

Bruern Abbey 1147 – 1536

PART 1 BY JOY TIMMS

Bruern is an enchanting hamlet situated in a lush valley on the south bank of the river Evenlode in West Oxfordshire, close to the Gloucestershire border.¹ In 1147 Nicholas Basset founded a Cistercian monastery here called Bruern Abbey. The site belonged to the manor of Treton and consisted of heath-land or 'Brueria' whence the abbey took its name of 'The Church of St Mary of the Heath of Treton' (Brueria de Treitonic). Over time the name Treton disappeared and the parish became known as Bruern.

The Basset family were great benefactors to monasteries in Oxfordshire, and this secluded site was perfect as the Cistercian rule required:

No cell of ours must be built in cities, fortified places or villages, but in sites retired from the haunts of men.²

Documentary evidence shows that Ralph Basset, Clerk, brother of Nicholas, had served the church of Treton which was in their father's demesne before the founding of the Abbey, and later a certain William, Presbyter of St Peter's, Treton, witnessed a grant; his stipend ceased at the same time as tithes were no longer paid from the lands which were now cultivated by the Cistercians.³ Nicholas Basset's original gifts were cited in an 1194 charter of Richard I, these being the abbey site and land in Tangle, Sandbrook and Nethercote. Several years later he extended his foundation by bestowing the whole of his manors of Treton and Nethercote. These gifts were confirmed, together with other benefactions by Henry II, Richard I and John, to 'The Church of St Mary of the Heath of Treton'. King John's charter of 1205 at Oxford granted new benefactions of lands at Harptree and Priddy in Somerset to Bruern Abbey.

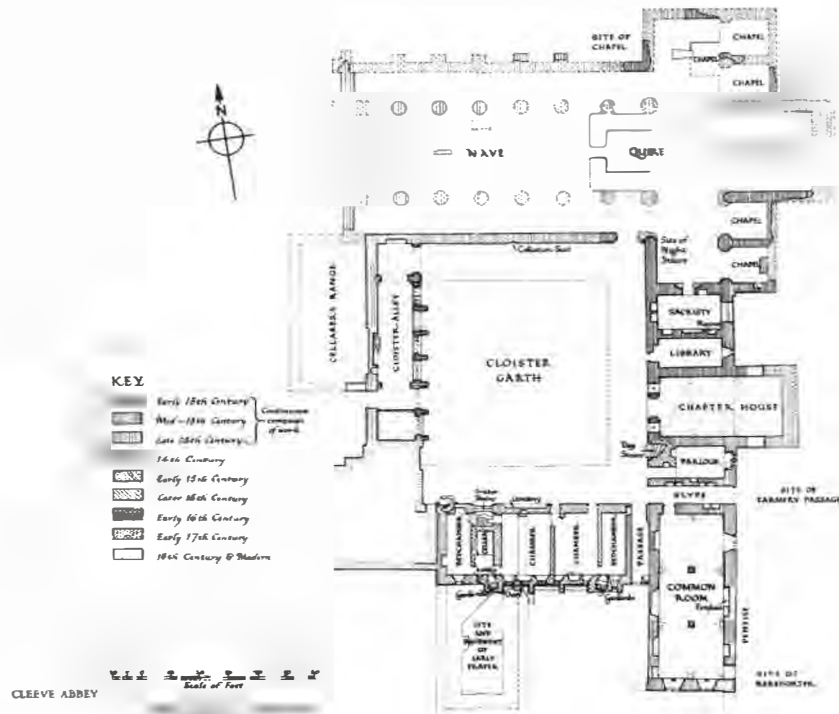
Bruern Abbey, like Thame, was a daughter of Waverley Abbey in Sussex, and although no cartulary is extant, many of the original deeds are preserved in The National Archives, the British Museum, the Bodleian Library and in the cartularies of other abbeys.⁴ Twelve monks and their Abbot David came from the mother house to build an abbey and pray for the souls of Nicholas and his family for ever. During four succeeding centuries they commemorated this now forgotten benefactor, saying



WAVERLEY ABBEY NEAR FARNHAM, SURREY, THE FIRST CISTERCIAN FOUNDATION IN ENGLAND IN 1128 AND THE MOTHER HOUSE OF BRUERN ABBEY. FROM D. KNOWLES, BARE RUINED CHOIRS. 1976

masses for him daily and distributing alms to the poor every year on Maundy Thursday. All Cistercian abbeys followed a basic plan and soon the church was built on the south bank of the river near the heath. Adjoining it were the cloisters, chapter house and the rest of the buildings. There is no obvious trace of Bruern Abbey on the ground now although by looking at other sites it is possible to see what it may have looked like.⁵ There are many famous large Cistercian ruins such as Fountains Abbey and Rievaulx that show the layout but one of the best preserved is Cleve Abbey in Somerset, the gatehouse in particular is a very good example and the entrance to Bruern Abbey may have looked similar.

Early Cistercian abbeys embodied two sorts of religious brethren, the Monachi, the monks, and the Conversi, the lay brothers. During Bruern's first century close connections were kept with their mother house and each year a visit was made by the abbot of Waverley and less frequently by a visitor appointed by the Chapter at Cîteaux so that grievances could be inquired into. The abbot himself was bound to attend the Chapter General at Cîteaux every year. The monks' chief work consisted of recitation of the divine offices with the intervals between being occupied with study,



A SKETCH OF A TYPICAL LAYOUT OF A CISTERCIAN ABBEY BASED ON THE EXTANT REMAINS OF CLEEVE ABBEY

meditation, meeting in the chapter house and periods of recreation and sleep. The daily routine of the 'white monks' in their habits of undyed wool started with matins at 2 am and ended with compline, the last service of the day. The austerity of their order meant self-denial in their food; the daily ration for each monk consisted of a pound of coarse bread, a drink of wine and water, plus two dishes of vegetables. In winter a single meal was served and in summer two meals and a repast known as 'mixtum'. Each monk was required to perform only one manual task, that of taking his turn in the kitchen. The main manual labour fell to the lay brothers; the night offices of the abbey church were curtailed for them as their work called them away at an early hour to work at the granges.⁶ Discipline was strict and the chapter house meted out punishment even for minor offences like breaking the rule of silence or singing too loudly in church. Penalties for serious crimes permitted anything but death as the abbot was not allowed to pronounce sentence on a fellow monk, but as a feudal lord he had the demesne gallows at his disposal for those other than monks. Towards the end of the twelfth century, rules were relaxed as the

abbey lands were now more extensive and lay brothers were found to be in charge of the grange farms. By a decree of Pope Eugenius III in 1152, granges were held to be sanctuaries where none under pain of sacrilege might commit an act of violence, rapine, theft or arson. These granges, as at Sandbrook (Bruern Grange), now contained sleeping accommodation in addition to farm buildings. Lay brothers living in the granges were now permitted to receive holy communion in other churches if no provision existed in their own grange or if they were too far away to return to their mother house at the end of the day.

Bruern Abbey continued to receive many gifts from grateful benefactors. Among these was a gift from Robert de Witfield, Sheriff of Oxford 1181-5, of two hides in Milton under Wychwood mentioning that Peter, his uncle, was a lay brother at Bruern. Middleton, later Monks Milton, was part of Shipton under Wychwood manor owned by the de Clares. Of the other neighbouring villages on the north bank of the river, Kingham was owned by the Mandervilles, Churchill by the De Nowers, and Sarsden by the Golafres. These great families were to figure prominently in Bruern's history as friends and benefactors and the monks in their position as farmers and landed proprietors were brought into frequent contact with neighbouring laity. Not only were they called upon to offer prayers and masses for their lay friends and to grant them privilege of burial in Bruern's chapter house, but their advice was sought also in worldly matters. They acted as King John's bankers on more than one occasion and served others in similar ways. Transactions with laymen included the sale of villeins. Abbot John in 1246 sold his 'nativus', Hugh Barker of Churchill, to the armourer of Nicholas de Nowers for 40 shillings and Matilda, the doctor's widow, sold to the abbot her man, Richard of East End Lyneham, with all his belongings for 20 shillings. There were many quarrels with Churchill over tithes and at one stage in 1217 they lost the contest when Pope Honorius issued a mandate ordering the monks to pay their tithes, and also to pay costs of one silver mark.

The good repute of Bruern's early abbots is evident by their appointment to act as Papal Judges' Delegate to try ecclesiastical cases between the years 1181 and 1217 but the community's fortunes were not immune to national events. The Civil War during the reign of Stephen (1135-54) and the Baron's Revolt proved politically difficult for the community. The Bruern monks contributed 300 marks in money, wool and other treasures and possessions towards the one hundred thousand silver marks demanded for King Richard's ransom in 1191. The Cistercians refused to grant King John aid towards his expedition to Ireland in 1210, and so he persecuted individual houses to the point where the monks were forced to disperse for a time on account of poverty. The Papal Interdict of 1208-1214 did not prevent bequests being made to religious houses which aggravated the laity who accused the monks of

receiving favouritism over the heads of other mortals. In 1212, the document Testa De Nevill shows that the sons of Nicholas Basset were forced to give up their father's lands to Henry II because of their partisanship of King Stephen during the Civil War. Henry replaced Nicholas's name with that of his own as Bruern's founder. He granted the monks freedom from scutage on their two knights fees though the Patent Rolls show that this tax was still demanded of them until Henry III pardoned them from paying in 1218.⁷ It was not until the Valor Ecclesiasticus in 1535 that Nicholas Basset's name was once again recorded and honoured as Bruern's founder.

During the thirteenth century Bruern owned pastures, woodland, fish-ponds and dovecotes, but above all the abbey was famous for Cotswold sheep. The Bruern monks were established in three counties as sheep farmers and wool had become their main source of income. A royal order of 28 February 1233, addressed to the sheriffs of Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, granted that no sheriff in these counties could distrain the monks by their sheep for any debt that they may owe. This must have proved useful in 1284 when their debt reached 2,100 marks. Their wool dealings sometimes went awry, when they had borrowed money on the promise of being able to deliver a set quantity and quality of wool in future years, only to find unforeseen circumstances getting in the way.

The monks were friendly with neighbouring lords and even entertained the king on several occasions. Corrodies, agreements for future board and lodging in return for an immediate cash payment, were granted to servants of the king, in order that they could retire to Bruern and enjoy a country life.⁸ The initial payment for a corrody was very welcome but was soon spent, causing financial difficulties for the abbot who was trying to make ends meet. This financial drain on the abbey's resources got worse as successive kings required more corrodies to be granted.

At the beginning of Henry III's reign, (1216-72), an order was given to Thomas Langley, Keeper of Wychwood, authorising him to allow the abbot to have a third cart going into the forest to gather fuel, and the following year he released the monks from paying 2 marks scutage. Later, grateful for Bruern's hospitality, the king ordered the keeper of Wychwood Forest to provide 100 good oak trees towards the new buildings at Bruern, which took 20 years to complete. An indulgence in summer 1250, on the Sunday after the Translation of St Thomas the Martyr, tells of the consecration of the high altar of St Mary in the abbey church, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Edmund Rich who, as a former Archbishop of Canterbury and a native of Abingdon, had been canonised in 1246. This great occasion attracted many sightseers and pilgrims. The Bishop of St Asaph conducted the consecration ceremony, and it seems likely that Henry III attended the festivities, as a royal charter was dated at Bruern on

ST EDMUND RICH OF ABINGDON, ARCHBISHOP OF
CANTERBURY



that day. The king still kept in close touch with Bruern and in 1258 ordered the Justiciar of Sherwood Forest to send five good oaks to Bruern 'forthwith' for the construction of the bell tower.

Although secluded, news of great events still reached the Bruern community. In 1265 it is likely they were saddened to hear of the deaths at the battle of Evesham of Ralph Basset, their founder's kinsman, their benefactor William de Manderville of Kingham and of Simon de Montfort, 'Flower of Knights', friend and champion of the Cistercian order. Bruern had its share of healing miracles which involved the ghost of Simon de Montfort. On the authority of Robert, vicar of Evesham, the tale goes 'there was a monk of Bruern who had lain in his bed in the infirmary for seven years stricken with paralysis till one day, after the battle of Evesham, he saw in a dream two men passing through his room. One he recognised, an abbot who had died; the other who wore knight's armour was unknown to him. As they approached his bed the sick man heard the stranger ask 'Who is that man?' The abbot answered 'He was once the best singer in our church'. At once the knight drew nearer and touched him. In that touch the monk knew de Montfort's hand, and rose from his bed, healed from his sickness and praising Earl Simon's name'. These tales of healing no doubt helped to boost income as Bruern was short of relics which were the main attraction for pilgrims.

The monks entertained travellers who kept them informed about the outside world. In 1266 through no fault of his own the abbot harboured a stranger, who had obtained hospitality at the abbey under the pretence that he was Prince Edward, heir to the throne. The man, whose real name was Gervase Skimett, had perpetrated a like fraud on the rector of Heythrop. He was subsequently hanged and his hosts were cleared of complicity in his misdeeds.

After his succession, Edward I (1272-1307) visited Bruern on several occasions. He came on 13 and 14 March 1276 and again the following year on 15 January when he presented the abbey with six oaks from Wychwood Forest. Similar gifts followed in 1279 and 1281. Again royal visits were recorded in 1291 during February and March. Such calls on Bruern's hospitality were a source of great expense to the community. Monastic

hospitality could be abused as it would have been great luxury to stay in these 'guest-houses' of the middle ages, and visitations to the abbey by bishops and archbishops with their large entourage were a great drain on the abbey's resources. Rome and the realm were constantly demanding monies from the monasteries so that the monks in turn leaned on their tenants. Bruern lands were included in the Hundred Rolls survey commissioned by the king in 1279 and in the Taxation of Pope Nicholas in 1291. This was a valuation made on the occasion of a grant to the king by the pope of a tenth of the profits of all ecclesiastical benefices for six years, as a contribution to the expenses of a crusade to the Holy Land. The account of Bruern's possessions recorded an income of £72 but omission of certain properties show that the return was incomplete. The taxation showed that Bruern Abbey had an income from the church of Shipton under Wychwood worth six shillings and eight pence.

Bruern Abbey was experiencing the worst trials of farming life as the thirteenth century was drawing to a close with bad debts, failure of crops, dilapidations and labour troubles plus the ongoing corrodies imposed on the abbey by successive kings. Sheep disease attacked flocks throughout the country in 1277. The Cistercians had a practical remedy, an ointment made of quick-silver and hog's fat. As lay brothers declined in numbers, the abbot was forced to take on hired labour. This, together with quarrels in the cloisters and the heavy burden of increasing wages and disorder in the grange farms, forced the abbot to borrow heavily from Italian money lenders who had settled in Lombard Street, London.

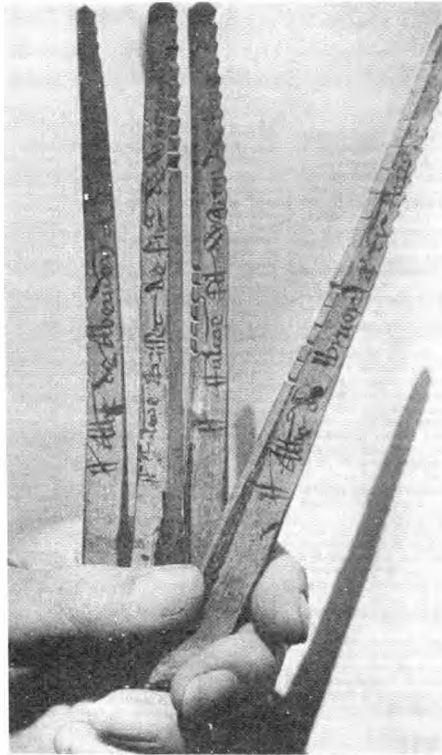
The house of Bardi of Florence was well known in England for its wool dealings and a detailed list survives compiled for the Bardi by Francesco Balducci Pegolotti while working in England in 1318-21. It records 194 wool-producers, mainly Cistercian monasteries, and confirms how heavily the Order was involved in the wool business. The Pegolotti list suggests that the Cistercians got better prices than others in the market reflecting their specialisation in the trade from growing to packing. Wool from Kingswood and Bruern Abbeys was the most valuable produced in England. Their grading, processing and packing was outstanding and others rarely came up to their Cistercian perfection and honesty. Bruern's superiority in the wool-trade enabled them to survive.

The Black Death struck England during 1349-50. The mortality at Bruern is not known but possibly many died. In nearby Witney, two-thirds of its population perished, and the Langley family of Wychwood died out completely in a second visitation of this pestilence in 1363. The loss of tenants on the Bruern estates, the loss of servants and lay brothers and of monks holding official positions in the community may have contributed to the bankruptcy of Bruern Abbey in 1351 when it was threatened with closure. It was in a state of sequestration which lasted for several years. Four officials were appointed, William de Shareshall, John Golafre,

Thomas de Langley and Edmund Bereford (Barford), all of whom had landed connections in Oxfordshire, to take custody while the abbey was under Royal protection. William de Shareshull, lord of Dean and Chalford is remembered among Bruern's benefactors for his gift of Denchworth Church and manor in Berkshire. The *Valor* in 1535 recorded Denchworth church as part of Bruern's possessions leased to a layman, Alexander Unton, at a fixed rent so it does not seem that the monks assumed any responsibility for the parishioners of Denchworth. The apparent monastic indifference to the spiritual welfare of their parishioners was the subject of an attack on them in *Piers Plowman* written anonymously in about 1369. It has been suggested that the author was William Longland of Shipton under Wychwood:

Little cause have owners to give the land
 Away from their heirs, to monks who
 Have no pity, though the rain falls on
 Their altars, and in many places where they
 Are parsons, they themselves live at ease.
 They have no pity for the poor
 Such is their charity but to behave
 As lords, their land lies so broad.⁹

The Bruern community was again troubled in 1363 by an internal revolt by some of the monks who were opposed to the behaviour of their abbot, John of Dunster. Monk Robert of Stow acted as their proctor in the Papal Court. The presiding cardinal decided in the abbot's favour which put Monk Robert of Stow in an awkward position if he returned to Bruern, fearful of ill treatment from Abbot John and his friends. His petition for leave to transfer to another convent was granted in Avignon in December 1363. Further light is thrown on this quarrel by successive entries in the Patent Rolls, how Abbot John of Dunster had closed his gates against a visitation by the Abbot of Garrendon who promptly forced his way in and carried off Abbot John as prisoner to Hailes. He appealed to the king, claiming that he had been 'robbed and imprisoned by evil doers who came at night and broke his close and doors and house'. After an enquiry, the king commissioned John de Nowers and Roger Elmrugge to act, and the next month he appointed the same two joint custodians of the abbey together with William de Shareshall. The fortunes of the abbey had sunk to an all-time low according to the official description in 1366, which relates 'the house was heavily in debt through misrule and adversity and threatened by total destruction and the dispersal of the monks'. And 'The Abbey of Brewern County Oxon, through misrule and covetousness of past presidents is so miserably oppressed by corrodies granted to suspected persons of foul character that divine worship has ceased and alms and



TALLY STICKS. THESE STICKS WERE USED AS RECEIPTS AND DETAILS OF TRANSACTIONS WERE INSCRIBED ON THE SIDES. THE RIGHT STICK CONFIRMS PAYMENT OF £13 6S 8D FROM THE ABBOT OF BRUERN FOR TRESPASS IN THE FOREST.

other pious works is withdrawn and there is danger of dispersal of the monks by lack of sustenance'. This time the king committed the abbey into the hands of William Hervy and John Golafre to do whatever was necessary to revive it.

During this last period of sequestration the Abbot of Cirencester took advantage, making a raid on Bruern lands at Eastleach in the Coln valley, north of Cirencester. In November 1367, Nicholas, Abbot of Cirencester, with four laymen, broke the gallows lately erected at Eastleach, carried off oxen valued at £20 and committed other enormities in contempt of the king and the abbot. The king was Proctor of

Bruern Abbey at this time. This may have been a provocative act by Abbot Nicholas in response to a previous lawsuit between the two abbots, in the course of which the representative of Bruern had produced evidence based on a falsified charter.

John of Dunster's successor revived Bruern's fortunes. Further gifts in the 1380s included land in Lyneham and a meadow in Shipton known as Capron mede. A more important benefaction was the grant of Fifhide (Fifield) manor and land in Kingham.¹⁰ Local tradition assigns the building of Fifield church and a greater part of Idbury church to the Bruern monks. A messuage and land in Brodeysington (Great Rissington) was the purchase price of a corrody by John Lovell and Richard Gurdon.

The fifteenth century saw Bruern's fortunes greatly improving under the rule of three abbots. Henry VI (1422-61) granted them the church of Wootton in 1440 and £8 in rent with licence to appropriate, 'for the aid and sustentation of the abbey, and for Divine Service therein'. Unfortunately, Edward IV coming to the crown by conquest revoked this grant, among others, in 1464. Abbot John appealed, saying that they had little livelihood to live by, but only by husbandry but his pleas fell on deaf-ears. During the Wars of the Roses, Bruern had to act cautiously. Henry VI had endeared



THE TOMB IN ICOMBE CHURCH OF SIR JOHN BLACKET WHO DIED IN 1441. FOUR YEARS LATER THE WILL OF HIS SON EDMUND REQUESTED THAT 'MY BODY TO BE BURIED IN THE CHAPEL OF BLESSED MARY OF BRUERN'.

himself to ecclesiastics by his generous gifts and piety, but prudence compelled them to acknowledge his successor who at the beginning of his reign, revoked by Act of Parliament the grants made by preceding kings. It is likely that the community came into contact with Yorkist Edward IV when he was at Cornbury in 1461, but their support of the Lancastrian kings could hardly have gone unnoticed.

The days of great landed benefactions to the monasteries were now over, but bequests of money or in kind continued to be made. It was the dying wish of Sir John Blacket in 1441 that Abbot Walter should say his funeral service in the church of Icomb. Four years later Abbot John Asheby was appointed executor to John Blacket's son Edmund. His will reads: 'First I leave my soul to God and to Blessed Mary and all the Saints, and my body to be buried in the chapel of Blessed Mary of Bruern'. He bequeathed many precious gifts to the abbey and six shillings and eight pence to every monk, and 'The residue to John Asheby Abbot of Bruern'. John Asheby was obviously a respected and trusted friend, judging by the number of wills administered by him. He was appointed trustee in 1453 under John Wilcote's will during the minority of his son Thomas. Thomas Send, Rector of Taynton, left money and houses in Burford to the abbot and monks in his will of 1453 and two Lincoln wills instance two more of Bruern's benefactors from very different backgrounds. John, seventh Lord Lovell, left the abbot £40 in 1455. Thomas Wilks the hermit of Newelm, a tenant of the monastery in Wychwood Forest, where the Cistercians had

enjoyed rights since the days of Henry II, left a legacy of three shillings and four pence out of 'gratitude'. In the survey of Bruern's property in the *Valor* 1535 it was stated that the King's foresters then occupied Newelm with its chapel and out buildings.

In 1480 Bruern petitioned the Chapter at Cîteaux for a licence to eat meat in Lent:

The Monastery of Bruern is a long way from the sea and rivers and so the abbot and monks living there cannot get a great quantity of fish, they accordingly suffer a great lack of food on fish days. For that reason they have devoutly petitioned that you will grant to them the licence to make use of flesh meat in Septuagesima.

Perhaps the extensive stew ponds at Bruern were insufficient for their needs.

During the great development in the English wool trade, abbots as feudal lords played their part in the engrossing of land, a number of small holdings became consolidated into a large farm. Open fields were hedged or fenced for the purpose of cultivation and arable land was turned into pasture. These changes were due in part to the scarcity and expense of labour following the Black Death and changes in the law of villeinage. Formerly the monks had sold their wool to Flemish merchants. Now they dealt with local dealers who bought for the English cloth manufacturers as well as for export. Bruern's monks sold their wool at markets at Stow on the Wold, Burford, Chipping Norton and Witney. Richard Wenman was the greatest of the local woolmen, and wool merchants such as the Wenmans and the Fermors of Chadlington East End, were taking the place of the feudal landlords who had been patrons of Bruern Abbey. A record of 1530 in the State papers show Bruern's monks as leading wool growers and gatherers in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. Bruern, Hailes, Winchcombe and Oseney abbeys were all exporting wool to Calais, as well as laymen like Sir William Barrentyne of Churchill, Robert Catesby of Chastleton, Sir John Bridges (later owner of Bruern after the dissolution), Mr William Fermor, Sir Anthony Cope of Hanwell and the Seacolls, a family holding Bruern land in Fifield and Mr Ashfield of Heythrop, a tenant of the abbey at Dunthrop. In 1535, the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* lists rights of sheep pasture on common land. Bruern Abbey had sheep pasturage for 500 sheep in Hinchwick and 400 in summer and 300 in winter at Guiting Power, Gloucestershire.

The process of engrossing and inclosure caused much discontent among the poor but it is uncertain how many were deprived of their dwellings. An Inquisition of 1515 stated that the Abbot of Bruern, Dr Robert King, abbot from 1515 to 1527, had in his demesne a messuage and its appurtenances with 30 acres called 'The Grange' in Tangle. He had caused the house to be pulled down and the land put to pasture. This had

resulted in the eviction of four people. Towards the end of King's time at Bruern, services ceased at Treton Church which for centuries had been served by a monk from the abbey who received a yearly stipend of 8 shillings and 8 pence. And also during Robert King's rule certain bills were not paid. The will of Thomas Frydaye of Chipping Norton listed a debt of 18s 4s owed to him by King, by now titled 'My Lord of Thame now my Lord of Oxford', for the 'pavement at Bruern'. In the *Valor* Thomas Frydaye paid 10 shillings rent to the abbey for the quarry at Milton.

When Robert King departed from Bruern to Thame, the community was financially stable with harmony in the cloisters but this phase proved to be short-lived. The monks rebelled against Robert King's successor John Chaffcombe alias Macy. Riots at Bruern in 1529 and 1530 forced the abbot to appeal to Mr Osbaldiston of Chadlington for help. As Chaffcombe's behaviour was the scandal of the countryside, the magistrate refused to interfere. After five years of misrule Chaffcombe's ill-repute had reached high Cistercian dignitaries and the abbot was brought to trial. Chaffcombe had bribed craftsmen from Burford and other places with Bruern's money to help him but, when he knew of the impending inquisition and in order to resist the visitors he shut the gates against them. Sir Simon Harcourt and other gentlemen were commissioned by the king to aid the reformers against the abbot. The monks of Bruern, senior Cistercian dignitaries and abbots and the king's assessors met on April 26 1532 in the Chapter House to confront the accused. The king's mandate opened with these words:

Trusty and well beloved, we greet you well, and for as much as by sundry complaints and information it has come to our knowledge that Dom John Chaffcombe, being a person of very evil rule and conversation ...

John Chaffcombe delivered a protest in writing, refused to accept them as competent judges and entered an appeal to Rome. They dismissed his protest as contrary to the order which he was sworn to observe. Once again he refused to answer them. The judges called on him to present himself at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Meanwhile the monks gave their evidence. Prior Richard Hanney, William Ablington, Robert Dorsette, Henry Bent and many other named men gave evidence to the same effect. It was agreed that the two main points of the inquiry were the improvidence and incontinence of the abbot. A present of 280 oaks for the building of the Cardinal's College at Oxford, now Christ Church, had been the price of Chaffcomb's office as Abbot of Bruern. It was now possible for the prosecution to reflect upon the discredited career of Cardinal Wolsey. Chaffcombe had entered into a bond of £280 to the Abbot of Ford, to rid himself of a troublesome brother who objected to his underhand ways. There had been 3,200 sheep on Bruern's pastures and now there were only 1,500; 300 cattle, now there were only 160. He had been selling convent

wool at a loss, had sold and given away stores of wheat, barley and malt, had sold and pawned jewels of the church and pledged a gold chalice to Sir Simon Harcourt for £80. He leased out farms and pastures unprofitably. £1,200 of the abbey's money had disappeared. Even the abbey's seal had disappeared although it later reappeared. The bursar, William Barrington, told of the money losses and Chaffcombe's dealings with women and he, in company with others, had often spied upon the abbot's privacy. It seems that the whole monastery and some of the neighbours had been present at the discovery of a paramour in his lodging. She was not the only one, ten women, some local, were named out of thirteen habituates of his lodging.

When Chaffcombe failed to appear at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, proceedings were postponed until March 12 the following year, 1533, at St Bernard's College, Oxford, later taken over by St John's. This time he appeared and after examination an outstanding debt of £200 was said to be still owing and, to the rest of the accusations, Chaffcombe made a full confession. He was found guilty of simony, adultery, perjury, dilapidation, rebellion and notorious contumacy. A sentence of deprivation was pronounced upon him and his brethren were absolved of obedience to him. He seems to have got off lightly, it may be assumed that he made deals in high places during that year of postponement. Abbot John Chaffcombe alias Macy continued to receive the yearly pension of £13 6s 8d after the dissolution of Bruern. He was living in Hook Norton in 1548.

Chaffcombe was succeeded by Richard King and his reign as abbot, though outwardly peaceful and successful, was soon cut short. The approaching doom was heralded by the arrival of John Tregonwell, Visitor of the Monasteries. He reported on Bruern Abbey to Thomas Cromwell in a letter written from Studley Priory:

th'abbot (as hyt apperyth to me) not only vertuowse and well lernye in holy scripture, but also hathe ryght well reparyd the rewen and dekeye of that house, left by his predycissors neglygens, and the convent (which hereuntofore were insolvent) byn now brought to good order.¹¹

This good report did not save Bruern from its fate and the next year it was surrendered to the king on October 10 1536. It is now more than 470 years since the white monks left the countryside of Bruern and the abbey which had survived for nearly 400 years. St Bernard, greatest of all Cistercians wrote these words:

Believe one who has experienced it,
Thou wilt find among the woods
Something that thou didst never
Find in books. Stones and trees
Will teach thee a lesson thou
Didst never learn in schools.

PART 2: BRUERN ABBEY AND THE VALOR ECCLESIASTICUS
1535-6 BY JOAN HOWARD-DRAKE

So fell our monasteries,
in one instant growne,
Not to less houses
but to heaps of stone.

John Donne ¹²

The *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, the document that recorded the result of the surveys in 1536 of the lands and properties of religious house that were to be sequestered by the crown in the reign of Henry VIII, is a good source of information on Bruern Abbey's lands but it does not show such things as furnishings, plate and jewellery in the abbey. This article shows the property of Bruern Abbey in Oxfordshire as it appears in the Valor, the land it held, the rentals it received and the disbursements it made when it was closed. It was one of the places where two surveys were made and both are described.

There were early closures of religious houses, for example, in the 14th century foreign houses in England were closed because religious and papal influences from Europe were becoming unpopular in England. In 1524 Cardinal Wolsey suppressed twenty-nine small monasteries and nunneries including St Frideswide in Oxford and seized their assets in order to support his school, chapel and almshouses in Ipswich and Cardinal College. He said of those religious houses that only a handful of men and women were involved and they were 'where neither God is served nor religion kept'.¹³ Thomas Cromwell was closely associated with Wolsey in these dissolutions and worked for him in all his other business, as his agent. Cromwell supported him even after his downfall but did not fall with his master and later managed to join the King's service and become as powerful as Wolsey had been. With the agreement of the king who was desperate for money, the backing of both houses of Parliament and the encouragement of the 'new learning' adherents, Cromwell organised what came to be known as 'The Dissolution of the Monasteries'.

In 1536 Cromwell prepared a bill for an act of Parliament to suppress the smaller religious houses. Its intention is made clear in the preamble to the bill.

Forasmuch as manifest sin, vicious, carnal and abominable living, is daily used and committed amongst the little and small abbeys, priories and other religious houses of monks, canons and nuns, where the congregation of such religious persons is under number of 12 persons, whereby the governors of such religious houses and their convent spoil, destroy, consume and utterly waste as well their churches, monasteries, priories, principal houses, farms, granges, lands, tenements and hereditaments, as the ornaments of their churches and their goods and chattells to the high displeasure of Almighty God, slander of good religion, and to the great infamy of the King's Highness and the realm if redress should not be had thereof; and albeit that many visitations have heretofore had by the space of two hundred years and more for an honest and charitable reformation of such unthrifty, carnal and abominable living, yet nevertheless little or none amendment is hitherto had, but their vicious living shamelessly increaseth and augmenteth ...¹⁴

When the bill reached Parliament it was passed easily in the Lords but in the Commons the presence and pressure of the King was needed to get it through. It was thought that the income from religious lands and possessions sequestered, particularly the gold, silver and jewels, would bring in a great amount of wealth for the Crown. Cromwell boasted that it would make the King richer by £40,000 a year and eventually it was worth more than that. Over time the closures and confiscations came to be seen as part of the upheaval caused by the King's matrimonial problem and the move towards Protestantism. Cromwell later paid with his life in the continuing struggles between supporters of the opposing religious groups which followed the suppressions, separation from Catholic Rome and the King's difficulty in getting a divorce from Catherine of Aragon.

From 1306 the first year's income from a newly appointed clergyman, called 'the first fruits' or Annates, was paid to the Pope. This tax became increasingly unpopular in England and a convocation of religious leaders in 1532 asked the King to stop the payments. This was done in 1534, with all such income passing to the Crown from 1 January 1535 as also Tenths, a further tax imposed on the profits of a benefice.¹⁵ Commissions were set up in 1535 to assess the value of religious property in each diocese and to get accurate returns of the income to be taxed. The Commissioners were bishops, mayors, sheriffs, justices of the peace, official auditors and local gentry. Lists of these men are in the Liber Regis held in the National Archives at Kew. In 1536 small religious houses with the yearly income of less than £200 and with less than 12 religious inmates were to be examined by special Royal Commissioners, often lawyers. All clergy and church officials had to give full and exact information on oath of all their possessions and income and, in particular, religious houses had to specify manors, farms, rents and other temporal revenues, and spiritual revenues



SIR JOHN TREGONWELL BY HENRY HOPPNER MEYER, AFTER HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER, STIPPLE ENGRAVING, © NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON.

from rectories, vicarages, tithes and offerings. Each religious house was examined with comments on its status and value being recorded with added information as to how the house was run and the behaviour of the monks. Not all fixed assets such as buildings were included in the income and some tax-free deductions were to be allowed for pensions, rents, alms paid under

wills, and fees paid to lay administrators such as bailiffs and stewards amounting in all to about 8% of the income.

The 'visitor' or commissioner who visited Bruern was John Tregonwell. He was a Cornishman, born about 1500 and educated at Oxford. He is described in the Alumni Oxoniensis as a bachelor and doctor of law. He held many high offices in the law and the Church and became a Member of Parliament in 1553. He was a proctor for Henry VIII in his divorce from Queen Catherine and took part in the trial of Anne Boleyn and the trials of Fisher and More who had refused to take the oath of Supremacy. He was said to be an independent, reliable visitor who did not hesitate to plead the cause of any house he thought deserving, as he certainly did for Bruern. David Knowles suggests that he had sympathy for the new learning but against this Geoffrey Baskerville says of him that he was no innovator in religion and cites the fact of the Catholic Queen Mary knighting him in 1553 to show that this was the case.¹⁶ Presumably he was like so many at that time who worked for both sides and took advantage of what was available. In 1536 he asked Cromwell if he could have the lease of either Bruern or Dorchester. He did not get Bruern but he later petitioned and got the site and lands of the suppressed nunnery in Milton Abbas, Dorset and died there in 1565 in the time of Elizabeth.¹⁷

The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* entry for Bruern Abbey began under the heading Bruern Monast' in Com Oxon Lincoln dioces. It stated that it was the 'Monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Bruern' and listed its lands, buildings, possessions in Oxfordshire and in other counties, and named all the tenants.

The first entry under 'Bruern Monastery in the Deanery of ChepyNorton' was the 'site and mansion of the monastery'. The places named were given under the headings of their deaneries both in Oxfordshire and other counties. The value of the abbey's lands and houses held in the monks' own hands and not let to tenants, and a chapel called Saint Katherine was given as £4 8s 4d. The abbey held the chapel, tenements and buildings called Nwellme (*sic*) Hermitage in Leafield from the King which was occupied by the staff of the King's Forest. No valuation, rent or income was shown for this.

The second entry was for the manor, grange and lands of Sandbrook which like other granges was for the 'use and sustenance of the Monastery', not let out to tenants and there was a chapel called Saint Peter the Apostle. There was also an entry for Tangley Manor with its grange which was valued at £4. Under Milton Monachorum were the names of the free and customary tenants of the manor and grange with their rents. Then came tenants in villages in the Chipping Norton and other deaneries giving their rents. All the above are listed in Appendix 2. Field names, coppices, granges, mills, chapels, quarries, villages in Oxfordshire and in other counties where the abbey had lands and property are given in Appendix 3. Also stated are the numbers of sheep kept by the abbey.

The grand total for this income with allowable deductions with a tenth of £14 9s 1d to the King, is given as £135 10s 10d.

Bruern Abbey was one of the abbeys which were surveyed twice for the *Valor* by the Commissioners and the figures that ensued are somewhat different. Monasteries like Bruern owned property in different places and different commissioners could have given different valuations for those properties. The first survey gave the income as £153 16s 2d gross and £135 10s 10d net. The second shorter one gave the income as £171 9s 1d gross and £141 10s 10d net. An Augmentation Court was set up after the dissolutions to account for the income and value of the religious houses that had been closed. In one of the Court's surveys done after Bruern Abbey had been passed to the Crown the total income confirmed was the higher one. An example of how the difference occurred was shown by the entries for Kingham, where the earlier *Valor* entry said that the abbey held it for its own use, whereas in the later one it says John Becham paid 4s rent annually. The second survey gave the names of lands with their acreage and value per acre; these are shown in Appendix 3. Also named there are the authorities that the abbey paid money to for various lands they held and the pensions they paid.



MASONRY FOUND DURING BUILDING WORK IN A WALL OF AN OLD MILL ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE ROAD, OPPOSITE THE PRESENT BRUERN ABBEY.

In a letter to Cromwell from William Cavendish on 10 October 1536 he says,

At our repair to the monastery of Bruerne, Oxon, letter came from the King to Sir John a Brigges to be ready as many as he could make to meet his Grace on the 17th at Amptill; & he said he could not both serve the King & disburse money for such goods, corn & cattle as was here. Having therefore discharged the monks & part of the servants of the house with the money we have received elsewhere, & being even obliged to borrow to despatch the other affairs of the house with such gentle rewards as we have used, we desire instructions what to do, as the grantees of houses not yet dissolved likewise intend to do the King service. Bruern 10 October.¹⁸

So October 10 1536 saw the end of Bruern Abbey as a religious house and the departure of the monks and some of the lay people of Bruern. (See appendix 3). It is obvious that money was given to them, and it presents a different picture from that often reported of brutal ejections of everyone; some at least were helped. The Abbot Robert King became Abbot of Oseney and after its closure he was appointed the first Bishop of Oxford. Abbot Richard King received a pension of £22 a year and later became Rector of Wigginton on the Swere.

The monasteries were part of the fabric of society and of everyday life. The suppression of Bruern Abbey must have greatly affected the area and particularly the people of Milton.¹⁹ There is no evidence to show how they felt, no doubt the community was divided but whatever their feelings their lives would have been considerably changed. The White Monks and lay brothers, known to the villagers, were sent away from the abbey and while some may have stayed locally many would have left for other places. Anyone from Milton employed as a servant at the abbey would have felt the closure badly. Without evidence it can only be speculated as

to what was in Treton Chapel, what painted walls there were, what saints' figures and other church goods if any. In the past money could have been given for prayers and masses for the villagers' dead ancestors; this would now end as would those for the founder of the abbey Nicholas Basset including the masses for him on Maundy Thursday.

Milton villagers would need to attend Shipton parish church for all their services and even there because of the general movement towards Protestantism there would have been changes in church liturgy, in the format of services which they would have known since childhood and which were very familiar. The candles, saints' statues, incense and maybe coloured pictures on the walls would have disappeared from Shipton Church and services now held in English not in Latin. Shipton's later churchwardens' accounts show that they had earlier appointed Nicholas Bennet to ensure that no 'popish' items were in the church.²⁰ It would be interesting to know whether Treton or Shipton churchgoers and officials resorted to the same activities as are recounted in the book on Morepath in Devon where the parishioners hid 'popish' objects from their church thinking that the old ways might return and they could be replaced.²¹

Former abbey tenants became leaseholders of property under the Crown and the later occupiers of the abbey. Its buildings and lands were leased at various times by Thomas Pope, Treasurer of the Augmentation Court and Henry Norris, Esquire to the Body. John Bridges of Coberley in Gloucestershire and Thomas Brydges of Cornbury were granted a 21 year lease of Bruern Monastery on 28 February 1538/39. Thomas Markham, Chief Pensioner, had a lease of Bruern from Queen Elizabeth and finally it passed to the Unton family who retained it until Sir Henry Unton's death in 1596. In the seventeenth century it became the property of the Cope family who built at least three houses on the site, one of which is now a private house called Bruern Abbey.

References

- 1 From the 7th century the river was called the Bladen, changing to Evenlode in the 15th century.
- 2 Ralph, Justiciar to Henry I and father of Nicholas, gave the land of Finstock to Eynsham Abbey and Gilbert, Nicholas's son founded an Augustinian Priory at Bicester in 1182.
- 3 Treton Church which served the parish of Treton is thought to have been in the field called Chapel Bank on the east side of the road leading from Fifield/Milton crossroads to the Stow/Burford Road. OS 243174
- 4 The principle sources used for this article are:
 - Book of Fees
 - Calendar of Close Rolls
 - Calendar of Papal Petitions
 - Calendar of Patent Rolls
 - Campden Society Vol 15
 - Cartulary Antiq

Cisterian Statutes
 Dugdale's Monasticon
 Eynsham Cartulary
 Feudal Aids
 Harleian Rolls
 Hundred Rolls, Record Commission
 Letters from the Abbots to the Chapter at Cîteaux
 Letters Patent dated from the Royal Palace at Woodstock
 Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln 1517-31
 Lloyd (1973) Table 5
 Madox's Formulæ
 Meaux Abbey Annals
 Oriel Records
 Oxfordshire Fines
 Oxfordshire Record Society V.39 PCC wills
 Oseney Cartulary
Valor Ecclesiasticus 1535-6
 Victoria County History vol II
 Waverley Annals
 Waverley Chronicler
 D Hurst, *Sheep in the Cotswolds*
 R M Marshall, *Oxfordshire Byways*
 E Power, *The Wood Trade in English Medieval History*
 D Knowles, *The Religious Orders of England. Bare Ruined Choirs*

- 5 No substantial archaeology has been done on the Bruern site, although an investigation is mentioned in a Chipping Norton Deanery Magazine as taking place in 1887, but no record of this investigation has been found so far, only fragments of masonry and other small artefacts have turned up in the locality. A great window from the Abbey is traditionally said to be in Chipping Norton Church. In the fields beside the farm near Milton called Bruern Grange is the site of some of the abbey fishponds and these were surveyed by Wychwoods Local History Society in 1989. *Wychwoods History* No 5. In the same article James Bond refers to some earthworks reported in 1987 on the Abbey site
- 6 Le Grainge – Norman French for barn
- 7 The tax of scutage allowed a knight to 'buy out' of the military service due to the Crown from the holder of a knight's fee.
- 8 A corrody was a grant made to an abbey. A full corrody consisted of food and drink, light and heat, accommodation within the precinct, and sometimes clothing and laundering.
- 9 William Longland, *Vision of Piers Plowman*.
- 10 From Domesday to the C17 Fifield was known as Fifhide.
- 11 Cook, G.H. Letters to Cromwell, John Baker. 1965.
- 12 Donne, John, *A hymn to the Saints and Marquess of Hamylton*.
- 13 Wilson, David, *In the Lion's Court*, Hutchinson 2001, pp 323
- 14 Henry VIII 26 1536.c.3
- 15 PRO Letters & Papers Henry VIII 1534
- 16 Knowles, David, *Bare Ruined Choirs* CUP 1976. Baskerville, Geoffrey, *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries*, Jonathan Cape, 1937
- 17 Cook, G.H., Letters to Cromwell, John Baker. 1965
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 There has been a suggestion that in its early days Bruern Abbey owned the Crown Inn, now The Shaven Crown, in Shipton under Wychwood. There is no reference to Bruern Abbey owning any property in Shipton in the early extant documents nor in the Augmentation Returns except a meadow called Capron Mede. The Crown Inn name was changed to the Shaven Crown in 1932 when a Shipton village charity sold the property to a brewery.

- 20 Shipton under Wychwood Churchwardens' Accounts 1520-1696.
 21 Duffy, Eamon, *The Voices of Morepath*, Yale University Press, 2001

APPENDICES

The Abbots of Bruern are listed in *Victoria County History* vol 2.

Appendix 1

Names of the abbot and monks at the Dissolution as listed on the Deed of Surrender to William Cavendish 1536

Richard King, Abbot
 Richard Norton, Prior

Monachi sacerdotes (monks in priest's orders)

William Abbingdon
 Robert Dorsett
 John Todnam
 John Webbe
 Henry Bente
 William Barrington
 James Kendall
 Robert Hull
 Ralph Enston

Lay brothers
 James Evysham
 Richard Faryngton
 William Bloxham

Appendix 2

In the first survey of the Abbey the *Valor* states that the monks had in their own hands the site and building of the Abbey with orchards, gardens, pools and closes adjoining and ecclesiastical offerings. Also in hand was the chapel commonly called St Katheryns which was valued at 8s 4d; Newellme (*sic*) Chapel with its tenements and buildings in Leafield; the manor and grange of Tangley, two meadows called Tangley Mede and Cokkysmore and a water mill, a pasture called Bruern Heath; a field called

Laund of two acres valued at 4s. The names of the two free tenants of the Abbey appear in this first entry with their rents. The valuation overall was £4 8s 4d.

Sandbroke is cited next as the manor and grange all of whose lands and appurtenances are used for the support of the monastery. A chapel is named as Saint Peter the Apostle, it goes on to call it the former parish church which pays neither tithes or oblations. This appears to confirm the view that St Peters and Treton are one and the same. No value is given for Sandbrook.

Then follows the list of tenants and their holdings in villages in various deaneries and counties and their yearly rents.

Names of tenants & their rents in Chipping Norton Deanery in Oxfordshire

Names have been kept as in the Valor

Buern

	£	s	d
John King holding the Tanhouse	3	1	0
Richard Knight having a tenement		10	0

[The Patent Roll of 26 December 1560 shows 'grants of leases to Edward Unton which includes a tannery called Sandbroke by the Monastery of Bruern and a messuage called Kytteshouse by the site of the said Monastery'. This entry may indicate where John King and Richard Knight lived in 1535.]

Customary tenants in Milton Monachorum

	£	s	d
John Ivettoo	1	7	11
John Hyatt		11	8
William Hyatt	1	0	0
Richard Perret	1	1	10
William Perret	1	6	2
John Collyng		14	8
William Tonnys		13	4
Alicia Tommys widow		6	0
Daniel Ashwell		4	0
Edward Harberd		4	0
Robert Cambry		10	0
Philip Barret		3	4
George Coke		2	0

The previous tenants paid between them for Raymede pasture	2	0	0
Thomas Fryday holds a quarry		10	0

Free tenants of Milton

Richard Sewell	3	0	
John Sessions	3	0	

Shipton under Wychwood

Abbot & Convent – a field valued	7	0	
----------------------------------	---	---	--

Lyneham

Richard Colyns, by indenture	2	6	0
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It is impossible to find details of the Abbey tenants in Milton and Lyneham when the Valor was taken in 1535 because there are no Abbey records of them and their tenancies. Milton and Lyneham residents and their families would have been baptised or married in Treton Chapel where the monks of Bruern 'served the cure'. After the Abbey was dissolved and Treton Chapel closed they had to go for services to Shipton Church whose parish registers did not start until 1538. The parish then included Milton and Lyneham and the following names appear in the registers of those who could have been tenants of Bruern Abbey with names as found in the registers.

William Hyat/Hiat, Richard Perret senior & junior, William Perret, John Colyng/Collins, William Tonnys/Toms, Daniel Ashwell/Ashill, Philip Barret, George Coke/Cook, Richard Sewell/Shewell, John Sessions, John & Richard Collins and Richard Brodeshaw/Bradshaw who were baptising children from 1538 onwards.

William Hyat, Richard and William Perret, William Tonnys, Philip Barret, George Coke/Cook are in early Churchwardens' accounts for Shipton.

Richard Perret was given in a burial in 1569 as of West End, Milton and he left a will. William Hyat of Lyneham, William Perret senior and junior, Richard Collins, William Tonnys, Daniel Ashwell, Philip Barret, Richard Sewell all of Milton left wills as did George Coke of Shipton. Thomas Fryday of Chipping Norton left a will in 1546.

These records show that although particular linkage to Abbey tenants cannot be made family names are in the area. At this later time there is no mention locally of the King, Knight, Ivettoo and Doege who were named as tenants in the Valor.

Another side of Milton's life at the time of the Valor can be seen in The Muster Rolls returns of 1542 which give lists of men who could be called on to serve in the King's armies. The men would be between sixteen and

sixty and 'picked men'. County and parish officials e.g. the constable picked the men for service. The ablest and tallest were chosen as archers and the rest would be billmen. It is probable that those likely to be called as archers would have practised longbow training following a statute of 1512 which required all men to practise with the weapon on holy days even when Bruern Abbey was still there. The Milton entry says as follows:-

Ablemen. Archers 4.

Richard Perott and William Tomys plus two others.

Bylmen 3

Richard Camby and two others.

Le Armor.

William Perot to find an Archar on horsbacke.

The Towneship besidis to finde an Archard on foote'.¹

	£	s	d
Leafield(Felde)			
Richard Brodeshaw, a [capit] message	1	4	0
Richard Turner		8	0
Thomas Honyborn		8	0
John Hichman		3	0
Thomas Doege		2	0
Shorthampton			
Richard Freeman		8	0
Sarsden			
Elizabeth Horne, widow, a tenement & land by indenture to Master Horne	3	6	8
Churchill			
William Salcombe & Alice his wife	6	8	4
He has the manor & grange by indenture			
Kingham			
John Becham		4	0
Fifield			
Robert Secoll holds a house & lands by indenture	3	6	8
<i>Customary tenants</i>			
John Humfrey	1	0	0
William Brookwell	1	2	0
William Hukkys		14	0

Richard Smith	9	0	
Thomas Byrge	5	0	
Robert Chamblen/Chamberlain	5	0	
William Green	6	0	
Thomas Lynsecombe	4	0	
Richard K...	3	4	
John Green	3	4	
Thomas Cook	2	0	
?Stewards/Officials of the Chapel	4	0	
<i>Free tenants</i>			
John Humfrey		ob	
Robert Payne		8ob	
John Perley gives a garland of Periwinkle	1		

Witney Deanery

Witney			
Thomas Smith	6	0	

Woodstock Deanery**Dunthorp**

Elizabeth Ashfeild, widow, holds the grange and lands with the Abbot & Convent in Sewell	38	10	0
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Epwell

The Abbot & Convent, a water mill valued	3	4	
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Swalcliffe

John Potter	1	6	8
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Holoway Grange

Thomas Watts has the grange by indenture	4	0	0
--	---	---	---

Tangley

The Abbot & Convent the manor & grange with all appurtenances in their hands for work to the support the Monastery			
Valued at	4	0	0

Appendix 3**Berkshire – Salisbury Diocese****Denchworth**

Alexander Unton, armiger, holds Rectory	1	6	8
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Somerset – Bath & Wells Diocese**Preedy**

John Saunders, farmer	4	0	0
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Gloucestershire – Worcester Diocese**Eastleech**

Thomas Keball, farmer holds sheep pasture	6	1	0
<i>Customary tenants</i>			
Walter Green		10	0
Richard Lyffholly jun		10	0
John Lyffholy		10	0
John Robins	0	0	0
Richard Lyffholy sen		7	0
Quarry formerly a stone quarry	0	0	0
Thomas Lyffholy		5	0
Edmund Thame, armiger, pays by Rokis Lond			

Marysden/?Miserden

John Mayse, by indenture	14	0	0
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Collysborn Parva/Little Colesborne

Thomas Prydy, by indenture	1	7	4
----------------------------	---	---	---

Sipton Solas

William Bray, by indenture		13	4
----------------------------	--	----	---

Nether Guiting

Robert Dean holds the farm & water mill	1	13	4
John Crokker, farmer, has sheep pasture & other land by indenture	6	0	0

Hinchwick, Condicote

John Roche, farmer with sheep pasture by indenture	1	13	4
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Sezincote

Heirs & assigns of Edward Greville dec'd lands etc by indenture	6	8	4
---	---	---	---

Longborough

Walter Cockrell, by indenture	1	1	0
-------------------------------	---	---	---

Stowe

Richard Gervis, by indenture		6	8
------------------------------	--	---	---

Little Rissington			
Nicholas Barret	10	0	
Great Rissington			
Robert Lamb, by indenture	2	13	4
Slaughter			
Adam Fenfeld	6	8	
Little Barington			
John Chadwell	6	0	
Westcot			
Thomas Smith	8	0	
The sum total and value of all the manors, granges, lands and tenements ...	139	17	1

This account shows 500 sheep kept in Eastleach between the Feast of the Annunciation and St Martin's Day and 400 between St Martin's Day and the Feast of the Annunciation. 500 and 300 hundred were being pastured in Hinchwick in Condicote, Gloucestershire. Neither entries give any value.

Appendix 4

The second survey of Bruern gives its lands with their acreage, their value per acre (p.a) and names of fields, pastures and meadows. No tenants are named but those of the authorities that the abbey paid money to for various lands they held and the pensions they paid are given.

It records annual sums paid out to the King by the bailiff of Chadlington for the manor of Fifield; Shipton manor holding land in Milton; for the manor of Dunthorp and land in Sewell in the Hundred of Wootton; Brasenose college, Oxford was paid for tenements and land in Dunthorp, the Carthusians of Sheen for other land in Dunthorp; for Treton Chapel to the [Archdeacon?] of Oxford and a [?pension] to Osney Abbey for the same.

It also paid three Stewards, Master Henry Norris and Thomas Nowers under-Stewards with John Hunfrey Bailiff for Oxfordshire; Robert Wye with Robert Whytney to oversee manors, tenements and lands in Gloucestershire with Thomas King a Bailiff; Edward Powell an Attorney, Robert Hucvale an auditor, John Bogy a receiver.

There were also two others receiving annual sums Thomas Arundell and Edward Fettiplace related to Chaffcombe's pension.

Bruern	£	s	d
The water mill in the precincts of the Monastery	1	0	0
Field called Tangley Mede, estimated 10 acres @ 2s p.a	1	0	0
Field called Cokkysmore, two acres, Water Mede, 10 acres & the rest Londe Mede, four acres		6	8
The common called Bruern Heath, 14 acres @ 2d p.a		2	4
Close called Launde Meadow, two acres @ 1s p.a		2	0
.....Summa	2	11	8
			(sic)
Sandbrook Grange			
Pasture called Sheep House Leas, seven acres @ 1s 10d p.a		12	10
Pasture called Bayards Leas, eight acres @ 1s 8d p.a		13	4
Field called Longe Mede, six acres @ 1s 8d p.a		10	0
Field called Deep Pole Meadow, three acres @ 1s 6d p.a		4	6
Field called Black Pit Meadow, three acres @ 1s 6d p.a		4	6
Pasture called The Cow Leas, eight acres @ 1s p.a		8	0
Pasture called The Calves Leas, six acres @ 1s 4d p.a		8	0
Pasture called Ox Leas, eight acres @ 1s p.a		8	0
Pasture called Hatche Leas, nine acres @ 1s p.a		9	0
Field called The Barne Field, ten acres @ 6d p.a		5	0
Pasture called The Infield, 12 acres @ 8d p.a		8	0
Le New Field overgrown with furze, six acres @ 4d p.a		2	0
Pasture called The Brode overgrown, 11 acres @ 6d p.a	1	0	0
			(sic)
Close called Treton Chapel Close, half an acre		8	8
Arable in the South & North Fields, 160 acres @ 2d p.a	1	6	8
Pasture in Shipton called Capron Mede, three acres @ 2s 4d p.a		7	0
.....Summa	7	7	6
Wood Copse at Sandbrook Grange not valued	0	0	0
.....Summa	9	19	2
Additional amount		19	6
	Total Sum	10	19
			1
Coppices			
Overhay	1	4	0
Coppice		7	0
Cocks More		7	0
Middlehay		4	0
Chapel		6	0
South		2	0
.....Summa	3	0	0
<u>Total sum for all manors, lands, tenements etc</u>	180	16	2

Annual Payments made by the Abbot & convent of Bruern

Oxfordshire County

Bruern with members?

To the King's bailiff of the hundred of Chadlington for the manor of Fifield	11	0	
To the King's manor of Shipton under Wychwood for its holdings in Milton Monarchorum	5	0	
To the King's bailiff of the hundred of Wootton for its manor of Dunthrop ?rendering service	1	0	0
To the Master and scholars of the King's College called Brasynnose(Brasenose) in the University of Oxford for land & tenements n Dunthrop	10	0	
To the Prior & Convent of the Carthusians of Shene for land in Dunthrop	2	10	0
To the bailiff of the King's hundred of Wootton for lands in Sewell	1	0	
To the Archdeacon of Oxford by the ?officials of Treton Chapel in County Oxfordshire	6	8	
To the Abbot & Convent of Osney for an old pension for Treton Chapel	4	0	0
.....Summa	4	18	8

Bruern Monastery with members?

Payments to the Chief Stewards and other officials and administrators of the Monastery

To Master Henry Norris, armiger, Chief Steward of the Monastery	3	13	4
To Robert Wye & Robert Whytney, armigers, official Stewards of the manors, lands & tenements in County Gloucestershire	1	0	0
To Edmund Powell, gentleman, Attorney of the Monastery	13	4	
To Thomas Nowers, gentleman, under-Steward of the Monastery	1	0	0
To Robert Huevale/Huckvale Auditor of the Monastery	1	0	0
To John Bogye Receiver of the annual rents etc of the Monastery	2	0	0
To Thomas Kyng Bailiff for all the manors, lands & tenements of the Monastery in Gloucestershire	3	0	0
To John Humfrey Bailiff of all the manors, granges lands & tenements in of the Monastery in Oxfordshire	3	0	0
.....Summa	14	6	8
.....Total	19	5	4

Bruern Monastery with Members

Pensions & annuities rendered annually

To John Chaffcomb formerly abbot of Bruern ?with consent of the King	13	6	8
To Thomus Arundell, armiger, ?for Chaffcomb	2	13	4
To Edward Fetypace, armiger, ?for Chaffcomb	2	13	4

?No other allowances

For all manors etc & possessions as as Summa	180	3	10
All allowances	19	v	4
Remaining	137	10	10
Tenth to the Lord King	14	9	1

Reference

- 1 Beauchamp, Peter C ed. *The Oxfordshire Muster Rolls 1539, 1542, 1569.* Oxfordshire Record Society, Vol 60, 1996.