

# PETER DE WINTONIA, PARSON OF CRAWLEY

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*The career of Peter de Wintonia (Peter of Winchester) is a vivid illustration of how even a perpetually indigent king like Henry III could remunerate his 'civil servants' very liberally, by bestowing clerical benefices upon them. The resulting pluralism became a scandal, but could—and in Peter's case did—lead to pluralists becoming rich.*

Under the east window of the chancel of the church of St Firmin at North Crawley, outside, is a now almost illegible inscription in Lombardic Capitals: PETRUS CANCELLUM TIBI DAT FIRMINE NOVELLUM UT CUM LAUDERIS DEO PETRI MEMORERIS, 'Peter gives you, O Firmin, a new chancel so that, when you praise God, you may mention Peter'. The five elegant windows of the chancel, with uncusped lights headed by quatrefoiled circles, together with the buttresses, pilasters and heavy and high string course, are of mid to later thirteenth-century dates. So too are internal features, the window shafting, the carved brackets on either side of the east window and the double piscina. In the later fifteenth century, the high-pitched roof, of whose gable traces can be discerned on the exterior of the east gable of the nave, was removed, the side walls were raised and the existing low-pitched roof installed; in the interior, a beam of this new roof obscures the top of the east window. At some date an embattled parapet was added.

Browne Willis, followed by the Lysons, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Lipscomb, Sheahan, the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments, the Victoria County History, and the local 'Short Guide to the Church', ascribe the building of the chancel to Peter de Guildford, allegedly rector in the late thirteenth century.<sup>1</sup> As Chibnall points out,<sup>2</sup> this is an error due to confusion of Crawley with Crowell in Oxfordshire, to which latter living Peter de Guildford was presented in October 1294 by the king,

Edward I, as guardian of the heir and lands of Isabella de Fortibus, erstwhile Countess of Albemarle. Confirmation of the error is contained in the record of the case in April 1295 in which Sir John de St Helen alias St Agatha successfully claimed the right of appointment to Crowell against the king, resulting in the displacement of Peter de Guildford and institution as rector of John de Verny during the following month.<sup>3</sup>

Who then was the Peter whose inscription claims the rebuilding of the chancel of the church at North Crawley? In January 1245, Robert de Broughton confirmed the gift by his father, William, to Eudo, prior of Cauldwell (Bedford), of the moiety of the advowson of the living of Crawley.<sup>4</sup> In 1249, Richard de Filiol, who claimed the right to the other moiety, presented sub-deacon Peter de Wintonia and, despite the reclamation of Prior Eudo, Bishop Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln directed that Peter should be duly instituted as rector of Crawley.<sup>5</sup> In June/July of that year, Eudo acknowledged the right of Richard to the advowson of the moiety of the living against Richard's payment of 6 marks silver.<sup>6</sup> Three years later, in May 1252, Peter acted as attorney for Richard in negotiating with the attorney of Walter, prior of Cauldwell, as a result of which Richard acquired, against payment of 66 marks silver, the remaining moiety, which had meanwhile come to the prior.<sup>7</sup>

The first clue to the identity of this Peter de Wintonia is the entry, dated May 1253, in the

Close Rolls, recording the gift by King Henry III, to Peter de Wintonia, parson of Crawley, of four good oaks from Salcey Forest.<sup>8</sup> The second clue is an entry of the same month in the Patent Rolls listing those who were to accompany the king to Gascony; included are Peter de Wintonia, clerk, as well as his patron at Crawley, Richard de Filiol, and also Thomas de Wintonia.<sup>9</sup> Henry left for Bordeaux in August 1253 to negotiate with Alfonso the Wise, king of Castile, who had revived a claim by his family to Gascony. Agreement was reached in the treaty of Toledo. At Burgos in October 1254, Henry's son, Edward, then 15, was married to Alfonso's sister, Eleanor, then a child. The Castilian threat removed, Henry went north to Fontevraud where he transferred the body of his mother, Isabel of Angoulême (died 1246), to the abbey church (where the effigy on her tomb can still be seen). Henry then travelled to the abbey of Pontigny where St Edmund of Abingdon (died 1240) was buried and then to Chartres where he was met by his wife's sister's husband, Louis IX, king of the Franks, who escorted him to Paris. Henry returned to England soon after Christmas 1254.

During Henry's peregrinations, the Patent Rolls record Aubrey de Fécamp and Peter de Wintonia receiving moneys loaned to the king and dealing with loan terms and repayments, at Bordeaux, at Vendôme, at Boulogne-sur-Mer and at Wissant. These entries make it clear that Aubrey and Peter were clerks in the king's wardrobe under Peter de Chaceporc, keeper of the wardrobe, who died in Boulogne on Christmas eve that year of 1254.<sup>10</sup> The wardrobe was the administrative, financial and secretarial centre of the royal household, and members of its staff travelled with the king. Among other tasks, it received and kept the king's returns from the royal demesne, taxes and duties, negotiated with merchants in selling the royal wool, purchased and stored supplies for the household, undertook diplomatic missions, drew up and filed copies of agreements, and so on. At this time and in the following reign, the wardrobe was involved in paying allies, armies and fleets. When Peter's career in the king's household commenced is not recorded; however, the royal gift of oaks in 1253

suggests that he had already served Henry for some years.

The king visited France again from November 1259 to April 1260 to sign the treaty of Paris with Louis, under which Henry relinquished all claim to Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Touraine and much of Poitou, and paid homage as Duke of Gascony. Peter de Wintonia and another king's clerk, Richard de Wintonia, were in the royal party.<sup>11</sup>

In June 1262, Peter appointed Richard de Crawley and Serlo de Wintonia as his attorneys before again going oversea with the king,<sup>12</sup> and was a member of the royal entourage when Henry left for France in July to deal with problems arising from the treaty of Paris. During September, Henry's household at St Maur-des-Fossés was smitten by an epidemic raging in Paris; Henry himself was rumoured to have died and was still weak when he returned to England before Christmas of that year. Peter features in five documents recorded from the stay in France.<sup>13</sup> The first, dated September 1262 at St Germain-des-Prés, is a grant by the king to Peter de Wintonia, king's clerk, of the deanery of Tattenhall and mandate to the sheriff of Stafford and Salop to give him seisin. The second, dated October from Lagny, notifies the chapter of St Paul's in London that the king has given a vacant prebend to Peter de Wintonia, king's clerk, in the king's gift by reason of the voidance of the bishopric of London, and mandates the chapter to assign him a stall in the choir and place in the chapter. In the other three records, dated October at St Germain-des-Prés, November at Reims and December at Wissant, Peter appears as a witness.

In April 1264, at Southampton, Peter de Wintonia was granted simple protection until Michaelmas to go oversea and, in July at St Paul's, protection until All Saints. Whether these entries refer to two separate trips and to where and for what purpose are not recorded in these Rolls.<sup>14</sup> They were probably visits to Henry's queen, Eleanor of Provence, who was in France during 1263–5 trying to raise money for Henry to finance his conflict with the barons

led by his brother-in-law, Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester.

During his long reign, Henry indulged in a variety of projects, political and otherwise, both oversea and in England, and all expensive. Among these, he was rebuilding Westminster Abbey with a magnificent new shrine for his favourite saint, Edward the Confessor. The fall in the revenues that could be collected during the disturbances of the reign meant that the king always lacked ready money. Powicke<sup>15</sup> remarks that Henry's administration struggled by on loans, some of which were still outstanding in the time of his grandson, Edward II. The king's lack of ready money is already obvious in the loan transactions and failures to repay in full and on time, recorded while he was in France in 1254. After the defeat and death of Simon in August 1265, Henry obtained help from Pope Clement IV, who in August 1266 published a bull granting the king the papal tenth for three years to meet the debts incurred by Queen Eleanor on behalf of her husband while she was in France. A part of the quid pro quo was the understanding that Edward or Edmund, Henry's sons, would fulfil their father's earlier vow to go on crusade. Since this tax was a papal tax on the clergy, payments were made to the king's wardrobe, not to the exchequer. The Patent Rolls record many of these payments, audited by Peter de Wintonia whose main expertise and responsibilities seem to have been financial.<sup>16</sup>

Despite this relief, the king's money problems continued, evidenced by the instruction, in March 1267 from Cambridge, to Nicholas de Lewknor and Peter de Wintonia, keepers, to hand to Walter Giffard, Archbishop of York, and Brother John Derlington (later archbishop of Dublin) all the king's jewels except the regalia, for selling, pawning or whatever, because the king has arduous business needing money.<sup>17</sup> In June that year, Peter was witness to the list of valuables intended for the new shrine of St Edward the Confessor, being built at Westminster, that were to be pawned, to be redeemed and returned by Michaelmas of the following year.<sup>18</sup> Further pawnings of the king's jewels were authorized in 1268 and 1269.<sup>19</sup>

Presumably the valuables intended to decorate the shrine were redeemed in time for the dedication of the new abbey church and translation of the relics of St Edward to his new shrine on his saint's day, 13 October, in 1269. Powicke considers this event marked the true end of Henry's long and troubled reign, his remaining years being passed under the congenial tutelage of his son, Edward, and the latter's appointees in the royal council.<sup>20</sup>

The Close, Patent and Liberate Rolls as far back as 1254 indifferently describe Peter as keeper of the wardrobe or merely as king's clerk in the wardrobe. According to Tout, Peter was keeper jointly with Aubrey de Fécamp from 1258 to 1261; he was controller in charge of the Counter Rolls from 1261 to 1268, with John de Wintonia as his deputy from 1261 to 1264.<sup>21</sup> In 1268 he became sole keeper,<sup>22</sup> a post he retained until the death of King Henry late on 15 November 1272. In the Liberate Rolls, on that very day, Peter de Wintonia, keeper of the wardrobe, was allocated £236 for delivery to divers of the king's creditors of the king's old debts.<sup>23</sup> The next morning after Henry's death, John de Kirkby delivered the king's royal seal under his own seal and that of Peter de Wintonia, keeper of the wardrobe, to Walter Giffard, Archbishop of York, Robert Aguillon and other councillors of the king in the presence of the said councillors.<sup>24</sup> On 29 November, Peter delivered to John de London, Edward's clerk, his own seal and the jewels of the late king as well as the jewels kept in the chapel of the wardrobe.<sup>25</sup> After that, there are a few entries in the Close Rolls confirming the receipt of various sums acknowledged by Peter when keeper of the wardrobe, the last such entry being dated 1291.<sup>26</sup>

The royal lack of ready money has already been stressed. Payment of royal servants then was, when possible, in lands and kind rather than money. Clerks like Peter were in holy orders and their payment was in appointments to ecclesiastical benefices by royal grant or through the intervention or influence of the king. As an example, in April 1241, Henry authorized payment of 50 marks yearly to the wardrobe clerk, Peter de Chaceporc, for his

maintenance in the king's service until the king should provide him with a benefice worth that or more. Two days later, in the voidance of the bishopric of Winchester, the king directed Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, to admit Peter de Chaceporc to Ivinghoe, the richest rectorial benefice in Buckinghamshire (in 1291 worth £36.13.4 or 55 marks).<sup>27</sup> It was probably through royal influence that Richard de Filiol presented Peter de Wintonia to Crawley in 1249.

Immediately on return from France in 1260, Henry directed the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield to admit Peter de Wintonia to the church at Ashbourne, a direction that had to be repeated in 1261.<sup>28</sup> Ashbourne and its berewicks were royal property under Edward the Confessor, and Domesday Book records a church there and a priest holding land and men. In 1093, the church and the chapels in the berewicks were granted by William Rufus to Robert Bloet, Bishop of Lincoln, a grant confirmed by Pope Eugenius III in 1146, by Henry II in 1162/5 and by Pope Alexander II in 1163.<sup>29</sup> Arising, no doubt, from the church at Ashbourne originally having been an independent Saxon minster, the situation remained unusual in that, instead of the dean and chapter of Lincoln taking the emoluments and paying a vicar to serve the church, the church was held, for life, by a perpetual vicar. This vicar himself received the emoluments and paid the dean a yearly sum which, in 1198/1203, was 100 shillings in three instalments each of 2½ marks.<sup>30</sup> This arrangement was formalized in 1241 by Hugh Pattishall, Bishop of Lichfield, with the consent of the dean and chapter of Lincoln. The dean was to present to the bishop clerks for institution to the church of Ashbourne and a number of chapels, including that at Kniveton (a berewick of Markeaton). The perpetual vicar was to serve personally at Ashbourne, with two chaplains, one deacon and one sub-deacon, and to name chaplains for chapels in the berewicks of Ashbourne at Alsop, Hognaston and Parwich. He was to have all the emoluments of Ashbourne and these chapels, great and small tithes, escheats, oblations, homages and other dues, discharge all expenses, and pay the dean annually the sum of 50 marks.<sup>31</sup>

Since the emoluments amounted to more than twice 50 marks, Richard Gravesend, dean of Lincoln, complained about the anomaly to Pope Alexander IV who agreed and, in a bull from Viterbo in 1258, granted an indulgence that, when the incumbent at Ashbourne resigned or died, the dean or his successor could appropriate the said church, on condition that a suitable portion was assigned for a vicar to be appointed by the dean.<sup>32</sup> In 1262, Richard Gavesend, then bishop of Lincoln, directed the dean of York and the archdeacon of Oxford to induct the dean of Lincoln into possession of the church of Ashbourne when a vacancy occurred, in accordance with the mandate of Alexander IV.<sup>33</sup> Later that year, Roger Longespée, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, admitted William Lexington, dean of Lincoln, to all benefices in his diocese belonging to the dean of Lincoln and instituted him rector in all the churches except two. One of these was Ashbourne which was 'in possession of another on the presentation of the king'.<sup>34</sup> The 'another' was Peter de Wintonia and these records explain why the direction from the king had had to be repeated. The dean protested to the bishop that he ought to have the church or, at least, the 50 marks per year agreed by bishop Hugh Pattishall. Peter remained as perpetual vicar and, although there is no record, presumably paid the dean the pension of 50 marks annually.

As a Christmas present in 1260, the king directed the archbishop of Canterbury to admit Peter as rector to the church of Bishop's Waltham, the bishopric of Winchester being void.<sup>35</sup> Henry de Blois, bishop of Winchester from 1129 to 1171, who built the palace and the church of St Peter, gave the advowson to his foundation of the Hospital of St Cross at Winchester. The advowson had, presumably, reverted to the bishop by the time of the king's gift to Peter. Certainly, before Peter's death, the bishop held the advowson of Waltham against a claim by the monks of St Swithun at Winchester.<sup>36</sup>

It has been mentioned above that, while in France in 1262, the king directed the appointment of Peter to the deanery of Tattenhall and to a prebend at St Paul's. Unlike some other

royal clerks, Peter was never preferred to other higher ecclesiastical offices, archdeaconry or bishopric. He did, however, accumulate a number of benefices, his will listing a total of seven churches and a chapel. In view of Peter's duties with the royal household and his other commitments, even after leaving the wardrobe, his personal service at Ashbourne can hardly have satisfied the conditions in the bishop Hugh Pattishall agreement mentioned previously. Following then current practice in the case of pluralities, pastoral care in his benefices would be exercised by vicars and chaplains, chosen and paid by him; bishops' visitations would, in principle, check on whether the arrangements were satisfactory.

Pluralism supplied priests with benefices rather than benefices with priests—it did not demand that a cleric should reside and personally exercise pastoral care in his benefice and limit each to one. The spasmodic papal campaign against widespread pluralism, with pluralities commonly licenced by the granting of indulgences, was revived in his province by John Pecham, the newly-appointed Franciscan archbishop of Canterbury, at the council of Reading in 1279. That Peter de Wintonia, still described as king's clerk, retained influence in royal circles is evidenced by the royal direction dated February 1280 that he should not be removed against his will from the church at Ashbourne, possession of which (after the sitting incumbent's resignation or death) had been confirmed by the king to the dean and chapter of St Mary of Lincoln.<sup>37</sup> Was this directive a preemptive warning to Archbishop Pecham, who visited Ashbourne late in March of that year?<sup>38</sup>

In addition to the king's gift of four oaks from Salcey Forest in 1253 mentioned earlier, Peter received many similar royal gifts in kind: in 1256, seven good oaks from Salcey for Peter de Wintonia, parson of Crawley; in 1258 six oaks from Doyley Wood in Chute Forest for Peter de Wintonia, royal clerk; in 1260 four oaks from Porchester Forest; in 1262 two oaks from the park at Waltham and four from other woods of the bishopric of Winchester to repair the chancel of the church at Waltham. Other gifts of

oaks followed: in 1269 four from Hinkley Forest 'for Peter de Wintonia, beloved clerk in our wardrobe', in 1270 four from Chute Forest and two from Alice Holt Forest, in 1271 two from Alice Holt for Peter de Wintonia, keeper of the royal wardrobe, in 1272 three from Salcey.<sup>39</sup> A final recorded gift cost the king no monetary outlay—in 1271 Peter was granted licence for life to hunt, with his own dogs, the hare, the fox, the badger and the cat through the forests of the counties of Southampton, Wiltshire, Oxford, Berkshire, Worcester, Warwick, Buckingham, Northampton and Essex.<sup>40</sup>

As Chibnall remarks<sup>41</sup>, the building of a vast new rectory at Crawley East End was probably the end use of some of the oaks from Salcey. This rectory was of 8 bays, and in 1639 contained 18 rooms;<sup>42</sup> it is located by Chibnall nearly three-quarters of a mile east of the church, with the moated Filiol manor house another half-mile distant. After retirement from the king's wardrobe, it seems that Peter made the new rectory at Crawley his principal residence. He had been acquiring additional land there, as is evidenced by the record of a transaction in 1260.<sup>43</sup> It was, almost certainly, Peter who claimed the tithe of Little Crawley due, according to Chibnall<sup>44</sup>, to the prior of Tickford who had been responsible for serving a chapel in that hamlet. After the chapel fell into disuse around the end of the twelfth century, the inhabitants of Little Crawley apparently preferred to attend church in Crawley rather than their more distant parish church at Chicheley. The parson of Crawley thus came to regard the people of Little Crawley as his parishioners and their tithe as his. There is no record in the *Taxatio* of any income due to the prior of Tickford from Little Crawley. The claim was contested between priors of Tickford and parsons of Crawley in a succession of lawsuits, before both ecclesiastical and lay courts, and was still in dispute in 1384. It was then biased in favour of the rector, John de Burton, who had the advantage of being a clerk in the royal chancery. Finally, a century later, the major part of Little Crawley was transferred from Chicheley parish to that of Crawley, while a compensatory pension (10s a year in 1535) was to be paid to the prior of Tickford.

Neither the date nor place of Peter de Wintonia's death is on record. However, in March 1289, at Agen, Edmund de Maidstone, chaplain to Bishop John de Pontissara of Winchester, was collated to the rectory of Bishop's Waltham vacant by the death of Peter de Wintonia the previous rector.<sup>45</sup> If Peter was dead before March 1289, there seem to have been delays in filling the other vacancies left. In February 1290, the church of Sutton-le-Marsh being vacant by the death of Peter de Wintonia, John de Scalleby was instituted rector, by letter patent by a council at Northampton; the patron was the bishop of Lincoln and John had been commended by a previous council held in London.<sup>46</sup> In October 1290, Roger Longespée, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, wrote from Tattenhall to the bishop of Lincoln confirming that the chapel of Kniveton was to be appropriated, along with the church at Ashbourne, by the dean and chapter of Lincoln on the death or resignation of Master Peter de Wintonia.<sup>47</sup> Strangely, Roger's letter refers to Peter as 'now rector'; however, the letter was sealed by the bishop of Lincoln in November 1290 and his registrar, John de Scalleby, was certainly in a position to know that Peter was no longer alive. The chapel was, presumably, duly appropriated. The *Taxatio* of c.1291 shows that the church at Ashbourne, worth £66.13.4, had been appropriated and a vicarage endowed with a stipend of £5.<sup>48</sup>

Because Peter's benefices were in several dioceses, his will was executed in the court of John Pecham, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1292. However, the record appears, with a whole list of others similar, in the register of the next archbishop, Robert Winchelsey, under year 1309: either legal proceedings were as dilatory then as now or the registrars were catching up with a backlog of records. Dominus Peter de Wintonia had died in possession of the churches of (North) Crawley and Sutton (le-Marsh) in the dioceses of Lincoln, (Bishop's) Waltham and Stradlington in the diocese of Winchester, Langedon (Longdon) in the diocese of Worcester, Ashbourne and the chapel of Kniveton in the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, and Compton in that of Sarum.<sup>49</sup> Peter's prebend in St Paul's and his deanery of

Tattenhall are not mentioned.

Neither the Patent Rolls, in which four of Peter's other appointments by the king's gift are recorded, nor the Lincoln registers, give the date of his appointment to Sutton-le-Marsh.

On unknown grounds, Chibnall<sup>50</sup> identifies Stradlington as Streatham (Surrey) which seems untenable since Streatham is always recorded identifiably in medieval records. The editor of Archbishop Winchelsey's register makes a point of mentioning that Stradlington was the one place that neither she nor her place-name advisers were able to identify. No reference to Stradlington, or to Peter's appointment thereto, has been found in the Patent Rolls covering Peter's years of activity. No Stradlington is included in the c.1270 list of churches in the diocese of Winchester in the earliest Winchester register, that of bishop John de Pontissara (1282–1305). No Stradlington is listed in the *Taxatio* of c.1291. In these two lists, moreover, there is no name which appears at all likely to have been entered as Stradlington in Archbishop Winchelsey's register or be so transcribed by the editor who, no doubt, checked this name very carefully. No Stradlington is known to the present keeper of the diocesan records.<sup>51</sup> Nor has a Stradlington in the diocese of Winchester been found in Domesday Book (in Hampshire or Surrey), or in a number of other medieval records.<sup>52</sup> Investigation of the one or two churches in the diocese of Winchester with names even remotely similar to Stradlington in the *Taxatio* has proved fruitless.

No register for the diocese of Worcester exists prior to that of bishop Godfrey Giffard (1268–1302) so that no diocesan record has been found giving the date of Peter de Wintonia's appointment to Longdon near Tewkesbury. From 1264, the patron of the moiety of the advowson was the abbot of Westminster, but no record of Peter's appointment has been found in the Patent Rolls or in the archives of the abbey.<sup>53</sup> However, the king was often at Westminster and Peter, as a king's clerk, must have had many contacts with the abbot and his staff, so that it is possible that he obtained the church of Longdon by agreement with the

abbot, rather than by royal directive (which would explain the lack of record in the Patent Rolls). Peter would have been the rector, appointing a vicar actually to serve in the church. In a list of 1285 of priests in the diocese of Worcester, Gilbert is recorded as vicar of Longdon and there is no mention of Peter de Wintonia who was, presumably, the absentee rector.<sup>54</sup> There is a record, dated to 1291, that John de Bruges was admitted to the church at Longdon but not instituted as absent;<sup>55</sup> was he intended as the immediate successor to Peter? The church was fully appropriated to Westminster Abbey by papal bull in 1332 and from then on was a perpetual vicarage to which a number of appointments are on record.<sup>56</sup>

There is no register extant for the diocese of Sarum covering the years of Peter's active career to aid identification of the Compton of which he was the parson.<sup>57</sup> Chibnall apparently chose, on the basis of the *Taxatio* value he gives, but on unknown grounds, the Compton just south of Shaftesbury (patron the abbot of Milton). A pointer against this and the other Compton Abbas or the other Dorset Comptons is the fact that Dorset was not among the counties in whose forests Peter received licence to hunt.

During the relevant period, the advowson of the church of Compton in the deanery of Newbury was held by the abbess of Wherwell. In April 1257, Abbess Euphemia died and the next month the abbey was visited by king's clerk, Andrew de Wintonia, who was charged with receiving seisin in the king's name during the voidance.<sup>58</sup> A curious custom existed whereby, at each election of an abbess of Wherwell, the king had the right to nominate a clerk to receive a pension from the abbey until he should be provided with a suitable benefice. King Henry's opportunism in exploiting ecclesiastical voidances to reward his clerks with appointments to benefices has already been exemplified by Peter de Wintonia's appointments to the prebend of St Paul's and to the church of Bishop's Waltham. This Wherwell custom was tailor-made for a king like Henry and it seems probable that Peter was appointed to Compton either during the voidance or at the

election of the next abbess, Mary, in 1259. If not then, there were other voidances and elections, as can be seen from the list of abbesses prior to the death of Henry: Mary 1259, Constance 1261–2, M(ary?) de Ticheburne 1262 and Mabel 1270–81.<sup>59</sup> Since such an appointment would not, nominally, be directly by the king, the Patent Rolls would not necessarily have a record. Despite the lack of any record linking Peter definitely to this Compton, the probability is that this was the Compton listed in his will.

In the *Taxatio* of c.1291, the yearly values of these benefices are recorded: Crawley £20, Sutton £12.6.8, Waltham £20, Stradlington (no mention), Longdon £29.13.4, Ashbourne £66.13.4 (vicar £5), Kniveton £8, Compton £13.6.8 (vicar £4.6.8).<sup>60</sup> In his retirement from the royal service, Peter's benefices thus provided him with a gross income of some £180 per annum which, even taking account of his outgoings in payments to his vicars and chaplains and to the dean of Lincoln, made him a comfortably rich man, compared with the income of around £20 considered appropriate for undertaking the obligations of a knight. In our times, higher civil servants supplement their pensions by appointments to quangos or to the boards of companies, nationalized or private, and similar activities.

The thirteenth century saw a tremendous wave of building and rebuilding of churches, from cathedrals to parish churches and chapels. The chancel of his church was the rector's responsibility and many a new chancel must have been provided by rich pluralists with useful connections like Peter de Wintonia. His first four oaks from Salcey Forest almost certainly went towards the rebuilding of the chancel of St Firmin's at Crawley, dating the start of that rebuilding to 1253. The sophisticated simplicity of the design of the chancel, particularly the elegant tracery of the windows, strongly suggests that Peter enlisted the services of one of the masons involved in the contemporary rebuilding of Westminster Abbey. However, no mason's mark which might confirm this is now discernible on the chancel at Crawley (the exterior is disfigured by gashes made to key the

Roman cement with which it was covered until recently, while the interior is heavily white-washed).

Whether Peter sold his other oaks or utilized them on building projects at his other churches is not recorded, except in the case of Bishop's Waltham where the oaks were granted specifically for repair of the chancel of the church. There is now no trace of his work in the chancel there but, during rebuilding in the 1860s, vestiges of thirteenth-century windows were found in the north wall, vestiges perhaps of Peter's rebuilding overlain by the late fourteenth-century rebuilding of Bishop William of Wykeham.<sup>61</sup>

At Sutton-le-Marsh, the present church of St Clement was built in the nineteenth century to replace the medieval church destroyed by the sea. The church of St Mary at Longdon near Tewkesbury retains no medieval features except the west tower and spire (later than Peter's time) and a brass of a later lord of the manor and his lady.

Of Ashbourne church, dedicated to St Oswald, the chancel, basically as it now exists, was dedicated in 1241, according to a contemporary inscription on brass to be seen in the south transept; the transepts and their aisles were, almost certainly, still under construction in Peter's time. At the small, mutilated, church of St Michael at Kniveton, the minuscule west tower appears to be of thirteenth-century date, perhaps from the time of Peter. The fonts at Ashbourne and Kniveton are both thirteenth-century in date, of the same stone and decorated with similar but not identical trefoil designs.

The church of St Mary and St Nicholas at Compton displays no major medieval feature except for the thirteenth-century west tower. The chancel was rebuilt in the last century in thirteenth-century style, perhaps inspired by remains of features of the time of Peter de Wintonia, while a twentieth-century north aisle to the nave replaces one demolished many years ago.<sup>62</sup>

Peter's immediate successor as rector of Crawley is not known, since Peter de Guildford's alleged appointment in 1294 has been shown to be an error. Upkeep of the vast rectory may have been beyond the means of a rector without substantial other income and it must have been one of Peter de Wintonia's successors who attempted to alleviate matters by encouraging pilgrims to visit and leave offerings at the site of the former resting place of St Firmin and location of his holy well.<sup>63</sup> In 1298, Bishop Oliver Sutton of Lincoln found it necessary to mandate the dean of Newport Pagnell to go to the church at Great Crawley and find out whether superstitious pilgrimages were being made on account of miracles which had been accredited and, if they were, to put a stop to them; the dean's report is not on record.<sup>64</sup> Pilgrimages to ancient holy sites were not so easily suppressed. The scale of the church of St Firmin, compared with churches in nearby villages, and the quality of the architecture and fittings dating from after 1298, in what was never a particularly rich or populous village, suggest that the church coffers continued to benefit through medieval times from offerings at St Firmin's holy well.

In 1408, the rector, William Frankyssh, was given licence to celebrate service in the rectory for three years, presumably because the church was in the hands of builders for what must have been major work to necessitate non-use for so long;<sup>65</sup> however, no existing, obvious, part of the church is usually ascribed to the early fifteenth century. The major rebuilding, which included raising the walls of nave and chancel and installing low-pitched timber roofs, is ascribed by RCHM to the mid or later fifteenth century (see Appendix 2).

The visitation of Crawley Boriall in 1519 records that the rector was non-resident and the rectory was in lay hands and ruinous.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, according to Chibnall, Peter's rectory was only finally demolished around 1800 and the material used in building a new rectory, now the house near the church called 'The Old Rectory', in lay possession since after 1933. The slow pace of inflation in the value of agricultural



property between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries is shown by the increase in the value of the living from £20 in 1291 to only £28 in 1535, despite the absorption of most of Little Crawley in (Great) Crawley.<sup>67</sup>

Peter's resting place may have been marked by the thirteenth-century slab with incised cross recorded by the RCHM at the east end of the nave of the church at North Crawley. The slab was apparently not known to the writer of the 'Short Guide' and is not now in view; it may be hidden under the nave carpeting or the flooring

of one of the box pews. Luckily, Peter's chancel with his inscription still remains to grace the church of St Firmin and serve as his memorial, reminding us when we praise God to mention Peter.

#### *Acknowledgements*

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### APPENDIX 1: THE SUFFIX 'DE WINTONIA' (OF WINCHESTER)

The suffix de Wintonia, Winton, Wynton, or Wyntes, appears from time to time in thirteenth-century public records, though without throwing light on relationships. A few examples are given here to augment those given in the main text.

Mention may first be made of Herbert de Wintonia who was chamberlain and treasurer to William II and Henry I.<sup>68</sup> His FitzHerbert sons and grandsons served Henry I and Henry II in high posts. One son, Walter FitzHerbert was elected archbishop of York in 1140 but, owing to opposition by the Cistercians led by (St) Bernard, was not consecrated by Pope Innocent II until 1143 and then deposed by Eugenius III in 1147, to be reinstated by Anastasius IV in 1153 after the death of Bernard. Walter re-entered York in May 1154 and died a month later after celebrating a mass. Poison was suspected. He was canonized by Honorius III in 1226.<sup>69</sup>

Of later bearers of the suffix, Walter de Wintonia sheriff of London in 1229/30 had to wait until 1233 for repayment of disbursements made for the king's established alms during that year of office.<sup>70</sup> In 1242, Adam de Wintonia was a monk at Worcester.<sup>71</sup> Thomas de Wintonia was a king's clerk in 1244, and Tout suggests that Peter might have been his brother<sup>72</sup> This was, almost certainly, the Thomas de Wintonia appointed by the prior of Merton to the church of Whipsnade in 1245.<sup>73</sup> In that year, Master Simon de Wintonia was keeper of the bishopric of Coventry and Lichfield, then in the king's hands.<sup>74</sup> The visit of Andrew de Wintonia, king's clerk, to the abbey of Wherwell in 1257 is mentioned in the main text. It was presumably this Andrew who was nominated to the church of La Kalandre in Winchester in February 1261

by the king's gift in avoidance of the bishopric of Winchester<sup>75</sup> and later to other benefices. From 1261 to 1264, Peter's deputy in charge of the Counter Rolls was John de Wintonia. Serlo de Wintonia held Peter's power of attorney in 1262. Richard, king's clerk, was also in that royal party overseas. It must have been this Richard who is recorded as king's pantler in 1262 and clerk of the pantry in 1266.<sup>70</sup> Most likely, it was he whom the king had directed the archbishop of Canterbury to admit to the church of Cumpston in the diocese of Winchester in September 1259,<sup>77</sup> a directive that had to be repeated in December 1260.

In 1269, Adam de Wintonia, clerk to King Henry's son, Edward, was granted for life that his houses in the parish of St Saviour at Winchester should be quit of all livery of stewards, marshals or other ministers of the king.<sup>78</sup> Later, it was perhaps this Adam who was keeper of the rolls and writs of the king's Jewry. Another Peter de Wynton was one of the three monks of St Swithun's of Winchester who brought news to their brethren that the Pope had not admitted the postulation of Robert Burnell, Bishop of Bath and Wells, to be their bishop.<sup>79</sup> Roger de Wynton features in a 1281 list of priests in the diocese of Worcester and, in 1283, Henry de Wynton is recorded as clerk to bishop Godfrey Giffard<sup>80</sup> In 1290, there was a Richard de Wintonia, monk at Reading Abbey.<sup>81</sup>

There were other and less 'official' contemporary bearers of the suffix de Wintonia. In May 1263, Alice de Wintonia, appearing before the king at St Paul's, was pardoned for falsifying the king's money.<sup>82</sup> Several Jews suffixed de Wintonia also appear in contemporary records, for example Benetton or Benedict de Wintonia given royal licence to trade.<sup>83</sup>

However the apparent proliferation of royal officers and royal and episcopal clerks suffixed 'de Wintonia' suggests, not necessarily that they were all related by blood but, perhaps, that some of them emanated from

the same educational establishment: the monastic school at Winchester—the predecessors of our 'Wykehamists'.

## APPENDIX 2: DATES OF VISIBLE FEATURES IN THE FABRIC OF THE CHURCH OF ST FIRMIN AT NORTH CRAWLEY

Peter de Wintonia's new chancel presumably replaced a Saxon or Norman chancel. At that time (c. 1253) there was a nave and south aisle, separated by an arcade of five arches of Transitional Norman data (c. 1199), the eastern three being slightly earlier and taller than the western two. The pier separating the two sizes of arch is said to incorporate a remnant of the west wall of a Norman nave. In fact, the apparent traces of a pre-existing wall appear on both north and south sides of the pier, suggesting there was also a pre-Transitional south aisle. Moreover, these vestiges indicate that the alleged wall was only 21 inches thick, a thickness more suggestive of Saxon than of Norman work. The short length of the south wall of the nave between the easternmost, engaged, pier of the arcade and the chancel wall is also said to be of Norman date. The thickness at the base is about 32 inches, again on the thin side for Norman walling of the then probable height.

By Peter's time, the three lower stories of the early thirteenth century Early English west tower existed, with a circular turret clasping the south-west angle. The top storey, in the Decorated style, was added during the fourteenth century. Earlier in that same century, a north aisle was built, with an arcade of four Decorated style arches.

The installation of a low-pitched roof on the chancel is dated by RCHM to the later fifteenth century. The necessary raising of the walls is suggested by the fact that the thirteenth-century buttresses and pilasters do not reach anywhere near the present tops of the north and south walls and is confirmed by a study of the masonry. At this time, the chancel arch may have been widened, although the chamfers are identical with those of the north arcade arches, and the carving of the supporting corbels could also be of fourteenth-century date. The raising of the nave walls allowed the insertion of large, Perpendicular style, clerestory windows, as well as a low-pitched roof of design very similar to that of the chancel. These oak roofs are fine examples of their time and type, with carved figures of apostles, saints and angels along with animals, birds and foliage. The

aisle roofs appear to be contemporary. Similar roofs may be seen in the church at Newport Pagnell.

The windows in the aisles are also Perpendicular in style and of similar later fifteenth-century date with the exception of a small window, probably thirteenth-century, toward the west end of the south aisle. The 'Short Guide' to the church refers to widening of the south aisle at the time the existing windows were inserted. The masonry of the south aisle walls, however, shows no signs of such a widening. The buttresses, diagonal at the corners, were no doubt added to strengthen the wall when the large Perpendicular windows were inserted.

The north doorway and door date from the late fifteenth century. The south doorway and the priest's door in the chancel are both largely of cement. Each fits within its original frame in the masonry and, if the cement designs copy the originals, both were in a style transitional between Early English and Decorated, of the late thirteenth to early fourteenth century.

Unless the features dated by RCHM to the later fifteenth century can be brought forward by some fifty years, there are no obvious major vestiges of the early fifteenth century to explain the permission for the rector, William Frankyssh, to hold services in the rectory for three years from 1408.

Finally, mention must be made of the late fifteenth-century rood screen with its panels painted with figures of twelve prophets and, on the doors, four saints. This fine example of a medieval painted screen may be unique in this country, and certainly deserves to be better-known.

At present, in 1990, the chancel is being restored externally. The hood moulds of the windows are being replaced and the traceries restored. The crenellated parapet is being replaced. Restoration work has recently been carried out on some of the clerestory windows. Drains are being provided externally, with the aim of protecting the fabric from rain-water run-off and rising damp.

## Sources

RCHM, *Buckinghamshire* 2, 219ff.

H. M. and J. Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture* 1 (CUP, 1965) 12.

H. M. Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture* 3 (CUP, 1978) 959.

*St Firmin's Church, North Crawley, A Short Guide.*

T. D. Atkinson, *English Architecture* (Methuen, 1930) 81.

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- Gentleman's Magazine* (1849) Pt 1, 158; RCHM, *Buckinghamshire* 2 (1913) 219ff. GM mentions the 'salubrious' well in the churchyard, implying that this too was refurbished by Peter de Guildford. In the gravelled area N of the church, close to the churchyard fence, is a steel plate covering a well or tank, which may mark the site of the holy well.
- A. C. Chibnall, *Beyond Sherington* (Phillimore, 1979) 19–20, 229; *Calendar of Patent Rolls [Cal Pat] 1292–1301*, 94. The confusion between Crawley and Crowell was due to spellings such as 'Crawele' (Crawley) and 'Crawelle' (Crowell).
- Rosalind M. T. Hill (ed.), *Rolls & Register of Bishop Oliver Sutton* (Lincoln Record Society [LRS], Vol. 76) 188.
- M. W. Hughes (ed.), *A Calendar of the Feet of Fines for Buckinghamshire 7 Richard I to 44 Henry III* (Bucks Arch. Soc., Records Branch, Vol. 4, 1940) 85.
- F. N. Davies (ed.), *Rotuli Roberti Grosseteste* (LRS, Vol. 11) 377.
- Hughes, *op. cit.*, 93.
- Ibid.*, 95.
- Calendar of Close Rolls [Cal Close] 1251–3*, 348. Salcey Forest lies partly in Bucks and partly in Northants. It is now bordered on the West by the M1 motorway.
- Cal Pat 1247–58*, 232.
- Ibid.*, 378, 383, 387, 388. Peter de Chaceporc also had Buckinghamshire connections. Among other benefices he held Ivinghoe and, post mortem, was the real founder of Ravenstone Priory.
- Cal Pat 1258–66*, 54.
- Cal Pat 1261–4*, 129.
- Cal Pat 1266–72*, 731, 736, 737, 740. These entries, all dated to 1262, are chronologically out of place in the roll.
- Cal Pat 1258–66*, 310, 332.
- M. Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century* (OUP, 1953) 220.
- Cal Pat 1266–72*. See index under Peter de Wintonia.
- Ibid.*, 43, 50.
- Ibid.*, 135.
- Ibid.*, 280, 343.
- Powicke, *op. cit.*, 224.
- T. F. Tout, *Chapters in Medieval Administrative History* (Manchester UP, 1923–5) I, 277–8, 280, 298–300, 314–16, 319: 2, 3; 4, 349; 6, 5, 25–28, 76, 77.
- Cal Pat 1266–72*, 200.
- Calendar of Liberate Rolls [Cal Lib] 1267–72*, 239.
- Cal Pat 1266–72*, 715.
- Cal Pat 1272–81*, 3.
- Cal Close 1288–96*, 181.
- Cal Pat 1232–47*, 249; *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae Auctoritate P. Nicholai VI Circa 1291* (Record Commission, 1802) 33b.
- Cal Pat 1258–66*, 67, 143.
- C. W. Foster (ed.), *Registrum Antiquissimum Lincoln* (LRS, Vol. 27) 17, 116, 199, 206.
- Ibid.*, (LRS, Vol. 29) 38.
- Ibid.*, 41.
- Ibid.*, 42.
- Ibid.*, 44.
- Ibid.*, 110.
- Cal Pat 1258–66*, 132. Bishop-elect of Winchester since 1250, Aymer de Valence or de Lusignan, half-brother to Henry III, died in Paris on 4 December 1260, while on his way back to England after consecration by the Pope in May that year.
- Cecil Deedes (ed.), *Registrum Johannis de Pontissara* (Canterbury & York Society [CYS], Vol. 30, 1924) 432.
- Cal Pat 1272–81*, 362.
- Decima Douie (ed.), *Register of John Pecham, Archbishop of Canterbury* (CYS, Vol. 65, 1968) 108.
- Cal Close 1254–6*, 250; *1256–9*, 241; *1259–61*, 51; *1261–4*, 40; *1264–8*, 63, 152; *1268–72*, 67, 184, 374, 456. Doyley wood in Chute Forest lay about a mile N of Hurstbourne Tarrant, Hants; Porchester Forest, immediately N of Portsdown, was the southern portion of the Forest of Bere; Hinkley or Finkley Forest, just NE of Andover, was considered part of Chute Forest; Alice Holt was centred about 4m SW of Farnham, Surrey, but lay mainly in Hants.
- Cal Pat 1266–72*, 567.
- Chibnall, *op. cit.*, 20.
- Ibid.*, 229.
- Hughes, *op. cit.*, 112.
- Chibnall, *op. cit.*, 119ff. For position in 1384 see *Cal Pat 1381–6*, 445.
- Deedes, (CYS, Vol. 19, 1915) 31.
- Hill, *op. cit.*, (LRS, Vol. 39) 137.
- Ibid.*, (LRS, Vol. 48) 55–6.
- Taxatio*, 246b.
- Rose Graham (ed.), *Registrum Roberti Winchelsea* (CYS, Vol. 52, 1956) 1150 and Introduction.
- Chibnall, *op. cit.*, 229 n. 16.
- Mr John Hardacre, Curator, Winchester Cathedral, pers. comm.
- Testa de Nevill* (Record Commission, 1807); *Placita de Quo Waranto* (Rec. Comm., 1818); *Nonarum Inquisitiones: Cal Rot Chartarum* (Rec. Comm., 1837).
- Dr Richard Mortimer, Keeper of the Muniments, Westminster Abbey, pers. comm.
- J. Willis Bund (ed.), *Register of Bishop Godfrey Giffard 1268–1301* (Worcs. Hist. Soc., 1898–1902) Vol.

- 2, 255.
55. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, ccxxi, Appendix IV.
56. See n. 48.
57. Miss Suzanne Edward, Librarian and Keeper of the Muniments, Salisbury Cathedral, pers. comm.
58. *Cal Pat 1247-58*, 552.
59. *VCH Hampshire* 2, 132ff.
60. *Taxatio*, 33b, 59a, 188a, 211b, 216b, 246b, 247a.
61. *VCH Hampshire* 3, 279.
62. *VCH Berkshire* 4, 20.
63. R. P. Hagerty, 'The Buckinghamshire Saints Reconsidered. 1: St Firmin of North Crawley', *Recs. Bucks* 27 (1985) 65ff.
64. Hill, *op. cit.*, (LRS, Vol. 64) 103f.
65. M. Archer (ed.), *Register of Bishop Philip Repingdon* (LRS, Vol. 57) 114. See also Appendix 2.
66. A. H. Thompson (ed.), *Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln, 1517-1531* (LRS, Vol. 33) 52.
67. Chibnall, *op. cit.*, 21-2; *Valor Ecclesiasticus temp Henry VIII (1535)* 4, 244. The gross value of Great Crawley was £28, less the pension of 10s paid to the prior of Tickford.
68. Tout, *op. cit.*, 1, 76-7; 6, 112.
69. DNB 7, 173-6; Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, 2, 503-5.
70. *Cal Lib 1226-40*, 200.
71. *Cal Pat 1232-47*, 284.
72. Tout, *op. cit.*, 1, 277.
73. Davies, *op. cit.*, 324.
74. *Cal Pat 1232-47*, 447.
75. *Cal Pat 1258-66*, 143.
76. *Cal Pat 1260-67*, 98, 219.
77. *Cal Pat 1258-66*, 44.
78. *Cal Pat 1266-72*, 390, 717.
79. *Cal Pat 1272-81*, 398.
80. Willis Bund, *op. cit.*, 2, 158ff., 182.
81. *Cal Pat 1281-92*.
82. *Cal Pat 1258-66*, 258.
83. *Cal Pat 1226-40*, 46.