

PAMBER PRIORY.

Hugh de Port born in 1024 at Port-en-Bessin in Normandy

HUGH DE PORT SUPPORTS WILLIAM'S INVASION in 1066.

Hugh de Port is rewarded with 55 'manors' from William and 13 'manors' from Bishop Odo, mostly in Hampshire but some in Northampton.

De Port creates his main home at Basing.

Died and buried at Winchester in 1096 (having become a monk).

Henry de Port, son of Hugh, baron of the Exchequer to the King (believed born in 1066 or 1068).

Married 'Hadwise' (presumably an Anglo Saxon).

Initial Priory Charter c.1110 AD (?).

John de Port, son of Henry

Alive in 1167 AD.

Adam de Port, son of John,

Married to Mabel de St John (styled Comitissa or Countess)

He was outlawed in 1172 for supporting Thomas Becket and fled to Scotland, but was pardoned in 1180 and received back his possessions. Adam died in 1213.

William de Port, son of Adam de Port,

Mother was Mabel de St John – he, or maybe his father, changed his name to St John (hence Sherborne St John).



Pamber Priory West Front.

The stonework in the foreground on the right is the remnant of the original West Doorway wall (c.1125)

PAMBER PRIORY

Also previously known as

WEST SHIREBORNE PRIORY

And

SHERBORNE PRIORY.

Henry I, the youngest (and fourth) son of William I, became King in 1100 and died in 1135 (succeeded by Matilda/Stephen/Matilda/Stephen).

c.1110 AD Henry de Port applied for permission to build a Benedictine Priory as a daughter establishment to the Priory of St Vigor at Cerisy-la-Foret (founded in AD590) in Normandy, for the purpose of saying prayers for all the de Port family **and** the family of King Henry I (it was believed that the more prayers that were said for someone after their death, then the less time was spent in Purgatory – hence the inclusion of the family of King Henry). Permission was given.

In 1125 (during the later stages of building?) the Crown issued a licence allowing the collection and use of two cartloads of dead timber each week from Pamber Forest (a Royal Hunting Preserve) **‘for their hearth’**.

1128 Consecration of The Benedictine Priory of West Shireborne (now known as Pamber Priory) by William Giffard the Bishop of Winchester (Winchester was then capital of England).

King Henry II, son of Matilda, became King in 1154 on death of Stephen and died in 1189.

King Henry II (and his Queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine) must have made significant use of the Priory during their travels across Southern England, but we have no documentary confirmation.

1170-1180 King Henry II had a large hunting estate constructed at Tidgrove Warren, near Hannington; it had stabling for 80 horses. These buildings were sold and demolished in the 1190's by a 'developer'.

1250-1270 the Priory was at its zenith – being very wealthy and well run with many expensive and valuable possessions. It was much used by King Henry III (1216-1272). The Queen (Eleanor of Provence) maintained lodgings at the Priory. Major re-building was carried out 1245-1265 (the current chancel and significant other building).

1248 (October) the custodian of the King's wines in Southampton was ordered to despatch one cask of wine to the Queen at Pamber Priory.

1249 (May) Permission was given to fell an oak tree in Pamber Forest (a Royal Hunting Forest) for the making of windows in the Queen's chamber at Pamber Priory.

1252 (Feb) tuns of wine to be delivered to the following: Guildford (10), Chawton (4), Winchester (10), Reading Abbey (10), Wherwell (4), Ludgershall (4), Marlborough (10), Clarendon (10), Sandelford (4), Sherborne (Pamber) (4).

1254 (Sep) Two tuns of wine to Sherborne (Pamber).

1255 (Nov) Two tuns to Sherborne (Pamber) Priory.

1257 (Dec) Two tuns to Sherborne (Pamber) Priory.

A tun of wine is 252 'wine gallons' each of 3.785 litres or 231 cubic inches (the current US gallon), as opposed to the Imperial Gallon (official measure since 1826) each of 4.546 litres or 277.4 cubic inches.

King Henry III was a generous benefactor to religious orders.

With reference to Sherborne (Pamber) Priory, entries in the Close Rolls of 1247 to 1271 include:

1255 (Dec). Three oak trees were given 'for the timber of the chapel which is being made'.

1256 (May). Four oak trees were given 'towards the fabric of the church which is being shaped out'.

1256 (Nov). Six oaks were given 'towards the fabric of this church, one for timber and five for making shingles'.

1257 (Jan). A gift of four marks (£1:6s:8d) 'to make three altars in the new work at the Priory'.

1257 (July). A gift of four oaks 'towards the repair of the church'.

1258 (June). A gift of four oaks 'to make shingles for the church'.

1259 (March). A gift of three oaks 'for the building of the church'.

1259 (May). A gift of four oaks from Alice Holt Forest 'towards perfecting or completing the works at the Priory'.

1259 (Summer). A gift of three oaks 'for the works at the almonry at the Priory'.

1271 (Jan). The last recorded gift of oaks.

These records suggest that there was a significant building project in progress in the mid-13th century. This is the probable construction of the current chancel at the Priory plus other building (including an almonry).

King Henry III travelled frequently, often between Winchester (the capital of England) and Windsor (the military headquarters) or Reading Abbey and would night-stop with his entourage at Pamber.

1251 King Henry III stopped at the Priory 28 May.

1251 King Henry III stopped at the Priory 15 July.

1252 King Henry III stopped at the Priory 19 June.

1253 King Henry III stopped at the Priory 13 and 14 June.

1261 King Henry III stopped at the Priory 24 Jan.
1154-1170 Trade with Cerisy was allowed to continue without payment of customs duty.

1154 Roelandus of Mattingley gave the church of Acleia (Oakley) and his land at Estgerleia (Eastleigh?) to Pamber Priory. Other gifts included a virgate of land (20 acres) at Fratton (probably in Portsmouth) by Baldwin of Portsey, a chapel at Sotwell, and the churches of Padworth and Wallingford by Robert (son of Fulcred).

1168 Roger de Scures made a gift of a hide of land in Ramsdell to the Priory at Pamber (a hide is an amount of land sufficient to support a family – it is therefore a variable depending on the fertility and nature of the land).

Early 13th Century Priors included Richard and Michael.

1253. The Prior went to law to recover 40/- per annum from Robert, rector at Shawes (Salisbury), which had not been paid for 6 years. The Prior won the case with costs against the rector of Shawes of 100/-.

1273. 8th May. Lawrence was the abbot at Cerisy; Richard de Bordeignaise was prior elect at Pamber and was accompanied by Bartholomew Robyn.

1279 The 'Statute of Mortmain' forbade the leaving of money and possessions to the church; it was introduced by King Edward I in order to reduce the wealth and power of the religious orders.

1329 The Prior owed £26 to Thomas de Combe (clerk).
1337 The custody of the Priory was returned to the Prior at an annual rent to the King of £80 per annum.

1341 The 'Hall of the Queen's Scholars' at Oxford founded by Queen Philippa and Robert de Eglesfield, chaplain to

Queen Philippa, and named in her honour (see West window at All saints church in Monk Sherborne).

1343 Queen Philippa acquired St Julian's Hospital in Southampton for The Queen's College including its extensive lands, these lands later developed into Southampton Docks and associated commercial developments.

During the period from about 1050AD to about 1300AD the weather had been generally beneficial to good crop yields; consequently the people prospered and the population grew rapidly.

1315 to 1322. The weather across Europe, north of the Alps, became very wet and stormy and there were major failures of many crops, especially cereals. This was the Great Famine of England (and the bulk of Northern Europe). There may also have been a major volcanic eruption that had disastrous effects on world climate. The Priory was severely affected and had great difficulties paying heavy taxation to the King.

1340 the Priory was described as being '**grievously burdened with debt**'. In July of that year the Priory was given immunity from seizure of its cattle by the Crown. Nicholas de la Beche and James de Wodestock were appointed overseers of the Priory.

1349 The Black Death killed some 30 to 40% of the population of England in less than a year (population dropped from about 3.5 million down to some 2.5 million, maybe even less). The Priory was severely affected.

1351. Denis was the Prior at Pamber. 14th Nov.: John att More leased lands in Sherborne, Tadley and Pamber from the Prior for 32/- per annum, later increased to 36/- per annum (was the Priory in desperate need of funds?).

1380's. The King (Richard II) continued(?) an annual tax of £80 on the Priory, payable to the King.

In 1388 the Prior was in arrears of £53 from the annual payment of £80 to the Crown (annual income was £96). The Prior was ordered to settle the debt 'forthwith' to Menaudus Brocas (one of the keepers of the king's great horses). Note the Brocas family lived at Beaurepaire and their tomb is in St Andrews Church in Sherborne St John.

1398-1437. William Trenchfowe was the Prior at Pamber.

1414 Suppression of the Alien Monasteries Act by King Henry V, but the Priory appears to have been largely excluded from the limitations put on other establishments. This may have been due to its poverty.

1439. Benedict became Prior at Pamber.

1439. 21st Mar. Thomas att More promises £40 to the Priory as a Corody, but stipulates that it is void if he does not avail himself of the facility.

1441 Eton College construction was completed by King Henry VI 'to provide an educated elite to rule the country'.

1451 Pamber Priory given to Eton College (did Eton need finance to run the College?) by King Henry VI of the House of Lancaster. Eton takes possession in January 1452. Eton College then ejects the Prior and the five monks, and sets about asset stripping and finishes up by largely destroying the Priory (only the chancel and tower survive).

1459. 20th Nov. Confirmation of the Charter of Henry VI conferring Pamber Priory to Eton, made at Coventry.

1462(?). Following serious representations by the local population, the Priory was taken away from Eton College by King Edward IV of the House of York and given to St Julian's Hospital in Southampton, also known as Domus Dei (which had come into the possession of The Queen's College in Oxford in 1343).

1472 King Edward IV gave the Priory back to Eton College, but this was overturned by a ruling of the judiciary. Eton College went to court to recover what they considered to be rightfully theirs.

1474AD. After major repair work by The Queen's College the Priory was re-consecrated as a **church** under the control of the vicar of Monk Sherborne with a curate at the Priory. The curate was paid a stipend of £10 per annum.

1491. 2nd Oct. Eton College still trying to recover its lost possessions (including Whitchurch Manor); The Bishop of Salisbury, warden of God's House, counter claims that Eton had broken the 'Statute of Forcible Entry'.

1493. Pope Nicholas VIII confirmed the gift of Pamber to Eton in 1451 (or 1453), but this appears to have been ignored.

Finally, after possibly 36 years of litigation (i.e. in 1399), Eton lost their claim!

Early 1540's. One bell was cast (new installation or repair?).

1557-1564AD. Following the chaos of the Reformation, services at the Priory church ceased and it was claimed that it was being used as an agricultural store – for hay, straw, grain and implements; the use of farm carts in the chancel area could well have been the cause of damage

to the tomb tops which were later re-located beneath the tower (behind the screen) and in the side chapels.

1557. At this time services were no longer being held at the Priory - presumably the curacy had ceased. A Bill of Complaint by Guy Ryce, Thomas Hyde, John Fuller and Phillip Wymboldon, on behalf of the parishioners of Pamber, was made to the Lord Chancellor. The complaint was forwarded to the Archbishop of York for a decision (the Archbishop of Canterbury was not available)

1564. Bill of Complaint continues in Chancery.

1564(?). Order in Chancery instructing The Queen's College in Oxford to maintain the Priory Church in a condition whereby services could be held on a regular basis and that they must ensure that there is a qualified cleric available to hold those services. Much structural repair and material improvements made.

1567. 6th June. Bill of Complaint goes to the Exchequer.
1567. 24th Nov. The Defendants (Queen's College) are ordered to appear in Court – 8ve Hilary next.

1581AD (approx). Four bells installed in tower (one cast in 1579, another in 1581 and the other two were removed in 1851 and, being cracked, were melted down and re-cast – one of these has the effigy of two monkeys cast into the bell supports, each monkey is about 5 inches high and they have their hands over their ears). The heaviest bell weighs about 8cwt (400 Kg).

1692. 17 Dec. Peter Dalton, rector of Bramley, spent £32 on repairs at the Priory, with a further £3 still to be spent; these repairs were expected to last for the next 30 to 40 years.

1843-1852 Major repair work carried out by The Queen's College, including re-roofing and the installation of stained glass throughout; some of the work was initiated by Sir Gilbert Scott.

1936 Further repair work was carried out by The College and most of the stained glass was removed, but not that in the four 'bell' windows located high up in the chancel.

At the present time The Priory Church remains in the possession of The Queen's College in Oxford and they are still bound by the Order in Chancery dated 1564.

Two services are held here most months' plus some additional services around Christmas and Easter, and is used by the adjacent Priory School for some of their special services.

Acknowledgements:

Moira Grant in Hampshire Studies Vol. 55, etc.

The Queen's College Archive.

Hampshire County Records.

PAMBER PRIORY.

INVENTORY OF PRIORY INCOME IN 1294.

300 acres of land valued at	£3: 5s:0d
20 acres of hill land valued at	3s:4d
10 acres of meadow valued at	10s:0d
6 acres of moor valued at	3s:0d
Pasture valued at	2s:6d
Common pasture valued at	6s:8d
Pannage valued at	£1: 3s:4d
Total	£6: 3s:10d

24 tenants paid rents	£22:19s:0d
Value of labour due	£1: 0s:0d
Pensions, Spiritual Dues, etc	£57:12s:0d
Total	£87:14s:10d

Contributions by Dependent Churches:

Upton Church (9 marks)	£6: 0s:0d
Chineham Church (10 marks)	£6:13:4d
Sherborne	£5: 6s:0d
Bramley Church	£24: 0s:0d
Total	£42: 0s:0d

Livestock valued at	£27:14s:6d
Plenty of corn seed	
Wheat for 43 acres	
Oats for 86 acres	
Hay (mostly spoiled) valued at	13s:4d

PAMBER PRIORY.

INVENTORY OF PRIORY INCOME IN 1339.

Income from tenants	£5: 6s:2d
Contributions made by Dependent Churches:	
Aldermaston Church	£6:13s:4d
Padworth Church	£1: 6s:8d
Sulhamstead Church	2s:0d
Lavington Church	10s:0d
Newnham Church	£2: 0s:0d
Church Oakley	6s:8d
Lydeshute	6s:8d
West Sherborne Church	£11:13s:4d
Bramley	£23: 6s:8d
Upton Grey	£8:16s:5d
Chapel at Chineham	£3: 6s:8d (in addition to £4 to Prior of Selborne)
TOTAL	£88:12s:7d

These two inventories are not directly comparable as some items do not appear to have been included/excluded in both lists, but it does show the order of magnitude of the annual finances. But also note the drop in rentals received from tenants!

OAK EFFIGY AT THE PRIORY.

The oak effigy has been claimed to date from about the year 1275. It was probably produced locally and appears to have been made from one solid piece of oak. I understand that the manner in which the sword was worn went out of use in the early 1300's. From heel to crown he measures 6ft 2ins (1.88 metres).

It would be nice to think that this effigy is that of one of the knights who acted as one of Edward's bodyguards on the last crusade (see below). It is quite possible/probable that the effigy is that of one of the de Port family descendants (the Priory had been created to provide a last resting place for the de Port family).

King Edward I was nicknamed 'Longshanks' because he was very tall (Edward was originally buried at Winchester – the then capital of England – but he was dug up in about 1758, his bones were measured and he was then re-buried at Westminster); they concluded that he had been 6ft 2ins tall.

Edward became king in 1272 following the death of his father (Henry III), although he did not arrive back in England until 1273.

In 1267 the eighth (and last) crusade was called for by King Louis IX of France. In the summer of 1270 they landed in Tunis where Edward and his army joined Louis; but Louis' son, John, died on 3rd August and then Louis died on the 27th of 'the flux in the stomach' (presumably dysentery). The French went home, but Edward and the rest of the crusade carried on to Acre (the last Crusader outpost in Syria) – they achieved nothing of significance.

Edward at over 6ft tall would have been an obvious target for any enemy, so he would have surrounded himself with a bodyguard of knights who were of a similar build. Perhaps this effigy is that of someone who accompanied Edward on that Crusade and it is likely that he was a de Port descendant (the Priory had been built as a last resting place for all the de Port family).

On Edward's return journey from Palestine he met James of St George in Savoie, southeast France; James was a stonemason and builder. Edward invited James to work for him in England and James became the pre-eminent castle designer and builder of the age; he was responsible for the design and building of the castles at Harlech, Carnarvon, Conwy and Beaumaris.

ALL SAINTS CHURCH MONK SHERBORNE

1474 AD Pamber Priory re-consecrated as a **church**. Now All Saints was the pre-eminent local church and the Priory was its subsidiary and the incumbent of All Saints was required to provide a curate to hold services – at a stipend of £10 per year.

1536AD. The Reformation starts with the imposition of the: “TEN ARTICLES”.

Churches are instructed to maintain a Parish Register.

1547 AD King Henry dies and is succeeded by 9-year old Edward VI, under the protection of Somerset and, later, Northumberland.

1553 AD King Edward VI dies and is succeeded by Queen Mary.

1558 AD Queen Mary dies at the age of 42 and is succeeded by her half-sister Elizabeth,

Note the role of The Queen’s College in nominating the incumbents at All Saints.

1645 AD The Puritan Parliament rules that the Prayer Book is banned and all copies are to be burnt. In addition there was a massive assault on all decorative features within churches.

All the glass in the windows is Victorian; some represent agricultural produce (e.g. oats, barley and hops for beer), some are memorials to vicars and vicars families. The west window was installed in the 1860’s by The Queen’s College in Oxford and represents the founding of the college in 1341 – it shows King Edward III on the left, Queen Philippa in the centre and Robert de Eglesfield on the right. Robert de Eglesfield was the Queen Philippa’s chaplain and may have originated in the local area.

The Queen’s College have been patrons of the church since 1474 and even today still have an influence on the selection of incumbents to the parish.

THE REFORMATION

1533 King Henry VIII divorces Katherine of Aragon after 32 years of marriage: Katherine had borne 5 children but only Mary had survived into adulthood.

1534 Start of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The Monasteries were subject to the church in Rome and had become enormously wealthy and influential. The Pope had excommunicated Henry because the Church did not accept divorce. Henry needed serious finance to fund the defence of the realm.

The monastic wealth was expropriated by the State and the monasteries largely destroyed and the monks and nuns dispersed.

1536 There had been some 50 Saints' Days, these were banned between 1st July and 29th Sept to ensure that there was manpower for the harvest.

Thomas Cromwell, the King's Vicar General, instructed the clergy to encourage their parishioners to read the Bible **in English**.

1538 All parishes instructed to buy Coverdale's English translation of the Bible (probably expensive). The use of the rosary was banned, shrines were to be demolished and relics destroyed. All treasures were confiscated by the Crown, all images were to be taken down and candles were banned.

Parish Registers were to be kept in every church.

1547 King Edward VI became King at the age of 9 years on the death of Henry VIII. It was decreed that all images should be destroyed, all processions should cease; there was to be no holy water and no holy bread; candles were forbidden. Money raised and possessions owned by charities, guilds and fraternities were all confiscated by the crown.

1547-8 A visitation of the whole country was made by 30 Commissioners – they went beyond their remit and removed all images, banned traditional ceremonies and destroyed the altars.

1548 A licence to preach was introduced so that the State could control what was said from the pulpit.

1549 The first Book of Common Prayer was introduced; there had been some 50 Saints' Days. Now only Christmas, Easter and Whitsun and a few Saints' Days were allowed.

1549 Riot and commotion broke out in Cornwall and Devon, large numbers converged on Exeter where 4000 were killed by the military and one vicar was left to die chained to the tower of his church festooned with his 'popish trash'.

1552 The second Book of Common Prayer was introduced which implemented a complete break with the past. Steps up to the old altars were banned and removed; churches were now empty, whitewashed rooms (no decoration and no seating) with suitable biblical texts inscribed on the walls.

1553 The young King Edward VI died and was succeeded by his half-sister Mary, who was a committed Catholic. Suddenly everything had to be restored to its previous condition. The clergy were instructed to re-instate all godly ceremonies of the church, new choirs were formed and a tabernacle built for the sacrament.

1558 Queen Mary died (probably from cancer of the stomach) at the age of 42 years and was succeeded by her half-sister, Elizabeth, who was a Protestant. This resulted in yet another reversal of doctrine, but not as extreme as some in previous years.