

## TICKFORD PRIORY.

In 1861 the Rev. C. G. Hulton, of Emberton, wrote some account of this foundation which was published in the Bucks Records (Vol. II., page 220), but since that date much fresh information has come to light, some of which is included in the following pages.

The Priory was founded by Fulk Paynel, the then Lord of Newport, in the reign of William Rufus. It was a cell of the Abbey of Marmouëtier at Tours and has generally been referred to as a Clunic House. Mr. Hamilton Thompson however doubts whether this is an accurate designation. Marmouëtier, Mr. Thompson points out, "was reformed from Cluny and adopted Cluniac customs but it was never affiliated to Cluny and remained an autonomous house on the ordinary Benedictine pattern. If it and its English cells had been Cluniac the Bishop of Lincoln" as mentioned presently, "could not," says Mr. Thompson, "have made good his right to institute priors at Tickford which would have cut at the root of the autocracy of Cluny. Cluniac priories were those directly subject to Cluny or, later, to la Charité-sur-Loire."

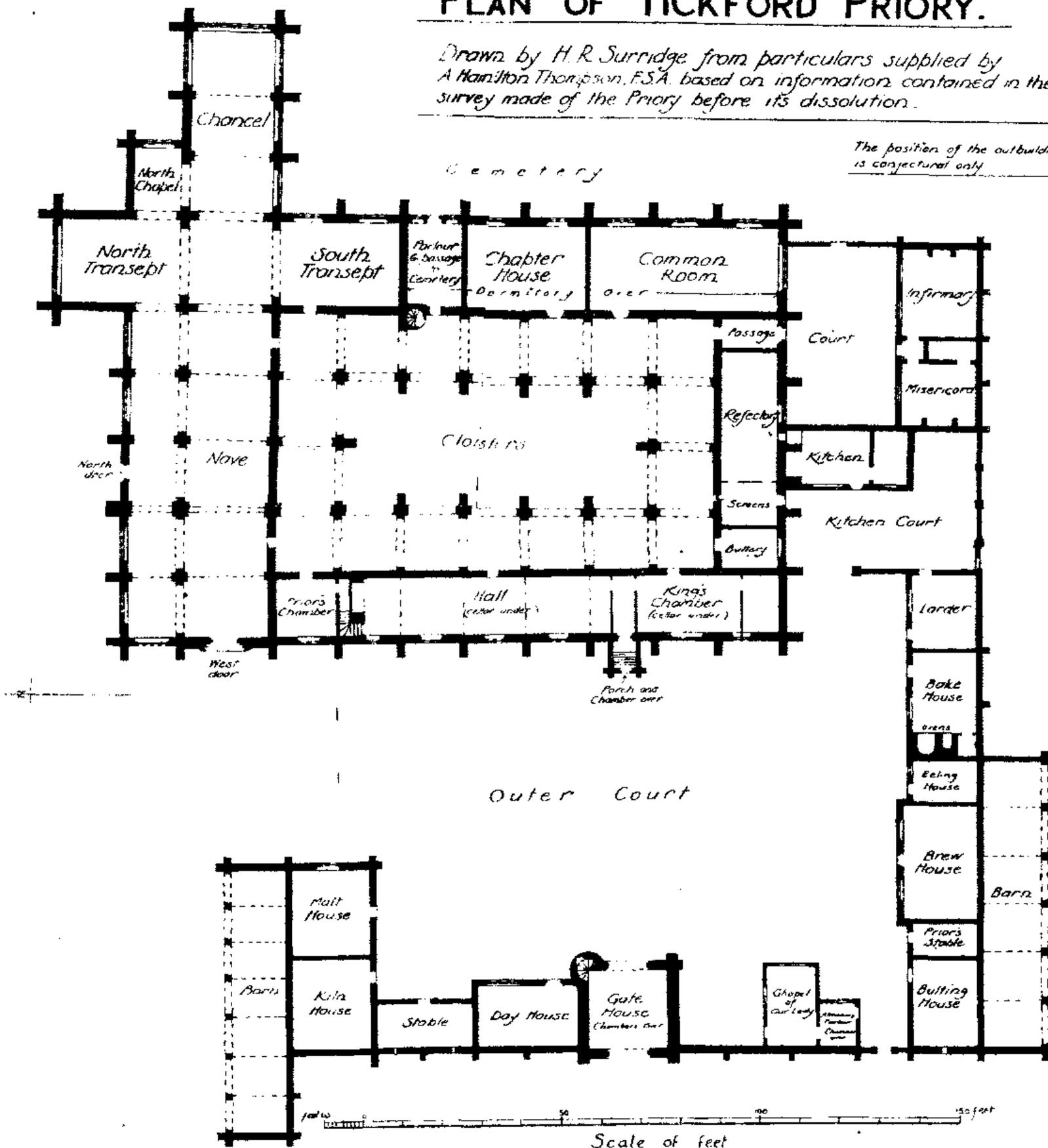
The house was, too, connected with Holy Trinity Priory, York, which was subordinate to Marmouëtier also. This connection, as is pointed out in the Victoria County History, gave rise to constant trouble as to the right of presentation of the Priors, and as to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of the Diocese of Lincoln over it and its affairs. Eventually it was agreed that the visitation and correction of the Priory belonged to the Abbot alone, and that the Bishop should institute the Priors. The House being an alien one was often seized by Edward III and Richard II and there was frequent difficulty as to its management. From the reign of Henry IV. the Priory ceased to be immediately subject to Tours, and the Priors were nominated by the Prior of Holy Trinity, York.

The Church was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and in an old Charter of Confirmation given by Gervase

# PLAN OF TICKFORD PRIORY.

*Drawn by H. R. Surridge from particulars supplied by A Hamilton Thompson, F.S.A. based on information contained in the survey made of the Priory before its dissolution.*

*The position of the outbuildings is conjectural only*



Paganell in 1187 with the assent of his wife Isabella, Countess of Northampton, it is recorded that in the Church and Chapter House there then rested the bodies of his sons, and mention is made of the gifts which his grandfather Fulk Paganell and his father Ralph Paganell gave to the foundation.

Though there were some subsequent gifts it is quite evident that the Paganells or Paynels were the principal benefactors of the Priory.

During the disputes as to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Lincoln there were many stormy scenes, and more than once when the Bishop was displeased he excommunicated the Monks much to the annoyance of the Abbot of Marmoutier. The Bishop did not always act without good reason, and in 1291 the Prior Simon de Reda was deservedly removed for waste of goods, evil living, and homicide. It was this scandal which brought matters to a head and led to the settlement already referred to.

About 1311 the Charters and Muniments of the Priory were destroyed by fire, though whether, as is possible, the Priory Buildings suffered damage also, is not known. As a result a Confirmatory Charter was obtained from Edward II. in 1312, which contains full particulars of the then existing possessions of the Priory, and the Charter is quoted by Mr. Hulton in his article.

A little later there was a survey of the Priory from which it appears that there were only eight Monks instead of sixteen or so, besides the Prior and one Chaplain, called Richard de Cachepol. There were too divers people who more or less lived out of the Priory provisions. One Martin Angleys, besides taking like a Monk, and more, took a pig at the Feast of St. Martin, two cart loads of wood, and the stubble of two acres of land. John de Pontefract took weekly seven loaves and seven gallons of conventual beer and four dishes of meat. Others took in everything as Monks, and beyond daily one loaf of brown bread and one gallon of second beer.

In 1340 there was a serious disturbance between the then Prior, Fulk de Tanquetterre, and the Vicar of Newport, John Amys, arising from the fact that the Prior

and others had hostilely besieged the Vicar's House at Tykeford, in which he then was, had broken the doors and windows, and when he tried to come out had insulted, beaten, wounded, and wickedly ill-treated him so that his life was in danger. Moreover the besiegers, so ran the complaint, carried away the Vicar's goods and chattels to the amount of £10, and used such threats as to his person and burning his house if he returned that he dare not do so. What were the real facts and exactly how the dispute, which did not tend to ecclesiastical peace, was settled, is not known, but Amys resigned his living in 1343, and Fulk remained Prior till 1349, when he died, possibly of the Great Pestilence.

The discipline of the Priory was difficult to maintain during the frequent forfeitures of its revenues as an alien house, and Prior John Drien did not add to its dignity by trying to obtain tythes from the Rector of North Crawley on false pretences.

The ill-fated Cardinal Wolsey was the cause of the final disappearance of the foundation from the pages of history for when he conceived the idea of founding colleges at Ipswich and Oxford he obtained leave to throw down, among others, the "superfluous" house of Tickford and to divert its revenues towards the cost of building.

On 5th February, 1524, there was a solemn meeting in the Chapter House of Tickford at which the Prior, whose name is given as Thomas Parker, though the last recorded Prior is Thomas Broke, "not being coerced led or drawn thereto by force fraud or fear," so runs the record, surrendered his office and the House to the Deputy of the Cardinal. The conventual seal<sup>1</sup> was then and there broken, and the goods of the Priory annexed to the College of the Most Reverend Father the Lord Thomas in the renowned University of Oxford to be founded. It is probable says Mr. Thompson that Broke and Parker were the same person "Parker" may represent his father's occupation; "Broke" (atte Broke) is possibly the localised name of his family from their dwelling place. These

<sup>1</sup> A sketch of the Priory Seal is to be found in Vol. VIII., p. 405, of the Bucks Records.

varieties of surnames in lists made about the period of the suppression are constantly found. At the dissolution the total issues of the house amounted to £57:11:4, the bells and lead were worth £33:6:8 and movable goods only £5:4:0. The Ministers Accounts give a total of £122:19:7.

A minute survey of the Priory Buildings was taken at the time of the Dissolution<sup>2</sup> and with its aid an attempt has been made to show on the plan annexed to this article the approximate position of the Priory Church and Offices.

Unfortunately the only building of which the exact dimensions are given is the Priory Church, but the position of many of the other buildings is clearly indicated. For instance the Dormitory "covered with tyle wherein is a chymney and five sells for the late Monks there" is stated to adjoin the Church.

Beneath the Dormitory and also adjoining the Church there was doubtless a parlour and passage to the Cemetery on the East while adjoining it was the Chapter House wherein was a "glased wyndow" and beyond that a Common Room.

All these buildings, over which as just stated the Dormitory ran, formed the East side of the Cloister Quadrangle: the Cloisters themselves being "well covered with sklayte and the gutters therof bene led, and the tymber work good and much ston there."

On the South side of the Cloisters there was probably a range of buildings containing the Refectory and Buttery and beyond them the Infirmary, Misericorde, and Kitchen the misericorde being "a loo chaumber with a chymney and an inner chaumber thereunto adjoynyng." It was used as a dining place for Monks who had been bled, and others, who for some reason did not go to the Refectory. It is interesting to note that blood letting in a most systematic way was practised in monastic houses, perhaps as often as seven times annually as at Ely and Peterborough. A curious account of the methods adopted can be found in J. W.

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<sup>2</sup> Now at the P.R.O. Exch. Treasury of the Receipt Books, 165 p.p 61-65.

Clark's "Observances of Barnwell." The period of bleeding was called "seyny" (*sanguinata saignée*), and the Misericord used by the Monks in their "seynies," was often called the "seyny" as at Peterborough.

The Necessarium was doubtless at the South end of the Dormitory with steps or other access direct thereto.

On the West side of the Cloister was the Hall with Cellar under, with the Prior's Chamber in its usual position at the North end next the Church, and the King's Chamber for the use of special guests at the South end. At the entrance to the Hall on its West side was a porch with Chamber over.

The North side of the Cloisters adjoined the Nave of the Church and probably near the North East corner, as at Castleacre, there was a staircase to the Dormitory.

In the outer court there was the Gatehouse and on its South side was a little Chapel of Our Lady covered with tile and "buylded wyth stude" with a little bell at the end. Adjoining the Chapel was a building probably used as an Almonry and containing divers windows of new glass.

Round the Court were various farm and other buildings which included the malt house, kiln house, brew house, the bulting house, where the meal was sifted, the eeling house, a title which speaks for itself, though the Monks also had a "fair poole replenyshed with carp" and divers barns.

As already stated the only building of which the dimensions are given is the Priory Church.

The body or nave of the Church was 80 feet in length and 21 feet in breadth. It was substantially built with "a fair rooffe of tymber work."

The transepts, or "iles" as they are called, on the North and South sides of the "bellframe," the roofs of which were also of good and substantial timber, were each 30 feet in length and 21 feet in breadth.

The bellframe, or central tower, was substantially builded with stone and had much good timber within the same and three bells.

The Chancel was 45 feet in length and 21 feet in breadth. It was roofed with stone and timber and had a little Chapel adjoining, which was 16 feet in length and 12 feet in breadth. There were it is stated divers windows "as well in the Church as in the Chauncell that be glased the glasse whereof is verie old and little worth."

The roofs of the Church and its aisles were tiled.

It will be noticed that the Survey mentions aisles, or really transepts, but says nothing of aisles proper.

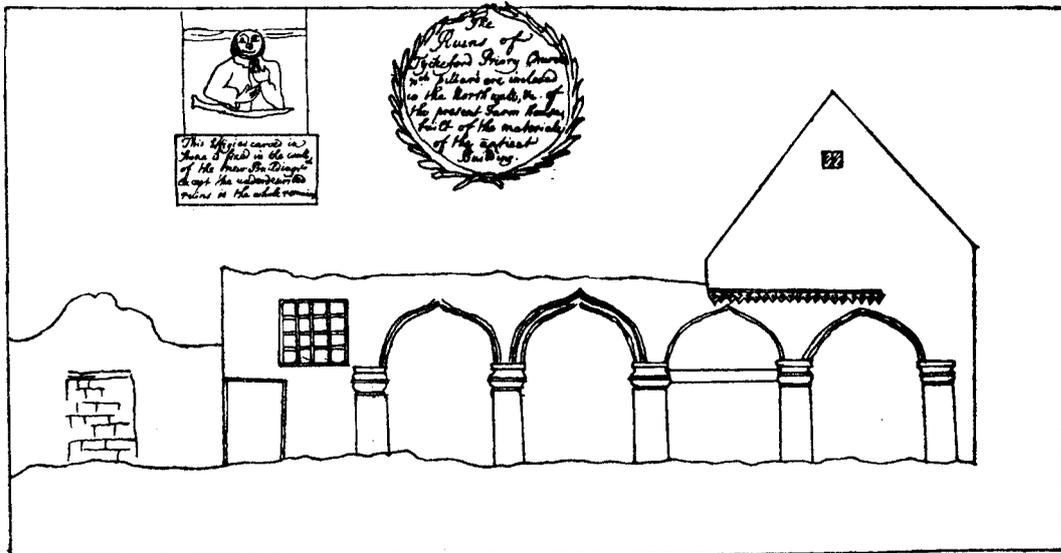
From Browne Willis's sketch, which is reproduced in this number, it is quite clear, however, that there was an aisle on the North side of the Nave.

Five pillars are clearly shown in the sketch, and the gable end of the then Farm House is marked as the West end of the ruins. The chevron string course above the two western arches, as Mr. Hamilton Thompson remarks, is no doubt the original outer string course of an aisleless twelfth century Church, and probably marked the position of the eaves.

Browne Willis's sketch suggests on the whole work of circa 1190-1200 or even later, and Mr. Thompson thinks that a North Aisle was added about that time to the Nave of an aisleless cruciform Church.

There is another rougher drawing of the ruins in the Willis MSS. at the Bodleian in which three arches only are shewn and five pillars, but the measurements and notes tally pretty well with the length of the Nave as given in the Survey and with the details contained in the other sketch.

Browne Willis states that in 1703, when the sketches were made "the Church consisted of five pillars of about 14 feet asunder which shewed the Fabrick to have been 80 feet in length," and adds, "by what I can make out it consisted of a Body and two Isles and a Tower at the West end, three of the pillars then standing making part of the wall and bearing up the upper end of the building which was left standing." He goes on "about the year 1680, the great part of the Abbey House was rebuilt, and in a stone near the entrance is infixed in the wall the effigies of a Monk



RUINS OF TICKFORD PRIORY. CIRCA 1703.

(From sketch by Browne Willis at the Bodleian.)

carved leaning on his hand which is the only thing preserved and remarkable about the building. At the entrance is the old gateway which consisted of a larger and lesser portal the lesser of which is now standing, but the arch of the larger being fallen down is converted to an ordinary pair of piers. These arches comprised the outward wall of a spacious gatehouse wherein as 'tis said hung the Bells appropriated to the use of the Convent."

The conclusions as to the position of the Church Tower and the Bells are apparently erroneous as the Tower was evidently a central one, and the bells were in it.

Cole on the 1st April, 1767, writes, "I went to Tickford about three or four years ago to see the scite, but nothing now remains worthy of notice. The person who now owns it, one Mr. Hooton, a farmerly sort of man, has lately built a neat square House of stone upon the ruins of the Older House which was built out of the remains of the Convent. It stands low and commands a pretty view of the River Ouse which runs very near it."

The property has passed through the hands of the Adkins family, the head of which was a Royal Physician who cured Charles I., when Prince of Wales, of a serious illness, and to Thomas Hooton, who left the premises to his only Daughter, Sarah, the Wife of Philip Hoddle Ward. Subsequent owners were William Powell, Mrs. Massey, and Philip Butler. The present owner is curiously enough another Ward, viz: Mrs. Sarah Ward.

The existing buildings are practically all of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There is still to be seen the grotesquely carved figure of a Monk mentioned by Browne Willis, now in the pediment of a door on the North Side of the Abbey, while in the wall of the Chapel Garden, which is no doubt part of the site of the Cemetery, skeletons having been dug up there, are a number of fragments of worked stone dating from the 12th to the 15th centuries. There is too a fragment of 15th century glass in the present kitchen window apparently representing, say the

Historical Monuments Commission, part of a Nativity with figures of a man, a sleeping woman, and an Angel.

In the grounds there is a private burial place of the Hootons, and it is worth noting that in the Township there are four cases of private burials.<sup>3</sup>

Thanks are due to Mr. A. Hamilton Thompson, F.S.A., for his invaluable aid in reconstructing the Priory Plan, for information as to the buildings, and several items in the text, and to Mr. H. R. Surridge for drawing the plan itself, while for a good list of the Priors and other information the Victoria County History may be consulted. The Dissolution Survey appears in Dugdale's Monasticon.

FREDK. WM. BULL, F.S.A.

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<sup>3</sup> Vide article by Rev. R. F. Pale, M.A., Bucks Records, Vol. XI, p. 88.