



Interior of St. Cyriac's Church, Lacock

The witnesses seem obviously the couple who married in 1809. In the burial register appears the simple entry:

29 Mar 1801 James Smith

while a long, flat, stone slab in the churchyard (now with no date of death on it) records:

James Smith aged 49 A Faithful and Honest Servant who lived many years in the Shrewsbury family.

Brian Howells Banks

THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH OF SWINDON AND ITS RELATIONS WITH SOUTHWICK PRIORY IN HAMPSHIRE

The parish church of the Holy Rood in Swindon belonged for much of the medieval period to Southwick Priory, which was situated at first at Portchester, and from about 1150 at Southwick, in Hampshire. The cartularies of the priory, preserved in the Hampshire Record Office (1M54/1-3), contain extensive references to Swindon church. They have been edited in extensive calendar form in English, with a modern index: Katharine A. Hanna *The Cartularies of Southwick Priory*, (Hampshire County Council, 1988 (Cartularies I and II) and 1989 (Cartulary III) as Volumes IX and X in the Hampshire Record Series, cited in this article by the sequential cartulary volume and entry numbers used in that edition.¹

The importance of accurate published texts or calendars of historical manuscripts, particularly when indexed, can scarcely be overstated. These two published volumes were not available to the editors of the *Victoria County History of Wiltshire*, Vol. IX, when compiling the topographical article for Swindon, published in 1970. They relied on a 19th century transcript by Sir Frederick Madden, which covered only the third volume of the cartularies (British Library Add. MSS. 33280).² Mrs. Hanna's edition makes accessible much additional information about the benefice and church of Swindon and its relations with Southwick Priory, enabling a fuller and more accurate account of the medieval history of the church to be given.

The first mention of the church is earlier than 'towards the end of the 12th century', as stated in *VCH Wiltshire* IX, p. 145. It was apparently given to the Augustinian canons of Portchester, for the perpetual maintenance of their guest-house, before the priory moved to Southwick in or before 1150 (I 19). In several charters of the late 1140s or 1150s entered in the cartularies (I 11, 18, 19, 21, 22; III 79, 405, 407, 412) the donor is recorded as Robert de Pont de l'Arche, though in two instances (I 11, 18) he states that he is confirming a gift made earlier by his father, William de Pont de l'Arche, who died about 1148, and in another (I 19) that his own gift in free alms has been made with the consent of his father. In some of the charters (I 18; III 79) the church of Swindon is explicitly (though not necessarily validly)

included among the possessions granted to the priory on its establishment before 1129;³ and in one document there is evidence from witnesses, including Robert, the elder, formerly priest of Swindon, that the latter had held the church and its tithes from the demesne of the canons of Portchester in the time of King Henry I (i.e. before 1135), paying them annually 30 shillings (I 12). A dispute in the 1150s between the priory and the priest at Swindon, probably over this payment, brought to light an agreement, undated but probably made between 1152 and 1160 before Jocelin, bishop of Salisbury, in the chapter house at Salisbury, by which Robert the elder had quitclaimed his rights in the church to Robert, the younger, priest of Swindon, in return for maintenance for the remainder of his life. The dispute, heard before the bishop in synod, was settled by an agreement between the priory and Robert the younger for the latter to hold the church and tithes, paying the priory one silver mark a year, while providing for the maintenance of the elder Robert as long as he lived (I 12). The issue must have arisen again, for in 1199 Herbert Poore, bishop of Salisbury, granted the priory an enhanced pension of 100 shillings a year from the church (I 154). Even then, disputes continued, with cases of non-payment of the pension or other dues by successive rectors or vicars⁴ being heard in 1231 (III 669), in the late 1240s (III 30), and again in the early 1280s (III 18, 32) before papal delegates, resulting in sentences in favour of the priory, which nonetheless required bolstering by successive episcopal confirmations (III 31, 413, 417; I 107).

Although the priory obtained a licence from Edward III in 1325 to appropriate the church of Swindon (III 982; *Cal. Pat. R.* 1324-7, p. 122), this does not appear to have been taken up.⁵ A further licence was obtained in 1357 (III 403; *Cal. Pat. R.* 1354-8, p. 531) and this time led to the appropriation to the priory on 12 July 1357 (II 1) by Robert Wyvil, bishop of Salisbury, of the fruits, rents and profits of the parish church, over and above the advowson and annual pension of 100 shillings which already belonged to the priory. The income thus transferred was said not to exceed 20 marks according to the assessment of the tithe. Wyvil directed that there should be adequate provision for a vicar and for payment of annual pensions to himself and his successors, to the cathedral church of Salisbury and to the archdeacon of Wiltshire. He subsequently ordered an inquisition into the rents, profits and oblations of the church, and on 25 July 1359 issued ordinances, with the agreement of the priory and the vicar of Swindon, William Matthew, dividing the land, buildings, tithes and other oblations belonging to the church between them and their successors and setting out their respective rights and duties (II 3). These arrangements are set out in a separate article on the Medieval Clergy of Swindon.

The appropriation of the church to Southwick Priory and ordination of the vicarage was confirmed by the bishop of Salisbury at the priory's request in 1378 (III 31, 413), not initiated then, as *VCH Wiltshire* IX, p. 145 suggests. The appropriation was again confirmed by Simon of Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury, acting as special papal delegate (as well as papal legate) on 3 October 1380, when the references to Swindon in the Southwick Cartularies effectively cease.

The above account draws on only part of the information about the priory's interest in Swindon church covering the more significant entries necessary to chart the main developments in the relations between priory and parish. The whole body of material illustrates, if it does not wholly clarify, the complex interaction of temporal and spiritual relationships between the priory, diocesan and papal authorities, and the secular interests of the Crown and landowners.

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