

## THE LAST DAYS OF THE ABBEYS OF DURFORD AND TITCHFIELD AND A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

By JANET H STEVENSON

### ABSTRACT

*The entries for John Simpson in the lists of the heads of the Premonstratensian abbeys of Durford, Sussex, and Titchfield, Hampshire, given in The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales 1377–1540, identify him with John Salisbury alias Thetford, later dean of Norwich and bishop of Sodor and Man. That identification first appears to have been made by F J Baigent in a list of abbots of Titchfield compiled from the registers of the bishops of Winchester and was followed by F A Gasquet, who named the last abbot of Titchfield, in office 1536–7, as John Sampson or Sympson and in parenthesis identified him as John Salisbury, suffragan bishop of Thetford. The relevant register, that of Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester 1531–51 and 1553–5, however, shows that John Simpson and John Salisbury were different men. This paper aims to demonstrate that they were, indeed, different men, explaining how they became confused and conflated. In doing so it offers an account of the final days of the abbeys of Durford and Titchfield.*

The Premonstratensian abbeys in England were exempt from the jurisdiction of diocesan bishops and little is known of their state after 1500. This was the last year for which records survive of their visitation by Richard Redman, abbot of Shap and also bishop of Exeter, as commissary general of the abbot of Prémontré in England (Gribbin 2001, 227, 243). There were then no outstanding problems at Durford and those that were observed seem to have stemmed chiefly from poverty, a tendency of canons to leave the abbey without permission, and a lack of vocations. The few problems noted at the other Premonstratensian house in Sussex, Bayham abbey, seem to have had similar causes. Although there were then eleven canons at Bayham including the abbot,

considered an able man by Bishop Redman, two were apostates, one was a novice and another was vicar of Pembury, about three miles north-west of the abbey in Kent (Gasquet 1906a, nos. 260, 388). That the priest's path, so called, still led to Pembury from the site of the former abbey in the mid-nineteenth century suggests that the benefice had invariably been served by a canon of the house (Cooper 1857, 176). At Titchfield Abbey in 1500 there was a full complement of thirteen canons including the abbot, and also two novices. Three canons, however, were serving cures, one at Titchfield itself but the other two on the Isle of Wight and in Exeter. To counter worldliness the canons were ordered to desist from adopting fashionable dress on pain of greater excommunication and were enjoined to observe the rule on tonsures. As in most other houses silence was not well observed (Gasquet 1906b, no. 589). The position of the order in relation to Prémontré changed after 1512, when the English abbots successfully severed all connection with it. The abbot of Welbeck became head of the order in England, with the power to hold general chapters, to legislate and to hold visitations of its houses, which remained outside diocesan control (Gribbin 2001, 210).

The little that is known of the state of the nine smaller monastic establishments in Sussex which, unlike Bayham and Durford, were subject to oversight of the ordinary, allows some comparisons and contrasts to be drawn. At the episcopal visitations mentioned below and conducted in 1518 and during the 1520s, the chief problem in both Benedictine and Augustinian houses was a general lack of enthusiasm for the rigours of the religious life, an acceptance of which may have already resulted in the easing of strict adherence to the monastic rule.



At a 1478 visitation by Edward Story, bishop of Chichester, the priories of Easebourne and Hastings both claimed that John Arundel, bishop of Chichester from 1459 to 1477, had dispensed them from rising for Matins in the middle of the night, allowing them to say that office early in the morning instead. That a similar practice was followed in 1478 at the Augustinian priories of Michelham, Pynham and Shulbrede suggests that the dispensation may have been a general one for those houses in the diocese subject to episcopal authority (Fryde *et al* 1986, 239; WSRO, Ep. I/1/3, ff. 23v, 27–28v, 29v, 33). Injunctions issued by Robert Sherburne, bishop of Chichester, to the Benedictine priory of Boxgrove following his visitation in 1518, the record of which does not survive, were also sent to the Augustinian priories of Tortington, Hardham, Shulbrede, Michelham and Hastings. Problems common to all those houses were lack of adequate financial resources and insufficient numbers to maintain a common religious life and proper observance of the canonical hours. The prevailing poverty and laxity resulted in inattention not only to the maintenance of the monastic buildings and their precincts, but also to personal cleanliness. Unauthorized absences were common, as apparently was the tendency, as earlier at Titchfield, to wear fashionable dress, and to engage in sports such as archery outside the enclosure. The bishop expressly forbade hunting, and the playing of games such as dice or cards within the precincts, both of which were prohibited by canon law (Turner & Blaauw 1857, 61–6). The two small nunneries in Sussex, the Benedictine house at Rusper with four nuns and the Augustinian priory at Easebourne with four and a novice, evidently had barely enough resources either to maintain themselves or to observe the canonical hours. Answers given at visitations in 1521 and 1524 show both houses to have been plagued by petty squabbles such as might be expected in a small enclosed community (Way 1852, 256–7; Blaauw 1857, 22–7). The Augustinian community at Hardham comprised only two canons and two novices besides the prior in 1524 (Dugdale 1830, 307; WSRO, Ep. I/1/4, f. 92v), and by 1527 the prior, two canons and a novice (WSRO, Ep. I/1/4, f. 101). It is

possible that there may well have been less to criticize at Durford and Bayham despite the paucity of evidence after 1500.

Two houses in Sussex were among those dissolved in order to finance Cardinal Wolsey's project to establish educational foundations at Oxford and Ipswich. These were Pynham Priory, a small Augustinian house immediately south of Arundel in the western division of the county, and Bayham Abbey in the eastern division. Since the later fifteenth century there had been no more than two or three canons, including the prior, at Pynham, and the house was described as 'desolate and prophane' in December 1524 (Salzmann 1907, 80). Jeremy Goring, in his article on the short-lived riot at Bayham Abbey in Whit week 1525, noted that, of the nineteen houses suppressed by Wolsey, only the fall of Bayham was followed by armed resistance and the restoration, albeit temporary, of the canons. It is possible that the loyalty of the local population may have played a part, but there was widespread anger at Wolsey's financial demands in 1525, notably those contained in his proposed 'Amicable Grant'. This, therefore, may have attracted wider opposition to taxation without consent, clerical as well as lay, further afield in Sussex. A few rioters may also have held personal grudges against Wolsey's servant Thomas Cromwell. Opposition at Bayham may also have received tacit encouragement from an influential local resident magnate, George Nevill, Lord Abergavenny, a longstanding opponent of Wolsey. The fact that the disturbances continued unchecked for over a week suggests that Abergavenny, a justice of the peace and a member of the commission of the peace for both Kent and Sussex, supported the rebels' aims. No action appears to have been taken locally by others of influence, however, and the uprising soon died down. The ringleaders were said to have been arrested and imprisoned, but several of those known to have participated were still living in the neighbourhood in later years (Goring 1978). Although the causes of the riot may have been both economic and religious, it is also possible that local anger was further exacerbated by the knowledge that the poorer house of Durford, like Bayham situated in a wild and inhospitable landscape

near the county boundary, had been allowed to stand. That it did so may have been due to the influence of Sir Anthony Windsor. He and his wife Elizabeth Lovell, a descendant of the Husseys, who had founded Durford and owned portions of the nearby manor of Harting, were its patrons in 1525 (Moger 1953, 15). Sir Anthony whose will, proved in 1549, shows him to have been a pragmatic conservative in religion, (Garraway Rice & Godfrey [1938], 270–1) may well have exerted himself successfully on the canons' behalf if Wolsey had indeed had his eye on Durford. It is possible that there was also another connection between the Windsors and Durford since a Henry Windsor was, as a former canon of Durford, licensed to hold a secular benefice on 20 October 1536 (Chambers 1966, 78). His relationship to the Windsors, however, is unknown. He is unlikely to have been Anthony's son and heir Henry, who had a wife Eleanor by 1553, when he died a childless 'idiot' deemed unable to manage his lands (Attree 1912, nos 1105–6).

The Augustinian house of Hardham, where there were only two priest canons and two novices in 1524, may also have been considered more deserving of early dissolution to help fund Wolsey's project. The house had successfully deflected such a possibility by granting annuities, at an unknown date before 18 July 1524, to Wolsey's servant John Alen, then described as the priory's auditor, and to Edward Lewknor, then its steward (WSRO, Ep. I/1/4, ff. 92v–93). Lewknor, who lived some fourteen miles south-east at Kingston by Sea and died in 1528 (Elrington 1980, 134), had served as escheator for Surrey and Sussex in 1522–3 (Wood 1932 & 1971, 167). The involvement of both men suggests that Wolsey may have intended the dissolution of Hardham, and that Lewknor may have sought to acquire it, prevented only by his early death before its eventual demise. The house was again allowed to stand in 1532, probably owing to the intervention of Thomas Cromwell, whom the canons had also bribed by grant of an annuity (Gairdner 1880, nos. 1285 (vi), 1618). It did not, however, survive for long. Its site was acquired at an unknown date by its patron, Sir William Goring (Dugdale 1830, 307), and in 1534 other property attaching to the house was

sold (Dunkin 1914–15, 201–2). In 1536 the last prior, Robert Pryklove, was rector of Iping, a living he had obtained through the influence of Sir William, members of whose family had been its patrons since at least 1482 (TNA: PRO, E 334/1, f. 29; WSRO, Ep. I/1/4, ff. 7, 17, 35v). It is likely that the priories of Michelham and Shulbrede, as well as the greater Cluniac house of Lewes, had similarly deflected Cromwell's attentions, at least temporarily, in 1532 by the grant of annuities to him (Gairdner 1880, no. 1285 (vi)).

John Simpson became abbot of Durford before 6 February 1529 (TNA: PRO, E 315/100, ff. 93v–94) on the resignation of Henry Skinner, who had still been in post on 2 January that year (Stevenson 2006, no. 360). Skinner remained in the neighbourhood until at least 11 January 1532, when he resigned the nearby vicarage of Rogate, to which he had been presented on 4 December 1526 by grant of a turn at an unknown date to John Alen from the abbot and convent, to whom the advowson belonged (WSRO, Ep. I/1/4, ff. 52v, 59v). Alen, trained as both a canon and civil lawyer, was a protégé of Archbishop Warham, and had first pursued a career at the papal curia. He was enlisted in c.1518 as a servant of Thomas Wolsey, his ultimate reward for loyal service being the archbishopric of Dublin in 1528. In 1519 Alen became commissary general of the cardinal's legatine court, one of the objectives of which was the reduction of monastic independence. With Thomas Cromwell, he was responsible for the suppression from 1524 of some of the smaller houses, the revenues of which were to be used for the endowment of Wolsey's projected collegiate foundations already mentioned (Murray 2004, 638–40). To what can Alen's involvement in Durford's affairs be attributed? Does his acquisition at an unknown date, and from an unknown abbot, of the next turn at Rogate indicate that Wolsey may originally have contemplated the suppression of Durford? If that was the case it is difficult to see what, apart from Wolsey's direct intervention, could have saved Durford in 1525.

Possibly of a Petersfield family, John Simpson used his position as abbot to advance his kinsfolk. In April 1536, his brother John, called

the elder, was intruded into one of the abbey properties, Heath House farm, just over the county boundary in Petersfield, Hampshire, after the tenant had been induced to cede the remaining years of the lease to him (Stevenson 2006, no. 360). A Lancelot Simpson, also of Petersfield, whose relationship to the abbot is unknown, was described as the abbot's servant (Blaauw 1854, 224–5). He, like the abbot's elder sibling John, was also a tenant of the abbey from at least 1532, when Abbot John devised the manor of South Sheet in Petersfield to him at farm (Stevenson 2006, no. 348) and, in 1536, he was tenant of an abbey farm of sixty acres in Petersfield called Marteynes (TNA: PRO, SC 6/Hen. VIII/3674, rot. 17d). Another brother, William, was a canon of Durford in 1533 (Stevenson 2006, no. 339).

When Richard Layton, Cromwell's visitor, arrived at Durford Abbey on Friday 24 September 1535, his first impression was of the house's poverty, but, unlike other houses near by, it did not lack the means to entertain him for the night. Although Layton's opinion of the condition of the house itself was damning ('Dirtford'), his report on Simpson's ability as abbot was more favourable. He observed that 'this young man, for his time, has done well, and I have licensed him to repair to you for the liberty of himself and his brethren, as I could not meddle'. And that is exactly what Simpson did, conveying Layton's report of 26 September to Cromwell (Gairdner 1886, no. 444). That Simpson had other links with Cromwell is suggested by the fact that, in 1545, it was claimed that he had been in debt to Cromwell's recently deceased nephew Sir Richard Cromwell (Gibbs & Doubleday 1913, 555; Gairdner & Brodie 1907, no. 824).

The exact date of the dissolution of Durford Abbey is uncertain, but may *de facto* if not *de jure* have taken place on 15 August 1536 when the abbey property was surveyed. Accounts for the smaller religious houses in Sussex from 4 February to 26 March 1536 filed at Michaelmas that year by John Morris, a receiver of the Court of Augmentations, however, stated that Durford, together with the priories of Shulbrede, Rusper, Hastings, Michelham and Tortington, was dissolved about six months after the closing of his account, that is, about

25 March 1537. In February and March 1536, payments for their maintenance were made to five canons at Durford (Anon 1901, 55, 64; Jack 1970, 178), but a certificate drawn up by the commissioners appointed to survey the smaller houses, undated but later than 20 July 1536, accounted for nine canons, of whom eight were priests and one a novice (Youngs 1971, 166–7). As will be shown, Simpson had moved on to Titchfield by the end of October 1536, so it is possible, and indeed likely, that what happened in March 1537 merely marked the official end of a lengthy process of disbandment during which the canons had left at different times as opportunities for preferment offered themselves. On 17 October 1537, the abbey and its lands were granted to Sir William FitzWilliam who, from 18 October, was earl of Southampton. Upon his death on 15 October 1542, they reverted to the Crown (Gairdner 1891, no. 1008 (19); White 1953, 118–121).

The later careers of several canons of Durford which can be traced also suggest that the process of dissolution was gradual. John Simpson's brother William, although then only about thirty-four years old since he gave his age as forty in 1542, was already in receipt of a pension of £4 from the abbey when its property was surveyed on 15 August 1536 (Blaauw 1854, 226; Caley & Hunter 1834, pp. xiii–xiv). John Wakeling, then aged about thirty since he gave his age as thirty-six in 1542, called Waketon and said to have been 'recently' a Premonstratensian canon of Durford abbey, was granted a dispensation to hold a benefice with complete change of habit on 20 October 1536. This implies that the house had already been suppressed, and on the same date his fellow canons, Henry Dent, then aged about thirty-eight since he gave his age as forty-four in 1542, Richard Sandefeld, Roger Wheeler and Henry Windsor were all granted similar capacities (Blaauw 1854, 226; Chambers 1966, 78). By 1542 Wakeling had become a minor canon of St Paul's Cathedral, London, a post he retained until his death in 1581 (Blaauw 1854, 226; TNA: PRO, PROB 11/63, ff. 266v–267). He may have owed his position to the new bishop of Chichester, Richard Sampson, consecrated on 11 June 1536 and, from July of the same year, commendatory dean of St Paul's (Fryde

*et al* 1986, 240; Horn 1963, 7). Roger Wheeler was perhaps the man of that name collated to the vicarage of Cocking in January 1558 on the deprivation of the previous incumbent. He was rural dean of Midhurst in 1563 (Salzman 1954, 30; Torr 1920, 109) and made his will in 1574. His ownership of property in Petersfield at his death suggests that he had local connections (WSRO, STC II/H 160, will of Roger Wheeler). John Beston, a canon of Durford who had been presented by the abbey to the vicarage of Rogate in 1532, was still the incumbent there in 1535, and so was already provided for (Caley & Hunter 1810, 325; WSRO, Ep. I/1/4, f. 59v). He was still vicar on 1 June 1553, but was deprived in 1554 (Giuseppi & Walker 1937, 42; Peckham 1936, 101). In 1560 he became rector of Treyford (TNA: PRO, E 334/7, f. 75v) where he died, a thrice married man, in 1579. He requested burial at Rogate, however, near his mother's grave (WSRO, STC I/12, ff. 121v–122, will of John Beston).

John Simpson's compliance over the dissolution of Durford is likely to have resulted in his translation to Titchfield, with the intention that he should manage its passage towards dissolution. That he was translated to Titchfield Abbey from Durford is not in doubt. An action was brought against him, as abbot of Durford, and against William Maydenwell, his former receiver there, in the Court of Augmentations in 1542 before Sir Edmund Mervyn, a justice of King's Bench. On 14 April, it was deposed that Simpson had transferred farm stock from Durford to Titchfield and had illicitly disposed of other livestock belonging to the abbey. Other acts of embezzlement and malpractice of which he was then accused included the sale of more farm stock and of a suit of mass vestments bought by Sir William Barentyne for use at Little Haseley in Oxfordshire. It was claimed that a crimson cope belonging to the abbey had actually been seen in use at a funeral there (Blaauw 1854, 224–6; Sainty 1993, 29; Stevenson 2006, no. 339). Mervyn, who already had local interests (Moger 1953, 17, 28), in 1544 received a grant of the site of Durford Abbey from the Crown (Gairdner & Brodie 1903, no. 610 (109)). Although nowhere in the 1542 depositions was the former abbot expressly referred to either as John, John

Simpson, John Salisbury or John, bishop of Thetford, it can safely be inferred that John Simpson was intended. The goods of Durford Abbey, or what remained of them, were valued by the king's commissioners on 15 August 1536 (Caley & Hunter 1834, pp. xiii–xiv), and John Simpson, so called, occurs as abbot of Titchfield by 28 October 1536, having replaced the abbot commendatory, John Maxey, who had died on 15 August. Maxey, a Premonstratensian canon, was also abbot of Welbeck and thus visitor general of the order in England from 1519 until his death. He had been provided to the Irish bishopric of Elphin in 1525 and was from, the same year, a suffragan bishop in the diocese of York (Caley & Hunter 1814, 21; Chitty & Malden 1930, 152–5, 160; Colvin 1951, 419; Fryde *et al* 1986, 353). Exactly when John Salisbury, suffragan bishop of Thetford, replaced Simpson at Titchfield is unknown: in 1537 Salisbury and the convent there were considered to be bound by an obligation of 30 November 1536, presumably entered into by Simpson, although he was not expressly said to have been party to it (Gairdner 1891, no. 1275). Salisbury was described in the formal surrender document of Titchfield Abbey as abbot commendatory (TNA: PRO, C 54/408, no. 14; C 54/409, no. 63).

Titchfield Abbey was not one of the lesser monasteries, having a net income of £249 in c.1535 (Gribbin 2001, 82), but owed its early demise to the fact that it had already attracted the interest of Thomas Wriothesley by the summer of 1537. The dates of the documents which recorded its surrender that year suggest that the process of dissolution at Titchfield was also gradual (Youings 1971, 66–7). The actual transfer of the house to the Crown was effected by a final concord levied in the quindene of Martinmas 1537, that is between 25 November and 1 December (TNA: PRO, CP 25 (2)/52/372/29 Hen. VIII Mich., no. 15). The original deed of surrender does not survive, but it was first enrolled in Chancery on 28 December 1537 (TNA: PRO, C 54/408, no. 14). A second enrolment with the earlier date 18 December (TNA: PRO, C 54/409, no. 63) implies that an alteration was made to render unimpeachable the grant of Titchfield Abbey and its property to Thomas Wriothes-

ley on 30 December (Gairdner 1891, no. 1311 (40)). It is probable, however, that once the process of transfer began in November, the house was considered to have been dissolved and the canons were free to either transfer to another house or to seek posts as secular clergy under the terms of the Act of 1536 dissolving the smaller houses. This assumption is reinforced by the fact that on 22 December 1537 John Crayford, one of the two commissioners who had received the surrender of Titchfield, was already acting as Wriothesley's clerk of the works for the planned conversion of the conventual buildings into a sumptuous residence (Youngs 1971, 66, 246–8).

The commendatory abbot John Thetford, then so called, received a faculty on 10 November 1537 to hold two other benefices besides acting as suffragan bishop of Thetford. On the following 20 December, Giles Croxforde, described as 'recently prior of Titchfield', and other nine named canons of the house were also granted permission to seek secular preferment (Chambers 1966, 114, 119). It is likely that permission, at least for some of the canons, may have been retrospective. By 15 June 1537, one of them, Edward Bachelor, was studying at St John's, Cambridge, a college founded some years earlier expressly to promote humanistic studies. In a fulsome and obsequious letter of that date he thanked Thomas Wriothesley for presenting him as absentee incumbent to an unnamed and evidently impoverished benefice served by a stipendiary priest and which he proposed to let for £3 per year. '... I am so much bound to you', he wrote, 'who pulled me out of the blind darkness of our old religion, and brought me to the light of learning in a university which has begun, and a house which continues to set forth the unfeigned verity of Christ's gospel' (Gairdner 1891, no. 95). Of the other canons, the later careers of two are known. In 1541 Thomas Gryme served a chantry in the church of Holy Rood, Southampton, and in 1550 John Baker compounded for the first fruits of the rectory of Dibden (Chitty & Malden 1930, 146, 179).

Simpson himself was called 'sometime abbot of Titchfield' in 1538, when he was being encouraged to exchange a pension of

£20 a year payable to him by Thomas Wriothesley for the benefice of Horsted Keynes in Sussex, which was worth 20 marks a year and had become vacant between November 1537 and April 1538 (Emden 1974, 175–6; Gairdner 1892, nos. 381, 728). Since John's brother William, the former canon of Durford, was described as clerk of Horsted Keynes in April 1542 (Blaauw 1854, 226) he, rather than John, may have become rector there, possibly in return for surrendering his pension of £4 from Durford (Caley & Hunter 1834, p. xiv). The Chichester episcopal registers are deficient in institutions for the period in question (Steer & Kirby 1966, 3). David Mitchell occurs as rector in the years 1543 and 1559 (Garraway Rice & Godfrey [1939], 6). Although it has been stated categorically that John Simpson held the benefice of Horsted Keynes (Smith 2008, 572), the sources on which that assumption is evidently based (Gairdner 1892, nos. 381, 728) appear to have been misinterpreted. William Simpson may also be the man of that name who compounded for the first fruits of the rectory of Chailey in Sussex in 1543 (TNA: PRO, E 334/2, f. 132v), and was buried there in 1548 (East Sussex Record Office, PAR 289/1/1/1, f. 26). In April 1539, John Simpson himself was actively seeking preferment in the diocese of Winchester, when the bishop refused to collate him to a benefice because he was then already under judicial investigation, presumably for his alleged malpractice at Durford (Gairdner & Brodie 1894, no. 862). Despite that, John Simpson was certainly the man of that name instituted at an unknown date to the vicarage of East Meon, which was of the bishop of Winchester's collation (Chitty & Malden 1930, 120). That identification is strengthened by the fact that in 1541 John Heep, a fellow canon at Durford, acted as his curate at Steep, a chapelry of East Meon (Blaauw 1854, 226; Chitty & Malden 1930, 180). John Simpson is also certain to have been the person who was instituted on 27 April 1541 to the rectory of Colemore, of which John Norton was patron and which included the chapelry of Prior's Dean (Chitty & Malden 1930, 116). Colemore, like East Meon, was in the neighbourhood of Petersfield, and Simpson accounted for its first fruits and tenths on 18 May (TNA: PRO, E

334/2, f. 33 (f. 48)). In December 1541 Henry Dent, like John Heep a fellow canon of John Simpson at Durford, and who, as mentioned above, had received a faculty to hold a benefice with change of habit on 20 October 1536 (Chambers 1966, 78), performed duty as Simpson's curate in the parish of Colemore, for which he was paid by John Norton (Chitty & Malden 1930, 178). In 1542 he lived at Prior's Dean (Blaauw 1854, 226). Both livings were rich ones as Colemore with Prior's Dean was worth just over £22 a year, and the vicarage of East Meon, with the chapelries of Froxfield and Steep, just over £35. Together these were a more attractive bargain than the rectory of Horsted Keynes, valued at only just over £13 per year (Caley & Hunter 1810, 340; 1814, 11, 21). Simpson held the benefices in plurality and died before 24 April 1543 (Chitty & Malden 1930, pp. xxxiv–xxxv, 116, 120–1, 143).

If, as suggested, John Simpson's misappropriation and disposal of goods from Durford came to light immediately after his transfer to Titchfield and resulted in his being replaced within a month or two as abbot, the question why he was later rewarded with rich livings in the neighbourhood of those abbeys remains. It is possible that such lucrative preferments may have been dangled merely to encourage Simpson to give up the pension payable to him by Thomas Wriothesley. But how far Wriothesley was involved in Simpson's short post-dissolution career must remain unknown for the present.

John Salisbury's clearly traceable career shows him to have been an entirely different man from John Simpson. He first occurs as a monk of the Benedictine abbey of Bury St Edmunds at Gloucester College, Oxford, where he was suspected of Protestant leanings and imprisoned on the orders of Cardinal Wolsey from 25 February 1528 to 26 March 1529. On his release he returned to Bury where, he later claimed, he was 'little better than a prisoner' for five years, that is until about 1534 (Atherton 2004, 710–11). It is therefore most unlikely that, under the alias John Simpson, he could also have been abbot of Durford during that period. Thomas Cromwell evidently recognised Salisbury as a potentially useful placeman, and thereafter he advanced swiftly under the aegis

of Cromwell's servant Thomas Wriothesley. As prior of the Benedictine house of Horsham St Faith in Norfolk Salisbury, so called, acknowledged the royal supremacy on 17 August 1534 (Caley & Devon, 289). He afterwards, albeit unwillingly and with some hope that it might be overturned, acquiesced in the sequestration of the priory's possessions on 21 November 1535 for, as he wrote to Cromwell, 'Being of your advancement, I should be sorry to use myself unbecomingly' (Gairdner 1886, no. 865). The immediate reward for his compliance was his consecration on 19 March 1536 (when he was again called John Salisbury with no alias) as suffragan bishop of Thetford in the diocese of Norwich (LPL, Reg. Cranmer, f. 188 and v). That advancement, although one of honour only, had been obtained, he was at pains to emphasize years later, by royal letters patent and not by papal provision (LPL, MS 113, f. 79v). Horsham St Faith was finally suppressed between 23 September 1536 and 27 January 1537 (Cox 1906, 348; Gairdner 1890, no. 510; TNA: PRO, SP 5/1, f. 110). In the accounts for the dissolved house for 1536–7 the former prior was called John Salisbury (TNA: PRO, SC 6/Hen. VIII/2621, rot. 8 and d). It was presumably at the instance of Cromwell through Wriothesley that before 1 May 1537 the Benedictine Salisbury, as described above, had been appointed abbot *in commendam* of the Premonstratensian abbey of Titchfield, where he was at least intermittently resident (Gairdner 1890, no. 1108). When granted a faculty to hold two additional benefices on 10 November 1537 and in an account of the abbey properties for 1538–9, he was called John Thetford (Chambers 1966, 114; TNA: PRO, SC 6/Hen. VIII/3341, rot. 69 and d). It seems likely that Salisbury, having overseen the surrender of Horsham St Faith efficiently, was intruded into Titchfield by Wriothesley in place of Simpson for a brief period to ensure that none of its property would be sold or misappropriated as had apparently happened at Durford during Simpson's last days there.

From Titchfield, Salisbury moved on to Norwich priory to oversee its transformation to a cathedral of the new foundation governed by a dean and chapter. His rewards for compliance with the new dispensation were a prebend

there in 1538 and, in 1539, the deanery itself. His prebend, the sixth and the only one not reserved for former monks of Norwich, was obtained through Wriothesley's influence. A noted pluralist, Salisbury was briefly deprived of all his preferments on his marriage in 1554. Although pardoned the same year, he did not regain most of his former benefices, including the deanery of Norwich and recognition of his status as suffragan bishop of Thetford, until 1558. From 1570 he held the bishopric of Sodor and Man, which he seems never to have visited, *in commendam* with the deanery, and died, probably at Norwich, in 1573 (Atherton 2004, 710–11; Baskerville 1937 and 2002, 191–2; Horn 1992, 42, 59).

## CONCLUSION

The account given above of the careers of John Simpson and John Salisbury before and after the dissolution of their houses demonstrates conclusively that they were different men. John Simpson, had he not fallen from favour when his misdeeds at Durford came to light, might possibly have expected to receive rewards such as those accorded to John Salisbury. In the event, he remained in the neighbourhood of Durford and Titchfield, albeit as the incumbent of rich livings, until his early death. The careers of other former canons whose post-dissolution preferments can be traced seem to have been uneventful and none apparently had difficulty in adopting innovations in religious practice. Few moved very far from their abbeys. Two, however, Edward Bachelor from Titchfield and John Wakeling from Durford, possibly because they were more able than their brethren,

sought advancement further afield, Bachelor certainly and Wakeling possibly, with the aid of influential patrons.

Although no visitation of the abbeys of Durford or Titchfield survives after 1500, those for the lesser houses in Sussex held in 1518 and the 1520s show that in almost all a disciplined common life had ceased to exist through the failure of superiors to maintain monastic rigour in the face of poverty, spiritual torpor, a lack of desire for the religious life and a consequent decline in vocations. It is likely that in 1524–5 Cardinal Wolsey may have contemplated not only the dissolution of Bayham and Pynham, but also of Durford and Hardham. Hardham gained a few more years by successful bribery and it is possible that Durford did too. Indeed, it is hard to see why either should have survived rather than Bayham. That both did so may be explained, too, by the support of more influential patrons. The early fall of the greater house of Titchfield, however, demonstrates that possession of the resources deemed necessary for it to be allowed to continue after 1536 was of no avail against the covetousness of a powerful servant of the state. Also clear is that through the co-operation of such men as Simpson and Salisbury the eventual process of dissolution at both Durford and Titchfield was carefully managed over a period of time and, as far as can be ascertained, achieved without local opposition.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am most grateful to Dr Alison McHardy for reading and commenting on this article.

## REFERENCES

### *Primary sources*

East Sussex Record Office, PAR 289, Chailey Parish Records.  
 Lambeth Palace Library [LPL]: Register of Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury; MS 113, Miscellaneous Papers.  
 The National Archives: Public Record Office [TNA:

PRO]: C 54, Close Rolls; CP 25, Feet of Fines; E 315, Miscellaneous Books of the Augmentation Office; E 334, Composition Books of the First Fruits and Tenths Office; PROB 11, Registered Copies of Wills; SC 6, Ministers' and Receivers' Accounts; SP 5, Suppression Papers.

- West Sussex Record Office [WSRO]: Ep. I/1/3, Register of Edward Story, Bishop of Chichester; Ep. I/1/4, Registers of Edward Story, Richard FitzJames and Robert Sherburne, Bishops of Chichester (in all instances the pencil foliations have been cited); STC I, Testaments and Wills; STC II, Original Testaments and Wills (both Archdeaconry of Chichester).
- Secondary sources*
- Anon, 1901 Inventories of goods of the smaller monasteries and friaries in Sussex at the time of their dissolution, *Sussex Archaeol Coll* **44** 55–72.
- Atherton, I 2004 John Salisbury, in Matthew, H G C & Harrison, B (eds) *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* **48**, Oxford, 710–11.
- Attree, F W T (ed.) 1912 *Notes of Post Mortem Inquisitions taken in Sussex. 1 Henry VII to 1649 and after*, Sussex Record Society **14**, London.
- Baskerville, G 1937 *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries*, repr. 2002, London.
- Blaauw, W H 1854 Sussex Monasteries at the Time of their Suppression, *Sussex Archaeol Coll* **7** 217–28.
- Blaauw, W H 1857 Episcopal Visitations of the Benedictine Monastery of Easebourne, *Sussex Archaeol Coll* **9** 1–32.
- Caley, J & Devon, F 1846 Inventory of the original acknowledgements of the Royal Supremacy made by the religious houses, etc., and deposited in the Treasury of the Receipt of the Exchequer, temp. Hen. VIII, *7th Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records*, Appendix **2**, London, 297–306.
- Caley, J & Hunter, J (eds) 1810, 1814, 1834 *Valor Ecclesiasticus temp. Hen. VIII. Auctoritate Regia Institutus*, **1**, **2**, **6**, London.
- Chambers, D S (ed.) 1966 *Faculty Office Registers, 1534–1549*, Oxford.
- Chitty, H & Malden, H E (eds) 1930 *Registra Stephani Gardiner et Johannis Poynt, Episcoporum Wintoniensium*, Canterbury and York Society **37**, Oxford.
- Colvin, H M 1951 *The White Canons in England*, Oxford.
- Cooper, G M 1857 The Premonstratensian Abbey of Bayham, *Sussex Archaeol Coll* **9** 145–81.
- Cox, J C 1906 The Priory of St Faith, Horsham, *The Victoria History of the County of Norfolk* **2**, London, 346–9.
- Dugdale, W 1830 *Monasticon Anglicanum* **6** (1), Caley, J, Ellis, H & Bandinel, B (eds), London.
- Dunkin, E H W (ed.) 1914–15 *Sussex Manors, Advowsons, etc., Recorded in the Feet of Fines Henry VIII to William IV*, Sussex Record Society **19**, London.
- Elrington C R 1980 Kingston by Sea, *A History of the County of Sussex* **6** (1), Oxford, 132–8.
- Emden, A B 1974 *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford AD 1501 to 1540*, Oxford.
- Fryde, E B, Greenway, D E, Porter, S & Roy, I 1986 *Handbook of British Chronology*, London.
- Gairdner, J (ed.) 1880 *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII etc.* **5**, London.
- Gairdner, J (ed.) 1886 *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII etc.* **9**, London.
- Gairdner, J (ed.) 1890 *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII etc.* **12** (1), London.
- Gairdner, J (ed.) 1891 *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII etc.* **12** (2), London.
- Gairdner, J (ed.) 1892 *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII etc.* **13** (1), London.
- Gairdner, J & Brodie, R H (eds) 1894 *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII etc.* **14** (1), London.
- Gairdner, J & Brodie, R H (eds) 1903 *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII etc.* **19** (1), London.
- Gairdner, J & Brodie, R H (eds) 1907 *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII etc.* **20** (2), London.
- Garraway Rice, R & Godfrey, W H (eds) 1938 *Transcripts of Sussex Wills* **2**, Sussex Record Society **42**, Lewes.
- Garraway Rice, R & Godfrey, W H (eds) 1939 *Transcripts of Sussex Wills* **3**, Sussex Record Society **43**, Lewes.
- Gasquet, F A (ed.) 1906a *Collectanea Anglo-Premonstratensia*, Camden 3rd Series **10**, London.
- Gasquet, F A (ed.) 1906b *Collectanea Anglo-Premonstratensia*, Camden 3rd Series **12**, London.
- Gibbs, V & Doubleday, H A (eds) 1913 *G E C The Complete Peerage of England Scotland Ireland Great Britain and the United Kingdom* **3**, London.
- Giuseppi, M S & Walker, J C (eds) 1937 *Calendar*

- of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office. Philip and Mary 1* (1553–4), London.
- Goring, J 1978 The riot at Bayham Abbey, *Sussex Archaeol Coll* **116** 1–10.
- Gribbin, J A 2001 *The Premonstratensian Order in Late Medieval England*, Woodbridge.
- Horn, J M (ed.) 1963 John Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300–1541: St Paul's London*, London.
- Horn, J M (ed.) 1992 John Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1541–1857: Ely, Norwich, Westminster and Worcester Dioceses*, London.
- Jack, S M 1970 Dissolution dates for the monasteries dissolved under the Act of 1536, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* **43** 161–81.
- Knowles, D 1959 *The Religious Orders in England* **3**, Cambridge.
- MacCulloch, D 1986 *Suffolk and the Tudors: politics and religion in an English county 1500–1600*, Oxford.
- Madden, F 1834 Abbats of Tichfield Abbey, in Hampshire, *Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica* **1** 14–16.
- Moger, O M 1953 Harting; Terwick, *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex* **4**, Oxford, 10–21, 28–30.
- Murray, J 2004 John Alen, in Matthew, H G C & Harrison, B (eds) *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* **1**, Oxford, 638–40.
- Peckham, W D 1936 A Diocesan Visitation of 1553, *Sussex Archaeol Coll* **77** 93–105.
- Sainty, J 1993 *The Judges of England 1272–1990*, Selden Society Supplementary Series **10**, London.
- Salzman, L F 1954 Sussex religious at the Dissolution, *Sussex Archaeol Coll* **92** 24–36.
- Salzmann, L 1907 Pynham Priory, *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex* **2**, London, 80–1.
- Smith, D M 2008 *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales 1377–1540*, Cambridge.
- Steer, F W & Kirby, I M (eds) 1966 *Diocese of Chichester: a catalogue of the records of the bishop, archdeacons and former exempt jurisdictions*, Chichester.
- Stevenson, J H (ed.) 2006 *The Durford Cartulary*, Sussex Record Society **90**, Lewes.
- Torr, V J B 1920 An Elizabethan return of the State of the Diocese of Chichester, *Sussex Archaeol Coll* **61** 92–124.
- Turner, W & Blaauw, W H 1857 Injunctions given to the Prior and Convent of Boxgrove, A.D. 1518, *Sussex Archaeol Coll* **9** 61–6.
- Way, A 1852 Notices of the Benedictine priory of St Mary Magdalen, at Rusper, *Sussex Archaeol Coll* **5** 244–62.
- White, G H (ed.) 1953 *G E C The Complete Peerage* **12** (1), London.
- Wood, A C 1932 *List of Escheators for England*, List & Index Society **72**, repr. 1971, London.
- Youngs, J 1971 *The Dissolution of the Monasteries*, London.

*Author:* Janet H Stevenson, 23 Byron Gardens, Sutton, Surrey, SM1 3QG

© Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society