

Westminster Abbey Muniments 1863

Westminster Abbey Muniments Book 11: 'The Westminster Domesday', fo. 171b - 172

Letter of the lord bishop of Winchester concerning the church of Morden acquired by W. de Wenlock, abbot 1300

J., by divine permission the humble minister of Winchester church, to the beloved sons in Christ, by grace of God the abbot of Westminster and the convent of the same place, greetings in the Lord eternal. Your tearful petition, which has been exhibited to us, contained that it is permitted that, although your aforesaid monastery, which had formerly been founded by the kings of England with a copious abundance of temporal things, had been accustomed to flourish, nevertheless it has notoriously fallen into the misfortune of poverty and the pressure of extreme want, both from the malice of days and men and from the fire, which lately originated accidentally from the royal palace and which destroyed your noble monastery, as if from the foundation. According to the sanctions of your house, unless the Lord looks at you from high with eyes of divine mercy, this so miserable a fall will not be possible to be repaired in any way, nor can the same monastery increase, so that it resurges. Therefore, as regards the premises being both public and notorious as if we are mercifully laying open the bowels of mercy and compassion, and considering that your monastery, situated in a public and solemn place next to the city of London and next to the king's palace, to which a countless multitude of poor and infirm visitors frequently flock, for whom it is both proper and reasonable for you to administer the necessities of life, we appropriate the church of Morden of our diocese, next to Merton, in which you hold the right of patronage, to the relief and repair of the fall of your monastery and to the more fruitful maintenance of the visitors and the infirm, to be possessed by you and your aforesaid monastery forever on behalf of us and our successors, granting to you and your successors that on the retirement or death of the now rector of the same church, you can freely convert all the fruits and proceeds of the same church to your own use and that of your monastery thenceforth.* Saving to the vicar in the said church after the death of the said rector a suitable portion from the fruits and proceeds of the same[#] church for all and singular the ordinary charges and other incumbencies to be supported by us and our successors, to be assessed at the sum of nine marks, and always saving the right and dignity of the church of Winchester and the archidiaconal right in all matters. In testimony of which matter our seal is affixed to these presents. Dated at Dover on the morrow of St John before the Latin Gate, AD 1300 and the eighteenth of our consecration.

Light brown seal, chipped (very fine) – Bishop full length vested and mitred with crozier and right hand uplifted - S' JOHANNIS DEI GRATIA WINTONIEN EPISCOP[]

endorsement: *Appropriacio Ecclesie de Mordon per episcopum Winton. Infirm Reg^r in Mordon. Supplicat^a*
Appropriation of the Church of Morden by the bishop of Winchester. Infirmary. Registered in Morden. Requested.
marginal note: "*dupl'* Infirmary – First chest as above."

The appropriation of the church of Morden

The rectory of Morden was one of four appropriated following a fire at Westminster in 1298. The church and chapter house were unscathed, but domestic buildings and the cloister were damaged, and the repairs needed financing. John de Pontissara, Bishop of Winchester, in whose diocese Morden was, gave his assent when the living became vacant in 1301 on the resignation of the rector, Gerard de Standon or de Staunden.

see B Harvey *Westminster Abbey and its Estates in the Middle Ages* (1977) p51

* Instead of *possitis omnes fructus et proventus*, WD fo. 171b has *ipsam ecclesiam ingredi valeatis auctoritate vestra propria fructusque et proventus omnes* and inserts *colligere et habere inperpetuum* at the end of the sentence after *convertere* – 'you may have power to enter the same church by your own authority and all the fruits and proceeds of the same church freely thereafter convert, collect and have forever to your own use and that of your monastery'. The confirmation by the prior and convent of St Swythyn (WAM 1854 = WD fo. 172a) quotes the shorter text as in WAM 1863.

Instead of *ipsius* 'same' WD fo. 171b has *dicta* 'said'. This change is not found in the confirmation by the prior and convent of St Swythyn (WAM 1854 = WD fo. 172a).