

THE CARTULARY OF DURFORD ABBEY, SUSSEX

Transcribed from British Museum Ms. Cotton Vespasian E. xxiii  
and edited with an introduction and select index.

A Thesis presented to the  
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By

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THE CARTULARY OF DURFORD ABBEY, SUSSEX

The cartulary consists of a manuscript some one hundred and thirteen pages long, and was written at the abbey of Durford in the county of Sussex, England, around the end of the thirteenth century. There are some charters of early fourteenth century provenance and a few later additions, with the last item to which any positive date may be given being of c. 1465. It contains copies of royal and episcopal privileges (Henry II, John, Henry III and Edward II; the various bishops of Chichester and Winchester, in the period covered by the cartulary; and two letters of confirmation by Archbishops Richard Grant and Ralph Nevill of Canterbury), and charters of the founders (the Husey family of Harting), together with many other documents of leases, fines and similar records. The earliest document is one of Henry II relating to the foundation of the abbey c. 1161. Other documents relate to the taxation of 1292, and to the disastrous fire of 1417 which resulted in the loss of the bell tower of the abbey. There is also a letter from Bishop John Langton, of Chichester, to the bishop of Winchester, Adam Orleton, concerning the poverty of the abbey, following its plundering by thieves in the early fourteenth century, and asking his support in helping Durford Abbey acquire the advowson of the church at Compton, in Surrey. The cartulary also contains copies of a number of corrodies, with the obligations of both parties being set out in some detail.

The introduction describes the appearance and contents of the manuscript and discusses the possible aspect of the abbey buildings, of which no traces remain beyond a few ornamental tiles and a tombstone. The economic life of the abbey and its holdings in Sussex and Hampshire is also considered. The problem of the lack of the earliest foundation documents is also discussed, together with the abbey's place in the history of Premonstratensian foundations in England at that period.

The endowments of the abbey, the terms on which these were given, and the status and families of the men who gave them are described in the introduction and the notes accompanying the charters. The abbey's relationship with other religious orders is considered, especially the connection with the Order of St Lazarus, whose leper hospital in Harting was acquired by Durford Abbey around 1248. The introduction also mentions the link with the Benedictine abbey of Hyde, whose abbot had patronage of a chantry at Durford; though the evidence for this is outside the cartulary itself.

Appendices on the abbots of Durford and the Husey family are also given, together with a select index of the principal persons and places mentioned in the text.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	i
Map.....	liii
Text of the Cartulary.....	1
Appendix One: The Abbots of Durford.....	439
Appendix Two: The Husey Family.....	441
Appendix Three: Samples of Hands.....	443
Bibliography.....	446
Index of Selected Places and Persons in the Text....	452

## THE CARTULARY OF DURFORD ABBEY, SUSSEX

### INTRODUCTION

The Premonstratensian abbey of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St John the Baptist was founded at Durford in the remote northwest corner of the county of Sussex at some time just before 1161, its patrons being the family of Husey (Hosatus), lords of the nearby manor of Harting.

The cartulary of the abbey consists of 113 folios of vellum, each  $9\frac{1}{4}$  x  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches in size, with a flyleaf of the same size bearing an inscription (in a later hand than the main work): Registrum Cartarum Prioratus de Dureford in Com. Sussexia. Between the flyleaf and the first folio of the cartulary are three cyrograph parts, each smaller than the main folios, and pasted sideways to the rest upon binding. The whole has been bound into a handsome brown and gold cover with the title on its spine: Registrum Cartarum Prioratus de Dureford. Com. Suss. Cot. Vesp. E. xxiii; thus signifying its inclusion in the library of the Cotton family, who collected a great many ancient registers and records in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The Cottonian title also gives a clue to the inscribed flyleaf previously mentioned, not only because the wording is almost identical, but also because the cartulary itself never refers to Durford as a priory, but always as an abbey. The Cottonian Library was the object of some misgivings in the early 18th century, as many historians were uneasy at the thought of so many early records being in private hands. After a disastrous fire at the library in 1731, when many manuscripts were destroyed, the collection

was eventually moved to the newly formed British Museum in London in 1753. The Durford cartulary remains in the Manuscript Section of the Museum, now renamed the British Library.

For the most part the folios are of generally fair to good quality, though some have holes or other blemishes in them, while others have been badly trimmed at the time of binding. These defects, especially when they interfere with transcription, are mentioned in the notes to the entry in this edition. Most folios have been pricked and ruled and contain 25 - 29 lines of writing which extend across the page. A comparison of hands shows two major styles and a miscellany of others. Hand 'A', a careful court hand of late 13th-century provenance, forms the dominant script for some 182 of the 225 pages of the cartulary, and thus accounts for about 81% of the whole. The small cyrograph copies would appear to be also in the same script. Hand 'B', a larger and more flowing hand than the other, occurs in folios 102 - 109 in a series of entries relating to land grants in Mapledurham (Hants.), and has only about 20 lines to the page. It tends to have more elaborate capitals as initial letters and rubricates many letters in the body of the entry. Taken together, hands 'A' and 'B' account for some 88% of the cartulary entries. The remaining hands are varied and generally each extends over only a single folio, or two on occasion. Such entries are rarely pricked and ruled, and appear in many cases to have been made in the wide bottom margin, or to use up the remainder of a page. Examples of the major hands may be seen in Appendix Three.

The cartulary is arranged and numbered in two sections, mainly on

a topographical basis, with the royal charters placed at the beginning of the first and miscellaneous additions at the beginning and end of each. In the collection and binding certain folios have been misplaced. Folios 42 - 47 should follow folio 72 to form the first quire of the second section, that dealing with the abbey's properties in Hampshire.<sup>1</sup> The first section begins with the charters of King Henry II and King John relating to the early endowments and the foundation of the abbey, and include the confirmatory charter of Henry II on Henry Husey's foundation of a leper hospital at Harting, which did not belong to Durford until the middle of the 13th century (4)<sup>2</sup>. The royal charters are followed by various versions of the Husey family's foundation charters, which recite the endowments in greater detail. The abbey's claims to the church at Rogate and the chapel at Standen (Wilts.) occur next, followed by a series of episcopal charters of the bishops of Chichester and Salisbury on these, and those of the bishop of Winchester on tithes in his diocese. The archbishop of Canterbury also confirms the various gifts, endowments and privileges of the abbey (folios 15 - 22). The remainder of the section is taken up with the charters of the greater landowners of the area: William, earl of Arundel (Sussex) in whose gift the land lay, William, earl of Warenne, William de Braose, lord of Bramber; and with the record of grants in Sussex at Heyshott, Graffham, Tillington, Trotton and Chithurst (folios 33 - 42). At this

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1. See G. R. C. Davis, Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain. A Short Catalogue, p. 38. Note, however, that Davis counts the flyleaf and cyrograph fragments as folios, so his folio numbers are always four ahead of the numbers in this edition.

2. Numbers in brackets in the text refer to items in the cartulary.



point the sequence is broken by the error in the binding already mentioned, and by miscellaneous material on the taxation of 1292 and the disastrous fire of 1417. The folios on the Hampshire lands, wrongly included here, are numbered in accord with the second section. The Sussex holdings are recorded again from folio 48 on and include the properties in Rogate and Wenham. The important acquisition of the leper hospital in Harting, and the subsequent consolidation of its land in Upperton, Harting and Hurst, in Sussex, occur next in folios 53 - 67, and these are followed by the continuation of the 1292 taxation list on folio 72. The second section, on the Hampshire lands, then recommences and continues until the end of the cartulary.

The material, especially when copied by writer 'A', is usually carefully arranged, with a rubricated heading concerning each entry at its head. On occasion a space was left for an ornamental initial which was never actually filled in, and such occurrences are pointed out in the notes. There are only three entries in hand 'A' which are incomplete (7, 301 and possibly 222, where it coincides with the end of a page). An examination of such entries in hand 'A' which are dated would suggest a terminus of c. 1300 for this writer, although the material relating to the taxation of 1292 is written in a different hand. The entries of hand 'B' all refer to matters taking place in c. 1318. The other miscellaneous hands have widely divergent dates, with the latest entry that can be dated with any certainty (307), occurring c. 1465.

The cartulary naturally concerns itself with matters of legal import and occasions for personal or lighter comment would not be expected

to occur. On three occasions there are small drawings of a hand with a curiously long index finger (folios 42, 66v, 84), pointing to the material in the deed. After the laborious calculation of the taxation of Pope Nicholas IV, c. 1292, the canon breaks into a little verse, Res audita perit, litera scripta manet, presumably on the double grounds that he has completed his accounts, and that Durford Abbey has successfully met its tax obligations. (132a)

Judging by the occurrence of marginal comments against the main text, one important contemporary use of the cartulary was as a reminder and a check on important endowments. Marginal notes occur most frequently against the royal charters and alongside the entries of the Husey family (8 - 10), and again beside the confirmatory charter of Bishop Seffrid II of Chichester, on the gifts of the Husey family and others (36). In the second section the various donations of the successive earls of Gloucester are similarly noted. Various indentures also occur (254, 279, 288), as duplicate or multiply endorsed land exchanges and agreements thereon, as the abbots would naturally take particular care over these. In some cases, reference is made to deeds which the canons already hold, (160, for example); and there is one case of a memorandum setting out the legal precedents upon which the canons had successfully held their position against a plea in an assize of mort d'ancestor (221). For the most part, however, the cartulary records the grants to and by Durford Abbey, and the rents or other services which it was to receive or pay. There is generally clear evidence, therefore, of use from its compilation in the late 13th and early 14th centuries; later, however,

in the 15th century, one wonders whether it was consulted at all as, in answer to Bishop Redman's questionnaire of 1478, which he sent to all Premonstratensian houses in England, the canons could not even give an accurate date for the foundation of their house, or the name of its first abbot. (See below p.xlvi).

As a search in the Public Records Office, and elsewhere in London, revealed no originals of the cartulary entries, a check upon the accuracy of the cartulary copies must be done by comparing the entries against printed sources. In 1374 - 8, for example, when Edward III asked for the usual feudal dues upon the reception of knighthood by his eldest son, the Black Prince, distraint was made upon Durford Abbey upon its objection to the payment of such dues. The Parliament Rolls of that year record a petition to Edward and his Council from "ses pouvres Chepelyns, l'Abbe et covent de Durford" referring to the original foundation and its confirmation by Henry II as being held in frankalmoign. (2). The Council duly noted this and released the lands from claim, as "les terres contenues en la Peticion soient tenuz en pure et perpetuel almoigne." Alongside the Parliamentary responsio is printed Henry II's original charter, which is identical with that of the cartulary.<sup>1</sup> In similar fashion, a check of the fines in the cartulary against the published Feet of Fines (Sussex) shows substantial agreement between the cartulary and the Curia Regis copy (220, 222). The last fine (222) is incomplete in the cartulary, but it could be that a page is missing at that point. Another less direct check may be made against the published Patent Rolls;

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1. Rot. Parl., 67, 21 and 22 Edward III. Petitiones in Parlamento.
  2. Feet of Fines, Sussex. Vol. 2 (1902), L. F. Salzman (ed), Nos. 467, 419.

indirect, because calendared in English. They reveal substantial agreement in content with the cartulary entries (312, 313).<sup>1</sup> Finally, the charter dealing with the lands of Keynesham Abbey (325) consists in large part of a copy of the confirmatory charter of Gilbert de Clare to that abbey. The Durford cartulary has an abstract of the sections dealing with lands in Mapledurham. This again is substantially accurate, the major difference being the transformation of the first person verbs of the original Keynesham charter to third person in the copy.<sup>2</sup> It may be concluded, therefore, that the copying was generally carefully done, with the proviso that evidence for such can only be of an impressionistic nature.

Later historians made use of the cartulary in various ways. Dugdale, who had access to it in the Cottonian Library, printed eight items from it.<sup>3</sup> Tanner makes mention of Durford Abbey and notes the use of the cartulary by Dugdale and Speed, but makes no extracts himself, simply drawing up a list of the secondary sources of his day pertaining to the abbey.<sup>4</sup> With the revival of interest in English medieval antiquities in the 19th century, a number of local and county historical societies were formed. In Sussex a number of historians formed the Sussex Archaeological Society in the county town of Lewes; one of the founder members, W. H. Blaauw, published an article on Durford Abbey in its papers.

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1. Cal. Pat. Rolls. 9 Edward II, 12 Edward II.

2. See note to 325 and Monasticon, vi, pt. i, pp. 452, 454.

3. The items are numbers 8, 1, 4, 12, 32, 36, 87, 300 in Dugdale's order. Monasticon, vi, pp. 936 - 939.

4. Tanner, Thomas. Notitia Monastica. 1744 (under Dureford).

This would appear to be the only work, short though it is, which deals with Durford Abbey per se, but it is generally of more antiquarian than modern historical interest, and in point of detail must be quoted with caution. Blaauw briefly mentions Durford Abbey in two other articles for the same Society.<sup>1</sup> In the early 20th century, the volumes of the Victoria County Histories began to appear, and L. F. Salzman, a later member of the same Society as Blaauw, contributed a short article on Durford Abbey in the V. C. H. Sussex, ii, (1907), p. 89. H. M. Colvin, in his major work on the Premonstratensian Order in England, devotes some three pages to Durford Abbey and its foundation, as well as numerous references in the body of the volume.<sup>2</sup> David Knowles and R. Neville Hadcock give some notes on the abbey in Medieval Religious Houses. England and Wales, (1953, 1971); while Knowles, and others, mention the early abbots of Durford in another work.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Blaauw, W. H. "Dureford Abbey", Sussex Archaeological Collections, viii (1856); "Sussex Monasteries at the Time of their Suppression", vii, (1856); "Visit of King Edward the Second to Battle and other parts of Sussex in 1324", vi, (1853).

2. Colvin, H. M., The White Canons in England. (1951), esp. pp. 88 - 91.

3. Knowles, D. C. N. L. Brooke and Vera London. The Heads of Religious Houses, England and Wales, 940 - 1216. (1972) p. 195.

## II. The Abbey Buildings and Their Occupants, and the Economic Aspects.

The abbey in which the cartulary was written was situated at Durford, in the parish of Rogate, and less than 200 yards inside the county boundary between Sussex and the adjacent county of Hampshire. This boundary (divisa Hanteshire) is used a number of times in the cartulary as a convenient marker in land donations. It was also important in that this same county boundary also marked the division between the diocese of Chichester, under whose jurisdiction lay the abbey's lands in Sussex, and the diocese of Winchester, which included the Hampshire lands. As Durford Abbey, from its earliest days, had property in both counties, the significance of its site, almost on the county line, was of more than geographical importance; indeed, as mentioned earlier, the cartulary itself falls into two main sections relative to the topographical distribution of its lands in the two counties.

The situation of the abbey was a pleasant one, on a gentle slope falling southward to the left bank of a small stream, the River Rother, which in turn forms a tributary of the Arun River. Beyond the Rother the land rises gently over a series of low wooded hills to the scarp face of the South Downs some three miles to the south. The various Harting villages mentioned in the cartulary lie on the spring line between the chalk of the Downs and the clay and greensand beneath them. Further north from Durford lies the heavier, stiff clay of the Weald, which possesses only pockets of good land. Durford Abbey, therefore, lay on land which, from the viewpoint of agricultural use, tended towards the poorer land. The town of Petersfield lies among the same low hills

only two miles to the west of Durford, and was the only market site of economic importance nearby. One of the abbey's earliest donations was the freedom from tolls on all food and clothing bought in the market of Petersfield. (1, 292)

The appearance, or even the size, of the abbey is impossible of conjecture to a modern viewer, as all of the principal buildings, including the church, have been completely swept away since its dissolution in the 16th century. The site is now occupied by a farm (Durford Abbey Farm), with its farm house and outbuildings. The house itself dates from the late 18th century, and is the second such on the site since the suppression of the abbey. Adjacent to it on the east are various stables and a large barn, dating from c. 1600. Set into one of the walls of the house is a monumental gravestone, probably of the 13th century, but even this bears no name or date; only the words vir pie memorie being legible. The farmer possesses some broken tiles which date back to the time of the abbey; other ornamental tiles were removed in the 19th century to the County Museum in Lewes and may be examined there. Some shallow depressions to the west of the present farmhouse are pointed out as the site of the abbey's fishponds; the Ordnance Survey map marks the farm as the site of a Premonstratensian Abbey, but there is no historic marker of any kind at Durford itself.

The cartulary, however, does provide some information concerning the buildings and their occupants, though naturally these are of a fragmentary nature. The church was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St John the Baptist. It was probably a plain and unassuming building at the

time of its dedication c. 1190, but by the end of the next century it possessed a tower, which held eight bells. An entry in 1417 tells of a fire, caused by lightning, and the consequent destruction of the tower and the bells. (132b) John Ulyng, as 'nominated abbot', caused the replacement of the bells, and presumably the tower, in the following year, and the same cartulary entry records the weight of the bells.

Yet even in its earlier days the church boasted several altars, and the canons and their benefactors obviously took pride in enhancing them with candles and lights. Henry Husey III gave a lamp for the altar of the Holy Cross, together with 5s. a year to keep it burning day and night, and requested daily mass to be celebrated at the altar for his family. Clemencia, his wife, from her marriage portion, made gifts for daily masses at the altar of the Blessed Virgin. (7 - 9) A later Henry Husey exchanged lands in Mapledurham (Hants.) for a close and a house at Durford, and included support for two chaplains to make a daily celebration at the altar of the Holy Trinity and St Eutropius (25). In the same century (c. 1270) a certain Ralph de Thorney and his wife Matilda gave one virgate of land for daily mass at the altar of St Catherine (56), and later donated two candles for the same altar. The couple evidently had a particular devotion to St Catherine, for after Ralph's death, Matilda gave an altar light and an extra candle for requiem masses at the same altar (57, 58). Other donors gave candles and lights, and in one case 6d. a year, for the decoration of the church on the feast day of St John the Baptist (75, 117).

The chantry or penitential function of the abbey was, of course, an



important element in landholding by tenure in free alms. One interesting feature, not included in the cartulary, was that Durford Abbey had a chantry in the patronage of a house of Benedictine monks. The cartulary of the Abbey of Hyde (Hants.), records that a certain Walter of Durford gave 100 marks to Durford for the establishment of a chantry to pray for him and his wife while they lived, and to offer mass daily for their souls after death. It was to be served by a canon of Durford on whose death "the abbot of Hyde was to nominate a secular clerk within one month for profession as a canon".<sup>1</sup>

The conventual life also implied other buildings for its effective function. There are mentions of chapter meetings and of the kitchen and refectory (coquina refectorii), where Henry Husey requested that 15s. be spent annually by two canons chosen by their fellows in chapter (10). The same Henry also gave houses and gardens for the support of the canons in the infirmary (16), and William, son of Otewy, gave land at Sunworth for the same purpose (231).

There was a courtyard with a gate facing the bridge called "Harford", for John le Mareschal and his wife Joan were given a house in the courtyard as part of a corrody granted them by Abbot John (306) in the year 1321. Other corrodians had houses within the abbey courtyard (304), but H. de Basing (a confrater of the house, 307) and Richard le Peynton (309), are mentioned only as having rooms within the abbey. The generally

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1. H. M. Colvin, *op. cit.* p. 270. See also Harleian Ms. 1761. Register Cartarum Abbatie de Hida, p. 162-3. Tanner, *op. cit.*, also mentions: "In bib. Harleiana ms 1761, f. 162, compositionem inter abbatem de Hyda, super fundatione cantariae in eccl. de Dureford per Will. (sic) de Dureford. AD 1327."

full accounts of the terms of the corrodies granted usually stipulate the amount and quality of bread, and the amount of conventual beer or cider each corrodian would receive; this would seem to imply a bakehouse and a brewery or cider-press. John and his wife were also granted the privilege of keeping a horse, and to have pasture and pannage for two cows and six pigs in the abbey environs.

The cartulary itself never mentions the numbers of canons in the house, but the usual complement at foundation was 13, including the abbot, according to general Premonstratensian practice. In 1327, at the time when most of the corrodies already mentioned here were granted, there were at least 15 canons, apart from the abbot.<sup>1</sup> The fall off in numbers of all religious, especially after the Black Death of the mid-14th century, has been well documented, and it seems doubtful that Durford ever recovered its numbers of 1327. In the following century numbers declined to the point where Bishop Redman, Visitor to the Order in England, found only nine canons, including the abbot, in 1478. On his next visit, in 1482, he found that most of these had died of the plague. He consoled the abbot and urged him to get together another community, but at the visitation of 1488 the number stood at only 5 canons. Further visits by Bishop Redman show numbers increasing only slowly, for he doubts they can function effectively. He also laments the long-standing ruinous state of the cloister.<sup>2</sup> At the suppression of the abbey in 1536 the number of canons stood at nine.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Knowles and Hadcock, *op. cit.*, p. 188

2. *Collectanea Anglo-Premonstratensia*. Vol 2, nos 380, 381, 385, and 388.

3. Knowles and Hadcock, *op. cit.*, p. 188

The cartulary provides some information on the immediate surroundings of the abbey and upon its economic life. An early grant records a water-mill on the River Rother, with houses and gardens situated nearby (1, 16). There is mention, too, of a garden within the enclosure of the abbey as exempt from tithes in 1265 (45), and of a sheepfold near the Durford Bridge (18). With the mention of mills, houses, gardens, sheepfolds and pastures, one gets the impression that the site was more populated and lively in the late 13th and early 14th century than it is today, when Durford Abbey Farm stands isolated with only one house in distant sight.

Apart from the canons themselves, and such corrodians that are mentioned, the cartulary has hardly a mention of any other inhabitants. That the abbey had certain free servants is clear, for one condition of Richard le Peynton's corrody is that he will receive each year one coat of the same quality such servants had (309). Presumably this labour force worked in the abbey and the lands close by, in the gardens and plough-lands. It would also be possible for them to supervise the nearer sheep herds, those on the Downs near Harting, for example, where Richard de la Dole granted a sheepfold in 1262 (183). Yet the numbers of sheep mentioned in the cartulary, 200, for example, at Sunworth (237) and 200 more, plus oxen and cows in the same area (239), must have demanded a fairly substantial labour force, at least at certain times of the year. Sunworth is only some three miles from Durford Abbey and the sheep runs there and at nearby Nursted (256) would be within easy walking distance for the labourers if they lived in or near Durford. For the more distant pastures at Trotton and Chithurst the canons possibly

ran a system of granges on the Cistercian model, although there is no evidence of this in the cartulary itself. One entry (152) mentions a gift by the abbey in which the recipient, Geoffrey Gofayre, undertakes to make himself responsible for guarding and enclosing the abbey's wood at Wyk, and a gift given at Brighton (58) was much too far away to be supervised by the canons at Durford. One possible answer to the question of who worked the lands is contained in some of the charters. Most of the gifts of land in the more distant areas, especially in the 13th century, seemed to have been provided with bondmen (villani, or nativi), as various entries speak of 'one half virgate at Tillington, with Alwyn and his family' (cum sequela) (91); or the three solidates of land given by Ralph Sanzaver at Fernhurst, with Edwin 'et liberis suis' (95); or the gift of land near Petersfield given by Earl Gilbert de Clare, 'with Thomas and Richard and their families' (299). In one case Gernagan gives Alwyn Bulluc 'and his land' (158). These serfs, in effect, simply changed one overlord for another when they were given to the abbey, and the labour force was, so to speak, 'built in'. There is mention also of the abbey's cottars (197), who would generally have less land (and less security of tenure) than the villeins, and could provide a pool of labour for times of heavier employment, such as harvest, lambing or sheep shearing.

From such evidence it is possible to build up at least a general picture of the spiritual and economic life which revolved around the white canons at Durford Abbey. For all its remote location, its situation on the very edge of the fertile belt below the Downs, albeit towards the

damp and marshy edge of it, the abbey had a basic agricultural viability. The abbey buildings were probably not of any great beauty or size, but taken together with the surrounding small houses and gardens made for a busy scene. The spiritual life of the canons, as R. W. Southern reminds us, was also a social one, for the abbey existed not only, or even primarily, for the sake of the men of religion within, for they ceaselessly fought a spiritual battle for all men, "quite as real, and more important, than the battles of the natural world."<sup>1</sup>

Looking further afield, and beyond the abbey surrounds, some general economic picture can be built up. The nearness of the Downs, with their famous breeds of sheep, and the number of times sheep are mentioned in the cartulary, suggest the wool crop as an important component in the abbey's agriculture. The well-known list ascribed to Francesco Pegolotti claims that Durford could supply 5 sacks of wool each year.<sup>2</sup> Almost all the deeds mention pasture for sheep or other animals, but nowhere is an overall figure given. The flocks and herds, as mentioned above, were supervised and tended in different ways, with distance a limiting factor.

The clay belt, too, has its wetter patches, and in spite of much drainage in modern times, the heath land towards Petersfield can still be very damp. Yet this might work in the abbey's favour too, as along the River Rother there are water meadows for good crops of hay for winter feed, another limiting factor in medieval agriculture. Such lands,

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1. R. W. Southern, Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages. p. 224. The whole of Chapter 6, "The Religious Orders", is of note.

2. Francesco Pegolotti. La Pratica della Mercatura. p. 264

together with those valleys running into the chalk downs, are also suitable for cattle. The clay, especially when well marled (and marl-pits are often mentioned: 139, 239, for example) can be made into good arable land. The canons, one can assume, must have had generally adequate crops, first and foremost for their own subsistence in bread and beer, but on occasion sufficient enough to use as a cash crop and a bargaining counter in land consolidation. They were able, in one instance, to give Geoffrey Cook, 'in his great need', 1½ loads of wheat at one time, and four loads of wheat, one of oats and one-half of rye on another (270, 272). In exchange, of course, they obtained Geoffrey's land at Nursted. Finally, in economic summary, mention must be made of the swine, who needed no specific land, but only the privilege of pannage and free range in the nearby woodland, which wood again provided fuel and fencing timber (231, 239).

### III. The Foundation of the Abbey, its Endowments and Growth.

The order of Premonstratensian canons founded by St Norbert, and given papal sanction in 1126, "enjoyed a period of rapid expansion which by the middle of the twelfth century had brought its houses to almost every kingdom in Western Europe, and had established them at the very boundaries of Christendom."<sup>1</sup> The remarkable success of the order in Eastern Europe, and even in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, form an

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1. Colvin, op. cit., p. 28.

important part of Premonstratensian history, but of more significance in the story of Durford Abbey was the solid consolidation of houses in France and the Low Countries. By the fourth decade of the 12th century, a large proportion of the one hundred or more houses of the white canons lay in that particular area of Western Europe. The movement of the order to England became, therefore, the next logical and inevitable step.

Indeed, the spread of the Cistercian Order in England had shown that the time was ripe for expansion. Some historians, in view of the sympathy which St Bernard had shown for St Norbert and his endeavours, have suggested a Bernardine influence behind the spread of the white canons in England, but Colvin argues that in spite of the friendship between the two orders, their expansion in Britain was quite independent.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the famous decree of 1152, in which the Cistercian General Chapter forbade the foundation of further abbeys, gave some impetus to the transfer of potential growth in English monastic houses to the Premonstratensians<sup>2</sup>; although, even allowing for this, it should be noted that at least three houses of white canons were formed in England before 1152 (Newhouse, 1143; Alwick, 1147; Easby, 1151), and Welbeck traces its foundation to c. 1153. In any case, between 1143 and 1267, the number of Premonstratensian abbeys in England grew to 30, with a further three nunneries and certain lesser dependencies<sup>3</sup>.

It was from Welbeck, in Nottinghamshire, that Durford Abbey was

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1. Ibid., p. 29

2. R. W. Southern, *op. cit.*, pp. 253-5.

3. Knowles and Hadcock, *op. cit.*, pp 183 - 185.