

SUPPRESSION OF TEWKESBURY MONASTERY

In the fourteenth century, Edward I and Edward III between them dissolved more than one hundred alien priories, and throughout the early fifteenth century, bishops had been transferring monastic holdings to the Universities. Moreover, with the majority of English monasteries having fewer than twelve member clergy, many religious believed someone must reform these small foundations. Thus, pressure for reform had been building for decades before England's break with Rome.

In 1534, Thomas Cromwell began inventorying the possessions of all English monasteries. In 1535, Parliament suppressed 243 foundations with a net worth less than £200, with more suppressions following every year. By 1540, every monastic foundation in England except Saint Benet's Abbey (Norfolk) had ceased to exist.

At the time of its dissolution, the Benedictine foundation at Tewkesbury (Gloucestershire) housed thirty-eight monks. The abbot, John Wiche, received appointment as Bishop of Gloucester (1541-1550) and the parish spent £453 to purchase the abbey building to serve as their parish church.

January 1539/1540

Tewkesbury, late monastery, surrender to the use of the King's Majesty and of his heirs and successors forever, made bearing date under the covent-seal of the same late monastery, the ninth day of January, in the thirty-first year of the reign of our most dread victorious Sovereign Lord, King Henry the Eighth. And the said day and year clearly dissolved and suppressed.

The clear yearly value of all the said possessions belonging to the monastery, as well spiritual as temporal, over and besides £136 8s 1d in fees, annuities, and custodies, granted to diverse persons by letters patents under the covent-seal of the said late monastery for term of their lives£1595 15s 6d

John Wiche, late Abbot there	£266	13s	4d
John Beley, late Prior there	£16	-	-
J. Bromsegrove, late Prior of Delehurst	£13	6s	8d
Robert Cheltenham, B.D.	£10	-	-
Robert Circester, Prior of Saint James	£13	6s	8d
two monks, £8 apiece	£16	-	-
Will Didcote, Prior of Cranborne	£10	-	-
one monk	£7	-	-
27 monks (£6 13s 6d each)	£180	-	-

And so remains clear..... £1044 8s 10d

Records and evidences belonging to the late monastery remain in the treasury there under the custody of John Whittington, Knight. The keys thereof being delivered to Richard Pauler, receiver.

Houses and Buildings to Remain Un-Defaced

The lodging called the Newark, leading from the gate to the late abbot's lodging, with buttery, pantry, cellar, kitchen, larder, and pastry thereto adjoining. The late abbot's lodging, the hostelry, the great gate entering into the court, with the lodging over the same; the abbot's stable, bake-house, brew-house, and slaughterhouse, the almery, barn, dairy-house, the great barn next the Avon, the malting-house, with the garners in the same, the ox-house in the Barton, the Barton gate, and the lodging over the same.

Deemed to be Superfluous

The church, with chapels, cloisters, chapterhouse, misericord, the two dormitories, infirmary with chapels and lodgings within the same; the workhouse, with another house adjoining to the same, the convent kitchen, the library, the old hostelry, the chamberer's lodging, the new-hall, the old parlour adjoining to the abbot's lodging; the cellarer's lodging, the poultry-house, the garden, the almery, and all other houses and lodgings not above reserved.

Leads remaining upon the quire, aisles, and chapels annexed the cloister chapterhouse, Frater, Saint Michael's chapel, halls, firmery, and gate-house, esteemed to 180 foder.

Bells remaining in the steeple there are eight poize, by estimation 14.600 weight.

Reserved to the Use of the King's Majesty

Jewels Miters garnished with gilt, rugged pearls, and counterfeit stones.

Plate of Silver Silver gilt, 329 ounces; silver parcel gilt, 605 ounces; silver white, 497 ounces.

Ornaments One cope of silver tissue, with one chasuble and one tunicle of the same; one cope of gold tissue, with one cope and two tunicles of the same.

Sum of all the ornaments, goods, and chattels belonging to the said monastery sold by the said commissioners, as in particular book of sales thereof made ready to be shown, as more at large may appear.£194 8s –

Payments to the late religious and servants dispatched

To 38 late religious persons of the said late monastery of the King's Majesty reward.....£80 13s 4d

To 144 late servants of the said late monastery, for their wages and liveries.....£75 10s –

Payments to diverse persons for victuals and necessaries of them had to the use of the said monastery, with £10 paid to the late abbot there, for and in full payment of £124 5s 4d by him to be paid to certain creditors of the said late monastery, by covenants made with the aforesaid commissioners.£18 12s –

And so remains clear.....£19 12s 8d

Then follows a list of the livings in their gift

County of Gloucester	Four parsonages and 10 vicarages
County of Worcestershire	Two parsonages and 2 vicarages
County of Warwick	Two parsonages
County of Bristol	Five parsonages and 1 vicarage
County of Wiltshire	2 vicarages
County of Oxforshire	One parsonage and 2 vicarages
County of Dorset	Four parsonages and 2 vicarages
County of Somerset	Three parsonages
County of Devon	1 vicarage
County of Cornwall	2 vicarages
Counties of Glamorgan and Morgan	5 vicarages