental of 1537, discussed in detail below, noted two 'fish garths' and a 'Tenement or booth with fishing' in the abbey's demesne.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, Lincoln St. Catherine's was accused of altering the course of the Witham in Lincoln to their advantage.¹⁶⁵ Other monasteries may have also owned small fleets. In 1307, Barlings attempted to purchase the former site of the Friars of the Sack in Lincoln. This was adjacent to the Witham thus ideal for a warehouse exporting the monastery's woollen products along the Fosdyke: at the time just about navigable.¹⁶⁶

Whether tinsured or secular, the interests of the farmer and boat-owner concurred: the former wanting efficient drainage, the latter free passage from obstructions.¹⁶⁷ However, fishermen were at odds with both. Fish, especially eels, were in abundance, so rivers were perhaps used by monasteries in lieu or in addition to their fishponds, from where surpluses were sold providing additional income. Complaints concerning fish weirs blocking waterways were laid against Peterborough, Barlings and also the nuns of Stainfield, 'for building an

encroachment in the King's highway of the river'.¹⁶⁸ In 1450 the nun's grange at 'Barleymowthe', situated at Shortferry by the confluence of the Witham and Barlings Eau was leased to a Robert Trusse, whose descendant, another Robert was still renting for 100s. in 1535.¹⁶⁹ Fishing appeared to be a family trait. Thomas Trusse, who during the Rising was indicted for 'urging them [the commons] to kill the gentlemen', rented a 'Fisher Bothe' and fourteen acres from Kirkstead.¹⁷⁰

(i) Monasteries as Landlords.

The most regular connectivity between a monastery and parishioner was as landlord and tenant. At the turn of the sixteenth-century, landlords, both lay and religious were equally powerful entities retaining similar legal systems largely administered within their respective manor courts. This was possibly a source of local resentment with interference in the minutiae of people's lives, extracting fines for the smallest legal transactions and infringements. The manor court, probably chaired by the monastery's steward, was nonetheless the glue that secured manorial authority, simultaneously retaining considerable influence over the local population.¹⁷¹ In 1300, under the abbacy of Richard of Crowland (1280-1303), the court held at Langtoft adjudicated that John, son of the Reeve, would give the abbot 12d., *not* to be made ale-taster, five newcomers were to give 4d. per annum, and another, two cocks for a license to reside.¹⁷²

In 1299, the same abbot decreed that at 'Baston, the sokemen [were to be] fined for failure to perform plough services and carting, and the bondmen of Winthorpe for receiving alien sheep in the lord's pasture [intercommoning], and for marrying a woman without the lords permission'.¹⁷³ A similar occurrence took place in c1519 at Peterborough's manor of Scotter in north-west Lindsey, sixty-seven miles from the abbey. A villein, William Overye, requested that his daughter Alice could marry, which was authorized on a fine of five shillings. Known as *mercheta mulierum*, or 'marriage tax', this was a process through which the lord obtained compensation for the loss of customary services from the woman involved.¹⁷⁴ Minor offences were also

adjudicated. These ranged from affray (*affraiam*), common theft (*communis latruncula*), along with four women accused of illegal brewing and baking.¹⁷⁵ Monastic lordship as a result infiltrated the lives of their tenants. In the case of Scotter this was at some distance, with Sir Thomas Heneage the local Steward retained on £1 10s. per annum to administer the abbey's affairs.¹⁷⁶

Despite misgivings concerning monastic administration, secular lordship suffered from absentee landlords and changes of ownership with the sale of property, family extinction or attainder. The permanence of monastic tenure was wedded to their concept of *stabilitas*. The head of the house might change, but the structure, physical, financial and spiritual, remained largely intact. Therefore, with monasteries tending to retain ownership of estates from foundation to dissolution, their agricultural and manorial systems must have produced a sense of constancy and largely efficient administration. This would have been especially true during troubled periods, providing a reasonably secure social and economic environment.

Amongst many examples of longevity was the manor of Legsby donated by Robert Twenge to Sixhills, probably at its foundation.¹⁷⁷ At the Dissolution it was valued at £5 4s. for land (*terra*), a grange worth £4 with a messuage assessed at £2 6s. 8d.¹⁷⁸ Newsham acquired the manor of Habrough by 1200: still held in 1535, valued at 40s. 3d.¹⁷⁹ Crowland retained the oldest manors: Baston, Langtoft and Algarkirk originating from the pre-Conquest period.¹⁸⁰ The supervision of these landholdings was nevertheless the responsibility of a locally appointed official: the monastic landlord remaining largely a remote entity.

The estates may however have been visited occasionally by a trusted member of the community to undertake services at the grange chapel. Research recently completed on granges owned by Barlings suggests that facilities were provided for residential canons and that Premonstratensian constitutions provided for daily worship.¹⁸¹ Similarly, the visitation of Augustinian Wellow in 1519 noted that Canon Robert Whitgift was in charge of the granaries and was also the 'granger'.¹⁸² However,

staffing all the estates with regular canons would probably have been beyond the capacity most houses.

There was nevertheless a gradual retreat from directly farming the monastery's land towards a system of renting and leasing. In the thirteenth-century,

Brother Helias [Elias, c1217-c1235], Abbot of Revesby, give[s] to William son of Bricius of Stickney and his heirs one bovate of arable land in Stickney..., and William and his heirs are to pay 7 shillings annually for all service due on the land. After the death of William his heirs shall renew the lease by payment of 8 shillings.¹⁸³

Occasionally the system was reversed with monasteries leasing land from the laity. In 1316, 'Richard, son of Roger, Vicar of Wood Enderby, leases to the Abbey of Revesby one selion of arable land, to be held for 26 years in return for a sum of money, which the monks paid to Richard'.¹⁸⁴

These are early examples, but once the initial impetus to establish monasteries in the twelfth and early thirteenth-centuries had subsided, the number of documents started to decline. This may be due to simple loss, or perhaps monasteries no longer featured in donations that required detailed legal documentation. Charters of gifts, grants, quitclaims and final concords may have been superseded by donations through testaments. Alternatively, people may have rejected the monasteries and directed their donations towards the friars, who were visible, accessible and in general spiritually respected. Unfortunately, the mendicants left few records, probably reflecting their lack of property and rectories. Fortunately, one Lincolnshire monastery left a vitally important document that details the financial connectivity between a religious house and local people within a landscape setting.

(j) The Kirkstead Abbey Rental.

A surviving document illustrating the landholdings and type of agriculture undertaken in sixteenth-century Lincolnshire is the Kirkstead Rental of 1537.¹⁸⁵ This important record gives a detailed account of economic interactions between local people and a monastic house. The valuation was probably compiled by Sir William

Parr (d1547) following the execution of the abbot, Richard Harrison and three monks following the Rising, and the escheatment of the monastery's property to the Crown. The 272 references mostly span the early part of the sixteenth-century, and although 156 give no date, they almost certainly originate from this period. There were four general types of landholdings. Freehold, accounting for fifty-three titles (19.5%), copyhold, eighty-two (30%), leasehold, fifty-four (19.8%) and fifty-two 'At Will' (19%): the remaining thirty-one (11.4%) give no details. The copyhold system, governed by the abbey's manor court was the most flexible method of tenure: nevertheless leasehold would allow an instant cash flow to an establishment short of revenue.

The manor with the most rented land was Armtree in Wildmore Fen with thirty-seven tenants (13.6%) followed by Thimbleby, eighteen (6.6%), Langton by Wragby and Roughton, seventeen (6.3%), with Boston and Covenham on fourteen each (5%). The most revealing is the abbey's demesne, dated from 1511 to 1535, which had twenty tenants (7.4%).¹⁸⁶ This consisted of fish garths, messuages, gardens and 'booths': semi-permanent dwellings easily disassembled, presumably in periods of flooding. John Barker held a varied selection of demesne property dating from 1516, with tenements, meadow and pasture in leasehold, copyhold and 'At Will': in one case for forty years. In 1511, Richard Warde obtained copyhold of a messuage and garden within the monastery itself. As the abbey was Cistercian there are no surviving visitation documents revealing the affect on the incumbents by this 'intrusion'.

The monks were also inordinately fond of capons: mentioned thirty times (11%) as part of the rent. In 1522, Thomas Bartylmewe of Great Sturton rented a toftstead, three oxgangs of arable for thirty-three years: the rent including ten quarters of barley and two capons.¹⁸⁷ In 1535, John Wylson of Navenby leased the abbey's tanning facilities with all the relevant equipment for thirty years at £2 per annum. Tanning was one of the occupations proscribed in an act of 1529 limiting the

economic activities of 'spyrituall persons', both secular and regular: legislation that went largely unheeded.¹⁸⁸

Some of those listed had other stakes in the monastery. Henry Fleming received 33s. 4d., from the abbey as Bailiff of the manor of Covenham, with a further 20s. for Roughton and Kirkby including Supervisor of 'Bayne' and Haltham.¹⁸⁹ Others include Edward Wilkinson, Bailiff of Thimbleby, Woodhall and Horncastle on a retainer of 26s. 8d. John Johnson, rented land in Thimbleby and received 3s. 4d. as Bailiff of Martin and Timberland in Kesteven.¹⁹⁰ A number of people listed in the Rental also left wills. In 1540, William Awncell of North Somercotes left to his daughter landholdings consisting of a messuage and nine acres of meadow, together with sixteen acres of pasture, previously leased from Kirkstead for forty years: his wife similarly acquired lands from Alvingham.¹⁹¹

From 1512 Robert Dighton, Alderman of Lincoln, leased a house, barn, garden, twelve acres of meadow and thirty of pasture in Swinethorpe for eighty years at £1 per annum.¹⁹² In his will of 1523 he provided 33s. 4d., per annum for fifteen years for a Bedeman at St. Michael [on the Mount] in Lincoln, financed by the farm in Swinethorpe, 'which I have by indenture of thabbot of Kyrkstede and thabbot of Barlings'.¹⁹³ Although leased nearly twenty-five years prior to the Dissolution, in acquiring an eighty year lease Dighton appeared confident that monasticism would continue *ad finitem*.

Robert Halgarth a tanner of Horncastle, leased two tenements, a house, two 'barkhouses', a kilnhouse, a 'scylyng' house, stable, garden and seven acres of arable for 33s. 4d. per annum.¹⁹⁴ His will of 1529 notes, 'I will that the land arrable and gresse that lyeth of the weste syde of Bayne, the wich I have of the lese of Kyrksted remane to Richerd Kyrke, payng the rente to the same house'.¹⁹⁵ In his will, Kyrke in turn gave to 'my lorde abbot of Kyrkstede the supervisor, to se it be performyd, fulfyllyd and kepyd...to have for his payn xs.'. ¹⁹⁶ John Leek, a mercer of Boston in his will of 1527 left, 'To Jenet wyff off Nicholes Smyth the house wyth the

stabyll that I toke off the abbot and convent off Kyrkested, the terme off hyr lyff...'.¹⁹⁷ Although most originate from the period prior to the Act of Supremacy and the start of the Dissolution process, the length of some leases perhaps represents a positive view of the future of monasticism despite looming uncertainties. Nevertheless these are purely economic contacts, nothing is known of any spiritual input concerning these transactions.

Woodland, a diminishing resource in the county, was naturally perceived as an important aspect of the abbey's economy. The Leverton churchwarden's accounts notes that 5d. was spent 'for Ryding to...Kyekested to se wood for the chyrche'.¹⁹⁸

Woodland	Acres	Age
Belsholme Wood	120	70a. 40 years. 60a. young wood
Langhallys Wood	3	12
Oxclose Wood	4	100
Cote Wood	14	14
Lyndall Wood	10	20
Hyll Wood	100	2
Old Dowod Springs	14	8
Braderi Wood	140	2 parts young spring wood: third part 30 years
Barnes Wood Hagge	10	30
Synker Holte Wood	2	1
Calfe Croft	2	16
Total	419	

Table 4:2

Table 4:2 gives an analysis of the acreage owned by Kirkstead in 1537.¹⁹⁹ Understanding the age of trees was important, as woodland needed to be preserved for later generations through careful management. Through the leasing of its extensive and varied property, Kirkstead was clearly not a poor house, assessed in the *Valor* at £286 2s. 7¾d: the seventh wealthiest house in the county.²⁰⁰ In 1535, corrodies were still being imposed, with 'William Blyke, Page of the Pitcherhouse, to have the corrody of the monastery of Cristhede'.²⁰¹ However, following its suppression, William Parr wrote to Cromwell stating that, 'All the plate and money he can find at Kirkstead is scarce worth 20s., in consequence of the late abbot's

unthriftiness, for which he would have deserved punishment if he had not transgressed the laws'.²⁰²

(k) The Spiritual Economy.

All landowners and tenants were required to pay tithes to the local church, which if appropriated went into the monastery's treasury.²⁰³ Along with rents from farms, mills, fisheries and tolls, these were an important part of the monastic economy. These factors nevertheless forged a link between parishioner and monastery. Although a religious house owned a small quantity of land within a specific settlement, these properties were often centred on the gift of a parish church. Alvingham appropriated the churches of nearby Grainthorpe, Keddington, Little Cawthorpe, South Cockerington, Wold Newton and Yarburgh, which also contained the nunnery's manors. This compactness made for greater efficiency, as the bulk of a monastery's supplies came from their own estates.²⁰⁴

The overall wealth of monasteries is important in assessing their financial impact on the economy of the county. Researching the *Valor*, Alexander Savine suggests that English monasteries were worth approximately £160,000 per annum, supposedly representing 20-25% of landed income. This figure would possibly reach nearly £200,000 if hospitals and colleges were included.²⁰⁵ The total value of forty-nine Lincolnshire monasteries was £7,263 6s. 0¼d.²⁰⁶ Only ten establishments (24.4%) were above the required £200 to preclude them from the first Act of Suppression. The richest was Crowland (£926. 7s. 9d., excluding its cell at Freiston on £167 8s 1½d.), followed by Spalding (£878 17s. 3d.) and Thornton (£591 0s. 2¾d.).²⁰⁷ The poorest was Bridgend (£5 1s. 11½d.) and Hirst, a cell of Nostell Priory in Yorkshire (£7 11s. 8d.). The wealthiest nunnery was Sempringham £317 4s. 1d., and the poorest was Fosse on £7 3s. 1d. It is notable that the four houses in Holland, Crowland, Spalding, Swineshead and Freiston are all within the top thirteen wealthiest establishments.

Savine also divided religious houses into five financial categories.²⁰⁸ (**Table 4:3**). Most Lincolnshire monasteries fall into the last three groupings, with 75.5% ranging from £20 to £300, with an average of £110. Although most were in the small to medium range, the county also possessed a greater than average number of very small houses. Of the seven under £20, four were nunneries: in descending order Gokewell, Orford, Grimsby St. Leonard's and Fosse, all within the poorer areas of north Lindsey. Only Crowland, Spalding, Bardney, Thornton and Sempringham broke through the £300 barrier. These five houses totalled £3,079 15s. 4³/₄d., (42.4% of the total income).

Value	England	Lincolnshire Number (% age)
Very Large (Over £1000)	4%	0 (0%)
Large (£300-999)	16%	5 (10.20%)
Medium (£100-299)	35%	18 (36.73%)
Small (£21-99)	35%	19 (38.77%)
Very Small (Under £20)	9%	7 (14.28%)

Table 4:3.
Alexander Savine's analysis of the value of religious houses compared to those in Lincolnshire.

Also using the *Valor*, David Knowles has calculated that spiritual income on average provided approximately 25% of a monastery's proceeds. Tithes were undoubtedly the greatest asset, but glebe rents, pensions from other churches and religious houses, along with numerous offerings also supplemented monastic income.²⁰⁹ However, percentages from Lincolnshire monasteries varied considerably. The *summa* of the spiritualities at Stixwold was £33 16s. 8d., 29% of the total of £114 5s. 2¹/₂d., Revesby was approximately 10.5%, Markby at 22% and Kirkstead with only three rectories on 4.5%. The abbey's church at 'Wodhall' was valued at £9 6s. 8d., and 'Wyspyngton' at £6.²¹⁰ However, the leasing of especially rectories, commencing long before the sixteenth-century, severed connections between proprietor and parishioner, further diminishing the local influence of the monastery.²¹¹

The remaining 75% of monastic income came from temporalities: land rents, leases, tenements, smallholdings, woodlands and sale of agricultural produce. Financially the most important were rents from smallholdings and the leasing of manors, although by the sixteenth-century the average income from demesne land had been

reduced to 10% of the total.²¹² In Lincolnshire, overall landholdings accounted for 208,442 acres, some being demesne granges.²¹³ Monastic granges were generally associated with the Cistercians, Premonstratensians and Gilbertines. These originally consisted of locally enclosed land, farmed directly from the monastery by lay brothers or servants. Out of thirty-eight temporal properties owned by Kirkstead, nine are listed by name as granges. Some, like Buckland and Sheepwash at Canwick were near Lincoln but one was in Yorkshire near Kimberworth.²¹⁴

The Premonstratensians also followed a similar system. The original site of Barlings situated at the head of the causeway leading to the abbey, became the local grange.²¹⁵ Similarly, the abbey's other property at Scothern, Snelland, Grange Lings and

Table 4:4

Monastery	Deanery	Property Value	% age
Crowland	Holland	£177 7s. 10d	68
Louth Park	Louthesk	£158 9s. 1d.	64
Spalding	Holland	£249 13s. 0d.	92
Thornholme	Manlake	£41 17s 1d.	55
Thornton	Yarborough	£185 11s. 3d.	79

Stainton were all situated within the Lawres deanery. The *Taxatio* of 1291 revealed a pattern of land ownership generally within the deanery where the motherhouse was located: a further example of localism. **Table 4:4** illustrates the value and percentage of temporal property within the respective deanery.²¹⁶ Nevertheless in order to sustain increasing agricultural productivity, repairs to the sewers (drains), especially vital in the fenlands of Holland and Axholme, became the prerogative of Lincolnshire houses.

(I) Waterways and Sewers.

Some Lincolnshire abbots and priors were given the title 'Commissioner of Sewers', but their efficiency in preserving the county's vital drainage systems could be inconsistent. Consequently the work may have been entrusted to local communities. The heads of Crowland, Bardney, Newsham, Kirkstead, Thornton and Revesby, some of whose houses were situated in low-lying areas were regularly mentioned in

state documents.²¹⁷ It was not only Lincolnshire regulars who were appointed administrators within the county. The abbot of St. Mary's York, which held lands in the county and Thomas Dokwray (Docwra), head of the order of St. John of Jerusalem both retained positions. Members of the local gentry were also included in the Commission. Amongst many others William Tyrwhitt, Robert Dymoke, John Skipwith, John Littlebury, William Askewe, Geoffrey Paynell and John Heneage. Also amongst their number was John Robynson, merchant of Boston, who died in 1525 leaving extensive donations to most sectors of the Church and who had connections with the Dymoke and Willoughby families.²¹⁸ All possessed considerable property in the county, with some holding the title of monastic steward.

Commissionership was an important position, essential to securing marsh and fenlands from the encroaching sea. However, disputes arose between the regulars and local populations over these vital structures. In 1533, a Thomas Mayhew wrote to Cromwell,

...touching on the King's tenants of the honor of Bolingbroke, in which we are troubled by the abbot of Kirkstead...we have ever been accustomed yearly to ride and see all manner of banks about our fen, as well the Abbot's as commoners, and present [are] defaulters at the court leets; which the Abbot would now prevent. It shall be prejudicial to the King if the homagers now lose this liberty.²¹⁹

The outcome of the petition is unknown, but the Kirkstead Rental notes 'Memorandum that the se banks there is very chargeable for the defense of the water, which will cost, one year with another, £13 6s. 8d'.²²⁰ Clearly, a system of checking sea defences appeared to be in place, especially within a Wapentake situated adjacent to the Witham valley and in parts near to the coast.

Monasteries could be penalised if sewer work was neglected. This was especially relevant in the Isle of Axholme where its namesake river drained the low-lying district. The abbot of Roche, holding the manor of Roxby was fined 110 Marks,

...for not scouring of 11 score roods...from the bridges called Byshoppe Brygges, as the water of Anholme runneth, and the gutters and streams coming thereunto, unto the bridges called Ferybe Bryggez, unto the water of Humber, as the same water of Anholme...of the same by rage of the sea flowing and reflowing.²²¹

Louth Park had responsibility for a causeway in the low-lying area of Flixborough in northwest Lincolnshire adjacent to the Trent. In 1341, unsuccessful proceedings were taken against the abbot for lack of repair and also constructing a ditch, thereby narrowing the road.²²²

If the monasteries were sometimes lax in 'reparacions' to the county's waterways, some within local communities were more generous. Richard Gryme of South Ferriby gave half a quarter of barley for 'upholdyng of the brydge over [the] Ancolm', with fellow parishioner John Gawdby leaving the same for 'reparacions of the brige'.²²³ Thomas Hawe, vicar of Glentham gave £3 6s. 8d., 'to the mayntenaunce of Bysshope Brygges' in his parish at the southern extremity of the Anholme.²²⁴ Further south in 1220, Robert son of Reinald of Holtham (Halham) obtained a license from Kirkstead, 'to stop the water, fill breaches and level them, between his curia and the Bain'.²²⁵

Following the Dissolution, complaints were aimed at the new landowners for not respecting their obligations of maintenance. William Dugdale noted that,

...it hath been a long received opinion...that the total drowning of this great Level hath...been occasioned by the neglect of putting the Laws of Sewers in due execution: and that before the dissolution of the Monasteries the passages for the water were kept with clensing...chiefly through the care and cost of those Religious Houses.²²⁶

If this neglect was replicated in places such as the Witham valley, with its many suppressed monasteries, then the Lincolnshire drainage system would have been under considerable stress. Joan Thirsk however challenges this theory as livestock in the county generally increased in the late sixteenth-century, something not associated with persistent flooding.²²⁷ Nonetheless, although agriculturally diverse

with some highly productive areas, Lincolnshire remained a challenging environment especially in periods of changing climate.

(m) Agriculture, Population and Climate.

The geographical isolation of the county, especially in winter promoted an unenviable reputation of being populated by 'backward' inhabitants reminiscent of 'that brute and beastly shire' reviled by the king. Lincolnshire's fenlands in particular were labelled as 'unhealthy', with the marshlands and swamps associated with noxious vapours known as miasmas. Abbot Ingulph of Crowland (d1109) interpreted the name of his monastery as 'crude or muddy' land.²²⁸ In 1535, Walter Graver, a teacher, wrote to Cromwell complaining that he 'has been nearly two years engaged in teaching youth at Croyland, where the climate is so unwholesome that he would rather die than pass a third summer there'. He suggests other positions within the county, noting, 'there is also [a school] at Stamford without a master, which he should prefer to all others for its healthy situation'.²²⁹

The geographer John Ogilby (1600–76), noted that Crowland 'was seated very low, and amongst deep fens, almost after the manner of Venice...the lowness of its situation admits no carriages to come at it'.²³⁰ Camden similarly wrote that the fenland was,

...like unto that Holland in Germanie it is so thoroughly wet in most places with waters that a mans foote is ready to sinke into it, and as one standeth upon it the ground will shake and quake under his feet.²³¹

However, other parts of Lincolnshire apparently appealed to Camden. 'Kesteven is for aire farre more holesome and for soile no less fruitfull...[and] 'Lindsey butteth with a huge bowing front upon the ocean'.²³² By the sixteenth-century some influential gentry resided in Kesteven, no doubt for its better communications with the capital but also to escape the 'miasmas'.²³³

Possibly due to its geographical isolation, by the sixteenth-century the county was largely in decline. There were few large centres of population other than Stamford,

Grimsby, Lincoln and Boston, all gradually waning in economic importance.²³⁴ In the 1334 Poll Tax assessment, Holland was richest of the county's three districts. Although only contributing 21% to the levy, as against Lindsey's 48.5% and Kesteven's 30.3%, because of Holland's smaller area it paid proportionately more.

The 'taxer' for Holland in 1334 was the Abbot of Crowland (Henry de Casewick, 1324-59), and for Kesteven and Lindsey the Abbot of Bardney (Richard de Gainsborough, 1318-42).²³⁵ In the 1524 Subsidy, Holland accounted for 22.1% (17.8% of the county's geographical area), Lindsey 55.2% (56.4%) and Kesteven, 22.6% (25.7%).²³⁶ This overall decline could also be linked to the relative poverty of the county's monasteries. Twenty-six (52%, not including friaries), were valued at under £100 in 1535, with seventeen below £50. Landholdings had shrunk with the resultant fall in income, and also loosened ties with the communities that were once part of the monastic estates.

Population figures from earlier periods are notoriously difficult to calculate. Josiah Russell suggests that Domesday Lincolnshire had a populace of 90,341, although Graham Platts raises that to 120,000.²³⁷ This compares with neighbouring Nottinghamshire (20,230), Yorkshire (28,553), but with wealthy Norfolk on 95,438.²³⁸ In the 1377 Poll Tax assessment, Lincolnshire had risen to 142,678, despite the Black Death, Nottinghamshire 43,328, Yorkshire 196,560 and Norfolk 146,726.²³⁹ In the same survey, Lincoln is noted at 5,354, Boston 4,307 and Stamford 1,827.²⁴⁰ Consequently, the number of people per square mile rose from 31.5 in 1086 to 49.8 in 1377.²⁴¹ Nationwide the population had risen from approximately one and a half million in 1086 to over four million prior to the *pestilential*: noted in the *Louth Park Chronicle* as 'the hand of the only Omnipotent God [striking] the human race with a deadly blow'.²⁴² Calculated by Gerald Hodgett, the population in 1563 was 109,400 and by 1603 rose to 115,767, so in c1530 would possibly be approximately 100,000.²⁴³

Using Russell's estimate Henry Darby suggests that in the developing areas of Holland between 1086 and the late thirteenth-century the number of tenants in

Spalding rose by a multiple of six, Pinchbeck by eleven and Fleet by sixty-one: the latter situated within an area of considerable reclaimed land.²⁴⁴ This increase may have been aided by ‘partible inheritance’, by which landholdings were distributed amongst all the heirs to an estate: an alternative to primogeniture.²⁴⁵ This would have divided any area into smaller landholdings, thereby more profitable and easier to administer than larger estates. These factors, along with a stable temperate climate during earlier periods, promoted greater production of foodstuffs.

The agricultural activities of the monastic houses were as much part of the local economy as the estates of the nobles and gentry. Taken from surviving inventories, the amount and type of crop grown in the fenland areas were detailed by Joan Thirsk. **Table 4:5** lists the acreage sown at nineteen separate farms from 1537 to 1591, although how many were originally owned by monasteries is not noted.²⁴⁶

Wheat	Rye	Barley	Beans	Peas	Oats	Hemp	Total
16a ½r	4a 1r	98a 2r	27a 3r	24a 2r	2r	11a	182a 2½r
8.8%	2.3%	54%	15.2%	13.4%	0.2%	6%	99.9%

Table 4:5

Barley was clearly the most extensive crop. This was used along with rye mainly for low quality bread but also for brewing, reflected in inventories noting vats and malt querns. In addition to human consumption, peas, beans and some barley supplemented hay as winter-feed fodder, vitally important to the mixed farming economy of the county. Wheat, sometimes used to make white bread was grown on the silt lands. Although few oats were cultivated, hemp was grown, and along with flax was used for coarse fabric, rope making and animal bedding.²⁴⁷

One farmer noted in Thirsk’s research was Richard Bacon of Bourne, who grew just over two acres of wheat, twelve of barley and seven of peas.²⁴⁸ In his will of 1537, he titles himself ‘Yeoman’. This gives an understanding of the amount of land, nearly twenty-one acres, qualifying him for the social position, although he probably owned a great deal more.²⁴⁹ Another example was Robert Bryan of Swaton, who donated to St. Catherine’s, Bridgend Priory, specifically to the causeway, along with

the purchase of two hymnals for the parish church.²⁵⁰ He possessed one acre of wheat, five of barley and four of peas. Similarly, Richard Knapton of Gedney gave to St. Catherine's, his parish church and the cathedral, but farmed only two acres of wheat, two roods of barley and three of beans.²⁵¹ Although presumably not the full extent of their economic activities, these farmers had clearly prospered, enabling contributions to be made to the Church and local community, but importantly were wealthy enough to leave a testament.

Like most fenland farmers, these parishioners could be described as smallholders.

Table 4:6 shows the size of personal estates left by sixty-nine fenland farmers in

Value of Estate	1530-40	% age	1590-1	% age
Less than £10	31	45	7	9.3
£10-20	20	28.7	11	14.6
£20-30	9	13	6	8
£30-40	5	7.2	11	14.6
£40-50	2	2.9	7	9.3
£50-60	1	1.4	3	4
£60-80	1	1.4	11	14.6
£80-100	-	-	15	20
More than £100	-	-	4	5.3

Table 4:6.

Lincolnshire from 1530 to 1540 and for comparison seventy-five from 1590-91.²⁵² In the earlier period, nearly 75% were valued at under £20, with nearly half less than £10. Socially some would also have gravitated from being smallholders to yeomen farmers and possibly even gentry. Unfortunately, the proportion of wealth given to the Church is unknown, or whether they leased from a monastery. Fifty to sixty years later, the values of the estates had increased and spread more evenly, possibly reflecting the increased agricultural production from reclaimed lands.

Some allowance however must be made in the calculations for inflation during the Tudor period. The coinage was debased, Crown monopolies sold off and rent and price rises became the norm. The polemicist Henry Brinklowe (d c1545) noted,

This inordinate enhancing of rents must needs make all things dear, for as he increases his rent so must the farmer the price of his wool, cattle and all victuals...for else they could not maintain their living.²⁵³

Additionally, there was an increasing population and huge expenditure on wars, all of which was only partly offset by taxes, seizure of estates and notably the sale of monastic land.

A document from early 1536 shows that wool prices also rose considerably throughout the sheep rearing areas of both Lincolnshire and in other parts of the country. Noted as, 'bought for in years past, and what price the said wools be sold for in this present year', it gives an impression of increasing inflation.

Lynsey and Casten (Kesteven?), 2s. 8d. the stone, now 5s.
Holland and Rutland, 2s. 4d. the stone, now 4s. 8d.
Leymster (Leominster?) wool, 6s. 8d. a stone, sells now at 9s. or 9s. 3d.
Marche wool, 6s., now 7s. 6d.
Cotswolde wool, 10s. or 10s. 6d. the "toode," now 14s. and above.
Berkshire wool, 9s. and 9s. 6d. the "toode," now 13s. 4d.
Norfolk wool, 18d. or 20d. the stone, now 3s. 4d.²⁵⁴

(n) Agricultural Donations.

Possibly as a consequence of inflation, agricultural produce was often donated to the Church in lieu of cash. Friars especially were given 'strikes of barley' or 'seams of malt', known as 'pittances': replicating their notion of mendicancy. Some barley was given to monasteries for brewing into 'small beer': a substitute for poor quality water. A visitation of 1440 to Legbourne noted that amongst other produce, '...the nuns were allowed a daily loaf [and] a *pottellam* [4 pints] of beer'.²⁵⁵ Richard Faukeys, a husbandman of Riby, donated, 'To my lord of Welhoo a bushyll of wheate and a bushyll of barley to have forgyfnes of all trespacys done unto the sayd house'.²⁵⁶ Beer could also be used as a form of penance. In 1438 in a visitation to Markby, Bishop Alnwick imposed on Brother Thomas Dugby, who confessed to 'incest' with Margaret Portere, that, 'he shall fast upon bread, beer and one kind of vegetables'.²⁵⁷

Similarly, a bushel of wheat given to a parish church was probably used to make the white Holy Bread. Robert Greg of Rowston gave 6s. 8d. to 'the Lady Light of the holy bread altar', but also 'to the iij housys of frerys that I am broder, to every house

a stryke barley'.²⁵⁸ A combination of bread, ale and cheese were given to the poor for attendance at funerals. Robert Charley, a husbandman of Gunwarby gave 'half a seam of wheat to be made into bread for [the] poor': white bread in contrast to the poorer barley variety.²⁵⁹ John Brinkhill of Burton by Lincoln, noted as a servant to Robert Sutton, gave to the poor attending his burial, 6s. 8d. in bread, ale and cheese.²⁶⁰

Table 4:7 gives an indication of the number of donors leaving agricultural produce both to the regulars, other sections of the Church and also to charity.

Table 4:7

Wills	Wheat	Rye	Barley	Malt
Monastic Wills, 1500-40 (1,433)	19 (1.3%)	2 (0.14%)	97 (6.7%)	24 (1.7%)
Parish Wills, (1532-40) (2,933, excluding monasteries)	49 (1.7%)	5 (0.2%)	209 (7.1%)	46 (1.5%)

Charitable donations included domestic animals, suggesting that Lincolnshire in the early sixteenth-century was reasonably wealthy in livestock. John Colchester, a yeoman of Spalding requested that 'one bullock to be killed and half a quarter of wheat to be baked in bread and be given to poor at Christmas over three years'.²⁶¹ Margaret Appulbe of Horbling gave a 'cove to Mr. Prior of Sempringham', appointing him counsellor to her supervisor.²⁶² John Leeke, a Mercer of Boston bequeathed to, '...the iij orders off frearys with in Boston be the space off x yerys every yere a cove or a sterre amonges them'.²⁶³

Some testators were more specific. Elizabeth Sheffield of Brattleby donated, 'a white cow when it dies [to be] given to church stock and Maundy', whereas William Richardson of Ruskington gave 'a brown cow with a white back for one obit'.²⁶⁴ Richard Burton, a yeoman, donated 'to the reparacions of the churche of Hotofte iij shepe'. In addition, he gave one sheep annually to the vicar and the cathedral works and six to Markby Priory, adding, 'to every yoman of my sayd lorde of Markeby a lambe'.²⁶⁵ He also left twenty sheep, an unspecified number of lambs, a cow and a 'nagge' to family members.²⁶⁶ One unusual legacy, which included livestock, was that of Simon South of North Ormsby. He requests,

I will that my executor shall receyve at the handes of m^r prior of Catley xxxij schepe, one oxe, and a cowe, to the vse of Jenet my doughter yf the sayd Jenet be myndyd to be a religiose woman, then...pay and delyver to suche a house as she shall be professyd the sayd schepe, oxe and cowe, togeder with xls.²⁶⁷

There is no evidence that Jenet entered the convent, but significantly she was given the choice: ‘myndyd’, not compelled. Interestingly, although Simon resided in Ormsby he wished his daughter to be professed in Catley twenty-five miles distant rather than the local Gilbertine house, despite donating 6s. 8d: perhaps there were family connections at Catley.

(o) A Monastery in the Landscape – The Case of Sempringham.

A large monastery could have considerable impact upon local economies. Sempringham, founded in 1139, was instituted within an already settled agricultural environment surrounding an extant parish church. In 1086, Gocelin (Jocelin) a Norman knight and father of Gilbert of Sempringham (d1189) could have been described as a local ‘squire’: noted as ‘Alvred’s man’ and holding ‘the fourth part of 1 church’.²⁶⁸

Table 4:8.

Settlement	Tenants	Carucates	TRE	Domesday	±
Billingborough	19	6	70s.	100s.	+30s.
Birthorpe	16	1½	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bourne	57	?	216s.	286s.	+70s.
Dowsby	22	9	120s	140s.	+20s.
Dunsby	27	6	60s.	80s.	+20s.
Folkingham	38	12	£50	£40	-£10.
Graby	10	3¼	80s.	40s.	-40s.
Haceby	25	4	60s.	53s.	-7s.
Kirkby Underwood	17	3	70s.	50s.	-20s.
Osournby	33	6	40s.	120s.	+80s.
Ouseby	15	4½	70s.	60s.	-10s
Pickworth	40	6	80s.	80s.	same
Pointon	23	4½	30s.	33s.	+3s.
Sempringham	42	8	40s.	40s.	same
Walcot	51	9	160s.	80s.	-80s.
Total	435	82¾	£105	£98	

The village may have had at least forty households with an estimated population between 150 and 200.²⁶⁹ **Table 4:8** shows that although Sempringham possessed a

considerable number of Domesday tenants, its low overall value probably reflected its fen-edge location, although the majority of similar nearby settlements improved in value post-Conquest.²⁷⁰ Population numbers must have increased considerably following the foundation of the Gilbertine motherhouse, reflected in its increased wealth. In 1254, the nunnery was valued at £366. 9s. 1d., and the temporal wealth alone in 1291 at £202 2s. ½d., of which £91 14s. 11d. came from the home deanery of Aveland.²⁷¹

At the turn of the thirteenth-century, the monastery contained a maximum of 120 women with a male contingent of at least sixty. This expansion would have provided employment for the local population within a manor wholly owned by the monastery. Additionally, following his death in 1189, supposedly as a centenarian, Gilbert was hurriedly canonised in 1202.²⁷² This and an indulgence of 150 days for visiting his shrine must have resulted in escalating numbers of pilgrims. In addition, merchants and other travellers came to Sempringham, which would have given added impetus to the already expanding economy of the village and the surrounding area.²⁷³

Nevertheless, the huge establishment required constant maintenance. This placed considerable pressure on ever-declining resources, to some extent due to the colder and wetter climate in the late thirteenth-century onwards. Torrential rains caused flooding to valuable agricultural land hard-won from the fens, and increased cases of murrain added to the problem.²⁷⁴ In 1315, the *Louth Park Chronicle* relates that, 'there was such a flood of water that the fruits of the earth were entirely destroyed; the consequence was a famine...[and] it was scarcely possible to find bread for sale'.²⁷⁵

Increasing numbers of incumbents allegedly placed a strain on scarce resources. In 1247, the Papal Registers recount a familiar plea of 'poverty' regularly issuing from religious houses.²⁷⁶

To the master of the order of Sempringham...to the uses of the church of Orbling [Horbling], value scarcely exceeding 30 marks...there being 200 women living under their rule, who often need the necessaries of life.²⁷⁷

In 1319, another papal document relates to the, '...the appropriation of the parish church of Wyssenden [Whissendine, Rutland], value fifty marks, their revenues not being enough to support forty canons and two hundred sisters.²⁷⁸ Approximately seventy years later, in a similar tone,

Mandate to appropriate to the prior and convent of Sempringham, who have begun to rebuild their church, which is prostrated to the ground with age, the church of Hacumby [Haconby] of their patronage, value 30 marks.²⁷⁹

Pleas of poverty, real or otherwise were far from unusual, but decreasing amounts of usable land was probably proving inadequate for the maintenance of the huge monastery. Additional income therefore had to be obtained from local churches: parishioners supporting the monastery through their tithes whether they approved or not. Following the Suppression, the village of Sempringham became deserted: the population going to nearby Pointon situated on the route to Bourne and Stamford.

(p) Rich and Poor – Thornton Abbey and Legbourne Priory.

Agricultural produce was utilized by the monasteries, both for personal use and for sale, evidenced by a surviving inventory from Legbourne. (**Table 4:9, below**). This important document also gives a detailed breakdown of the convent's valuables, notes the various chambers and the dimensions of the church and ancillary buildings. Unfortunately, no date is noted, but was probably calculated prior to, or just following closure in October 1536. In the larder there was 'nothing of no valewe' and in the 'granard...not come to serve till newe cumme again', suggesting suppression.²⁸⁰

Livestock	Total	Per Animal	£	s	d
Milk Cows	31	8s.	*12	8	0
Yearlings	9	3s. 4d.		30	0
Young Calves	7	20d.		11	8
Mares	2	5s.		10	0
Horse (2 Years)	2	6s.		12	0
Horse (3 Years)	1	10s.		10	0
Yearling Colt	2	5s.		10	0
Filly (2 Years)	1	5s.		5	0
Yearling Filly	4	20d.		6	8
Gelding (3Years)	1	20d?		1	8
Sheep & Lambs	143	18d.	21	4	6
Horses & Mares	8	10s.	4	0	0
Oxen	13	10s. 8d.	10	16	8
Kyne & Quye	3	8s.		24	0
Bull, 'and oone quye newfound'.	2	16s.		16	0
Hogs & Pigs	42	c 5½d		19	7
Total *(Noted as £8 8s.)	271		56	5	9

Table 4:9. Numbers and Types of Animals at Legbourne in 1536.

Under the title 'Catall at Somercotes at Fenne House dary', the inventory illustrates the type, number and price of livestock owned by the relatively poor nunnery, ranked thirty-seventh in wealth, although still retaining plate weighing over two pounds, worth £6 11s. 2d.²⁸¹ The livestock ranged from pigs for meat, to milk cows for dairy produce with sheep supplying both meat and wool. Horses were probably used to work a mill noted in the document, with the oxen utilized as plough animals. There was also an assortment of young stock used for breeding. Where these animals were kept, whether on demesne or leased land is unknown, or the number of servants needed to run the farms.

Crop	Acres	Price per Acre	£	s	d
Wheat	32	3s.	4	16	0
Barley, 'of ground hierd at Alvingham'.	22	2s.		44	0
Barley, 'of her owne ground'.	31	3s. 4d.	5	3	4
Beans	56	2s. 8d.	7	9	4
Total	141		19	12	8

Table 4:10. Types and Value of Arable Crops at Legbourne in 1536.

Crops were also listed under 'Corne Sowen'.²⁸² (**Table 4:10, above**). Although the main yield was beans, probably used to supplement animal fodder, barley came a close second. The price per acre of barley varied with a greater amount derived from the demesne land, although there is no mention of the 'hierd ground at Alvingham' in the *Valor*, or the Ministers Accounts.²⁸³ Agricultural produce represented approximately 40% of Legbourne's assessed value.²⁸⁴ The final total of £177 10s. 10d., was much higher than the *Valor* at £38 8s. 4d. or the Minister's Accounts with £73 17s. 9¼d.²⁸⁵ However, these were purely financial documents: the *Valor* commissioners having no remit to detail goods and chattels.²⁸⁶

As one of the poorer houses, the closure of Legbourne came early in the Suppression process, despite the efforts of the Lincolnshire rebels. This is in stark contrast to Thornton, which was technically the last monastery in the county to close: later

refounded by the king as a secular college.²⁸⁷ Thornton's inventory, produced in December 1539 and signed by Cromwell, clearly displays the contrast in wealth. Although no values are placed on the various agricultural commodities, it is clear that the abbey was a major producer. Most notable is the huge quantities of barley grown compared with other crops and

Produce	Qtrs.	Livestock	No.
Wheat	60	Kyne	9
Rye	5	Sows	4
Malt	28	Hogs	31
Barley	248	Yearlings	12
Peas	16	Fat Oxen	23
Hay	40	Fat Cows	1
Mastlin*	5	Draught Oxen	2
Beans	1	Draught Horses	2
Total	403	Horses & Apparels	14
*Rye milled with Wheat		Steers	6
		Oxen	2
		Sheep	1,000
		Horses (good & bad)	21
		Total	1,127

Table 4:11. Agricultural produce and livestock owned by Thornton in 1539.

the number of sheep reared, probably upon the Wolds near the monastery. (**Table 4:11**). Being December most of this produce had been gathered into storage, but some remained at their farm at 'Burntham' (Burnham).²⁸⁸

The inventory also gives a detailed account of the number of separate chapels and the various accoutrements used for services, and a list of the ancillary buildings including the abbot's lodgings. This consisted of a number of separate chambers furnished with 'fetherbedes', featuring a Great Hall, complete with a 'lavatory of leade', along with a 'parlure, butterie, ketchen and larder'. The 'Convent Celler' contained thirty hogsheads of approximately fifty-two gallons each, presumably for ale and beer. The quantity of lead used to cover the numerous structures was considerable, even for the roofing of the ancillary buildings. In all this totalled 371 fadders of lead: approximately 361 tons.²⁸⁹

This clearly illustrates the differences in wealth between a relatively impoverished nunnery and that of a large monastery: the third most affluent in the county. The Augustinian canons were evidently not stinting themselves so far as luxuries were concerned. Compared to most outside the monastery walls they lived a comfortable existence: something perhaps well-known and possibly resented by the local population. Of the nineteen wills mentioning the abbey, only four came from Thornton Curtis itself: three testators clearly having connections with the monastery. This is a further example of the outside world encroaching into the cloister. The use of 'fetherbedes' is not mentioned in either the Rules of Augustine or Benedict, in which they shall 'receive bedding suitable to their manner of life'.²⁹⁰

Conclusion.

This chapter underlines the important contribution of the Lincolnshire landscape to the connectivity between the monasteries and their local communities. The economy of the Lincolnshire landscape was vital to the monasteries and their relationship with their tenants and tithe payers. With the loss of lay brothers and sisters, largely following the Black Death, the religious houses required local servants to perform daily tasks, returning to their homes in settlements sometimes owned by the monastery: connectivity through employment. With the participation of the religious houses, land was reclaimed from the sea, and from these 'Newlands' crops

were grown and salt extracted, again providing jobs for local people. Those parts of the transport infrastructure owned by the regulars were maintained with varying degrees of competence: neglect sometimes due to sustained poverty rather than deliberate intention. Repairing roads and bridges again provided work for local craftsmen, skilled in carpentry and masonry.

The chapter additionally uncovered both the connectivity and the localisation of the monastic economic structure, and additionally its considerable impact on parish communities. This was revealed not just through agricultural production, but via management of recourses controlled by the monastery's local manor courts. It was here that the focal relationship between monk and parishioner took place, face to face with the monastery's administrator across the courtroom, not within the spiritual arena.

Like the rest of Tudor England, the county's landscape steadily became devoid of monasteries, friaries and nunneries: their incumbents scattered, their memory largely erased. The financial circumstances of the monasteries and also the administration of the Church in general will be discussed in the next chapter. It will disclose the spiritual connectivity of the Lincolnshire population with their parish but also whether the ecclesiastical authorities were relating to the religious needs of their local parishioners.

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NOTES – CHAPTER FOUR

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- ²¹ *Ibid*, 22.
- ²² *Ibid*, 34-5.
- ²³ *Ibid*, 30.
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- ¹⁰¹ CPR, 1429-36, 605-7. 25th November 1435.
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- ¹⁰⁴ Jackson – John, 27th October 1533, Catherine, 22nd April 1534. Hickman, 219, 323-4. Cooke – William, 5th September 1530, Parnell, 3rd February 1531. Foster, III, 44, 208.
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- ¹⁰⁹ Hickman, 327. 3rd May 1534.
- ¹¹⁰ LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 156. 26th January 1536.
- ¹¹¹ Hickman, 266-7. 14th January 1533.
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- ¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 310.
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- ¹²⁹ CPR, 1334-38, 148. 12th July 1335.
- ¹³⁰ Barley, 'Lincolnshire Rivers', 17.
- ¹³¹ Smith, *Leland's Itinerary*, I, 29. The canal was not reopened until 1672. Barley, 'Lincolnshire Rivers', 11.
- ¹³² Barley, 'Lincolnshire Rivers', 19.
- ¹³³ Smith, *Leland's Itinerary*, I, 32.
- ¹³⁴ Ayscough, S., Caley, J (eds.), *Taxatio Ecclesiastica...* (London, 1802), 69. Wright, T., *Three Chapters of Letters Relating to the Suppression of the Monasteries*, Camden Society, 26 (1843), 214. In 1535, Torksey was valued at £13 1s. 4d., Fosse £7 3s. 1d. VE, IV, 131, 132.
- ¹³⁵ Hunter, J., 'An Account of King Henry the Eighth's Progress in Lincolnshire', *Proceedings of the Archaeological Institute* (1848), 146-56.
- ¹³⁶ Chandler, *Leland's Itinerary*, 286, Map. Leland possibly travelled with the king. Hunter, 'Henry the Eighth's Progress', 146.
- ¹³⁷ Chandler, *Leland's Itinerary*: Vaudey, 287; Fosse and St. Leonard's, 295; Lincoln, 292-4; SS. Mary Magdalene & Catherine, 293; Axholme, 297.
- ¹³⁸ Smith, *Leland's Itinerary*, I, 25, 28.
- ¹³⁹ Hickman, 23. 12th May 1532.
- ¹⁴⁰ Barley, 'Lincolnshire Rivers', 3.
- ¹⁴¹ Barley, 'Lincolnshire Rivers', 4. Dalton, P., *DNB*, 21, 389.
- ¹⁴² Defoe, D., *A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain, divided into circuits or journies* (London, 1927). <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk>. Accessed 11/11/2010.
- ¹⁴³ Guisborough held Hessle church: Bridlington retained a moiety in Ferriby church. Barley, 'Lincolnshire Rivers', 6.
- ¹⁴⁴ Barley, 'Lincolnshire Rivers', 6-7. Nun Cotham exported 10 sacks of wool in c1315. Everson, P., Stocker, D., *Custodians of Continuity?: the Premonstratensian abbey at Barlings and the landscape of ritual* (Heckington, 2011), 304.
- ¹⁴⁵ Smith, *Leland's Itinerary*, I, 29.
- ¹⁴⁶ Alexander, J. S., 'Building Stone from East Midlands Quarries: sources, transportation and usage', *Medieval Archaeology*, 39 (1995), 125. This change of course may have occurred in 1014, when, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, '...that great flood came widely throughout this country and ran further inland than it ever did before, and drowned many settlements...'. Swanton, M., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London, 1997), 145.
- ¹⁴⁷ Hallam, *Elloe*, 4. Phillips suggests that the Slea also flowed into Bicker Haven. Phillips, *Fenland*, 42.
- ¹⁴⁸ The charter of 1st May 1291 is torn, but evidently mentions Lincoln in relation to the Staple. Birch, W. de Gray, *The Royal Charters and Grants to the City of Lincoln* (London, 1906), 15. Macray, W. D., Hardy, W. J., Poole R. L., Gibbons A. W. (eds.), *The Manuscripts of Lincoln, Bury St. Edmund's, and Great Grimsby Corporation and of the Deans and Chapters of Worcester and Lichfield, &c.* (London, 1895), 6. Hill, *Medieval Lincoln*, 248-9.
- ¹⁴⁹ Barley, 'Lincolnshire Rivers', 19.
- ¹⁵⁰ Power, E., Postan, M. M., *Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1933), 41.
- ¹⁵¹ Massingberd, W. O., *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 319.
- ¹⁵² Owen, *Church and Society*, 66. Platts, G., *Land and People in Medieval Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, 1985), 147.
- ¹⁵³ Estimate of 23 sacks between them. Platts, G., *Land and People*, 147.
- ¹⁵⁴ A sack may have contained as much as 240 fleeces or 26 stone in weight. TNA, E358/18, 53. Pers. Comm. Mike Jefferson. Janet Burton has suggested 200 fleeces per sack at 10 to 12 Marks each. In the early 14th century, Watton Priory sold 40 sacks containing 8,000 fleeces. Burton, J., *The Yorkshire Nunneries in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, 56 (1979), 14. Burton, J., *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire, 1069-1215* (Cambridge, 1999), 270-1.
- ¹⁵⁵ Everson & Stocker, D., *Custodians of Continuity*, 304.
- ¹⁵⁶ Owen, *Church and Society*, 66. Platts, *Land and People*, 147.
- ¹⁵⁷ Owen, *Church and Society*, 68.
- ¹⁵⁸ *CChR*, III, 1300-1326, 266. 1314. Owen, D. M., 'The Beginnings of the Port of Boston', in Field, N., White, A (eds.), *A Prospect of Lincolnshire: being collected articles on the history & traditions of Lincolnshire in honour of Ethel H Rudkin* (1984), 45.
- ¹⁵⁹ Barley, 'Lincolnshire Rivers', 17.
- ¹⁶⁰ Appletreeness is shown on the 1st Series O/S map from 1824 at TF 136 495, but not in later editions. Alexander, J. S., 'Building Stone', 125, 128 and n106.
- ¹⁶¹ Alexander, J. S., 'Building Stone', 125-6. The wharf was not listed in the *Valor*. Dugdale, *Imbanking*, 201.
- ¹⁶² CPR, 1321-24, 372-3 and 379. 31st July 1323: 12th September 1323.

- ¹⁶³ Barley, 'Lincolnshire Rivers', 13. 'Calfe Croft' is noted in the Kirkstead Rental of 1537 as having two acres of woodland. Owen, 'Kirkstead Abbey', 45.
- ¹⁶⁴ Barley, 'Lincolnshire Rivers', 11. Owen, 'Kirkstead Abbey', 43-4
- ¹⁶⁵ Barley, 'Lincolnshire Rivers', 11.
- ¹⁶⁶ The site was near Thornbridge in Lincoln. Little, A. G., *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 225.
- ¹⁶⁷ White, A. J., 'Medieval Fisheries in the Witham and its Tributaries', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 19 (1984), 29.
- ¹⁶⁸ Barley, 'Lincolnshire Rivers', 11. White, 'Medieval Fisheries', 30.
- ¹⁶⁹ White, 'Medieval Fisheries', 30. *Valor*, IV, 82.
- ¹⁷⁰ *L&P*, XI, 975. 1536. Owen, 'Kirkstead Abbey', 41.
- ¹⁷¹ In c1528 the Abbot of Selby was present at Crowle manor court in person and in the 14th century monks from the abbey were regular attendees. Varley, J (ed.), *Lincolnshire Archivists Report* (Lincoln, 1952-53), 18.
- ¹⁷² LAO, 6ANC1/13. 9th November 1300.
- ¹⁷³ LAO, 6ANC1/10. 27th July and 20th September 1299.
- ¹⁷⁴ Peacock, E., 'Notes from the Court Rolls of the Manor of Scotter', *Archaeologia*, 46 (1881), 373.
- ¹⁷⁵ 'Ibid', 372.
- ¹⁷⁶ Ketteringham, Thesis, 59.
- ¹⁷⁷ Graham, R., *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 194.
- ¹⁷⁸ *Mon. Ang.*, VI (ii), 965.
- ¹⁷⁹ *VE*, IV, 74.
- ¹⁸⁰ Jurkowski, et. al., *Monastic Estates*, 267-8.
- ¹⁸¹ Everson & Stocker, *Custodians of Continuity*, 349-53.
- ¹⁸² Thompson, II: 37, 116-19.
- ¹⁸³ LAO, RA/1/Revesby/4/91.
- ¹⁸⁴ LAO, RA/1/Revesby/6/135.
- ¹⁸⁵ BL, Harleian MSS, 144. Owen, 'Kirkstead Abbey', 41-5.
- ¹⁸⁶ Owen, 'Kirkstead Abbey', 43-4.
- ¹⁸⁷ Owen, 'Kirkstead Abbey', 43.
- ¹⁸⁸ 21 Henry VIII, c.13. *Statutes*, 3:1, 292-3. The act also prohibits profits from markets, fairs, cattle, corn, lead, tin, leather, fish, wood, wool etc.
- ¹⁸⁹ *VE*, IV, 36.
- ¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*
- ¹⁹¹ LAO, LCC, 1538-40, f 351. 5th July 1540. Owen, 'Kirkstead Abbey', 42.
- ¹⁹² Owen, 'Kirkstead Abbey', 42.
- ¹⁹³ TNA, PROB, 11/21. 3rd August 1523.
- ¹⁹⁴ Owen, 'Kirkstead Abbey', 43.
- ¹⁹⁵ Foster, II, 127-8. 14th May 1529.
- ¹⁹⁶ Hickman, 107. 18th February 1532.
- ¹⁹⁷ Foster, II, 40-3. 19th August 1527.
- ¹⁹⁸ Peacock, E., 'Extracts from the Churchwardens' Accounts of the Parish of Leverton in the County of Lincoln', *Archaeologia*, 41 (1866), 348.
- ¹⁹⁹ Owen, 'Kirkstead Abbey', 45.
- ²⁰⁰ Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 137.
- ²⁰¹ *L&P*, VIII, 802 (28). 15th May 1535.
- ²⁰² *L&P*, XII (i), 677. Abbot Richard Harrison was executed on 6th March 1537.
- ²⁰³ Youings, J., 'The Church', in Thirsk, J. (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, 1500-1640, Vol. IV (Cambridge, 1967), 309. *RO*, III, 248.
- ²⁰⁴ Darby, H. C., *A New Historical Geography of England before 1600* (Cambridge, 1976), 151-2.
- ²⁰⁵ Savine, A.N., 'English Monasteries on the Eve of the Dissolution', in Vinogradoff, P. (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History*, Vol. I (Oxford, 1909), quoted from Youings, J., 'The Church', 306-7.
- ²⁰⁶ Calculations taken from the *Valor* of Lincolnshire 49 monasteries, excluding Deeping St. James. *VCH, Lincolnshire*, Vol. II.
- ²⁰⁷ In calculating position of wealth, the value of Crowland excludes Freiston.
- ²⁰⁸ Savine, 'English Monasteries', 114-15.
- ²⁰⁹ *RO*, III, 248.
- ²¹⁰ *VE*, IV, Stixwould, 37-8, Revesby, 44-5, Markby, 50, Kirkstead, 34-5. Owen, 'Kirkstead Abbey', 41
- ²¹¹ *RO*, III, 248-9.
- ²¹² *Ibid*, 250.
- ²¹³ Massingberd, W. O., *VCH Lincolnshire*, II, 325.
- ²¹⁴ Jurkowski, et. al., *Monastic Estates*, 274-5.
- ²¹⁵ Everson & Stocker, *Custodians of Continuity*, 41-9.
- ²¹⁶ Platts, *Land and People*, 37-8.

- ²¹⁷ Barley, 'Lincolnshire Rivers', 10.
- ²¹⁸ *L&P*, I (ii), 3582 (14). 14th December 1514. TNA, PROB, 11/23. 25th February 1525.
- ²¹⁹ *L&P*, VI, 1538. 18th Dec 1533.
- ²²⁰ Owen, 'Kirkstead Abbey', 45.
- ²²¹ *L&P*, VI, 710. 26th June 1533.
- ²²² *CPR*, 1340-43, 137-8. 6th February 1341. Venables & Maddison, *Louth Park*, 55-6.
- ²²³ Gawdby, 12th May 1534. Gryme, 1st March 1533. Hickman, 290, 330-1.
- ²²⁴ Hickman, 125. 31st March 1533.
- ²²⁵ LAO, RA/1/Kirkstead/1/13.
- ²²⁶ Dugdale, *Imbanking*, 375.
- ²²⁷ Thirsk, J., *Fenland Farming*, 25.
- ²²⁸ Riley, *Ingulph's Chronicle*, 8.
- ²²⁹ *L&P*, IX, 1107. 1535.
- ²³⁰ Hill, *Tudor and Stuart Lincoln*, 2, n.3.
- ²³¹ www.visionofbritain.org.uk. Accessed 2nd November 2010.
- ²³² *Ibid*.
- ²³³ Hodgett, G. A. J., *Tudor Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, 1975), 2.
- ²³⁴ *Ibid*, 1-2.
- ²³⁵ Glasscock, R. E. (ed.), *The Lay Subsidy of 1334*, Records of the Social and Economic History, ii (London, 1975), 167.
- ²³⁶ Based on modern calculations of the three districts, Holland consists of 426.2 square miles, Kesteven 720 and Lindsey 1,526.7 with the present borough of Lincoln, 13.8: a total of 2,687 square miles. Thirsk, *Fenland Farming*, 42-4.
- ²³⁷ Russell, J. C., *British Medieval Population* (Albuquerque, 1948), 53. Platts, *Land and People*, 11.
- ²³⁸ Russell, *Medieval Population*, 53.
- ²³⁹ *Ibid*, 132.
- ²⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 142.
- ²⁴¹ *Ibid*, 313.
- ²⁴² Venables & Maddison, *Louth Park*, 38. It is estimated that between Lady Day 1349 and 1350, 48% of the population within the Lincoln Archdeaconry died, with 57% in Stow. Darby, *Historical Geography before 1600*, 189.
- ²⁴³ Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*, 66.
- ²⁴⁴ Darby, *Historical Geography before 1600*, 76.
- ²⁴⁵ *Ibid*.
- ²⁴⁶ Thirsk, *Fenland Farming*, Table III, 37.
- ²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 38.
- ²⁴⁸ *Ibid*, III, 37. The other two examples are from the same table.
- ²⁴⁹ LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 240. 12th June 1537. Christopher Dyer suggests that a yeoman probably held at least 80 acres and probably more. Dyer, C., *Making a Living in the Middle Ages: the people of Britain, 850-1520* (London, 2009), 358.
- ²⁵⁰ LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 223. 20th March 1536.
- ²⁵¹ LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 201. 16th August 1536.
- ²⁵² Thirsk, *Fenland Farming*, 43, Table VII.
- ²⁵³ Quoted from Gray, R., 'Inflation and Dearth in the Sixteenth Century, the Modern Economic Perspective: valid or misleading?', *Student Economic Review*, 17 (2003), 10
- ²⁵⁴ *L&P*, X, 247. February 1536. A 'Tod' equals 28lbs. *OED*.
- ²⁵⁵ Thompson, I: **14**, 184.
- ²⁵⁶ Foster, II, 188. 21st April 1530.
- ²⁵⁷ Thompson, I: **21**, 222, 224.
- ²⁵⁸ Hickman, 127. 2nd April 1533.
- ²⁵⁹ LAO, LCC, 1538-40, f 200. 6th April 1539.
- ²⁶⁰ LAO, Stow Wills, 1530-52, f 28. 24th May 1538.
- ²⁶¹ LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 275. 6th September 1537.
- ²⁶² Hickman, 380. 17th February 1532 (Probate).
- ²⁶³ Foster, II, 40-3. 19th August 1527.
- ²⁶⁴ Sheriff: LAO, Stow Wills, 1531-56, f 342. 25th May 1532. Richardson: LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 77. 8th January 1535.
- ²⁶⁵ Markby owned both the church and a manor at Huttoft.
- ²⁶⁶ Hickman, 367-8. 1st October 1534.
- ²⁶⁷ Foster, III, 147-8. 20th July 1531.
- ²⁶⁸ Foster & Longley, *Domesday*, 27/57, 130.

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- ²⁶⁹ Platts, G., 'The Decline and Demise of Sempringham Village', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 20 (1985), 47.
- ²⁷⁰ 'Ibid', 49.
- ²⁷¹ Graham, R., *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 182-3. Ayscough & Caley, *Taxatio*, 70.
- ²⁷² Farmer, D., *Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford, 1996), 204.
- ²⁷³ Platts, 'Sempringham Village', 48. Graham, R., *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 181.
- ²⁷⁴ Platts, *Land and People*, 115-17.
- ²⁷⁵ Venables & Maddison, *Louth Park*, 24.
- ²⁷⁶ The Templars gained control of the church at Donington, because of, 'the immense expenses which the enemies of the Cross have brought upon this order'. Hill, *Oliver Sutton*, I, xxii.
- ²⁷⁷ *CPL*, 1198-1304, 232-3. June 1247. Whether this number includes lay sisters is unknown.
- ²⁷⁸ *CPL*, 1305-42, 273. July 1327.
- ²⁷⁹ *CPL*, 1362-1404, 435. March 1392.
- ²⁸⁰ Whitworth, M., 'An Inventory of the Nunnery of Legbourne', *Lincolnshire Historian*, 2:5 (1958), 36.
- ²⁸¹ 'Ibid', 32-33, 37.
- ²⁸² 'Ibid', 37-8.
- ²⁸³ *VE*, IV, 52. PRO, *Dissolved Religious Houses*, 103-4.
- ²⁸⁴ Agricultural products equals £71 11s. 9d.
- ²⁸⁵ Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 154.
- ²⁸⁶ *RO*, III, 246.
- ²⁸⁷ Closed 12th December 1539.
- ²⁸⁸ Minns, E. H., 'Documents Relating to the Dissolution of the Monastery of Thornton Curtis...', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, X, (n/s IV) (1898-1903), 490-1.
- ²⁸⁹ 'Ibid', 484-90.
- ²⁹⁰ Geary, P. J., *Readings in Medieval History*, 2 Vols. (Hadleigh, 1998), I, 170.

CHAPTER FIVE

The State of the Church

And shame it is, if a prest take keep,
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,
By his clenness, how that his sheep sholde lyve.
He sette nat his benefice to hyre
And leet his sheep encombred in the myre
And ran to Londoun unto Seinte Poules
To seken hym a chaunterie for soules,
Or with a bretherhed to been witholde;
But dwelt at hoom, and kepte wel his folde.¹

Geoffrey Chaucer (c1340–1400).
'The Canterbury Tales'.

This chapter will uncover the local connectivity of the Tudor Church especially in relation to its system of governance during this period of considerable transformation. Although this will primarily encompass monasteries, the importance of the parish clergy to local congregations will be a major part of the discussion. It will also fill a considerable research gap by essentially revealing the relationship between the people of Lincolnshire and their parish churches, both as places of worship but also as centres of their community.

The requirements of a monastic appropriated church will also be analysed to uncover whether the religious houses were maintaining their obligations to the parish. This connectivity will also include local interactions with the religious guilds and also the cathedral. These factors will be explored using the parish visitations of 1519, churchwarden's accounts and the wills of Lincolnshire testators. Together they will uncover whether the Tudor Church locally was the moribund instrument some historians have portrayed or spiritually involving in the eyes of tithe paying parishioners.

Chaucer's allegory is one of many in the late medieval period commending or disparaging the clergy: both secular and regular. John Gower (c1330-1408), in the *Mirour de l'omme* of c1378, wrote that the friars 'preach poverty to us, and always have their hands out to receive riches'.² Similarly, William Langland (dc 1390), lambasted what he perceived as the greed, ignorance, idleness and lasciviousness of parish clergy. He also attacked the religious for decadence, worldliness and the ownership of property, like Chaucer, principally singling out the friars for their alleged exploitation of penance for financial ends.³

To Chaucer mendicant poverty appeared to be just 'skin deep'. This replicated problems that also beset the enclosed monastic orders. Originally founded with good intentions, some later acquiesced to financial materialism rather than spiritual expertise. Although the mendicants technically owned no property, their buildings began to signify prosperity. The surviving section of the mid thirteenth-century Franciscan friary in Lincoln was possibly the infirmary, a considerable structure in itself.⁴ (**Plate 5:1**). In Boston, the early thirteenth-century fabric of possibly the south cloister range is still standing, part of a once extensive building.⁵ (**Plate 5:2**).

Friars also appeared to be growing closer to the wealthier classes, taking their confessions, promoting interments within the friary and selling letters of fraternity to prosperous citizens.⁶ The friar's preaching tours also came under critical scrutiny for residing and dining with the wealthy classes rather than aiding the poor. Chaucer relates in *The Romaunt of the Rose*,

And grete nedes cunne espleyten,
And goon and garden grett pitaunces,
And purchase hem the acqueyntaunces,
Of men that mighty lyf may leden,
And feyne hem pore, and hemselve feden,
With gode morcels delicious,
And drinken good wyn precious,
And preche us povert and distresse,
And fisshen hem-self greet richesse.⁷



Plate 5:1. The undercroft of possibly the infirmary at the Franciscan Friary in Lincoln.

Plate 5:2. The Dominican Friary in Boston.



These words also echo the thoughts of the Dominican John Bromyard (dc 1352) suggesting that his brethren ‘...love rather to be with those reclining at court tables along with Herod, than in the prison cell with John’.⁸ It was nevertheless the friar’s prayers that Lincolnshire testators requested to aid them through Purgatory.

(a) Purgatory.

The main thrust of religious donations supposedly related to lessening time in Purgatory. Therefore the viewpoints of Chaucer and Langland may or may not have reflected the attitude of the majority of parishioners in Tudor Lincolnshire towards the clergy. However, if their testaments are to be believed, conviction in prayers for the dead was still very strong. Nevertheless, perhaps seen as inauspicious, only two wills out of over four thousand specifically mention the term, and only as general affirmations for ‘all the faithful who are in the pains of purgatory’.⁹

Judging from their testaments, the Church’s ‘threat’ of purgatorial agonies had not lost its effect on the testators of Lincolnshire, and the subject was widely discussed within theological circles. Sir Thomas More and Bishop John Fisher debated Purgatory in some detail: both concluding it was a place of considerable pain and anguish.¹⁰ The reformer Hugh Latimer (c.1485–ex1555) took an opposing view: ‘the fowndyng of monastarys arguyed purgatory to be so the puttyng of them down arguyth it not to be...’.¹¹ Similarly, Simon Fish (d1531) wrote that there was ‘not one word of hit in al holy scripture’.¹² The ‘Ten Articles’ of 1536 adopted a neutral stance concerning the destination of the soul.

Forasmuch as then place where they be, the name thereof, the kinds of pains there also be to us uncertain by scripture, therefore...we remit to Almighty God, unto whose mercy it is meet and convenient for us to commend them...¹³

Signatories to this document included Bishop John Longland, the abbots of Crowland and Wellow and the priors of Sempringham and Kyme. **(Plate 5:3).**

Eamon Duffy however suggests the theory probably loomed large within the consciousness of the laity.¹⁴

This was largely due to spiritual writings and eschatological homilies, but principally to *aide-mémoires* in glass, paint and sculpture within parish churches. The clergy suggested that discomforts suffered in life, pain, sickness and poverty, along with appropriate contrition of sin, would lessen torment in the afterlife.¹⁵ Figures ascending to Heaven in the many 'Doom' paintings had endured the cleansing processes and were therefore judged 'acceptable' in the presence of God, whereas sinners were thrust down into highly detailed depictions of Hell, illustrated in St. Andrew's at Pickworth. (**Plates 5:4 & 5:5 below**). Purgatory could therefore be seen in a positive light, as an 'ante-room of Heaven' rather than 'an outpost of Hell'.¹⁶

It was however the Tudor 'intelligencia', men such as Robert Barnes, John Fisher, William Tyndale, Thomas More and John Bale who largely discussed the minutiae of religious doctrine, not local parishioners in sixteenth-century Lincolnshire. Nevertheless, although only a tiny percentage left a will, evidence suggests that despite increasing concerns parishioners appeared at ease with their long-established religion. Therefore regarding administration of the daily round of services and other activities the Church was probably deemed largely acceptable. Most worshipped their God within the local parish church, probably hoping as in the words of the mystic Julian of Norwich (dc 1416), 'All shall be well...and all manner of thing shall be well'; with time in Purgatory subsequently diminished.

There were however no alternatives to the long-established Church, whose doctrines, like them or not, were inescapable. The Lollards had been largely driven underground; there was no Protestantism as such and no evidence of agnosticism or atheism. Therefore the question needs to be addressed as to whether the Church was nationally in crisis and locally ineffectual, or alternatively spiritually energetic, with doctrine and belief well maintained? Importantly was the connectivity of parishioners with the regulars still perceived as significant in the early sixteenth-century?



St. Andrew, Pickworth.

Plate 5:4 (above).

Wall painting above the chancel arch depicting doomed souls being dragged into Hell by a demon using a chain.
(After Rouse, 1950, Plt. XXXI).



Plate 5:5 (left).

Wall painting above the south arcade illustrating three souls being roasted in the Caldron of Hell.
(After Rouse, 1950).

Evidence gleaned from Lincolnshire parochial visitations suggest that the local apparatus was largely functioning adequately if not vibrantly. Religious guilds were still part of the fabric of local society, providing spiritual sustenance to their confraters. Although sharply declining in the later 1530s, gifts to the cathedral were generally sustained, but the quality of the local priesthood varied considerably.

(b) Instructing the Priesthood.

The condition of the parish clergy and their interaction with their parishioners was an important factor in the administration of the Church. There were no seminaries in England and clergy were taught 'on the job', rising through the ranks of the Minor and Major Orders. Some became excellent parish priests, whilst others were poorly educated, poorly paid and consequently poorly motivated. Despite protestations from a succession of local bishops, notably Robert Grosseteste (1235-53), this situation appears to some extent unresolved by the sixteenth-century. At a minimum a bishop required priests to know the Ten Commandments, the Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Sacraments, and to explain the faith in simple terms.¹⁷ Turgid homilies and lengthy discourses in Latin would not have inspired the average Lincolnshire parishioner used to the recitation of familiar prayers and performance of a well-understood liturgy. Nevertheless, although sometimes led by unimpassioned clergy with ineffective preaching skills, evidence from the visitations discussed below suggests that unless the priest was non-resident parishioners were generally content with their spiritual provision.

The misuse by clergy of Latin during services was a particular concern of the poet and rector John Skelton (c1460-1529). In his work *Speke Parott* (1521), he railed against inadequate priests and poor sermons.

So many morall maters, and so lytell usyd;
So myche newe making, and so madd tyme spent;
So mych translacion into Englyshe confused;
So myche nobyll prechyng, and so lytell amendment;
So much consultacion, almoste to none entente;

So myche provision, and so lytell wytte at nede-
Syns Dewcalyons floode there can no clerks rede.¹⁸

Although his polemic was a veiled attack on Cardinal Wolsey, Skelton was also concerned for the ethical standing of the Church.

So many vacabondes, so many beggers bolde,
So myche decay of monesteries and relygious places;
So hote hatered agaynste the Churche, and cheryte so colde;
So myche of my lordes grace, and in hym no grace ys;
So many hollow hartes, and so dowbyll faces;
So myche sayntuary brekyng, and prevylegidde barryd –
Syns Dewcalyons flodde was nevyr sen nor lyerd.¹⁹

Although Skelton paints a negative picture of the Church, most local clergy were performing a demanding task with little reward.

(c) Anti-Clericalism.

From a national viewpoint, by the early years of the sixteenth-century the English Church at most levels appeared to be reasonably stable. As a faithful adherent of the Roman Canon, Henry VIII had been awarded the sobriquet *Fidei Defensor* by the Pope for his treatise *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum...*, opposing the doctrines of Luther. Nonetheless, the notion of 'anti-clericalism', rife in the fifteenth-century continued, although this appears to have been largely confined to the southern sectors of the Lincoln diocese: specifically Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.²⁰ However, dissatisfaction amongst the higher laity with a Church that had creaked along contentedly for many centuries was beginning to emerge, especially within the intellectual circles.

Similar criticisms occurred during the previous century, within a period of considerable instability. Lollards challenged established Church doctrines, principally transubstantiation and prayers for the dead. In the mid fifteenth-century a Lincolnshire blacksmith, William Ayleward, declared he could make 'as good a sacrament between ii yrons as the prest doth upon his auter'.²¹ The ceremonial

opening of the church doors at Brampton was criticised by a parishioner: 'What a sport we have we towards! will our vicar run at the quintain with God Almighty?'²²

John Scarisbrick suggests that with the fall of Wolsey in 1530, anticlericalism became *de rigueur* with the elevation of the 'semi-Erasnian' Thomas More to Lord Chancellor: a post generally occupied by the clergy.²³ In 1533, Thomas Cranmer was translated to Canterbury on the death of Archbishop Wharam: the new primate described by Christopher Haigh as having 'theological views [that] shifted so subtly that analysis of them is a historical industry itself'.²⁴ The Reformation Parliaments from 1529 onwards were partly constituted to mandate ecclesiastical restructuring. This was 'managed' by Thomas Cromwell (ex1540), an evangelical reformist sympathetic to Erasmian Protestantism, who held little affection for the regulars.²⁵ In addition, the Church's premise suggesting that the spirituality of the clergy, notably the regulars, was superior to the laity was being challenged by the Tudor *intelligencia*.²⁶

At local level, financial pressures in the form of tithes and other charges were also a source of grievance against the clergy. Some priests were absent or did not fulfil their parochial duties, resulting in parishioners seeking out friars for confession. This may have been partly through spiritual disillusionment, but also possibly 'to cloak and hide their lewd and naughty living': kept secret from the episcopal visitor and local priest.²⁷ This might therefore account for the popularity of the friars in Lincolnshire, with many hundreds of testators donating to the mendicants, perhaps in return for a lighter penance.

(d) The "Popularity" of the Friars.

Michael Robson proposed that mendicancy 'was a novel form of religious life, breaking free from the customary forms of material support and the physical restraints of the cloister'.²⁸ This was probably one reason amongst others for the friar's greater standing amongst testators. They were additionally admired for their perceived poverty in comparison with the enclosed religious orders and the higher

clergy. Friars also gave an impression of greater spirituality, essentially obtained through their higher education and superior preaching skills. These facts alone must have helped the mendicants gain respect from local parishioners.

This admiration also stemmed from their visibility, along with simple but effective discourse at fairs, market crosses and within their purposely designed naves and other public places such as the *batailplace* outside Lincoln castle.²⁹ Mendicants also visited outlying parishes, taking part in preaching tours, using portable altars and probably staying in accommodation provided by prominent local people.³⁰ Importantly, friars were licensed as personal confessors and spiritual advisors to mainly wealthy families. In 1338, Bishop Henry Burghersh (1320-42), accredited Hugh de Blatherwick, 'a Carmelite friar, to hear confessions of the household of William de Roos (d1342), for one year'. William and his wife Margary de Bradlesmere (d1363) were also licensed 'to choose a confessor', as a personal penitentiary.³¹

In the same year, Carmelite William de Hesseye, was licensed as penitentiary within the Stow and Lincoln archdeaconries. He had 'power to grant absolution in twenty notorious cases of adultery or incest not being within the second degree of kinship...or of soothsayers'.³² Friars also heard confessions and gave absolution in particular to nuns. In 1322, Franciscan Adam de Ludford and Dominican Robert de Wynthorpe obtained permission to hear confessions from the nuns of Stainfield.³³ Sixteen years later, Franciscans John de Morton and John de Barton, were licensed to 'hear confessions of the nuns of Legbourne, even in cases reserved for the bishop'.³⁴

Canons residing in nunneries were given authorization to grant remission, even where it involved an anathema. In 1339, William de Thornton was 'to grant absolution to Isabella de Kirketon, nun of Stixwould, from the sentence of greater excommunication which she incurred by incontinence and incest', *pro incontinencia seu incestu*.³⁵ Occasionally a superior of a house was granted permission to hear confessions outside the monastery. Henry de Castre, prior of Freiston, acted as

'penitentiary to the parishes of Freiston and Butterwick': the latter only a mile from the monastery.³⁶

The friars also ran extensive confraternities where sometimes whole families registered for entry into the 'mendicant brotherhood'. A surviving pro-forma document consisting of a grant dated 1511 from John Tennel, prior of the Stamford Dominicans, reads, 'for a man and his wife, [leaving space for names], living or dying, giving the benefit of their prayers, preachings, fastings and alms'.³⁷ Entry however was not *pro bono*, and money inevitably changed hands. William Dyst and his wife Joan from Bridgewater in Somerset were granted confraternity by the local Franciscans, the prior stating that he wished 'to compensate with spiritual benefits the devotion...you have towards our order especially...the multiple granting of benefits'.³⁸

In his will of 1533, Gilbert Dale of Boston, wrote, 'to Our Lady's Frerys callyd Carmettes, to the reparacion of ther house, xxs., and they to pray for my soule as a brother of ther chapter house'.³⁹ In 1528, Richard Clerke, a gentleman, left the four orders in Lincoln 6s. 8d. each, specifically for prayers. He also bequested,

...to the Frerys Observantes of Newarke, where it please them by the meanys of good frere Barton to get me a letter of brotherhode for me and my wyff, to bestowe it as the father ther for the tyme beyng shall thynke moste convenient, to pray for my soule, xxs.⁴⁰

Also included in the same will was the quasi mendicant order of the Trinitarians. 'I will that ther be sent to the house of Hounslawe [Hounslow] xiijs. iiijd. and on sylver spone...and to the house of saynt Robert off Knarysburgh [Knaresborough] on sylver spone and xld.'.⁴¹ Clerke clearly had strong connections with the mendicants in their many forms: his being only one of two known Lincolnshire wills to cite the Trinitarians.⁴² Nevertheless he chose to become a confrater, along with his wife, in the newly established friary of the *stricta observantia regularis* at Newark: perhaps hoping that their more rigorous spiritual life would reflect in their prayers for his soul.⁴³

Part of the mendicant's appeal was their perceived poverty in comparison with the alleged wealth of the enclosed orders. This notion was challenged, not only by Chaucer and Langland, but also by an unnamed secretary to the Venetian ambassador in the early sixteenth-century. He noted, 'nor is there a convent of mendicant friars so poor, as not to have all of these articles [crucifixes, candlesticks etc.] in silver, besides many other ornaments worthy of a cathedral'.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, poverty may well have encouraged monastic superiors to be recruited into the mendicant's ranks. Successive priors of Nocton Park, Richard de Yarwell (1277-86) and Hugh [John?] de Grimsby (1286-92) joined the Franciscans, along with Richard Hanworth, Abbot of Barlings (1278-82) who was recruited into the Minors in York.⁴⁵

Another attraction of the friars was that they held no land, extracting no rents, possessed no manor courts and imposed no tithes. Consequently the mendicants appear to have been well respected at least by testators for their connectivity with local populations. They were a synthesis of parish priest, able to maintain direct contact with secular society, and also monastic incumbent, retreating into the friary to pray and meditate. Owning little, friars were also of slight interest financially to the state during the early Dissolution process. Consequently gifts, even in later periods were still donated to what appeared a sound spiritual investment.

(e) Suppression of the Mendicants.

Nonetheless, of all the regulars, the Tudor government was apparently most concerned with the 'wandering friar'.⁴⁶ Richard Ingworth (d1544), Suffragan Bishop of Dover and former Dominican Provincial, was tasked by Cromwell with suppressing the friaries. He wrote to Hugh Latimer, 'the friars...have many favourers, and great labour is made for their continuance, Divers trust to see them set up again, and some have gone up to sue for them'.⁴⁷ Having few possessions friars had no need of stewards and consequently few contacts with influential gentry who might have prevented closure, which inevitably came in 1538-39. With the exception of the Observant Franciscans, the mendicants were suppressed with few difficulties: most having previously signed the Act of Supremacy. They received no

pensions and had to obtain preferments, sometimes as chantry or guild priests.⁴⁸ By this period, most people probably saw their fall merely as continuation of the Dissolution process; consequently few voices were raised in protest.

The friars were loosely administered from Rome, but visited through their own system of provincials who unfortunately left little documentary evidence. However, on the suppression of the Stamford Franciscans in 1538, the surrender document also included an act of contrition. The Warden wrote that,

...the p[er]fection of Christian livyng dothe nott conciste in dome cerimonies, weringe of a grey cotte, disgeasinge orselfe after strunge fassions, dokyng and bekyng, in gurdyng orselves wythe a gurdle full of knots and other lyke papisticall cerimonies, wherein wee have byn mooste pincipally practised and misselyd in tymes paste.⁴⁹

The Lincolnshire houses nevertheless appear to have adhered to their rule of poverty. The administrators found little of value except bells and lead: the friars having mostly departed to seek employment elsewhere.

A letter from Commissioner John Freeman to Cromwell states,

I have dissolved the Grey Friars in Grimsby, was there 9 Fre[re]s. There remains to the King's use in bells and lead, £80. The Augustine Friars...most have run away, discharged the prior of his religion, and made him keeper of the house for the King, with a promise of 5 marks at his departing. It would [n]ot be worth more than 4 marks to the King.⁵⁰

Similar letters from Ingworth to Cromwell, note the poverty of the Lincoln and Boston houses. In Lincoln 'I have receyveyde iiij pore howseys non thymge left but stonys and pore glasse, but metely ledeyd...I leve to the kynges use'. At Boston 'very pore howseys and pore persons...in the iiij howses abowte iiij schor foddr or more...I have delyveryd the same howses to master Taverner...servantte to the kynges grace'.⁵¹ Whether the people of Lincolnshire lamented the passing of the friars is unknown, but testaments reveal that their patronage was widespread and although much reduced continued up until their collective suppression.

The musician and composer John Taverner (c1490-1545) had connections with the Boston friars and especially with the local guilds. He exemplifies how a person during the early Reformation process managed his political and religious affairs and also illustrates localised connectivity with the regulars. In c1524, Taverner became a lay clerk in Tattershall College choir. Two years later, he was given a similar position at Wolsey's new Cardinal College in Oxford. He may also have had contacts with Thomas Cromwell, then Wolsey's secretary. There is little evidence that Taverner had evangelical notions, and despite later suggestions by the martyrologist John Foxe, also a native of Boston, he continued composing for the prevailing liturgy.⁵²

After Wolsey's fall, Taverner returned to Lincolnshire taking a post of choir instructor in the Lady Guild of St. Botolph's in Boston, continuing until c1536.⁵³ However, in what appears to be a religious *volte-face*, two years later in a letter to Cromwell, he stated,

According to Your Lordship's command, the Rood was burned on the 7th inst., market day, and a sermon by the Black Friar at the burning of him [the Rood]...has done much good, and hath turned many men's hearts.⁵⁴

It is uncertain whether this was the chancel rood or from the Lady Chapel, but the fact that a friar supported the action was perhaps a case of his siding with the new doctrine with hopes of a valuable preferment.

In 1537, Taverner had joined the Corpus Christi Guild, later serving as treasurer. This was an organisation dedicated to the notion of transubstantiation: an anathema to the reform movement. In addition, two years later when acting as a minor commissioner, he pleaded with Cromwell for,

...the priors and their brethren of the friars Dominicans, White and Austens, [who] have piteously lamented to me their poverty, knowing not how to live till their houses be surrendered. For why? The devotion of the people is clean gone, their plate and implements sold; so they have nothing left but the lead which (if I had not forbid it) they would have plucked down and sold too. I bade them come to me when they lacked anything. I beg to know, by my servant, what to do.⁵⁵



Plate 5:6. Boston, St. Botolph: south-west nave looking west. The tomb slab with missing brass indents of John Robinson and his four wives. It lies a few yards north of the entrance to the now demolished Corpus Christi chapel. Robinson died aged seventy-two and in his will of 1525 requested burial at the chapel.

The reply is unknown, but in 1539, Ingworth wrote to Cromwell, that he 'has received to the King's use the four houses of friars in Boston, very poor houses and very poor persons, and delivered them to Mr. Taverner and Mr. Johnys, the King's servants, "with all the poor implements for his money."'.⁵⁶ Clearly, Taverner trod a careful path through the minefield of religious politics. As a prominent citizen and possibly a confidant of Cromwell, he was also probably aware of changes in policy at Court and would have reacted accordingly.⁵⁷

(f) The *Scala Celli*.

Cromwell himself was familiar with Boston having travelled in 1517-18 to Rome at the behest of Alderman John Robinson, a prominent member of the Corpus Christi Guild, near whose chapel he requested burial.⁵⁸ **(Plate 5:6 above)**. This journey may have been part of a move to secure from Pope Leo X (1513-21) the *Scala Celli* indulgence for the Lady Guild at St. Botolph's.⁵⁹ Paradoxically, although Robinson left in his will considerable sums to the regulars, including 10s. to each friary in Boston and 53s. 8d per annum to his daughter, a nun in Bullington he made no request for *Scala Celli* Masses.⁶⁰ In all fifty-three testators requested services at *Scala Celli*: thirteen of whom originated from Boston with over half also leaving to monasteries.

This indulgence, which originally required a pilgrimage to Rome, was extended by the end of the fifteenth-century to other places. The indulgence states,

'...it is graunted to all Cristen people, the which any Fryday in the yere doth vysyt our Lady Chapell in the sayde parysshe churche of Boston shall have the full lybertyes and power of *Scala Celi* in Rome'.⁶¹

Praying at the *Scala* altar, caused a specific soul to 'be swiftly freed' from Purgatory.⁶² After St. Mary's Guild acquired the indulgence a number of people requested services. Richard Jefferay states, 'I will the day of my buryall that my wyff do cause to be sung for me xiiij messys of *Scala Celli* by xiiij frerys'.⁶³ Isabel Longland (d1530), the mother of Bishop Longland, asked the 'Gilde off our blessed ladye off

Boston...wher as I am suster to have masse of *Scala Celli* and dirige shortely after my departinge, vjs. viijd.'.⁶⁴

In Lincolnshire, the *Scala* was associated with the Augustinian friars where six testators requested services. Robert Thomson of Elsham notes 'to the Austyn frerys of Grymesby for v messys doying at *Scala Celi*, ijs. jd., and Elizabeth Sherriff of Brattleby requested the Augustinians of Lincoln perform a Trental at *Scala Celli*.⁶⁵ The *Scala* was finally outlawed in 1536: being specifically proscribed within the Ten Articles, probably as having originated from Rome.⁶⁶ It was,

...to be put away...to make men believe that through the Bishop of Rome's pardons souls might be delivered out of Purgatory...or that masses said at *Scala Cæli*...might deliver them of all their pain.⁶⁷

The indulgence was last mentioned in Lincolnshire in the will of William Annabull of Boston who in 1535 asked for thirty *Scala* masses. He had previously been on pilgrimage to Compostella, and donated a staff of silver and gilt to St. James Guild at St. Botolph's.⁶⁸

(g) Pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage to the major shrines, Thomas of Canterbury, Cuthbert of Durham, Swithun of Winchester and Hugh of Lincoln still continued in the sixteenth-century but on a smaller scale than previously. Sainly devotion had given way to a more Christocentric approach to worship, with Mary the focus of pilgrimages, notably to Walsingham.⁶⁹ In the seventeenth-century, Gervase Holles observed that Roger and Jone Shavelock of Boston had engraved on their late fifteenth-century tomb a statement of their pilgrimage to the Marian shrine.⁷⁰

To ye mortall coarse, thet lyeth here under stone,
Was of Roger Shavelocke ye wife clepyd Jone.
Of London he was Citizen, on Pilgrimage he went
To our Lady of Walsingham, with full good intent,
And so header to yeir countrey, disporting in yeir life.
But cruell death, yt spareth none, he took away ye wife.
In ye yeare of our Ld 1488, ye day of Ascention,
All good Christian pepull pray for hir devotion.⁷¹

Nevertheless, few gifts to shrines were noted in Lincolnshire wills. Agnes Halborowe of Croft is the one known donator to the Holy Blood of Hailes, and only two gave to Thomas of Canterbury: William Gaunte of Theddlethorpe donated 4d., and Thomas Robertson, merchant of Algarkirk gifting ‘a jewel of silver and gilt worth xxs.’.⁷²

A royal saint was also cited: Henry VI (d1471). This healing cult was promoted by the Tudors; their line issuing from the ‘martyred’ monarch. The shrine appeared to have been more popular than Becket’s, despite only lasting approximately fifty years.⁷³ In 1533, Henry Weste, a ‘laborer’ of Great Cotes, bequested ‘To Alan my sun an ox with thys condicion, that he shall go on pilgrimage for me till good Kyng Henry of Wynsore’.⁷⁴ Five other donations were also made to the ‘King Henry’ light in Alford.

Hugh of Lincoln fittingly attracted the greatest number of local bequests, possibly giving a sense of connectivity with the cathedral. From 1513 to 1539, there were forty-three donations either to Hugh’s shrine or the reliquary containing his head. These came from twenty-nine separate settlements, twenty-one of which were over ten miles from Lincoln. **Table 5:1** shows the number of donations per annum, which, although small in number fluctuate considerably; notably from 1530 onwards with most testators donating pennies rather than shillings.

Year	Wills	Year	Wills	Year	Wills
1513	1	1530	5	1535	3
1523	2	1531	4	1536	2
1526	1	1532	3	1537	5
1528	1	1533	5	1538	4
1529	2	1534	4	1539	1

Table 5:1.

These are however a small proportion of the total gifts bequeathed by pilgrims. The amount conferred on Hugh’s shrine by visitors varies significantly.

Table 5:2

Year	£	s	d	Year	£	s	d	Year	£	s	d
1509/10	11	19	7½	1519/20	8	19	10	1526/27	3	15	8
1510/11	9	2	1	1520/21	2	0	7	1527/28	5	5	7
1511/12	9	13	1½	1521/22	5	18	0	1528/29	6	1	3
1512/13	8	10	11	1522/23	4	13	10	1529/30	2	12	9
1513/14	9	12	10	1523/24	3	12	9	1530/31	1	12	0
1514/15	6	0	1	1524/25	3	11	0	1531/32	6	5	6
1515/16	8	0	9	1525/26	4	10	4½				

Table 5:2 shows that from a zenith of nearly £12 at the turn of the century gifts fell gradually towards the 1530s.⁷⁵ However, allowing for inflation in the sixteenth-century, the amounts given to the shrine were much reduced in value compared to earlier periods. Clearly the great body shrines were diminishing in both spiritual and also economic stature, along with some other sections of the Church: notably monastic houses and the religious guilds. (**Plates 5:7 & 5:8**).

(h) St. Catherine’s Guild, Stamford.

The Act Book of St. Katherine’s Guild in Stamford has been recently transcribed and reveals considerable connectivity between all facets of Church and local society.⁷⁶ It revealed an increase in influential members from its refoundation in 1480 by Alderman William Browne (d1489), Staple merchant and founder of Browne’s Hospital. Recruited into its ranks was Lady Margaret Beaufort (d1509) along with Lady Cecily Welles (d1507), daughter of Edward IV and David Cecil (d1536), grandfather of William, Lord Burghley (d1598). Canons from the colleges at Leicester and Fortheringhay joined: the latter owning considerable property in Stamford.⁷⁷ Friars from all four orders in Stamford, some of whom were paid for performing guild Masses, were also members. Other affiliates included the abbots of Crowland and Bourne, the priors of Spalding and nearby St. Leonard’s, along with the prioress of Rothwell in Northamptonshire: all no doubt basking in membership of such a prestigious organisation

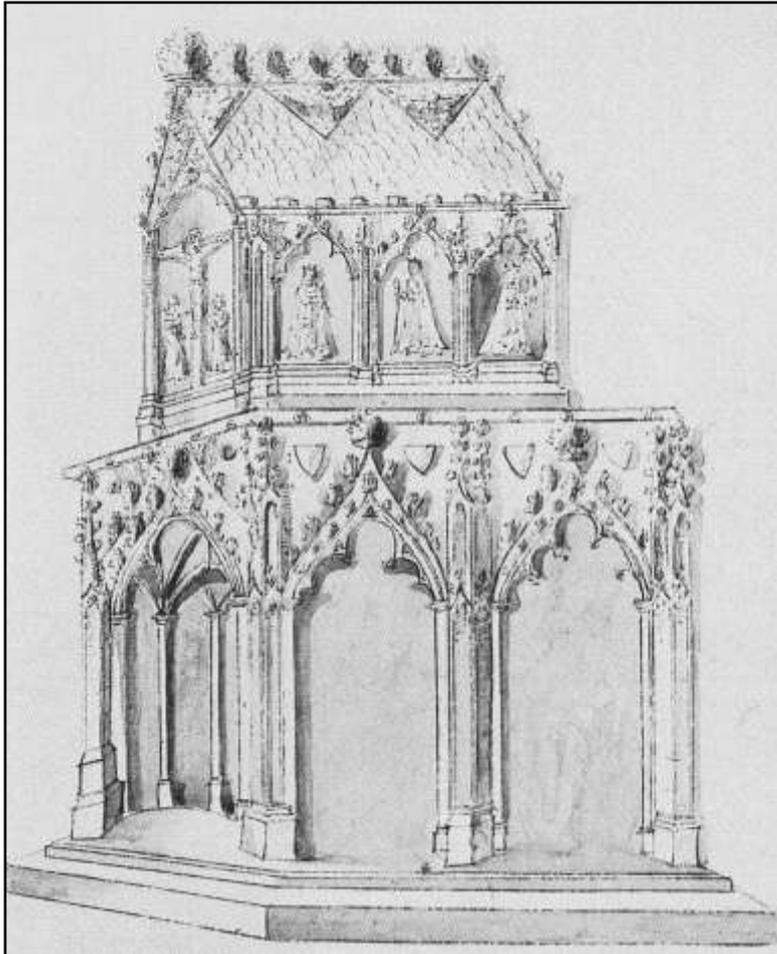


Plate 5:7.

William Dugdale's drawing of the Head Shrine of St. Hugh. (After Bennett, 2001, 26).

Plate 5:8.

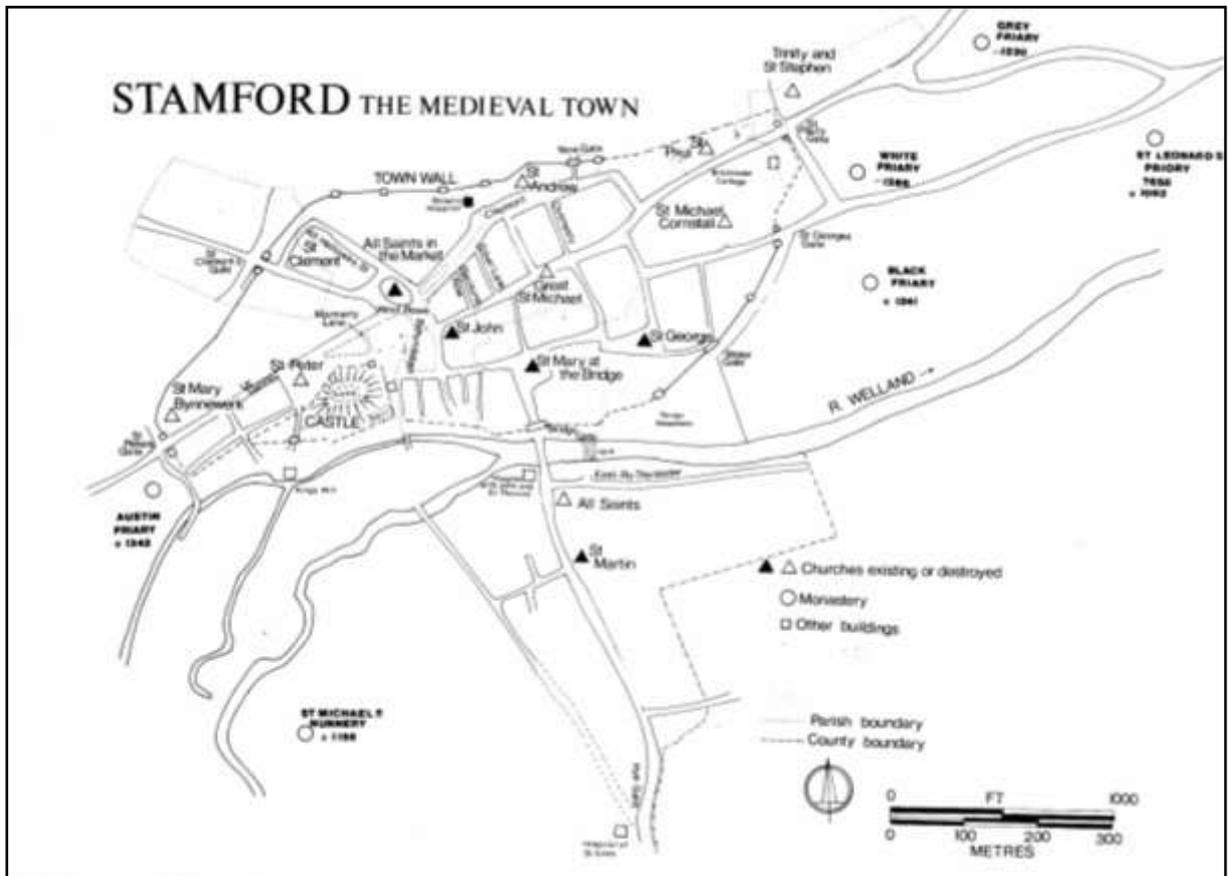
The present east end of the Angel Choir, with the rebuilt Head Shrine on the left and the nineteenth-century copy of the viscera tomb of Eleanor of Castile.



The standard entry fee into St. Katherine's guild was 6s. 8d., with yearly subscriptions of 2d. for a single person and 4d. for married couples.⁷⁸ The register for 1514 notes, 'the abbott of Corland Dam John Welles ys admitted and must pay vjs. viijd. the wech ys to the geltyng [gilding?] of sent Kateryn'.⁷⁹ There were also strict rules of entry. To become a member the applicant had to 'bee founde of goode name and fame of good conversacion and honeste in his demeanour and of goode rule'.⁸⁰ As with most guilds obits were performed for deceased members: in 1534 those for Friar John Depyng and Carmelite Richard Thorpe were held.⁸¹

On the north side of the guild's chapel was a cell for an anchoress, who was also a registered member of the guild, and was subject to the annual 'waxshot' or subscription.⁸² (**Map 5:1: Plate 5:9**). Anchoresses had been living in St. Paul's for at least a hundred years prior to the guild's re-establishment. In 1382, the will of Geoffrey le Scrope, canon of Lincoln, noted, '...I bequeath to the anchorite at the church of St. Paul of Staunford xiijs. iiijd.'. ⁸³ A hundred and forty years later John Fermer of Market Deeping gave 12d., and in 1533, John Lee a 'shopkeeper' of Stamford donated 8d.⁸⁴ Lee or Ley, described in the Act Book as a mercer, had been a member of the guild since 1496 and was steward from 1511-16.⁸⁵ Although the **principal** patrons were from the highest echelons of society, the majority appear to be tradesmen and merchants, reflecting local economic and social diversity. Trades associated with the guild were, bakers, barbers, carpenters, drapers, fishmongers, masons, saddlers and weavers.

The location of an anchoress in St. Paul's may have originally attracted William Browne to re-establish the guild, and for Margaret Beaufort, as a vowess, to sponsor the rebuilding of the cell. Browne owned a copy of the *Speculum Inclusorum*, featuring the lives of anchorites. Although there are few religious donations in his will, Browne does 'bequeith to the ancesse in Staunford xxs. and x yere after my deceese if eny be there closid, every yere xxs.'. ⁸⁶ However, this may have been the anchoress living at the nunnery of Stamford St. Michael's, then in Northamptonshire.



Map 5:1. Map of Medieval Stamford illustrating monastic houses, parish churches and the guild chapel of St. Paul's. (After Mahany, 1978).

Plate 5:9. The Church of St. Paul, now part of Stamford School.



In 1504, she was recorded as a member of the guild, the register stating, 'Dna Margaret White anchoress at the Nuns admitted vjs. viijd: paid xxd. and owes vs.'.⁸⁷

Anchoresses were also noted in wills at Lincoln and Boston. At the latter she may have resided in or near one of the friaries: William Wightman leaving to the mendicants and 'to my lady ancores of the same, ijs.'⁸⁸ Two Stamford guild members also left wills. In her testament of 1508, vowess Dame Margaret Spencer, who entered the guild in 1488 with her husband William, left 6s. 8d. to the anchoress 'in 'polls" church', and also donated to Crowland, Bardney and the Stamford friars.⁸⁹ Clearly, local religious houses, particularly friaries, like those at Grantham, Boston and Lincoln, were closely connected with guilds through both membership and patronage.

(i) Monastic Connectivity Beyond the Cloister.

Unlike monasteries, the guild system was open to public scrutiny: members could witness their spiritual investment in the form of services and ceremonies. The regulars were perhaps seen therefore as mysterious: their concealment behind cloister walls possibly adding to the supposition. In principle, there was limited access into a monastery. Only the incumbents themselves and those dealing with administrative matters understood the workings of the establishment. Services by regular canons at an appropriated church, along with manor courts, rent and tithe collections by officials were generally people's closest connectivity with regulars.

Some paid their tithes directly to monasteries. William Smith of Humberston granted 12d. to the 'abbay for tithys forgottyn', and three testators from the 'Sutton' villages in Holland similarly remunerated Castle Acre, proprietor of the 'mother' church at Long Sutton.⁹⁰ Likewise, John Ver of Reepham gave Barlings half a quarter of barley.⁹¹ Robert Barret, a Staple merchant from Wainfleet, wrote, '...to the comans [canons] of Stixwould in recompense of alms and tithes xls....to my lady and her susters to be made brother in their chapiter house'.⁹² This indicates that these monasteries, like Crowland and Bourne, had a parochial element to their churches,

thereby retaining a degree of connectivity. Unlike the mendicants, monks and especially nuns nevertheless must have largely remained an enigma, consequently out of sight and out of mind.

Any link was generally attained through monastery officials who administered the secular affairs, leaving the religious to prayer and contemplation. The monastic Steward was tasked with upkeep of the scattered estates along with expanding the house's political and financial interests beyond the cloister. Usually on a lucrative retainer, stewardship formed a bond between the monastery, the local gentry and the convent's manorial courts.⁹³ In Lincolnshire, Lord Hussey along with influential gentry families all held positions of Steward, Bailiff, Attorney or Auditor to numerous establishments. Principal amongst these was Hussey who was paid £40 16s. 8d. per annum for the stewardship of twenty monasteries and colleges.⁹⁴

Anthony Mussenden (Missenden) of Healing, Recorder of Lincoln and a commissioner of the *Valor*, was steward to six establishments.⁹⁵ Two of his relations, Mary and Joan were prioresses at Stixwould and Legbourne respectively, although Mussenden was steward of neither. Similar to the Heneage's at Sixhills, stewards of smaller houses became unofficial patrons for a small fee, thereby enhancing their own social status. Larger establishments with widely scattered estates needed a greater number of stewards. Thornton, with considerable assets in both Lincolnshire and the East Riding of Yorkshire had twelve administrators. Sir William Ayscough holding lands in nearby Stallingborough, and Sir John Constable, a major landowner in Yorkshire, both tended to the monastery's considerable estates.⁹⁶ Connectivity was extended through economics rather than religion, but also through narrative.

(j) Monastic Literature.

Many theological works were owned by Lincolnshire monasteries. Although largely concealed from the county's parishioners, state officials had access to these volumes.⁹⁷ During the divorce crisis, works on philosophy, religion and canon law originating from monasteries became tools in the king's dispute with the papacy.

Some of these books came from Lincolnshire's religious houses.⁹⁸ The Privy Purse expenses for 1531 state that servants from Sempringham and Spalding, were paid 30s. and 40s. respectively for transporting volumes to the Court.⁹⁹ A catalogue, the *Tabula librorum de histories antiquitatum...*, possibly compiled by Leland, lists nearly a hundred books originating from Lincolnshire monasteries. **(Plate 5:10)**. It contains markings against thirty-six relevant works, suggesting the king wished these transferred to his libraries.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, Leland probably only recorded books relevant to either himself or the king: at Thornholme, he found no volumes 'worthy of individual comment'.¹⁰¹

Several titles suggest motive behind the acquisitions. The twelfth-century monk Ralph of Flais's commentary on Leviticus concerning the prohibition of a man marrying his brother's wife obtained from Kirkstead was an obvious choice in terminating the king's marriage.¹⁰² A copy of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* from Thornton has annotations in the margins concerning Church councils and the authority of popes and bishops. **(Plate 5:11)**. Regarding consanguinity, a pertinent quote in the *Gesta* originating from Pope Gregory I (d604) suggests that, 'nobody could take a wife from his own family, someone on his dead wife's side or...the widow of a blood relation, until kinship on both sides was seven stages away'.¹⁰³

Volumes from Bardney, Hagnaby, Revesby, Thornton, Tupholme and Tattershall College are **also** listed in the *Tabula*.¹⁰⁴ Other works include the *Historia Anglorum* by Henry of Huntingdon (d1157) from the Dominican and Carmelite Friaries at Lincoln and sermons by Gilbert of Hoyland, abbot of Swineshead (d1172), taken from Kirkstead.¹⁰⁵ Writings of Robert of Bridlington (d1160) were also acquired from Kirkstead and from Revesby the sermons of Robert Grosseteste.¹⁰⁶ Lincoln St. Catherine's possessed commentaries on the Old Testament by Gilbert of Sempringham (d1189) and also by William de Montibus (d1213), who became head of the cathedral school and later Chancellor.¹⁰⁷

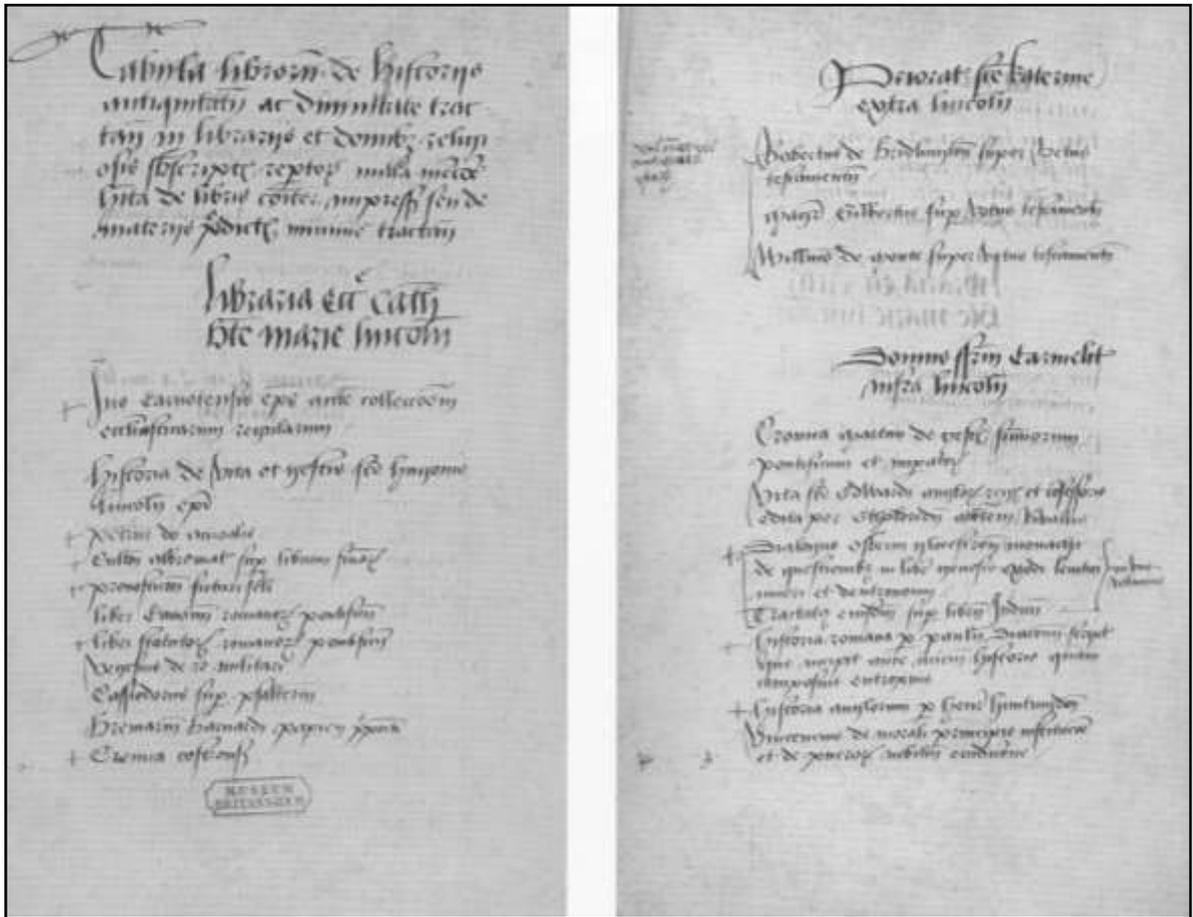


Plate 5:10 (above).

Two pages from the *Tabula Librorum*, featuring lists of books with marks against the required volumes: from Lincoln Cathedral (left) and St. Catherine's (right).

BL, Royal MS Appendix 69, fol. 2r-v.
(After Doran & Starkey, 2009, 139).

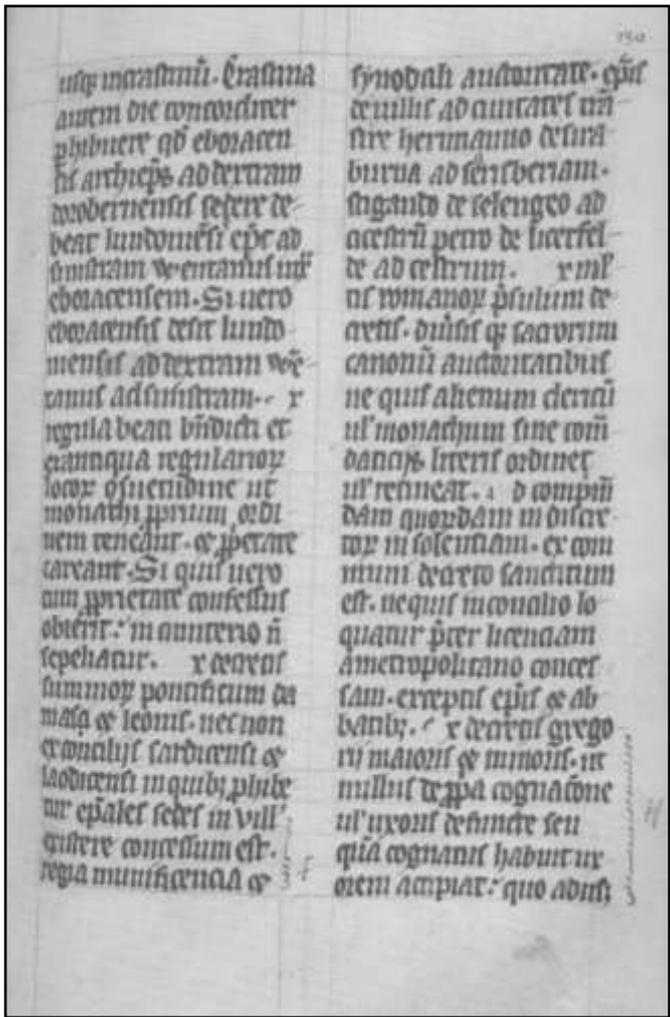


Plate 5:11.

A page from *De Gestis Pontificum*, by William of Malmesbury, acquired from Thornton. Annotations are

This clearly shows that monastic libraries included volumes of considerable literary and spiritual merit. Whether they were ever consulted is of course unknown: perhaps used only to impress potential patrons and the episcopal visitor. With the decline of the monastic *scriptoria*, the regulars may have obtained new printed volumes on religion and Canon Law. The visitation of Spalding in 1438 lists a number of books removed by Alan Kirkstone, onetime scholar at Oxford. These included the *Epistles* by Peter de Blois, *Liber Decretorum* by Gratian, *Sermones Odonis* by Odo of Cluny and *Flores Bernardi* by Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux. These are all required reading for the study of Canon Law but also for an understanding of preaching and teaching.¹⁰⁸

Leland realised that monastic libraries contained large quantities of important material secured within the monk's *bibliotheca*. Some however may have been available to the outside world. Author Walter Copinger (d1910) suggests that monasteries 'were the public libraries of the Middle Ages: ...the main repository of knowledge for those whose poverty prevented them from acquiring libraries of their own'.¹⁰⁹ Secular students could study books within a monastic library and in some cases allowed to remove them. The Council of Paris of 1212 decreed that, 'we forbid monks...not to lend books to the poor, seeing that such a loan is one of the chief works of mercy'.¹¹⁰ In the eleventh-century, Crowland allegedly possessed three thousand volumes, although whether they came into the hands of 'the poor' is unknown.¹¹¹

This practice of loaning books could partially account for the numerous losses. However following the Suppression some were sold or their pages recycled.¹¹² Four leaves from a lost antiphonal, probably originating from Barlings, were used from 1590 by the churchwardens of Scothern as their account book. The church, along with the local manor, was appropriated to the abbey with the canons occasionally serving the benefice, possibly using the volume for services.¹¹³

Although vehemently opposed to monasticism, John Bale (d1563), formally the Carmelite prior of Doncaster was nevertheless concerned about losing the regular's volumes. He wrote,

Yf there had bene in every shyre of Englande but one solemyne librarye to the preservacyon of those noble workes and preferment of good lernynge in posteryte it had been yet sumwhat. To destroye all without consyderacyon wyll be unto Engalnde a moste horryble infamy. ...Some [are used] to scoure theyr candelstyches, & some to rubbe their bootes...some they solde to the grosser and sope sellers, & some they sent over see to y^e bokebynders.¹¹⁴

In 1566, the Wrangle churchwardens noted, 'one masse booke and all other bookes of papistre defaced and sold to Richard Dandison who hath made papars thereof to wrappe spice in'.¹¹⁵

Although there was improved access to information through newly printed material, most scholarly works would have been studied by intellectual elites, both lay and clerical. Whether any of these volumes or indeed their hypotheses were transmitted to congregations by local clergy, is uncertain. Few wills mention books other than those specifically required for services. Richard Stapleforthe, priest of South Ormsby left works to Nocton Park. Amongst them were printed volumes of SS. Augustine, Bonaventura and Anselm of Canterbury along with writings by Virgil used as teaching aids.¹¹⁶ Nocton did not own Ormsby church, or retain local estates so the connection is unknown. Stapleforthe probably donated books to benefit the monks but also to educate others. Whether these were used originally for composing sermons or allowed to accumulate dust on the vicarage shelves is of course unknown, but it does point to evidence that some clergy were well educated. Connectivity between the Church and the local population was therefore to a lesser extent attained through spiritual literature, both at parish and monastic levels; written narrative did however extended into the secular world.

(k) Two Commonplace Books.

Some people, both clerical and secular, did however leave written evidence of their viewpoints, both religious and economic. These were noted in 'commonplace

books': anthologies of local activities. Between 1520 and 1531, John Gysborn, a Premonstratensian canon of Coverham in Yorkshire, probably on secondment to Newbo, was curate of the local abbey's appropriated church at Allington.¹¹⁷ His commonplace book emphasized the lives of the saints, although little was written concerning scriptural teaching.¹¹⁸ Gysborn noted confessional enquires which highlighted adultery, envy and the non-payment of tithes. He also posed questions on drunkenness, the manufacture of 'love potions' and procedures to induce abortion. However, in asking different questions of men and women, husbandmen and servants, Gysborn possibly displayed knowledge of the differing social elements of village society.¹¹⁹

The book also contains poetic prayers to the Virgin, the saints and martyrs. There is a sketch of the Five Wounds of Christ, reports of a miracle in Exeter and 'spirited accounts' of the pains of Hell. Along with reports of parishioner's debts, Gysborn also records remedies for colic, the stone, strangury, pox and the plague, in addition to instructions on how to engrave metal and enamel gold.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, although two small sermons were included, there was little emphasis on preaching. This is an example of book containing miscellanies of contemporary parochial life. It is also evidence of a regular canon closely interacting with local parishioners in a settlement only two miles from the monastery.

Although it appears that most parishioners unquestionably accepted the doctrines of the Church, some studied religion more closely. **(Plate 5:12)**. Though not originating from Lincolnshire, a Norfolk yeoman, Robert Reynes (c1450-1512?), also wrote a commonplace book, not only keeping details of financial records but also illustrating his observations concerning religion.¹²¹ The work provides a rare insight into the beliefs and practices of a man from a relatively modest social and educational background, who nevertheless appeared to have attained considerable standing within his village community.¹²²

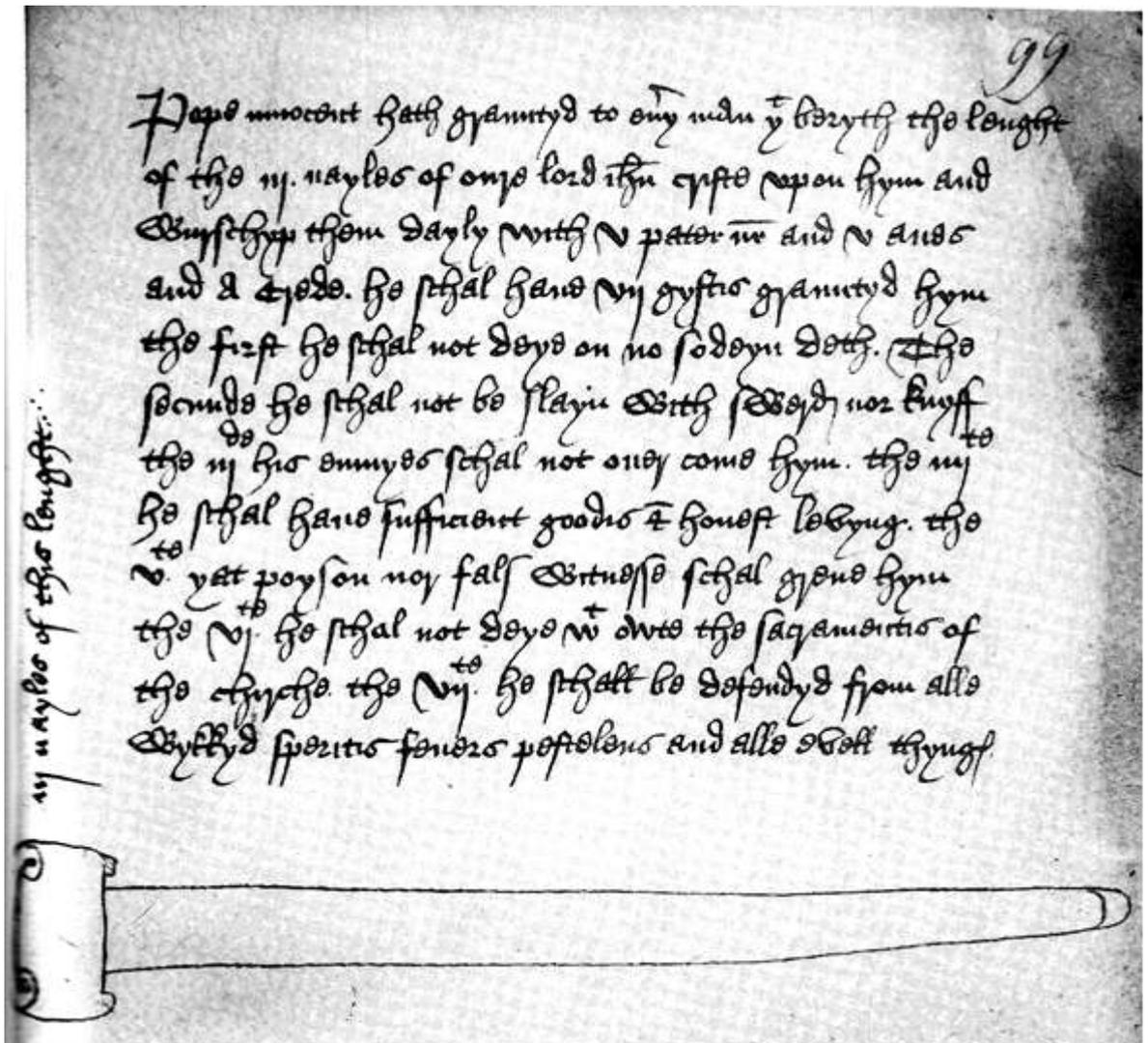


Plate 5:12. A page from the commonplace book of Richard Reynes, entitled 'The Nails of Christ'. (After Duffy, 1992, Plt. 112).

“Pope Innocent hath granted to every man that beryth the length of the iij nayles of our lord ihu crste upon hym and wurshchys them dayly with v pater [nostre] and v ave and a crede he shal have vij gyfts grauntyd hym the first he shal not deye on no sodeyn deth. the secunde he shal not be slayn with sewerd nor knyff the iij [d] hys enemyes shall not over come hym. the iiijth he shal have sufficient goodes a honest leaving. the vth yat poison nor fals witnessse shall greve hym the vijth he shl not deye w[ith] owte the saqamentis of the churche the vijth he shal be defendyd from alle wykked speritis fevers pestelens and alle evell things.”

The drawing of the nail is 5¾ inches long.

Reynes was churchwarden at Acle and reeve for the lord of the manor, Tintern Abbey in Monmouthshire.¹²³ Cameron Louis suggests that Reynes met the abbot, Thomas Colstone, either at Acle, in London or at Tintern itself.¹²⁴ The distances involved were considerable: the Cistercian abbey well over 200 miles from Norfolk. Alternatively, this may be evidence of a monastic superior venturing far from his monastery on manorial business.¹²⁵ Others therefore probably followed his example, notably those from mitred abbeys attending Parliament: in Lincolnshire represented by Bardney and Crowland.

As part of his manorial duties, Reynes kept accounts, oversaw the manor's harvest, recorded taxes and surveyed landholdings. He also appears responsible for enforcing local regulations. These included the assize of bread and ale, weights and measures, supervising the local constables, and also the activities of the manorial court, swearing in jurors and recording court proceedings. He was a representative of those men who sought social and financial prominence within a local community through activities both secular and religious, and was consequently wealthy enough to leave twenty Marks in his will.¹²⁶

Reynes's text was possibly used as an *aide-mémoire*, composed in the form of numerical lists on various themes from the Bible. These were probably used for teaching his children and helping parishioners memorise the Scriptures.

The Virgin Mother Mary lived sixty-three years:
She was fourteen at her blessed conception.
She lived thirty-three years with her Son.
Sixteen more years on earth, and then she went to Heaven.¹²⁷

However, Reynes was clearly not impressed by the friars.

A friar, a hayward, a fox and a polecat sitting in a row,
A tapster sitting by them to keep them company.
The best is a wretch.¹²⁸

Carmelite friars sailed a boat near Ely.
They were not in heaven since they f**ked the wives of hell.
They all got drenched because they had no helmsman.

The friars with knives go about and swive men's wives.¹²⁹

There was however a serious aspect to most of the work, as illustrated in 'The Signs of Death'.

When your head quakes, Remember.
When your lips blacken, Confess.
When your noses grows thin, Be contrite.
When your limbs stiffen, Make satisfaction.
When your breast heaves, Know thyself.
When your breath grows short, Seek mercy.
When your eyes film, Free me Lord.
When death follows, Go forth to Judgement.¹³⁰

Reynes produced a valuable document, noting a manor's connectivity with a distant monastic house. Its main purpose however was to assist in preaching and teaching, something the Church was often accused of neglecting at parish level.

(I) Preaching and Teaching.

The preaching of sermons appeared to be secondary to the process of saving souls from Purgatory: possibly seen as a more lucrative activity. There was also perhaps reluctance by some parishioners to comprehend a deeper understanding of religion. Many previous attempts were made to counter this problem. Robert Grosseteste, in his *Epistolae*, extolled priests to teach children at least the Lord's Prayer, the Ave and the sign of the Cross.¹³¹

John Myrc (*fl* c1382–c1414), an Augustinian canon of Lilleshall Abbey in Shropshire, devised a list of instructions to parish priests. Concerning preaching, which at parish level appeared to have barely progressed beyond the basic Sacraments, the Ten Commandments and the Creed,¹³² Myrc writes,

The pater noster and þe crede,
Preche þy paresche þou moste need,
Twyes or þryes in þe zere,
To þy paresch hole and fere;
Teche hem þus, and byd hem say
Wyþ gode entent euery day,
"Fader owre þat art in heuene,
Halowed be þy name" with meke steuene.¹³³

Similarly, Richard Whitford of Syon Abbey, in his *Werke for Householdiers* (1530), suggests, 'let them ever keep the preachings rather than the masse, if they may not hear both'.¹³⁴ Nevertheless whether preaching was enforced at a local level in order to retain connectivity between priest and parishioners largely depended on the influence of the bishop. In the Lincolnshire parish visitations of 1519 there was however little mention of preaching. Either the bishop had given up attempting to improve the situation or alternatively it required no remedial action.

The response by parishioners to sermons can only be surmised. An instruction book from 1520 suggested asking the congregation whether they 'had been slothful to hear the Word of God preached'.¹³⁵ To the average Lincolnshire parishioner however the basic doctrine was perhaps sufficient to satisfy most spiritual requirements. Therefore the concept of leaving the 'scholarly stuff' to the bishops, monks and theologians was possibly quite widespread within sixteenth-century England. This may be one reason for the perceived isolation of the regulars from the general population, especially in a rural county like Lincolnshire. Not only were monks physically separate but they also appeared to be intellectually divorced. It was left to the parish clergy and the friars to promote the doctrine to a largely undemanding congregation, comfortable in their own spirituality within the parish church.

Even allowing for illiteracy, service books were nevertheless probably becoming commonplace. In 1486, the Louth churchwarden's accounts included a detailed inventory of the church's possessions. Along with numerous crosses, challises, pyxes and candlesticks there is a list of volumes. These range from graduals, 'antiphennars', 'messalls', 'processioneres' and 'hymnares', all service books, few of which could be classified as 'preaching tools'.¹³⁶ However, the churchwardens of Hagworthingham recorded in 1538-9 the purchase for 7s. 6d. of 'one halfe of a Book called the Bible', presumably the New Testament.¹³⁷

Volumes were sometimes donated to the parish as part of a bequest.¹³⁸ William Jowytson of Stickford left 4s. to purchase a Mass book. He also gave the priest 100s. per annum for four years, 'yff he will teche the chyldren of the sayd towne... and yff he will not teche none, then he is to have...but vij markes'.¹³⁹ Two men from Sutterton however must have valued church books enough to steal them. Churchwarden's accounts for 1491 note, 'payd in expens for wrong vexacon don by Edmund Quytyngham and Wyllm Malyn pro takyngg forth of ye bokys'.¹⁴⁰

Thefts from churches, although apparently rare did sometimes occur. At Louth in 1517-18, John Baly, a priest, allegedly 'stole fro the huche'. This was a box containing the church's valuables, partly used as collateral to pay guild loans for the new spire. It was placed upon the Rood screen in full view of the congregation, spiritually protected by the figure of Christ on the Cross. The accounts describe numerous and expensive journeys to Lincoln castle for the Assizes, when Baly was guarded by local parishioners, led by one Robert Smyth, a 'bocher'. It is unknown whether he was found guilty, but in 1522 the church employed 'Will Jakeson [for] wachyng Kirke of nyghts at 14d.'. ¹⁴¹ Notwithstanding, in the same year the wardens paid 10s. 'in expensis at Lyncoln for pariche prest brekyng the thirde sylver cros & sylver candelstykes at Saynt James [to be] tyed at sisse'.¹⁴² The Church was therefore not immune from criminal activity by both parishioners and clergy: for some at least the threat of eternal damnation clearly held little deterrent.

(m) The Lincolnshire Rising: Parochialism before Monasticism?

Demonstrated during the Rising, parishioners led by priests were prepared to go to extreme lengths in defending the parish church from rumours of closure or at the very least the seizure of valuable assets. Although unsubstantiated, these reports were possibly seen as part of the government's overall scheme of ecclesiastical restructuring. Amongst many similar statements during the commission of enquiry into the revolt,

Nicholas Melton of Louth, shoemaker, says Thomas Foster, yeoman and singing man of 10l. of land, dwelling in Louth...said "Go we to follow the crosses for and if they be taken from us we be like to follow them no more."¹⁴³

Though there is no evidence, there may also have been a fear that appropriated churches would fall alongside the motherhouse.

The arrest of Cromwell's commissioners at Louth Park and those attempting to close nearby Legbourne were only a small part of the rapidly expanding revolt. It is notable however that three weeks prior to the commencement of the rebellion, the townsfolk did nothing to resist the suppression of Louth Park, nor earlier at Vaudey, Markby and Hagnaby.¹⁴⁴ **(Plate 5:13)**. This is another example of monasteries probably being perceived by parishioners as primarily economic entities rather than places of learning and asceticism. They were also possibly seen as a source of manpower by the rebels. Against the advice of their superiors, some of the younger monks joined the rebel's ranks: perhaps seeing a chance to escape the confines of the cloister. Regulars from Barlings, Bardney and also Kirkstead took part: the latter's cellarer and bursar on horseback armed with axes.¹⁴⁵

The Rising possibly may never have transpired if considerable numbers of priests had not assembled in Louth church and other large centres for the deanery visitation. **(Plate 5:14)**. Thomas Kendall, vicar of Louth stated that 'On Monday following the insurrection 60 priests were at Lowth by command of the bishop's officers, and the morrow after their departure their parishioners were up, and sworn to ring their common bells'.¹⁴⁶ The clergy, some possibly from locally influential yeoman families, were opposed to the imposition of the Ten Articles, but were also concerned for their livelihoods especially if rumoured higher educational standards were enforced. Their main anxiety however was the closure of churches, especially as ordained monks expelled from already suppressed monasteries would be competing for a diminishing number of lucrative benefices.

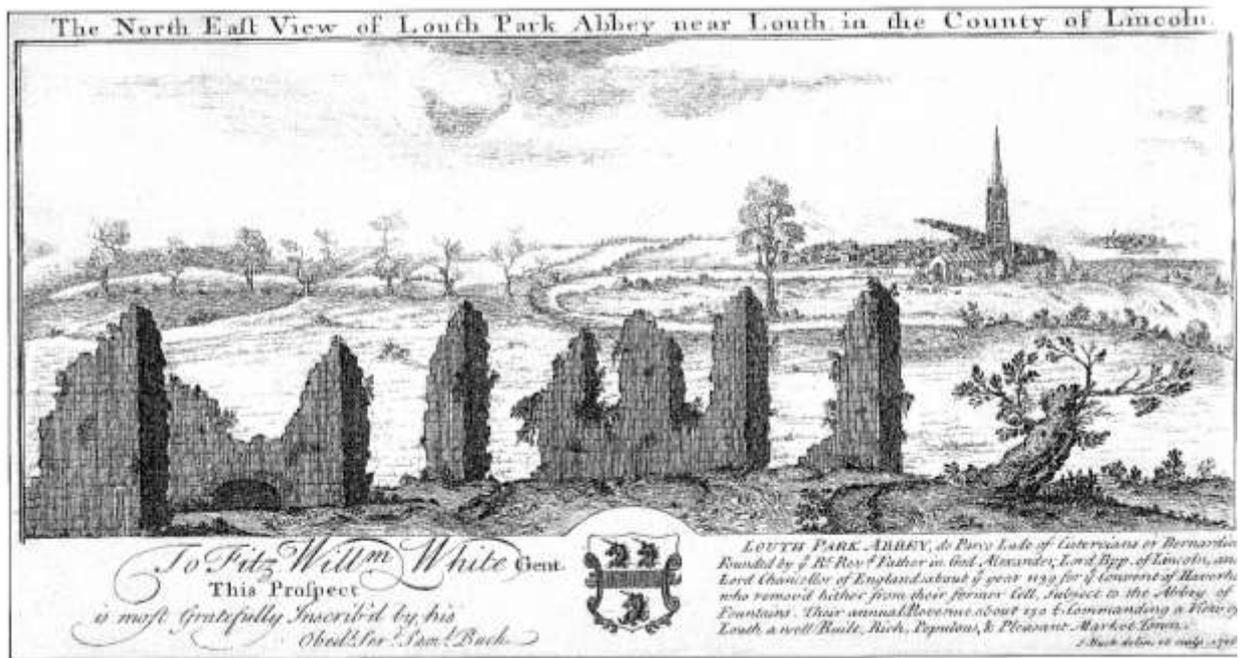


Plate 5:13 (above).

Samuel Buck's 1726 illustration of the ruins of Louth Park Abbey with St. James church in the background.
 (After Ward, 1996, 12).

Plate 5:14.

St. James Louth with its imposing 295ft. tower and spire completed in 1515.
<http://www.wparkinson.com>.
 Accessed 22/9/2012.

The Louth parishioners' main concern was therefore saving their church. The churchwardens' accounts render a detailed description of the construction process of the spire, and list patrons who contributed to the scheme. In 1515, the year the project was completed, parishioners clearly had no worries concerning changes in religion. Just over twenty years later, encouraged by their clergy they rose only when their church appeared to be in jeopardy. As patrons they would first and foremost defend their spiritual and structural investment from appropriation by largely mistrusted officials of both Church and State. Dedicated to their God, and as a statement of their prosperity, they were willing to defend it to the death. This was spiritual connectivity in its rawest state. In the final analysis, local religious principles overrode national secular politics, with parochialism prevailing over monasticism.

(n) Mortuary Payments.

Parish churches nevertheless required constant maintenance, with the clergy financed by income from various sources. Many wills included the statement, '...with that right requyryth to be my mortuary'. Mortuary or 'soul-scot' were customary fees given to a priest on the death of a parishioner. Frequently a contentious issue, in 1529 a law was passed that governed payments relative to the deceased's assets.¹⁴⁷ Most mortuaries originally consisted of goods or livestock, but by the early sixteenth-century, this had diminished considerably. Of the 2,933 Parish Wills, only nineteen declare a mortuary 'gift', mostly in cash. However, William Ashton, rector of Belton gave 'myne awmlynge hors, the wiche I last rode upon', and Isabell Valence, of Epworth gave a 'varyn hors'.¹⁴⁸

Some monastic proprietors may have taken mortuaries as 'employers' of the incumbent, despite the payment being aimed at the poorly remunerated parish clergy. In 1328, the sacrist of Peterborough Abbey, Geoffrey de Aslackby claimed as mortuary from John Neville of Scotton 'his best horse saddled and bridled', but accepted 40s. instead, as the horse 'was not good enough as a palfrey for so great a lord as the abbot'. The same family in 1362 paid the abbey 100s. in lieu of a fully

armed horse.¹⁴⁹ If all monasteries took the mortuary from their appropriated churches, the 1529 law must have considerably effected on their incomes. This was not aided by parishioners regularly donating to maintain and expand their naves and raise their towers rather than giving to their monastic appropriator, responsible for the chancel.

(o) Upholding the Parish Church; Spiritually and Physically.

Alexander Thompson suggests ‘...of the numerous beautiful chancels of the early fourteenth-century found in Lincolnshire, not one is to be found in a church which...was appropriated to a monastery’.¹⁵⁰ Chancels of appropriated churches were possibly seen therefore as stylistically ‘out of date’; possibly signifying neglect. By the sixteenth-century, some churches were over five hundred years old, and despite renovations a number were in disrepair. However, in the 1519 parish visitations, it was mainly the chancel that was reported for structural problems. The *cancellus est ruinosus*’ was a recurring theme throughout the proceedings. However, despite the terminology ruinous does not imply total destruction, but includes anything from a broken window to water leaking onto the High Altar.

Within the visitations, only ten cases noted defects to the nave, but unmaintained chancels were reported in sixty-seven churches (18.3%), of which forty-eight were appropriated. At Burgh le Marsh, Bullington was reproached because ‘the chancel is in need of repair by the carelessness of the prior and convent...proprietor of the same place’.¹⁵¹ This can be compared with the parishioners efforts in the early sixteenth-century to rebuild the nave. Similarly at Ingham, ‘the chancel is ruinous [due to] lack of care by the prioress of Bullington’.¹⁵² Freiston was censured for the ‘ruinous’ chancel at Butterwick, and at Croft the ‘walls [were] defective, by the fault of the proprietors’, Kyme Priory.¹⁵³ Humberston, always a poor house, was reprimanded for the ‘chancel walls and roof collapsing’ at Holton le Clay: a continuing problem with little hope of resolution.¹⁵⁴

The responsibility for maintaining churches some distant from the motherhouse generally fell upon the local representative, the Bailiff or Reeve. However, the prioress of Minchin Buckland in Somerset was reprimanded for failing to repair the chancel, rectory and vicarage at Kirton in Holland. In addition, the vicar was present only twice in seven years and the parishioners had to travel elsewhere for services.¹⁵⁵ Unsurprisingly, none of the fifty-nine testators from both Kirton and the priory's church at Donington gave to the convent.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, considerable numbers of Lincolnshire churches were rebuilt with heightened towers, raised clerestories and refurbished aisles replete with altars and illuminated images. The 272ft. Boston 'Stump' was finally completed c1520 following a lengthy gestation period. This, and the 295ft. tower and spire of Louth St. James, are examples of major church construction in the years prior to the Reformation.¹⁵⁶ These prosperous towns were possibly in competition over the stature of their ecclesiastical buildings.¹⁵⁷ Boston and Louth both contained a single large parish church, which consequently gained the majority of donations. Whereas Louth also had a nearby Cistercian abbey, Boston possessed four houses of friars attracting considerable numbers of gifts. Both settlements were closely involved in the wool and cloth trade: Merchants of the Staple of Calais being well represented.

Due to Louth's 'Peculiar' status, similar to Sleaford, there are only four surviving wills from the town. Thomas Bradley was a Staple Merchant, as was Symond Lyncoln (d1505), who was also a churchwarden and the only local testator to leave to Louth Park.¹⁵⁸ In his will of 1499, Merchant John Chapman spread his patronage lavishly, donating to the Boston friars and also to St. James, principally to the various lights and guilds. He also gave £5 to the 'mayking of a broche' prior to the commencement of the work, a penny each to the 'bedemen and bedewomen', and similarly 'to every lazar in the lazar house at the end of the town'.¹⁵⁹

Within the 2,933 Parish Wills, there are 1,997 references of gifts to the 'works' of parish churches and/or the cathedral. However, within the Monastic Wills only one mentions a religious house in the same context. Sir Thomas Wyngoode, a chantry priest of Trusthorpe, gave 'To the buyldyng off hagneby abbey xxs.'¹⁶⁰ Testators possibly judged that monasteries possessed sufficient regular income to undertake their own renovations. Conversely, in a parish church the nave was administered by the vicar and two churchwardens. There was usually a 'fabric fund', supplemented by donations, notably from wills, but also from collections. Money was kept in the Parish Chest with three keys, one each for the churchwardens and a third with the priest. Although the funds were supposedly employed primarily for maintenance, it gradually became used for charitable purposes: the wardens being part of the local administration.¹⁶¹

Similar to Louth, the church tower at Alford was also under construction or renovation: testators contributing through either testaments or unsolicited donations. **(Plates 5:15 & 5:16).** Alice Hoode gave 5s. 'to the stepull of Alforde', and Robert Lyndeley, gave 6s. 8d. to 'the steple wark'. He also donated 20s. plus rents to Bilsby church, where he was vicar, 'for the buyldyng of the steple [and] a tenor bell'.¹⁶² Three testators donated to Burgh for alterations to the aisles.

Thomas Temper noted that,

I will that my executors cause to be selarde and gilte the sayd trinite quere in the sayd churche of Burghe equall and lyke to St. John's quere...and yff so be the paryshoners of Burgh do make an Ile of the south syde of the sayd churche as the north syde is, then I bequethe to the makyng of the sayd Ile iii^{li} vjs. viijd.¹⁶³

Whether these 'queres' were the responsibly of the proprietor, Bullington, is unclear, but neglected repairs were also noted in the priory's churches at Friskney, South Reston and South Ferriby.¹⁶⁴

According to now lost accounts, the tower at Old Leake was constructed between 1490 and 1547, costing £359 14s. 10d.¹⁶⁵ It is solidly built, squat in appearance with



Plate 5:15.
The tower of St. Wilfrid, Alford, largely constructed from Spilsby Greenstone.

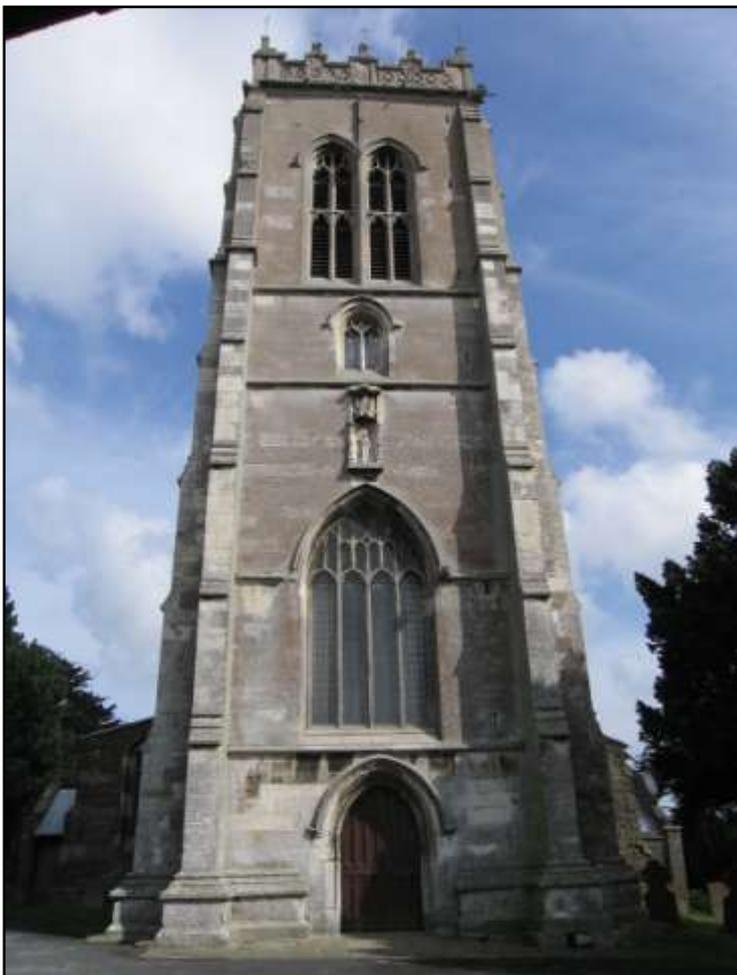


Plate 5:16.
The steeple of SS. Peter & Paul, Burgh-le-Marsh.

heavy angle buttresses. This suggests problems with subsidence, noticeable in the western arches of the nave arcade, which are visibly out of kilter. Work may however have ceased prematurely on the death of the king. Doubts were perhaps raised regarding the continuation of such projects in the light of shifting religious policies.

Notwithstanding, in 1534, John Clymson of Wyberton, a landholder in the village gave 6s. 8d., 'to the reparacion and buyldyng of the churche of Leeke', and two other local testators, John Grene and John Sevyl both gave to 'makyng of ye steple'.¹⁶⁶ Grene also remembered the church's proprietor.

I will that Jenet wheytt my capital messuage called Ryxderby house for the term of [her] natural life paying...yearly to the brother of Nicholas Cantilupe Chantry within the close of Lincoln for one obit to be done in the choir of St. Nicholas's yearly, iijs. iiijd.¹⁶⁷

Further north, Theddlethorpe St. Helen attracted four donations for the 'buyldyng of the steple', although this was probably renovation as the tower is fifteenth-century.¹⁶⁸ Three wills noting Theddlethorpe originated from the Whyte family, one of whom, Richard, was the incumbent of the deserted village of Stane, three miles away.¹⁶⁹

One testator, not content with giving to the 'works', proposed a completely new church. Thomas Kirkman the priest of Stane who probably replaced the aforementioned Richard Whyte, bequeathed,

...to the beyldyng of sanct peter churche in Mawbelthorpe when thay begyn to beyld the same vi^{li} xiiis. iiijd., and yf thay beyld yt not, then I wyll the sayd money be employed upon cowering of Stane churche with leade.¹⁷⁰

St. Peter's, along with the settlement was swept away by high tides in 1287: noted in the Louth Park Chronicle as being 'rent asunder by the waves of the sea'.¹⁷¹ The Hagnaby Chronicle states, 'On St. Hilary's day the sea opened and enlarged its bounds...and St. Peter's was wholly destroyed, the challis and pyx being found crushed under a heap of stones'.¹⁷² Pevsner suggests that St. Peter's was rebuilt but destroyed again in the late 1540s.¹⁷³ This was a poor benefice, evidenced in the 1526

Subsidy returns. The rector of *Mablthorp Petri*, John Kyrkman, probably a relative of Thomas Kirkman, received £8 per annum, as against *Mablethorp Marie* with six clergy each on a similar stipend.¹⁷⁴ The church inventories for 1548 state that for St. Peter's the 'totayll svme' was £3 0s. 6d., in comparison to St. Mary's at £36 16s.¹⁷⁵

Clearly, there was a continual battle to preserve churches near the coast from destruction by the sea. Nevertheless people continually gave to the rebuilding of parish churches, even in areas threatened with inundations. There is no evidence of a monastery being lost in similar circumstances, and whether Lincolnshire people would have contributed to its rebuilding is of course unknown. This commitment to the physical structure as well as the spiritual doctrine is a prime example of local connectivity that the county's religious houses failed to attain.

In order to maintain church buildings a continuous flow of donations was required. The Louth churchwarden's accounts give some idea of the annual income from the 'Sunday' collections to a large parish church within a comparatively wealthy community. The revenue also reflects progress on the building of the new spire. From 1501 to 1515, most amounts were over £10, with a maximum of nearly £15 following commencement of the project. Thereafter, although steady, it appears to waiver slightly until 1510 but then increased, probably due to visible progress on the project.

Table 5:3. 'Sunday' collections at Louth St. James.

Date	£	s	d	Date	£	s	d	Date	£	s	d
1500	7	6	8	1515	11	16	0	1530	9	6	2
1501	11	5	8	1516	7	9	0	1531	14	4	1
1502	14	18	11	1517	9	5	3	1532	8	1	5
1503	12	10	4	1518	8	13	1	1533	9	15	4
1504	10	13	9	1519	7	0	11	1534	10	0	0
1505	10	13	1	1520	9	5	1	1535	10	17	7
1506	11	2	2	1521	7	12	8	1536	7	18	9
1507	10	2	10	1522	8	8	7	1537	9	13	0
1508	9	12	10	1523	9	10	0	1538	6	12	9
1509	9	2	2	1524	n/a	n/a	n/a	1539	6	0	6
1510	11	16	4	1525	n/a	n/a	n/a	1540	7	17	10
1511	12	12	4	1526	n/a	n/a	n/a				
1512	10	3	2	1527	9	1	7				
1513	9	9	5	1528	8	17	0				
1514	12	10	0	1529	8	5	7				

Table 5:3 (above) shows that after completion in 1515, income falls to an average of just over £8, with a few spikes in the period leading up to the Rising, largely centred on the town. Surprisingly, for the year 1536 little is mentioned in the accounts concerning the revolt in which the town's clergy played a prominent role. In October however there were no collections 'on account of unrest of the people'; also reflected by the £3 reduction in the annual total.¹⁷⁶ (**Plate 5:17**).

Regular donations were vital to a parish church for general repairs and daily expenses. The few surviving Lincolnshire churchwarden's accounts relate to a continuous process of maintenance, involving churches that sometimes dated from the pre-Conquest period.¹⁷⁷ In 1535, the wardens of Kirton in Lindsey paid the costs of two people riding to Roche abbey, possibly for the excellent building stone.¹⁷⁸ The wardens at Wigtoft left detailed records, some concerning the maintenance of the church's structure, parts dating from the twelfth-century.¹⁷⁹ Although the accounts extend from 1484 to 1612 with occasional gaps, an unfortunate break occurs during the vital years 1536 to 1543.

The advowson of 'Wygetoff' was firstly granted to Crowland by Richard, son of Peter de Hoddil, but from 1330 was alienated to Dore Abbey in Herefordshire.¹⁸⁰ Due to the distance involved, Dore probably adopted a *laissez-faire* approach to administration, leaving the process to their local representatives, as the abbey is only mentioned once in the accounts. In 1524, the churchwardens noted they 'Receyved of ye abbat of dore, 1s.'¹⁸¹ In 1521, 10d. was paid to John Agarth, 'for mending of the stapull of ye chawnsell', something which Dore as rector was technically responsible.¹⁸² The eleven Wigtoft parishioners donating to monastic houses only note St. Catherine's or the Boston friars. Nothing was left to Dore, or nearby Swineshead. When it was open the Cistercian house was only mentioned twice in the accounts. Once at the end of the fifteenth-century, with 'costs and charges to the abbot of Swynshed, 3d.', and again in 1533, when wood to aid in the casting of bells was purchased from the abbey for 2s. 8d.¹⁸³ (**Plates 5:18 & 5:19**).

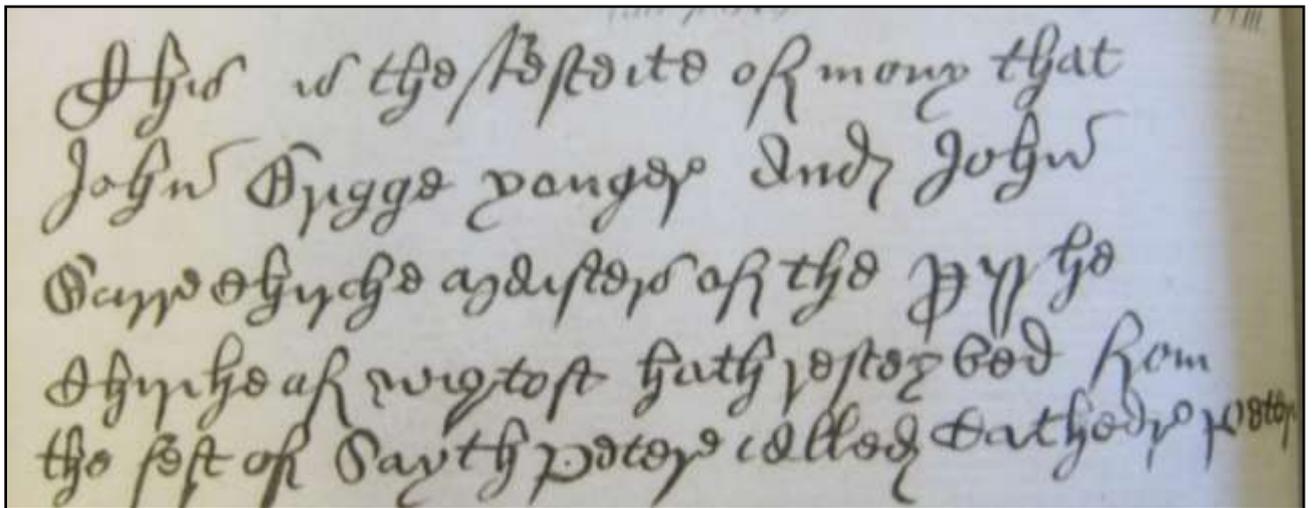


Plate 5:18. A small section of the now lost Wigtoft Churchwarden's Accounts. 'This is the receite of mony that John Crigge, younger and John Carre chirche maisters of the p'yeche chirche of Wigtoft hath resceyved from from the fest of Sayth Petere called Cathedra peter'. (After *Gentleman's Magazine*, 59 (1), 1789).



Plate 5:19. The Nave of Wigtoft church.

Similarly, the Louth accounts seldom mention monastic houses unless in the context of purchasing materials used in construction of the new spire. In 1501, the wardens gave Louth Park 3s. 4d., for a tree. In 1508 they 'paid [for] careyng of rope fro Louth Parke to Louth, 1d.', and in 1515 noted 'for 2 trees 1 bigge & 1 lityll, 5s. 6d.'.¹⁸⁴ In 1522, the accounts relate, 'Paid John Coke for fetching moldys from Louth Park 4d.'.¹⁸⁵ These were probably used as templates to carve accurate mouldings for the decorative parts of the church, suggesting architectural elements of Louth Park are replicated in St. James.¹⁸⁶

In 1502, stone was obtained from Revesby Abbey, fifteen miles away. The spire was constructed of Ancaster stone from Wilsford, thirty-five miles distant, which suggests parts of Revesby were constructed from the same material.¹⁸⁷ Also noted was 'Riding to Revesby to borrow stone 2s. 9d: Paid for stone from Abbot of Revesby, 11s. 4d: 5 loads of stone from quarry, 7s. 6d: Abbot lent 15cwt stone'.¹⁸⁸ In 1527 it was noted, 'Paid abbot of Revesby for a fodder of lead and also xlix stone £5 9s. 2d.'.¹⁸⁹ Although the abbey clearly possessed a quarry, Leland noted, 'Meatly good plenty of woode about...Reseby Abbay'.¹⁹⁰

Other monasteries mentioned were Legbourne, which in 1507 sold stone for 2s. 8d., and in 1513, Nun Ormsby was given 8d. for unknown purchases.¹⁹¹ The final note in the accounts concerning monasteries was in 1536, 'To John Taylor for carrying the mape [map?] from Louthe Park, ijd.', probably following the abbey's closure.¹⁹² The only monastic donation was 5s. from the Abbot of Thornton in 1502.¹⁹³ This was patronage from a monastery over twenty-five miles away with no known connections to Louth.

The church 'belleys' were items of continual expenditure at Wigtoft. In 1543, two pence was paid to Henri Dayl, 'for caring ye bell to ye abbay, & bryngyng ye other home', and the same amount for 'drynke wan we were at Swynshed to change ye bell'.¹⁹⁴ The suppressed abbey probably had better quality bells, hence the exchange. The site also could have been used to cast or refurbish bells and may also have

possessed a quarry. The Leverton churchwardens in 1498 paid expenses of 6d. to those who 'went for Swynsyd fayr to the quarryll', and later 20d., 'to ye breñ of Swynsyd fen wan ye com from ye quarryll wyt the ston'.¹⁹⁵

Perhaps signifying the emergence of communal hymn singing, an 'orgoune' was purchased at Wigtoft in 1507 and an 'Orgounplayar' hired.¹⁹⁶ There was also a clock: whether this included a face or just for ringing bells is unknown. In 1525, five shillings was 'payd to the cloke maker' and in the same year the 'Clok [was] meyndded' for 4s. 2d.¹⁹⁷ Outgoings for the fabric of the church were paid out of church funds contributed by parishioners. The influence of both their distant monastic proprietor and nearby Swineshead was largely irrelevant to what was a small but financially well-endowed church, with a supportive congregation: connectivity limited to building *matériel*. Similar to Louth, the local monastic house appears to have been a repository for building materials, but for little else.

Local patronage was also illustrated through the upkeep of the various 'lights' within a church, illuminating altars and saintly images. Wax was expensive, hence the setting-up of funds for each light and to furnish the saintly image. These accounts, known in the West Country as 'stores', constituted donations of land, livestock, income from festivities and finance through bequests or offerings.¹⁹⁸ Wigtoft's testators were generous to their church's accoutrement. Out of twenty-four noted in the Parish Wills, sixteen gave to their upkeep. Margaret Stannard, a widow, gave to the high altar a towel of diaper work, for its repair a ewe and a lamb, and to the Lady and St. Nicholas altars 'my best kyrchyff divided for 2 corprys and a towel of best cloth work'.¹⁹⁹

Robert Bryg, like his brother Thomas, was churchwarden of Wigtoft several times, and left a detailed testament. In addition to giving to St. Catherine's and the Boston friars, Bryg donated 20s. to the church's 'works' and the same amount 'toward the gylytyng of the ymage of St. Paule'. He also left the Lady altar 12d., gave 8d. to St. Nicholas altar, and 12d. each to the Rood and Plough lights.²⁰⁰ Including other

donations, he gave in total £3 6s. 8d. to his parish church as an investment for the security of his soul. In the same year, the new churchwardens, 'recevyd of margaret brygg for ye quethword of Robert Brygg hir hosband', 1s., and 'of ye seyde margaret for his beryll', 6s. 8d.²⁰¹ Bryg, although not categorized as a yeoman, was clearly an important figure within the village community, and similar to Robert Reynes noted earlier, would probably have been well educated and also reasonably wealthy. Some donations were given during life. The Wigtoft wardens noted the payment in 1532 by John Atkynson and Robert Shepperd of £1 6s. 8d., for the 'plowght lyght': a considerable sum.²⁰² Atkynson was a churchwarden holding a prominent position in local society; his gift an act of piety and patronage towards the local church.

An actual church building was however far more than a place of worship. It also acted as a community centre for the celebration of feasts, plays and church ales but also for business activities.²⁰³ Legal documents were signed as the *sacra* bell was rung and Host elevated during Mass: God therefore being witness to the proceedings. Feast days, in addition to celebrating a religious festival were a time for merriment and also provided income for church maintenance.

The Sutterton churchwarden's accounts show that 'players' were a regular feature of church activities, using the nave during inclement weather. In 1519 and 1521, 9d. was given as 'ye plaars rewarde'. In 1524 the sum of 9s. 6d. was noted 'for increments for the play playd on the day of the assvmpcon of our ladey'.²⁰⁴ Players came from Whaplode, Donington and Swineshead, the latter paid 'iij s. iiij d., and viij d. for brede and drynke'.²⁰⁵ This evidence shows that the Tudor Church was not a moribund organisation, but one where local parishioners were investing considerable sums of hard-earned money and hard-won agricultural produce to sustain a much admired entity, both spiritual and structural. Although there was little religious connectivity with the neighbouring monasteries, spiritual localism was on display for all to see.

(p) Parish Visitations.

At parish level, worship performed for hundreds of years was largely sustained. Some concerns were however revealed in the Lincolnshire parish visitations undertaken by Bishop Atwater in the summer of 1519, in which the Church hierarchy held both clergy and congregation to account.²⁰⁶ It should be stressed however, as with the monastic visitations, only conflicts not concords were revealed.²⁰⁷ Whereas monastic deliberations could take up to three days, parish clergy and their churchwardens were assembled in the largest church within the deanery: business rarely taking longer than a day.²⁰⁸ The surviving documents relate to 367 Lincolnshire churches, of which 222 (60.5%) were owned by religious houses.²⁰⁹

Of the churches visited, 12% of parishioners stated *Omni bene*, nevertheless a number of complaints were levelled at the clergy, both secular and monastic. The commissioners were preoccupied with 'inappropriate' women living in the incumbent's lodging, whether servants or relations.²¹⁰ Most clergy required female assistance within their accommodation. Family members, notably mothers and sisters, would be recruited, with lodging in lieu of payment. However, a canon of Thornholme, acting as vicar of Orby was reprimanded for having his brother, his sister-in-law and another woman in the vicarage.²¹¹ Seventy-eight women (21%) were noted: some respectable, *non-suspectas*, others, 'suspicious women', *suspectam muliereum*. Ideally, a female servant should be honourable, *honestas* and preferably aged, '*veterem*'.

There were some reproaches concerning ceremonies. Clergy at Spalding and East Barkwith were criticized because divine services were performed at the incorrect times.²¹² At Goulceby, the vicar did not perform Vespers at Corpus Christi and a Richard Adelard died without the sacrament.²¹³ In Harrington, the rector recited the articles of faith inaudibly with prayers not recited in English.²¹⁴ Sometimes the accoutrement for services was inadequate. At Laughton, owned by Thornholme,

three books were missing, a directory, missal and the service book, the Breviary and censor needed repair, the Pyx was broken, the chrism container was wooden and two candlesticks were mislaid.²¹⁵

It was not only the clergy who came under scrutiny. There were twenty-four notified cases of alleged incontinence and fornication by parishioners, who if found guilty, would be given penances. Unfortunately, the results of the Lincolnshire visitation are unknown, but an example from the Lichfield and Coventry diocese gives an idea of the punishments involved. On 16th June 1528, the bishop, Geoffrey Blythe (d1530), imposed on Thomas Taylor, after he,

...acknowledged that he knew Helen Butteler carnally...that on Sunday, bare foot, bare legged and bare headed with a candle valued at 1d. in his hand, he shall go before the cross at the time of the procession in penitential manner and that he will kneel before the high altar and will approach the offertory with the candle in his hand afterwards he will give the candle unto the hand of the priest and will stay kneeling until the end of Mass.²¹⁶

In a similar situation, Joan Maller, convicted of incontinence with Edmund Ereley, was told 'to provide meals and give alms to paupers, but also to recite the Lady Psalter every Sunday'.²¹⁷ Here, parishioners witnessed penalties imposed by the ecclesiastical authorities as an integral part of a religious service; both Church and laity combining to enforce spiritual and social connectivity within a community.

The visitation accounts surprisingly make no mention of non-payment of tithes. Parishioner's testaments however reveal that this was a regular occurrence. Settlement of tithes occurs 1,161 times within the Parish Wills, some with multiple declarations. Unpaid debts to the Church might prolong time in Purgatory, so testaments made the appropriate reimbursement. Typical is John Page, who gave 'to the high altare of Gretham [Greetham] for forgottyn or withholdyn tithys xijd'.²¹⁸ John Allowdsday paid both to Lutton church and its owner Castle Acre.²¹⁹ Penance for 'detention of tithes' was undertaken in 1522 by Robert Curtebe of Oadby in Leicestershire, who had to 'kneel in the middle of the choir with a lit candle in his hand and to recite five prayers with the *O salute beate marie*...and to offer the candle

to the principal image'.²²⁰ Again the penance was witnessed by the entire congregation: the penitent collectively making his peace with God and community.

The visitations also exposed clerical poverty. Unless a priest had additional earnings, perhaps from glebe lands or other rents, he would struggle financially. This problem was illustrated via accusations of livestock occupying the cemetery. At West Laughton, 'Sir William Cuthbert, canon of Sempringham allows parishioner's brute animals in the cemetery thereby disgracing it': no doubt some were his own, and probably charged rent for the others.²²¹ This problem occurred at fourteen other churches, although not all animals belonged to the priest.²²² Consequently, complaints of insecure cemeteries, *cimiterium non est bene clausum*, possibly related to the escape of valuable grazing animals rather than protecting a sacred place from encroachment. The visitation findings give a useful outline of the practical problems faced by local parishioners during the early sixteenth-century and the remedies that the bishop proposed to maintain connectivity between Church and people.

(q) Connectivity through Appropriated Churches.

Rectories owned by religious houses are an important factor in uncovering the relationship between the religious and parish communities. As mentioned previously, the maintenance of the chancels of appropriated churches was sometimes inadequate. Consequently parishioners possibly thought that the advowson of a church was merely part of the monastery's general income, along with rents and manor court fines: their spiritual input appearing to be negligible.

Income from rectories was however vital to the long-term economy of monastic houses. By the sixteenth-century, around 311 parish churches in Lincolnshire out of a total of approximately 650 (47.8%) possessed a monastic 'corporation' as their rector.²²³ Margaret Bowker has calculated that between 1495 and 1520, eighty religious had been incumbents in approximately forty-three parishes.²²⁴ The 1519 visitations disclosed a number of regular canons holding a benefice, although some parishioners were displeased with the system. This perhaps discloses some

antipathy towards men who technically have to return to their monastery after services, leaving people without spiritual provision. The parishioners of Rauceby preferred a secular priest to the canon provided by Shelford Priory in Nottinghamshire, twenty-five miles distant.²²⁵ The 1526 Subsidy accounts revealed the Prior of the Lincoln Carmelites also acted as vicar of St. Marks in the city.²²⁶

Canons holding parochial cures may have returned to their monasteries in the evening, leaving parishioners without spiritual provision. Within its constitution, the Premonstratensian order was allowed to provide incumbents for their appropriated churches, providing they were accompanied by a canon *socius*: a companion.²²⁷ In the 1270's two canons from Welbeck in Nottinghamshire were resident in the appropriated church at Cotes by Stow.²²⁸ Welbeck also provided a canon for Whitton who received a rare commendation from the visitor, noting the 'vicar resides and does well'.²²⁹ The rector of Brocklesby was Sir Robert Esington, the former abbot of Newsham: the abbey also providing clergy for Killingholme and Kirmington.²³⁰ The priest at Middle Rasen Topholme was a canon from the abbey thirteen miles away: too far for a daily commute.²³¹

Barlings, the proprietor of Swaton, provided the incumbent, although was noted as non-resident with the abbey over twenty miles away.²³² Barlings occasionally supplied canons to its local appropriated churches at Snelland, Scothern, Stainton by Langworth and Reepham. Within riding distance of the mother house, the canons were encouraged to return for meals and not dine in parishioner's homes.²³³ Whether they stayed overnight in the parish is unknown. If they returned to the monastery spiritual provision was problematic and fostered little confidence between parishioner and monastery. This is evidenced by three wills originating from the manors. Only one donated money specifically for tithes, the remainder only noting tenancy.

A priest's services were required at all times, notably to perform Baptism and Extreme Unction. If a canon returned to his monastery there is little prospect of

administrating to a dying parishioner. This problem may have occurred at Risby, provided with a non-resident canon by Thornholme, just two miles away.²³⁴ Conversely some regulars balked at being absent from their monastery. John Alesby of Wellow served the appropriated church at Clee. In the visitation of 1440, he requested 'to be restored to the cloister as the journey there and back is tiresome'. The church was only two miles from the monastery, where he ate, but returned to the parish, sleeping overnight. The bishop granted his request, because 'it would be better beseen to be intent upon watchings in cloister than to have his conversation among secular folk'.²³⁵ Eighty years later, the parish visitations also note that neither the curate nor the vicar were resident at Clee.²³⁶

In 1377, the canons of Kyme were reprimanded by Bishop Buckingham for serving their churches in person, and not employing a secular vicar.²³⁷ At Wainfleet St. Thomas, Sir Oliver Elward of Kyme was noted as 'not diligent in the duties of his office'.²³⁸ Similarly at Tealby in 1519, Sir William Gayton, chaplain of the chantry was non-resident, being at Watton Priory in Yorkshire, a Gilbertine house, as was Tealby's proprietor, Sixhills.²³⁹ The vicar of Sixhills was also a canon from the nearby nunnery, as was the incumbent of Saleby, who kept a tavern aided by his sister, no doubt for the added income.²⁴⁰ At Alvingham, a canon from the adjacent nunnery took services, with St. Catherine's providing a resident priest from their community for Newton on Trent.²⁴¹ The only monastery providing a priest was Revesby, which contributed an ordained monk to Wilksby, 'as no secular chaplain is willing to serve it', owing to the poverty of the church.²⁴²

A significant factor affecting the connectivity between monastery and parishioner was when an appropriated was church was 'farmed out', thereby severing the parochial relationship.²⁴³ Episcopal licences to lease were however renewable, generally on a three year basis. Although the numbers noted in bishop's registers were small, efforts were made to ensure payment of the vicar's stipend together with retaining rights to the Small Tithe. This secured provision for divine services,

continuing maintenance of church buildings and also poor relief. Nocton Park was cited for not paying the full stipend to the vicar of Dunston, and Frieston for obstructing the vicar of Butterwick from receiving oblations, altar dues and small offerings at the cross.²⁴⁴

The farming of churches nevertheless continued. In 1405, a 'Licence to the prioress and convent of Stixwould to put to farm the appropriated churches of Wainfleet St. Mary, Lavington [Lenton] and Hundleby for two years', was agreed.²⁴⁵ Five years later authorisation was given, 'to the prioress and convent of Stainfield to put to farm the appropriated churches of Quadring, Kirmond-le-Mire, Waddingworth and Marton [Martin by Horncastle] for three years'.²⁴⁶ Stainfield, whose Benedictine nuns were transferred to Stixwould upon its first refoundation in 1536, appears only to have retained Quadring.²⁴⁷ Some of assets were returned to their respective houses, as with Stixwould at its second restoration as a Premonstratensian house in 1537.²⁴⁸ It appears however that in April 1538, eighteen months before final closure, the nuns leased Wainfleet parsonage for seventy-two years at £17 per annum.²⁴⁹

In 1528, 'Dame Elyn Key, [Helen Kay] Prioress of Stixwould,...[leased] to Richard Sawmon of Baumber, yeoman, the parsonage of Baumber and all manner of tithes, arable land, rents, pastures, meadows, etc.'.²⁵⁰ Seven years later the same prioress farmed out to 'Thomas Hall of Huntingdon, gent, the parsonage of Lavington' on a thirty-three year lease that however excluded the advowson of the church.²⁵¹ Either she had no perception of the ensuing problems or was simply securing the nunnery's income. Nevertheless, to most local parishioners this was a side of monasticism that was of little direct concern. Connectivity with the parish church came foremost, whether the advowson was owned by a monastery or lay rector.

In their role as parish priests, regular canons naturally came into direct communication with the laity: a relationship denied to most enclosed religious.²⁵² However some monks obtained papal consent to hold a benefice in their own right. In 1482, Thomas Garforth of Kirkstead was given 'dispensation to receive and retain

for life any benefice with cure governed by secular clerks even if a parish church...'.²⁵³ This was confirmed in 1500,

...to enable Thomas to live among secular clerics more honestly and without scandal to the people, the pope hereby indulges him for life to wear his religious habit under an honest priestly vestment and to proceed in other respects in the manner of secular priests...²⁵⁴

Similarly, John Morlandi a canon of Topholme was '...to receive and retain any benefice, with or without cure, usually held by secular clerics'.²⁵⁵ However, amid fears this process might undermine the ethos of enclosure; in 1529 the activity was proscribed unless permission was obtained from the bishop.²⁵⁶

(r) Education.

During the visitations, complaints regarding non-residence of clergy were voiced, with fifty-two (14%) absent for various reasons. Absenteeism may however have involved education. Three clergy, from Burton by Lincoln, Rand and South Willingham were noted as university students.²⁵⁷ The rector of Waltham, Master John Fitzherbert, was in Paris, presumably at the university: the advowson being owned by Southwell College, where Fitzherbert was a prebendary canon.²⁵⁸

Education was mandatory within the Augustinian order's statutes.²⁵⁹ A General Chapter held at Newstead by Stamford in 1356, decreed that scholars should be sent to university and that teaching of elementary knowledge and grammar should be mandatory in every house.²⁶⁰ In 1534, John Hornclyff of Grimsby gifted Wellow to send his son, an Augustinian canon, to university for a period of eight years.²⁶¹ Although there were some learning facilities within monasteries, noted in the visitations, David Cressey however suggests that the role of monasteries as educational institutions was perhaps on the wane by the time of the Dissolution.²⁶² Following the Suppression former monks may however have acquired teaching posts, some perversely financed by patrons who benefited from the acquisition of monastic property.

Lincolnshire documents give some notion of a commitment by the Church to education. In 1484 at Wigtoft, three pence was paid 'for wood to make ye ptycion [in the] scholl house', and later 'for mending of ye scollhows dor'.²⁶³ The small number of bequests specifically to the 'pupils' of St. Catherine's, display both a wish to educate the needy and equally secure their souls via 'good works'.²⁶⁴ With the closure of St. Catherine's in 1538, donations towards education possibly became more localised. In 1540, John Goderycke, Merchant of the Staple of Calais left £20 'to finding a school for the children of Bolingbroke'.²⁶⁵ Basic schooling therefore appears to have existed at parochial level, with communities acting as benefactors with the priest as tutor. This added to his probably meagre income and was also seen as a worthy communal activity.

(s) Charitable Patronage.

Giving to 'good works' was a mixture of piety and charity, also enhancing the donor's social standing.²⁶⁶ In earlier periods, donations were given to monasteries for distribution to the poor, generally at the gatehouse. In the mid thirteenth-century, Matilda of Horsington donated an unknown amount for '*ad usus pauperum ad portar de Kirkstede*', and John de Carlton gave a toft in Langton for the 'use of the poor'.²⁶⁷ There was a similar process at both Revesby and Vaudey. At the former, 'Juetta, daughter of Alan of Hammeringham, [gave] for the purpose of gate alms at the Abbey 4 acres of arable land'.²⁶⁸ Similarly, there was a 'notification of a grant in free alms for the work of the gate by Agnes de Mundevil to the Blessed Mary of Vaudey and the monks serving God there, a plot of meadow'.²⁶⁹

Charitable patronage also required spiritual rewards in return. A fifteenth-century donation of an advowson and landholdings issued from Sir Robert Tyrwhitt, Justice of the King's Bench (d1427). The licence states that he,

...may give and assign one acre of land in Herpeswell [Harpwell] and the advowson of the church of the same vill to the Abbot and Convent of Louthepark, for the support of certain divine services...and that they may appropriate the said church providing always that the vicarage of the said

church be sufficiently endowed, and that a certain sum of money...be distributed amongst poor parishioners.²⁷⁰

This was an example of connectivity between *patronus* and *monasterium*, by which a gift was rewarded with prayers and time in Purgatory reduced by donations to the poor.

Some donations from earlier periods continued into the sixteenth-century. The will of Alice de Lacy (d1348), patron of Barlings, stipulated that charity to thirteen poor men was to be distributed at the gates. This continued until the Suppression with the huge sum of £18 dispensed each year. Similarly, 6s. 8d. was given in memory of John of Gaunt and his three wives: every poor person at Barlings being given a loaf and a herring.²⁷¹ The abbey also features in the will of John Dowedale, who in 1409 donated to '*Et pauperibus ad portas abbathie de Barlyngs xij d.*'²⁷² At Bardney, 60s. 4d, '*elemosina distribut paupibus*', in memory of Thomas Pery and John Dove, and at the obit of John Cooke '*quondam archidiaconi Lincoln*', 10s. was given to the poor.²⁷³ Twelve pence per week was also to be distributed at Stixwold's gates for the soul of the founder Lucy de Bolingbroke, Countess of Chester (dc 1138).²⁷⁴

Although charity was technically the prerogative of the Church, by the early Tudor period possibly only 2.5% of monastic income was being allocated for this purpose.²⁷⁵ This amount has been challenged by Paul Slack who suggests that in 1537, £6,500 was provided overall from monastic funds: poor relief not matched until 1580.²⁷⁶ Assuming at least 840 religious houses were still in existence in 1537, this figure gives an average of £7.73p per house.²⁷⁷ Of the sixteen houses in Lincolnshire mentioned in the *Valor* as giving alms, the amount totalled £160 per annum, an average of £10 per house.²⁷⁸ At St. Catherine's the orphans were sustained on £21 13s. 4d. per annum, from proceeds of £202 5s. ½d.²⁷⁹ Kirkstead appeared to have profited from lost children. The abbey's Rental states that the 'courts with waifs and stray' was worth yearly £44 8s.'²⁸⁰ Notwithstanding, a dole of surplus food from the monastic kitchens was probably still distributed to the needy, albeit after a lengthy

walk: illustrating a small but important charitable connectivity with local communities.²⁸¹

(t) Financial Difficulties of the Parish Clergy.

The main burden of local spiritual provision was nevertheless laid at the door of the **often** poorly remunerated parish priest. At the turn of the sixteenth-century, most required at least £10 per annum for basic requirements. The majority of benefices were worth less than £7, and in Lincolnshire, just under half had been appropriated by ecclesiastical institutions, notably monasteries.²⁸² Parish clergy also supplemented their incomes by taking employment as chantry and guild priests.²⁸³ This system hardly encouraged the better educated to enter the Church unless they were guaranteed an income via patronage or land holdings.

Rectors were required by the 1391 Act of Mortmain to provide money 'to the poor parishioners of the said churches, to aid their living and sustenance forever; and also that the vicar be well and sufficiently endowed'.²⁸⁴ In principle this law included monastic rectors. The poor were supposed to be sustained by parish charity, administered by the priest but not always carried out. During the 1519 visitation, '*non habent distributiones*' was mentioned twenty-seven times (7.35%), which could **however** imply that the majority were conforming. The clergy at Osbournby dispensed four quarters of grain to the parish, although at Sibsey they neglected to distribute to four paupers 2½ quarters of peas and clothes called 'sloppys'.²⁸⁵

In 1509, Sir Robert Wilkinson, vicar of Reepham, obtained an increased stipend from Barlings, the church's proprietor, of ten quarters of barley, four of peas, 'with oon loode off tithe hey'. He was also assigned shelter for six specified animals fed on pasture owned by the monastery. However, he was only paid 'xxs. off good and lawfull money off Englund', but by 1535, this had risen to £6 13s. 4d.²⁸⁶ In the Kirkstead Rental of c1537, Woodhall church produced £10 6s. 8d. per annum, and Wispington generated £7, but in both cases the priest, probably a curate, was paid £5 6s. 8d.²⁸⁷ This appears to be the 'going rate' for assistant clergy, disregarding

considerable inflation during the period. Margaret Bowker suggests that after charges, the average gross stipend of a vicar in 1526 was £9 9s 1¾d., a net of £6 13s. 1½d. This might also include a share of the tithings, which in straightened economic times would be negligible.²⁸⁸

Some local clergy from the richer benefices were possibly recruited from yeomen families with perhaps husbandmen or peasant stock, similar to the vast majority of parishioners, allocated to the remainder.²⁸⁹ They had to retain a network of social and financial relationships not only with parishioners but also local patrons and where appropriate the monastic rector. Similarly, 'no hospitality' was a feature of the visitation, with twenty clergy (5.4%) neglecting their responsibility. This could however be due to inadequate income rather than deceitful intentions. One exception was the vicar of Winthorpe who was censured for providing hospitality in his brother's house and not the vicarage.²⁹⁰ Additionally, priests **also** had to pay synodals, the cost of episcopal visitations, and also procurations, payment for hospitality. This was in addition to the expenses of daily services, the wine and bread, plus the price of a curate if non-resident.²⁹¹ The minimal pay could possibly be seen as recompense for an enhanced position within the community, but little else.

During the 1519 visitation a parish that attracted numerous complaints was Spalding. Here the large church of St. Nicholas, owned by Spalding priory, was used for the enquiry. The church had no vicar, the monastery supplying two curates, one of which was later removed. The other was poorly educated, and equally poorly remunerated. He was also accused of incontinence and did not celebrate services at regular times, and without a payment of 2d., refused to lead funeral processions to the church from deceased parishioner's houses.²⁹² This alone must have caused considerable animosity between the community and the priory.

The priory was the second richest monastery in Lincolnshire: the establishment clearly visible across the Welland from St. Nicholas's. Comparable to Louth, Boston,

Grimsby and Grantham, St. Nicholas's was a single large parish church situated within a prosperous town, but apparently neglected by its wealthy proprietor. In addition, a visitation of the priory in the same year revealed many shortcomings, mostly financial matters and internal power struggles.²⁹³ Although attracting the largest number of wills for an enclosed monastery, the spiritual parsimony shown towards its parishioners was possibly why out of thirty-eight testators, merely sixteen came from Spalding itself. Of these, only half made a financial commitment: the remainder **just** noting tenancy.

(u) Shared Conventual Churches.

Similar to Bardney, Spalding's parish church, formally adjacent to the priory, had been relocated by the monks to its present site in the late thirteenth-century.²⁹⁴ However, other monasteries shared their conventual churches with the parish: the monks occupying the chancel and parishioners areas of the nave. These included Crowland and its cell at Freiston, Bourne, Kyme, Deeping St. James and possibly Barlings, where architectural remains suggest the north aisle of the nave was parochial.²⁹⁵ On feast days and special celebrations, monastic possessions probably entered via the west door passing through the nave and into the chancel. These were some of the few official contacts between regular and parishioner within a spiritual context rather than as landlord and tenant. Monks and parishioners would have cooperated for the benefit of both parties, but this goes largely unrecorded.

At Crowland, the parish was allocated the north aisle of the nave, with a separate entrance porch, and similar to Spalding, the monastery supplied a curate for parish services.²⁹⁶ The relationship must have been reasonably cordial as few complaints were made in both the monastic and parochial visitations. The only notable reproach was in 1431 by Bishop Gray when the monastic Sacrist was instructed '...to see that vestments and vessels for the lesser altars are washed and repaired and that houses under his jurisdiction, especially that of the parish chaplain, be refurbished as they are ruinous'.²⁹⁷

The bishop was attempting to keep the peace between regular and secular: vital to the stability of a monastery situated within a settlement. Nevertheless, of the twenty-five wills that Crowland attracted none originated from the village. As tenants, local people possibly thought they owed nothing to their monastic landlord. They also probably knew individual monks better than the visitor, especially those with local names: Freiston, Sutton, Stamford, Boston and Crowland itself being examples.²⁹⁸ They consequently withheld donations to a dominant institution perhaps perceived rightly or wrongly as negligent in its spiritual duties, but nevertheless avaricious in its financial dealings. However, compared with many others, Crowland generally received satisfactory visitation reports, although deteriorated under the last abbot, John Wells (Bridges), who was described as 'very arbitrary and unpopular'.²⁹⁹

Another shared monastery positioned within a town was Bourne. From the early thirteenth-century, the abbey's appointed vicar ate at the canon's table, resided in a cottage at the abbey gates, obtained travelling expenses and 20s. towards clothing.³⁰⁰ In 1519, the parishioners complained of no nave altar lamp, the guttering between nave and monastery was in disrepair, and vicar did not process at Rogantide.³⁰¹ Of ten wills noting the monastery only two originated from the town, possibly man and wife.³⁰² In 1508, William Hekington gave 'to the glazing of the cloister and go as far as £5 will last'. He also donated generously to other religious houses, the cathedral, the parochial church and its many guilds and repairs to the local highway.³⁰³

In 1533, Alice Hekington, a vowess, gave 10s. to the abbey for prayers and likewise to the church, with a requirement that, 'Magister Robert Haryngton to have oversight and rewle of my husbande's prest in Bourne church to see that he do hys dewty and pray for my husbande's soule and myne'.³⁰⁴ Evidently, some people in Bourne had concerns over their clergy, both secular and regular. There also appears to be a marked lack of respect towards the canons, who in visitations were often accused of drinking in the town and allowing seculars within the cloister, thereby

denigrating their calling.³⁰⁵ Bourne testators therefore generally gave to the parochial church, with connectivity towards the canons largely absent. This however represented only a small fragment of much undocumented patronage throughout the county, both to monasteries and the parish church.

(v) Patronage during Lifetime.

Although there is considerable evidence of patronage via testaments, confirmation of lifetime donations is more problematical. Another form of connectivity with the parish was income from 'Witwords', legacies given to a church for obits or an annual presentation from the Bede Roll.³⁰⁶ One testator even informed his children not 'to make truble & busyness' concerning the Wittword'.³⁰⁷ Although not always cited in testaments, these gifts are nevertheless revealed in churchwardens' accounts. Louth and Wigtoft have numerous examples and some names correspond to wills. Symond Lyndsay of Louth, who left 6s. 8d., for 'bulding of the broche of Lowth stepull', is also mentioned in the accounts for 1506-7, with an annual payment of 20s. to the church: something not noted in his will.³⁰⁸

John Lawys is mentioned as 'kyrkegrav[e]' of Wigtoft in 1511 and 1512.³⁰⁹ He died in 1525, leaving 3s. 4d., to the church and many donations to the altars.³¹⁰ In 1514, Thomas Snell and Nicholas Thurke, both executors, gave 1s. 8d. 'for the quethe Word of Als Snelle'.³¹¹ In her will Alice left a total of 4s. 6d. to Wigtoft church, and like many testators from Holland also gave to St. Catherine's and the Boston friars.³¹² Robert Lambeson, another churchwarden, left a will with the condition,

...that yff the paryshoners off Wygtofft do take downe the Northe Ile off ther church, then I wyll the forsayd pece of pasture off v acres, called Marche Hylles, be solde be my feoffes, and the mony theroff to be receyvyd to be put to the use off the reedifieng off the sayd Ile.³¹³

The accounts for 1532 note that, 'fyrst receyvd of M. richard Wolmr, for land holde to him Wych Was gyvon to ye church by Robt lambeson Wyll at ye tyme of his deptyng & deth, £2 0s. 0d.'.³¹⁴

In the Wigtoft accounts there are lists of parishioners who gave small amounts of money during life, ranging from 1d. to 8d. These may be gifts or a local church tax: their names unfortunately not transcribed by Nichols.³¹⁵ Nevertheless, the accounts for 1532 show nine gifts totalling £5 3s. 4d., mostly to altar lights within the church. The great majority, totalling £1 6s. 8d., were donated to the Plough Light: the others ranging between 6s. 8d. to 13s. 4d.³¹⁶ The Louth accounts similarly reveals,

...that Agnes moore wydowe...hathe given to the Honor of god one crosse clothe of grene sarsenet having on it the assumption of our Lady whiche clothe was bowght for xxs of the coste & charge of the said Agnes moore & Isabel the wyffe of Mr. Asseby this year.³¹⁷

Likewise, 6s. 8d. was 'gyffen by Johnson of Sawnthorpe for his wyffe to the [same] churche & the highe aulter & ryngyng of the bells, a cow sold by Hughe Benlay'.³¹⁸ These gifts, and no doubt many like them given during lifetime, are not highlighted in wills. They were however the hidden financial backbone of the county's parish churches: the **main** focus of religious patronage.

Conclusion.

Despite closure of the monasteries and changes in religion, local spiritual activities were still closely melded to the long-held beliefs of generations of Lincolnshire parishioners. Save for the short-lived Rising, there was however little opposition to the termination of monasticism after hundreds of years of prayer, piety and penance. The king's commissioner's tore down sixty-five monastic houses, but Lincolnshire parishioners persevered in their religious belief and community spirit, represented by the ageing stonework of their local parish church. Connectivity with the county's religious houses may have been eradicated, but localism, both spiritual and social was active and thriving.

Through the use of churchwarden's accounts, visitation documents, testaments and other documentation, this chapter has highlighted the mechanisms of the Tudor Church and its relevance to local people. Most of the spiritual work was undertaken by an underpaid and sometimes undereducated parish clergy, who nevertheless

held the reigns of a doctrine that the evidence revealed, was both valued and had **been** locally respected for many centuries. The findings suggest that the Church was not moribund and far from ineffectual, but was an essential part of the daily lives of the people of Lincolnshire. The buildings themselves were maintained, architecturally embellished and provided with the accoutrement required for elaborate services. Feasts and ceremonies were still performed; baptisms, marriages and burials continually undertaken. Souls were secured via the parish priest, well known and probably well respected within the largely close-knit communities.

It was this social connectivity that also gave the peripatetic mendicants an advantage over the enclosed regulars, who had little spiritual contact with parishioners. This was not the fault of the monks themselves, but the regulations they inherited from the foundation period and earlier. These precluded contact with the very people their prayers were supposed to aid. Whether the regulars were still implementing these obligations will be the subject of the next chapter, which amongst other aspects will reveal local connectivity between monk and secular; appropriate or otherwise.

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NOTES - CHAPTER FIVE

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- ⁸ *Ibid.*
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- ¹⁰ More: *The Supplication of Souls*. Fisher: *English Works*.
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- ¹² Marshall, P., *Religious Identities in Henry VIII's England* (Aldershot, 2006), 46-7.
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- ¹⁴ Duffy, *Altars*, 338.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid*, 342.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid*, 343.
- ¹⁷ Robson, M., 'The Greyfriars of Lincoln c1230-1330: the establishment of the friars' ministry and life in the city and its environs', in Robson, M., Rohrkasten, J., *Franciscan Organisation in the Mendicant Context: formal and informal structures of the friar's lives and ministry in the middle ages*, Vita Regularis, 44 (Berlin, 2010), 119.
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- ¹⁹ *Ibid*, 245-6.
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- ²¹ LAO, Chedworth Register XX, f. 61r.
- ²² Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*, 16.
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- ²⁴ Haigh, *English Reformations*, 14.
- ²⁵ Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 303. Gilkes, R. K., *The Tudor Parliament* (London, 1969), 117-19.
- ²⁶ MacCullough, D., *Reformation: Europe's house divided, 1490-1700* (London, 2003), 224.
- ²⁷ Visitation articles of 1537, Bishop Lee of Coventry and Litchfield. Marshall, P., *The Catholic Priesthood in the English Reformation* (Oxford, 1994), 14.
- ²⁸ Robson, 'Greyfriars', 116.
- ²⁹ Owen, *Church and Society*, 87. Robson, 'Greyfriars', 121-22.
- ³⁰ Robson, 'Greyfriars', 122. Owst, *Preaching*, 91. Portable altars were authorised by Pope Urban V in 1363. Andrews, F., *The Other Friars: the Carmelites, Augustinians, Sack and Pied friars in the middle ages* (Woodbridge, 2006), 65 and note 35.
- ³¹ Bennett, N (ed.), *The Registers of Henry Burghersh, 1320-1342*: Vol. III, Lincoln Record Society, 101 (2011), 355.
- ³² *Ibid*, 356.
- ³³ Robson, Greyfriars, 124.
- ³⁴ Bennett, *Burghersh*, III, 363, 372.
- ³⁵ *Ibid*, 371-2.
- ³⁶ *Ibid*, 366.
- ³⁷ Owen, *Church and Society*, 87.
- ³⁸ Swanson, R. N., *Catholic England: faith, religion and observance before the Reformation* (Manchester, 1993), 210.
- ³⁹ Hickman, 208-9. 1st November 1533.
- ⁴⁰ Foster, II, 89-90. 1st July 1528.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid*, 89-90. 1st July 1528.
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- ⁴⁴ Sneyd, C. A., *A Relation or rather a True Account of the Islands of England...*, Camden Society, Old Series, 37 (1847), 29.

- ⁴⁵ Robson, 'Greyfriars', 117-18. Bishop Sutton's register notes Hugh de Grimsby, *LRS*, 39, 83-4, 168. *Heads*, II, 433-4, suggests John. Barlings, *Heads*, II, 492.
- ⁴⁶ MacCullough, *Reformation*, 200-1.
- ⁴⁷ Baskerville, *Suppression*, 228. *L&P*, xiii (ii), 170. 23rd August 1538.
- ⁴⁸ Baskerville, *Suppression*, 229. Cross, M. C., 'Communal Piety in Sixteenth-Century Boston', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 25 (1990), 36
- ⁴⁹ PRO, *Reports of the Deputy Keeper of Public Records*, 32 Vols. (London, 1840-1958), 8th Report, Appendix II (1842), 4.
- ⁵⁰ *L&P*, xiii (ii), 567. 8th October 1538
- ⁵¹ 23rd February 1539. Wright, *Letters*, 192.
- ⁵² 'This Tauerner repented him very muche that he had made songes to Popishe ditties in the tyme of hys blindenes'. Townsend, *Acts and Monuments*, V, 50.
- ⁵³ Bowers, R., *DNB*, 53, 836-40.
- ⁵⁴ *L&P*, xiii (ii), 328. 11th September 1538. Cross, 'Communal Piety', 36.
- ⁵⁵ *L&P*, xiv (i), 101. 20th January 1539.
- ⁵⁶ *L&P*, xiv (i), 348. 23rd February 1539.
- ⁵⁷ Taverner became an Alderman in 1545, just prior to his death.
- ⁵⁸ Leithead, H., *DNB*, 14, 366-86. TNA, PROB, 11/23. 25th February 1525.
- ⁵⁹ Eamon Duffy suggests the *Scala* was obtained by Boston in 1510, so consequently this may be a renewal. Duffy, *Altars*, 376. According to William Lunt, the indulgence dates from a Bull of February 1518 and states that Cromwell travelled to Rome for that purpose. Lunt, W. E., *Financial Relations of the Papacy with England, 1327-1534* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962), 496, 510. This date could be challenged by the will of William Peake of Wakefield, that requests mass of *Scala Celli* of our Lady Guild of Boston is dated 1516. Raine, J (Snr.), Raine, J (Jnr.), Clay, J. W (eds.), *Testamenta Eboracensia: a selection of wills from the registry at York (1300-1551)*, 6 vols., Surtees Society, V, 79 (1884) 74.
- ⁶⁰ TNA, PROB, 11/23. 25th February 1525.
- ⁶¹ The *Scala* was based on a vision by St. Bernard of Clairvaux in which he witnessed souls ascending to heaven via a ladder supported by angels. Morgan, N., 'The *Scala Cœli* Indulgence and the Royal Chapels', in Thompson, B., *The Reign of Henry VII*, Proceedings of the 1993 Harlaxton Symposium (Stamford, 1995), 82.
- ⁶² From a German indulgence advertisement of 1499. 'Ibid', 87.
- ⁶³ Foster, III, 154-6. 21st August 1531.
- ⁶⁴ Gibbons, A., *Early Lincoln Wills...* (Lincoln, 1888), 208. 13th September 1527.
- ⁶⁵ Thomson: Foster, II, 196. 2nd May 1530. Sheriff: LAO, Stow Wills, 1531-56, f 342. 25th March 1532.
- ⁶⁶ Article 10. Williams, *Documents*, 804-5.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 805.
- ⁶⁸ LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 49. 10th June 1535.
- ⁶⁹ Swanson, *Catholic England*, 175.
- ⁷⁰ Owen, *Church and Society*, 126.
- ⁷¹ Cole, R. E. G (ed.), *Lincolnshire Church Notes made by Gervase Holles, AD 1634 to AD 1642*, Lincoln Record Society, 1 (1911), 154.
- ⁷² Halborowe, LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 87. 28/1/1534. Gaunte, LAO, LCC, 1520-31, f 272. 12th May 1531. Robertson, TNA, PROB, 11/14. 2nd January 1529.
- ⁷³ Duffy, *Altars*, 195.
- ⁷⁴ Hickman, 126. 1st April 1533.
- ⁷⁵ The highest achieved was £67 3s. 6d., in 1363-64. Nilson, B., *Cathedral Shrines of Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 1998), 222, 225-6.
- ⁷⁶ Rogers, A., *The Act Book of St. Katherine's Guild, Stamford, 1480-1534* (Bury St. Edmund's, 2011).
- ⁷⁷ Rogers, *St. Katherine's Guild*, 8. Cox, J. C., *VCH, Northamptonshire*, II, 170.
- ⁷⁸ Rogers, *St. Katherine's Guild*, 31-2
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 197. John Welles or Bridges was abbot from 1512-39. *Heads*, III, 37.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 31.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid*, 25.
- ⁸² *Ibid*, 59.
- ⁸³ Foster, I, 17. 4th February 1382.
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- ⁸⁷ Rogers, *St. Katherine's Guild*, 144-5.
- ⁸⁸ Hickman, 51.
- ⁸⁹ TNA, PROB, 11/16. 10th August 1508. William Spencer also gave to the local friars and anchoress in St., Michael's. TNA PROB, 11/12. 1st July 1500.

- ⁹⁰ Smith: Foster, III, 35, 10th August 1530. In Sutton, John Clinton: Foster, I, 127-8. 20th March 1523. James Fyshe: Foster, III, 34-5. 10th August 1530. William Jonson: Foster, I, 61-2. 2nd October 1514.
- ⁹¹ Foster, III, 101. 22nd January 1530.
- ⁹² TNA, PROB, 11/22. 28th April 1527.
- ⁹³ Maddison, A. R., 'Lincolnshire Gentry during the Sixteenth Century', *Reports and Papers of the Associated Architectural Societies*, 22 (1894), 209.
- ⁹⁴ Ketteringham, Thesis, 58-61.
- ⁹⁵ Maddison, 'Lincolnshire Gentry', 207.
- ⁹⁶ 'Ibid', 209. Ketteringham, Thesis, 58-61.
- ⁹⁷ Lovatt, R., 'The Imitation of Christ in Late Medieval England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Series, 18 (1968), 100.
- ⁹⁸ There are suggestions that Leland toured Lincolnshire prior to the Suppression noting volumes in monastic libraries. Due to an outbreak of the sweating sickness, he excluded Sixhills, dissolved 1538, and the Augustinian Friars at Boston, closed in 1539; '*non visitavimus causa pestis*'. Liddle, 'Manuscripts', 88, 93. Carley, 'Leland', 330. Smith, *Leland's Itinerary*, V, 34.
- ⁹⁹ *L&P*, V, 1799. Sempringham, 12th Feb 1531: Spalding, 5th June 1531.
- ¹⁰⁰ BL, MS. Royal Appendix 69. Carley, *Libraries*, xxxiii-xxxv. Bishop Longland, who was Henry's confessor and at the centre of the divorce proceedings, may have chosen some works. Carley, 'Leland', 331 and n7.
- ¹⁰¹ Webber, T., Watson, A. G (eds.), *The Libraries of the Augustinian Canons*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, 4 (London, 1998), 411.
- ¹⁰² Liddle, 'Manuscripts', 94. And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing; he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless'. Lev, Ch. 20, v 21.
- ¹⁰³ Preest, D (ed.), *William of Malmesbury: The deeds of the Bishops of England* (Woodbridge, 2001), 46. Carley, 'Leland', 333.
- ¹⁰⁴ Carley, 'Leland', 332.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Historia* (BL Egerton 3668). Gilbert is described as '*quondam abbatis de Hoylandia*', Holland being the name that Swineshead was previously identified. Liddell, 'Manuscripts', 90, 94.
- ¹⁰⁶ Kirkstead: *Robertus de Bridlington super Exodum* (BL, Royal MS 3 B. iv). Revesby: *Super prophetas duodecim minores* (Oxford, St John's College, MS 46), Grosseteste *Sermones* (BL. Royal, 7 D, xv). Bell, D. N (ed.), *The Libraries of the Cistercians, Gilbertines and Premonstratensians*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, 3 (London, 1992), 31, 86.
- ¹⁰⁷ Bell, *Libraries of the Cistercians*, 154-5. Liddell, 'Manuscripts', 90. Goering, J., *DNB*, 38, 873-4.
- ¹⁰⁸ Thompson, I: 21, 330, n.1.
- ¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Clarke, A. L., 'John Leland and King Henry VIII', *The Library*, 3rd Series, 2 (1911), 140.
- ¹¹⁰ Putnam, G. H., *Books and their Makers in the Middle Ages* (London, 1896), 138.
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 134.
- ¹¹² North, T., Drayton, M., *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, Vol. 4, Prose and Poetry (Cambridge, 1907-21), 8.
- ¹¹³ LAO, Scothern, PAR/10/1. Leadbetter, S. 'A Recently Identified Fragment of a Premonstratensian Antiphoner belonging to St. Germain's Church, Scothern, perhaps from Barlings Abbey', in Everson, P., Stocker, D., *Custodians of Continuity?: the Premonstratensian abbey at Barlings and the landscape of ritual* (Heckington, 2011), 427. Jurkowski, et. al. *English Monastic Estates*, 261.
- ¹¹⁴ From *The New Years Gift to Henry VIII*, quoted in Clarke, 'John Leland', 142.
- ¹¹⁵ Foster, C. W., 'English Church Furniture, A.D 1566', *Lincolnshire Notes & Queries*, 14 (1916-17), 173.
- ¹¹⁶ Hickman, 122, n, 76 -7. 25th March 1533.
- ¹¹⁷ Dickens, A. G., *The English Reformation* (London, 1989), 27
- ¹¹⁸ BL Sloane MS. 1584.
- ¹¹⁹ Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*, 14-15.
- ¹²⁰ Dickens, *English Reformation*, 27-8.
- ¹²¹ Bodl. Oxf., MS Tanner 407. Shinnars, J., *Medieval Popular Religion: a reader* (Peterborough, Canada, 1999), 335-76.
- ¹²² Louis, C., 'Reynes, Robert', *DNB*, www.oxforddnb.com. Accessed, 4/7/2011.
- ¹²³ In 1301-2, Roger Bigod III, Earl of Norfolk (1270-1306), gave Acle manor to Tintern, which, at £55 in 1535 was accounting for a quarter of the abbey's income. <http://cistercians.shef.ac.uk/abbey/tintern.php>. Accessed 4/7/2011. *Mon. Ang.*, V, 273.
- ¹²⁴ Louis, C., 'Reynes, Robert', *DNB*, www.oxforddnb.com. Accessed 4/7/2011. Colstone was abbot on occasions between 1460 and 1486. *Heads*, III, 341.
- ¹²⁵ Louis, C., *The Commonplace Book of Richard Reynes: an addition of Tanner MS 407* (New York, 1980), 489-90.
- ¹²⁶ Duffy, *Altars*, 71. Louis, 'Reynes', *DNB*, www.oxforddnb.com. Accessed 4/7/2011.
- ¹²⁷ 'The Glorious Virgin Mary's Age'. Shinnars, *Popular Religion*, 336.
- ¹²⁸ Shinnars, *Popular Religion*, 371.

- ¹²⁹ *Ibid.* There were Carmelite friaries at Norwich and Yarmouth, both ten miles from Acle. There was no friary at Ely.
- ¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 363.
- ¹³¹ Bryant, G. F., Plumb, G. A., *How Thow Schalt Thy Paresche Preche: John Myrc's instructions for parish Priests*, 2 Vols. (Barton-on-Humber, 1999, 2003), II, 96.
- ¹³² *Ibid.*, 95.
- ¹³³ Bryant & Hunter, *John Myrc*, I, 60, lines 404 – 412.
- ¹³⁴ Marshall, *Catholic Priesthood*, 88-9.
- ¹³⁵ *Exornatorium Curatorum*. Marshall, *Catholic Priesthood*, 90.
- ¹³⁶ Dudding, R. C (ed.), *The First Churchwardens' Book of Louth, 1500-1524* (Oxford, 1941), 150-58.
- ¹³⁷ Anon, *Hagworthingham Church Book*, Lincolnshire Notes & Queries, I (1888-9), 8.
- ¹³⁸ Marshall, *Catholic Priesthood*, 89.
- ¹³⁹ Hickman, 117-18. 16th March 1532.
- ¹⁴⁰ Peacock, E., 'Churchwardens' Accounts of Saint Mary's, Sutterton', *Archaeological Journal*, 39 (1882), 57.
- ¹⁴¹ Dudding, *Churchwardens'*, 190-2, 197, 220.
- ¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 220.
- ¹⁴³ *L&P*, XI, 828 (i), 1. 21st October 1536, and *ibid.* (iii), 1. 23rd October 1536.
- ¹⁴⁴ Louth Park closed 8th September 1536. *MRH*, 122.
- ¹⁴⁵ Ward, *Rising*, 27.
- ¹⁴⁶ *L&P*, XII (i), 70 (1). Kendall had been an Oxford theologian. The advowson of Louth had been previously sold by Longland to the king in 1535. Davis, C. S. L., 'Popular Religion and the Pilgrimage of Grace', in Fletcher, A. J., Stevenson, J., *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1986), 69, n49.
- ¹⁴⁷ The Act of 1529 (21 Hen. 8. c. 6), stipulated that no mortuary was paid by those whose assets were under 10 Marks, between 10 and 30 Marks, 3s. 4d., between 30 and 40 Marks, 6s. 8d., and over 40 Marks, 10s. Hickman, 3, n 1.
- ¹⁴⁸ Hickman, 22-4, 50.
- ¹⁴⁹ Owen, *Church and Society*, 16-17. Mellows, W. T., 'The Estates of the Monastery of Peterborough in the County of Lincoln, pt. 2', *Lincolnshire Historian*, 4 (1949), 139.
- ¹⁵⁰ Quoted from Coulton, *Medieval Studies*, 253.
- ¹⁵¹ Thompson, II: **33**, 79.
- ¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 95.
- ¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 69, 80.
- ¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.
- ¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 70-71.
- ¹⁵⁶ Pevsner, et. al., *Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*, 156, 538. Grantham St. Wulfram's spire is 282 feet high. Maddison, J., 'The Church of St. Wulfram 2: the tower and spire', in Start, D., Stocker, D., *The Making of Grantham: the Medieval town* (Heckington, 2011), 90.
- ¹⁵⁷ Monckton, L., "'The beste and fairest of al Lincolnshire': the parish church of St. Botolph, Boston.", in Badham, S., Cockerham, P (eds.), *The beste and fayrest of al Lincolnshire': the church of St. Botolph, Boston, Lincolnshire, and its medieval monuments*, BAR, British Series, 554 (2012), 46.
- ¹⁵⁸ Bradley: TNA, PROB, 11/20. 18th June 1519. Lyncoln: TNA, PROB, 11/14. 10th April 1505.
- ¹⁵⁹ TNA, PROB, 11/14. 24th June 1499. Little is known of the leper house in Louth other than an indulgence granted in 1314 by Bishop Dalderby. Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 234.
- ¹⁶⁰ Foster, I, 177-8. 27th September 1526.
- ¹⁶¹ Thompson, II: **33**, xxvi.
- ¹⁶² Hoode: Hickman 244-5. 12th December 1533. Lyndeley: Hickman, 18-19. 5th May 1532. Alford St. Wilfrid's has a tower and a tower-arch rebuilt between 1525-35. www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk. Accessed 1/11/2010.
- ¹⁶³ LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 30. Maddison, A. R., *Lincolnshire Wills, First Series A.D. 1500-1600* (Lincoln, 1888), 17. 15th April 1535.
- ¹⁶⁴ Thompson, II: **33**, 79, 83, 91, 95. Friskney's advowson was a moiety between Bullington and St. Catherine's.
- ¹⁶⁵ Pevsner, et. al., *Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*, 594.
- ¹⁶⁶ Clymson: Hickman, 340-2. 26th June 1534. Sevyll: LAO, LCC, 1538-40, f 110, 4th June 1538. Grene: LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 85. 22nd April 1535.
- ¹⁶⁷ The Sir Nicholas Cantilupe chantry was situated in the south aisle of the Angel Choir: the torso of his effigy is still extant.
- ¹⁶⁸ Pevsner, et. al., *Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*, 755.
- ¹⁶⁹ Simon Marcande: Hickman, 249-50, 25th December 1533. John White: LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 131, 6th June 1535. William Whyte: LAO, EpR (Misc), Pope I, f 52, 22nd January 1539. Richard Whyte: Hickman, 27. 1st June 1532.
- ¹⁷⁰ LAO, LCC, 1534 &., f 104, 12th March 1539.
- ¹⁷¹ Venables & Maddison, *Louth Park*, 19.

- ¹⁷² BL MS Cotton Vespasian. B. xi, f 32, quoted from Owen, A. E. B., 'Mablethorpe St. Peter's and the Sea', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 21 (1986), 61. The site of Hagnaby Abbey is about 2½ miles from the present coastline.
- ¹⁷³ Pevsner, et. al., *Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*, 548.
- ¹⁷⁴ Salter, H (ed.), *A Subsidy Collected in the Diocese of Lincoln in 1526, I, Lincolnshire* (Oxford, 1909), 16-17.
- ¹⁷⁵ Foster, C. W., 'Inventories of Church Goods, A.D.1548', *Reports & Papers of the Associated Architectural Societies*, 34 (1917-18), 35.
- ¹⁷⁶ LAO, PAR, Louth St. James, 7/2, f 36. Gunn, S. J., 'Piers, Commons and Gentry in the Lincolnshire Revolt of 1536', *Past and Present*, 123 (1989), 66.
- ¹⁷⁷ There are forty-eight churches in Lincolnshire with surviving elements of Saxon masonry. Taylor, H. M., Taylor, J., *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, Vol. II (1980), 727-8.
- ¹⁷⁸ The Kirton limestone is good for building material but not for delicate carving. Peacock, E., 'Kirton in Lindsey: churchwardens' accounts etc.', *The Antiquary*, 19 (1889), 20.
- ¹⁷⁹ Pevsner, et. al., *Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*, 798.
- ¹⁸⁰ CPR, 28 Edw I, 21st November 1299; 4 Edw III, 22nd August 1330; 5 Edw III, 29th January 1331. Raban, S., *The Estates of Thorney and Crowland: a study in medieval monastic land tenure* (Cambridge, 1977), 70, 84. Wigtoft rectory was rated at £10 in the *Valor* with Augmentations raising this to £13 6s. 8d. *Mon. Ang.*, V, 554, 556-7.
- ¹⁸¹ Nichols, J., *Illustrations of the manners and expences of antient times in England...* (London, 1797), 213. www.galegroup.com. Accessed 7/10/2008
- ¹⁸² *Ibid*, 211. Possibly a bellcote holding the Sanctus bell, although there is no evidence of one today.
- ¹⁸³ *Ibid*, 87, 230.
- ¹⁸⁴ Dudding, *Churchwardens'*, 27, 110, 177.
- ¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 129.
- ¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, xii.
- ¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, xviii.
- ¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 36, 38, 41, 42.
- ¹⁸⁹ LAO, Par 7/2, Louth St. James Churchwardens', Accounts, f 4.
- ¹⁹⁰ Smith, Leland's Itinerary, V, 36.
- ¹⁹¹ Dudding, *Churchwardens'*, 96, 159.
- ¹⁹² LAO, Par 7/2, f 38.
- ¹⁹³ Dudding, *Churchwardens'*, 32.
- ¹⁹⁴ Nichols, *Illustrations*, 224.
- ¹⁹⁵ Peacock, E., 'Extracts from the Churchwardens' Accounts of the Parish of Leverton in the County of Lincoln', *Archaeologia*, 41 (1866), 339-40.
- ¹⁹⁶ Nichols, *Illustrations*, 200, 202.
- ¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 16.
- ¹⁹⁸ Duffy, *Morebath*, 25.
- ¹⁹⁹ LAO, LCC, 1538-40, f 178. 22nd March 1538.
- ²⁰⁰ Hickman, 19-21. 6th May 1532.
- ²⁰¹ Nichols, *Illustrations*, 220.
- ²⁰² *Ibid*, 219.
- ²⁰³ Edden, V., 'The Devotional Life of the Laity in the Late Middle Ages', in Dyas, D., Edden, V., Ellis, R (eds.), *Approaching Medieval English Anchoritic and Mystical Texts* (Cambridge, 2005), 39.
- ²⁰⁴ Peacock, 'Churchwardens' Accounts, Sutterton', 61.
- ²⁰⁵ 'Ibid', 62.
- ²⁰⁶ These were officially the deanery visitations, implemented at deanery level.
- ²⁰⁷ Heal, M. R. V., 'Monastic-Parochial Churches in Late Medieval England', in Burgess, C., Duffy, E (eds.), *The Parish in Late Medieval England: proceedings of the 2002 Harlaxton symposium* (Donington, 2006), 58.
- ²⁰⁸ Thompson, II: 33, xxiii. The churches were Boston, Spalding, Bourne, Wragby, Horncastle, Louth, Spilsby, Partney, Alford, Grimsby, Elsham, Appleby, Kirton in Lindsey, Corringham and Torksey, St. Mary.
- ²⁰⁹ Only one of the eight Kesteven deaneries was visited.
- ²¹⁰ Thompson, II: 33, xxiv.
- ²¹¹ *Ibid*, 79.
- ²¹² *Ibid*, 61-2, 63.
- ²¹³ *Ibid*, 67.
- ²¹⁴ *Ibid*.
- ²¹⁵ *Ibid*, 98.
- ²¹⁶ Postles, D., 'What Happened to Penance in the Sixteenth Century?', in Holland, K (ed.), *Mender of Disorders: court and community in the Archdeaconry of Nottingham, 1560-1756* (Nottingham, 2004), 54.
- ²¹⁷ 'Ibid', 55.
- ²¹⁸ Hickman, 149. 4th May 1533.

- ²¹⁹ LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 246. 28th January 1537.
- ²²⁰ Postles, 'Penance', 55.
- ²²¹ Thompson, II: **33**, 57. Cuthbert was probably acting a parish priest in the now deserted village; there is no evidence of his name in the pension listings.
- ²²² *Ibid*, 56, 59, 71, 79.
- ²²³ *Church and Society*, 134-5, quoted from Thompson, A.H., *The English Clergy and their Organisation in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1947), 115. Gerald Hodgett suggests 632 parishes, not including chapels. Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*, 9.
- ²²⁴ Owen, *Church and Society*, 135, quoted from Bowker, *Secular Clergy*, Appendix III.
- ²²⁵ Owen, *Church and Society*, 135.
- ²²⁶ *Ibid*. Salter, *Subsidy*, 80.
- ²²⁷ Thompson, A. H., 'The Pestilences of the Fourteenth Century in the Diocese of York', *Archaeology Journal*, 71 (1914), 118. *RO*, II, 292.
- ²²⁸ Everson & Stocker, *Custodians of Continuity*, 332.
- ²²⁹ Thompson, II: **33**, 94.
- ²³⁰ *Ibid*, 91.
- ²³¹ *Ibid*, 89.
- ²³² *Ibid*, 56.
- ²³³ Everson & Stocker, *Custodians of Continuity*, 332.
- ²³⁴ Thompson, II: **33**, 92.
- ²³⁵ Thompson, I: **21**, 394-5.
- ²³⁶ Thompson, II: **33**, 87.
- ²³⁷ Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 173.
- ²³⁸ Thompson, II: **33**, 80.
- ²³⁹ *Ibid*, 88.
- ²⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 63, 82..
- ²⁴¹ *Ibid*, 74, 98-99.
- ²⁴² *Ibid*, 67. Owen, *Church and Society*, 135. Revesby held the manor of Wilksby, not the church. Jurkowski, et. al., *Monastic Estates*, 284.
- ²⁴³ *RO*, III, 248-9.
- ²⁴⁴ Archer, *Repingdon*, III, 168, 175.
- ²⁴⁵ Archer, *Repingdon*, I, 46. 10th September 1405.
- ²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 179. 25th October 1410.
- ²⁴⁷ *Mon. Ang.*, IV, 310.
- ²⁴⁸ *L&P*, XII (ii), 411 (27).
- ²⁴⁹ www.ucl.ac.uk/history2/englishmonasticarchives.
- ²⁵⁰ TNA, E 118/1/31/64, f 48-9. 1st October 1528.
- ²⁵¹ TNA, E 118/1/31/58, f 41-42. LAO, 1 ANC/1A/10/1. 4th March 1535.
- ²⁵² Thompson, II: **33**, xxxii-xxxiii.
- ²⁵³ *CPL*, XIII, Pt. II, 1471-1484, 814. 29th January 1482.
- ²⁵⁴ *CPL*, XVII, Pt. I, 1495-1503, 21. 4th December 1500.
- ²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 483. 7th May 1502.
- ²⁵⁶ Logan, D., *Runaway Religious in Medieval England, c.1240-1540* (Cambridge, 1996), 60.
- ²⁵⁷ Thompson, II: **33**, 65, 99.
- ²⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 85. A John Fytzherbert became a clerk at Southwell in 1499, later becoming prebendary, and was alive in 1547. Leach, A. F., *Visitations and Memorial of Southwell Minster*, Camden Society, n/s, 48 (1891), 150, 159.
- ²⁵⁹ 'The prior is ...to cause one to instruct them [the canons] in grammar'. Weaver, F. W., 'Barlinch Priory', *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 54 (1909), 87.
- ²⁶⁰ Salter, H. E., *The Triennial Chapters of the Augustinian Canons*, Oxford Historical Society, 74 (1922), xxvi, xxxi, xxxiv, 184.
- ²⁶¹ Hickman, 364-5. 20th September 1534. There is no record of John Hornclyff at Oxbridge or in the pension's listings.
- ²⁶² Cressy, D., *Education in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1975), 6.
- ²⁶³ Nichols, *Illustrations*, 79, 197, 212.
- ²⁶⁴ The twenty testators (2.8%) giving to St. Catherine's state 'pupils and orphans'.
- ²⁶⁵ TNA, PROB, 11/28. 11th May 1540.
- ²⁶⁶ Swanson, *Church and Society*, 299.
- ²⁶⁷ LAO, RA/1/Kirkstead/1/18, 19, 20.
- ²⁶⁸ LAO, RA/1/Revesby/4/79.
- ²⁶⁹ LAO, 2ANC1/1/20.
- ²⁷⁰ *CPR*, 1408-13, 48. 4th February 1409. Venables & Maddison, *Louth Park*, 63.

- ²⁷¹ VE, iv, 130. Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 204.
- ²⁷² Archer, *Repingdon*, I, 179.
- ²⁷³ VE, IV, 82. Archdeacon 1481-94.
- ²⁷⁴ VE, IV, 38.
- ²⁷⁵ RO, III, 264, quoting Savine, 'English Monasteries', 238-9. Slack, P., *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1988), 13.
- ²⁷⁶ Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, 13.
- ²⁷⁷ *MRH*, 494.
- ²⁷⁸ Rushton, N. S., 'Monastic Charitable Provision in Tudor England: quantifying and qualifying poor relief in the early sixteenth century', *Continuity and Change*, 16:1 (2001), 23.
- ²⁷⁹ VE, IV, 34.
- ²⁸⁰ Owen, 'Kirkstead Abbey', 45.
- ²⁸¹ The food allowance of a deceased monk was distributed to the poor for a month. RO, III, 265, n3.
- ²⁸² Owen, *Church and Society*, 134-5. Kümin, B., *Shaping of a Community*, 130.
- ²⁸³ Kümin, *Shaping of a Community*, 130.
- ²⁸⁴ 15, Ric II, c5. *Statutes*, 80.
- ²⁸⁵ Thompson, II: **33**, 55, 78.
- ²⁸⁶ In his will, Wilkinson left only a brass pot to his church. LAO, Stow Wills, 1530-52, f 85. 10th February 1539. Clark, A., *Lincoln Diocese Documents, 1450-1544*, Early English Texts Society, 149 (1914), 132. VE, IV, 129.
- ²⁸⁷ Owen, 'Kirkstead Abbey', 41.
- ²⁸⁸ Bowker, *Secular Clergy*, 140-41.
- ²⁸⁹ Bryant & Plumb, *John Myrc*, II, 6.
- ²⁹⁰ Thompson, II: **33**, 80.
- ²⁹¹ Heal, F., 'Economic Problems of the Clergy', in Heal, F., O'Day, R (eds.), *Church and Society in England: Henry VIII to James I* (1977), 101.
- ²⁹² *Ibid*, 60-61.
- ²⁹³ Thompson, II: **37**, 97-98. Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 123.
- ²⁹⁴ Pevsner, & Harris, *Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*, 670.
- ²⁹⁵ Everson & Stocker, *Custodians of Continuity*, 330.
- ²⁹⁶ Thompson, I: **7**, 37, n 1.
- ²⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 36-37.
- ²⁹⁸ Hodgett, G. A. J., *The State of Ex-Religious and Former Chantry Priests in the Diocese of Lincoln, 1547-74*, Lincoln Record Society, Vol. 53 (1959).
- ²⁹⁹ Graham, R., *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 117. Thompson, II: **35**, 108-11.
- ³⁰⁰ Birkbeck, J. D., *History of Bourne* (Bourne, 1970), 25.
- ³⁰¹ Thompson, II: **33**, 57-58.
- ³⁰² There is conflicting evidence concerning Alice and William. In his will William wishes to be 'buried in the choere within the pisshe church of Burne under the stone there as my wif lyeth': Alice therefore was possibly his second wife. TNA, PROB, 11/16. 1508.
- ³⁰³ *Ibid*.
- ³⁰⁴ Alice, nee Walcot, was the maternal grandmother of William, Lord Burghley, born in Bourne in 1520. She left a cow to her daughter, Jane Cecil, the mother of William. Hickman, 261. 7th January 1533. Maddison, *Lincolnshire Wills*, 9.
- ³⁰⁵ Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 177-78.
- ³⁰⁶ A will or testament also a covenant. *OED*.
- ³⁰⁷ Richard Popplewell, Husbandman of Belton. LAO, Stow Wills, 1531-56, f 193. 14th December 1538.
- ³⁰⁸ TNA, PROB, 11/14. 12th September 1504. Dudding, *Churchwardens'*, 86.
- ³⁰⁹ Nichols, *Illustrations* 204-5.
- ³¹⁰ Foster, I, 148-9. 9th June 1525.
- ³¹¹ 'Quethe Word' is a derivation of Witword. Nichols, *Illustrations*, 207.
- ³¹² Foster, I, 59-60. 6th May 1514.
- ³¹³ Foster, II, 37-8. 19th July 1527. The north aisle is 14th century, with no visible signs of major alterations, other than a vestry to the east.
- ³¹⁴ Nichols, *Illustrations* 220.
- ³¹⁵ *Ibid*, 198, 210, 214, 215, 226.
- ³¹⁶ *Ibid*, 219-20.
- ³¹⁷ LAO, Par 7/2, Louth St. James Churchwardens' Accounts, f 23. 1532.
- ³¹⁸ *Ibid*, f 28. 1534.

CHAPTER SIX

Visitation

Diocesan bishops shall make it their business to reform the monasteries under their jurisdiction...that they find more in them worthy of commendation than of correction.¹

The Fourth Lateran Council: Canon 12.

This study would be incomplete without analysing details of the episcopal visitations. The investigation will therefore uncover whether the monasteries were well administrated or alternatively in steady decline. The chapter will also reveal the challenges bishops faced in preserving stability within tight-knit communities of monks and nuns from the fifteenth-century onwards. Also illustrated will be the problems he confronted in implementing his corrections to a monastery's administration, both economic and spiritual, and whether the outcome was growing stability or recurrent turmoil. However, these important documents were primarily investigated to help answer the main research question as to whether Lincolnshire's religious houses retained a sense of connectivity with the local population beyond the cloister, for whose souls they were in theory praying.

To perform effectively a monastery was required to be a place of peace, prayer and spiritual fulfilment. The head of the house was obliged to be rigorous in regard to the daily recital of worship, study and meditation. Without a sense of equity and careful financial administration, divisions and conflict could easily occur within monastic communities. Therefore the relationship with patrons and benefactors required prudence and integrity, along with honesty and openness in dealings with diocesan visitors.

The principle of episcopal scrutiny was consequently to first attain and then safeguard these ideals in order to preserve *stabilitas*, stability. Without a stable environment, religious communities, like any other organisation, could descend into

factional disarray. A minority of malcontents might easily infect the remainder of the establishment, leading to spiritual laxity and even apostasy. Superiors who did not espouse discipline and authority within their monasteries lost the respect of the brethren and consequently governed ineffectively. It was therefore incumbent on the diocesan to enquire into the conduct of the whole community, requiring them to coalesce together, thereby creating a spiritually and economically secure environment in which to perform the *Opus Dei*.

The surviving visitation reports are some of the few comprehensive documents that expose every-day life within a monastery. In Lincolnshire, as in other parts of the country, the visitations uncovered financial intrigues, divisive internal politics and underlying social tensions within the county's Benedictine, Augustinian and Premonstratensian monasteries. Equally important, the documents to a degree revealed the overall condition of monasticism and whether the differing policies of the successive bishops of Lincoln succeeded in upholding monastic discipline. It is vital to remember however that the visitation process was specifically designed to find fault, not to praise.

Crucial for this study, the findings will also relate to the monasteries economic activities within nearby communities. The administration of granges, churches and mills were key areas examined by the bishop. Visitations also exposed the relationship between the diocesan and the religious, and whether his injunctions were implemented. Opportunities to settle old scores arose: giving evidence against a fellow monk could possibly facilitate advancement within the monastery's hierarchy. Importantly, accounts of misconduct within the monastery were perhaps disclosed to the local population. In the case of Sir Thomas Cumberworthe noted below, negative revelations possibly compromised regular patronage and respect for the entire ethos of monasticism. The monks' connectivity with the local population was therefore high on the bishop's agenda.

Some orders, notably Carthusians, Cistercians, Gilbertines, Premonstratensians, and the friars were exempt from episcopal authority: maintaining instead a system of internal scrutiny. Nevertheless, visitation documents dating from the late fifteenth-century relating to the six Premonstratensian houses in Lincolnshire, correlated by Richard Redman, Abbot of Shap (d1505) have survived.² It is especially unfortunate that no similar examples exist for the Gilbertine order, considering its strong connections with Lincolnshire.³ Yet, with this notable exception, all the county's nunneries were incorporated into the visitation process. These included the 'Cistercian' houses, which, although acknowledging the order's edicts, were not recognised by Cîteaux and consequently liable for both visitation and taxation.⁴

It was not until the Act of Supremacy in 1534, that all monasteries whatever their affiliation, were subject to outside scrutiny. However, no lordly cleric would provide adjudications. Commissioners of the king, authors of the *Compendium Compertorum*, composed with considerable haste during 1535-6, would be both judge and jury.⁵ **(Plate 6:1)**. These visitations were not an antidote to monastic misdemeanour, previously 'cured' through penance and prayer, but a collation of accusations to be used against the regulars. If enough regulars were 'discredited', then influential opinion might turn against the entire monastic system. The results were employed by Thomas Cromwell as part of his campaign of opposition to 'conservative' ideology within the Church: epitomised by monasticism.

Although some documents maybe lost, the authors of the *Comperta* appear to have circumvented Lincolnshire.⁶ The Lincoln Corporation Registers however note, '24th Nov. 1535 [that] Persons [were] appointed to view the house of Heynynges abbey in St. Michael's parish, and to certify whether it be able to stand or not'.⁷ Nevertheless, the *Comperta* has largely been discredited, partly due to its hastily conducted interrogations compared with the more relaxed deliberations of the bishops. Regulars reported as 'wishing to leave religion' along with numerous 'sodomites' and 'incontinent' per monastery were almost certainly far in excess of reality.

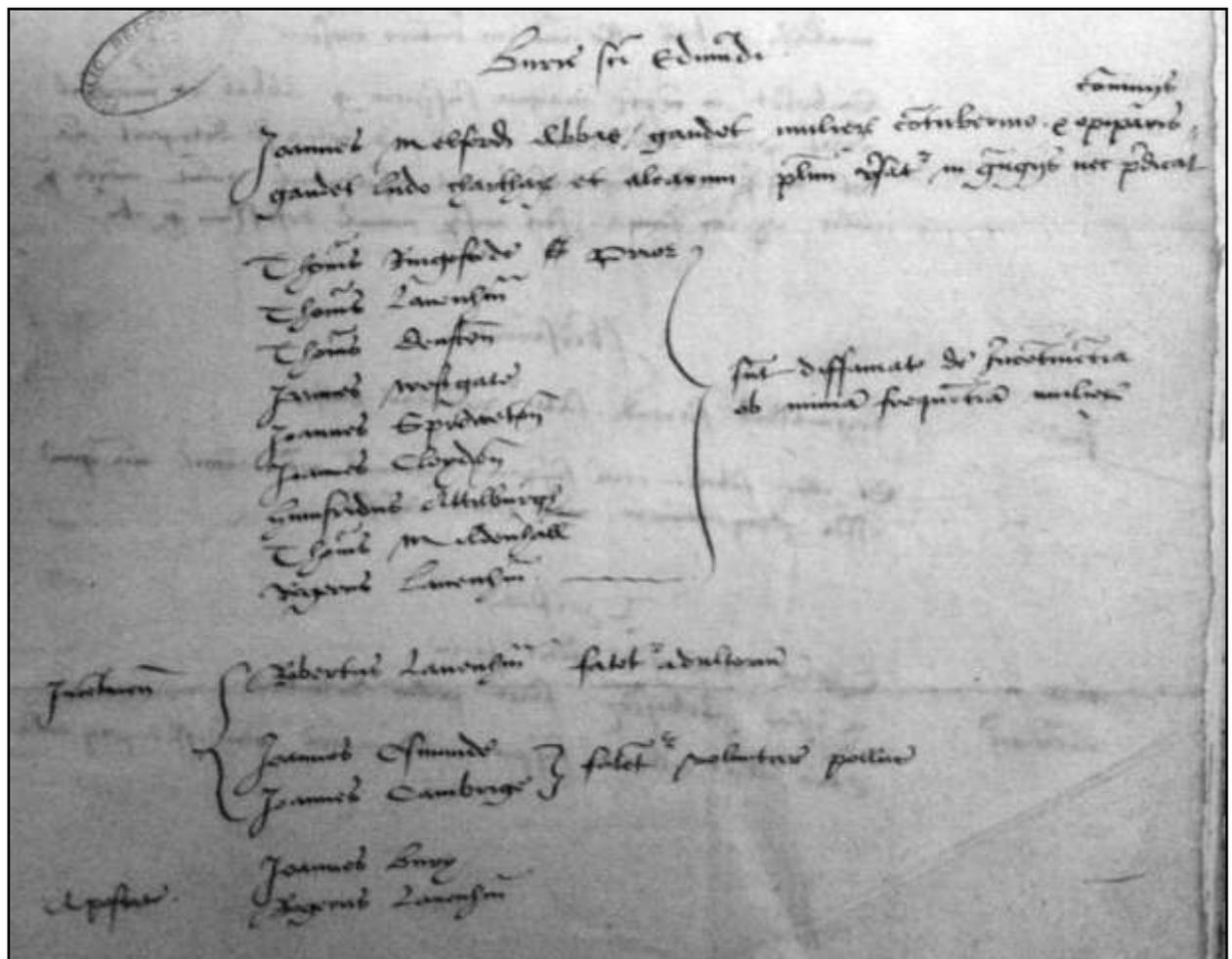


Plate 6:1. A later abridged version of the *Compendium Compertorum* for Bury St. Edmunds. TNA, SP 1/102, f35 [103].

One of the more contemporary copies notes, 'John Melford, the abbot, delights in the company of women and in sumptuous banquets; he delights in cards and dice, lives much in his granges, and does not preach. Thomas Ringstede, the prior, and 8 others, are defamed for incontinence with women; 1 confesses adultery, and 2 "voluntar. polluc."; 2 apostates. Vain and fictitious relics: the shirt of St. Edmund, blood of Christ, some parts of Holy Cross, the stone with which St. Stephen was stoned, the coals with which St. Lawrence was roasted, also parings of the nails and of the hair of St. Edmund in a pix, some skulls, among which they have one of St. Petronilla, which simple folk put on their heads, hoping thereby to be delivered from fever. They have also the boots of St. Thomas of Canterbury, and the sword of St. Edmund. It is the custom whenever rain is wanted to carry about in processions the shrine containing the bones of St. Botolph, in the hope that rain will come the sooner. Anile superstition: Kentish men are accustomed to carry thence "triticum panxillum" and wax candles, which they light at the end of the field while the wheat is sown, and hope from this

Later visits, as part of the dissolution process, overturned some of the *Compertor's* findings; to a certain extent discrediting its principal authors, Richard Layton and Thomas Legh. Layton's visit to Nun Appleton in Yorkshire revealed that the Sub-prioress Elizabeth Normanville and Margaret Carter had previously given birth. Given that Elizabeth was fifty-six and Margaret forty-seven, unless the children were born far earlier this was clearly impossible. Additionally, Archbishop Lee's visitation of 1535 and the later commissioner's report did not support this accusation; Elizabeth later becoming the last prioress.⁸

Layton's letter to Cromwell of June 1535 also exposes his prejudices especially concerning the reformation in the North.

There can be no better way to beat the King's authority into the heads of the rude people in the North than to show them that the King intends reformation and correction of religion. They are more superstitious than virtuous, long accustomed to frantic fantasies and ceremonies, which they regard more than either God or their prince, right far alienate from true religion.⁹

It is therefore initially puzzling that when visiting the cathedral priory at Durham both Legh and Layton's reports ran contrary to their general findings in the North. Both the monastery and Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall (1530-58), received considerable praise. Layton stated that 'never yet a woman in the abbey...nor the monks never come within the town'. Legh wrote that Tunstall preached 'to the utter abolishment of the Bishop of Rome'. Nevertheless, both nepotism and patronage were behind these benevolent expressions. Layton was the bishop's nephew and Legh had lately become Master of Sherburn hospital, in the gift of the bishop.¹⁰

(a) The Process of Visitation.

Before discussing the Lincolnshire visitations, it is worthwhile giving a brief overview of the procedure. The visit could last up to three days, with the superior notified in advance.¹¹ Unless the monastery was in a particularly parlous state, the bishop sometimes appointed his chancellor or another suitable cleric as commissioner.¹² Bishops Alnwick and Atwater generally performed most of their

visits *personaliter*, however Longland regularly deputised his chancellor, John Rayne (k1536). Perhaps this reflected either a heavy workload within the huge diocese or alternatively a diminishing interest in the governance of monasticism.¹³

Following a High Mass, the bishop processed to the chapter house, where a sermon was preached, sometimes by a scholarly member of the community.¹⁴ The subject of the address was generally on the theme of visitation and correction. During Alnwick's visit to Bardney in 1437, the title was 'Visit this Vine' (Psalms, 80: 14), whilst at Markby the following year it was 'Let all things be done amongst you in order' (I Cor, 14: 40).¹⁵ In nunneries, where Latin was perhaps less prevalent, the sermon was often preached in the vernacular. At Fosse in 1445, the text 'I come seeking fruit' (Luke, 13: 7), was almost certainly rendered in English.¹⁶

After the sermon, a certificate of visitation in Latin was produced by the superior along with documents licensing his or her appointment. Charters were also shown confirming landholdings and tenancies. These occasionally dated from the foundation period and were commonly mislaid. Following these legal preliminaries, the chapter house was cleared. Each member of the community then reappeared and was questioned concerning activities within the monastery that he or she thought required correction. This procedure was done 'in camerâ' in order to compile the *detecta*, a detailed assessment, and also to preclude any possibility of interference from other incumbents. The results of this examination, known as the *comperta*, which including the bishop's own observations, were then correlated to form the *iniuncciones*, the injunctions.¹⁷

Subsequently, members of the community whom the bishop perceived as having committed particularly serious offences were re-interrogated. If pleading guilty, penances were assigned ranging from dietary restrictions, bread and water, to the ultimate sanctions of excommunication or imprisonment. In 1439, Thomas Barton of Bardney, was incarcerated at Belvoir Priory for numerous misdemeanours including calling the abbot a thief. Although later released, Barton was the instigator of many

problems at Bardney although he was largely tolerated by the bishop and retained by the community.¹⁸

If the accused pleaded not guilty, he was required to produce a number of *compurgators*: witnesses to secure his innocence. If he was unable to convince anyone, his case would founder and was subsequently sentenced. If a particularly complicated case arose, the visitation was adjourned to a later date. The proceedings were then concluded in the chapter house with the full congregation present. Here the bishop read aloud the *detecta* and *comperta* and imposed his *iniunctiones*: augmented with excommunication if not enacted.

(b) Retaining Discipline.

Excommunication or anathema, although threatened was rarely employed. There were however examples from Premonstratensian houses imposed by Bishop Redman, the order's missionary-general. In 1478, a canon of Topholme was excommunicated for apostasy. In 1481 and again the following year two canons at Newsham received the anathema for instances of both apostasy and incontinence.¹⁹ Newsham reoccurred in 1491 when a canon was sentenced along with a nun from Orford, both for unspecified crimes.²⁰ Although Newsham appeared to be unredeemable, under Redman's guidance improvements were so significant that his final report in 1503 noted that 'all things are in an excellent state'.²¹ This was possibly due to a new abbot, William Sandale (1497-1503), during whose reign the abbey witnessed a spiritual revival, and became moderately prosperous.²² This is an example of an effectual superior providing a stable environment through his authority and allowing the canons to flourish spiritually.

Following a visitation, the written injunctions were dispatched to the monastery. Thompson suggests that the contents appear formulaic, just signifying a completion of the process.²³ However to some extent they slightly differed, possibly illustrating careful deliberations of the evidence presented. In theory, the injunctions were entered into the monastery's statutes and read out regularly in chapter.²⁴ However,

complaints laid against the abbot of Bardney in 1438 that previous injunctions were 'hidden away', was not an unusual occurrence.²⁵ At Bourne during Bishop Fleming's visit of 1422, the matter of pleading ignorance to the injunctions was countered by the bishop's demand that they 'be expounded publicly in the mother tongue eight times in every year'.²⁶

Although monastic rules sanctioned regulars to venture outside the monastery, these excursions were supposed to encompass economic not recreational activities. Bourne, situated in a market town is an example of a monastery that gradually slid into mediocrity. The catalogues of misdeeds were nothing exceptional: notably failure to lock the cloister, exclusion of seculars, unsanctioned sale of corrodies and a prohibition on unofficial visits into the town.²⁷ Alnwick however noted in 1440 that Thomas Wytham had apostatized, but had nevertheless stayed in religion as a priest at St. Mary's College in Warwick.²⁸ There he was recognised by pilgrims from Bourne journeying to Hailes Abbey in Gloucestershire to the shrine of the Holy Blood.²⁹ The canons were therefore well-known to the townsfolk of Bourne.

Eighty years later, Atwater gave Bourne a reasonably favourable report, although the usual strictures emerged concerning the rendition of accounts and the behaviour of younger monks towards their elders.³⁰ The abbot later failed to attend the Augustinian General Chapter, stating the abbey was originally Arrouasian: a justification used by other abbots to escape similar responsibilities.³¹ However, in 1525, John Rayne took a harder line, exposing serious misconduct at Bourne that appeared to have escaped the notice of Atwater. The same abbot, John Small had never rendered an account since taking office in 1511. There was no grammar teacher and the canons were ill-fed. Robert Baston and Thomas Pounfrett the Cantor had insulted the abbot, with the prior and numerous canons drinking in the town.³² Indiscipline was rife with the monastery gradually descending into disorder despite earlier attempts at reform. With the abbot apparently loosing control, secularisation had taken root with the distractions of the town infiltrating the cloister.

Visitation documents must however be viewed with some caution to separate honest criticism from malevolent gossip. The rationale behind the visitation process was one of 'detection and punishment of failure', whether of a disciplinary, administrative or a moral nature.³³ Consequently, most of the enquiries resulted in finding fault however trivial, with positive reports relatively uncommon.³⁴ One exception was Newstead Priory in Nottinghamshire, where in 1252 Archbishop Gray stated that 'he found the canons fervent religious, lovers of peace and concord'.³⁵ This was the zenith of Newstead's visitation record; the following years were bedevilled by financial irregularities and substantial indiscipline.³⁶

During the visitations, a significant percentage of Lincolnshire incumbents voiced the familiar '*omnia bene*': all is well. They were probably hoping to distance themselves from divisive politics, or as Knowles suggests, signifying 'acquiescence in mediocrity'.³⁷ Bishops heard an increasing number of these abstentions. In 1525 at Legbourne, John Rayne was confronted by an ongoing quarrel between the prioress, Agnes Otterley and a nun, Elizabeth Pinchbeck. The other nuns proclaimed *omnia bene*: an example of a community standing aside in a personal dispute.³⁸ There were some elaborations on the familiar declaration. In the same year at Nun Cotham, Alice Fiddyll stated 'everything was in the highest state of happiness', whereas Margaret Kelk suggested 'all their doings were quite prosperous'.³⁹ The more cautious Alice Robynson however 'hoped that everything was fundamentally sound'.⁴⁰

The visitation process revolved around correction rather than retribution. Consequently, even the most serious transgressions could be absolved following a suitable penance. Pregnant nuns sometimes returned to the convent after the birth: the child reared by family members. Beatrice de Hawkesworth, a nun at Esholt Priory in Yorkshire was readmitted after having previously absconded and giving birth: she was however the daughter of a benefactor.⁴¹ In 1525, John Rayne when visiting Greenfield was faced with the problem of Margaret Newcome, a nun noted

as troublesome by Atwater in 1519. In the interim, she produced a child by a certain William Wharton, and had been imprisoned by the prioress. Rayne ordered her to prostrate herself in the Chapter House whilst the other nuns stepped over her.⁴² Similar punishment was given to Agnes Graunde described as 'light' and who sometimes consorted with a Jacob Smythe.⁴³

In 1433, Ellen Cotone, a nun of Heynings was the cause of an inquiry led by John Mackworth, Dean of Lincoln (d1450). He reported,

...[after] having set at nought the purity of religion, [she] has abandoned chastity, committed incest, and...has conceived and brought forth a child to the grievous peril of her soul, the scandal of religion and the ruinous example to others.⁴⁴

Despite her confession and an unspecified punishment, she was still resident at the convent in 1440 during a visitation by Alnwick, offering only *omnia bene* as her testimony.⁴⁵ Three factors emerge from Cotone's indictments: that of scandal, being a poor example to others and consequences of the afterlife. Scandal, sexual or otherwise, was a scenario the church authorities particularly wished to exclude from the public arena. This not only discredited the accused, but if becoming common knowledge would reduce the status of the monastery and inevitably of monasticism in general the eyes of potential benefactors.

Despite Cotone being an inappropriate model for her fellow nuns, her retention in the convent illustrates the notion of repentance within the visitation process. Nevertheless, within her own consciousness her soul was in jeopardy: a factor well-established in the minds of people of the period. The notion of Purgatory largely underpinned the *raison d'être* of monasticism, nevertheless, the religious had chosen their life or had been chosen for them. If they absconded as an apostate, the punishments were severe, often resulting in demotion, removal of privileges and in extreme cases imprisonment or excommunication, but rarely expulsion. Consequently, this policy left some monasteries with disaffected incumbents causing considerable instability.

(c) Apostasy.

Cases of apostasy are apparently few. Francis Logan notes that in Lincolnshire from 1280 to 1518 this totalled fifty-two: but with some probably going unrecorded due to missing documents.⁴⁶ Fifteen (29%) asked to be re-admitted, and following a period of penance and reduction in status this was generally authorized. Once absent, regulars could however be 'reconciled': a notion of rebirth, not rejection. Sometimes absenteeism could be for appropriate purposes. Papal letters relate to

John de Wyom, [a] Cistercian monk of St. Mary's, Kyrksted, who, not as an apostate but as a pilgrim, came to Rome [for the Jubilee] without licence of his superior to get the indulgence granted by Urban VI and at times on the way put off his habit and assumed a secular dress which he still wears, and now desires to return to his monastery.⁴⁷

Papal documents also note that Robert de Cambridge, a canon of Hagnaby, 'who, having left his order, desires to return to it', and similarly, 'John Stuard, monk of Kirkstede...desires to be reconciled'.⁴⁸

Some religious 'deserted' to other orders. In 1417, Bishop Repingdon ordered that Thomas Lek, a canon of Kyme who had absconded to the Carmelites in Nottingham, should be arrested. The decree was not executed; Lek only returning forty years later at the age of seventy.⁴⁹ He was re-admitted, but was given the last place in the choir and had no voice in Chapter. He appealed to the Augustinian authorities and was reinstated to his full position.⁵⁰ When Lek was younger he perhaps saw the friars as an exhilarating proposition, travelling the countryside preaching instead of living behind the walls of a religious house. Later, when elderly and possibly sick, he returned to the security of Kyme for support in his final years. His re-admittance speaks highly of the forbearance of the monastic system.

Despite being enclosed, some religious could also be in physical danger. In 1350, Margaret Everingham, a nun of Broadholme, then in Nottinghamshire was 'abducted' by William Fox, the rector of Lea, along with two Lincoln Franciscans, John Fox and Thomas de Lingiston. A court heard that, 'they violently took and

carried [her] away, stripping her of her religious habit and clothing her in a green gown of secular habit, taking also divers goods to the value of 40s.'⁵¹ Whether Margaret was abducted or was a willing participant is unknown, but a namesake Alice Everingham, a Gilbertine nun, was in a similar situation. She had apostatized and was living with a James de Huthulle. A mandate was therefore issued

...to arrest and deliver to William [de Prestwold], master of the order of Sempyngham, or his attorney, Aleisia daughter of John de Everyngham, nun of the prior of Haversholm of that order, who has spurned the habit of that order and now is at large in secular habit.⁵²

Apostasy and other scandalous behaviour could possibly affect the quantity of donations to the respective monastery, where connectivity with the local population had broken down through a collapse in trust between the spiritual and the secular.

(d) Securing the Cloister.

If a benefactor was unsure of the incumbent's religious devotion and accordingly the sanctity of their prayers, the entire monastery would be pressured to regularise its observance. In 1422, Fleming's injunctions to the canons of Bourne decreed that the 'the doors of the cloister and church be shut...lest by such access the purity of religion be stained, or scandal engendered'.⁵³ In 1438, William Yorke of Bardney, reported that 'it would be of advantage to the good fame of the monastery and of the monks...that Agnes Busshe, an unmarried woman...be wholly removed' from Southrey where the monks had their seynes.⁵⁴ They realised that the presence of a woman in their midst could cause scandal and consequently financial insecurity to their monastic existence.

However, with the permission of the superior monks were allowed to venture outside on specific business, but abiding to strict regulations. The Benedictine Rule dictates that, 'those who are working at a great distance...shall perform the Work of God in the place where they are working, bending their knees in reverence'.⁵⁵ Even if returning on the same day, the monk 'shall not presume to eat while he is out,

even if urgently requested to do so', on pain of excommunication.⁵⁶ When the monk returned, the Rule states that:

...let [him] lie prostrate on the floor of the oratory and beg the prayers of all on account of any faults that may have surprised [him] on the road through seeing or hearing of something evil, or through idle talk. And let no one presume to tell another whatever he may have seen or heard outside the monastery because this causes very great harm.⁵⁷

Here the Rule is used to impose on a monk during his travels the strictures of the cloister, and not **to** return with secular values to spread within the monastery. The chapter concludes by stating that a monk is to 'be punished who would presume to leave the enclosure...and go anywhere or do anything...without an order from the Abbot'.⁵⁸ Imposition of the Rule largely rested on the influence of the abbot as God's representative in the monastery. If his authority was however lax, then the monastery became a place of instability and insecurity.

(e) Rule of the Abbot.

Writing of Bishop Alnwick, David Knowles describes how the 'inflexible resolve to get rid of a scandalous superior [w]as an acid test of a visitor's sincerity'.⁵⁹ There were however few examples of a head being relieved of his position, despite damning evidence. Thompson's suggestion that Alnwick was 'merciful and easy' substantiates suggestions that expelling an incompetent ruler was problematic.⁶⁰ It was expensive to hold new elections which disrupted daily activities but also could be seen as the episcopal challenging the principle of internal monastic independence.⁶¹

The success of any monastery therefore depended almost entirely on the personality of the superior. A strong leader could also 'turn around' a declining monastery, and there were instances of replacement personnel from other houses rectifying systemic failures. In 1439, the frailty of John Wainfleet, abbot of Bardney, was causing friction within the monastery. To resolve the problem, Alnwick appointed Alan Kirketone from Spalding as coadjutor, or assistant: given the title of 'claustral prior' probably to

stabilise his position.⁶² Kirketone, a scholar at Oxford, was originally the almoner at Spalding. He was accused at a visitation in 1438 of not returning twelve books he took to the university, having pawned them because his pension was outstanding.⁶³ Nevertheless, as a literate scholar with knowledge of administration, Kirketone was an ideal choice to revitalise a monastery undergoing problems of discipline, both fiscal and moral.

Disorderliness at Bardney appears to have been a recurring problem. In 1519, Atwater issued his injunctions immediately following the visitation. He possibly realised that attempts at reform would be largely ineffective, unlike at Crowland which by comparison appeared to represent a beacon of stability.⁶⁴ In 1447, Gilbert Multone of Crowland, described as a 'bachelor in sacred theology' was promoted to the abbacy of Bardney after preaching 'in a noble and excellent wise' before Alnwick.⁶⁵ Multone replaced John Bracy, elected by the convent. Although later cleared of the charge, Bracy had been accused of 'adultery with Ellen Cok a married woman of Bardney'.⁶⁶ Another example of resurgence was when William Wainfleet, a monk of Bardney was transferred to Humberston in 1443 and a year later was probably abbot.⁶⁷ Alnwick, writing to the Abbot of Bardney, stated that where previously Humberston 'had come to grievous decay, [now] had manifestly been bettered by the presidency of Brother William'.⁶⁸

In 1440, substantial clemency had been extended to the brethren of Humberston where Abbot William West had clearly lost control. The bishop discovered five monks absent and one, John Gouxhille, was possibly so exasperated with the instability that he joined the friars.⁶⁹ John Wrauby was reprimanded for climbing the monastery gate to observe pipe-players and dancers. 'Light women' were procured by the abbot's serving man, and Thomas Fresshney alleged that John Gedeney stayed until midnight with women, rang the bell for Matins then returned to bed.⁷⁰ Gedeney is also suspected of 'knowing' Alice Laceby and Joan Walteham and dressing them in chrisem clothes in the sacristy where they lodged.⁷¹

Also included was a significant accusation by William Anderby that his fellow monks were quarrelsome in chapter: '...so great is the uproar that secular folk can hear them afar off, and therefore conclude that they were brawling among themselves'.⁷² In return, many of the brethren accused the abbot of severe financial irregularities and having little control over the workings of his monastery.⁷³ Yet despite this evidence and an obvious lack of trust between the superior and his brethren, the abbot received only a warning from the visitor. Stability backed by strong leadership was clearly non-existent, and anarchy appeared to reign, so, as noted previously, William Wainfleet's appointment as abbot could not have come sooner.

A number of points arise from this visitation. Like Bourne, Humberston was centred within a settlement replete with numerous temptations, of which some monks took full advantage. Most had local names, so even in 'civvies' and covering their tonsures they would have been recognised by the townsfolk.⁷⁴ The monks would have been ridiculed, if not openly, certainly within the thoughts of the local population. During a period when monasticism was the subject of increasing satirical commentary from the likes of Chaucer and Langland and openly challenged by the Lollards, the activities of the brethren did little to engender respect for their 'calling'.

This lack of stability not only applied to Lincolnshire. In 1514, Bishop Richard Nykke (Nix) of Norwich (1501-35) examined Walsingham Priory. Following royal visits to the Marian shrine, pilgrimage had increased and consequently the monastery became one of the wealthiest in the country.⁷⁵ Although the number of canons had nearly doubled since the previous visitation of 1494, serious problems had risen in equivalent proportions. The prior, William Lowth, stole donations from the chapel of Our Lady, kept an aged fool, treated the canons with brutality and before the visitation had threatened them in chapter.⁷⁶

In 1520, the priory was visited again by the suffragan Bishop of Chalcedon. This was possibly Matthew Mackerall (ex1537), later abbot of Barlings, executed at Tyburn following the Rising. He found that although Edmund Warham, the sub-prior and two of the canons supported the new prior Richard Vowell, six others wanted nothing to do with new statutes, whilst eight were 'refractory'.⁷⁷ Despite these problems, Walsingham attracted thirty-five donations from Lincolnshire parishioners, ranging from 2d. to 'a jewel of silver and gilt worth 40s.'.⁷⁸ In 1530, Catherine Burton of Haconby bequeathed 'a course girdle with a pendle and a buckle of silver'.⁷⁹ Had she known of the priory's unsound condition, Catherine may not have given her patronage.

(f) Moral Challenges.

If the sanctity of a monastery was in jeopardy then word would quickly spread, especially if the problem was of a carnal nature. An example of immoral behaviour that caused a patron to reconsider his allegiance occurred at Markby in 1438 when Alnwick found the monastery in a dire condition. It was 100 Marks in debt and 'suffering almost unrecoverable damage...[also] that there is no regular observances even so much as the outward form of religion'.⁸⁰ In addition, Thomas Dryby was accused of being 'defamed with Margaret Portere of Markby, of whom he has begotten two children'.⁸¹ Dryby's activities must have been known in the local village, which was centred on the monastery. Importantly the indictment would diminish the professed piety of the canons but also denigrate the status of the patron and other benefactors associated with the house. Consequently, John Alforde stated that 'because of the ill report that is current touching the like, certain folk, such as Sir Thomas Cumberworthe do withhold their alms'.⁸² Losing a patron of this stature would have had a profound effect on the financial and spiritual status of the house and its reputation as a place of piety.

Potential benefactors were presumably cautious in investing in monasteries whose incumbents appeared to lack spiritual enthusiasm and engaged in unsavoury

activities. Their office would be tarnished, and if ordained priests, the sacrament itself would likewise be tainted and dishonoured, placing the souls of donors in jeopardy. It was perhaps better to invest in the local parish church where the priest's activities could be observed, thereby retaining close connectivity in comparison to a closeted community masked from public scrutiny. Additionally, the parish priest, probably originating from a local family, would be well known, consequently any misconduct would be reported at the parochial visitation. Many wills called for an 'honest priest' to perform chantry services: perhaps suggesting some were less sincere in their vocation, or just poorly educated and remunerated.

Homosexuality within monastic houses possibly caused concern. Nevertheless, within the huge Lincoln diocese only two known references of 'familiarity' with boys were recorded.⁸³ At Markby, John Yorke, the Cellarer, noted '...that secular youths do lie in the dorter among the canons, and with some in the same bed'.⁸⁴ The aforementioned John Alforde, the Bursar was accused and threatened with excommunication if he continued having 'the company of a boy at night'.⁸⁵ No instances of lesbianism were noted, although precautions were taken when dealing with children of both sexes. The nuns of Heynings were warned by Bishop Buckingham in 1393 that 'children of the convent school were not to sleep in the dormitory'.⁸⁶ In 1440, Joan Thorpe, the prioress of Gokewell informed Alnwick that 'they have no boarders above ten years of age of female and eight years of male sex'.⁸⁷ In 1531, Longland counselled the women of Nun Cotham that, 'nott any men children to be brought upp, nor taught within your monastery, nor resorte to eny of your susters'.⁸⁸

(g) Repetitive Misdemeanours.

Within most visitations, there were repetitive occurrences of specific misdemeanours. Annual accounts were rarely delivered in chapter and the teaching of novices, especially in grammar, was generally disorganized or nonexistent. Attendance in the refectory was sporadic with meals taken in the abbot's lodgings,

the misericord or the infirmary. Talking, gaming and drinking after Compline were common, with a noticeable effect on attendance at Matins, and 'trips into town' became too frequent for the bishop to ignore.

David Knowles suggests that these repeated indiscretions became so ingrained within the late medieval monastic structure that it was virtually impossible to eradicate them completely.⁸⁹ Life beyond the cloister was being recreated within the walls. Illicit access into the monastery via unsecured entrances was regularly noted. Seculars of both sexes took advantage of this situation, thereby promoting scandal.⁹⁰ Most monasteries nevertheless recruited their incumbents and servants from the local area. Therefore, perhaps this 'insider knowledge' of monastic life engendered some respect, if not of monasticism itself, then for the communities of men and women confined within the cloister. This was connectivity through servitude, the monastery acting as employer, thereby also enhancing the economy of the area.

(h) Financial Challenges.

It is unwise to extract information from visitations to present evidence to prove that monasticism overall was in terminal decline. These would rely upon subjective observations from both the bishop and the religious, and even in Lincolnshire the documents are far from complete. For example, the theory that most houses in the county were poorly administered and impoverished is, with some notable exceptions, overstated. True, a considerable number were poor, but still adequately performed the *Opus Dei*. Newstead-by-Stamford retained only four canons and was in debt. Because of their small numbers, in 1440 Alnwick instructed the canons to recite the offices rather than sing.⁹¹ Poverty did not always signify a badly organised house. In 1536, Longland wrote to Cromwell in support of canon John Blakyt at Newstead, who 'semyth to be a right honest sobre man', recommending him for the post of prior.⁹²

To enhance income, the admission of secular corrodians took place but became a source of internal contention, principally because the superior sometimes retained

the revenue. At Humberston in 1440, William Anderby accused the abbot of selling a corrody worth 40s. per annum to a harper John Hardene, for 10 marks: the whereabouts of the proceeds being unknown.⁹³ Corrodians also brought the world into the cloister. At Kyme, Alnwick discovered that one Hardyng, entertained strangers, sat amongst the canons in the frater but paid only 20d. per week for accommodation.⁹⁴ In 1382, Bishop Buckingham ordered the prioress of Nun Cotham 'to remove all secular persons from their precincts especially Dame Joan Mounceys, who had taken permanent residence in the Guesthouse', no doubt paying for the privilege.⁹⁵ The same priory was admonished 150 years later, when in 1531 the prioress Joan Thompson was told 'to stop giving corrodies to your brother George Thompson and his children, and don't grant any leases above five years'.⁹⁶ If all accusations were true, the 'secrets' of the visitation process may have percolated into local communities via these 'guests'.

A considerable number of the county's nunneries however struggled to remain solvent. At Legbourne in 1440, Sibyl Papplewyk stated that,

...seeing the revenues of the house are not above forty pounds and the nuns are thirteen in number with one novice, so many out of rents so slender cannot have sufficient victuals and clothing, unless help be given...by secular friends.⁹⁷

The poverty of a house also restricted numbers wishing to enter. Some nunneries were suffering from deteriorating income, resulting in fewer incumbents.⁹⁸ In a 'Catch 22' situation, the cost of food, the size of the dormitory and the wherewithal to enlarge the structure were defining elements in recruitment.

Following archiepiscopal visitations to Arden, Wilberfoss and Swine in Yorkshire, a prohibition was placed on new entrants due to continuing debt, and 'because they are badly provided for at the table...'.⁹⁹ Novices were only recruited on the death of an incumbent, thereby automatically restricting development.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, in Lincolnshire, with the exception of Stixwold which was refounded by the king, the numbers of female religious changed little until the Suppression. **(Table 6:1).**

Nunnery	1377	1440	Suppression
Fosse	8	6	8
Gokewell	12	8	7
Greenfield	12	n/a	10
Heynings	17	15	12
Legbourne	15	11	10
Nun Cotham	13	14	13
Stainfield	21	19	16
Stixwold	28	20	12

Table 6:1. The numbers of women in eight Lincolnshire nunneries in the fourteenth, fifteenth centuries and at the time of the Suppression.

(i) Monastic “Vocation”.

Despite these issues, the majority of regulars appear to have fulfilled their spiritual obligations, if not to the letter, then to the principle. There was nevertheless perhaps a sense of resigned familiarity rather than a career dedicated to a deeper understanding of their spiritual ‘calling’. The supposed scarcity of recruits suggests a measured dilapidation of monastic life. However, actual numbers may not have been essential: the only condition being that the *Opus Dei* was performed regularly and correctly.¹⁰¹ Knowles suggests that in the approximate century between the visitations of Alnwick and Longland numbers had not changed significantly. It was only when insecurity increased following the Act of Supremacy that figures started to decline.¹⁰²

Between the visits of Atwater and Longland, recruitment actually slightly increased within the diocese. Dunstable rose from seven in 1518 to sixteen in 1530 with Missenden increasing from five to fourteen. Wellow’s numbers climbed from eight in 1519 to ten in 1525, although earlier in 1440 Alnwick noted an abbot and ten canons, where previously there had been fifteen to eighteen.¹⁰³ Numbers therefore fluctuated, and although novices are mentioned, mainly relating to education, the Monastic Wills only note twenty-eight with five ‘young friars’.

Although spiritual commitment compared with earlier times is difficult to analyse, recruitment was still occurring during the sixteenth-century but on a smaller scale. Whilst vocation was an important factor during the foundation phase, later there was possibly a sense of drudgery concerning the routine of prayer and study rather

than attaining a deeper understanding of their spiritual 'calling'. However, although rarely suggested in documents, some awareness must have existed within the consciousness of those preparing to enter the cloister. A greater number of local people were recruited, possibly to be near their homes, with perhaps an emphasis on a stable economic existence rather than a vocation.¹⁰⁴ Although generally poorly paid, financial opportunities available to parish priests were far greater than those of even an ordained monk: a factor probably not lost upon potential novices. Nevertheless, embarking on a lifetime of seclusion and prayer needed more than economic incentives.

Monasticism by its very nature is governed by strict rules. Therefore, this inflexibility may have dissuaded people with a 'free spirit' from entering the cloister. An alternative approach was provided by the mendicants, generally respected, usually well educated, and not confined within a cloister. In Lincolnshire during the foundation period the numbers of friars ranged from thirty to forty per house. These however fell to single figures at the time of closure, although most appeared to have departed before Cromwell's commissioners arrived. From some parishioner's viewpoint however, when the friaries closed the county lost a valued sector of the Church along with the last vestiges of connectivity with the monastic system.

The *lectio divina*, which included reading, praying, contemplation and meditating upon scriptural passages was a major catalyst in the spiritual life of a monk.¹⁰⁵ Few with an enthusiasm for learning would therefore wish to enter a monastery where education was either poor or non-existent. In 1440, Thomas Bartone of Elsham stated that when he entered the monastery 'he would be taught to read and understand religion', but no-one could teach him. Even the prior, William Clifton, admitted that 'no canon...is learned in religious discipline'.¹⁰⁶ When visiting Wellow in 1519, Atwater decreed that 'every brother is to occupy himself with books and sound learning...and to have a supply of paper and pen'.¹⁰⁷

For those not inclined to study, other diversions were available, although not all were permitted. Prohibitions were endorsed concerning regulars acting as godparents, which could involve entering into 'worldly festivities'. In 1440 at Nun Cotham, Alice Aunselle requested that the nuns should be 'restrained from presenting children at the font or when the chrism is put upon their foreheads'.¹⁰⁸ In 1525, John Rayne prohibited the nuns at both St. Leonard's in Grimsby and also Legbourne becoming godmothers, 'to prevent the priory from deteriorating'.¹⁰⁹ At Thornton in 1440, Richard Castelle, the abbot's chaplain stated the previous abbot was godfather to the sons of noblemen, notably the Earl of Northumberland and Lord Welles to whom he gave twelve jewels belonging to the house.¹¹⁰ All the prohibitions endorsed by the bishop were not to punish but via gentle persuasion to reinforce a sense of vocation within religious communities.

(j) Monastic Households.

One illustration of increasing secularization was the prevalence of 'households' or *familiae* within monasteries. These were small sections of the community who grouped together under the superior or an obedientiary, which was inferred within the Rule. 'Let the Abbot's table always be with the guests and travellers. When, however, there are no guests, let it be in his power to invite any of the brethren he desireth'.¹¹¹ This could be described as part of a training process for officers of the monastery, having to deal with the problems of small sections of the community at close quarters. Another factor was that better quality food was perhaps served at the superior's table, thereby creating a sense of 'unhealthy rivalry' amongst the incumbents.

The episcopal visitors were divided on the soundness of this arrangement, which ostensibly created cliques and therefore potentially increased conflict within the house. At Gokewell in 1440, the prioress, Joan Thorpe, said 'the nuns had two households in which they...entertain their friends'.¹¹² The previous year at Bardney, Alnwick noted that the monks were divided into three separate *familiae* taking their

meals in the abbot's household, in the infirmary and refectory and sometimes eating alone. They were given a choice: living in one household sharing the common table, or having an allowance and disposing of their servants. They chose the former, which later benefited the monastery financially.¹¹³ In 1438 at Spalding, Nicholas Sutton suggested that biblical texts were read to monks outside the *frater*, whilst dining in separate households. This was perhaps a plea to tolerate the *familial* system to the detriment of communal dining.¹¹⁴

Privately the visitors probably disapproved of the concept, perceiving it as divisive. At Stixwold in 1519, the nuns petitioned Atwater to reorganize unequal households. The prioress had fourteen nuns within her circle, the sub-prioress one and Elizabeth Moigne ate alone.¹¹⁵ The prioress also appears to have spent the night with laywomen, possibly from the village. The bishop decreed that she could retain a private 'house' for visitors and friends, and the nuns redistributed within the convent: some boarding with the sub-prioress with the prioress having only three.¹¹⁶ The prioress was Helen Kay, who held the position when Rayne visited in 1525 and appears to have heeded the previous injunction.¹¹⁷ However, he ordered a number of nuns 'to be at her table and in other places, to be witness to conversations'.¹¹⁸ The women were probably attempting to replicate the secular households they were familiar with as children. This gave them a sense of both the conviviality of their former home but also the security of the community: familial and spiritual connectivity.

(k) Conflict within a Friary.

Unfortunately, the visitations of the local friaries are unrecorded. However, in 1535, the Franciscans of Grantham became embroiled in a series of enquiries concerning alleged disreputable activities, at the same time demonstrating the relationship between local people and a monastic house. The Church was now technically 'state owned' and the friar's ultimate patron, the Pope, had been rendered *persona non grata* by the Act of Supremacy. The situation was therefore administered by both the local

and central authorities and the neighbouring nobility: the secular establishment, not the ecclesiastical hierarchy. This event is therefore worth recording in detail, as little other documentation concerning the friars in the county survives.

On 31st July 1535, Thomas Manners, 1st Earl of Rutland (d1543), reported to Cromwell that,

...the aldermen of Grantham show[ed] me that one of the friars had impeached other friars of the said house for using certain words. I commanded them to put the friars in prison till the King's pleasure were known...¹¹⁹

A paraphrase of the reply from Cromwell on the 9th August relates,

...the Warden of the friars who have spoken those seditious words is a right honest person...it may be he is accused by such light persons as cannot justify the same. Call before you the said Warden and his friars and examine the matter between them and their accusers. You shall cause Friar John Colsell, using the deceitful art of magic and astronomy to be detained in ward.¹²⁰

The response from Rutland on the 25th states:

...I have received your letter touching the demeanor of the friars of Grantham, and have examined them... I have also examined the alderman of the town and his brethren. I took with me Sir John Markham, John Constable, Will Dysney, and others. I have committed friar John Colsell to prison till I know the King's pleasure.¹²¹

The fact that Rutland was assisted by men from prominent Lincolnshire gentry families illustrates the importance of the proceedings. Cromwell, for reasons unknown, supported the Warden, Richard Hopkins in this matter: suggesting friar Colsell was a performer of divination. Colsell was apparently eighteen years old and his accuser was William Nobul, a novice aged thirteen to whom Colsell was schoolmaster. In his deposition, Nobel charged Colsell 'with having tutored him to bear false witness'.¹²²

There appears to have been a collapse of discipline, with Colsell refusing to travel to Lincoln with the warden saying 'he had writing to do'. The warden suggested that he leave the friary, but Colsell threatened to take the matter before the king.

Possibly fearing the outcome, the warden searched Colsell's room for incriminating evidence and discovered two scrolls 'which he took to Mr. Alderman', William Patynson (Patenson) (d1559).

A commission of enquiry, made up entirely of laity questioned some of the friars concerning Colsell's accusations. The Warden was charged with stating '...it is but a yere, in fayth it hath doon a thousand pounds worth of hurt to our religion; in fayth all is noight; well, the old facion will come again'.¹²³ This he denied and in turn accused a Friar Nicholas of saying, 'Well, this fashion will not last always...I trust we shall have the correction in our own religion again, for it hath done a hundred pounds worth of hurt since it was otherwise'.¹²⁴ Colsell also accused 'freer John Shelyngton and others for speaking in favour of the Pope and against the King's Acts, and for preventing the erasure of the Pope's name from the service books'.¹²⁵

Other accusations were placed before the enquiry.

Freer Gabriell Kyrke says...the warden, Sir Thomas Pytts [chaplain?], oon freer Hussher, and he, was at soper together...and the said warden sayed that there was mony Acts made which he trowed would soon be broken; and then sayd Sir Thomas Pytts, there haithe been mony made of wearing of sylks and velvets which be now broken; and then said freer Hussher, Godd forbydd ells, there is so mony made but some shuld be broken; and these were all the words that he herd spoken there, uppon his othe.¹²⁶

Pytts defended himself by suggesting '...if every Act were as well executed as this, we should have a merry world...for there was an Act made concerning the Statute of Array, that no man should wear satin, velvet, nor damask, unless he were a man of lands or a burgess'.¹²⁷

The members of the commission, all of whom found in favour of the warden are named. Along with Alderman Patenson, was William Skynner. A William Skymer from Grantham died in 1536, donated 10s. to the friars, was buried in the Corpus Christi choir and left a total of 8s. 4d. to St. Wulfram's church.¹²⁸ **(Plate 6:2).**

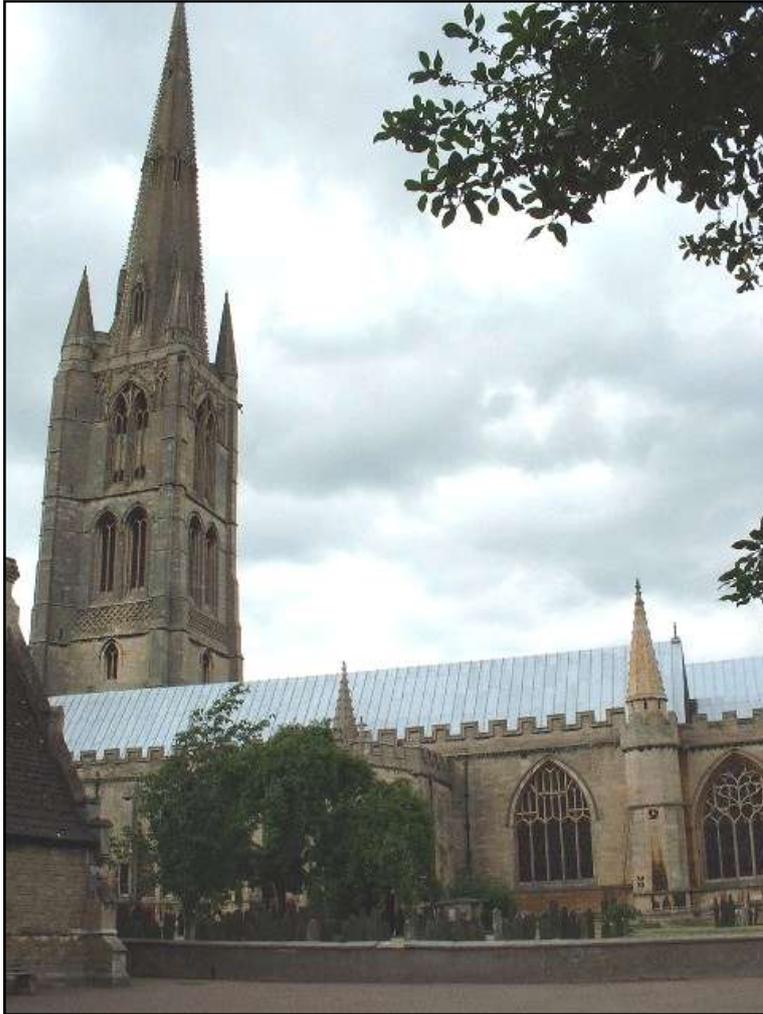


Plate 6:2.
St. Wulfram, Grantham with its
282ft. tower and spire.
www.wparkinson.com

Plate 6:3.
Grantham schoolhouse, possibly
dating from the late fifteenth-
century.
(After Start & Stocker, 2011, 229).



Although sitting on a committee witnessing the insecurity of his spiritual investment, he still considered his soul safe with the friars, but as a precaution his body was buried elsewhere. Another member of the panel, John Blak (Blake), a burgess of Grantham also left a will. Dying in 1539, like Skymer he was interred in Corpus Christi, gave 5s. to the parish church but like many from this period left nothing to the cathedral.¹²⁹ It could be suggested that the members of the enquiry were also confraters of the Corpus Christi Guild, an influential body, which, as in Boston, was probably closely connected with the mendicants. A description of the guild's activities on Corpus Christi day in Grantham notes that, 'the unmarried and widows uniting gave 14 loves, 8 flagons of ale, half a calf and one sheep to the Franciscan Friars who walked in front of the Guild in the Procession'.¹³⁰

Of the other inquiry representatives, William Williams, receiver to the queen's grace of Stamford and Grantham, supported the warden, and did Gervase (Jerves) Tyndale or Tyndall, schoolmaster at the Free Grammar School.¹³¹ **(Plate 6:3, above).** In November 1535, Tyndale wrote to Cromwell complaining that 'so many enemies draw their swords against the Gospel of Christ that it is dangerous to contend with them'.¹³² He then railed against 'a paltry doctor named Stanley [who] preached impudently to the people on purgatory and masses for the dead, and was received with great applause'.¹³³ Tyndale continued,

I remonstrated with him when his sermon was done, and he heard me at the time with patience; but after...he began to abuse me, and hold me up to the people as a Saxon heretic, and drove away from my school all the boys of the town lest they should catch the infection.¹³⁴

The main purpose of the letter was to ask for Cromwell's continuing patronage. He wrote, 'I am entirely exhausted of money, as, at your command and that of my lord of Rutland, I was employed in the business of certain friars who were about to practise necromancy'.¹³⁵ He may have been successful in his request for financial assistance. A Gervase Tyndall was possibly an informer for Cromwell against Margaret Plantagenet, Countess of Salisbury (ex1541): secretly employed in her house at Warblington in Hampshire, far way from Grantham.¹³⁶

Although this episode was not an official visitation, it does however reveal the tensions within a monastic establishment during the changes in religion. The participants are clearly using the new legislation to accuse one another of serious offences, some of which incurred the death penalty. The connectivity between town and cloister also appeared very close, with the alderman and burgesses at a local level and Cromwell and Rutland representing the national perspective. This clearly displays that during this period the laity possessed ultimate authority over the administration of a monastic house. Apparently at no time during the proceedings were the Franciscan authorities or the Bishop of Lincoln notified.

Interestingly, it was the Warden, in theory representing conservative religion, who gained the support of Cromwell and some influential local people, not his accusers. Was he therefore a convert to the reformist side of the religious argument, which nevertheless appeared contrary to local opinion? The people of the town apparently gave considerable succour to the conservative preacher Stanley, who asserted,

...that any earthly fire, as compared with the fire of purgatory, was as the picture of a man to a real man; and that on giving one penny to a priest souls were released from purgatory and went straight to Heaven.¹³⁷

Stanley may have been a member of the parish clergy, perhaps a popular preacher in St. Wulframs or at the market cross. It was clear where Grantham stood on religious matters after people withdrew their children from the Grammar School rather than be taught by a man whom they regarded as religiously suspect. Although the town took little part in the Rising, this is apparent where most people's sympathies lay. Despite being located on the Great North Road with reasonable access to the capital and its new religious ideas, parishioners stood by their local clergy, both secular and regular, along with the perceived stability of the 'Old Religion'.

Conclusion.

The religious houses of Lincolnshire, both spiritually and economically were probably no better or no worse than others throughout the country: the 'sins'

revealed were generally ones of omission rather than commission.¹³⁸ Between visitations, the daily running of a monastery however rested solely in the hands of the superior. No matter which order, if the head was ineffectual then the monastery became unstable. Consequently, when the visitor reappeared the same problems reemerged: hence the reiteration of previous injunctions. Only when Cromwell's commissioners conducted the state's visitations were the inadequacies of the previous administration exposed. Alexander Thompson writes,

The swiftness with which the destroyers moved from one monastery to another...was no greater than that with which John Rayne hurried through monasteries...to the tune of *Omnia Bene*.¹³⁹

Legh, Layton and London would not however accept that 'all is well', because all was far from well.

This chapter has shown the lengths episcopal visitors took to preserve the integrity of the monastic system. Abbots and priors either governed according to the Benedictine Rule, their 'commands and teaching...be instilled like a leaven of divine justice into the minds of [their] disciples', or alternatively internal strife could emerge, with factionalism causing discord and instability.¹⁴⁰ The Rule states that 'The first degree of humility is obedience [to the abbot] without delay'.¹⁴¹ In return the abbot must give to 'all a shepherd's care to his restless and unruly flock, and [take] all pains to correct their corrupt manners'.¹⁴² From the monks perspective, Benedict orders that '...the Abbot not disorder the flock committed to him, nor by an arbitrary use of his power dispose of anything unjustly...'.¹⁴³ Evidence suggests that by retaining a weak superior, a monastery would be spiritually and economically vulnerable to both internal and external influences. Therefore the replacement of ineffective superiors generally brought considerable improvements to otherwise dire spiritual and economic situations.

The visitation process illustrates that the religious were still valued within the Church's general organization and that considerable effort was made on the part of the episcopate to retain the structure in good order. It was nevertheless a twelfth-

century concept existing within a sixteenth-century environment, with the cloister gradually confronted by the political and religious changes enacted by the Reformation parliament. There were also continual problems with the official and unofficial relationship of regulars with secular society, with the possibility of confidentialities from within the monastery disclosed to the outside world. Whether these factors affected regular patronage to all sections of monasticism will be discussed in the following chapter. This will use the testaments from Lincolnshire parishioners to reveal the condition of all aspects of monasticism during this period of considerable transformation to uncover the local connectivity between regular and parishioner.

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NOTES – CHAPTER SIX

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- ¹ Geary, *Readings* II, 118.
- ² Gasquet, *Collectanea*. Richard Redman was later Bishop of St. Asaph, Exeter and Ely. Rose, R. K., *DNB*, 46, 272-3.
- ³ Although they had their own internal system of scrutineers, the Gilbertines were technically subject to legatine visitation. Golding, B., *Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertine Order* (Oxford, 1995), 161-2.
- ⁴ For Cistercian nunneries and their disputes over recognition and exemption, see Graves, C. V., 'English Cistercian Nuns in Lincolnshire', *Speculum*, 54 (1979), 492-99. Thompson, S., *Women Religious: the founding of English nunneries after the Norman Conquest* (Oxford, 1991), 95-100.
- ⁵ TNA, SP 1/102.
- ⁶ *RO*, III, 286. In a letter to Cromwell, Layton 'propose[d] to begin at Lincoln diocese, and go to the borders of Scotland'. *L&P*, VIII, 822. 4th June 1535. Hodgett suggests the Lincolnshire visitation was between the end of November and 22nd December 1535. Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*, 23. For the *Comperta* see TNA, SP 1/102 and *L&P*, X, 364. Late February 1536.
- ⁷ Macray, et. al., 'Manuscripts of Lincoln', I, 21-24.
- ⁸ Pensions listing, *L&P*, XIV (ii), 636. 5th December 1539. Harrison, M. J., *The Nunnery at Nun Appleton*, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, 98 (York, 2001), 7, 20.
- ⁹ *L&P*, VIII, 955.
- ¹⁰ Moorhouse, G., *The Last Office: 1539 and the dissolution of a monastery* (London, 2008), 143-4 and n.1.
- ¹¹ Thompson, I: 7, ix-xiii. *Ibid*, II: 33, xxiii.
- ¹² Bowker, *Henrician Reformation*, 20.
- ¹³ Thompson, II: 33, xx. In October 1536, Rayne was murdered by the Lincolnshire rebels at Horncastle.
- ¹⁴ Thompson, I: 7, x.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid*, 14, 10: 21, 219, respectively.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid*, 14, 91, n2.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid*, 14, xlvii-xlviii.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid*, 14, 25-8.
- ¹⁹ Gasquet, *Collectanea*, III, 76-7, 158.
- ²⁰ Gasquet, *Collectanea*, III, 80-1. She is noted as Margery Buke. Logan, F. D., *Runaway Religious in Medieval England, c.1240-1540* (Cambridge, 1996), 266. Sister Elspeth suggests a liaison had occurred. Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 200.
- ²¹ Gasquet, *Collectanea*, III, 87.
- ²² In 1494 numbers had fallen from 15 to 11, but by 1497 had risen to 17. Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 200. Seventeenth in value in 1535, worth £99 2s. 10½d. *VE*, IV: 74- 5.
- ²³ Thompson, I: 7, xi. *RO*, I, 83.
- ²⁴ Thompson, I: 14, xlix.
- ²⁵ *Ibid*, 14, 16. These reiterate Bishop Gray's earlier injunctions. *Ibid*, 7: 4.
- ²⁶ *Ibid*, 7, 10.
- ²⁷ *Ibid*, 7, 8-10.
- ²⁸ *Ibid*, 14, 36-8.
- ²⁹ Birkbeck, *Bourne*, 28. Only one Lincolnshire testator gave to Hails, Agnes Halborowe of Croft donated 4d. to the Holy Blood. LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f87. 28th February 1534.
- ³⁰ Thompson, II: 35, 82-3.
- ³¹ Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 178. Arrouasian houses ceased to be separate entities by the mid fifteenth-century.
- ³² Thompson, II: 33, lxxxvii-lxxxviii, and 35, 82-3.
- ³³ *RO*, I, 83.
- ³⁴ Thompson, I: 14, lxii.
- ³⁵ *RO*, I, 89.
- ³⁶ *Ibid*, 90.
- ³⁷ *RO*, III, 73.
- ³⁸ Thompson, II: 33, lxxv-lxxvi.
- ³⁹ Kelk was transferred to Catesby in Northamptonshire for 'being a troublemaker', but continued 'fostering quarrelling among the nuns'. Thompson, II, 33: lxxv.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid*.
- ⁴¹ Bell, H. E., 'Esholt Priory', *The Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 33 (1936-38), 8.
- ⁴² 'ita quod omnes moniales ibidem pretereuntes ipsam supeditabunt'. Thompson, II: 35, 161-2.
- ⁴³ *Ibid*, 163,
- ⁴⁴ Thompson, I: 7, 69.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 14, 133.
- ⁴⁶ Logan, *Runaway Religious*, 184-267.

- ⁴⁷ *CPL*, IV, 328. 20th September 1390.
- ⁴⁸ *CPL*, III, 231, 20th February 1346: 251, 4th September 1347.
- ⁴⁹ Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 173. The bishop's register suggests his name was Robert Soke and that he was at Notting Hill in London: there is no such friary. Archer, *Repingdon*, III, 74, 247.
- ⁵⁰ Logan, *Runaway Religious*, 46, n21, 148. Salter H. E., (ed.) *Chapters of the Augustinian Canons* (London, 1922), 110.
- ⁵¹ Logan, *Runaway Religious*, 266. Power, E. E., *Medieval English Nunneries, c1275-1535* (Cambridge, 1922), 449-50.
- ⁵² *CPR*, 1364-67, 369. 12th December 1366. Logan, *Runaway Religious*, 24, 266.
- ⁵³ Thompson, I: 7, 9.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 14, 21.
- ⁵⁵ Chapter 50. Geary, *Readings*, I, 179.
- ⁵⁶ Chapter 51. *Ibid*, I, 179.
- ⁵⁷ Chapter 67. *Ibid*, I, 186.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid*.
- ⁵⁹ *RO*, II, 213.
- ⁶⁰ Thompson, I: 14, lix, lx.
- ⁶¹ Pers comm. Judith Frost, LRS Conference, 2009.
- ⁶² Thompson, I: 14, 25, 27, n2.
- ⁶³ This was to be repaid on the instructions of the bishop. *Ibid*, 21: 330, and n.1, 334.
- ⁶⁴ Thompson, II: 33, lxii.
- ⁶⁵ Thompson, I: 14, xxii, 54, n.1.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 11, 24. On the death of John Wainfleet, Bracy was confirmed by the king as abbot, but the decision was reversed probably by papal decree instigated by Alnwick. *CPR*, 1446-52, 116, 117, 118. *Heads*, III, 16. Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 104, n.6.
- ⁶⁷ *Heads*, III, 48.
- ⁶⁸ Thompson, II: 14, 32, n.4, 148. Sister Elspeth suggests that Wainfleet was the visitor on behalf of Alnwick in 1444. Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 134.
- ⁶⁹ Thompson, I: 14, 140.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 140-1. Light women' were wanton or unchaste. *OED*.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid*, 144.
- ⁷² *Ibid*, 140.
- ⁷³ *Ibid*, 140-1.
- ⁷⁴ William Anderby, Thomas Gretham, John Gouxhille and John Clee are examples. The two women accused of soliciting, Alice Laceby and Joan Walteham, also local names.
- ⁷⁵ In 1535, the *Valor* noted £391 11s. 8d., whilst in 1534 offerings were £260 12s. 4½d. Cox, J. C., *VCH Norfolk*, II, 397.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 396.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid*.
- ⁷⁸ Thomas Robertson snr, Merchant of the Staple of Calais from Algarkirk. TNA/PROB 11/24. 2nd January 1529.
- ⁷⁹ Foster, III, 77.
- ⁸⁰ Thompson, I: 21, 225.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid*, 222.
- ⁸² *Ibid*, 222 and n.5. Sir Thomas Cumberworth left an 'ikon of tham a pare of bedys of coral...', to the prior of Markby. Gibbons, *Early Lincoln Wills*, 174. 15th February 1451.
- ⁸³ The other was Missenden (Buckinghamshire): Peacock, E., 'Injunctions of John Longland, Bishop of Lincoln, to Certain Monasteries in his Diocese', *Archaeologia*, 47, i (1882), 63.
- ⁸⁴ Thompson, I: 21, 221-2. Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 175, n.1.
- ⁸⁵ Thompson, I: 21, 224.
- ⁸⁶ Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 150.
- ⁸⁷ Thompson, I: 14, 117.
- ⁸⁸ Peacock, 'Longland', 58.
- ⁸⁹ *RO*, III, 69.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid*.
- ⁹¹ Thompson, I: 21, 240.
- ⁹² Wright, *Letters*, 94-5. The request was rejected by Cromwell.
- ⁹³ Thompson, I: 14, 141, 143.
- ⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 170. This maybe a John Hardene, connected with Humberston: thirty-six miles away.
- ⁹⁵ Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 152.
- ⁹⁶ Baskerville, *Suppression*, 210.
- ⁹⁷ Thompson, I: 14, 186.

- ⁹⁸ Burton, J., 'Yorkshire Nunneries in the Middle Ages: recruitment and resources', in Appleby, J. C, and Dalton, P (eds.), *Government, Religion and Society in Northern England, 1000-1700* (Stroud, 1997), 104-5.
- ⁹⁹ Tillotson, J., 'Visitation and Reform of the Yorkshire Nunneries in the Fourteenth Century', *Northern History*, 30 (1994), 15, n 62. Harrison, *Nun Appleton*, 9. Burton, 'recruitment and resources', 105.
- ¹⁰⁰ Burton, *Yorkshire Nunneries*, 22.
- ¹⁰¹ Pers. com. David Start.
- ¹⁰² Numbers recovered from c8,000 post Black Death to approximately 12,000 at the beginning of the sixteenth-century. *RO*, II, 257.
- ¹⁰³ *RO*, III, 70. Thompson, I: **21**, 392.
- ¹⁰⁴ *RO*, III, 70.
- ¹⁰⁵ Edden, V., 'Devotional Life', 42.
- ¹⁰⁶ Thompson, I: **14**, 87
- ¹⁰⁷ *RO*, III, 69.
- ¹⁰⁸ Thompson, I: **21**, 251.
- ¹⁰⁹ Thompson, II: **35**, 163, n.7, 182. Power, *Nunneries*, 379-80.
- ¹¹⁰ Thompson, I: **21**, 375, n.2,3. The previous abbot was John Hoton (1422-39). *Heads*, III, 535.
- ¹¹¹ Chapter LVI. Geary, *Readings*, I, 181.
- ¹¹² Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 156.
- ¹¹³ Thompson, I: **14**, 14.
- ¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, **21**: 330.
- ¹¹⁵ Elizabeth Moigne, no doubt from the local gentry family, may have been a corrody.
- ¹¹⁶ Thompson, II: **33**, lxxxv. *Ibid*, 37: 102
- ¹¹⁷ Joan Kay in her will noted that Helen Kay was her daughter and prioress of Stixwould. Foster, I, 153-5. 30th November 1525,
- ¹¹⁸ Thompson, II: **37**, 104.
- ¹¹⁹ *L&P*, VIII, 1149. 31st July 1535.
- ¹²⁰ HMCR, *Manuscripts of His Grace the Duke of Rutland, K.G., preserved at Belvoir Castle*, 4 Vols. (London, 1888 -1905), I, 25.
- ¹²¹ *L&P*, IX, 179. 25th August 1535.
- ¹²² *Ibid*, 179, (3), ii.
- ¹²³ *Ibid*, 179, (3).
- ¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 179, (3), iv.
- ¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 179, (3) (2).
- ¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 179, (3), iii.
- ¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 179, (3), vi.
- ¹²⁸ LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 171. 25th June 1536.
- ¹²⁹ TNA, PROB, 11/27. 22nd June 1539.
- ¹³⁰ Kūmin, *Shaping of a Community*, 150. Welby, A. C. E., *Records of the Parish and Prebendal Church, the Guilds and Chantries of Grantham* (Grantham, s.d.), 17.
- ¹³¹ It is unknown whether he was related to William Tyndale.
- ¹³² *L&P*, IX, 740. 1st November 1535.
- ¹³³ *Ibid*.
- ¹³⁴ *Ibid*.
- ¹³⁵ *Ibid*.
- ¹³⁶ Obtained from the 1896 edition of the *DNB*. www.oxforddnb.com. Accessed 13/7/2011.
- ¹³⁷ *L&P*, IX, 740. 1st November 1535.
- ¹³⁸ Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*, 17-18.
- ¹³⁹ Thompson, II: **33**, 104.
- ¹⁴⁰ Chapter II. Geary, *Readings*, I, 160.
- ¹⁴¹ Chapter V. *Ibid*, I, 163.
- ¹⁴² Chapter II. *Ibid*, I, 160.
- ¹⁴³ Chapter LXIII. *Ibid*, I, 183.

CHAPTER SEVEN

For the Sake of my Soul.

Fyrst I bequeath my soule to God allmyghtty, to Our Lady St. Mary and to all the holy company of heven, and my body to be buryed in the churche porche or in the churcheyerde of All Halloys of Fryskney.

The Testament of John Alcockson of Friskney, 20th May 1532.¹

This preamble to the will of John Alcockson illustrates his spiritual perspective during a period of growing uncertainty within both the secular and religious settings of Tudor England. **(Plate 7:1)**. The wording is comparable to the vast majority originating in Lincolnshire during the years prior to the dissolution of the monasteries and the later upheavals of the Reformation process. To researchers such documents raise questions concerning the testator's religious, social and economic background. They also reveal beliefs concerning the afterlife and the Church's participation in securing salvation, factors that will be closely discussed within this chapter.

Testaments are undoubtedly the most informative documents that can be employed by researchers to uncover the extent of patronage, both local and distant, donated to the various sectors of the Church. Importantly for this work, they clearly expose the connectivity between donor and recipient. This is illustrated through both the donation itself and the *quid pro quo* request generally for intercessory prayers; an arrangement that gradually came under threat during this period, principally in relation to monasteries. In addition, the extent of localised patronage is also revealed, especially in relation to the distance from donor and recipient, both within and outside the three districts that constitute the county of Lincolnshire. This chapter will therefore reveal the workings of testamentary patronage largely aimed at securing the soul, and the extent that each sector of the Church; the parish, guilds, the cathedral and especially the religious houses were drawn into the process.

In der now comen The xxij day of may the year of o lordes god of
 ffor Sundrye xxij and in the xxij year of the reigne of King
 Henry the sixt the xxij day of february the xxij day of february
 mynde and good remembrance maketh this into last will and
 testament in maner and forme folowynge I have I bequeath my
 soules to god allmyghty to a lady of maye and to all the good
 wyves of Sundrye and my body to be buryed in the church of
 our lady of maye yerde of all galleys of february by the
 of my wyf mynde as that I have bequeath to be my wyf
 And I bequeath to a lady of maye / by the xxij day of february
 xxij / mynde / And to the xxij day of february / xxij day of february
 february / by the xxij day of february / xxij day of february
 mynde in remembrance for the xxij day of february / by the xxij day of february
 remembrance of february / by the xxij day of february / by the xxij day of february
 payd xxij day of february / by the xxij day of february / by the xxij day of february
 xxij day of february / by the xxij day of february / by the xxij day of february
 mynde / And I bequeath to the xxij day of february / by the xxij day of february
 my wyf mynde of february / by the xxij day of february / by the xxij day of february
 february / by the xxij day of february / by the xxij day of february / by the xxij day of february

Plate 7:1. The first page of the testament of John Alcockson of Friskney, dated 20th May 1532.
 LAO, LCC, 1532-4, f 49.

(a) The Use of Wills.

Testaments do need however to be managed with caution. Norman Tanner suggests that they 'provide evidence of piety, not of irreligion or anti-clericalism'.² They contain details of financial and spiritual requests: a proclamation of personal wishes at the termination of life. Although the testator probably 'discovered' greater piety whilst approaching death, other than through the preamble, wills are evidence of belief not declarations of religious convictions. Instead they 'outline essential principles rather than offering mirrors to the soul'.³ Nonetheless, testaments are probably the most reliable documentary source in understanding people's approach towards religion especially in times of considerable change.

Other than the few surviving churchwardens' accounts, wills are the only documents that illustrate ordinary people's relationship with the Church. They were composed by those wealthy enough to require a testament in order to dispense their patronage and secure their assets. Importantly, by possessing substantial resources these testators must have been influential within their home settlement and probably beyond. This makes their contribution to the historical record of considerable value. However, only an average of 0.10% per annum of the Lincolnshire population left a will between 1500 and 1540.⁴ **(Graph 7:1, p. 351).**

These important documents subsequently revealed however a certain measure of ambivalence towards monks and nuns, if not necessarily the friars. If replicated throughout the county's estimated 100,000 souls, enclosed monasticism was not seen as a valued entity. The research also revealed which of the categories of regulars, monks, friars or nuns, were the most popular destinations of patronage. **(Graph 7:2, p. 352).** Over a period of forty-one years, far fewer donations were given to the county's fifty extant monasteries (531) than to its fifteen individual friaries (2,285), with 693 directed towards the orphans of St. Catherine's. Concerning the different orders, the greatest numbers of donations (112) were to the seven houses of Gilbertine nuns: understandable considering the order's Lincolnshire connections. This was followed by 101 gifts to eight houses of Benedictine monks, eighty-four to

seven Cistercian monasteries and seventy-nine to the ten Augustinian monasteries. These figures are however miniscule when compared with an average of 571 gifts to each of the four orders of friars. **(Graph 7:3, p. 353).**

(b) Preambles.

These figures cannot however be interpreted as a criticism of the Church as a whole. Consequently research into preambles was undertaken to attempt to discover Lincolnshire parishioner's religious allegiances. Despite John Alcockson's orthodox opening statement, similar to 98% of wills for 1532, there was a gradual increase in non-standard preambles. In the Parish Wills between 1532 and 1534, only 4.3% testaments were atypical: from 1535 to 1537 this rose slightly to 6.2%, but the biggest increase occurred between 1538 and 1540 when 14.8% of preambles were unorthodox. This compares with the more 'radical' county of Kent. From a sample of 1,578 wills between 1532-40, 'reformist' preambles rose from 5% in gradual increments to 26%, with 'conservative' examples falling from 95% to 72%.⁵ Being closer to the capital and the coast may have influenced Kentish testators' spiritual viewpoints, but these differences may relate to an ever-changing and sometimes confusing religious environment. Therefore leaving the soul to 'God allmyghtty' alone covered most eventualities.

Many testators with unconventional preambles nevertheless still donated to altars, lights and for intercessionary prayers. Composed in 1540, John Adland, a fishmonger of Boston, left his soul 'in the hand of the Lord God, my Creator and Redeemer', but gave 4d. to the High Altar at St. Botolph's, paid a priest £5 per annum in silver for prayers and bestowed the Seven Martyrs Guild with 4d.⁶ Also in 1540, John Calthorpe, a yeoman from Pinchbeck, gave his soul to 'Almighty God the father ye son ye Holy Gost three person one God', also adding, 'I stedfastly beleve & trust verily that through the merytts of Chryst passion & hys only mercy that I shall be saved'. He nevertheless gave 8d. to the High Altar, 10s. to the bells, 6s. 8d. to the 'works', along with 26s. 8d. for prayers at his burial and on the seventh and thirtieth days.⁷ Despite the uncertain religious and political environment, the overwhelming

majority of Lincolnshire people (90%) solicited orthodox preambles, bequeathing to the Church in all its forms. These recurring requests for intercession therefore illustrate that prayers for the dead within the county were far from extinct.

Problems occurred however when a will composed prior to the commencement of the Reformation process was still unchanged following the alterations in religion. Therefore whereas Sir John Port of Etwall in Derbyshire, a justice of the King's Bench, composed his first will in January 1528, he deposited a second in March 1540 with appropriate alterations.⁸ In the first he noted many religious houses, amongst them Repton, and the friars at Litchfield, Derby, Chester and Atherstone, along with a donation of 40s. 'towards the repairs of Swarkestone bridge'.⁹ The preambles also altered. In his first will, he bequeathed his soul,

...to almighty God, three persons in Trinity, humbly beseeching our blessed Lady St. Mary, St. John the Evangelist, and all the company of Heaven, to be intermediaries for me to Our Lord Jesus, so that by the virtue of his blessed passion my soul may be the partaker of everlasting bliss.¹⁰

In his later testament he noted the king as Supreme Head of the Church, and bequeathed his soul only 'to almighty God'.¹¹ In doing this Port reflected the changes in doctrine, simultaneously securing his position in the King's judiciary. Notwithstanding, he still gave John Compton, clerk £20 sterling 'to pray from my soul after my departing'.¹² Doctrine may have been changing at the centre, but locally prayers for the dead continued unabated.

(c) Lifetime Benefaction.

Another factor is not what was written in a will, but what was omitted. Clive Burgess suggests, '...pious services provided after death are little more than icing on the cake: the main response was made in life of which wills yield hardly an inkling'.¹³ Funeral services were often arranged beforehand and although major bequests were mentioned, the details were generally omitted.¹⁴ Some lengthy wills must however have been composed well before death. Conversely, short wills with little information were not necessarily cheap alternatives, but possibly concluding

statements of previously finalised patronage. Unfortunately, monasteries left few records regarding such donations. As discussed in Chapter Five, the only noted bequests were in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, featuring gifts to the 'poor at the gate', some dating from previous centuries.¹⁵

It is difficult therefore to ascertain how much was bequeathed to the Church during the life of a testator. Although not from Lincolnshire, one set of documents does however reveal evidence of considerable donations. The papers of Sir Henry Willoughby (1451-1528) of Wollaton Hall in Nottinghamshire list yearly accounts during the early sixteenth-century. These include payments to priests, friars, monks and hermits along with subscriptions to various confraternities. In 1509, 4d. was donated both to the 'perdoner of Burton Lazars, and to the 'Frears of Nothingham'.¹⁶ In 1520, 12d. was given 'for yowre brotherhayd of Lowdlowe [Ludlow], and similarly 'to the Wythefrayrse [Carmelites] of Cowentre for yowe brother-hede, and in 1523, 4d. for 'Sent John of Baywerlay' [Beverley].¹⁷

The Willoughby estates spanned the Midland counties. Consequently, donations also given to the monasteries of Canwell, Kenilworth, Nuneaton, Garendon, Merevale, Polesworth and also Maxstoke: the prior taking an offering of 4d. to Walsingham.¹⁸ Locally, a 'reward' was donated regularly to the 'Armytt [Hermit] Egerton', and 8d. was given 'to ij frayres off Notyngan that was goyng to Sent Mykylse Mowntt' [St. Michael's Mount].¹⁹ Other 'wandering friars' appear in the accounts. Four pence was given to a 'frayer off Taykylle [Tickhill] goyng toward Oxford', and 12d. 'to a frayer of Notyngam...that praychyd att Wollartoun'.²⁰ This must have been a regular occurrence as 3s. 4s. was paid to 'a frayre of Cowentre', and 8d to 'a frayre of Werweke' for preaching.²¹

John Willoughby (d1549), son of Sir Henry, carried 'oferyngs' of 8d., to the 'Holy Blowd of Haylse' and to 'Sent Kaylamse' [Kenelem] at Winchcombe.²² In 1542, a gift of 2d. was given 'to a pore man at the gates that was a hermytte'.²³ Clearly the Willoughby family were spreading their religious patronage lavishly. They sought

intercessionary prayers from differing sectors of the Church: noting on 'the xvij of May [1542], at the dirige for my Maister's father to iiij prestes...xvjd.'.²⁴

In his will, Henry Willoughby left his soul only to 'Almighty God', with his body interred in St. Leonard's Wollaton, alongside his four wives.²⁵ He left bequests to the poor, the local highways and to prisoners at Nottingham: appropriately as St. Leonard was their patron saint. Every house of Franciscan Observants was given 10s., and Newark 40s. and all Charterhouses were donated 13s. 4d., for Trentals, and 'to pray for me as a brother of their religion'.²⁶ Willoughby, whose capital in 1528 has been calculated at over £1,000, acquired primarily through local coal mining, is clearly choosing quality over quantity.²⁷ The austere orders of the Observants and Carthusians only amounted to fifteen houses in total, but their prayers were possibly seen as more effectual than other monastic orders.

Like the prosperous Willoughbys, John Alcockson's testament revealed that one of his prime concerns, like most people, was minimizing time in Purgatory. Here, earthly sins unwashed by confession and penance were supposedly cleansed. This process was to be assisted by intercessionary prayers from the four houses of friars in Boston, via a donation of 12d. each. Although Purgatory is not specifically cited, Alcockson's bequests solicited a smooth passage through what was generally perceived to be an unpleasant process.

Alcockson also donated 12d. to the cathedral, probably the High Altar, and a further 4d. to 'our Lady warkes ther'.²⁸ The Works Chantry with its 'Red Ark' helped maintain the vast structure.²⁹ A considerable percentage of donations were given to the cathedral, not only from Lincolnshire itself but also throughout the large diocese. It is extraordinary that many testators bequeathed to an unseen edifice sometimes miles from their parish. It was therefore perhaps perceived as a religious centre second only to the parish church.³⁰

From 1393 to 1510, the PCC wills from Oxfordshire, the archdeaconry furthest from Lincoln, noted 35% of testators donating to the cathedral.³¹ From 1484 to 1533, 80% of donors from the Bedfordshire archdeaconry gave to the minster.³² Nevertheless, the PCC wills from the county, suggest it was not so popular within the upper echelons, attaining only thirty-one donations out of 131 wills (23.6%). Their wealth may have been based in London, where donations were made to twenty-eight parish churches.³³ The Lincolnshire PCC wills reveal however that over forty-one years, only thirty-two out of 212 testators (15.1%) ignored the mother church.

(d) Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills (PCC).

The PCC testaments are important to the research as they provide an essence of connectivity with the wealthier members of Lincolnshire's society, who, because of their financial dealings spread their patronage over a wider area. One hundred and fifty three Lincolnshire PCC testators (10.7% of the Monastic Wills) left to religious houses of all types, both inside and outside the county. Additionally, 103 PCC donors (48.6% of 212) came from Holland, seventy-two (34%) from Lindsey with Kesteven on twenty-five (11.8%). PCC wills from Boston were by far the most numerous for a single settlement, accumulating forty-nine (23.1%), with Lincoln perhaps surprisingly on only twelve (5.6%). Despite its importance, the more affluent testators were perhaps leaving a declining city for other parts of the county with better communications to the south, by either land or sea. Interestingly, the number of PCC wills drops significantly as the period progresses. Therefore, they were perhaps departing for wealthier parts of England, more suitable for their enterprises. **(Graph 7:4, p. 354).**

PCC testators also gave to the friars, amounting to ninety-two wills (43.4% of 212). This included multiple donations in a single will, sometimes to mendicants in Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. Seventy-four (34.9%), left to enclosed monasteries: again to numerous houses within single testament. Despite possible 'insider knowledge' from the royal Court, some PCC testators were still giving to

monasteries up until their closure. In April 1538, one donated to Sixhills: the convent closing on 29th September the same year.³⁴ The Boston Friars received two bequests in 1538, and one in August 1539 from John Trollope of Boston, with the codicil, 'my bodye to be buried at the gray ffreres and [if] they stande'.³⁵

Although not a PCC testator, to further ensure his salvation, John Alcockson presented the high altar in All Hallows at Friskney with 12d. 'for tythes forgottyn', with an additional 4d. to the church guilds and to every altar. The building was endowed with 12d., specifically for 'reparacions': general repairs. **(Plate 7:2)**. The church of Wainfleet St. Mary, where Alcockson possessed landholdings, was given 6d., again for tithes.³⁶ This was a frequent declaration within wills of the period. In theory, to die intestate or in debt, especially to the Church, would perceivably lengthen time in Purgatory. It was however the executor or supervisor's responsibility to see that all instructions were executed; in this case Alcockson's wife and son.

(e) Witnesses, Executors and Supervisors.

Many testaments concluded by leaving, 'the resydew off my gudds [for] the welthe off my soule' or in similar terms.³⁷ This statement was levelled at the administrators of the will: prime movers in ensuring that both the requests and bequests of the deceased were performed according to their wishes. Philippa Maddern suggests the executor acts, 'as a projection after death of the legal personality of the deceased'.³⁸ Much rested on their shoulders, therefore it was not uncommon to include a priest and occasionally a regular, who theoretically could be trusted with both property and soul.

Nonetheless, veiled threats were occasionally issued by testators. John Green of Skillington insinuated to his executors, that '...they shall annswer afore the high juge in the day of Jugement'.³⁹ Humphrey Newell of Torksey, suggested that the nuns of Wilton in Wiltshire will 'answere before god at ye daye of dome'.⁴⁰

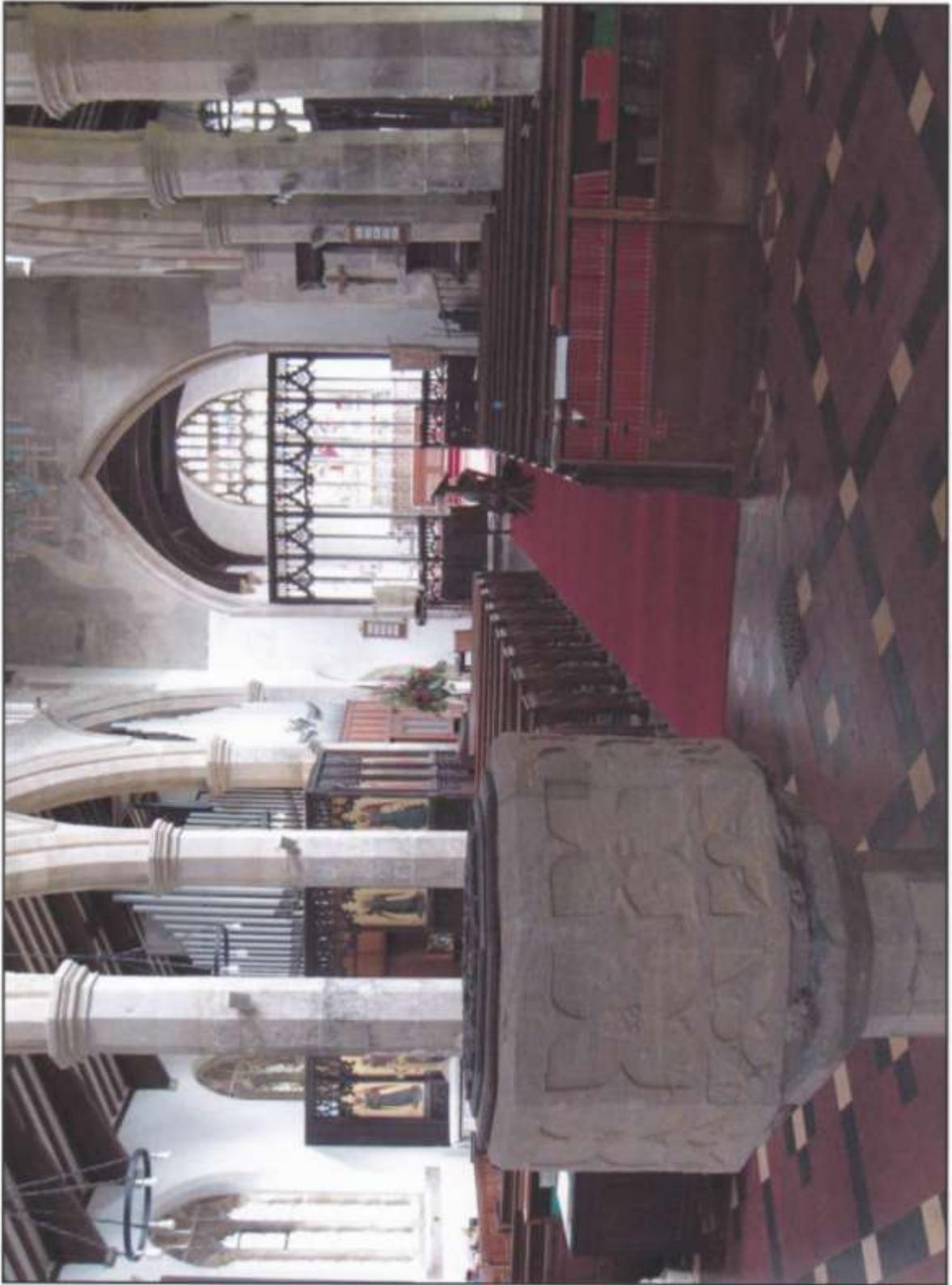


Plate 7:2. Friskney All Saints. The font is fifteenth-century, in which John Alcockson may well have been baptised.

In 1519, during the visitation of Wainfleet All Saints, it was noted 'that John Reysull of Ashby [was] not fulfilling his executorship to Robert Whyt and Joan Whitt of Wainfleet'.⁴¹ It was also revealed at Whaplode that 'the executors of vicar of Holbeach, Sir William Haltofte ... should appoint chaplain to say masses for his soul for 50 years: [as he has] not had one for 40 years'.⁴²

In Lincolnshire forty-two regulars are noted as witnesses, supervisors or overseers to wills. Although there were exceptions, most friars were witnesses whereas abbots and priors were generally supervisors, holding greater responsibility: only one prioress was noted, Isabell Smyth of Greenfield.⁴³ After donating to the Dominicans of Boston 'a dwelling house' in return for obits, John Akey, a weaver, requested the Prior, Sir Thomas Bekytt, to witness the testament.⁴⁴ Sir Richard Warner of the Augustinians in Stamford acted similarly for the testament of William Haryson of Careby. Haryson donated two strikes of barley to the other three orders, but an extra strike of rye to the 'hermit friars'.⁴⁵

In 1532, Margaret Appulbe of Horbling, made 'Richerde Palmer my supervisor with the councell of Mr. Prior of Sempyngham'. As payment she gave the prior a cow and Palmer a calf.⁴⁶ In the same year, Thomas Routon of Horbling also requested 'Richerd Palmer [to be] supervisor with the sight of Mr. Prior of Sempyngham'.⁴⁷ The terms 'with the sight of' and 'with the council of', suggests that the prior was perceived as a trusted authority. Similarly, in 1534, Marion Browne also of Horbling inserted that her son as executor had 'the residue of my goodes, to dispose for the helthe of my soule as he thynkes best', but adding 'with the councell of Mr. Vicare of Horblyng'.⁴⁸ Although she chose the parish priest rather than a regular, she nevertheless chose a respected Church official to advise her son *à propos* securing her soul.

Marion Browne also left considerable sums of money to three monastic institutions. These included donations to St. Catherine's and the Carmelites of Boston, but a significant sum of ten shillings to Sempringham, situated two miles south of

Horbling. John, her late husband, also donated 3s. 4d. each to the prior, canons and nuns of the monastery.⁴⁹ Sempringham held both the manor and advowson of Horbling, and may occasionally have supplied clergy from their ranks.⁵⁰ In appearing to favour Sempringham, it could be suggested that both made unrecorded donations to the house during their lifetimes.

(f) Testamentary Connectivity with the Religious.

The Monastic Wills give some indication of testator's connectivity towards specific monasteries. Of the 405 different settlements noted, 318 (79%) had connections with a monastery either as rectors and/or as manorial landholders. Of these, 275 testators donated to the respective monastery (19.2% of 1,433 wills), although this figure precludes friaries, holding no land or advowsons. Others left to houses not connected with the settlement or to St. Catherine's orphanage. Four testators in the Monastic Wills originated from Baumber. John Pape gave to Bardney Abbey, the holder of the manor, and three others donated to the Lincoln friars and the local church, held by Bridlington Priory. Pape also gave to Kirkstead, unconnected with Baumber.⁵¹

In the case of John and Jane Armstrong of Corby Glen, the former gave to Vaudey and St. Michael's, Stamford, the landholder and rector respectively. Jane, a vowess, bestowed upon Agnes Rud, Prioress of Sempringham and Jane Tyssington, Prioress of Haverholme, both Gilbertine houses.⁵² These nunneries have no known connections with Corby so the two superiors possibly had links with the Armstrong family.⁵³ This evidence reveals a mixture of familial and manorial connections, but also giving to monasteries that have no recognized affiliations with the testator.

Nevertheless, a number of parishioners appear to have held their monastic rector and landowner in some esteem. Eleven of the twenty-three testators donating to Bullington Priory came from Burgh le Marsh: the monastery being the holder of the advowson and manor. Similarly all six donors from Nocton gave to the local abbey: again owner of both estate and church. Of the eight monastic donors from Bardney

parish, all except one gave to the monastery. Lawrence Milford requested burial in the house, made the abbot his supervisor and asked that his wife have his corrody. Lawrence also donated to nearby Stainfield, Tupholme and Legbourne.⁵⁴ In 1548, a John *Melforde* of Bardney, perhaps a relation, was noted as a former corrodian receiving a pension of £2: dying in 1552.⁵⁵

In the Parish Wills, of the thirteen Bardney testators all gave to the parish church whose rector was the abbot. The present structure was built post 1434 at the behest of the monastery: the original parochial chapel having become 'notorious for its old age and craziness', and difficult to access during floods.⁵⁶ This, along with adverse visitation findings, notably recurring contacts with seculars, probably initiated the building of the new church, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the abbey.⁵⁷ Its close proximity nevertheless allowed the parishioners to retain connectivity with the monastery as rector, employer, landowner and no doubt occasional donator of charity.

(g) Connectivity with "Foreign" Monasteries.

Lincolnshire churches also retained proprietors from monasteries outside the county. Because of the considerable distances involved, most were seen as remote entities and therefore received few donations. The thirteen testators from Bicker ignored their monastic rector, Butley Priory in Suffolk, instead giving to the Boston friars and St. Catherine's.⁵⁸ Similarly, parishioners from nearby Donington ignored their church's appropriator, the nuns of Minching Buckland in Somerset. Nevertheless, one hundred and seventy 'foreign' houses are mentioned in 155 Monastic Wills: 10.8% of the total.

There is also evidence of a regional donation structure complementing the local. Here, patronage and pilgrimage merged: neither ecclesiastical nor political borders affecting spiritual donations. Journeying from Holland to the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk would not have been an arduous pilgrimage. Travelling by sea, the monastery is only approximately forty miles from Boston and closer overland from the settlements in southern Holland.⁵⁹ The Marian shrine

accumulated thirty-five gifts (2.4%), seventeen from Lindsey, eleven from Holland and seven from Kesteven: no-one from Lincoln contributed. Situated in the same county, Castle Acre Priory accumulated fifteen Lincolnshire donations (1.1%). These came primarily from the Sutton villages in Holland where the Cluniac house held churches and estates. It retained the advowsons of Long Sutton, Fleet and Lutton in Sutton, all in the south bordering on Norfolk.⁶⁰ These villages gave only small amounts generally addressed to the prior, although seven were for 'tithes forgotten': probably acknowledging rectoral privileges.⁶¹

Friars from distant towns were also included. In 1523, John Clinton of Lutton gave to both Castle Acre and the friars of King's Lynn.⁶² The Hanseatic port, with economic connections with the Holland district, contained four friaries, the recipients of seven Lincolnshire wills.⁶³ In 1346, the Carmelites in Lynn reached an agreement with the order in Cambridge only to beg and preach around Fleet and Gedney, whilst the former retained villages surrounding Tydd St. Mary, adjacent to the Lincolnshire/Norfolk border.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, two wills originating from Fleet donate to the Lynn friars, with three from Sutton and Lutton to Cambridge.

Eight wills, mostly from Holland, were shared between Peterborough and Thorney in Cambridgeshire and Ramsey in Huntingdonshire. Further afield, three testaments cite holding from Waltham Abbey in Essex. One donor gave a furred gown and hood to the prior of Hertford, and to Earls Colne Priory in Essex, 'half a dozen spoons with acorns on the end'.⁶⁵ In 1540, a testator from Syston gave to 'Thomas Smythe, late prior of Wroxton, iijs. iiijd'.⁶⁶ This Oxfordshire house closed in 1536 but had previously owned both church and manor at Syston.⁶⁷ One donor gave 6s. 8d 'to the sustention of the distraught men and women in Bedlam in London'.⁶⁸ The furthest was Lewes Priory in Sussex, 130 miles away, where a testator from Tydd, St. Mary was noted as tenant of the Cluniac house.⁶⁹

Similar 'cross border' donations also occurred in the north of the county and to a lesser extent in the west. Sixty wills from the Lindsey district left to monasteries

outside the county (11.7% of a total of 514). Testators from Horncastle were noted as holding of the Bishop of Carlisle, a major landholder, and some further north, notably Belton and Stallingborough held from the Abbot of Selby. The friars of Pontefract, Hull, Beverley, Doncaster, York and Tickhill benefited from twenty-three donations between them (4.4%), most originating from settlements in the north of Lindsey. The shrine of St. John of Beverley (d721) also attracted four donations from Goxhill, South Ferriby, Barrow and Brocklesby. Although in a different county these houses are also in a separate archiepiscopal diocese, lending credence to the concept of patronage ignoring ecclesiastical boundaries.

This process could be reversed, with Yorkshire residents leaving to Lincolnshire houses, especially where there was close familial connectivity. In 1502, Dame Elizabeth Greystock of York, widow of Sir John Vavasour and daughter of Sir Robert Tailboys of Kyme, left Thornholme 'my pece and cover of silver and gilte with okyn levys, and xls.'. She donated 40s. to Kyme, 'to the entent that they pray specially for my soule and my father and mother soules, whose bonys resteth there...'.⁷⁰ Similarly, in 1523, Dame Joan Thurescrosse, (née Lyncoln), a 'veiled widow' (*vidua velata*), of Hull, donated to monasteries in Grimsby. She gave the 'Nonnes in Grymesby xls. and thei to entre my name into their Mortilage booke', and 'to every house of Freres in Grymesby xs....them to say a trentall of Messes for me'. She also gave to Dame Agnes Austyn, 'noon of Sixhill xxs. [and] to my god doughtour, Dame Joan Gatton in the same place, xxs.'. ⁷¹ Discussed below, the Lyncoln and Austyn families had strong family ties: being from over the Humber was clearly no obstacle to the spread of patronage.⁷²

To the west of the county, seven houses in Nottinghamshire: Rufford, Newark, Broadholme, Wallingwells, Mattersey and Thurgarton were all mentioned, again situated within the York archiepiscopate. Broadholme and Thurgarton are both noted in the 262 wills originating from Kesteven. Croxton in Leicestershire is also mentioned: the monastery owning manors at Barrowby, Sedgebrook and Skillington,

all in the Grantham area. Thirty-one testators (11.8%) from the district also donated to thirty-eight 'foreign' houses. This widespread patronage was perhaps enhanced by better communications facilities via Stamford and the Great North Road. The furthest distant was to the friars of London, with Thomas Lee of Sleaford donating 20s. to 'Anne Leght my daughter in the hospital of St. Bartholomew, Smithfield'.⁷³

The largest beneficiary from Kesteven outside Lincolnshire was the Observant friars of Newark, attracting twelve wills out of sixteen. Newark was an early sixteenth-century foundation, and although purportedly more ascetic than their conventual counterparts, still left the cloister to preach to surrounding populations. In 1524, the accounts of the Willoughby family relate, '...for my M[aste]rs raywarde to the frayers of Nowarke that praychyd at Wolloghton, iijs. iiijd.'. ⁷⁴ Most of the donations to Newark came from the nearby settlements of Dry Doddington, Brant Broughton and Hougham, along with Hough on the Hill and Long Bennington, both once alien priories. This is evidence of cross-border connectivity towards a newly founded house whose asceticism attracted considerable patronage.

(h) Alien Priories.

Hough and Hougham were two of fifteen alien houses in the county suppressed during the "100 Years War", in a move by the Crown to seize French owned monasteries. Some were used to finance newly established Carthusian houses. A major element in the foundation of Axholme Priory was Monks Kirby, a Benedictine priory in Warwickshire previously owned by St. Nicholas of Angers.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, connectivity between the Carthusian Priory of Mount Grace in Yorkshire, and its appropriated churches in Lincolnshire were still retained a century after their acquisition.

Hough-on-the-Hill was an Augustinian cell founded from the abbey of Notre Dame in Cherbourg. Initially just given the manor, the late Saxon church was appropriated by the French house in 1235 as a monastic cell. In 1432, Hough, along with other alien houses was granted to Mount Grace.⁷⁶ Only two Monastic Wills originate from

Hough: both mentioning the Yorkshire monastery. In 1531, William Thornely donated 40s. along with gifts to the friars of Grantham and Newark.⁷⁷ A year earlier, Sir Thomas Day, the vicar, left the same amount to the Yorkshire house. He also donated 6s. 8d. to Minting church, twenty-five miles away.⁷⁸ Minting was originally a cell of Fleury, given to Mount Grace in 1421: the rents and tithes being collected by John Littlebury, the local steward from nearby Hagworthingham.⁷⁹ Unlike other 'foreign' houses associated with the county, connectivity was retained with the Carthusian priory through properties situated far from its homeland, but also perhaps due to the perceived sanctity of this austere order.

Long Bennington, was once the wealthiest alien cell in Lincolnshire.⁸⁰ The church and manor, again appropriated by Mount Grace, originally belonged to the Abbey of Savigny.⁸¹ In 1534, the incumbent Richard Smythe donated 20s. to the Carthusian priory, still technically his 'employer'.⁸² In a further connection, the pension listings of 1548 show that a Robert Shippley, 'formally a monk of Mount Grace' was resident in Long Bennington with a pension of £2 per annum. He was unmarried with no preferment describing himself as a yeoman.⁸³ However, in the pension list of 1539 he is noted as '*converso*', a lay brother, evidenced by his small pension.⁸⁴ Again, this displays continuing links with the distant motherhouse despite its closure. Testaments from the ex-religious are however rare but a Lincolnshire example does survive.⁸⁵

(i) Monastic Testaments.

A will from a former Lincolnshire prior revealed close familial connection with his monastery, and helps illustrate the lives of regulars following suppression. In April 1539, a month before his death, James Wallis, prior of Sixhills (1510?-1538) composed his will, donating to previous members of his convent, some family associates.⁸⁶

To sister Isabel Walleys all my shepe wythe on cobberd which magister George Hennage dyd geve me being in the chamber where I lay in the abbey. To Grace Burton layt syster in Syxhill abbey, vjs. viijd. To Willm off Syxhill abbey on trotting mere that I bowght...⁸⁷.

Isabel Walleys was given probably one of the few possessions James retained from his former lodgings.⁸⁸ In 1554, she was unmarried and still living at Sixhills: dying in c1558.⁸⁹ Although unnamed in the testament, there were possibly two other relatives in the nunnery, Anne and Joan Walles. Both are noted in the pension listings of 1539, but only Anne in 1548.⁹⁰ She resided in Middle Rasen and was married to a Richard Grysbie, but by Elizabeth's reign had moved to Louth.⁹¹ Middle Rasen was also the home of a Margaret Wallis, possibly sister of James and also a William Walleys, the supervisor of James's will. In her testament of 1536 Margaret gave Isabel 20s. but nothing to her 'sisters': her supervisor being Prior James. She additionally gave to Sixhills, St. Catherine's and also held a house from nearby Tupholme, the proprietor of one of Middle Rasen's two churches.⁹²

Grace Burton is unlisted in the pension documents, but 'Willm' was perhaps William Walker, noted third in surrender documents, therefore possibly the Subprior, or alternatively the aforementioned supervisor, William Walleys.⁹³ George Heneage was Dean of Lincoln (1528-39): his brother John having been steward of Sixhills.⁹⁴ Thomas Kyme, brother in law of George and John was a supervisor and also a witness to the testament. In a will of 1530, John Heneage, father of George and John, names James Wallis as executor, to have 6s. 8d. to administer the financial affairs of his wife.⁹⁵ Following the Suppression, Sixhills was added to the Heneage estates at nearby Hainton.⁹⁶ Leland notes that 'Syr Thomas Hennage hath donne much cost ther, yn translating and new building with brike and abbay stone'.⁹⁷ The nunnery was clearly seen as part of the familial estate even when in operation, with trusted relations keeping a close eye on both their spiritual and financial investments. This was connectivity and localism combining to further the interests, both spiritually and economically of an influential local gentry family.

When composing their testaments incumbents of appropriated churches also had to be mindful of their monastic 'employer'. Robert Lyndeley vicar of Bilsby donated

36s. 8d. to nearby Markby Priory, the proprietor.⁹⁸ Similarly, Sir John Beck, Vicar of Aby, noted that,

...all my [lands] in the paryshe off alhallouse in waynflet stand seased to the use off [myn executrix] Isabell Smyth priorysse off grenefeld and the convent off the same and ther successores for lxxx yeres, to thentent that they shall kepe an obyete for me and all crysten soules every yere...⁹⁹

Both Aby church and manor was owned by Greenfield, and having no apparent family, Beck therefore confirmed an agreed transaction with the convent. Isabel Smith was the cousin of William Smith, Archdeacon of Lincoln, nephew to his namesake Bishop of Lincoln (1495-1514). The archdeacon's will of 1528 states 'I bequeth to my Cosyn Isabell Smyth, prioresse of the Nunrye att Grenefelde my second best Sylver bason and Ewer to hyr own use [and] to my Cosyn Dampe Agnes Kettell, Nune of the same place iijl.'.¹⁰⁰ This again illustrates familial connectivity within a monastic context.

(j) The Appearance of Religious Houses within Testaments.

Monasteries were generally mentioned at the beginning of wills along the other ecclesiastical bequests; with secular donations following. As an example, after the Church received its due, the family of John Alcockson were left both money and livestock. This totalled over £1 in cash along with twenty-seven ewes and seven lambs: the latter shared between his wife Catherine, daughter-in-law and grandchildren. In the midst of these family legacies however appear the friars of Boston. It is not altogether unusual for monasteries and other religious institutions to be included almost as an afterthought. It could be suggested therefore that the sometimes-chaotic presentation of wills, with donations and bequests seemingly scattered at random, implies that some were testators were subject to pressure from priests, scribes or attending witnesses.

John Scarisbrick suggests however that in general, 'testators are not deceived by clerical ventriloquism'.¹⁰¹ It is difficult to envisage influential people within the community being pressured by witness, especially priests, into altering their

bequests.¹⁰² Being reasonably wealthy, the testator was probably active in the affairs of the parish, but also legally astute.¹⁰³ In addition, a secular priest is not likely to persuade a dying parishioner to leave to the regulars or in some cases nearby parish churches where the testator had landholdings¹⁰⁴

(k) Donations to the Mendicants.

John Alcockson's possibly belated donation to the friars, just prior to a codicil, may therefore have been a scribal error by the writer or court official in an otherwise standard testament. The friars probably visited Friskney from their house in Boston, eleven miles away. Six of the seven Monastic Wills originating from the village gave to the friars, with a further two donating to St. Catherine's; along with Bullington, the joint holder of the advowson.¹⁰⁵ The friars may have stayed with the Alcockson family when undertaking a preaching tour of the local area; it is therefore understandable that donations were given.

In addition, although peripatetic, friars were predominantly urban based. Lincolnshire towns containing friaries rarely had large monastic houses, possibly a reason behind their location. Boston and Grantham were both devoid of monasteries. Stamford possessed three small relatively poor establishments: St. Leonard's, a cell of Durham, **(Plate 7:3)**, Newstead by Stamford and St. Michael's nunnery then in Northamptonshire.¹⁰⁶ Lincoln had two houses, St. Mary Magdalene, a cell of St. Mary's, York and St. Catherine's. **(Plate 7:4)**. Grimsby retained the nunnery of St. Leonard's and the locally influential abbey of Wellow, proprietor of the main parish church of St. James.

Mendicants were probably seen as having greater spiritual connectivity locally. Consequently they were well represented in Lincolnshire testaments, accruing both cash and also produce: the latter reflecting their notion of mendicancy. Agricultural products consisted of wheat for white bread and malt for brewing. Barley was the most common bequest, donated to the Lincoln friars by sixty-seven testators, representing nearly 20% of the gifts.

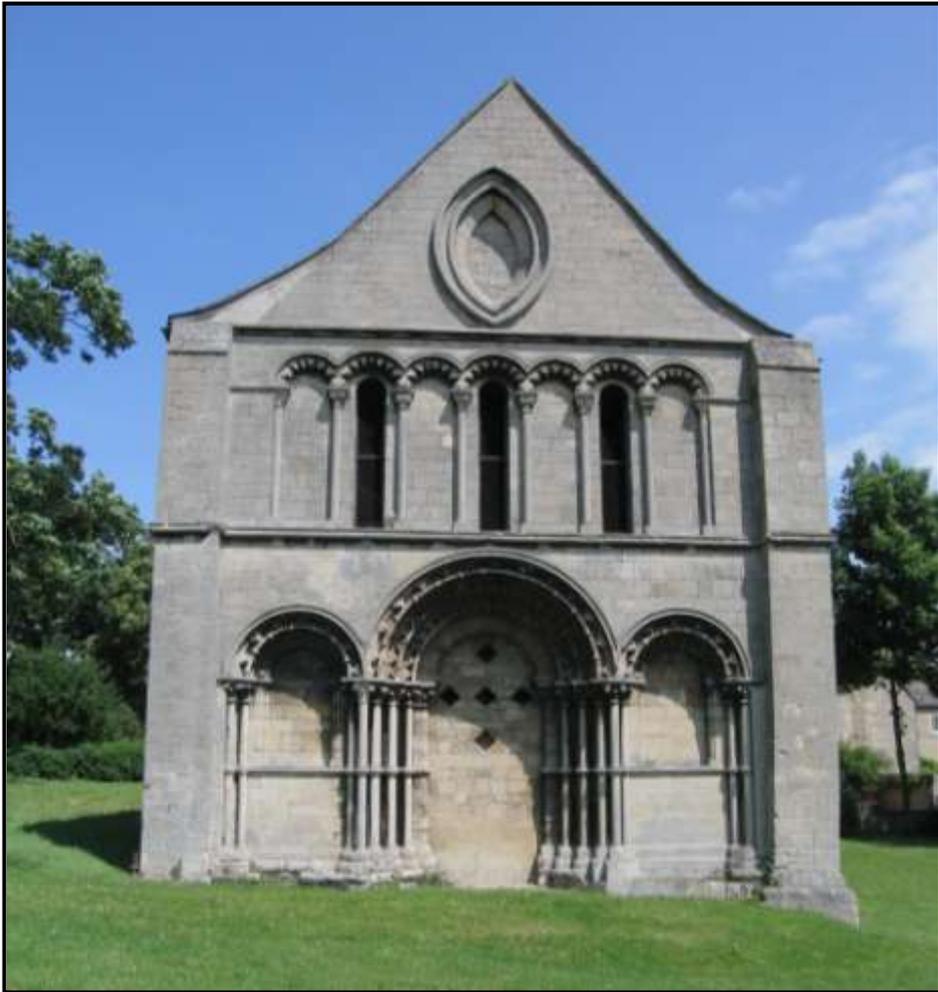


Plate 7:3. West front of St. Leonard's, Stamford, a cell of Durham Cathedral Priory.

Plate 7:4. The remains of St. Mary Magdalene, Lincoln, a cell of St. Mary's York.



As expected, the friars were popular in their town of origin. The major settlements of Boston, Stamford and Lincoln all possessed the four main orders, with two at Grimsby and a single Franciscan house at Grantham. In Lincoln, of the sixty-five Monastic Wills emanating from the city, all the testators gave to the local friaries. This was replicated to a lesser extent in Grimsby (86.6%), Stamford (85.7%) and Grantham (66.6%), with Boston at 55.5%: the main recipient from the port being St. Catherine's (86.4%). **(Maps 7:1 & 7:2, pp. 365-6).**

In Boston, William Bawtre requested an obit for seven years from the Carmelites for 3s. 4d., also leaving all four orders 6s. 8d. for a Trental.¹⁰⁷ Edmund Burte, requested that 'my body to be buryed at the Whyte frerys...within the chapell of our Lady...[giving] to the reparacion of ther church vjs. viijd.¹⁰⁸ John Akye, a weaver gave 'my tenauntrie next unto my dwelling house to the keypyng of a obit in the Blacke Freers for the term of xx yeres...the said freers to have ijs.'¹⁰⁹ Friars preached and taught both in their friary naves, specifically designed to accommodate large congregations, but also worked in outlying settlements. William Eyre of Saleby gave,

...to iiij orders of frerys wych visyttes the towne of Saleby for ther lyffyng, to eche order singler be it selffe xijd. for to have at every house sayd or song messe and dirige for helthe of my soule.¹¹⁰

Symond Lyndesey of Louth, a Staple Merchant, similarly bequested to, '...the iiij orders freres that be custumed to preche at Louth two tymes in the yere, iijs. iiijd.,' each.¹¹¹ Mendicants reached out spiritually to the local populations from villages that were sometimes ill-served by the parish clergy. In retaining connectivity through their visibility, it is little wonder that friars were admired by local testators.

(I) Social Models of Patronage.

The social status from which the testators originated was important to the research. Although some note their profession, only 6.1% of monastic testators mention their social position. These were the gentry, yeoman, esquires and merchants.¹¹²

Although issuing from the upper sections of Lincolnshire's social strata, they differ in their gift-giving and also in their residence. **(Table 7:1).**

Table 7:1	Gentry (21 Wills)	Yeomen (16 (Wills)	Merchants (34 Wills)	Esquires (16 Wills)	Total (87 wills)
St. Catherine's	11 (53.4%)	13 (81.3%)	22 (64.7%)	3 (18.8%)	49 (56.3%)
Friars	14 (66.7%)	5 (31.3%)	26 (76.5%)	11 (68.8%)	56 (64.4%)
Monasteries	11 (53.4%)	5 (31.3%)	16 (47.1%)	8 (50%)	40 (46%)
Holland	7 (33.3%)	11 (68.8%)	22 (64.7%)	2 (12.5%)	42 (48.3%)
Lindsey	11 (52.4%)	4 (25%)	9 (26.5%)	6 (37.5%)	30 (34.5%)
Kesteven	1 (4.8%)	1 (6.3%)	2 (5.9%)	8 (50%)	12 (13.8%)
Lincoln	2 (9.5%)	0	1 (2.9%)	0	3 (3.4%)
PCC Wills	7 (33.3%)	9 (56.3%)	25 (73.5%)	9 (56.3%)	50 (57.5%)

Of the three main destinations of monastic patronage, the friars, St. Catherine's and the enclosed monasteries, the mendicants were given priority by the gentry, merchants and esquires. The orphans are foremost regards the yeomen with the monasteries and friaries joint second. The merchants, largely based in Holland appear to spread their patronage comparatively evenly but the monasteries still came last. The gentry, prominent in Lindsey, favoured the friars with the monasteries and St. Catherine's a close second. Nearly 70% of esquires supported the mendicants, but monks and nuns nevertheless gained half of the donations, with St. Catherine's on fewer than 20%.

It is relevant that nearly 74% of merchants deposited their testaments with the PCC. By the sixteenth-century, these *mercaters*, along with the yeomen and esquires featuring in 56% of PCC wills, consequently were a major economic group within the county. They were far ahead of the gentry, languishing on 33%: 'new money' perhaps replacing the old order. Notwithstanding, the monastic houses were at the bottom of the patronage league of the wealthier citizens, although perhaps by a smaller factor in comparison with the non-PCC testaments. This maybe a case of the affluent classes donating to what they perceived as the 'upper-class' arm of monasticism, comparable with their own financial and social standing.

An important section of Lincolnshire society was the husbandman. Fifty are noted in the Monastic Wills, ten from Holland, thirteen from Kesteven and twenty-seven from Lindsey. Donations also differed from the other groupings, with 24% leaving to St. Catherine's, 58% to the friars and 36% to monastic houses.¹¹³ Demonstrating husbandmen's lower financial status, the amounts donated were mostly in pennies, the largest being two at 10s. for Trentals: the 'going rate' for the ceremony. Only one will was deposited with the PCC: Henry Isaak from Tydd, St. Mary, who donated 12d. for his 'forgotten tithes' to his church's proprietor, Castle Acre.¹¹⁴

Of the clergy, sixty-seven were noted as leaving to religious houses. These ranged from parish vicars to chaplains of the cathedral chantries. Because of their single status, most bequeathed to friends and fellow clergy, but the friars and monastic houses were also noted on 64.2% and 53.7% respectively.¹¹⁵ St. Catherine's only accrued 20.9%, perhaps reflecting a lack of empathy towards children. As with the husbandmen the majority came from Lindsey (49.3%), with Holland and Kesteven on 19.4% and 18%. Only nine clergy wills came from Lincoln, all associated with the Cathedral Close, with merely four depositing PCC wills; one from John Constable, Dean of Lincoln.¹¹⁶

Although women only feature in 9.6% of the Monastic testaments, their pattern of donation differs from the men. Although 46.4% gave to the friars, nearly 25% donated to monasteries, over half of which were nunneries. St. Catherine's received 62%, perhaps reflecting a nurturing aspect of patronage in contrast to the celibate clergy. Just over a third (37%) describe themselves as widows and nearly a third of that number gave to the orphans. Slightly over half the total of women testators came from Holland, with Kesteven on 18% with Lindsey 26%. Lincoln only accrued six wills, 4.3% of the total, and the PCC testaments amounted to seventeen (12.3%).

Five women are noted as vowesses. These were largely wealthy laywomen who took oaths of chastity, maintained a personal priest and adhered to the *Opus Dei* in a

similar manner to the religious. In c1418, Bishop Repingdon gave permission to give 'the veil, ring and mantle of widowhood to Alice, widow of John Green of Grantham'.¹¹⁷ In her will of 1419, Alice left to the Grantham friars, Sempringham, Catley, Newstead by Stamford, Broadholme and Croxton, in addition to 6s. 8d. to 'the boys of St. Catherine's'.¹¹⁸ In 1511, Joan Harby of Lincoln, noted as a *mantulata* or vowess, requested that 'my body be bered in the church of sant peter ad Archus within the Cite of Lincoln', she also donated 6s. 8d. to Barlings 'for my stone lynyg there'.¹¹⁹ Vowesses were consequently women of some wealth and influence, and if widowed able to decide on the destination of their patronage. Nevertheless, it was the funeral itself that formed a sense of connectivity between the deceased family, local parishioners and the Church.

(m) Formulating the Ceremonial.

A factor probably taken into consideration by testators was the likelihood of obits and other services being performed as per instructions. The local parish church was therefore the obvious destination for burial, with services preformed in the presence of the family and members of the local community.¹²⁰ Similarly, most chantries, either temporary or permanent were situated inside parish churches: there were few known examples in monasteries.¹²¹ The services, generally performed soon after death, consisted of Placebo, sung at night, with Dirige at Matins in the early morning, followed by a sometimes elaborate Requiem Mass.

Ambrose Irby of Moulton stated that 'myn executors...the day of my burial shall cause placebo and dirige to be song ournight and masse of Requiem on the morrow'.¹²² The Dirige was sometimes repeated on the following seventh and thirtieth days, along with the important anniversary obit, occasionally featuring a symbolically empty hearse surrounded by candles.¹²³ Trentals, thirty consecutive Masses generally performed over a month, were also a popular request, as was the Mass of the Five Wounds of Christ. All were local demonstrations of wealth, status and sanctity from a small but increasingly prosperous sector of Lincolnshire society.

These elaborate ceremonies would however be invisible behind the walls of a monastery. Yet, having services performed by the religious meant that the prayers of *all* the community are employed, not just a single parish priest: therefore cost-effective both financially and spiritually. Conversely, an individual monk could be requested to perform an obit. Nevertheless he still retained his place in the monastery whether completing the service or not.¹²⁴ At Humberston in 1440, Bishop Alnwick discovered during his visitation that a John Langham had donated £10 for repairs to the monastery in return for prayers which, 'is now altogether left undone'.¹²⁵

There were also a number of requests for membership of monastic confraternities, which no doubt would include a ceremony. Robert Lyndeley, vicar of Bilsby requested to 'th'abbot off Hagnaby and to the convent of the same for to make me brother in the chapter house, xs.'¹²⁶ Hagnaby was approximately two miles from Bilsby, so Lyndeley would have had close affiliations as the vicar of the appropriated church. His name would have been registered in the abbey's Bede Roll, with services performed at the anniversary in a similar manner to the guilds.

The aforementioned Ambrose Irby also stipulated he was 'to be brother and my wife sister of the chapter' of Spalding Priory, donating 13s. 4d. to the prior and 26s. 8d. to the convent, but nevertheless decreeing that a secular priest should perform the services. He also gave 40s. to Ambrose his godson, a monk in the priory, to be given following his first Mass.¹²⁷ An unknown amount was also given to his nephew Anthony Irby for his exhibition at Cambridge University.¹²⁸ An Anthony Irby, possibly of Gosberton (1490-1552), later became Under-Steward to Spalding and Auditor for Barlings.¹²⁹

The most detailed testament was that of Thomas Robertson Senior of Algarkirk, Merchant of the Staple of Calais.¹³⁰ It consists of ten pages of complex legal documentation that also illustrates considerable anxiety concerning the destination

of his soul. This apprehension is underlined by the highly organised religious ceremonies to be performed following his death. Along with abundant bequests to his family, Robertson dispersed large donations amongst numerous churches, monasteries, guilds and charities, both within the county and beyond. The four orders of friars in Lincoln received 10s., each, with those close-by in Boston £5 apiece; an enormous sum for the period. Even the orphans at St. Catherine's who normally acquired donations in pennies collected 10s.

The main funeral service was to be performed at Algarkirk within the large parish church of SS. Peter and Paul, where his father Nicholas instigated the building of the present clerestory.¹³¹ (**Plates 7:5 & 7:6**). Thomas left considerable funds for further building projects including a Rood Chapel as his burial place. The impressive funeral was to be performed by numerous priests all of whom were given lavish vestments, with the altar adorned by new challises and coverings for the occasion. This was an authoritative display of wealth and influence, simultaneously donating large sums to the poor in many local settlements: their effective prayers supposedly propelling a wealthy man rapidly through Purgatory.

Robertson also requested entry into numerous monastic confraternities. This not only included the Holland monasteries of Spalding, Crowland and Swineshead, but also the nunnery of Stixwold. In addition, he bequested to,

...every Abbot and prior of monks & nonnes...within Lincolnshire to be brother in their chapterhouse to every Abbot and prior, vjs. viijd., and to every monk and none, xijd. Every observants within the realme of Inglonde to be brother in their chapterhouse' - xxs.¹³²

St. Thomas's shrine in Canterbury, which received only two bequests from Lincolnshire during the period, was given jewels of silver and gilt worth 20s.¹³³ Walsingham was similarly gifted with ornaments valued at 40s., with the cathedral given a precious stone to Our Blessed Lady, worth 20s.



SS. Peter and Paul, Algarkirk.

Plate 7:5 (above).

Exterior.

The late fifteenth-century nave clerestory was financed by Nicholas Robertson.



Plate 7:6.

Interior.

The Robertsons were interred in the north aisle, where their brasses still remain.

Thomas Robertson also bestowed thirteen parish churches with 10s. each for their 'works', with pyxes worth 20s. The anchoresses in Boston were given 10s., 'if there be any', and a 'lazar house' also 10s.¹³⁴ In addition, 1,000 Masses were to be sung, with 'every priest, secular and religious receiving iiijd.'. Even 'the prisoners within the Castell of Lincoln that lyethe for lacke of payment of their fees and hath no frends to helpe them', were given 20s. Clearly, Robertson was an extremely wealthy and influential man within the locality and beyond. Therefore to escape the pains of the afterlife he distributed his patronage lavishly: no doubt recalling the biblical phrase 'it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God'.¹³⁵ With his thoughts focused on the hereafter, Robertson was nevertheless connecting both spiritually and economically with local people by means of his patronage. This was achieved through enhancing the physical structure of the church but also the employment of chantry priests.

(n) Burial.

Despite requests for admission into monastic chapters, there is less testamentary evidence for interment within religious houses. There are only fourteen known references, eight within friaries and six in monasteries. Helen Bilbe, a 'Gentlewoman' of Boston, was clearly a benefactor of the mendicants: specifically the Dominicans. She requested burial within their choir and gave 6s. 8d. for prayers, with a Friar Thomas selected to perform an additional service for 12d. The other three orders received lesser amounts, with the Warden of the Franciscans awarded 12d. Although she requested a Trental in St. Botolph's she gave nothing to the cathedral or St. Catherine's, thereby keeping her patronage local.¹³⁶

It is therefore unfortunate so little survives of the mendicant's houses: no doubt once containing the sepulchres of many notable people. Nonetheless, one elaborate tomb slab of Tournai marble from the Franciscan friary at Boston has been preserved in the parish church. **(Plate 7:7)**. It is dedicated to Wisselus Smallenburg of Munster in Germany who died in 1340: the friary having been allegedly founded in the thirteenth-century by Hansa merchants.¹³⁷

Plate 7:7. The incised Tournai tomb slab of *Wisselus Smallenburg* of Munster in Germany (d 1340), in St. Botolph's, Boston. He was originally interred in the Franciscan friary.



In 1408, a licence was given 'to John, a Franciscan friar from Cologne, to give absolution to his fellow countrymen in Boston'.¹³⁸ Excavations in the early twentieth-century at Bardney uncovered over sixty tomb covers of individuals buried from the late fourteenth-century to 1527, although some were undated.¹³⁹ Interred with the regulars were also seculars of both sexes: some no doubt patrons of the abbey. If this was replicated throughout Lincolnshire then monastic burials would have been considerable. Another interment noted was Richard Copsey of Humberston who gave the abbot 5s. for committal.¹⁴⁰ In 1503, Elizabeth Huse of Sempringham, mother of John Hussey, gave the nunnery £40, requesting burial under the tomb of her husband Sir William Huse (d1495). After paying for numerous Masses, she stated, 'I will have no pompous burall nor no months mynd'.¹⁴¹

The situation of people buried within a monastery would have been problematic following the Suppression. At Roche,

...the tombs in the church were all broken, for in most abbeys various noblemen and women were buried, and in some kings, but their tombs were no more regarded than those of lesser persons...¹⁴²

In his testament of 1535, John Hussey requested interment at Sempringham where he was Chief Steward.¹⁴³ He was executed in at Lincoln in June 1537 for his part in the Lincolnshire Rising. His resting-place is unknown, as the convent closed in September 1538: the Hussey family sepulchres probably destroyed along with the nunnery.

(o) Growth in Testamentary Patronage.

During this later period, the number of surviving testaments gradually multiplied, notably after 1520, but especially after 1530, possibly due to a number of factors. There were outbreaks of plague or pestilence: generic terms used for most diseases. Evidence comes from churchwarden's accounts; noting lists of deceased parishioners. In Louth, an epidemic possibly occurred around 1520. **(Graph 7:5, p. 355).** In 1519 five burials occurred, in 1520 fourteen, 1521 thirty-three, but in 1522

numbers fell to six.¹⁴⁴ There were nevertheless other outbreaks. The accounts for 1516 state, '...paid Willm Hall in areward for helpyng to maytyne servys of god in plake [plague] tyme, 3s. 4d.'¹⁴⁵ In 1518, the wardens, 'Paide Thos. Wayte forr going with Paryshe prste [in] playke tyme, xxvd.', and the following year, 'A. Webster dooeyng for the candles in plage tyme of Sundaies and Holidaias'.¹⁴⁶ In 1538, there were thirteen burials: 'To Hugh Cardemaker for helping the prest to say mas at saint Mary church in the plage tymes, iiijd.'¹⁴⁷

There was also a marked increase in the number of Monastic Wills from 1530 onwards, in part due to the inclusion of the Stow Archdeaconry samples whose start-date was mainly from this period.¹⁴⁸ **(Graph 7:6, p. 356)**. This rise was probably a local reaction to growing instability at the centre, both politically, economically and religiously. The king's "Great Matter" was coming to a head during this period, which along with the Acts of Succession and Supremacy and the Ten Articles all contributed to growing uncertainties. Added to this was the impact on incomes by growing inflation and increased taxes. It is therefore small wonder that Lincolnshire people sought to secure both money and soul by means of their testaments during these unsettling times.

Monastic donations reached their zenith in 1533 with 179, falling in 1538 to eighty as closures took affect. Most gifts between 1538 and 1540 went to either St. Catherine's (forty-eight) or the county's friars (thirty-four): the latter suppressed between 1538 and 1539.¹⁴⁹ The nadir was reached in 1539 with just ten wills, rising to fifteen in 1540: most noting previous monastic tenancies. Six of these mentioned Thornton following its suppression in December 1539 and its re-foundation as a secular college,

...for the ministracion of the sacraments, the observance of good manners, the care of the aged and those who had spent their lives in the service of the realm, and for the instruction of the young.¹⁵⁰

In April 1540, John York, formally a priest of Thornton, 'Late surrendered into the king's hands', was noted as, 'very aged and ancient in religion', and assigned a

pension of £5. 6s. 8d., per annum.¹⁵¹ In his will, he requested burial in the abbey, left bequests to his fellow canons and mentions Prior William Howson (Hobson), and Robert Wyllmson the former Cellarer.¹⁵² These were guardians of the monastery during its transition into a college: both receiving a £40 pension.¹⁵³

(p) Patronage to St. Catherine's.

St. Catherine's was included in the statistics despite the overwhelming majority of bequests being addressed 'To the orphanys off saynt Katherines without the wallys off Lincoln'.¹⁵⁴ The monastery has been described as,

... a home for waifs and strays...[where] certain orphans placed in danger through the negligence of their friends...[were] brought into the hospital of St. Sepulchre, guarded and educated there'.¹⁵⁵

The children were probably housed in the Hospital of the Holy Sepulchre, attached to the later Gilbertine monastery, although it was never mentioned by name in testaments.¹⁵⁶ Thomas Rawsby of Harmston, a tenant of the monastery, nevertheless declared 'I bequeath to the pupils and orphans of the house of the Saviour outside Lincoln half a quarter of malt'.¹⁵⁷ The number of orphans is unknown, but being nearby to a city probably meant its facilities were in considerable demand.

Settlements giving to St. Catherine's were distributed evenly throughout the county's three districts. **(Map 7:3, p. 367).** Wills came from 114 separate communities: forty from Holland (35.1%); Lindsey, thirty-six (31.6%), and Kesteven, thirty-seven (32.5%). However, if numbers of testaments per settlement are calculated the results alter considerably. Of 693 wills noting the monastery, 551 came from Holland (79.5%); sixty-three (9.1%) from Kesteven: seventy-one (10.2%) from Lindsey and seven (1%) from Lincoln. Although overwhelmingly from Holland, the largest number of gifts to St. Catherine's from Kesteven came from Horbling with ten and Swaton on five: both villages situated on the Holland border. Lindsey's principal donors came from Burgh le Marsh with nine, with Croft and Wainfleet equal on six: all within close proximity of Holland.

In Holland ninety-four gifts to the orphanage originated from Boston (17% of 551), twenty-seven miles away; Kirton in Holland, forty-five (8.1%: twenty-eight miles); Pinchbeck, forty-two (7.6%: thirty-three miles); Spalding, twenty-six (4.7%: thirty-three miles); Gosberton, twenty-three (4.2%: twenty-eight miles) and Moulton, nineteen (3.4%: thirty-five miles). The furthest example with nine wills (1.6%) was Tydd, St. Mary at forty-four miles.

Of the wills that mention St. Catherine's, 621 (89.6%) use the terms 'chylde', orphans, pupils or similar terminology. Two testators bequeathed money specifically 'to the prior and convent', one 'desiring them to say masse and dirige for me', the other 'to be prayd for'.¹⁵⁸ Four others mention the 'House' of St. Catherine's which could denote the monastery. Only three cite the lay sisters who, along with the lay brothers no doubt tended the children. Five sisters were resident in 1535, although they received no pension following suppression. Their names were recorded in the *Valor*: Alice Tavener, Katherine Jenkinson, Margaret Laynthorpe, Elizabeth Thomson and Joan Bretton; none unfortunately left wills.¹⁵⁹ In 1505, a reference to the will of an Alice Sympson alias Taverner appeared in the Corporation of Lincoln registers.¹⁶⁰ 'Sister' Alice was possibly related and therefore was perhaps of a higher social standing than previously thought. She may also have been linked to the musician John Taverner of Boston.¹⁶¹ Therefore the lay sisters were possibly from influential families, educated and literate rather than 'lowly' servants and skivvies of lore.

Intriguingly ten donations were given to St. Catherine's following suppression on the 14th July 1538. Although forty-two donated previously in the year, seven gave subsequent to closure. Two occurred in 1539, with one in 1540 from Thomas Styberd of Pinchbeck who gave 2d. to 'Chylde House of Lincoln'.¹⁶² This suggests that the hospital section perhaps remained open after the monastery's closure. Alternatively, testators may not have realised that the orphanage had closed along with the

monastery, therefore were possibly perceived as a separate entities, especially from as far away as Holland.

The reasoning behind the Hollanders' patronage of the distant monastery is unclear. Although the evidence is slight, the children were possibly being 'evacuated' from the 'unhealthy' fenlands. However, although the monastery was 'without the barrys of Lincoln', the city was infamous for 'open sewers, dunghills and middens', with resultant diseases.¹⁶³ St. Catherine's may therefore have been a form of boarding school, the children taught by the lay brothers and sisters. Twenty wills mention 'pupils' of St. Catherine's, nineteen from Holland. However John Rede, a Staple merchant from Wrangle, is the only testator who specifies 'food (*alimenta*) and education (*educationes*) of the orphans and pupils in the hospital of St. Katherine, ijs. vjd.'. ¹⁶⁴

The saint herself was perhaps a catalyst behind the patronage. Nevertheless, within the Parish Wills, there were only fifty-four donations to St. Catherine's altars and images (1.8%). Twenty-nine (53.7% of 54) came from Lindsey, nineteen from Holland (35.2%) and six from Kesteven (11.1%). There are no known parish church dedications to St. Catherine in the county, although nine guilds commemorated the saint, three in Holland and five in Lindsey, and Stamford in Kesteven. Therefore the monastery's dedication to the patron saint of schoolgirls and students appears to be largely relevant only as a place of education.¹⁶⁵

Intriguingly nobody donated to St. Catherine's from the Archdeaconry of Stow abutting onto Lincoln, despite the monastery owning both property and rectories within the area. This maybe because the archdeaconry encompassed the entire West Riding of Lindsey, with the orphanage, being outside the city walls technically located in Kesteven. In addition, only five testators came from Lincoln itself: between them leaving 14s. 4d., with a further two noted as holding tenancies. Two of the Lincoln donors were fishmongers perhaps supplying the monastery: one giving 20d. 'To the labores of sainte Katherines'.¹⁶⁶

Joan Harby, a widow and vowess, noted, 'I will to the fyndyng of faderlesse childer of sent Catelyns vjs. viij*d*', a considerable sum.¹⁶⁷ Perhaps as a widow, Joan had some feelings for the plight of the children, as none of her own is mentioned. This dearth of patronage suggests that Lincolnians perhaps gave directly via local collections rather than through testaments. Alternatively the children were perhaps perceived as troublemakers; therefore donations were seen as encouraging nefarious activities. Possibly it was a case of 'charity fatigue' towards the monastery outside the city walls: the orphans out of sight and out of mind, harboured within a 'wealthy' establishment.

(q) Variations in District Patronage.

A concept of localism within the three districts is revealed in the Monastic Wills. Out of 405 settlements noted, Holland only numbered forty-two (10.4%). By comparison Lindsey attained 251 (62%) and Kesteven 109 (27%).¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, by again calculating the number of wills per settlement Holland produced an average of 14, Lindsey 2.05 and Kesteven 2.4. Importantly, of the PCC wills, 103 (48.6% of 212) originated from Holland: forty-nine (23.1%) from Boston alone. This compares with Lindsey on seventy-two (34%), Kesteven twenty-five (11.8%), and Lincoln with only twelve (5.6%). Clearly wealthy and influential donors generally resided in the south-east of the county. However in the Parish Wills between 1532 and 1540, eighty-nine wills were registered for Lincoln with eighty-three from Boston.

Of the 590 Monastic wills issuing from Holland only 111 (18.8%) noted houses other than St. Catherine's and the Boston Friars: the former attaining 542 (91.9%), the latter 136 (23.1%).¹⁶⁹ Undoubtedly, the people of the fenlands were principally devoting their souls to the 'good works' of St. Catherine's and also the local friars, and a lesser extent to the enclosed monasteries of which there were only four in Holland. Crowland and Spalding were the county's two richest, but both Swineshead and Freiston, a cell of Crowland, attained a respectable eleventh and thirteenth.¹⁷⁰ **(Graph 7:7, p. 357).** However, between them they amassed only eighty-six wills over

forty-one years, 2.1 per annum, slightly fewer than 6% of the total, twenty-three of which originated from the PCC. St. Catherine's was noted in 43% of PCC wills, and the Boston friars 25.5%. These wealthy testators were therefore donating to the outwardly impoverished rather than the reclusively affluent: the orphans benefiting most from this patronage, albeit in pennies rather than pounds.

(r) Hospitals and Orphans.

The only Lincolnshire hospital noted in a will was St. John's at Skirbeck near Boston.¹⁷¹ The other two infirmaries of any size were in Lincoln; St. Giles, possibly founded by the cathedral chapter, and the leper-house of Holy Innocents, opposite St. Catherine's.¹⁷² However, cases of leprosy by the sixteenth-century were markedly declining; hospitals had therefore become a poor economic and spiritual investment for testators. Improvements in medicine laid the emphasis on the curative rather than pursuing a '*bonam mortem*'. The marked increase in charitable donations was possibly also a reaction to closure of hospitals within the 1539 Act: most becoming almshouses largely administered by the secular authorities.¹⁷³

Orphaned children were usually reared by extended families or fostered by close neighbours. In 1532, Robert Peycoke of Kirkby St. Peter bequeathed,

To Agnes, the chylde that I bring up, a red cowe, a red qwyte, a yowe and a lambe, a ambre, a gret brasse potte, a baysyn, a laver, a candylsyk and iij puter dyshes to be delyveryd at the day of her mariage'.¹⁷⁴

Undoubtedly this was Agnes's dowry, with gifts larger than to his two natural daughters, who may already have married. Robert also gave to the prior and convent of Haverholme, cautiously donating rents from a house for an obit 'yff the kynges lawes will suffer it'.¹⁷⁵ Despite connections with the Gilbertine nunnery, at this date he understandably does not suggest his daughters enter the convent.

Orphans were also a valuable pair of hands within a predominantly agricultural society. In 1540, Elizabeth Chamberlayn of Aslackby left lengthy instructions for such a child. Her testament read:

...to a pore child callyd Thomas yt I brought uppe for godsake a feder bedde...a cawdrey the best that I have & ij puter platters a candylstycke, ij podelgers a lytell chare a quye of ij yeres old and I will that Henry Chamberlayn have the chyld and all that ys given unto hym moreover I gave unto the child a qter of barly & a busshell of wheytt & a halffe a qter of peys & a cow the wch cow Henry Chamberlane hyars of me & I wyll yt the forsayd Henry kepe her unto suche tyme as the child came occupy her & ye oyer stuff.¹⁷⁶

Elizabeth was clearly devoted to the youngster. No children of her own are mentioned, so she naturally wished to secure the child's income. She left nothing to the cathedral and only 4d. to the high altar of her parish church, notably at the end of her testament. This was a case of patronage being retained within the family circle. Nevertheless generous donations could extend to monastic houses containing family members.

(s) Familial Monastic Patronage.

The will of Dame Margaret Sutton, a vowess of Burton by Lincoln is an example of monastic connectivity through patronage involving both incumbents and other members of an extended family of some wealth and influence. In 1525, along with other houses she gave Bullington 6s. 8d., with the nuns and sisters 13s. 4d. between them.¹⁷⁷ Her daughter, Dame Mary Sutton, a nun there, received a personal gift of 40s., contrary to the Rule.¹⁷⁸ Despite this infringement, at its suppression in 1538, Mary was the convent's last prioress. In 1554 she was unmarried, living at Butterwick and receiving a pension of £4, but too ill to travel.¹⁷⁹

In 1521, Mary Sutton's brother, Thomas, a Staple Merchant, remembered, 'the Nonne my suster' with a gift of 20s: another private donation. He also left 6s. 8d., to the church at Burton 'where I was borne', and 20s., to the 'works' of St. Andrew's Lincoln, 'where the body of my fadyr lyeth buried'. Additionally, he bequeathed 'to my modyr's chaplain syr Thomas', 10s., 'to pray devoutly for my sowle'.¹⁸⁰ Despite being based in Calais and choosing burial in London, Thomas still retained connections with his birthplace, but left his mother to support the local monasteries.

Margaret Sutton also gave to her own extensive family, one of whom was 'Sir John Sutton, knight of the Roodes [given] a bowll of silver dowble gilted with the cover therto'.¹⁸¹ A John Sutton was noted in 1534/35 as being preceptor of Willoughton and Beverley.¹⁸² Despite being a patron of monasticism, Margaret requested 'a secular preist continente...to syng oon yer in the church'; to be given seven Marks.¹⁸³ This patronage was probably designed to install a temporary chantry, at the same time providing an additional priest for the parish church.

Similar requests for specifically secular clergy occur in ten other wills, but the reasoning is unknown. Seven also gave to a monastery, so mistrusting the regulars can be largely discounted. In 1533, Robert Lockyn of Tetney, despite a donation to the Grimsby friars, requested that '...one preste syng for my one quarter and nother frere, chanon nor munke'.¹⁸⁴ One explanation is the priest, possibly from the Lady Guild mentioned in the text, was known to the testator or perhaps a family member. Alternatively, perhaps Lockyn was attempting to provide employment for an unbeneficed priest, or sensing a lack of commitment by the regulars.¹⁸⁵

Although proscribed, gifts to individual regulars must have cemented ties with the outside world, simultaneously stamping both familial bonds and patronal influence on a monastery. In 1524, William Austyn, of Little Steeping, a Staple Merchant, stated 'that my daughters of religion [to] have £10', and also gave 'to Ormsby Abbey in the name of Dame Margaret Lincoln', 30s.¹⁸⁶ In 1523, a Dame Agnes Austyn is noted in the will of Joan Thurescrosse of Hull as being 'a noon' at Sixhills, and still receiving a pension of £2 in 1548: Sixhills is not however mentioned by name in William Austyn's will.¹⁸⁷ Joan also gave to a Margaret Lyncoln, her brother's daughter who was resident in Horncastle.¹⁸⁸

It could be suggested that the £10 'donation' was his daughter's 'entry fee' into Sixhills. Entrance donations were forbidden in Canon Law, but nevertheless were regularly given.¹⁸⁹ In 1468 at Nun Monkton priory in Yorkshire, three pounds was the 'suggested entry fee...which the prioress and convent claim to have of custom...',

but at Wilberfoss and Arden, nuns were only to be received, 'on the instinct of charity'.¹⁹⁰ William Austyn's daughters were probably nuns at Sixhills, which, along with Ormsby and Alvingham, were the nearest Gilbertine houses to Steeping.

Both the Austyns and the Lyncolns clearly supported the Gilbertines. Nun Ormsby was twenty miles from Steeping, and a Dame Margaret Lyncoln was an incumbent.¹⁹¹ In his will dated 1505, Margaret's brother Symond, an influential merchant of Louth, left 'to my suster Dame Margaret of Ormsby Abbey', 10s. In a lengthy and detailed will, he also donated to forty-six churches and ten monasteries, six of them nunneries. Three of these were Nun Ormsby, Alvingham and Sixhills, again illustrating close connections with the Gilbertines.¹⁹² Lyncoln also left 20s. to the church of St. James in Louth, no doubt to aid their extensive building programme. This sum was noted in the Churchwarden's Accounts as, '...the 14 sonday after Trenete sonday of the gift Symond Lyncoln of Louth merchand, xxs.'¹⁹³

This is a rare occasion when details from wills correlated with other documents. Lyncoln was one of three influential parishioners concerned with building the spire or 'broach' on Louth church. The others were Thomas Bradley (d1519) and John Chapman (d1505). All three were Staple Merchants, and also churchwardens. The position was generally unpaid; therefore people with sufficient financial resources were preferred.¹⁹⁴ In his will, Bradley bequeathed to Nun Ormsby, Alvingham, Legbourne and Greenfield. Chapman gave only to the Boston friars, but extensively to the various altars, lights and guilds in St. James.¹⁹⁵ Another parishioner noted in the Louth accounts was John Kirkman, who in 1537 requested burial in St. James's church and donated the mandatory 6s. 8d.¹⁹⁶ He gave to the cathedral, churches at Sutton in the Marsh and Trusthorpe and left nearly £10 to charity.¹⁹⁷

(t) Localism Revealed through Monastic Patronage.

There were many facets governing patronage to religious houses. Gifts from within testaments could fluctuate; especially given the nature of the religious politics

during the period. In its basic form, social status along with familial or tenorial connections defined the nature of donations. It also encompassed the spiritual aspect, prayers and intercessions, in addition to a local political agenda. Geography must be added to the equation: the topographical situation of both donor settlement and religious house also determined the number of gifts. Patronage originated mainly locally, but evidence will show that donations coming from further afield were largely confined within the county's districts: the 'Parts of' Holland, Kesteven and Lindsey, along with the borough of Lincoln.

This perception of localism is best illustrated in the range of patronage from within these areas to various monasteries. Together the data will illustrate differences in the number and type of contributions from different parts of the county. Four establishments were subsequently chosen for the study: two male houses, a nunnery and a friary. Of the wills mentioning Crowland 78.6% came from more than ten miles distant, Kirkstead (50%), Sempringham (20%) and the Grantham Franciscans (11%).¹⁹⁸ These figures reveal a disparity in the geographical extent of patronage to these four Lincolnshire monastic establishments. They also illustrate that the concept of localism and also patronal connectivity towards a particular monastery is variable throughout the county. **(Maps 7:4, 7:5, 7:6, 7:7, pp. 368-371).**

(i) Crowland Abbey (Holland). (Map 7:8, p. 372).

Twenty-five testaments noting Crowland, Lincolnshire's wealthiest monastery, originated from fourteen different settlements, but only three were less than ten miles from the abbey. The furthest was Bucknall in Lindsey, thirty-seven miles away, the nearest being Cowbit at five miles. Importantly, eighteen testators (72%) were only noted as holding land or property, with one exception no money changing hands.¹⁹⁹ Accordingly, only seven people (28%) over a period of forty-one years gave financial donations, although most were considerable sums. Two bestowed 40s: one stipulating that he was 'to be made brother in the chapter house'. Two donated 20s., and one gave 26s. 8d. to the abbot and £3 6s. 8d. to the convent for prayers. Six came from seven wills proved at the PCC, suggesting that wealthier

testators perhaps saw the monastery and its incumbents as relative to their own 'class' structure. Four of the seven consisted of a yeoman, two Staple Merchants and a vowess, Dame Margaret Spencer.

Of the eighteen holders of Crowland tenancies, all came from settlements over ten miles away. Four of these originated from Bucknall, a manor held from the Saxon period.²⁰⁰ There were five wills (20%) mentioning twelve 'foreign' monasteries, either via tenure or through gifts. These ranged from Peterborough, Thorney and Huntingdon to Castle Acre and the Gilbertine nunnery of Shouldham, both in Norfolk. Fifteen wills (60%) also noted other Lincolnshire establishments. St. Catherine's was mentioned thirteen times, one testator from Algarkirk gave to the Lincoln friars over thirty miles away and five noted the Boston mendicants.

Donations also reflected the locality of the monastery *vis-à-vis* the other districts. Twenty Crowland wills originated from Holland (80%), four from Lindsey (16%) and one from Stamford in Kesteven (4%), clearly signifying a loyalty to the fenland district. There were however considerable time-gaps. Two testators donated in 1504 and 1508, followed by a break of fourteen years until 1522, then a flurry of gifts at one to two-year intervals until 1530. This may reflect a loss of documents, as the overall numbers prior to 1520 were few compared to the later period.²⁰¹ The final sixteen wills from 1530 onwards only noted tenancy. Nonetheless, attaining only twenty-five wills in forty-one years reflected poorly on the standing of monastic houses during this period.

(ii) Kirkstead Abbey (Lindsey). (Map 7:9, p. 373).

Kirkstead, the seventh richest, accumulated eighteen wills from fourteen different settlements, half over ten miles away. However, similar to Crowland, eleven testators (61.1%) mentioned either tenancy or supervision requests, although the latter all donated. Richard Kyrke of Horncastle gave the abbot 10s. to be the supervisor of his will.²⁰² John Leeke, a Mercer of Boston, was more precise. He gave

to Jenet wyff off Nicholes Smyth the house wyth the stabyll that I toke off the abbot and convent off Kyrksted, the terme off hyr lyff...and she to pay yerly therefore, accordyng to the indentur mayd betwyx the abbot and convent and me.²⁰³

In 1537, John Leeke is also noted in the abbey's Rental owning an eighty year leasehold since 1505 at 1s. 4d. per annum, relating to 'a messuage and tenement he built on Kirkstead land'.²⁰⁴

Only seven people (38.8%) in forty-one years donated money or produce. Thomas Cartewryght of nearby Woodall left 'To Elizabeth my wyffe the holle fermehold with all the purtonynges thereto in Dowode accordyng as it is expressyd under the Convent Seale off kyrksted...'.²⁰⁵ John Cowell, a fishmonger of Boston, requested a relative to enter the monastery without registering a gift.

I will that James Cowell be found and kept at school to he be at lawful age, and if he then be disposed to be a secular priest to be made priest with my goods and if he will be a religious man to be at Kirkstead...and my wife to give him his first clothing at his first making.²⁰⁶

Fourteen Kirkstead testators (77.7%) left to other monastic houses. Only two bequeathed to St. Catherine's, but thirteen donated to various friaries. Although situated beside the Witham in Lindsey, which acted as the boundary with Kesteven, 72% of donors came from the former, with only two (11.1%) from the latter.²⁰⁷ Again, this signifies an allegiance to the district in which the monastery was located.

Compared with Crowland, Kirkstead's donations were more evenly spread over the period. There was a gap from 1505 to 1520, then roughly yearly intervals until 1533 when the last financial donation was made. Although suppressed in 1537, two wills were dated 1538 and 1540, relating to previous tenancies. Kirkstead's patrons included two tanners, two esquires, a fishmonger, a mercer, a yeoman, a vowess, Dame Margaret Sutton and an Alderman of Lincoln, Robert Dighton.²⁰⁸ As with Crowland, most appeared reasonably affluent, although possibly of a slightly lower social status: five wills (27.7%) being deposited at the PCC. Nevertheless, Kirkstead

attained only eighteen wills over a period of forty-one years, again possibly indicating that large donations to monastic houses were long past.

(iii) Sempringham Priory (Kesteven). (Map 7:10, p. 374).

Sempringham, the county's wealthiest nunnery and fifth richest overall, attained twenty wills from fifteen different settlements. However, they were much less geographically wide-ranging than those to Crowland and Kirkstead; the majority coming from nearby settlements. Only three (15%) issued from the other two districts: Freiston (seventeen miles) and Boston (fourteen), both in Holland, and Stain (thirty-seven) in Lindsey. This suggests a sense of localism in 'belonging' to Kesteven rather than neighbouring Holland, often physically disconnected by waterlogged fenland.

Testators from Horbling made five donations (26.3%) with two from Stow Green (10.5%): both settlements retaining appropriated churches within two miles of the nunnery. Donations also came from Birthorpe Chapel at one-half miles, Stowe Green (two), Walcot (four) and Haconby (four-half), likewise owned by the monastery. Like the previous examples, a time-gap occurs between 1508 and 1525, then at regular intervals until the last financial contribution in 1535, three years prior to closure. There were however only three PCC wills (15%), along with those from two widows, two priests, a yeoman, a vowess and William Cutler, a Serjeant at Law, one of only ten members of a judicial elite.²⁰⁹ Fourteen testators (70%) gave cash, along with a cow, six silver spoons and a maser, with six (30%) only noting tenancy or testament supervision.

This localised patronage perhaps reflected the convents' nearby landholdings and rectories: the latter possibly served on occasion by Gilbertine canons. As the premier house of a locally founded order, Sempringham would possibly retain some residual status. The monastery controlled Sempringham village as a demesne estate, and may account for only one monastic donation: that of patron Elizabeth Hussey requesting burial with her husband, donating £40.²¹⁰ Six other testators from the

village left nothing to the nunnery. This suggests that patronal connectivity from 'host settlements', similar to Bourne and Crowland, was largely absent.

Evidence revealed that donations remained largely within the respective district. Geographically, Sempringham was bounded on the east by fenland and to the west by the sparsely populated Heathland, giving a sense of isolation. Nobody on the western side of Kesteven donated to Sempringham or *visa-versa*, although seven testators giving to the nunnery also donated to St. Catherine's, similar to other settlements near the border with Holland. Despite being only four miles apart, no testators from Donington in Holland gave to Sempringham. Similarly nobody from Swaton and Helpringham about five miles away donated: their monastic patronage remaining largely north of the Bridgend Causeway. Likewise only two Kesteven donors to Sempringham came from settlements north of the highway, Walcot and Screddington. This is a clear example of patronage being highly localised, not only within ten miles of the monastery, but also largely retained within the respective district.

(iv) Grantham, Franciscan Friars (Kesteven) (Map 7:11, p. 375).

The Grantham Franciscans accrued fifty-three wills from thirty-seven settlements, but with only three (10.8%) over ten miles. With the exception of Stane in Lindsey all the friary's donations were confined to Kesteven. Stane was the furthest at forty-four miles, with the Kesteven settlements of Beckingham (14) and Careby (11).²¹¹ Only four wills mention Newbo, four miles to the west, with merely two noting St. Catherine's. However, 54.7% also donated to the county's other friaries: Lincoln (17 wills), Boston (6), Stamford (5) and Grimsby (1).

Grantham's sense of localism could have been amplified by its location in the Upper Witham valley surrounded by steep hills, giving an impression of geographical isolation. Nonetheless, communications were good, with the Great North Road allowing access south to Stamford and London and north to Lincoln and Newark: seven testators (13.2%) also giving to the latter's Franciscan Observants. Most of the

donors originated from settlements on or near the North Road. To the south, Colsterworth, Corby Glen, Great Ponton and Harlaxton: northwards, Long Bennington, Claypole, Westborough and Dry Doddington.

Eleven donations were given between 1503 and 1529, increasing considerably in the 1530s: concluding in 1538, a year before closure. Curiously, for a reasonably prosperous town situated on a major thoroughfare there were only four PCC wills, 7.5% of the total. The friars however were just one aspect in the ecclesiastical environment of the town. Unlike Lincoln and Stamford, which were 'over-supplied' with parish churches, Grantham had only St. Wulfram's, to which all seventeen testators in the Parish Wills contributed.²¹² With exceptions such as the Corpus Christi Guild, closely associated with the friars, spiritual investment in Grantham was largely confined to either the parish church or the mendicants.

These four examples illustrate the extent of the geographical range of patronage within Lincolnshire. Of the fifty monasteries and fifteen friaries employed in the overall analysis, twenty-six (40%) had more than half their donations issuing from settlements more than ten miles distant. Notably, fourteen of these were friaries, reflecting the nature of the mendicant's peripatetic preaching. However, a few monastic houses also retained loyalty from some distance. This could however be due to familial connections, or possibly even incumbents within the monastery itself. The analysis of patronage within the three districts clearly shows that most is retained within the respective areas. Only 16.7% of Monastic Wills originated from outside a particular district. Even those monasteries situated near the boundaries, such as Kirkstead and Sempringham, maintained the majority of gifts within their respective areas. Excluding the friars as 'a special case', it is clear that the bulk of financial patronage was local to the respective monastery, both from within a ten mile radius but also inside their individual districts.

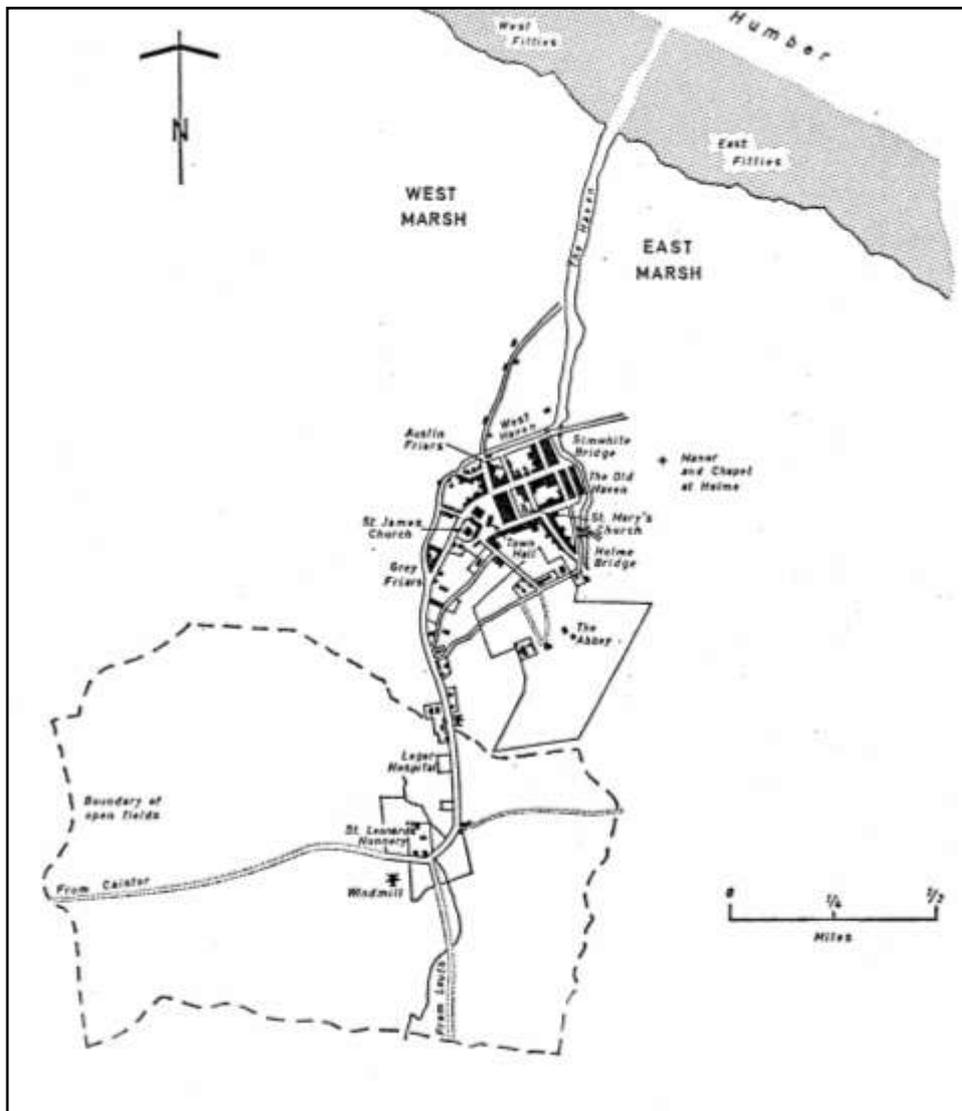
(u) The Stow Archdeaconry.

Continuing the theme of localism, out of 387 wills from the Archdeaconry of Stow, encompassing all the West Riding of Lindsey, only ninety-seven (25.1%) mentioned religious houses. Sixty-six gave to the Lincoln friars (17.1%), but the eight monasteries within the archdeaconry were only noted in twenty-six wills. These were generally the poorest houses within the county: probably reflecting the circumstances of the local economy. Financially Thornholme ranked twenty-first out of fifty in 1535: Heynings (thirty-third), Gokewell (forty-third), Torksey (forty-fifth) and Fosse (forty-seventh). The two richest, Barlings (eighth) and Axholme (ninth), are mentioned in only four Stow wills. Only eight PCC testators, three of which gave to Barlings, donated to the Stow monasteries, of which only two resided within the archdeaconry.

Like most Carthusian monasteries Axholme possessed a reputation for sanctity and rigorous enclosure, but overall only attracted four wills, three from the archdeaconry, the other from Lincoln. The city's friars appeared to hold the high ground in terms of donations from Stow: probably through their discernable spiritual activities. Nevertheless, donations to the cathedral from 1532-40 were only 69.8% overall as against 78.3% for the whole county. The minster church's presence clearly had less effect on the archdeaconry's poorer parishioners. Although giving mainly to the Lincoln friars, technically outside its boundaries, those depositing wills in the Stow Court clearly retained their monastic patronage within the archdeaconry's jurisdiction; again an example of localism to a specific area.

(v) Grimsby: a Case of Monastic Influence.

From a parochial viewpoint, a similar structural dominance to the cathedral can be found in Grimsby: the large parish church of St. James. The town also included St. Leonard's nunnery, two houses of friars and Wellow Abbey. **(Plate 7:8: Map 7:12).** Mary Lucas's work on Lincolnshire wills illustrates the interaction of Wellow with local testators and the town's secular hierarchy.²¹³



Map 7:12
 Medieval Grimsby
 and its monastic
 houses
 (After Gillett 1970).

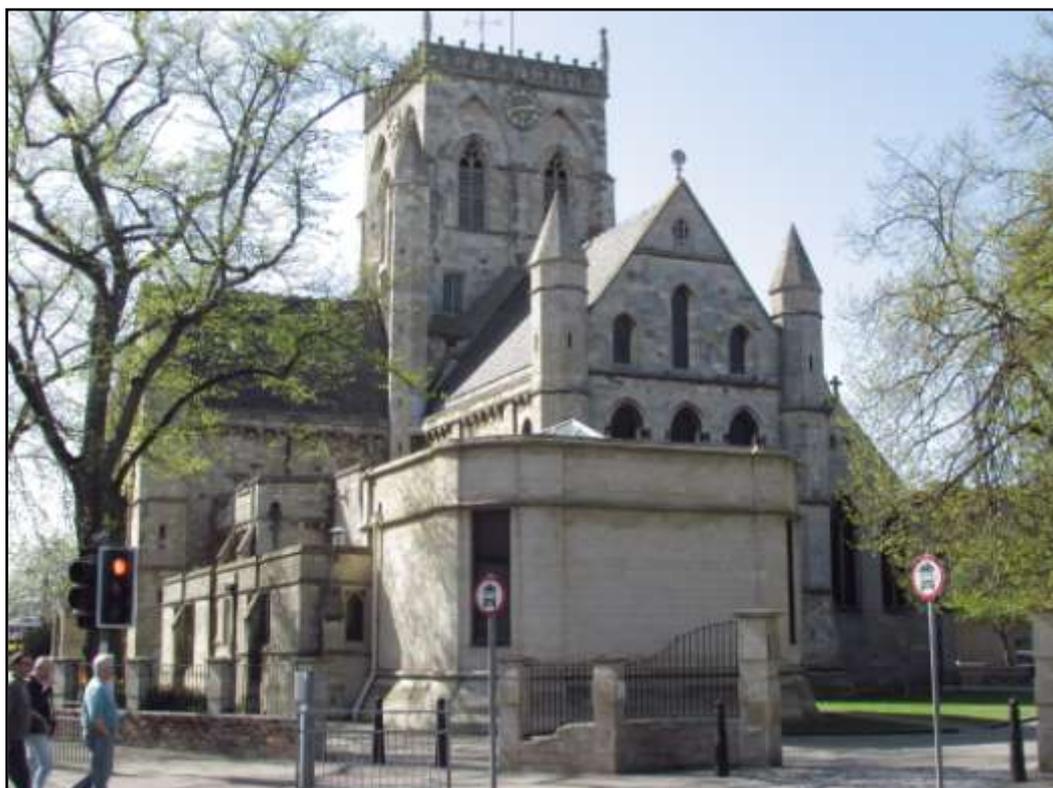


Plate 7:8.
 St. James,
 Grimsby

The abbey owned local property and retained considerable authority both through its Soke Court and also familial patronage.²¹⁴ In 1470, Abbot Richard Clee (1467-77), 'is admitted a Burgess, for certain causes...and does fealty'.²¹⁵

Wellow owned St. James's, and most patronage was locally confined, with only one donation from over ten miles. In 1518, Thomas Kingston requested, 'To be buried in the monastery of St. Austene and olyff [Olaf] in the chapell of our savior'. Displaying evidence of a parochial element at the abbey, he also bequested, 'To the parych awter in wellow for thythes forgotton viij*d*. [and] to the new organs at welhowe xxxjs. viij*d*'. He continued, 'To the same chapell a chalys, vestyment, boke, iij auter clothes, a corporys cloth with the case, ij crewyttes, candylstykes and tapors'.²¹⁶

In addition, Thomas Kingston left 'to my sonne Sir John viij marc and a hows in wellow gate to syng for me'. John Kingston was possibly at St. James's, therefore an abbey appointee. Thomas also conferred 40s. on 'Dame Isabell my dought'. She was at St. Leonard's, featuring in the pensions' listings with 30s.²¹⁷ The nunnery attained eighteen donations from nine places, three being over ten miles, the furthest seventeen. It was forty-sixth in terms of wealth, but fifth out of seventeen nunneries in relation to the number of wills. Despite, or perhaps because of their poverty, the canonesse of St. Leonard's appeared to be locally well respected.

Notably, Kingstone's will concludes with 'Wytnes my lord thabbott of Welhow'.²¹⁸ This is Kingston's relation Abbot Richard Kingston (1503-25). The visitation of 1519 noted that a 'Robert Kingstone, brother of Richard the abbot, does everything the abbot asks without consulting the community. The bishop continued: '[The] last visitation required [the] abbot to remove his brother, although he is still there although he is not suitable'.²¹⁹ This is an example of strong local and familial influence within the abbey, possibly challenging the authority of the bishop, but in addition considerable connectivity with the local borough and parish church, all entwined within a web of patronage.

Another example is Thomas Roose, vicar of Riby, where both church and manor were owned by Wellow.²²⁰ In 1532, he requested burial in the monastery, bequeathing 40s. for an obit. He also donating to canons Thomas Lincoln and William York: both given 'one cote, one ratchet, one kyrchyff'. Similar gifts were given to four nuns at St. Leonard's, from where a Joan Roose is noted as Sub-Prioress.²²¹ Thomas Roose's will concluded: 'it shall be orderyd and disposyd be the mynde and order of Sir Robert Whytgyfte, abbot of Welhoo'.²²² When the abbey closed in 1536, Whitgift received a pension of £16.²²³ His celebrated nephew, John Whitgift, later became Dean of Lincoln (1571-77), Bishop of Worcester (1577-83) and Archbishop of Canterbury (1583-1604).²²⁴

Despite its local influence, economically Wellow was 'mainstream', worth £95 6s. 1d. in 1535.²²⁵ It was twenty-sixth in wealth, with sixteen wills from six different places, seven came from Grimsby itself. Therefore Wellow's early closure in 1536 possibly reflected the waning influence of the town in the national arena. In addition, during the Rising 'Sir John Wappelott, late prior of Wellowe, suppressed, [was] accused by John Hatclyffe of charging him, the King's officer, to join the commons'.²²⁶ Significantly all four Grimsby religious houses attracted only fourteen PCC donors out of 158 wills (8.9%), the largest number noting the friars. Compared with the thirty-four testaments shared between Wellow and St. Leonard's, the two friaries attracted 124 donations: an average of 66.1% being over ten miles, although the mendicants probably had much less political influence than Wellow, their spiritual affect in the hinterland was clearly substantial, with wills coming from over twenty miles.

(x) Geographical Range of Mendicant Donations.

Grimsby retained only two houses of friars, but most testators gave to both orders. Likewise in Lincoln, most donated to 'every house of the iiij orders of frerys', each receiving an average of 315 donations over the period. Whilst sixty-four (20.3%) of bequests came from Lincoln itself, an average of just over 70% came from over ten

miles. The Boston friars were comparable with 71.4%, Stamford on 57.8% with the two houses at Grimsby attaining 68.7%. Only the Grantham Franciscans opposed the trend with 10.8%. The furthest distance from Lincoln was to Winthorpe near Skegness at thirty-seven miles. That from Boston was Trusthorpe, at twenty-seven miles, with a donor giving to the Stamford friars forty miles away in Lincoln. The farthest from Grimsby was Burton Stather at twenty-seven miles. Together this was an average of thirty-five miles, probably the maximum achievable on horseback with overnight stays during their preaching tours.²²⁷

To have Mass performed by a 'learned friar' possibly attained some kudos for a settlement. William Palmer of Winthorpe gave the Boston friars 3s. 4d. each for a Dirige and Masses. He stipulated that 'a ffrere to shewe the worde of God' at Ingoldmells in Rogation week, to be paid 3s. 4d. per annum: the settlement is twenty-one miles from Boston.²²⁸ There were however gradual changes in patronage as the period progressed with religious instability gradually emerging.

(y) Changes in Patronage during the Religious Uncertainties.

As noted previously, during the later years of the period, the numbers of testators increased considerably. The overall amount of patronage to the various recipients, ecclesiastical or otherwise, also altered. Gifts to Church institutions beyond the local parish declined largely due to political and doctrinal changes originating from both Court and cathedral. The relevance of intercessory prayers was challenged following the publication in 1536 of the Ten Articles. Especially pertinent were the sections regarding Purgatory: the last article stating, '...the name thereof, and kinds of pains there, be to us uncertain by scripture'.²²⁹ In Louth, it was the gathering of clergy to receive these new canons which was partly the catalyst behind the Rising.²³⁰

Although Lincolnshire wills revealed that parishioners were predominantly conservative, doctrinal uncertainties were occasionally revealed. Alderman Thomas Gryssington of Lincoln was a member of St. Anne's Guild and was naturally concerned for its future. His will of 1538 states, 'To Sainte Anne gylde yf ys continue

and stand, my crimson gowne with out lynyng or ffure'. He also donated to an anchoress, the Nicholas Cantilupe chantry in the cathedral and the Clerks Guild, in addition to giving £6 13s. 4d. to the poor. By spreading his patronage to many sectors of the Church and society he was clearly 'hedging his bets' in securing his soul.²³¹

Similarly, Thomas Johnson, Chantry Priest at the Cathedral bequeathed 2s. to the Clerks Guild, 'yff it contynew'.²³² In September 1536, following the first suppressions, Thomas Lawrence a Chaplain of Grimsby gave 'To ye house of St. Leonard's with out Grimsby if ye be not suppressed, xxs.', and under the same conditions to Alvingham and the local friars.²³³ In August 1539, John Trollope of Boston asked that 'my bodye to be buried at the gray ffreres...[if] they stande'.²³⁴ As a precaution, he also requested burial in St. Botolph's churchyard: the friary closed six months later.²³⁵

At parish level, there was also concern. In 1540, Robert Wallyll, Parson of Westborough requested a priest sing for a year, 'yf he can co[n]venyently or ells at hys owne liberty where he may best...'.²³⁶ Similarly, John Hopster of Thorpe asked for half a Trental 'yff yt may be pformyd'.²³⁷ There were earlier uncertainties concerning the changes. In 1534, John Lesse of Holbeach donated two acres to Whaplode Drove chapel, 'yff the law wyll suffer yt'. He only dedicated his 'sowell unto allmyghti God', and instructed 'myne executors to by a blew cope of velvet...and my name to be sowyd therin that I may be rememberyd...'.²³⁸

The most numerous donations were those to parish churches probably seen as a safe harbour from the approaching storms. Church lights, illuminating saintly images were regularly gifted with funds. John Cowper of Sibsey donated 2d. each to the lights of 'Our Ladies of Grayse and Pety' and also SS. Margaret, Sythe and Bryde.²³⁹ Altars were adorned with cloths, pyxes and paxes, sometimes paid through gifts of agricultural produce. William Dyckynson of Barnoldby gave half a sheep each to St. Mary's altar and the High altar for forgotten tithes (*pro decimis oblitis*).²⁴⁰ Walter

Cotman, Vicar of Great Steeping adorned his high altar with 'a pax, canopy [and also] a xpall (crystal?) stone clofyd in silver for the adorning of the Sacrament'.²⁴¹

Bequeathing to the parish in whatever context was perceived both as spiritual integrity but also social patronage. The 2,933 Parish Wills from 1532-1540, illustrate the differing targets of donations. Within these nine years, virtually all testators, 2,898 (98.8%) gave to their parish churches, with those just requesting burial probably giving beforehand. Although predominantly local, nearby churches where the donor probably had landholdings or familial connections were also gifted, totalling 688 (23.4%). The cathedral was noted in 2,299 (78.3%) testaments, religious guilds in 350 (11.9%), charitable bequests, mainly to the poor, 365 (12.4%) and donations to the infrastructure, generally 'cawsys' and 'brigges', 133 (4.5%). Nevertheless, 808 (27.5%) donors noted monastic houses of all types and orders, an average of approximately ninety wills per annum: the great majority giving to the friars and St. Catherine's.

The picture alters considerably however when the period is divided into three-year segments, analysis revealing underlying uncertainties concerning the religious changes. **(Graph 7:8, p. 358)**. Whereas a slump in monastic donations could be expected, the decline to both the cathedral and religious guilds probably reflect deeper political and religious concerns. Although the minster sustained its popularity during 1532-34, its status declined from 1535 onwards. John and Jenet Aby from Winterton left similar wills in 1535 and 1540 respectively. John left 12d. to the cathedral, but five years later Jenet only gave to the parish church.²⁴² Likewise, in 1535 William Golding of Nocton left 12d. to the cathedral works, whereas five years later his namesake from Dunston only bequeathed to the parish church and the poor.²⁴³

Although daily offerings at the cathedral's High Altar fluctuated they were in perceptible decline. In 1522, £39 9s. 1½d was collected, followed by a fall in the later 1520s finally to £36. In 1530, this fell dramatically to £15 9s. 7d., rising again to £38

two years later. The year 1536-37 only £18 2s. 1½d. was collected. This was the period of the Rising, paralleled with the start of the Dissolution process. In 1537-38 there was only £5 4s. 1d. given, followed by annual entries of '*nulla*'.²⁴⁴ Margaret Bowker therefore suggests, 'it would be a dull man indeed who did not recognise...that an offering to the church might rapidly become Henry VIII's pocket money'.²⁴⁵ Lincolnshire parishioners were consequently producing greater numbers of testaments to secure their wealth from the government and their souls from Purgatory.

Discussed previously, donations to Hugh's shrine decreased comparable with those to the High Altar.²⁴⁶ This development was possibly exacerbated by a systematic stripping of the cathedral valuables. In 1540, a commission was established,

...to take down and convey to the Tower of London a certain shrine and divers feigned relics and jewels in Lincoln Cathedral, by which simple people are deceived and brought into superstition and idolatry, together with all superfluous jewels, plate, copes, and the like....²⁴⁷

Some must have sensed that their fears concerning the desecration of churches were coming into fruition. In addition, it is probable that the cathedral authorities, notably Bishop Longland, were becoming increasingly unpopular following the Rising. Consequently, the more militant rebels may have wished not only to murder Cromwell, but also 'heretic' bishops, including Longland.²⁴⁸

With the formation of the *Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, with the monarch as Supreme Head, bishops were perhaps perceived even more than beforehand as servants of the Crown rather than spiritual leaders. Whatever the rationale, the cathedral was clearly becoming less popular amongst testators. A yearly analysis of testaments revealed that percentages to the various sectors fluctuated considerably. **(Graph 7:9, p. 359)**. Cathedral donations remained relatively stable until 1537, then suffered a marked decline to a nadir of 56.1% in 1539, recovering only slightly the following year, a decrease of over 38% from its zenith in 1534. **(Graph 7:10, p. 360)**.

This instability in patronage continued during the subsequent years of the century, reflecting the repetitive changes in religion. Research undertaken by Teresa Maybury in the area surrounding Marshchapel between 1540 and 1640 shows that whilst donations to the cathedral continued to fall, those to the poor generally increased by comparison.²⁴⁹ In the 1530s, testaments from the area included gifts to the cathedral and parish church and also nearby churches, notably Fulstow, but nothing was given to charity. Only one gave to Louth Park, holder of the advowson, for forgotten tithes.²⁵⁰ In the 1540s the cathedral accrued 80% of donations from the village, but those to the poor had risen to 50%.²⁵¹ These changes were reflected in the will of Edmund Cowper of Marshchapel. In 1547, he requested a priest 'for to singe for my soule...yf the kings busnes will admytt ytt' and if not then he required his son to 'dispose yt among poore people'.²⁵²

The 1550s witnessed the minster recovering to 90% of testaments, possibly with the reintroduction of Catholicism, but charity also increased to approximately 65%. Nevertheless with further changes in the 1560s a dramatic decline to 30% in cathedral donations occurred, with charity steady at just over 60%. The next decade witnessed a fall to 20% to both the cathedral and the poor, with both recovering slightly the following decade. Throughout the sixteenth-century, processes occurring at national level were therefore replicated amongst testators in a small settlement many miles from the centre of activities.²⁵³

Some testators relied upon religious guilds to provide security through the afterlife. There were approximately 120 guilds in Lincolnshire in the early sixteenth-century: the brethren coming from most sections of society.²⁵⁴ Some would be family members with women occasionally accorded prominent positions within the fraternity. In the Parish Wills, an average of 12% of testators left to the guilds: most specifying prayers at the fraternity altars. An analysis into the three-year periods however revealed a later decline in donations. **(Graph 7:11, p. 361)**. From 1532-34, 16.9% contributed, 1535-37, 15.8% and 1538-40, 7.3%. The fall was doubtless part of the general decline in religious bequests during a period of uncertainty. The guilds

were possibly considered to be next for closure, consequently an insecure spiritual investment.

Guilds acted as a form of 'burial club'. Obits were performed and names read aloud from the Bede-Roll at the annual dinner in the presence of guild members. George Browne, Alderman of Lincoln bequeathed 'to the clerke gyld e iij. s. iij. d. to say every yere aftyr dynner one *Pater Noster* and *Ave* for my soule' ...'.²⁵⁵ In stark contrast to the prayers of monks and nuns, elaborate commemorations were provided for deceased confraters in the splendour of their hall. A surviving example is St. Mary's Guildhall in Boston, in which John Akey, a weaver, gave instructions that the guild's 'aldermen and chamberlane to have oversight of the money [from the sale of his house] to bestowe it in mending...the calyce in the Shod Freer's Layn...and to have for ther payntakyng, vjs. viij. d.'.²⁵⁶ Shodfriars Lane was the site of the Dominican friary, which still retains surviving elements in nearby Spain Lane. Despite their accumulated wealth, guilds were in decline by the late 1530s, with their charitable activities increasingly taken up by testators.

However, guilds still appeared to be fulfilling their remit towards their members, retaining an influential presence, notably in Boston. In 1521-22, St. Mary's guild alone accrued £1,550 in indulgence receipts, probably aided by the recent acquisition of the *Scala Celli*.²⁵⁷ Doubtless due to the outlawing of such 'superstitions', testator's donations overall declined from 20.6% in 1533 to 6.1% in 1540.²⁵⁸ Charitable bequests were increasingly given to the poor as one of the Seven Acts of Mercy.

It was chiefly the needy who received charitable bequests. Their prayers were seen as more effective because as paupers they suffered in life; consequently were given precedence in the hereafter. Gifts to charity increased as against those to the Church in general. **(Graph 7:12, p. 362)**. Within the period 1532-34 the Parish Wills witnessed 12.7% of donors giving to charity, and although a reduction occurred between 1535-37 to 9%, from 1538-40 this rose to 14%, perhaps reflecting the loss of St. Catherine's. This could also be due to an increasing population and subsequent

rise in poverty, with fewer monasteries allocating poor relief.²⁵⁹ Most gifts were however in pennies or in produce.

For their charitable patronage, some testators nevertheless required attendance at the funeral, with 'pore men' provided with black gowns. The numbers of paupers and attending clergy also reflected the social standing of the deceased. In 1429, an obit for Speaker Thomas Hungerford (d1397) was graced by ninety-three priests and 363 paupers, and the following year by forty-three priests and 572 poor.²⁶⁰ An extreme case was John Hosier of London, who requested 4,800 paupers at his funeral.²⁶¹ As encouragement, those at the interment of John Brinkhill of Burton by Lincoln were given the equivalent of 6s. 8d. in bread, cheese and ale.²⁶² John Brachbrygge of Thorpe on the Hill, calling himself 'a poor man', nevertheless gave ½d. in bread to paupers attending his burial.²⁶³

One of the Acts of Mercy was visiting prisoners: based on Christ's declaration, 'I was in prison and ye came unto me'.²⁶⁴ Accordingly, three Lincolnshire testators gave to the inmates of Lincoln castle. Thomas Robertson Junior, merchant of Boston donated to the 'poure presoners ther within the castell, iijs. iiij.'. ²⁶⁵ William Barson, also of Boston gave 4d., and Robert Dowse, vicar of Lincoln, stated that 'ther be gyffyn in meake and drynk amonge the pore prisoners within the castell, xiijs. iiijd'.²⁶⁶ In 1523, the 'preseners of Notyngam' also received 4d. from Sir Henry Willoughby of Wollaton Hall, and were later mentioned in his will.²⁶⁷

Subsequently, bequests to charity became more frequent as the monasteries closed and changes in doctrine more apparent. However, as with other facets of patronage, it is unknown how much was given during life. Vague requests to executors to donate the residue of wills for the 'health of the soul' along with unspecified 'distributions' certainly entailed charitable donations. As seen from Marshchapel, the deterioration of patronage towards other sectors of the Church was replaced by gifts to charity, perhaps seen as a spiritual alternative. These calculations however do not note the many final affirmations giving 'alms and charity for my soul':

consequently totals were certainly higher. Ultimately, perhaps distrustful of the clergy, charity was seen as a religiously neutral alternative in times of instability.²⁶⁸

Charity was distributed locally to friends, neighbours but especially the sick and needy. The poor were given donations to attend the funeral and sometimes the anniversary obit; occasionally wearing black hooded gowns. Robert Alanson, a jeweller of Lincoln stated, 'I give and bequeath to xii poore men bearing torches at my burrall to evry one of them a gowne and iiijd. in money'.²⁶⁹ In 1535, William Ettwell, a merchant of Boston requested, 'to be delte to poure people [a] penny doll...and to have vj poure men to berre vj torches at my burial...to have every oon ofthem a blak gowne w[ith] a hoode': the greater number of poor in attendance equated to the status of the deceased.²⁷⁰

Charitable donations could also be practical. In 1540, two pence was given by Elizabeth Alger of Wyberton to those lacking a plough.²⁷¹ John West of Great Steeping gave a conditional donation to the 'poor with no plough a strike of beans, wheat and malt to spend only in their houses'.²⁷² Jenet Beway, a widow of Waddington gave a strike of barley plus a penny dole to local villagers, but to strangers ½d. in bread or money.²⁷³ Donations were sometimes allocated to places where the testator probably had landholdings: Jenet giving 3s. 4d. to the poor in Sleaford and Navenby. Similarly, parson Robert Anderson gave 'the poor people in Candlesby in most need, vjs. viijd.', and those next to Candlesby, but only 'as far as the money will last'.²⁷⁴ Robert Grene, a husbandman of Harlaxton gave 20s. to the poor in his village, but only 3s. 4d. to those in Denton, Barrowby and Stamford.²⁷⁵ This demarcation of localism illustrates a society centred on the parish and to a lesser extent in nearby landholdings.

Donations to the infrastructure also fluctuated during this period. **(Graph 7:13, p. 363).** Although small in comparison with other patronage, they were vitally important in maintaining communications. Within a total of 133 wills, from 1532-34, an average of 5.1% of testators donated to the causeways and bridges: 1535-37, (3.5%)

and 1538-40, (4.7%). Individual gifts were usually for neighbourhood repairs. John Browne of Grainthorpe left 3s. 4d., for 'mending of church ways if the parishioners do fall in hand to mend them'.²⁷⁶ John Clerke left to Tofte and Manthorpe 'bryg[s]' a 'stryke of barley' each.²⁷⁷ John Eme of Gedney donated £5 'to mending the cawsey in Long Sutton with stone and sand'.²⁷⁸ In this area of reclaimed land, regular maintenance of both the roads, bridges and the sewer ditches was paramount. Therefore giving to the local infrastructure not only aided the county's communications but also saved the soul.

It was however the religious houses that naturally suffered most from declining patronage during this later period. **(Graph 7:14, p. 364)**. A total of 808 Parish Wills mentioned religious houses (27.5% of 2,933), some with multiple donations. An average of 51.6% of testators donated to monasteries during the period 1532-34, 41% in 1535-37, falling in 1538-40 to 7.2%. Although remaining largely stable until 1537, the most prolific year was 1533 with 56.6% from 311 testaments. However, forty-two enclosed monasteries received only 243 donations, 1,138 was given to fifteen houses of mendicants, with St. Catherine's accruing 392.²⁷⁹

This steady decline in monastic donations reflected religious uncertainties at local level as the Suppression process accelerated. Wills mentioning only tenancies notably increased, with financial and agricultural donations decreasing accordingly. Monetary gifts to some monasteries ceased well before the suppression process was underway. The final dates of financial patronage naturally varied, but averaged 3.20 years from the last donation to suppression. Crowland's last monetary bequest occurred in 1530, nine years before closure, followed by Newstead on Ancholme and Freiston both on eight years. However Thornton, Newsham, Sixhills and the Boston and Grimsby friars were gifted in their year of closure, with Torksey and Lincoln St. Catherine's oddly receiving patronage following suppression.

Conclusion.

In this chapter Lincolnshire parishioner's testaments have revealed the variance in patronage towards the differing categories of religious, parish churches, the cathedral and religious guilds, together with charitable donations and upkeep of the infrastructure. Within the monastic arena, the friars clearly remained the primary destination of donations: their poverty, preaching skills, accessibility and education but moreover their visibility were all defining factors in their success in attracting patronage. Monks and especially nuns were perceived largely as distant entities, divorced from daily life: their connectivity revealed largely through their manor courts, as rent collectors or as tithe gatherers. It was partly the nature of monasticism itself that also produced this imbalance: compared with the friars the ethos of enclosure issuing from the twelfth-century was no longer as valid in the sixteenth. The majority of their patronage therefore issued largely from donors with connections to a monastery through family ties, both spiritually, economically and politically.

The localisation of patronage was to an extent governed by the geography of the county. Whereas donations were given in considerable sums to the local parish church, monastic patronage although geographically more extensive, was still retained largely within the district boundaries relative to the monastery. There is little evidence of a perception of 'Lincolnshire', rather that of Lindsey, Kesteven or Holland. It would therefore have been natural to donate to a monastery situated within the local district.

Lincolnshire wills were written within a period when the very fabric of belief was being challenged. They reveal however that people's spiritual convictions largely remained unchanged, but there were now fewer choices of places to bestow religious patronage. Although some preambles could be interpreted as 'reformist', in general most gifts were designed to secure the soul from the supposed torments in the hereafter. In examining these valuable documents in great detail a research gap has

been closed, thereby allowing considerable insight into the spiritual lives of Lincolnshire parishioners and their efforts in securing both their wealth but importantly their souls.

By 1540, monasticism in all its forms, both in the county and nationwide had been eradicated, the guilds and chantries soon following: monastic connectivity with local parishioners had been severed, never to be restored. The cathedral remained, but much diminished in the eyes of testators. There was however one place that would remain the bastion of traditional religion within the county. These were the parish churches which Lincolnshire testators would continue to nurture, for the 'sake of their souls'.

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NOTES – CHAPTER SEVEN

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- ¹ Hickman, 25. 20th May 1532.
- ² Tanner, N. P., *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich* (Toronto, 1984), 138.
- ³ Burgess, C., 'Late Medieval Wills and Pious Convention: testamentary evidence reconsidered', in Hicks, M. A (ed.), *Profit, Piety and the Professions in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1990), 30.
- ⁴ There are just over 4,000 surviving wills dating from 1500 to 1540.
- ⁵ Clark, *Provincial Society*, 58.
- ⁶ LAO, LCC, 1534 &., f 84. 6th June 1540.
- ⁷ LAO, LCC, 1538-40, f 348. 14th July 1540.
- ⁸ TNA, PROB, 11/28. 22nd March 1540.
- ⁹ Swanson, *Catholic England*, 255-6.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid*, 254.
- ¹¹ *Ibid*, 257.
- ¹² *Ibid*, 258. TNA, PROB, 11/28. 22nd March 1540. .
- ¹³ Burgess, 'Pious Convention', 16.
- ¹⁴ 'Ibid', 17.
- ¹⁵ pp 176-8
- ¹⁶ HMCR, *Middleton*, 327.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid*, 332, 359.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid*, 367. 1524.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid*, 334-5. 1520-21.
- ²⁰ *Ibid*, 336. 1521.
- ²¹ *Ibid*, 343, 346. 1521.
- ²² *Ibid*, 343. 1521.
- ²³ *Ibid*, 358, 389.
- ²⁴ *Ibid*, 388.
- ²⁵ His 'cadaver' tomb still survives in the church.
- ²⁶ TNA, PROB, 11/22. 1st July 1528.
- ²⁷ Payling, S. J., *DNB*, 59, 406-8. It has been suggested that one pound in 1530 would today be worth £481.00 using the retail price index and £5,230.00 using average earnings calculations. <http://www.measuringworth.com>.
- ²⁸ Hickman, 25.
- ²⁹ The 'Red Ark' contained offerings to the Works Chantry. Foster, I, 257.
- ³⁰ Hickman, xxvi.
- ³¹ 43 wills out of 123. Weaver, J. R. H., Bearwood, A (eds.), *Some Oxfordshire Wills Proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 1393-1510*, Oxfordshire Record Society, 39 (1958).
- ³² Bell, P (ed.), *Bedfordshire Wills, 1484-1533*, Bedfordshire Record Society, 76 (1997).
- ³³ McGregor, M (ed.), *Bedfordshire Wills Proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 1383-1548*, Bedfordshire Record Society, 58 (1979).
- ³⁴ Agnes Rede, Widow of Wrangle. TNA, PROB, 11/26. 19th April 1538.
- ³⁵ TNA, PROB, 11/26-27. 15th August 1539.
- ³⁶ Hickman, 25.
- ³⁷ Roger Bell, of Butterwick, Husbandman, 12th May 1532. Hickman, 24.
- ³⁸ Maddern, P. C., 'Friends of the Dead: executors, wills and family strategy in fifteenth-century Norfolk', in Archer, R. E., Walker, S (eds.), *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England: essays presented to Gerald Harriss* (London, 1995), 164.
- ³⁹ LAO, D&C, f 2/36. 1534
- ⁴⁰ LAO, Stow Wills, 1531-56, f 215. 3rd January 1533.
- ⁴¹ Thompson, II: **33**, 79.
- ⁴² *Ibid*, 62-3.
- ⁴³ Will of Sir John Beke, Vicar of Aby. Foster, I, 162. 14th March 1525.
- ⁴⁴ Hickman, 266-7. 14th January 1533.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 58-9. 4th November 1532.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 380. 1532. The prior was John Jordan. *Heads*, III, 605.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 73. 12th November 1532.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 263. 11th January 1534. The vicar was Thomas Smythe (1533-42).
- ⁴⁹ John Browne of Horbling, 20th July 1530. Foster, III, 26. They share a witness, Henry Atwyk, described as a widowman, who also left 10s., to Sempringham, large amounts to the parish church and to charity in surrounding villages. LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 78. 27th January 1535.
- ⁵⁰ Jurkowski, et. al., *English Monastic Estates*, 284-5.
- ⁵¹ Hickman, 247. 17th December 1533.

- ⁵² Agnes Rudd as prioress collected a pension of £5. Jane Tyssington was the penultimate prioress of Haverholme, possibly dying in office pre-1538. *L&P*, XIV (i) 1355. *Heads*, III, 605, 598.
- ⁵³ John Armstrong, of Corby, Merchant of the Staple of Calais, TNA, PROB, 11/18. 6th June 1515. Jane Armstrong, of Corby, Vowess, Foster, II, 143. 28th August 1529.
- ⁵⁴ Lawrence Milford of Bardney. Hickman, 374-6. 20th October 1534.
- ⁵⁵ Hodgett, *Ex-Religious*, 42, 55.
- ⁵⁶ Abbot Hemmingby to Bishop Gray. Thompson, A. H., 'Notes on the History of Bardney Abbey', *Reports & Papers of the Associated Architectural Societies*, 32 (1913-14), 53. Pevsner, et. al., *Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*, 114.
- ⁵⁷ Thompson, I: 7, 1-4, and 14: 9-34. Peacock, 'Longland', 97-113. Crowder, T., *Bardney Abbey: its history, charters, excavations* (Horncastle, 1925), 22-8.
- ⁵⁸ Bicker church was appropriated by c1291. Jurkowski, et. al., *English Monastic Estates*, 462.
- ⁵⁹ Thirty-two miles from Tydd, St. Mary.
- ⁶⁰ *VE*, III, 390-1. Long Sutton is twenty-five miles from Castle Acre.
- ⁶¹ A considerable number of wills mention 'Sutton in Holland'. This term encompasses the chapels of SS. Edmund, James, Katherine, Nicholas, Thomas and Holy Trinity, possibly attached to the 'mother' church of Long Sutton. Owen, 'Medieval Chapels', 21.
- ⁶² Foster, I, 127-8. 20th March 1523.
- ⁶³ Long Sutton is 11½ miles from King's Lynn.
- ⁶⁴ Owen, *Church and Society*, 88. Fleet is forty miles from Cambridge and Tydd eighteen miles from King's Lynn.
- ⁶⁵ Gabriel Silvester of Wyberton, Clerk and Prebendary of Chichester. TNA, PROB, 11/17. 29th September 1512.
- ⁶⁶ John Cocksie. LAO, LCC, 1541, f 382. 1540.
- ⁶⁷ *MRH*, 145. Salter, H. E., *VCH, Oxford*, II, 101-2.
- ⁶⁸ William Rede of Boston, Merchant of the Staple of Calais. TNA, PROB, 11/16. 22nd February 1507.
- ⁶⁹ Thomas Thornton. TNA, PROB, 11/27. 1537.
- ⁷⁰ Raine, et. al, *Testamenta Eboracensia*, 79: 3. 14th May 1502.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid*, 171. 17th September 1523.
- ⁷² pp. 261-2.
- ⁷³ Thomas Marmeon, Esquire of Thurlby. TNA, PROB, 11/18. 20th October 1516. Lee, TNA, PROB, 11/15. 18th September 1506.
- ⁷⁴ HMCR, *Middleton*, 369. 14th November 1524.
- ⁷⁵ Graham, R., *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 158-60.
- ⁷⁶ Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 242. *MRH*, 181. *VE*, V, 84-5.
- ⁷⁷ Foster, III, 215-16. 19th February 1531
- ⁷⁸ Foster, III, 33-4. 10th August 1530.
- ⁷⁹ No wills from the village mention the monastery. Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 239. *MRH*, 84, 90. Ketteringham, Thesis, 60.
- ⁸⁰ Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 242.
- ⁸¹ *MRH*, 131.
- ⁸² Hickman, 350. 23rd July 1534.
- ⁸³ Hodgett, *Ex-Religious*, 120.
- ⁸⁴ The choir monks received £6 13s. 4d. *Mon. Ang.*, VI (i), 24.
- ⁸⁵ In 1447, Hugh Boscawen of Penkevill in Cornwall left a will prior to his profession in Witham Priory in Somerset. Orme, N., *Cornish Wills, 1342-1540*, Devon and Cornwall Record Society, n/s, 50 (2007), 75. In 1551, William Bee, 'clerke and su'teme a professet brodere of the monastery of montgrace', left a solidly Catholic preamble, asking that 'Syr Leonard Hall mayke for me a dyryge...in the day off my buryall'. Raine, J., *Wills and Inventories of the Northern Counties of England from the Eleventh Century Downwards*, Pt. 1, Surtees Society, II (1835), 134-6.
- ⁸⁶ Sixhills was suppressed in 27th September 1538. *Heads*, III, 606.
- ⁸⁷ LAO, LCC, 1538-40, f 194. Maddison, *Lincolnshire Wills*, 21. 21st April 1539, Probate 23 May 1539.
- ⁸⁸ Isabel is listed as Elizabeth in *L&P*, XIV (i), 1355.
- ⁸⁹ Hodgett, *Ex-Religious*, 114, 131.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 39. *L&P*, XIV (i), 1355, p.602.
- ⁹¹ Hodgett, *Ex-Religious*, 110, 147.
- ⁹² LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 161. 2nd August 1536. The other was held by Drax in Yorkshire. Jurkowski, et. al., *English Monastic Estates*, 595.
- ⁹³ PRO, *The Eighth Report of the Deputy Keeper of Public Records* (London, 1847), 41.
- ⁹⁴ John Heneage was also Chief Steward of Humberston, Under Steward of Bardney and Steward of Bullington, Legbourne, Markby, Revesby, Stixwould and Thornton, on a total retainer of £8 6s. 8d., pa. Ketteringham, Thesis, 60.

- ⁹⁵ Cole, R. E. G., *Chapter Acts of the Cathedral Church of St. Mary of Lincoln, A.D 1520-1536*, Lincoln Record Society, Vol. 12 (1915), 133-5. 26th July 1530.
- ⁹⁶ *L&P*, XIX (i), 610 (78). Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*, 53-4.
- ⁹⁷ Smith, *Leland's Itinerary*, V, 37.
- ⁹⁸ Hickman, 18-19. 5th May 1532.
- ⁹⁹ Foster, I, 162. 14th March 1525.
- ¹⁰⁰ Cole, *Chapter Acts*, 91-4. 15th June 1528.
- ¹⁰¹ Scarisbrick, *Reformation*, 11.
- ¹⁰² *Ibid*, 10.
- ¹⁰³ Knight, M., *Piety and Devotion amongst the Warwickshire Gentry*, Dugdale Society Occasional Paper, No. 32 (1989), 4.
- ¹⁰⁴ Scarisbrick, *Reformation*, 10-11.
- ¹⁰⁵ Jurkowski, et. al., *English Monastic Estates*, 264, 277.
- ¹⁰⁶ In the *Valor*, Newstead was worth, £30. 6s., St. Leonard's £25 1s. 2½d., St. Michael's, £65 19s. 9d. *VE*, IV, 104: V, 305-6: IV, 140-1.
- ¹⁰⁷ TNA, PROB, 11/16. 4th May 1504.
- ¹⁰⁸ Foster, III, 218-19. 8th March 1531.
- ¹⁰⁹ Hickman, 266-7. 14th January 1533.
- ¹¹⁰ Saleby is slightly nearer Boston than Lincoln. Foster, III, 146-7. 11th July 1531.
- ¹¹¹ Probably friars from Boston, the port having mercantile connections with Louth. TNA, PROB, 11/14. 12th September 1504.
- ¹¹² In the analysis 'merchants' included Calais Staplers and 'mercers'.
- ¹¹³ Including multiple donations within a single will.
- ¹¹⁴ Tydd St. Mary. TNA, PROB, 11/23. 29th March 1529.
- ¹¹⁵ Some mention more than one house.
- ¹¹⁶ TNA, PROB, 11/23. 18/7/1528
- ¹¹⁷ Archer, *Repingdon*, III, 74, 261.
- ¹¹⁸ Foster, C. W., 'Lincolnshire Wills Proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury', *Reports & Papers of the Associated Architectural Societies*, 41:1 (1934 for 1932), 67. 11th September 1419.
- ¹¹⁹ Foster, I, 44-5. 7th April 1511.
- ¹²⁰ Burgess, C., "'By Quick and by Dead': wills and pious provision in late medieval Bristol", *English Historical Review*, 102 (1987), 840.
- ¹²¹ Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead*, 81.
- ¹²² TNA, PROB, 11/24. 6th June 1530.
- ¹²³ Duffy, *Altars*, 368-9.
- ¹²⁴ *RO*, II, 242-3. Tanner, *Medieval Norwich*, 107.
- ¹²⁵ Thompson, I: **14**: 145.
- ¹²⁶ Hickman, 18. 5th May 1532.
- ¹²⁷ At the surrender, Ambrose Irby was allocated a pension of £6 pa., still paid in 1548. *L&P*, XIV (ii), 652, 8th December 1539. Hodgett, *Ex-Religious*, 44.
- ¹²⁸ TNA, PROB, 11/24. 6th June 1530.
- ¹²⁹ Maddison, A. R., 'Lincolnshire Gentry during the Sixteenth Century', *Reports and Papers of the Associated Architectural Societies*, 22 (1894), 208. Maddison, A. R., *Lincolnshire Pedigrees*, Harleian Society, 4 vols. 51 (1903), 542.
- ¹³⁰ TNA, PROB, 11/24. 2nd January 1529.
- ¹³¹ Badham, S., 'The Robertsons Remembered: two generations of Calais staplers at Algarkirk, Lincolnshire', in Barron, C. M., Burgess, C. (eds.), *Memory and Commemoration in Medieval England: Proceedings of the 2008 Harlaxton Symposium* (Donington, 2010), 204.
- ¹³² TNA, PROB, 11/24. 2nd January 1529.
- ¹³³ Also William Gaunte of Theddlethorpe who gave 4d. LAO, LCC, 1520-31, f 272. 12th March 1531.
- ¹³⁴ Six wills note an anchoress at Boston. The 'lazar house' was possibly the hospital of St. John Baptist, noted by Leland. Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 233. Chandler, *Leland's Itinerary*, 303.
- ¹³⁵ Matthew, 19:23-24.
- ¹³⁶ LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 108. 26th October 1535.
- ¹³⁷ Little, A. G., *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 215.
- ¹³⁸ Archer, *Repingdon*, I, 114-15.
- ¹³⁹ Fowler lists fifty-one inscriptions: Brakspear sixty-five. Fowler, J. T., 'Tombstone Inscriptions from Bardney Abbey', *Reports & Papers of the Associated Architectural Societies*, 33 (1914), 403-10. Brakspear, H., 'Bardney Abbey', *Archaeological Journal*, 79 (1922), 60-75.
- ¹⁴⁰ Foster, II, 153. 10th November 1529.
- ¹⁴¹ TNA, PROB, 11/14. 6th August 1503.
- ¹⁴² Dickens, A. G., *Tudor Treatise*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, 125 (1959), 124.

- ¹⁴³ Hoyle, R. W., *DNB*, 28, 986-9. Hussey was paid £3 per annum, and was also Steward of Vaudey to which Elizabeth left £5. Ketteringham, Thesis, 58.
- ¹⁴⁴ Dudding, *Churchwardens*, 201, 206, 211-12, 216.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 187. Swaby, J. E., *A History of Louth* (London, 1951), 57.
- ¹⁴⁶ Bayley, R. S., *Notitia Ludæ, Notices of Louth* (Louth, 1834), 39.
- ¹⁴⁷ LAO, Par 7/2, f 46. St. Mary's, once a chapelry of St. James, was later demolished.
- ¹⁴⁸ Only 6.6% of 390 Stow wills date from before 1530. LAO, Boxes, 1530-52 and 1531-56.
- ¹⁴⁹ There were thirty-one wills to other monasteries, most noting tenancies.
- ¹⁵⁰ Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 237. The king attended a Privy Council at Thornton between 5th and 8th October 1541. *L&P*, XVI, 1234, 1236, 1237, 1239. The College was granted its charter 12th January 1541/2, its dedication changing from BVM to Holy Trinity. *L&P*, XVII, 71 (8). It was suppressed at an unknown date in the early years of Edward VI. The list of incumbents and their servants appears in Foster, C. W., Thompson, A. H., 'The Chantry Certificates for Lincoln and Lincolnshire', *Reports & Papers of the Associated Architectural Societies*, 37 (1923-5), 251-3.
- ¹⁵¹ *L&P*, XV, 153.
- ¹⁵² LAO, EpR (Misc), Pope I, f 56. 8th April 1540.
- ¹⁵³ William Hobson was possibly the acting abbot of the house at its suppression. Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 166 & n9.
- ¹⁵⁴ William Bystill of Algarkirk, Chantry Priest. Foster, I, 41-3. 17th June 1510.
- ¹⁵⁵ Clay, *Medieval Hospitals of England* (London, 1909), 26.
- ¹⁵⁶ The hospital of St. Sepulchre was established in the early 12th century by Bishop Robert Bloet. It was incorporated into the priory of St. Catherine's, a Gilbertine male house, following its foundation in c1150 by Bishop Robert de Chesney. Graham, *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 188-91.
- ¹⁵⁷ Foster, II, 2-3. 23rd September 1505.
- ¹⁵⁸ Thomas Gyldon of Skirbeck gave 6s. 8d. TNA, 11/27, 6th October 1537. John Craven snr. of Boultham donated 3s. 4d. Foster, III, 75. 15th November 1530
- ¹⁵⁹ *VE*, IV, 34.
- ¹⁶⁰ Macray, et. al., *Manuscripts of Lincoln*, 21-24.
- ¹⁶¹ Lucas, Thesis.
- ¹⁶² LAO, EpR (Misc), f Poi/83. 4th March 1540.
- ¹⁶³ Hill, *Tudor and Stuart Lincoln*, 18.
- ¹⁶⁴ TNA, PROB, 11/13. 1503.
- ¹⁶⁵ Farmer, *Saints*, 516, 88.
- ¹⁶⁶ Robert Colteman. Foster, II, 90. 1st July 1528.
- ¹⁶⁷ Foster, I, 44-5. 7th April 1511.
- ¹⁶⁸ Three names are unreadable.
- ¹⁶⁹ 102 (17.9%) gave to both St. Catherine's and the friars.
- ¹⁷⁰ In 1535, Crowland was the 27th richest house in the country. *RO*, III, 473.
- ¹⁷¹ Janett Lamkyn, Widow of Boston. TNA, PROB, 11/16. 19th November 1508.
- ¹⁷² Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 230, 233.
- ¹⁷³ 31 Hen 8 c 13. *Statutes*, III, 753.
- ¹⁷⁴ Hickman, 53-4. 12th September 1532
- ¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 54. 12th September 1532
- ¹⁷⁶ LAO, LCC, 1534 &, f 93. 1540.
- ¹⁷⁷ Foster, II, 18. 1st October 1525.
- ¹⁷⁸ Chapter 33. Geary, *Readings*, I, 173.
- ¹⁷⁹ *Heads*, III, 595. Hodgett, *Ex-Religious*, 40, 78.
- ¹⁸⁰ TNA, PROB, 11/20. 17th April 1521. Probate 9th March 1526
- ¹⁸¹ Foster, II, 18. 1st October 1525.
- ¹⁸² *L&P*, VII, 1675. Willoughton is noted in the *Valor*, with a Nicholas Sutton as Receiver General on a retainer of £6. *VE*, IV, 137.
- ¹⁸³ Foster, II, 18. 1st November 1525.
- ¹⁸⁴ Hickman, 239. 2nd December 1533
- ¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 239, n 147.
- ¹⁸⁶ TNA, PROB 11/21. 4th September 1524,
- ¹⁸⁷ Hodgett, *Ex-Religious*, 39.
- ¹⁸⁸ Raine, et. al., *Testamenta Eboracensia*, 79: 171. 17th September 1523.
- ¹⁸⁹ Fourth Lateran Council, Canon 64. Geary, *Readings*, II, 131-2.
- ¹⁹⁰ Burton, *Yorkshire Nunneries*, 22-3.
- ¹⁹¹ Joan Stockwith was the prioress at suppression. *Heads*, III, 602.
- ¹⁹² TNA, PROB, 11/14. 10th April 1505.
- ¹⁹³ Dudding, *Churchwardens*, 75.

- ¹⁹⁴ William Tate suggests they were only occasionally remunerated. Tate, W. E., *The Parish Chest* (Cambridge, 1969), 87.
- ¹⁹⁵ Bradley: TNA, PROB, 11/20, 18th June 1519, Codicil, 16/6/1521. Chapman: TNA, PROB, 11/14. 24th June 1499
- ¹⁹⁶ LAO, Louth St. James, Par 7/2, 40v.
- ¹⁹⁷ LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 211. 1537
- ¹⁹⁸ Fourteen monasteries attained wills from settlements ten miles and under.
- ¹⁹⁹ Thomas Calowe, a yeoman of Holbeach, left £4 13s. 4d. for prayers and held a house and 5 acres of the abbot. TNA, PROB, 11/22. 6th October 1526.
- ²⁰⁰ Jurkowski, et. al., *English Monastic Estates*, 268.
- ²⁰¹ Total 'Monastic Wills': 1500-1520, 158: 1521-1540, 1275.
- ²⁰² Hickman, 106-7. 18th February 1532.
- ²⁰³ Foster, II, 40-3. 19th August 1527.
- ²⁰⁴ Owen, 'Kirkstead Abbey', 44.
- ²⁰⁵ Foster, I, 186-7. 20th March 1526.
- ²⁰⁶ TNA, PROB, 11/14. 1st May 1503. There is no mention of a James Cowell in the pension's listings.
- ²⁰⁷ There were two from Holland a few miles to the south, and one from Lincoln.
- ²⁰⁸ Sutton: Foster, II, 17-19. 1st October 1525. Dighton: TNA, PROB/11/21. 3rd August 1523.
- ²⁰⁹ www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serjeant-at-law. Accessed 24/8/2012.
- ²¹⁰ TNA, PROB, 11/14. 6th August 1503.
- ²¹¹ Sir Richard, Whyte, Parson of Stane also donated to the friars of Boston, Lincoln and Grimsby and to Walsingham. Hickman, 27. 1st June 1532.
- ²¹² Parish churches were being closed in Lincoln and Stamford in the 16th century probably due to the falling populations. Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*, 136, 188. Hill, *Tudor and Stuart Lincoln*, 56-8.
- ²¹³ Lucas, Thesis, 183-5.
- ²¹⁴ Rigby, S. H., 'Boston and Grimsby in the Middle Ages: an administrative contrast, *Journal of Medieval History*, 10:1 (1984), 56. Some 15th century legal documents relating to the abbey and the local administration can be found in Macray, et. al., *Manuscripts of Lincoln*, 237-291.
- ²¹⁵ 12th July 1470. Macray, et. al., *Manuscripts of Lincoln*. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk>. Accessed: 18/5/2012
- ²¹⁶ Foster, I, 76-7. 26th August 1518.
- ²¹⁷ *L&P*, XIV (ii), 173. 15th September 1539.
- ²¹⁸ Foster, I, 76-7.
- ²¹⁹ Thompson, II: 37, 118.
- ²²⁰ Jurkowski, et. al. *English Monastic Estates*, 295.
- ²²¹ Received a pension of 33s. 4d. *L&P*, XIV (ii), 173. 15th September 1539.
- ²²² Hickman, 72-3. 10th November 1532.
- ²²³ Hodgett, *Ex-Religious*, 37.
- ²²⁴ Sheils, J. S., *DNB*, www.oxforddnb.com. Accessed, 30/5/2013.
- ²²⁵ *VE*, IV, 67.
- ²²⁶ *L&P*, XI, 975. November 1536.
- ²²⁷ Owst, *Preaching*, 91.
- ²²⁸ TNA, PROB/11/27. 22nd May 1528.
- ²²⁹ Article 10. Williams, *Documents*, 804-5. Marshall, *Religious Identities*, 46.
- ²³⁰ James, 'Obedience and Dissent', 14.
- ²³¹ TNA, PROB, 11/26, 4th March 1538.
- ²³² LAO, LCC, 1534 &., f 2/79, 8th May 1539. .
- ²³³ LAO, LCC, 1538-40, f 123, 17th December 1536.
- ²³⁴ TNA, PROB, 11/26, 11/27, 15th August 1539.
- ²³⁵ February 1539/40.
- ²³⁶ LAO, LCC, 1534 &., f 111. 14th November 1540.
- ²³⁷ LAO, LCC, 1534 &., f 37, 6th September 1540.
- ²³⁸ Hickman, 386-7. 8th October 1534 (probate).
- ²³⁹ *Ibid*, 109-10. 2nd March. 1532.
- ²⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 161. 15th May 1533.
- ²⁴¹ LAO, LCC, 1534 &., f 104. 15th October 1540.
- ²⁴² Jenet: LAO, Stow Wills, 1531-56. 5th August 1540. John: LAO, Stow Wills, 1530-52. 20th January 1535.
- ²⁴³ LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 61. 25th November 1535. LAO, LCC, 1534 &., f 129. 15th October 1540.
- ²⁴⁴ Bowker, *Henrician Reformation*, 93.
- ²⁴⁵ *Ibid*.
- ²⁴⁶ Chapter 5, pp. 140-1.

- ²⁴⁷ The haul included, '2,621 oz. of gold, 4,285 oz. of silver, a great number of pearls and precious stones'. *L&P*, XV, 772. 6th June 1540.
- ²⁴⁸ *L&P*, XII, (i), 70 (x). James, 'Obedience and Dissent', 27-8, 37.
- ²⁴⁹ Maybury, T, *A Century of Change on the Lindsey Marshland: Marshchapel 1540-1640*, University of Hull, Unpublished PhD Thesis (2011),
- ²⁵⁰ Robert Cowper. *LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 14*. 24th April 1535.
- ²⁵¹ Maybury, Thesis, 171-2.
- ²⁵² *LAO, LCC, 1547-9, f 83*. 1547.
- ²⁵³ Maybury, Thesis, 172.
- ²⁵⁴ Kümin, *Shaping of a Community*, 151.
- ²⁵⁵ Hickman, 286-7. 21st February 1533.
- ²⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 266-7. 14th January 1533.
- ²⁵⁷ Badham, S., "'He loved the guild": the religious guilds associated with St. Botolph's church, Boston', in Badham, S., Cockerham, P (eds.), *The beste and fayrest of al Lincolnshire': the church of St. Botolph, Boston, Lincolnshire, and its medieval monuments*, BAR, British Series, 554 (2012), 62.
- ²⁵⁸ 'Ibid' 65.
- ²⁵⁹ Knight, *Piety and Devotion*, 27.
- ²⁶⁰ Swanson, *Church and Society*, 303.
- ²⁶¹ *Ibid*, 302.
- ²⁶² *LAO, Stow Wills, 1530-52, f 28*. 24th May 1538.
- ²⁶³ *LAO, LCC, 1534 &., f 143*. 1540.
- ²⁶⁴ Matthew, 25, v 36.
- ²⁶⁵ *TNA, PROB, 11/27*. 10th July 1534
- ²⁶⁶ Barson: *LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 219*. 5th July 1535. Dowse: *LAO, D&C, 2/59*. 28th February 1536.
- ²⁶⁷ *HMCR, Middleton*, 358. 1523. *TNA, PROB, 11/22*.
- ²⁶⁸ Attreed, L. C., 'Preparation for Death in Sixteenth-Century Northern England', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 13:3 (1982), 50.
- ²⁶⁹ *TNA, PROB, 11/28*. 31st July 1540.
- ²⁷⁰ *TNA, PROB, 11/27*. 23rd February 1535.
- ²⁷¹ *LAO, LCC, 1534 &., f 72*. 30th July 1540.
- ²⁷² *LAO, LCC, 1541, f 173*. 24th January 1540.
- ²⁷³ *LAO, LCC, 1534 &., f 135*. 6th November 1540.
- ²⁷⁴ *LAO, EpR (Misc), f Poi/58*. 12th April 1540.
- ²⁷⁵ *LAO, LCC, 1538-40, f 253*. 7th March 1538.
- ²⁷⁶ *LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 260*. 2nd July 1537.
- ²⁷⁷ Hickman, 384. 1533.
- ²⁷⁸ *LAO, LCC, 1541, f 242*. 15th March 1540.
- ²⁷⁹ The other eight monasteries received no donations between 1532-40.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

Every one of the convent had given to him his cell, wherein he lied: wherein was not anything of price, but his bed and apparel, which was but simple and of small price.¹

Michael Sherbrook: *The Falle of the Religiouse Howses...*

In 1567, Michael Sherbrook (1535-c1610), rector of Wickersley in South Yorkshire, began writing a treatise on monasticism. He noted especially the demise in June 1538 of the Cistercian abbey of Roche, five miles from his parish. **(Plate 8:1)**. The above quotation relates to his uncle being offered a cell door for 2d. by a monk at the abbey's closure; evidence they were sleeping separately, possibly in the infirmary.² Roche's destruction is noted in considerable detail, albeit from a second-hand source: Sherbrook's own father.

Some took the Service Books...and laid them upon their Waine Coppes to piece the same: some took Windowes of the hay laith and hid them in their Hay; Gentlemen of the Country had bought the Timber of the Church...[which] was the first thing that was put to the spoil; and then the Abbat's Lodgine, Dortor and Frater with the cloister and all the Buildings thereabout within the Abbey Walls: for nothing was spared but the Ox-houses and swinecotes.³

In his work Sherbrook also relates, 'that the Commons of England have more Cause to praise the Builders and Founders [of abbeys] than the Destroyers and Spoylers...and greatly lament the overthrow thereof'.⁴ In hindsight, he was surprised local people had not attempted to save the abbey, and that 'every person bent himself to filch and spoil what he could'.⁵ Sherbrook continued, '...yea even such Persons were content to spoil them, that seemed not two days before to allow their Religion and do great Worship and Reverence...this day think it to be the House of God and the next day the House of the Devil'.⁶



Plate 8:1. The Sunset of Monasticism.
The ruins of the Cistercian abbey of Roche.

Sherbrook's father obtained timber from the tower's bell-frame, originally containing nine peals. Therefore he asked his father 'whether he thought well of the religious persons and of the religion then used'? The reply was, "'Yea, I did not see no cause to the contrary'". Sherbrook then enquired, "'how came it to pass you was so ready to destroy and spoil the thing that you thought well of?'" His father replied, "'What should I do?, might I not as well as others have some profit from the spoil of the abbey? For I did see all would away: and therefore I did as others did.'".⁷

Similarly, Francis Trigge (c1547-c1606), vicar of Welbourn in Lincolnshire, composed a chapter in his *Apologie* (1589) entitled 'Our days are more happie and blessed than the days of our forefathers'. He wrote,

...many do lament the pulling downe of abbayes, they say it was never merie world since: they highly commend their liberalite to the poore: their cutesie to their tenants, their commodite to the common wealth: their planting of woodes, their setting of trees.⁸

As a Protestant cleric, Trigge was using monasteries to justify his position that although some still longed for 'the old days', spiritually things were much improved. This was a generation not knowing the purpose or relevance of monasticism. In Lincolnshire their only connections were through the remains of buildings once housing religious communities, where men and women secured behind their walls prayed for the souls of those beyond.

Following the Suppression people still apparently retained some empathy for the regulars. Sherbrook senior's comment, 'I did not see no cause to the contrary... therefore I did as others did', probably reflected the general *laissez faire* attitude of many during the Suppression period. The wholesale removal of materials from the abandoned buildings cannot however be seen as a denigration of monasticism nor a disparagement of the incumbents: it was not despoliation but the reclamation of valuable resources.

By 1538 the Suppression was well advanced with monasteries near Roche either closed or under threat.⁹ The people of Yorkshire, like those of Lincolnshire, had by this period become familiar with the destruction of their religious houses and expulsion of the regulars. Following the failed Pilgrimage, they raised little objection and calmly procured what remained. In Lincolnshire the process was comparable: simply salvaging material within an area largely lacking in good timber and quality building stone. The dearth of monastic remains in the county clearly illustrates that the practice carried out at Roche was replicated with parallel zeal further east, by an equally religiously conservative population.

Roche closed during a decade of significant changes, with 1536 particularly notable for its instability in both secular and religious spheres. It witnessed the death of Catherine of Aragon, execution of Anne Boleyn and Henry's marriage to Jane Seymour. The two northern uprisings of the same year both to some extent contested the closure of religious houses. Additionally, the Act for the Suppression of the Lesser Monasteries eliminated many small establishments, allegedly because of their 'manifest sin, vicious, carnal and abominable living'.¹⁰ This naturally would have disturbed the religious: monasticism itself seemingly under threat from a state apparently bent upon reformation. Although the government reassured the continuance of larger establishments, their long-term future appeared in doubt, and the failure of the 1536 insurrections did to some extent permit the Tudor authorities to eliminate opposition to their policies of religious restructuring.¹¹ Within the new ecclesiastical creation there would however be no place for the monastic orders.

The publication in 1536 of the 'Ten Articles', with its *via media* of doctrinal amendments, also created a degree of insecurity within religious politics at both national and local levels. The Bible was translated into English, displeasing the conservatives. Offensive to the reformers was the retention of the Mass alongside prayers for the dead, with the basic notions of Purgatory and most ceremonials and

feasts left intact. The latter were especially important to agricultural communities: the seasons being closely related to the festivals of the Medieval Church.

Later a considerable number of feasts were abolished: seen as 'pernicious to the soules of many men...being entysed by the lycenyous vacacyon and lybertye of those holydayes'.¹² Locally these changes caused considerable disquiet. During the inquiry into the Rising, Nicholas Leche, parson of Belchford, stated that by encouraging work on the abrogated feast days, '...he feared he would have been slain by the commons'.¹³ Recurring evidence through their testaments revealed however that sixteenth-century Lincolnshire parishioners were content with the religious *status quo*, largely rejecting outside interference in their religious beliefs.

In contrast, the cloistered religious were perceived as largely divorced from the day-to-day realities of secular life. To outsiders they were possibly seen as privileged, living in substantial stone buildings, with full bellies, fortified with fine ale, and when elderly nurtured within the infirmary. In 1538, a letter from John London to Cromwell relates 'I perceive many...monkes and chanons, wiche be younge lustie men, all ways fatt fedde, lyving in ydelnes, and...sytt all day lurking in the cloister...'.¹⁴ During the Rising, the rebels sought out monks and canons to help sustain their cause. They had risen in part to defend monasticism, now they demanded support from the cloister. Nevertheless, from the monk's perspective, they were bound to a strict Rule closely regulated by the episcopal authorities. Their statutes severely regulated outside activities on pain of excommunication; including bearing arms.

Monastic connectivity with local populations generally came from within the important economic sphere: albeit at 'arms length'. To some potential patrons, enclosed monasteries however small were perhaps seen as capable of supporting themselves through their tithes and landholdings. Giving additional sponsorship to supposedly 'wealthy' establishments under threat from the state was therefore an unwise spiritual and economic investment. Conversely, the friars were popular with

Lincolnshire testators because of their education and alleged enhanced spirituality through professed poverty but especially their visibility. Despite their similar garb, they were perhaps perceived as a different form of monasticism, not equated with the enclosed orders. Friaries were also not mentioned in the first act of suppression and therefore possibly seen by testators as safeguarded from closure. However, they eventually fell to the political manoeuvrings of the state: the mendicants perhaps feared as 'gyrovagues', wanderers disseminating 'unsound' theology. When the friaries closed between 1538 and 1539, few voices were raised in their defence: the county by now accustomed to monastic suppression.

Over the centuries, Lincolnshire's monasteries acquired considerable landholdings, including mills, fisheries and tolls. A minority were very prosperous: others, notably most nunneries, were relatively poor, possibly due to small initial endowments and lack of subsequent patronage. It is therefore remarkable that aside from alien priories and some Templar preceptories, sixty-five religious houses survived until the Suppression.¹⁵ Although monasteries still retained some authority over the county's economic activities, many gradually deteriorated in influence with the release of assets. Some became financially insecure by 1535, with only ten (20%) over the mandatory £200 required in the first act of suppression. Almost 35% were valued at under £50, of which nearly half were nunneries; however five major houses retained over 42% of all monastic income.

These figures mirrored the overall declining prosperity of the county, notably in Lindsey where the smaller houses and most nunneries were situated. Poverty may have also reflected an allegedly diminished piety amongst the regulars. This was probably coupled to deterioration in monastic charity. Although still doled out 'to the poor at the gate', welfare increasingly relied on parishioners who generally donated within their neighbourhoods. Testators also supported the local infrastructure, giving towards the repair of local roads and bridges: securing communications vital for commerce.

This concept of localism is revealed in both economic and also geographical terms, relating especially to the county's three districts. The 'Parts of' Lindsey, Kesteven and Holland appear central to their respective populations rather than Lincolnshire overall. The 'Pinchbeck Map' showed that settlements in Kesteven were separated by boggy fenland from those in Holland. This and other geographical features, notably the Witham, are also evidenced by monastic patronage being largely retained within district boundaries.

Similarly, spiritual and temporal assets were usually located within the same district as the monastery. Likewise, some donations, principally to the friars, although originating from a considerable distance were generally retained within the same district or just beyond. These factors indicate a geographical insularity connected with monastic patronage. Sempringham Priory gives an example of localism reflecting district identity. Out of twenty wills, only three originated from outside Kesteven. This factor could be associated with the nunnery's manors: all except three situated within the district. It might also illustrate a 'belonging' to the eastern side of Kesteven. No Sempringham patrons donated to monasteries in the Grantham area: separated by the limestone Heathland. The Gilbertine mother house therefore retained considerable connectivity within the locale: four wills being witnessed or supervised by the prior.

Localism also extended to larger towns. Donations to the Grantham friars came generally from settlements along the Upper Witham Valley and the Great North Road, which passed through the town. The friars undoubtedly used this facility to reach nearby villages to preach and take confessions. Consequently they attracted fifty-three mainly local donations with only two beyond Kesteven. Another example is Grimsby, where Wellow attained sixteen wills, but only one from over ten miles. This is unsurprising as the abbey dominated the town both spiritually and economically. It owned St. James's, the only significant parish church, and many townsfolk were its tenants. The monastery also possessed a school where several of

the town's luminaries were educated.¹⁶ The topography of both Grantham and Grimsby also explains the largely local patronage: one situated within a deep valley, the other isolated by poor communications, notably to the south.

Not all monasteries however received primarily local patronage. Ninety-two percent of testators giving to St. Catherine's were from settlements over ten miles from the monastic orphanage, of which just under 80% came from Holland. Within this patronage was perhaps an educational aspect: parents sending their offspring for schooling by educated lay brothers and sisters, in addition to the perceived healthier climate. Similarly, 78.6% of Crowland's donations, 75% of Elsham's and 70% of Bullington's came from over ten miles, but with most retained within the respective districts. Similarly 65% of gifts to friaries came from outlying settlements: underlining the peripatetic nature of the mendicants. Nonetheless, the majority of monastic donations were local to within ten miles, reflecting an overall insularity regarding patronage. It may also represent the practicality of executors being able to closely observe the 'spiritual investments'. If the monastery was at some distance, then attending the anniversary obit would be problematic, especially in winter.

Donations that did originate from some distance might be due to particular factors. First, potential donors may have scant regard for their local monastery due its failings, real or otherwise. Secondly, local tenants of the monastery are unlikely to be patrons to their landlord, unless they had economic or familial connections. Finally, 76% of testators mentioning Crowland only noted their tenancies: no financial contributions were made. This was followed closely by Spalding on 65.8%, Kirkstead, 55.6% and Revesby on 50%. After 1530 no testator referring to Crowland made a monetary donation to the wealthy abbey, and no patron of Kirkstead similarly gave after 1533. This fact alone suggests that even before the religious changes, enclosed monasteries had fallen from favour as a major destination of financial patronage.

The Church as a whole nevertheless remained a vital ingredient in local people's lives. The few surviving churchwarden's accounts reveal an interaction between parishioners, the clergy and church officials. Importantly, in contrast to testators, they illustrate donations given during lifetime. The collection plate was often well filled, notably at Louth during the 'Sunday' services. In 1508, £9 12s. 10d. was given: an average of approximately 4s. per week.¹⁷ At Wigtoft repairs were made to the bells and the clock, with numerous patronal feasts also recorded. Lifetime donations were noted, and like Louth, named churchwardens left testaments. This was a Church that was locally active. Whatever was occurring at national level and in other sections of *ecclesium*, churchwarden's accounts reveal that the local church, closely bonded with social activities and seasonal festivities was still at the forefront of Lincolnshire people's lives.

The parish clergy bore the greatest responsibility for securing souls at local level. Although specifically designed to find fault, the parish visitations revealed few really heinous 'misdeeds'. 'Non-residence' of the incumbent was however a recurring theme. Resident clergy, even poorly paid curates, were more important to those seeking spiritual provision than animals loose in the cemetery or a leaking roof; both features regularly presented. Also important was the conduct of the clergy, with 'inappropriate' behaviour disparaging the efficacy of their prayers. If the vicar was '*incontinens*', his handling of elements of the Mass would be compromised; particularly vital during prayers for the dead. This, along with reproaches concerning female servants and '*non distribuciones*' to the poor, were recurring problems.

Another regular complaint was that the '*cancellus est ruinosus*', a considerable number owned by monastic proprietors. Some monasteries were neglecting their responsibilities either through poverty or parsimony: a factor possibly noted by parishioners when preparing their testaments. Few reports however mentioned repairs to the nave: parishioners clearly tending their section of the church.

Nevertheless the overall results of the visitation show that the majority of priests, although not enthusiastic preachers were competent in their vocation, but some monasteries neglected their tithe paying parishioners.

Local people paid their 'Tenth' to the monastic proprietor, but the spiritual returns appear meagre. This was not entirely the fault of the monastery. Certain orders of regular canons were permitted by their constitutions to serve outside the cloister; however the Benedictine Rule only allowed a monk to travel with permission of his superior. The reason was nevertheless usually financial rather than spiritual. Crowland's monks travelled to Lynn for sale of their fleeces, not to promote the faith: the preserve of local friars and clergy.¹⁸ By the 16th century, an appropriated church was therefore seen primarily as an economic entity: if not leased a source of income within increasingly difficult times.

Despite the religious uncertainties, Lincolnshire parishioners unfailingly gave to their local church; the primary objective of their religious patronage. It was a physical presence at the heart of the community: a proclamation of spiritual stability for hundreds of years. Some churches were updated in the latest architectural styles, giving a sense of collective pride and broadcasting the community's wealth to outsiders. There were possible rivalries to attain the finest window tracery and also tallest tower: examples being Boston and Louth both completed in the early 16th century. From the late Saxon period parish churches had witnessed the many festivals of the Church calendar: the building being also a community centre and a place of burial. Sainly images were illuminated and altars decorated. Obits, Trentals, Placebos and Diriges aided the deceased's soul through Purgatory. In addition, the deceased family could observe all was performed 'as per instructions' within the testament. Compared to the rites carried out behind monastery walls, parish funerals were highly visible both as sacred liturgy but also as a display of wealth and influence.

A small number of testators still opted for committal within religious institutions where they probably retained family or patronal connections. These were few, possibly due to space restrictions, but also perhaps to declining involvement with the regulars. When religious houses closed, tombs were either destroyed or removed. In Edenham church there are two sets of table tombs possibly of the Neville and Simeon families reputedly removed from Vaudey at its closure in 1536.¹⁹ At the suppressions of Croxton Abbey and Belvoir Priory, both in Leicestershire, the sepulchres of the de Roos family were reinterred in Bottesford church, the chancel becoming a family mausoleum. Thetford Priory in Norfolk was suppressed in 1540 despite protests from the patron, the 3rd Duke of Norfolk (1473–1554) whose ancestors were interred in the monastery. Even the tomb of Henry FitzRoy (d1536), the illegitimate son of the king, was removed from the priory to Framlingham church in Suffolk.

Political volatility within the monarchy and controversial legislation emanating from the Reformation Parliament would have troubled an already apprehensive population. Although later proved to be unfounded, there were 'bruits' suggesting the closure of parish churches and the removal of valuable plate.²⁰ Thomas Kendall, vicar of Louth suggested 'the insurrection would not have begun at Lowthe had it not been bruited that the church jewels should be taken away'.²¹ Within tight-knit local communities the prospect of worshipping elsewhere was an anathema to most clergy and parishioners. This was true for those who donated towards lights and maintenance, but especially importantly for burial and annual obits. The preservation of the parish churches was therefore a major factor during the Rising: Lincolnshire people protecting their investment, both physical and spiritual. They were willing to defend their churches against what was largely perceived as an authoritarian administration, bent upon unwanted religious changes. Therefore, Lincolnshire parishioners did not primarily revolt to defend their monasteries, whose suppression was already underway.

The State may have been closing monasteries, but relative to the survival of the parish church there was no contest: in the eyes of parishioners parochialism came before monasticism. Evidence lies within continual gifts of money and agricultural produce to parish churches. These investments were remarkable acts of confidence within a period of considerable religious uncertainty. In late September 1536, William Morland, a former monk of Louth Park, later executed for his part in the Rising, was delivering capacities to the canons of Markby and Hagnaby.²² Earlier, Vaudey and Louth Park itself had been closed, with few voices known to have been raised in protest.²³ Retaining the parish churches was therefore the primary aim of the rebels.

Church closures also meant that some clergy would be made redundant, whilst ordained former regulars would be applying for a diminishing number of benefices. A percentage of the clergy must also have issued from yeoman families. These were generally prosperous members of well educated and locally influential kinships. 'Unemployment' would be seen as a social stigma, reducing their standing and influence within the community. Churchwardens and other officials would also have lost their position, accompanied by a similar diminished social standing. The clergy were therefore in the vanguard of a revolt which eventually ended in confusion within the chapter house of Lincoln Minster.

After nearly 500 years Lincoln cathedral still remained secure upon its lofty prominence. From its *cathera* a succession of bishops from the late eleventh century ruled a vast diocese stretching from the Humber to the Thames, including 111 monasteries,²⁴ and over 1,000 parish churches and chapels. However, corroborated by the falling numbers of donations, to sixteenth-century Lincolnshire parishioners the bishop and the cathedral authorities were increasingly perceived as servants of the king rather than spiritual leaders. Following the Rising, donations to the cathedral from testators, along with pilgrimage to St. Hugh's shrine and gifts to the High Altar declined markedly. Here Lincolnshire people were registering their

disapproval of the state-run Church, along with its mitred civil servants and liturgical alterations, but especially the denigration of prayers for their departed.

This opposition applied particularly to the hierarchy surrounding Henry's confessor, John Longland. The bishop's opinions concerning the Rising go unrecorded, but the rebels' view of their episcopal was far from positive. A letter written by Anthony Irby a lawyer from Gosberton, to the Lord Chancellor, Thomas Audeley (d1544), mentions those sought by the rebels. Amongst others they wished '...to have the bishops of Lincoln and Ely [and] my lord Privy Seal [Cromwell], delivered up to them, or else banished the realm'.²⁵ Notwithstanding Longland's traditional religious perspective, comparable with most of the host, documents suggest the rebels '...intended, if they had prospered in their journey, to have slain the lord Cromwell, [and] four or five bishops...'.²⁶

Longland's fate could have mirrored that of his Chancellor John Rayne, murdered at Horncastle. Rayne was probably perceived as attempting to impose the Ten Articles on a reluctant clergy and a largely conservative population. Margaret Bowker writes that Longland 'left a diocese with priests and laity as conservative as he was'.²⁷ Despite this, at his death in 1547 Longland was still 'hedging his bets' on the outcome of the ensuing religious conflict. Dying five months after Henry, he was buried at Eton College and not within his chantry chapel at Lincoln: his heart was however interred before the high altar.²⁸

Another method of securing salvation was attaining membership of a religious guild, many of which were situated in large centres notably Stamford, Lincoln and Boston. Although donations declined towards 1540, reflecting religious uncertainties, some guilds remained wealthy, retaining considerable local support. There was nevertheless possibly some suspicion within the reformed Church that guilds were largely independent bodies steeped in 'superstition'. In 1533, William Foster a 'tyler' from Lincoln donated '...to the clerke gylde, xijd. and a hundrythe thake tyle', requesting an *Ave Maria* said 'at at ther dynner at the rehersyng of my

name'.²⁹ At the time this was a shrewd investment within the system of religious fraternity: five years later it would probably be viewed as ill-considered, spiritually, politically and financially.

Charitable donations to the poor increased as gifts to the cathedral, monasteries and guilds declined by comparison. Although donating to charity was seen as 'good works', it was also possibly perceived as an alternative to giving to the State Church, thereby replenishing the king's rapidly emptying treasury. Most gifts were to local recipients, although occasionally some came from nearby settlements where the testator owned land. Charity however occasionally required service in return. Many wills stipulated attendance at the funeral, the poor sometimes attired in black cloaks provided for the occasion. Also, the greater number attending the service demonstrated the influence of the deceased: wealth and patronage openly on display.

The care of the infrastructure, specifically roads and bridges, was of concern to many testators. Similar to charitable donations most were local, often mentioning specific '*cawseys*'. Larger structures, notably the Bridgend Causeway, required huge investment, far beyond the capabilities of the local population to sustain. Of the six wills mentioning the highway only three also donated to priory: the remainder giving towards 'mending the highway at Brygdyke'.³⁰ Clearly, this is a case of practicality over spirituality. These charitable gestures would have been appreciated by both local people and the impoverished monastery, placed in command of a vital but increasingly expensive structure.

Monasteries also still played a large but nevertheless gradually diminishing role in the administration of agriculture, fisheries and other local assets. Connectivity between tenant farmers and their monastic landlords are revealed in manor court rolls whose recorded fines filled the monk's treasury. Here permissions were granted and fees extracted, with religious and secular coming into contact through the monastery's officials. It was the Steward or Bailiff who generally presided over

the court, seeing to the legal affairs of a monastery which remained spiritually detached from its tenants.

From earlier periods, religious houses also took part in considerable land reclamation, along with the associated industry of salt extraction from these 'Newlands'. Although threatened in the sixteenth-century by cheaper imports from Iberia and Scotland, salt working continued both in the fens and along the coast, with land being recovered from earlier inundations. Over the preceding centuries this industry had a considerable effect on local economies and formed connections, albeit financial, between communities and religious houses. Factors concerning the management of monastic estates appear in the episcopal visitation documents, although often relating to maladministration rather than good husbandry.

Monasticism was still a major component of the Church that was nevertheless gradually waning economically but also spiritually. The concept of strict enclosure and thereby greater spiritual asceticism was appropriate to the twelfth-century, but by the Tudor period it was probably seen as outdated and to a certain extent irrelevant. Life beyond the cloister had changed considerably over the 400 years the majority of Lincolnshire houses had existed. In comparison with the cathedral, guilds and parish churches, and with the notable exception of the friars, the religious largely worshipped within a spiritual vacuum. Monks and especially nuns were required to accommodate the changing structure of sixteenth-century society that inevitably penetrated the monastic defences. Therefore, unless people were actively involved with a particular monastery, either as a benefactor, a local official or as a servant, the regular's environment was physically out of sight, therefore spiritually out of mind.

Evidence from the declining numbers of testaments mentioning houses of monks and nuns suggest that they were becoming steadily sidelined. This is despite a number of testators still requested post-obit membership of monastic confraternities: 'to be made brother in their chapter house': the last being in 1535.³¹ There was

however one element of monasticism that appeared to remain a significant force within the spiritual lives of Lincolnshire testators.

The fifteen houses of mendicants attracted many more donations than the enclosed monasteries. The four friaries at Boston, calculated as separate entities were mentioned in 773 testaments. The county's fifty monastic houses (excluding St. Catherine's), accounted for only 531 wills: an average of just under thirteen per annum' reflecting their lack of local connectivity. The mendicant's popularity was partly through their preaching skills to a population generally devoid of motivating sermons from the parish clergy. They used volumes of *exempla*, or anecdotes, depicting contemporary situations to portray religious themes: in Lincolnshire probably of an agricultural nature. Friars could perform the same services, take the same confessions and give the same absolutions as a parish priest, but with the additional kudos of being performed by an educated member of what appears to be a largely respected religious fraternity.

Friars also openly prayed with city, town and village populations, and were rewarded with patronage befitting this spiritual connectivity. Importantly, unlike the enclosed orders, mendicants were visible to the general population; performing what might be termed as 'proactive monasticism'. As a combination of monk and cleric they achieved equilibrium, balancing the rigours of monastic life but simultaneously retaining a spiritual relationship with local people. Patrons were therefore inclined to give to the visibly 'poor' friars, as against the largely 'invisible' and purportedly 'wealthy' monks. This was especially true in places such as Boston, where, even in the sixteenth-century there was possibly still a population of at least forty mendicants from all four orders. They would have preached in their friary's large nave and at the town's many fairs and markets, but also in outlying villages, witnessed by the considerable number of wills from settlements well over ten miles from the friary.

Important factors behind the considerable patronage given to the friars were that they owned no property, exacted no tithes, held no manor courts and consequently retained no secular authority over parishioners. As mendicants, they were perceived as 'beggars': illustrated by Franciscans symbolically walking the streets 'discalced'. In contrast to some of the county's monasteries, a friar's 'poverty' replicated both the life of Christ and also a considerable proportion of the local population. This aspect was evoked in the accounts of the king's commissioners at the Suppression, consistently recalling 'howseys non thymge lefte but stonys and pore glasse...'.³² The friars were therefore a major component in the religious life of Lincolnshire, and importantly through their spiritual and social connectivity were still receiving donations up until their collective closures between 1538-39.

Unfortunately no visitation records for the friars survive, but those for other religious orders provide a good impression of their activities. An efficient monastery possessed a sense of stability where prayer and spiritual reflection remained uninterrupted by petty squabbles and political infighting. However, similar to the parish visitations, it is easy to focus on wrongdoing rather than the process of correction, which could be effective under the guidance of the bishop and a competent superior.

Although financial matters were of primary concern during the bishop's deliberations, socializing with seculars was a continual theme of reproach, with the monastery's connectivity with the local population coming under particular scrutiny. Some of the incumbents were probably known locally, and this could reflect badly if wrongdoings were revealed, especially sexual offences. A harmonious relationship between religious and secular was also needed to secure a steady flow of patronage. Nonetheless, confidentialities must have been exposed, especially where the monastery was situated within a settlement. In the 1440s, Humberston was found in 'a state of collapse, spiritual and temporal'.³³ Significantly, only six people donated to the house, of which unsurprisingly only

two originated from the village to which the monks appear to have regularly frequented.

The original founders perceived the monastic vocation as austere enclosure with intercessory prayers and silent contemplation: those who pray interceding for those who work and those who fight. Monasticism itself could not however remain disconnected from outside influences. The enclosed were affected by the encroachment of secular customs the same as other religious institutions. Nevertheless, the perceptible reduction in monastic commitment revealed in the visitations did not reflect a decline in faith. In part it resulted from deteriorating theological instruction and spiritual interaction amongst the religious themselves. Consequently, although some religious works emanated from Carthusian houses, notably the *Speculum vitae Christi* by Nicholas Love, Prior of Mount Grace (d1424), there were few *operas* in the sixteenth-century similar to those of the Walter Hilton (c1340-1396), a canon of Thurgarton, and Gilbert of Hoyland (d1172), abbot of Swineshead.

The visitation documents also suggest that although most offices were still reverently performed, there was possibly little passion or enthusiasm involved. There were also numerous minor offences constantly revealed but rarely eradicated. Alexander Thompson remarks of Atwater and Longland's visitations that, 'the faults that appear in one monastery after another are much the same...familiar breaches of the Rule which Alnwick's visitations had revealed the best part of a century before'.³⁴ The visitors also displayed differing attitudes to their findings. Alnwick exhibited sensitivity for the moral and physical welfare of the incumbents. By comparison, Atwater and notably Longland possessed a perfunctory approach to the visitation process.³⁵ Longland's regular employment of commissioners, notably John Rayne, speaks volumes regarding his attitude towards the religious houses just prior to the Dissolution.

Similar to the parish documents few really heinous sins were exposed. Thompson however suggests that 'mingling the oil of mercy with the vinegar of rebuke in such proportions...to have a permanent effect on the health of the patient', did not reflect changing social attitudes beyond the cloister.³⁶ Although there were some apostates, few monks were actually 'sacked'. Visitations were not seen as a process of punishment, but teaching obedience and ultimately forgiving the wrongdoer, restoring him or her into the monastery's spiritual *familia*.

The enquiries did however reveal stories of ineffectual superiors that were not replaced and hence the monastery stagnated or ultimately descended into chaos. Any reform was dependent on the head, but also upon the community in accepting the strictures imposed. What the visitations do not reveal is the dedication of the majority of regulars, who slept in the dormer, ate in the refectory, studied diligently, prayed regularly, obeyed their superiors and conformed to the Rule. Except for the early offices, most services were probably well attended, but this detail goes unrecorded. Misdemeanours and transgressions were revealed for all to see: obedience and conformity went unrecorded or simply concealed within the repetitive *Omnia bene*. All however was not well at the nation's centre from where the fate of the monasteries would be ultimately decided.

Following a period of relative stability up until the late 1520s, both politics and religion gradually became more volatile as the king's 'Great Matter' took centre stage. This dilemma was to closely affect the Church, including approximately 880 religious houses containing thousands of incumbents.³⁷ Later, further pressure was applied to conform to new religious edicts, emanating, not for Rome but from the king as Supreme Head of the Church of England. Although most monastic superiors recognised the Acts of Succession and Supremacy, Henry and his councillors probably realised that this acknowledgement was superficial, and in reality most religious remained spiritually bonded to Rome and its 'superstitious' doctrines.

This conservatism was replicated within the wills of Lincolnshire testators. Their preambles remained solidly 'catholyke': only a small proportion rejecting the standard affirmation to 'God allmyghtty, to Our Lady St. Mary and to all the holy company of heven.'. Belief in the painful, if cleansing process of Purgatory with associated prayers for the dead was consistently acknowledged by testators. That the rest of the county's population retained similar viewpoints is evidenced by churchwarden's accounts revealing continuous support for the local church. However, compared with the shire's total populous, Lincolnshire parishioners left few wills: an average of 0.1% per annum over forty-one years, from a population of approximately 100,000. Nevertheless the numbers of testaments noticeably increased from a very low base at the beginning of the century to over 700 in 1540: probably used primarily to secure accumulated wealth in notionally unstable times.

The vast majority of testators were of the 'middling sort', holding enough assets that required legal safeguarding post-obit. This was a generation who had lived through a largely stable period, both politically and religiously, with financial instability only emerging in later years largely through increased inflation. Wealthier testators using the PCC were probably 'in the know' concerning religious politics at national level. Court attendees were aware of the looming changes and possibly regulated their donations accordingly. However, those who donated to monasteries possibly had unknown connections with the respective houses, either through long term familial patronage, relatives within the monastery or through business dealings.

Although the majority did not disclose their occupation or social standing, evidence revealed patronage issuing from various backgrounds. Women, of whom 37% were widows, made up approximately 10% of monastic testators. A further 14% were clergy, gentlemen, esquires, merchants, husbandmen and yeomen. The latter's financial influence increased markedly following the Dissolution. Kinships such as the Bellows of Grimsby and Broxholmes of Owersby grew in importance following huge purchases of monastic lands.³⁸ Therefore, yeoman families of the Tudor period

require further investigation, which might reveal layers of political and religious influence previously unrecorded.

Through their wealth, Lincolnshire testators must have retained some influence in their local communities, notably within the social, economic and religious spheres. During the Rising the 'commons' continually looked to their 'social superiors', both secular and monastic for leadership. In addition, as the newly affluent these *nouveau riches* possibly feared for their souls, therefore patronage of the Church was seen as spiritually imperative. They may nevertheless not have been coupled to the concept of enclosed monasticism. Religious houses were possibly seen as the fiefdom of royalty and senior clergy: the king as Duke of Lancaster was patron of eleven houses in the county and the bishop of three.³⁹

These testators perhaps perceived themselves outside the social strata of an abbot or a monastic patron, and therefore gave largely to the mendicants. The original founders of most Lincolnshire friaries are largely unknown, although they were probably from the higher clergy or as in Boston, merchants. The mendicants attained the majority of donations from testators of similar social backgrounds: the mercantile classes, lower gentry, yeoman and husbandmen. They were not huge gifts; along with much agricultural produce most were in pennies and shillings, not pounds and marks.

The destination of donations also altered, especially during 1532-40. Although a decline in bequests to monasteries would be expected, giving to the State Church *per-se* was conceivably seen as 'voluntary taxation'. The ultimate objective of religious patronage was now open to question: was it going into the Church or to fill the king's coffers? Adding to this uncertainty was rising inflation. Consequently with a shrinking currency, post-obit donations had to be carefully measured. Unlike those to the cathedral and religious houses, investments in the parish church, local charity and the infrastructure were easily overseen by executors. Evidence from testaments has proved that localised patronage was therefore preferable, especially

during a period of considerable religious change and with the process of securing souls in doubt.

Eamon Duffy suggests that during this period there was a gradual purgation of traditional worship and ceremonial: a liturgy understood and largely respected by Lincolnshire parishioners. This policy succeeded due to the effectiveness of the Tudor government, expounding the theory, 'whatever the Crown commanded, the people, for the most part, did...it is safer to do in religion as most do'.⁴⁰ It was this conformity that in part condemned Lincolnshire's religious houses. Christopher Haigh writes that 'after 1536, religious conservatism was not on the wane due to a decline in benefactions for prayers and images, but because the Dissolution demonstrated that ecclesiastical endowment was risky'.⁴¹ With the exception of the parish church, this theory is evidenced by declining ecclesiastical patronage within the county. In a religiously conservative environment, monasteries were a natural destination for benefaction, and until 1537 gifts, principally to the friars were largely sustained. However in the final analysis, religious patronage was a business transaction: the deal essentially being, 'we give to the Church, you pray for our souls'. If one side of the contract collapses, it all collapses and hence the connectivity is broken.

In an analysis of the work of Arthur Dickens, Haigh writes that contrary to expectations, he 'found Church courts that worked well, parish clergy who did their jobs, lay people who gave lots and lots to traditional pious causes...parishes conforming only reluctantly to royal orders and protest against change'.⁴² Haigh also suggests, 'The Reformation worked only because it did not reform much...that people would pick and choose the bits they most like, what they had always known and avoid the hard stuff'.⁴³ The testaments of Lincolnshire parishioners therefore mirrored local reactions to the policies of the central government. Whilst securing their souls, they were simultaneously protecting their wealth from what was

perceived as a financially avaricious administration: witnessed by opposition to the Subsidy commissioners during the Rising.

Ronald Hutton suggests that, '...the attraction of the Reformation is very hard to see for it involved the mass destruction of tangible objects of beauty, stained glass etc., and a substitution of printed words which had very little appeal to those not imbued with their faith'.⁴⁴ Interestingly, although inventories of church accoutrement were undertaken in Lincolnshire in 1548, apparently not until the mid 1560s was action taken to finally destroy 'papistical' fittings, still in place thirty years after the Suppression.⁴⁵

Similarly, as he got older, Henry VIII became more conservative in his religious philosophy. In his will, he donated his soul to 'the name of God and of the glorious and Blessed vyrgyn oure Lady Saint mary and of the holy company of heven' (**Plate 8:2**). He also stipulated that at Windsor College 'daly masses there to be said perpetually while the world shall endure'.⁴⁶ In addition, 1,000 Marks in alms were to be given to the poor with 'common beggars, as much as may be avoyeded', along with injunctions to pray for his soul.⁴⁷

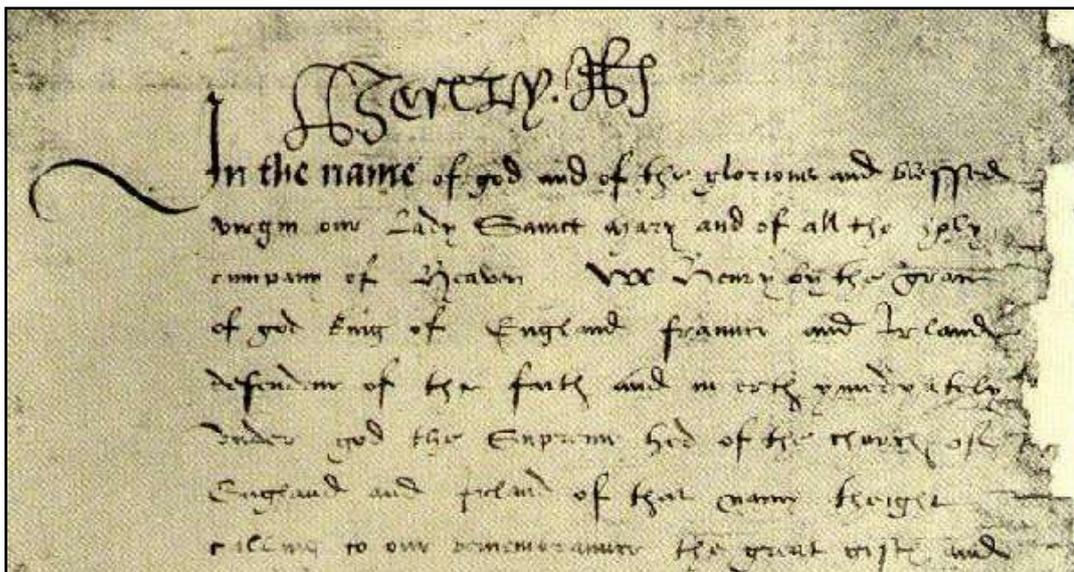


Plate 8:2. The Testament of King Henry VIII, dated 1546. www.tudorplace.com.

It is also significant that in the Act of Uniformity of 1559 his daughter Elizabeth required that,

...all and every person and persons inhabiting within this realm...shall diligently and faithfully...endeavour themselves to resort to their parish church or chapel accustomed...upon every Sunday...upon pain [of] forfeit for every such offence twelve pence.⁴⁸

As further evidence of disconnection from the Church, the Wigtoft churchwarden's accounts markedly diminished as the century progressed, and by the 1600s were reduced to a few lines per year. It may indicate the parish church was no longer the centre of activities: colourful services and festivals replaced by readings from scripture and lengthy sermons. This was accompanied by reductions in donations to the Church, with building activities largely curtailed; the money given to the poor.⁴⁹

Whatever the edicts were from above, Lincolnshire's parishioners established a spiritual constancy in their lives by simply ignoring them. By 1540, although the monasteries were closed, religious conservatism was alive and well. Congregations were not prepared to reject the supposed 'superstitions' of a faith known and generally respected for a thousand years. The Mass and other services had been performed from 'time out of mind', and had served them admirably. Ceremonies and feasts were an integral part of the seasonal cycle, with the local priest perceived as the spiritual leader of the community. If the parish visitations are to be believed, most clergy seemed to be reasonably competent, despite evidence of almost nonexistent preaching. Importantly, traditional preambles and donations for obits and Trentals showed that prayers for the dead continued to be part of both religious belief and social culture.

Through their testaments Lincolnshire's parishioners therefore appeared largely content with the doctrine of the Medieval Church. James Thomson writes that 'most people were neither passionately devout nor vehemently critical: they continued their lives and trusted their soul to God's mercy'.⁵⁰ Most people's knowledge of the deeper realms of Scripture was probably as limited as their understanding of the

political mechanisms of the diocesan establishment, and consequently was of little concern to the majority. Therefore, whilst the English Bible was undoubtedly welcomed, the new theology with its notion of predestinationism determined by a religious intelligentsia in the distant capital appears at least in Lincolnshire to have been largely rejected. The 'chattering classes' of Tudor England, men such as Tyndale, Gardiner, More, Bale and Foxe, mired in their own theological controversies, would not be interested in the thoughts of Lincolnshire people. They were too occupied pitching invectives at one another to care about 'that brute and beestelie shire'.

Yet, what of the 'common folk', whose lives Tudor reformers proposed to turn upside down? Haigh suggests,

Reformations were not the work of theologians in Cambridge and lawmakers in Westminster alone; they were also the work of those who sat bewildered in pews and befuddled in alehouses.⁵¹

Some of those confused churchgoers and perplexed imbibers originated from Lincolnshire. They were Christian men and women whose only desire was to secure their ultimate salvation. Whether this was achieved via the prayers of the parish priest, guild chaplain, friar, monk or nun was important only in the end result. In this the county's parishioners largely rejected the enclosed orders, opting instead for the mendicant, but principally for the familiar prayers of the local parish priest. Testaments reveal that although Henry VIII rid the county of its religious houses, his reformed Church failed to secure the hearts, minds and souls of the Lincolnshire people.

Over a period of three and a half years all of Lincolnshire's monastic establishments were closed: the last being Thornton Abbey on 12th December 1539.⁵² The little connectivity local communities had with their religious houses was finally severed. The incumbents were scattered, their landholdings becoming the property of secular landlords and speculators. Whether the parishioners of the county cared or just shrugged their collective shoulders can only be partly judged through their

testaments. What is certain is that most monasteries were speedily dismantled and the stone and timber reused. Nevertheless, other than the actual structures themselves, one feature was absent that would not have gone unnoticed by the Lincolnshire population.

When the county's monasteries disappeared, they took with them the sound of their bells that once resounded across the 'spiritual landscape'. The peals of the four friaries in Boston, competing with those of St. Botolph's atop its majestic 'Stump', were finally silenced: the metal melted down for the king's treasury. Did the parishioners of Timberland yearn for the resonance of Kirkstead Abbey's bells, so much part of their lives for hundreds of years, echoing across the Witham floodplain, summoning the Cistercian monks to the Offices of the *Opus Dei*? Only those of the local parish church survived, albeit in reduced numbers: their 'reparacions' still financed by donations from parishioners in return for prayers for their departed loved ones.

The conclusions drawn from the research therefore confirm that despite the loss of the monasteries and later the guilds and chantries, the orthodox canon was still fundamental to the spiritual lives of Lincolnshire people. From the standpoint of testators, the evidence clearly shows that parochialism came before monasticism. This lack of connectivity with religious houses does not however suggest animosity towards the regulars or the Church overall. Testamentary patronage was instead primarily aimed at the parish church, where most religious and communal activities took place: spiritual localism secured during increasingly unstable times. In addition, the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the 'state' Church continued to be subtly opposed in their attempts to implement reformed doctrines on a largely reluctant population. This was achieved partly by the county's testators through their wills requesting orthodox funerary rites, replete with solemn Masses and gifts to altars and lights.

Research into the visitation documents shows that in general the county's monasteries were reasonably well administered, if not necessarily spiritually dynamic. If the head of the house was competent then all was well, if not then chaos ensued. The few malcontents instigating discord were generally dealt with firmly but compassionately by the bishop. Overall however the same problems reoccurred throughout the period; the episcopals seemingly unable to eradicate them totally. Similarly the parish visitations only uncovered minor problems, both within activities of the clergy and the general upkeep of the physical structures. Priests who were '*non residet*' appeared to be the main concern of the parishioners; especially understandable when nearing death. Overall, the visitation documents revealed that both the monasteries and the local churches appear to have been 'ticking over' adequately; enough to generally satisfy both patrons and parishioners.

These findings are in contrast to the studies of some modern historians whose religious beliefs to a certain extent coloured their research. Until the emergence of the notion of 'revisionism', advanced by amongst others Duffy, Scarisbrick and Haigh, the general opinion was that sixteenth-century England rejected 'old fashioned Catholicism' and embraced 'newfangled Protestantism'. There is however little evidence of reformism in Lincolnshire other than a few minor changes to the preambles, most generally followed by an orthodox testament. Also, despite its proximity to the largely Protestant Low Countries, the county's parishioners clearly rejected the influences of these foreign reformers and during the period under discussion remained firmly within the ambit of the 'Old Religion'; albeit *sans* the pope. By filling in research gaps through a detailed study of testaments and other documentary sources, the findings of this thesis revealed that with few exceptions the Lincolnshire Church was effective in its dealings with local parishioners. They in turn invested their hard-won finances in all aspects of an organisation specifically designed to secure their souls; connectivity and localism combined.

It was therefore the county's religious houses that were suppressed, not people's beliefs. With the exception of the friars the connectivity between parish communities and the religious was very limited and therefore their eventual loss was not keenly felt. It can be said with some certainty that Lincolnshire people were first and foremost thankful that their parish church was to remain open and its valuables secured, and consequently were largely ambivalent to closure of the county's monasteries. The parish church was an essential part of the local community: the monastery by its very nature a remote entity whose loss generally affected few.

The monks departed, nuns left their convents and friars cast aside their habits. Monasteries had been part of England's landscape for nearly 1,000 years: their suppression one element within the clash of Tudor politics and religion, none of which was initiated by the religious. In the midst of this confrontation were the people of Lincolnshire, pulled every which way by the opposing camps of conservatism and reform. Like the regulars, they also did not instigate the conflict. Most just wanted stability within their religion: their deceased loved ones secured from anguish and pain in the afterlife; salvation attained through their religious convictions and intercessionary prayers.

The principal evidence from this thesis has clearly shown that Lincolnshire testators in increasing numbers began safeguarding both their souls and their wealth against seemingly troubled times ahead. A war was about to commence, not with France or Scotland, but a struggle to secure the souls of Lincolnshire parishioners, either via prayers for the departed or through the Word of God. To achieve this, their spiritual haven was ultimately to be the familiar parish church: despite its faults, unlikely to 'wither on the vine'.



NOTES – CONCLUSION

- ¹ Cross, C., 'Monasteries and Society in Sixteenth-Century Yorkshire: the last years of Roche Abbey', in Burton, J., Stöber, K. (eds.), *Monasteries and Society in the British Isles in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2008), 233.
- ² Dickens, *Tudor Treatise*, 123. Eleven monks received a pension of £5 per annum. *L&P*, XIII (ii), Appendix, 25. June 1538. <http://cistercians.shef.ac.uk/roche/buildings/infirmary>.
- ³ Dickens, *Tudor Treatise*, 124.
- ⁴ *Ibid*, 89.
- ⁵ Cross, 'Monasteries and Society', 233.
- ⁶ Dickens, *Tudor Treatise*, 124-5.
- ⁷ Cross, 'Monasteries and Society', 233.
- ⁸ Trigge, F., *An Apologie, or Defence of our Dayes, against the Vaine Murmurings & Complaints of Manie: wherein is plainly proued, that our dayes are more happie & blessed than the dayes of our forefathers* (London, 1589), 7. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com>. Accessed 16/7/2011.
- ⁹ Nearby Blythe in Nottinghamshire was suppressed in 1536: Worksop and the friaries at Doncaster and Tickhill closed in November 1538.
- ¹⁰ 27 Henry VIII. c. 28, enacted February 1535/6. *Statutes*, III, 575.
- ¹¹ MacCullough, *Reformation*, 200-1.
- ¹² Act for the Abrogation of Certain Holydays (1536). Wilkins, D., *Concilia Magnæ Britanniae et Hiberniae, a synodo verolamiensi A.D. CCC XLVI. ad londinensem A.D. MDCCXVII. Accedunt constitutiones et alia ad historiam Ecclesiae Anglicanae spectantia: a Davide Wilkins*, Vol. 3 (London, 1737), 823. <http://galenet.galegroup.com>. Accessed 24/1/2011.
- ¹³ *L&P*, XII (i), 70 (xi). January 12th 1537. Leche was executed at Tyburn on 29th March 1537 for his part in the Rising. Ketteringham, Thesis, 359.
- ¹⁴ Wright, *Letters*, 215.
- ¹⁵ Originally approximately ninety-eight establishments.
- ¹⁶ Lucas, Thesis, 296.
- ¹⁷ Dudding, *Churchwardens*, 107.
- ¹⁸ Wretts-Smith, M., 'Organisation of Farming at Croyland Abbey, 1257-1321', *Journal of Economic and Business History*, IV (1931-2), 185.
- ¹⁹ Vaudey owned the manor, but Bridlington the advowson. Jurkowski, et. al., *English Monastic Estates*, 294, 570.
- ²⁰ *L&P*, XI, 828 (i), 1. 21st October 1536.
- ²¹ *L&P*, XII (i), 70 (1). Kendall was executed at Tyburn on 29th March 1537 for his part in the Rising. Ketteringham, Thesis, 359.
- ²² *L&P*, XII (i), 380. 12th January 1537. Ward, *Rising*, 13.
- ²³ Vaudey probably closed in early August 1536. *L&P*, XI, 242. 7th August 1536.
- ²⁴ Bowker, *Henrician Reformation*, 18.
- ²⁵ *L&P*, XI, 585. October 1536. Maddison, 'Lincolnshire Gentry', 208.
- ²⁶ *L&P*, XII (i), 70 (x). 12th January, 1537.
- ²⁷ Bowker, *Henrician Reformation*, 181-5.
- ²⁸ Bowker, M., *OED*, 34, 395-8.
- ²⁹ Hickman, 222. 2nd November 1533.
- ³⁰ Sir Robert Whyham, Vicar of Helpringham. Hickman, 316-17. 14th April 1534. Two further Monastic Wills requested the prior as witness, but with no donation.
- ³¹ Leonard Markham of Great Hale, to be a brother at Bardney for 10s. He held the parsonage of Hale from the monastery by lease. LAO, LCC, 1535-7, f 178. 15th July 1535.
- ³² Wright, *Letters*, 192.
- ³³ Thompson, I: 14, 148. Elspeth (Sister), *VCH, Lincolnshire*, II, 134.
- ³⁴ Thompson, II: 33, lxxx.
- ³⁵ *Ibid*, ciii.
- ³⁶ *Ibid*.
- ³⁷ c10,000 is suggested in *MRH*, 494.
- ³⁸ Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*, 7, 59-61.
- ³⁹ Stöber, K., *Late Medieval Monasteries and their Patrons: England and Wales, c.1300-1540* (Woodbridge, 2007), 210-54.
- ⁴⁰ Aston, 'Review: Duffy', 113.
- ⁴¹ Haigh, 'Introduction', 13.
- ⁴² Haigh, C., 'A. G. Dickens', 36.
- ⁴³ 'Ibid', 38.
- ⁴⁴ Hutton, R., 'Revisionism in Britain', in Bentley, M (ed.), *Companion to Historiography* (London, 2002), 384.

⁴⁵ Church inventories from 1548 only relate to challises, bells and vestments etc. Some utensils were returned for basic services. Furnishings such as Rood screens were noted as 'brent' or 'defacid' in the *Inventarium Monumentorum. Superstitionis* of 1566. Foster, C. W., 'Inventories of Church Goods, A.D.1548', *Reports & Papers of the Associated Architectural Societies*, 34 (1917-18), 27. Peacock, E., *English Church Furniture: ornaments and decorations, at the period of the Reformation: as exhibited in a List of the Goods destroyed in certain Lincolnshire churches, A.D. 1566* (London, 1866). Foster, C. W., 'English Church Furniture, A.D 1566', *Lincolnshire Notes & Queries*, 14 (1916-17).

⁴⁶ TNA, PROB, 11/31/460. Probate April 1547.

⁴⁷ Ibid. *L&P*, XXI (ii), 634. 30th December 1546.

⁴⁸ 1 Eliz, cap. 2 (1559).

⁴⁹ Maybury, Thesis, 171-2. Fig. 5.5.

⁵⁰ Thomson, J, A. F., *The Early Tudor Church and Society, 1485-1529* (London, 1993), 4.

⁵¹ Haigh, *English Reformations*, 16.

⁵² Later re-established by the king as a secular college.

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APPENDIX 1.

Lincolnshire Monastic Houses in 1535.

Monastery	District	Type	Order	Dissolved	Gross Value 1535	Notes
Alvingham.	Lindsay	Priory	Gilbertine Nuns.	29/9/1538	£141 15s. 0d.	
•Axholme (Epworth).	Lindsay	Priory	Carthusian Monks.	18/6/1538	£290 14s. 7½d.	
•Bardney.	Lindsay	Abbey	Benedictine Monks.	1538	£429 7s. 0d.	
•Barlings.	Lindsay	Abbey	Premonstratensian Canons.	26/3/1537	£ 307 16s. 5d.	
•Boston.	Holland	Friary	Dominican Friars.	1538	n/a	
•Boston.	Holland	Friary	Augustinian Friars.	1539	n/a	
•Boston.	Holland	Friary	Franciscan Friars.	1539	n/a	
•Boston.	Holland	Friary	Carmelite Friars.	1539	n/a	
•Bourne.	Kesteven	Abbey	Augustinian Canons.	1536	£197 17s. 5¼d.	Originally Arrouasian Order.
Bridge End (Holland Bridge).	Kesteven	Priory	Gilbertine Canons.	1538	£5 1s. 11½d. (net)	Cell of Sempringham from c1445.
Bullington.	Lindsay	Priory	Gilbertine Nuns.	26/9/1538	£205 15s. 9d.	
•Catley.	Kesteven	Priory	Gilbertine Nuns.	25/9/1538	£38 13s. 8d.	
•Crowland.	Holland	Abbey	Benedictine Monks.	4/12/1539	£916 7s. 9d.*	
Deeping St. James.	Kesteven	Priory	Benedictine Monks.	1539	n/a	Cell of Thorney Abbey.
•Elsham.	Lindsay	Priory	Augustinian Canons.	1536	£83 17s. 10d.	
•Fosse.	Lindsay	Priory	Cistercian Nuns.	11/7/1539	£8 5s. 4d.	
•Freiston.	Holland	Priory	Benedictine Monks.	1539	£167 8s. 1½d. +	Cell of Crowland Abbey.
Gokewell.	Lindsay	Priory	Cistercian Nuns.	1536	£19 18s. 6d.	
Grantham.	Kesteven	Friary	Franciscan Friars.	1539	n/a	
Greenfield.	Lindsay	Priory	Cistercian Nuns.	1536	£ 79 15s. 1d.	
Grimsbj.	Lindsay	Friary	Augustinian Friars.	1538	n/a	
Grimsbj.	Lindsay	Friary	Franciscan Friars.	1538	n/a	
Grimsbj, St. Leonard's.	Lindsay	Priory	Augustinian Canonesses.	15/9/1539	£12 3s. 7d.	
Hagnaby.	Lindsay	Abbey	Premonstratensian Canons.	1536	£98 8s. 4d.	

Haverholme.	Kesteven	Priory	Gilbertine Nuns.	24/9/1538	£88 5s. 5d.	
Heynings.	Lindsay	Priory	Cistercian Nuns.	11/7/1539	£58 13s. 4d.	
Humberston.	Lindsay	Abbey	Benedictine Monks.	1536	£32 1s. 3d. (net)	Originally Tironensian Order.
Hirst (Hyrst).	Lindsay	Priory	Augustinian Canons.	1539?	£7 11s. 8d.	Cell of Nostell Priory.
•Kirkstead.	Lindsay	Abbey	Cistercian Monks.	1537	£338 13s. 11¼d.	Daughter house of Fountains.
Kyme.	Kesteven	Priory	Augustinian Canons.	6/7/1539	£138 4s. 9d.	
Legbourne.	Lindsay	Priory	Cistercian Nuns.	c29/9/1536	£57 13s. 5¼d.	
Lincoln.	Lincoln	Friary	Dominican Friars.	1539	n/a	
•Lincoln.	Lincoln	Friary	Franciscan Friars.	1539	n/a	
•Lincoln.	Lincoln	Friary	Augustinian Friars.	1539	n/a	
•Lincoln.	Lincoln	Friary	Carmelite Friars.	1539	n/a	
Lincoln, St. Catharine's.	Lincoln	Priory	Gilbertine Canons.	14/7/1538	£202 5s. ½d. (net)	
Lincoln, Mary Magdalene's.	Lincoln	Priory	Benedictine Monks.	1539	£26 1s. 3d.	Cell of York, St. Mary.
Louth Park.	Lindsay	Abbey	Cistercian Monks.	8/9/1536	£169 5s. 6½d.	Daughter house of Fountains.
•Markby.	Lindsay	Priory	Augustinian Canons.	1536	£163 17s. 6½d.	
Newbo.	Kesteven	Abbey	Premonstratensian Canons.	1536	£115 11s. 8d.	
Newsham (Newhouse).	Lindsay	Abbey	Premonstratensian Canons.	1536	£114 1s. 4½d.	
•Newstead by Stamford.	Kesteven	Priory	Augustinian Canons.	1539	£42 1s. 3d.	
Newstead on Ancholme.	Lindsay	Priory	Gilbertine Canons.	2/10/1538	£45 11s. 8d.	
•Nocton Park.	Kesteven	Priory	Augustinian Canons.	1536	£57 19s. 2½d.	
North (Nun) Ormsby.	Lindsay	Priory	Gilbertine Nuns.	30/9/1538	£98 0s 0d.	
Nun Cotham.	Lindsay	Priory	Cistercian Nuns.	9/7/1539	£53 13s. 7d.	
Orford.	Lindsay	Priory	Premonstratensian Canonesses.	1536	£14 13s. 4d.	
•Revesby.	Lindsay	Abbey	Cistercian Monks.	23/3/1538	£349 4s. 10d.	Daughter house of Rievaulx.
•Sempringham.	Kesteven	Priory	Gilbertine Nuns.	18/9/1538	£359 12s. 7d.	
Sixhills.	Lindsay	Priory	Gilbertine Nuns.	29/9/1538	£170 8s. 9d.	
Spalding.	Holland	Priory	Benedictine Monks.	8/12/1539	£878 17s. 3d.	
Stainfield.	Lindsay	Priory	Benedictine Nuns.	1536	£112 0s. 5d.	Removed to Stixwold.
•Stamford.	Kesteven	Friary	Augustinian Friars.	1538	n/a	

Stamford.	Kesteven	Friary	Dominican Friars.	1538	n/a	
Stamford.	Kesteven	Friary	Franciscan Friars.	1538	n/a	
Stamford.	Kesteven	Friary	Carmelite Friars.	1538	n/a	
Stamford, St. Leonard's.	Kesteven	Priory	Benedictine Monks.	1538	£36 1s. 5d.	Cell of Durham Cathedral Priory.
•Stixwold.	Lindsay	Priory	Cistercian Nuns.	1536	Unknown	
•Stixwold.	Lindsay	Priory	Benedictine Nuns.	1537	Unknown	Removed from Stainfield.
•Stixwold.	Lindsay	Priory	Premonstratensian Canonesses.	29/9/1539	£163 0s. 14½d.	Removed from Broadholme?
Swineshead.	Holland	Abbey	Cistercian Monks.	1536	£167 15s. 3½d. (net)	Founded from Furness (Savignac).
Thornholme.	Lindsay	Priory	Augustinian Canons.	1536	£155 19s. 6½d.	
† Thornton.	Lindsay	Abbey	Augustinian Canons.	12/12/1539	£730 17s. 3¾d.	
•Torksey.	Lindsay	Priory	Augustinian Canons.	1536	£27 2s. 8d.	
•Tupholme.	Lindsay	Abbey	Premonstratensian Canons.	1536	£119 2s. 8d.	
•Vaudey.	Kesteven	Abbey	Cistercian Monks.	1536	£177 15s. 7¾d.	Daughter house of Fountains.
Wellow.	Lindsay	Abbey	Augustinian Canons.	1536	£152 7s. 4d.	

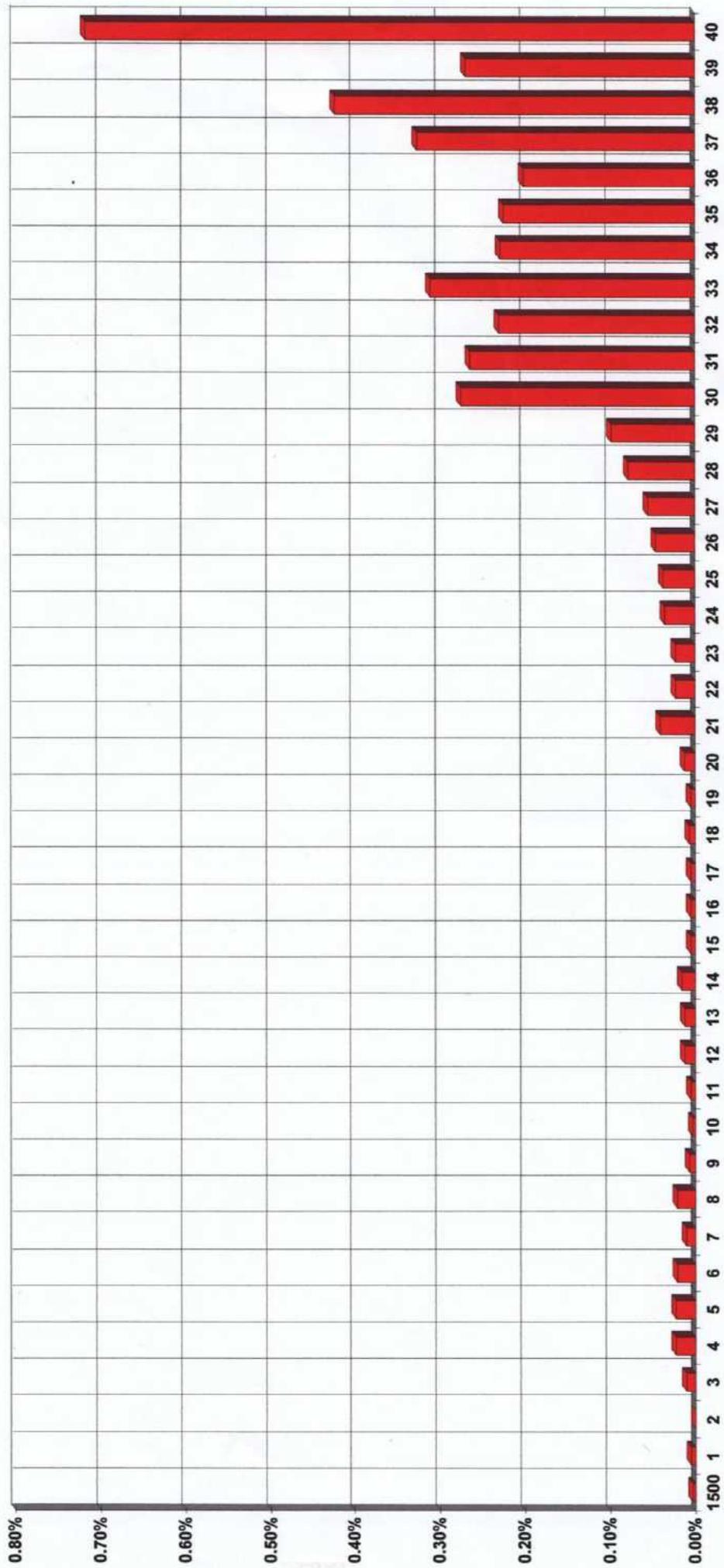
† Thornton Abbey was refounded in c1540-1 by Henry VIII as a secular college.

• Houses mentioned by John Leland.

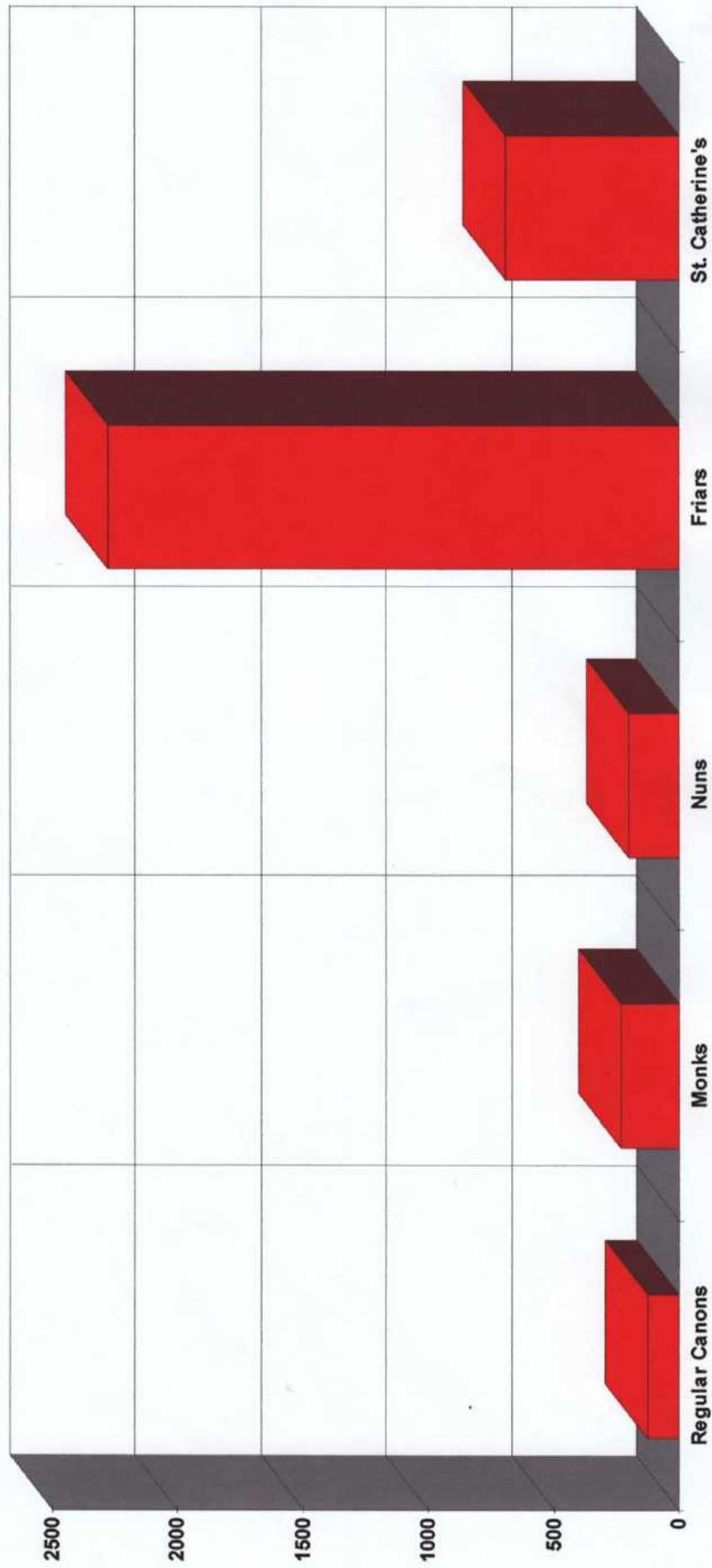
+ Noted in the *Monasticon* as £84 6s. 10d.

* Value excluding Freiston.

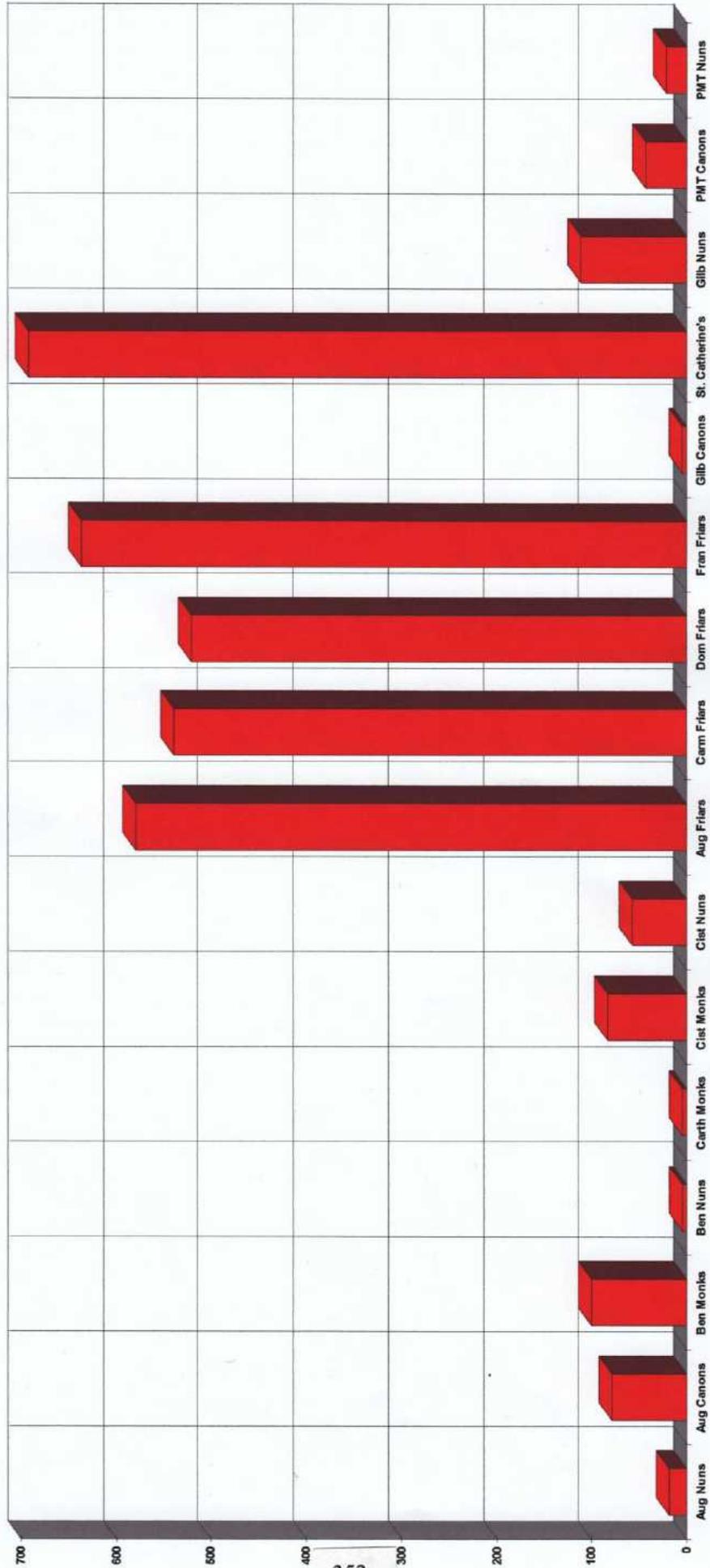
**Graph 7:1. Percentage of Total Wills
1500-1540**



Graph 7:2. Monastic Wills (1500-1540)
Number of Wills (Category of Regular)



Graph 7:3. Monastic Wills (1500-1540)
 Donations by Order



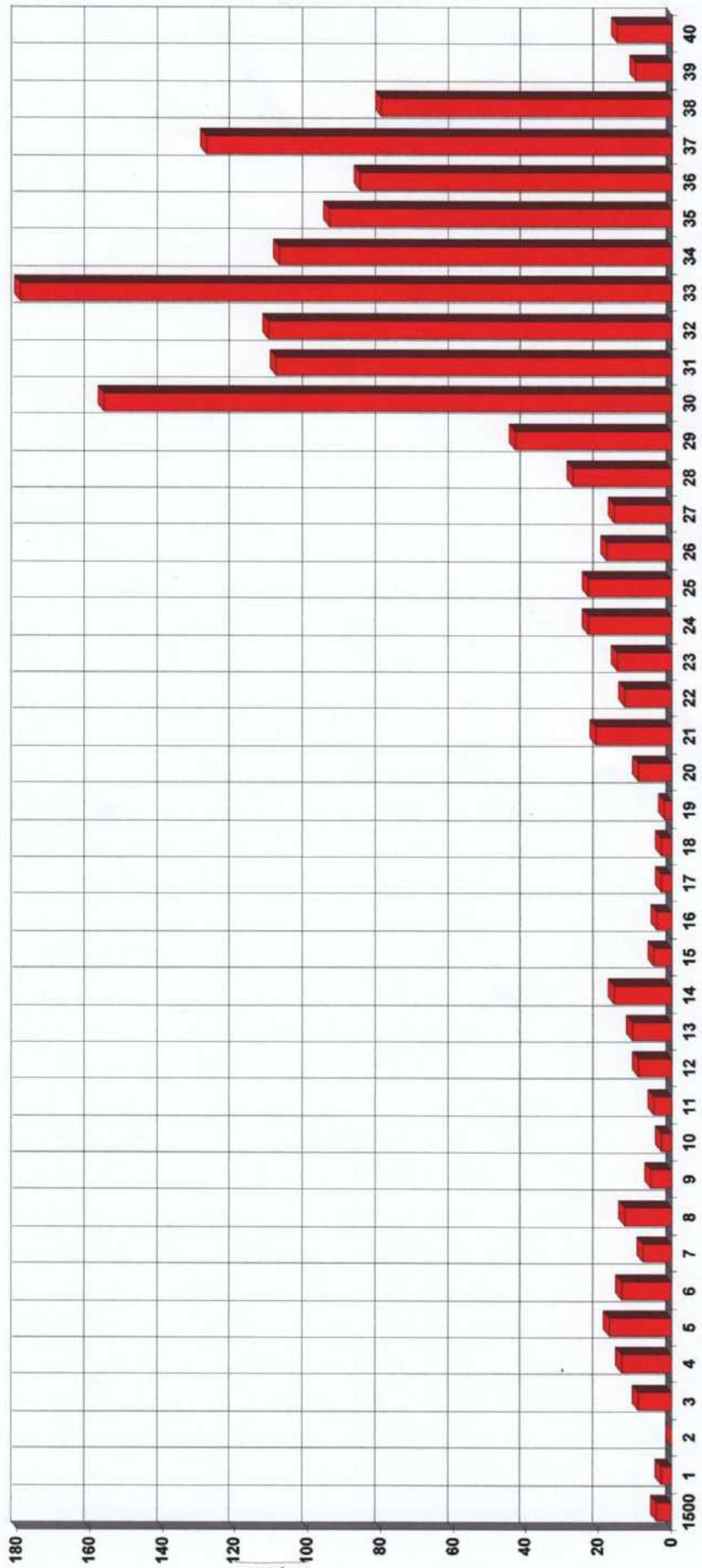
Graph 7:4. PCC Wills
Total Number of Wills (1500-1540)



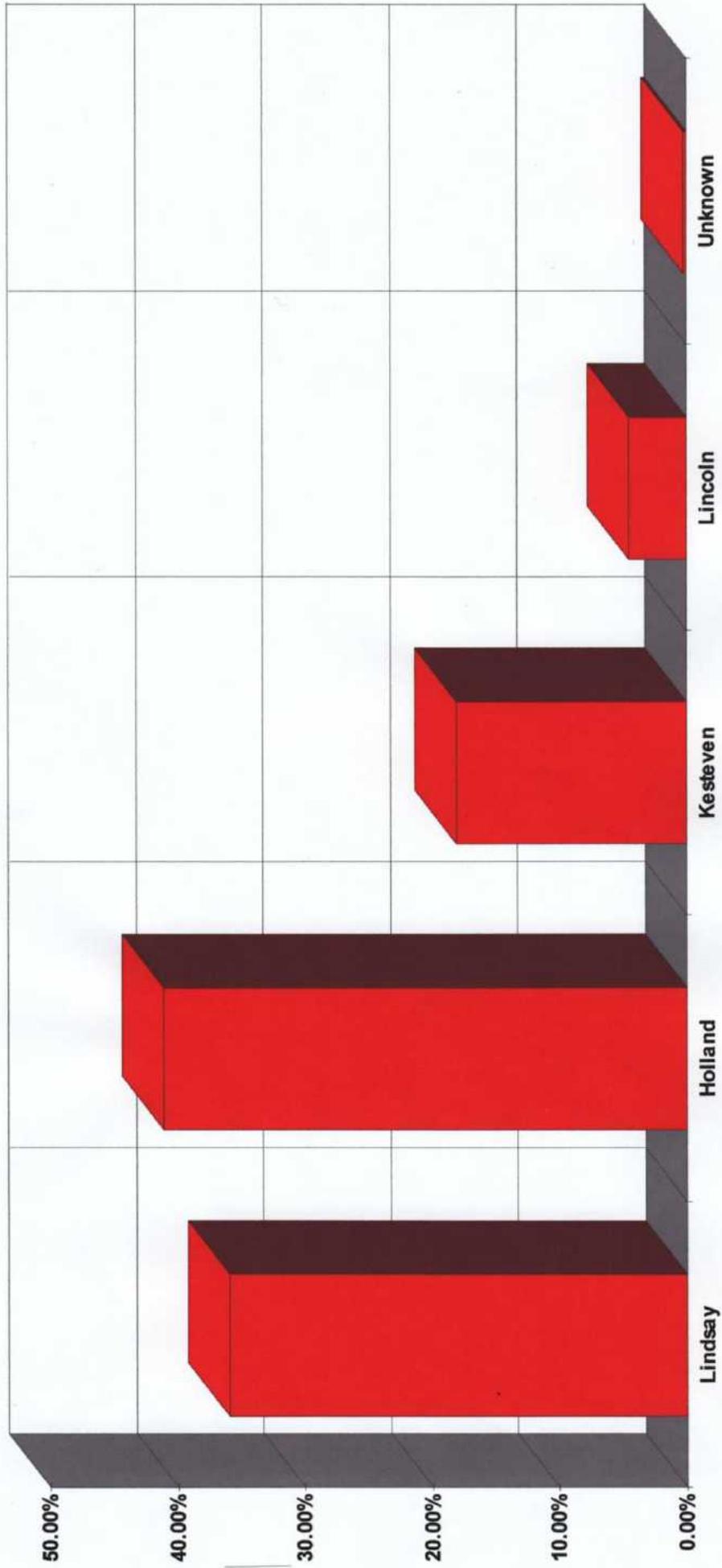
**Graph 7:5. Burials in Louth St. James
1500-1540 (No data for 1524-1526)**



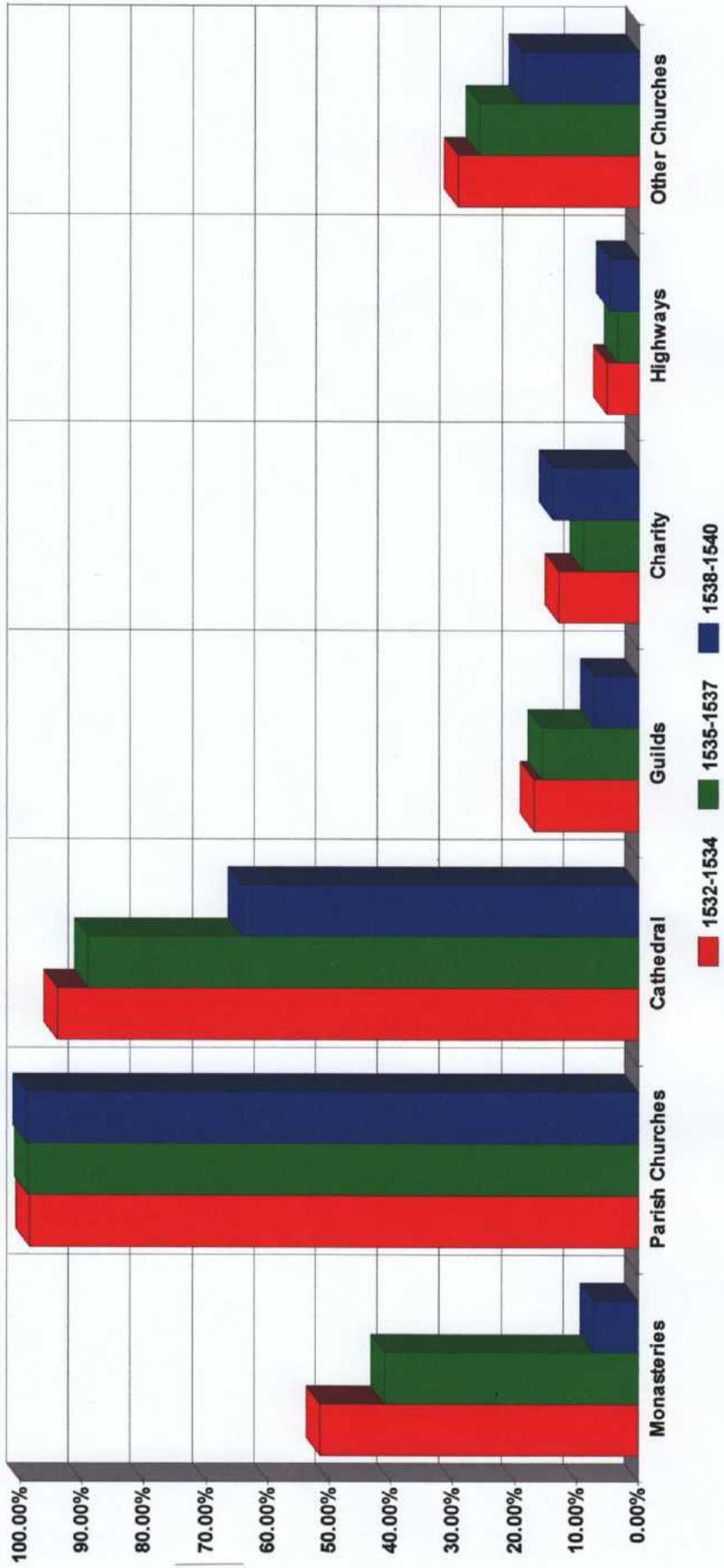
Graph 7:6. Monastic Wills (1500-1540)
Numbers per Annum



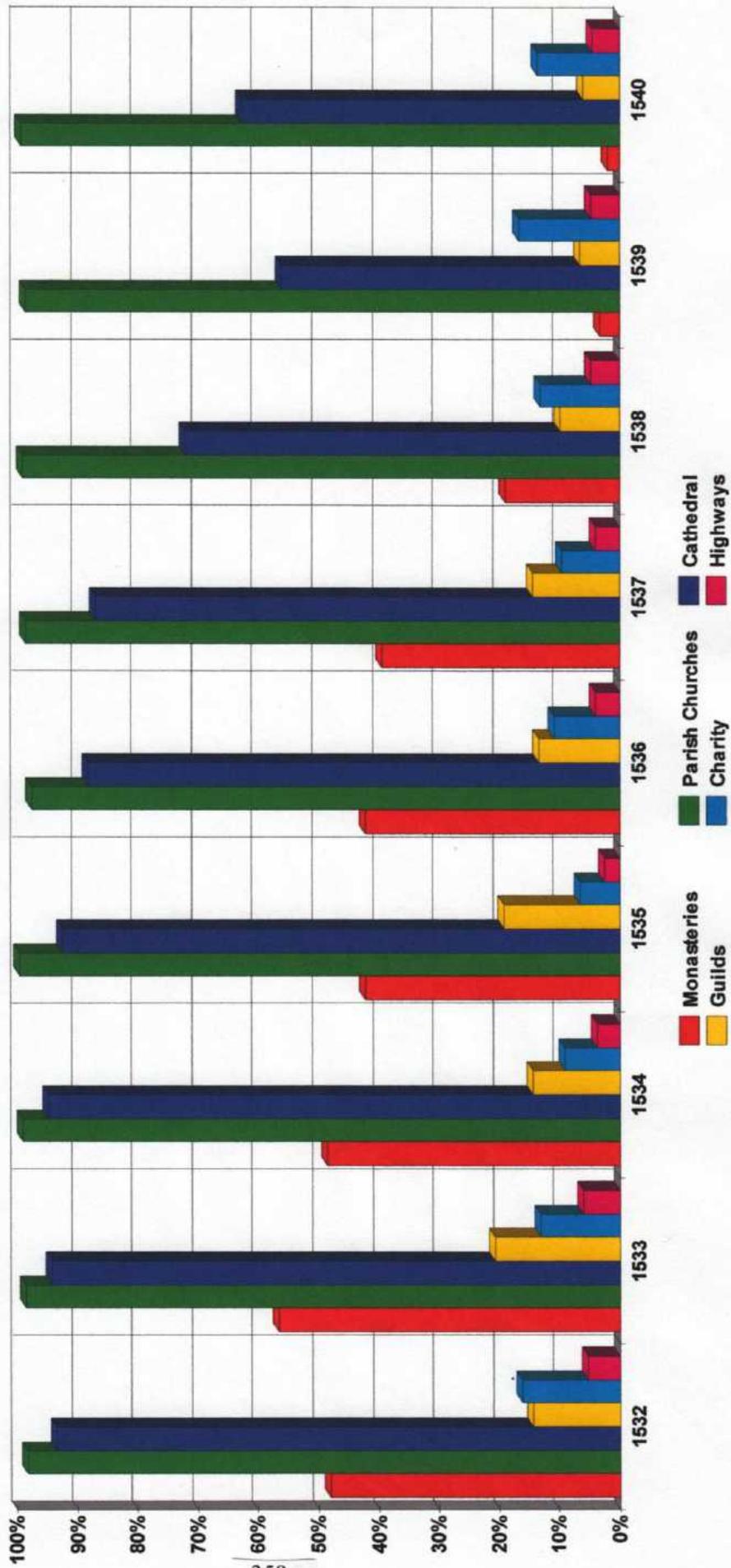
Graph 7:7. Monastic Wills (1500-1540)
District Percentage



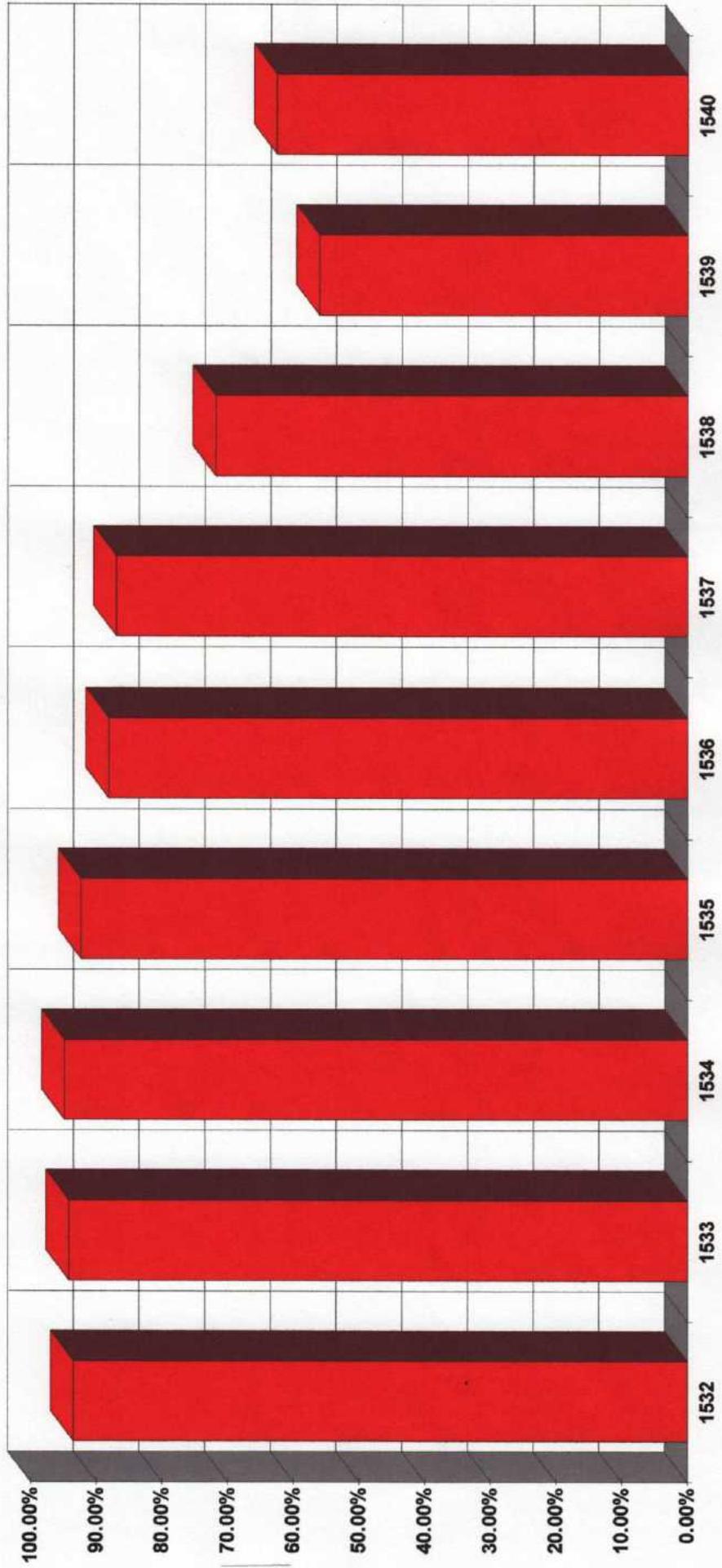
Graph 7:8. Parish Wills (1532-1540)
 Percentages over a Three Year Period



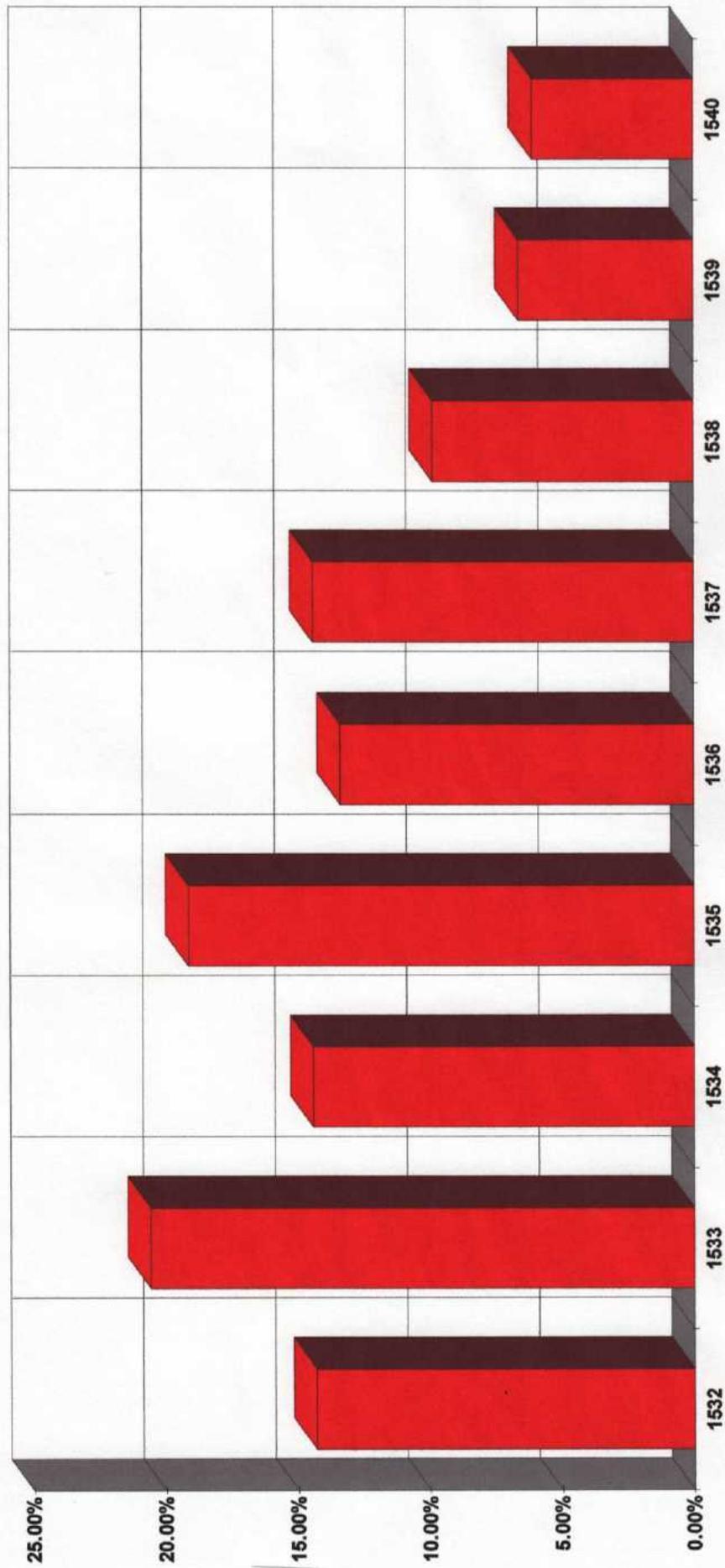
Graph 7.9. Parish Wills (1532-1540)
Percentages of Annual Donations



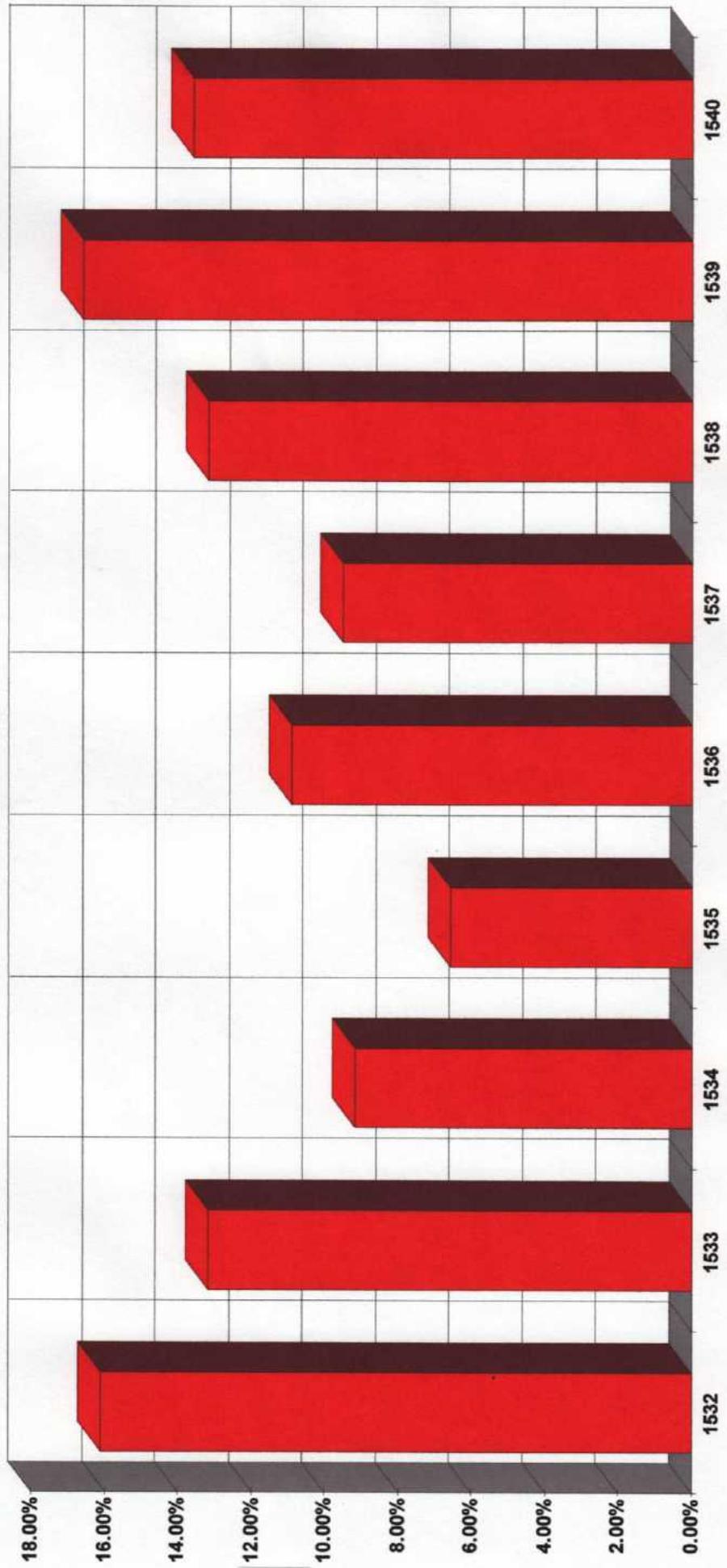
Graph 7:10. Parish Wills (1532-1540)
Percentage Donating to the Cathedral



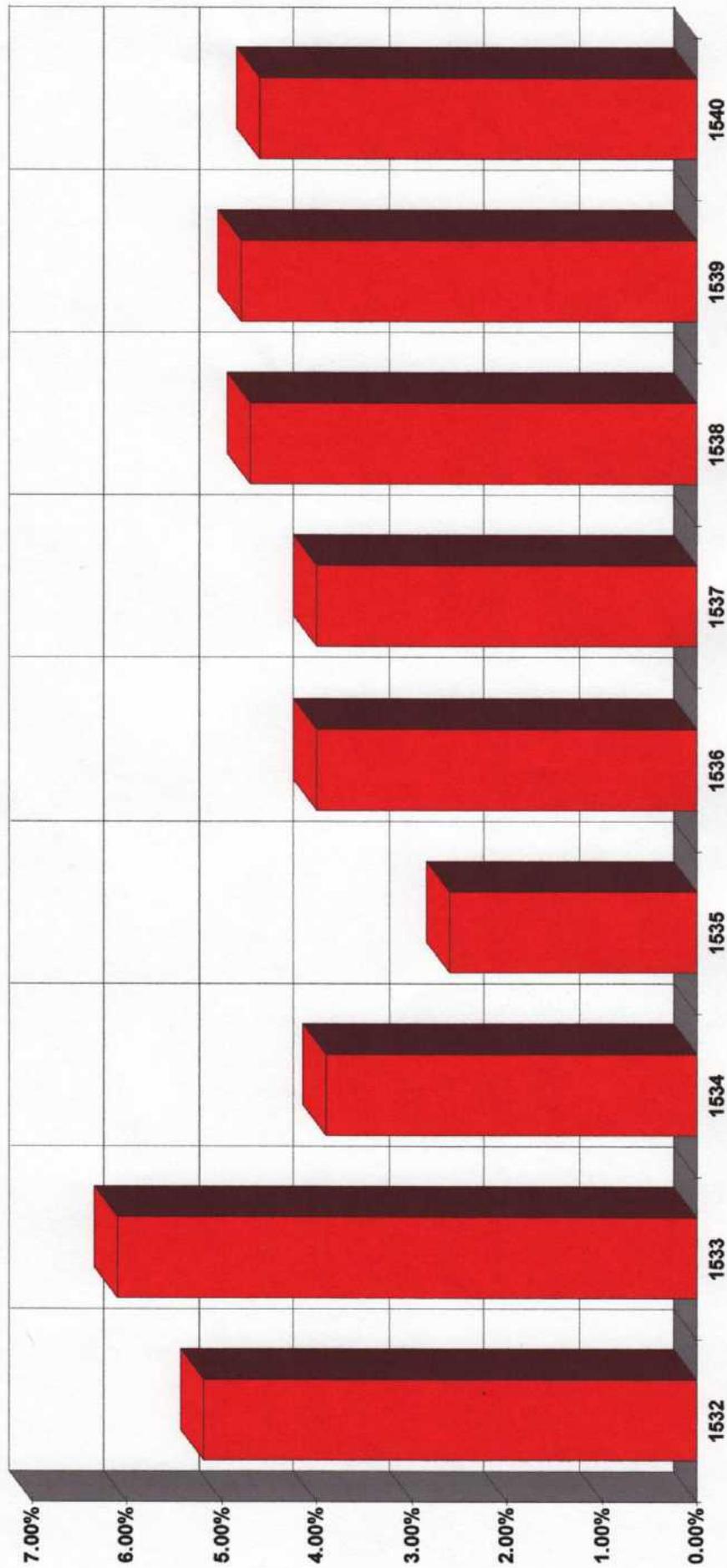
Graph 7:11. Parish Wills (1532-1540)
Percentage Donating to the Guilds



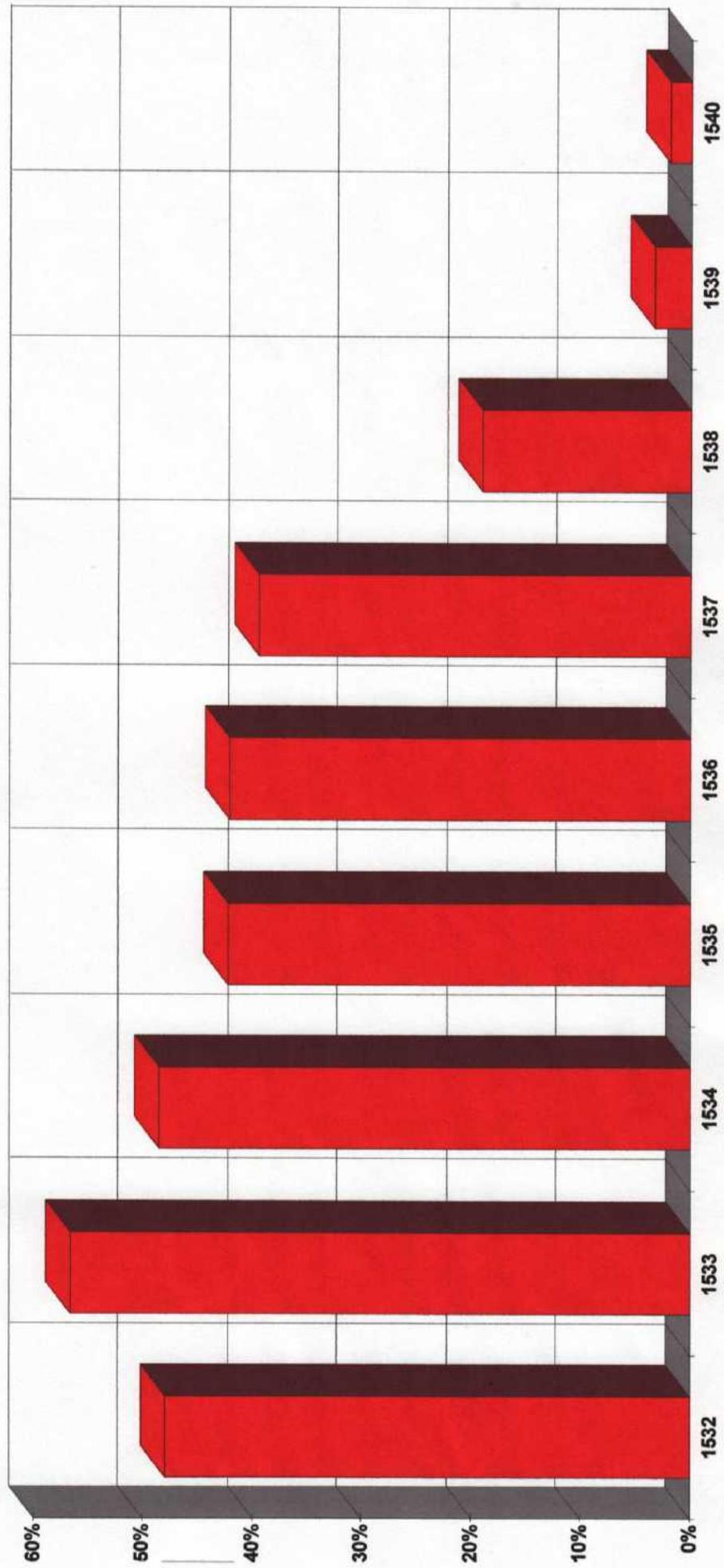
Graph 7:12. Parish Wills (1532-1540)
Percentage Donating to Charity

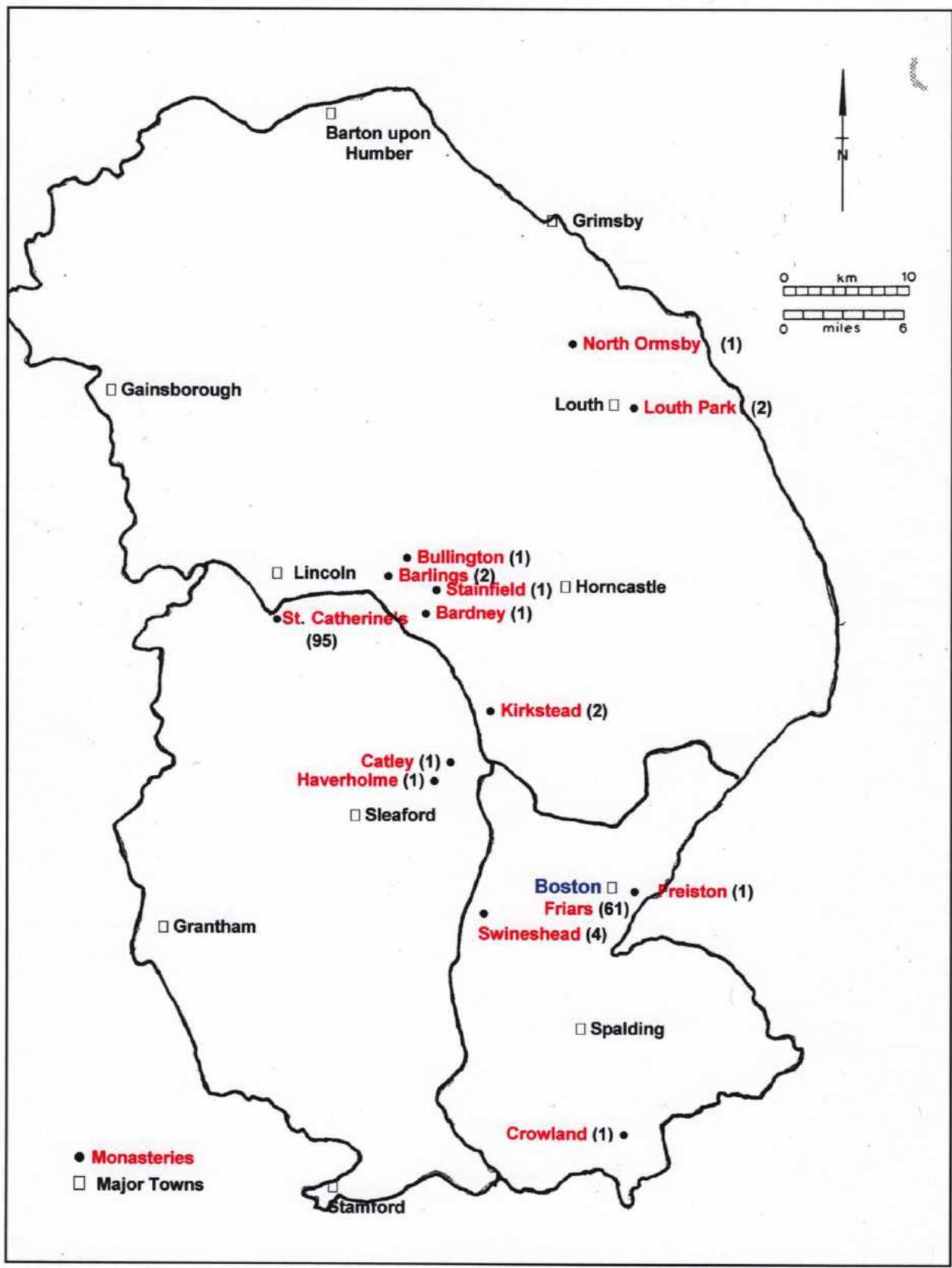


Graph 7:13. Parish Wills (1532-1540)
Percentage Donating to the Highways

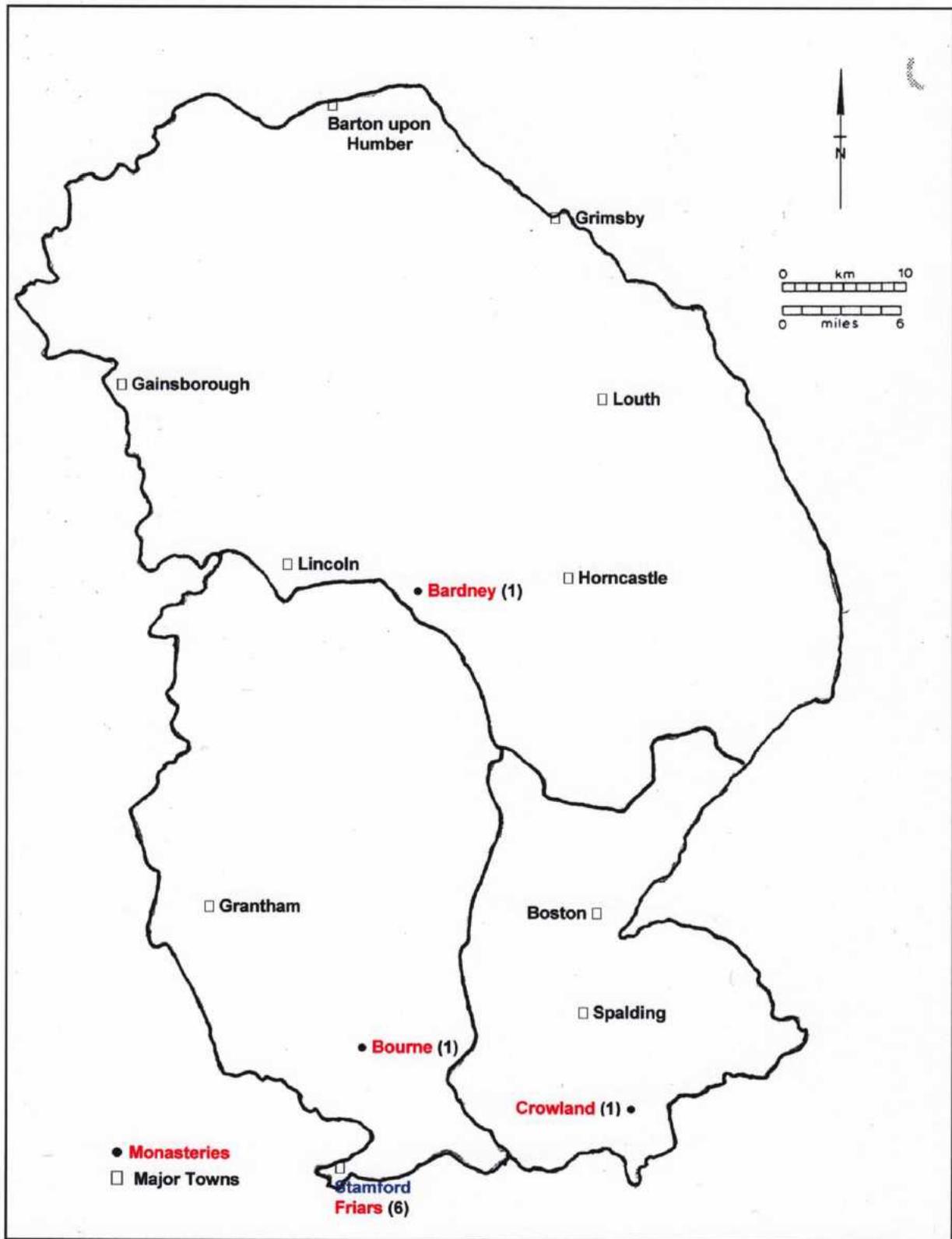


Graph 7:14. Parish Wills (1532-1540)
Percentage Donating to Monasteries

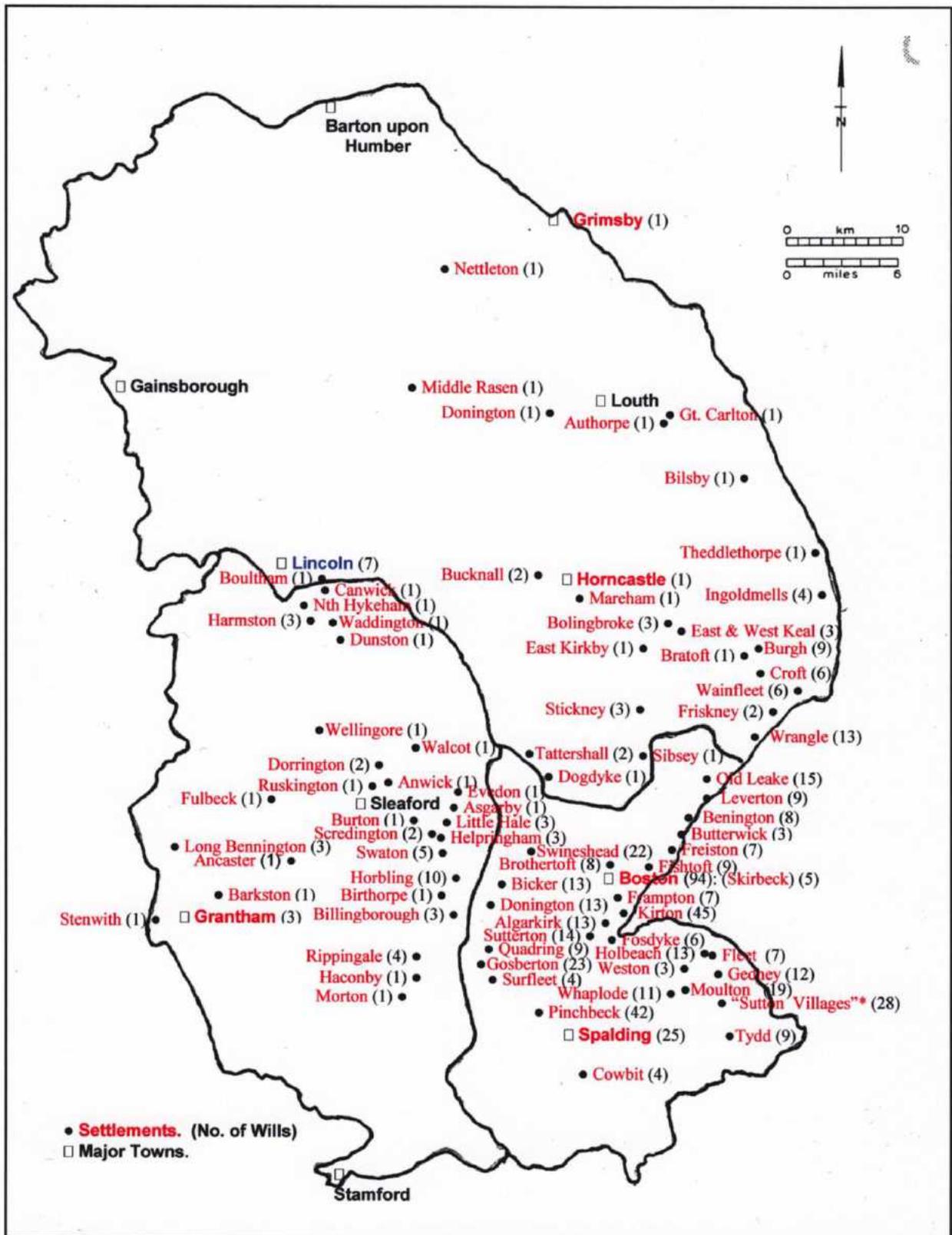




Map 7:1. Monastic Houses that acquired patronage from Boston.

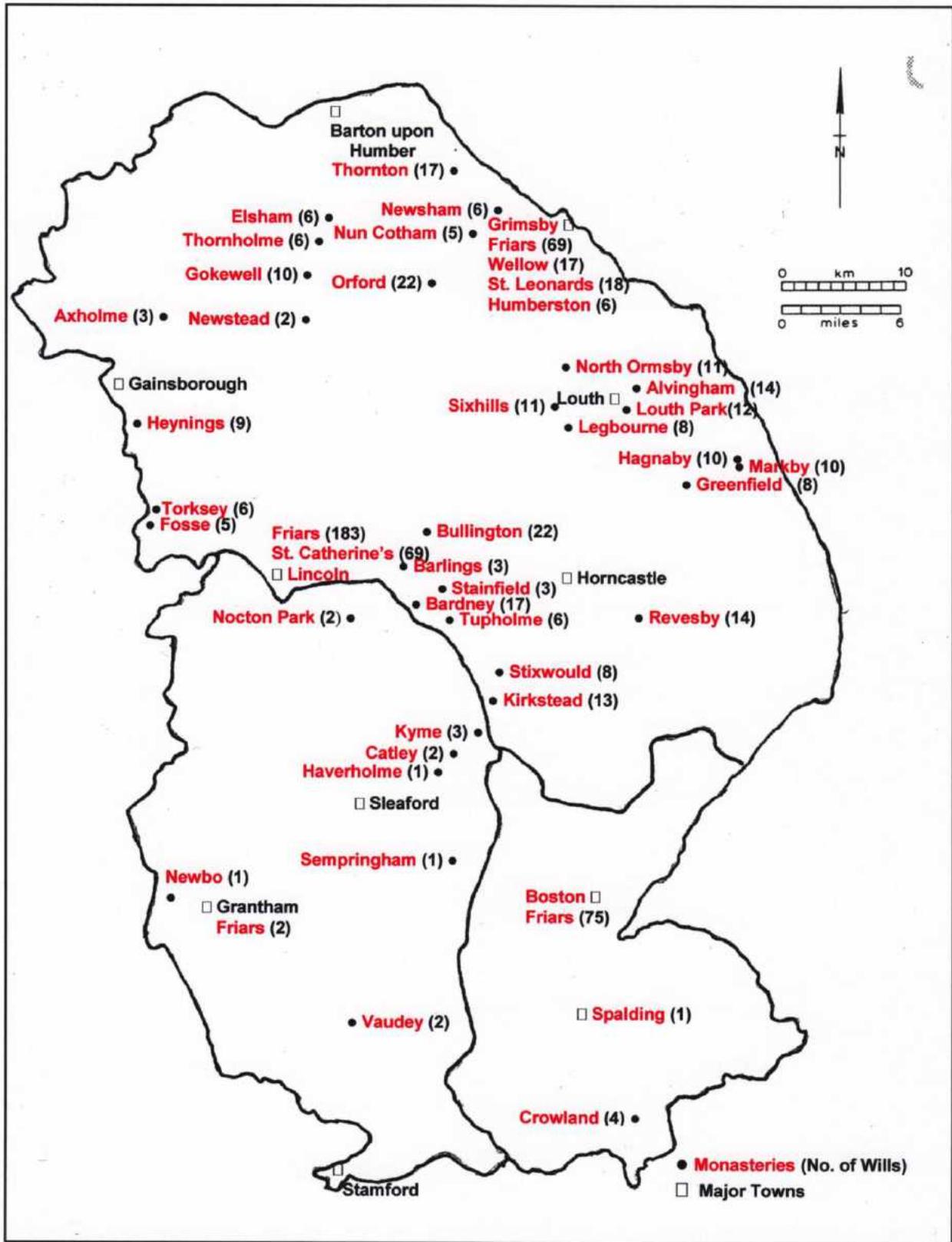


Map 7.2. Monastic Houses that acquired patronage from Stamford.

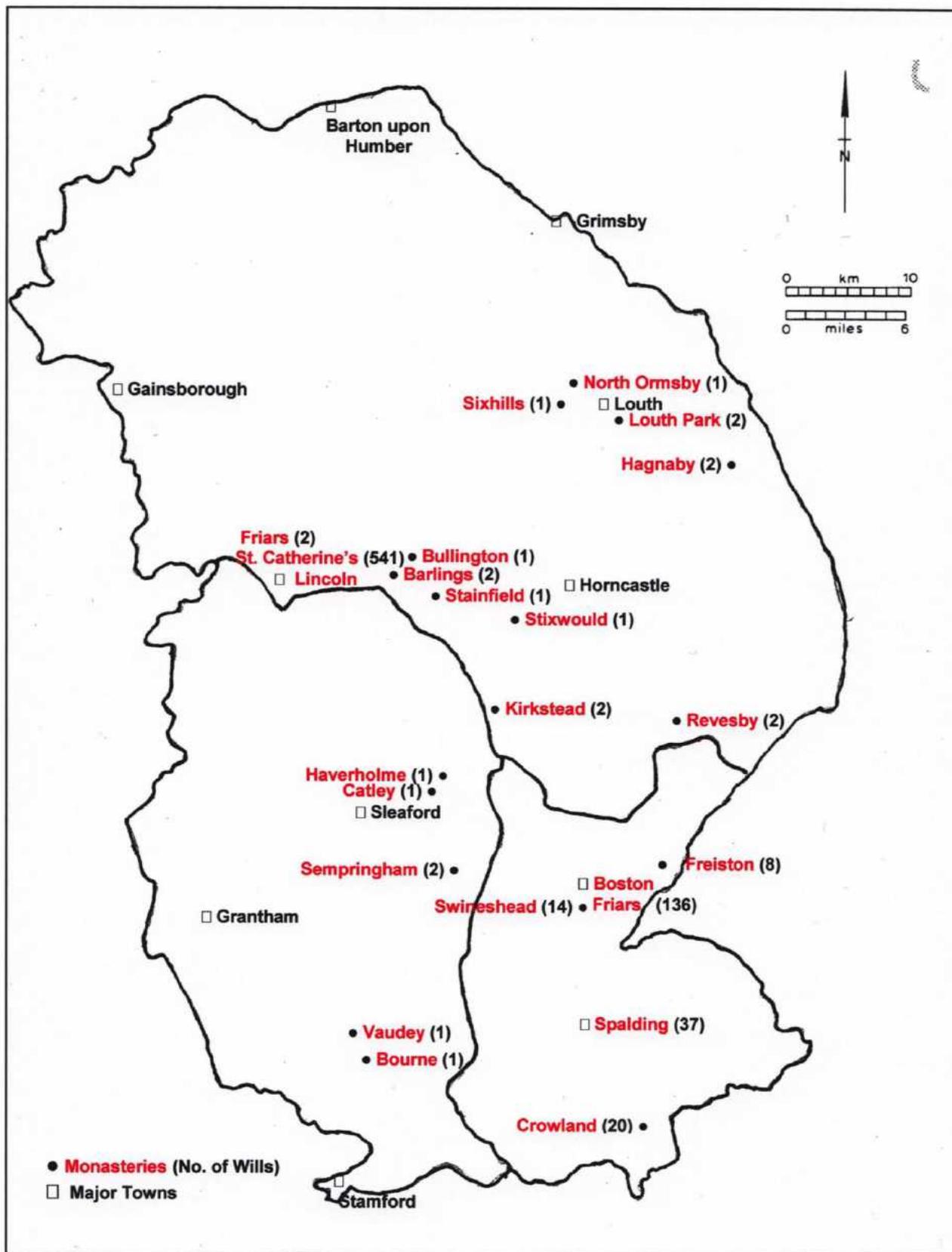


Map 7.3. Settlements from where testaments noting St. Catherine's originated.

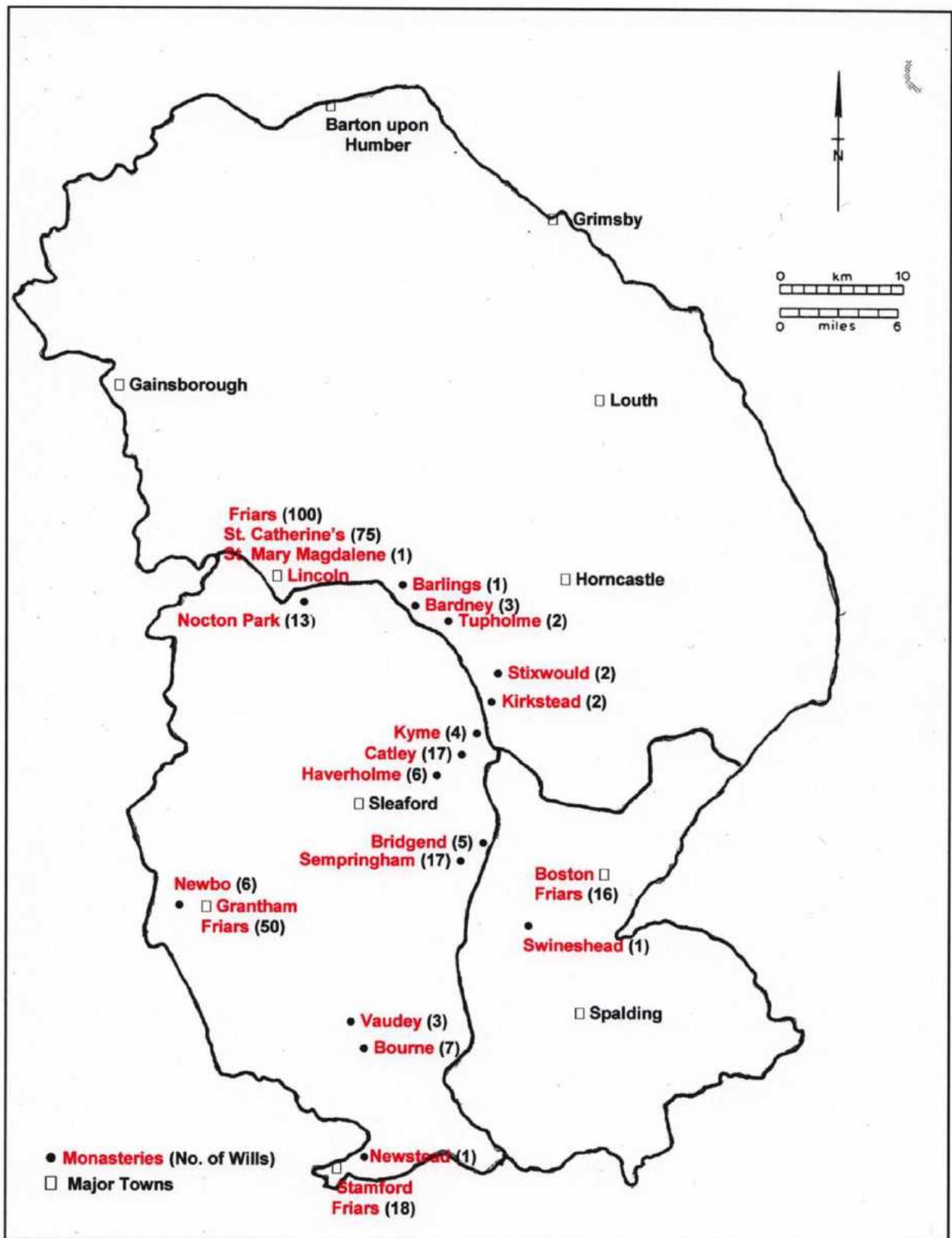
*The "Sutton Villages" consist of Long Sutton, Lutton in Sutton, Sutton St. James and Sutton St. Edmund. Settlements omitted due to lack of space: Wigtoft (11) and Wyberton (12), both in Holland.



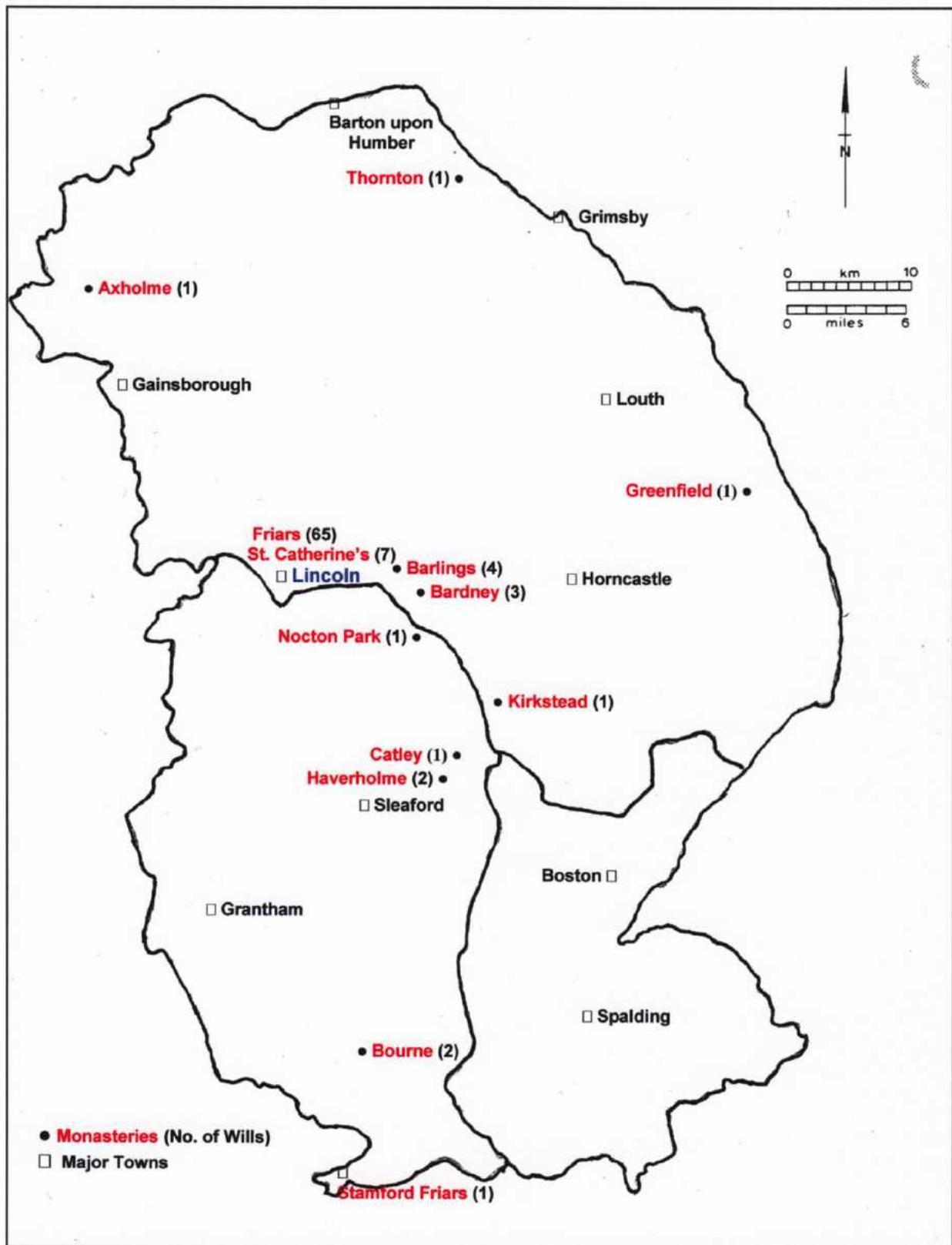
Map 7:4. Monasteries to which testators from Lindsay donated and the number of Wills.



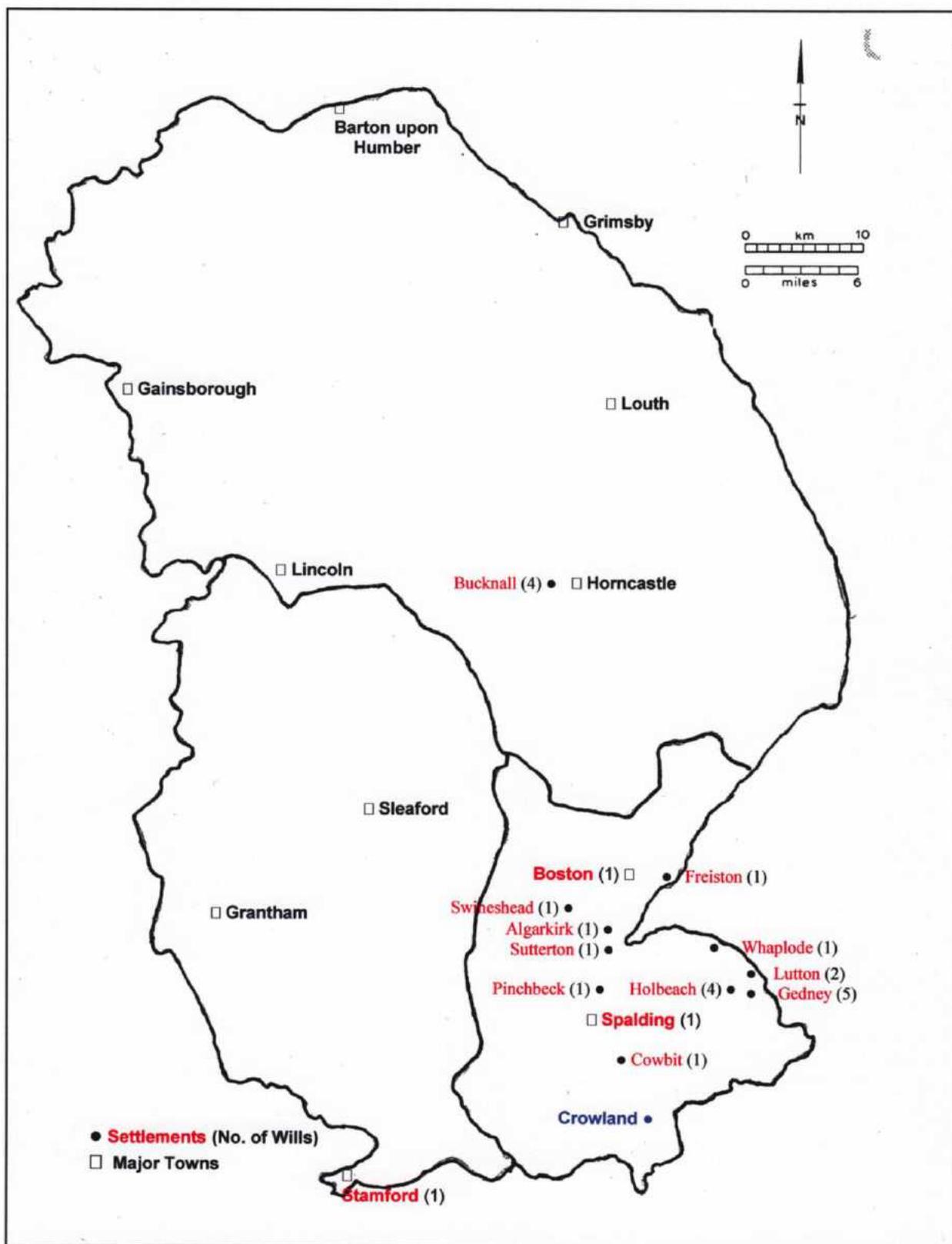
Map 7:5. Monasteries to which testators from Holland donated and the number of Wills.



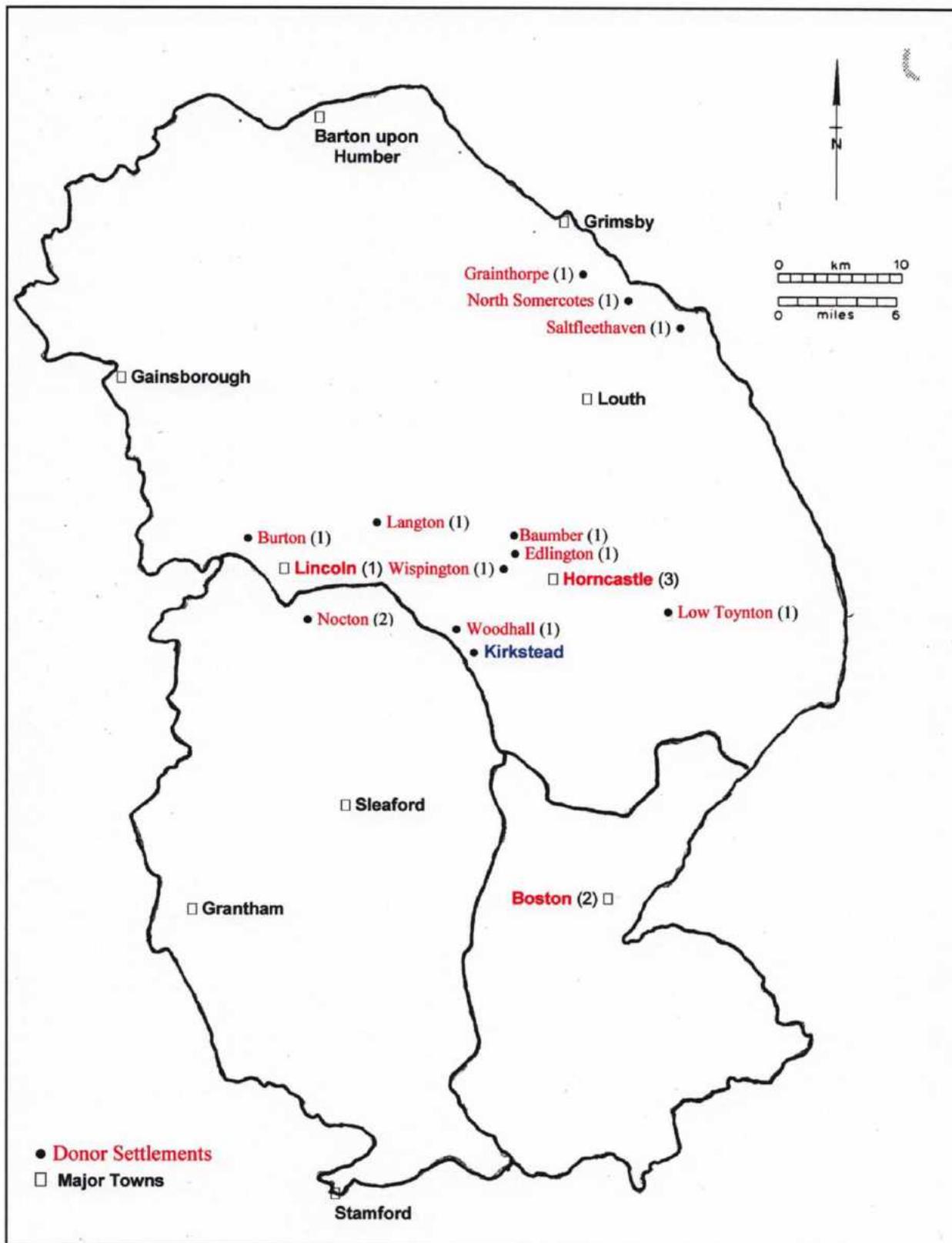
Map 7.6. Monasteries to which testators from Kesteven donated and the number of Wills.



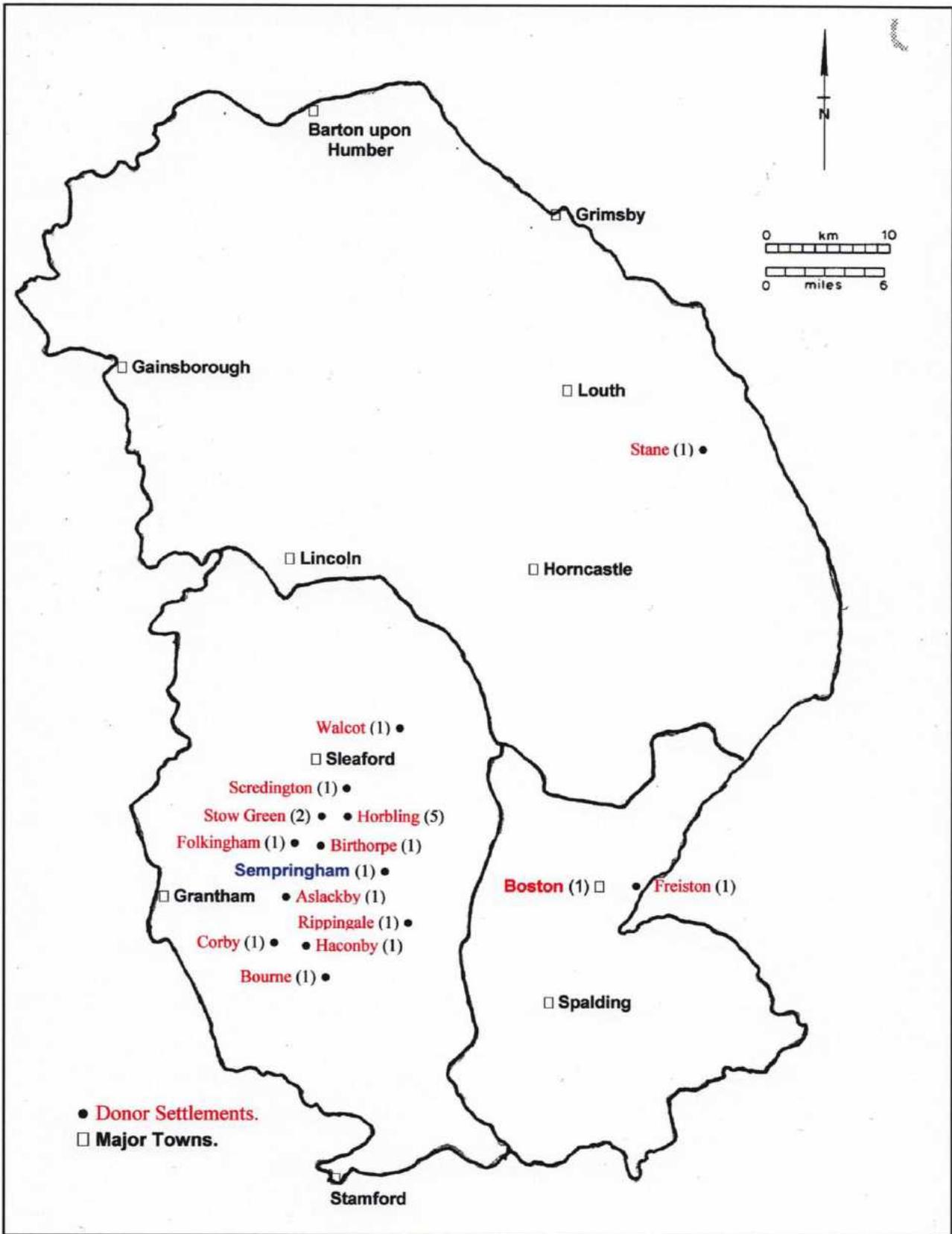
Map 7:7. Monasteries to which testators from Lincoln donated and the number of Wills.



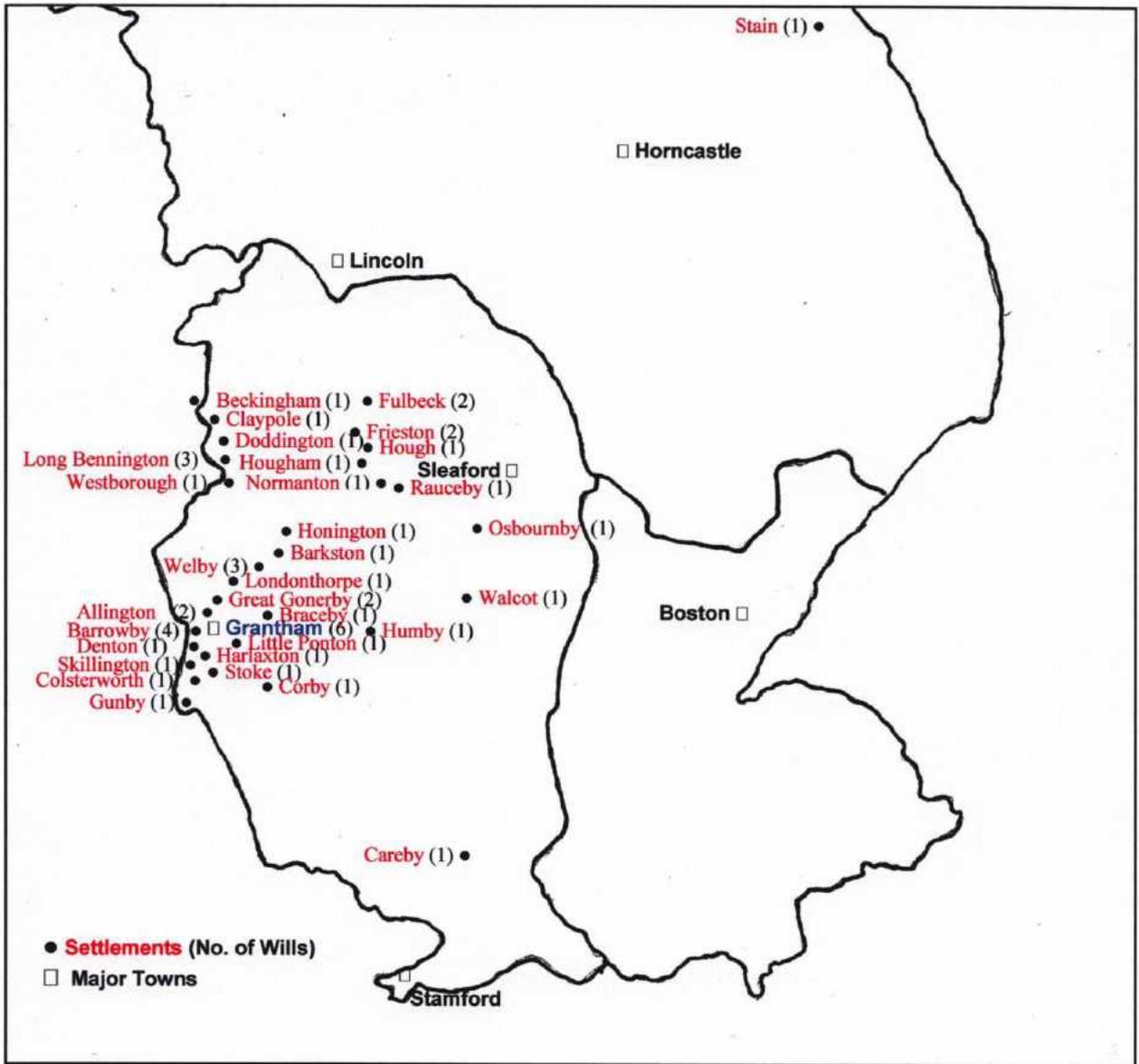
Map 7:8. Crowland Abbey.
Settlements from where testaments originated, and the number of wills.



Map 7.9. Kirkstead Abbey.
Settlements from where testaments originated, and the number of wills.



Map 7:10. Sempringham Priory.
Settlements from where testaments originated, and the number of wills.



Map 7:11. Grantham Franciscan Friars.

Settlements from where testaments originated, and the number of wills. Places omitted due to lack of space – Old Somerby (1): Ropsley (1): Wilsford (1).

