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History

The Abbey at St Albans and its Relationship with its Lordship in the Later Middle Ages

by

Rebecca Toepfer

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ABSTRACT

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Rebecca Toepfer

This thesis aims to examine the relationship between the monks and monastery of St Albans, and the townspeople and the tenants on the manors it held, including a case study on the manor of Codicote, by considering how the nature of this relationship changed throughout the history of the abbey from one of dependency to independence, and of animosity to acceptance. It will analyse events from the foundation of the monastery when the town grew around the abbey, to the problems of the fourteenth century, and finally, the Dissolution.

This thesis concludes that the relationship between the monastery and the town of St Albans and its surrounding manors had three phases: the first phase took place from the foundation of the abbey through to the fourteenth century, where the town and monastery were dependent on one another. The second was during the fourteenth century, where the townspeople fought for their freedoms while the third was from the end of the fourteenth century through to the Dissolution when the town was able to function without the monastery, but still maintained a productive relationship that continued until after 1539 when the abbey was dissolved.

This thesis is an addition to the work that has already been completed on both St Albans and Benedictine monasteries. It will go beyond the vast historiography on the subject by examining the relationship between town and abbey not as a simple political or financial one, but instead, as a complex changing relationship with multiple layers evolving over time.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Rebecca Toepfer declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

The Abbey at St Albans and its Relationship with its Lordship in the Late Middle Ages.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Date: 04/07/2017

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

GASA - Gesta Abbatum Sancti Albani by Thomas Walsingham, ed. Henry Riley, III vols., RS 28 (London: Longmans, 1867-69).

HALS - Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies

IPM - Inquisitions Post Mortem

LP Hen VIII - Letters and Papers Henry VIII

ODNB – Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

RB - Regula Benedict (The Rule of St Benedict)

Registra - Registrum Quorundam Abbatum Monasterii S. Albani, ed. Henry Riley, II vols. (London: Longman, 1872).

RS – Rolls Series

TNA - The National Archives

VCH - Victoria County History

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Benedictine monastery of St Albans had a colourful history throughout its 850 years. From its foundation in c.793 to its dissolution in 1539, the abbey experienced wealth, debt, revolt, and death. The fourteenth century witnessed much of this activity; including a rebellion in 1327, the Black Death in 1348, and the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. Over time, the monastery demonstrated its resilience by producing a steady flow of monks, manors, dependencies, and by maintaining a literary tradition. This chapter will introduce the questions of this thesis and St Albans itself. It will begin to consider the historiography of themes covered in this work that have been chosen to allow for the investigation into the relationship between the monastery and the town of St Albans.

1.1 Research Questions and Sources

The aim of this thesis is to understand the relationship that the monastery of St Albans enjoyed with its town. I demonstrate that this relationship was both governing and interdependent in nature and that despite experiencing problems, ultimately, it was successful. I will also determine whether the control that the monastery exerted over the town can be said to have been beneficial, and that if it was not for this management, the town may not have prospered as it did, both economically and politically. Each chapter will examine the ups and downs of the relationship, with the conclusion that at the end of the history of the monastery, little animosity from the town was directed at the abbot or monks. To do this, I examine at the relationship between the abbey and the town throughout different points in the history of St Albans, looking in detail at the events that shaped the town and its people and which, in return, shaped the relationship between them.

This chronological analysis of the monastery at St Albans examines themes within its history, including estate management, local government, rebellions and plague as well as offering a comparative study with other Benedictine monasteries. By using such an approach, I can use other monasteries not only in comparison to St Albans, but can also make careful assumptions in the history of St Albans where there are gaps in the evidence.

In this thesis I will argue that the relationship between the townspeople of St Albans and the abbot, monks, and monastery in the town had two natures. The first nature was that of a governing relationship; the abbey sought to carefully control the town and those living in it, and on the manors and to develop the town and aid it in its growth both economically and socially. The monastery laid the foundations for the town and witnessed its growth, particularly in the centuries before the Black Death. In this way, the monastery was able to ensure that the relationship it had with the town was highly beneficial to the monks, providing them with the rents, services, dues, and employees they required. This governing relationship is also demonstrated through the courts

held by the cellarer, and certain other obedientiaries, who were the monk-officials of the monastery. Certain officials held a manor in which they held a regular court. The business of the courts was recorded in the court rolls, and in turn this was copied into the court books that survive today. The cellarer's court was held frequently in St Albans. This meant that those attending the court would be travelling into the town and would have personal contact with the cellarer and the abbey. The courts handled disputes among the peasants, and the official would ensure smooth management of the manor. The second nature of this relationship was its interdependence, in that both the town and those living there and the abbey were dependent on each other. The townspeople benefitted from the relics of Alban and the prominence of the monastery so much so that royalty visited regularly and pilgrims ventured there often. In addition to this, the monastery needed the townspeople for rents and income to establish themselves as a great monastery.

The relationship between the townspeople and the monastery changed over time and appears to have three phases. The first phase lasted from the foundation of the monastery through to the start of the fourteenth century. During this time the town was highly dependent on the monastery for buildings, employment, and the prominence that the relics of Alban gave to the town. Likewise, the monastery depended on the town; they needed townspeople to pay rents and fees, and to enter the monastery as monks. They also needed country people living outside the town on the manors owned by the monastery for income from rents and food. The ruling relationship can also be seen through the charitable institutions that were founded. The townspeople did not seem to have too much trouble with the abbey during this time and so the relationship appears to have been beneficial enough for both parties to be content with the situation, with the benefits leaning heavily towards the monastery. However, this changed with the Black Death and Peasants' Revolt in the fourteenth century, which can be seen as the second phase. As a result of overpopulation before the Black Death, there were more opportunities for the peasants of England, which gave them more of a chance at improving their lives than their ancestors had been given. Prior to the revolt there had been certain grievances that the townspeople and tenants of the manors had with the abbot, however, they had been suppressed well enough by the monastery until 1381 when the townspeople took the opportunity to revolt together with much of the country. In Bury St Edmunds, the townspeople believed that they had outgrown the benefits of the monastery, and as such wanted to be free of its government, we can assume that the riots in St Albans had the same reasoning. The final phase is from the fifteenth century until the end of the monastery with the dissolution in 1539. It is here that the town might not have needed the monastery as much as it did in the previous centuries, but the religious devotion in the town seems to be high, as does the respect for the monastery. Only a few problems arose with certain townspeople regarding mills during this time, and these were settled quickly. This is confirmed when at the time of the dissolution, the abbot acted on behalf of the townspeople to ensure they had a school and place to worship, keeping close ties with those who were living in the town. I will conclude that the monks and the townspeople were very much dependent on one other until the middle of the fourteenth century when the town

felt it could survive without the monastery, despite the Peasants' Revolt and other disputes, the monks and townspeople grew a respect for one that continued until after the Dissolution of the monastery in 1539.

This study will cover the town and monastery of St Albans primarily from the end of the twelfth century to the middle of the sixteenth century. Although many of the historical aspects and events of this time are included, namely the Black Death, Peasants' Revolt, and Dissolution, it will be limited on account of the vast period under review and therefore will be limited in this manner. Other limitations of this study include the lost sources of St Albans, and therefore, previous studies of other monasteries will have to be used to help make conclusions about the Abbey. However, at the same time this thesis will not be able to cover the large number of manuscripts that survive from the monastery, and I shall have to be selective in what I use. I will also include a sample of the rural lordships of St Albans by looking at the manor of Codicote. Because of the number of manors held by the abbey, fourteen in total spread out mainly in Hertfordshire, and the vast amount of material in the court rolls available, Codicote will be used as a case study. Codicote has been chosen because of the extent of 1332 and the court rolls that are available from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, and because I can add to the extensive work that Elizabeth Levett completed on the manor. This also offers an opportunity for future work to be done on St Albans and the manors it held.

My research will add to the field of monastic study in many ways. This thesis will go beyond the current historiography and will provide an original viewpoint to it regarding St Albans by looking at the relationship between the townspeople and monastery over a long period of time and how it changed throughout that time. By doing this I will be examining many issues and events and how these shaped this relationship up until the Dissolution in 1539, thereby demonstrating that it was highly complex and had multiple layers with political, social, and economic aspects. It will also complement the work that has already been written on St Albans. Ada Elizabeth Levett, James Clark, and Michelle Still have all studied the monastery of St Albans.[1] Levett's work primarily focused on manorial studies, whilst using the abbey, its manors and methods of estate management as its case study. I will use her research on the manors of St Albans to show how they were managed and her invaluable research into the surviving court books of these manors. I will add to her work by looking at how the estate management she has examined had an effect on the relationship between the monks and townspeople of St Albans. In particular, my case study on Codicote will provide an example of the manors of St Albans, how they were managed, and the socio-economic structure on these manors, especially during difficult times including famine and

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[1] Ada Elizabeth Levett, *Studies in manorial history* (Oxford, 1938); James G. Clark, 'Thomas Walsingham Reconsidered: Books and Learning at Late-Medieval St. Albans', *Speculum,* 77 (2002), 832-860; James G. Clark, 'Reformation and Reaction at St Albans Abbey, 1530-58', *The English Historical Review,* 115 (2000), 297-328; Michelle Still, *The abbot and the rule : religious life at St Alban's, 1290-1349* (Aldershot, 2002).

the Black Death. James Clark has researched the monastery of St Albans in detail, including the work of the chronicler Thomas Walsingham, and the monks at the time of the dissolution. My work complements his by looking at the monks' duties relating to the lives of the townspeople, and the reaction of the townspeople to the dissolution of the abbey as well as the monks' response. Michelle Still's research was narrower, examining the history of the monastery and the religious life there between 1290 and 1349. This thesis will expand on her study, using her work on education, charity, and the abbots of this timeframe and look at these elements of the monastery within the wider picture of the town, and continuing through to the Dissolution. Finally, I will challenge the traditional viewpoint of the decline of monasteries held by David Knowles, and show that St Albans was thriving up until the eve of the Dissolution, which is the more current trend shared by Joan Greatrex and James Clark.

A substantial amount of research has been undertaken on the monasteries of medieval England. These works cover a variety of different areas of monastic history. Joan Greatrex has looked in detail at the medieval Benedictine monasteries of England, including the obedientiaries of the monastery of Peterborough.[2] David Knowles has examined the religiousness of the monks in Benedictine monasteries and his work *The Religious Orders*, has been of great use to my own work.[3] Barbara Harvey has also researched monastic history, looking at Westminster in particular, but she has also written more generally on the monks' lives in a monastery in the Middle Ages.[4] P.D.A Harvey, like Levett, has looked more at manorial history when considering the monasteries. He has focused on the court rolls, and what they can tell us about the monasteries and secular land owners; including how they were produced, and how this reflected the farming and estate management of the times.[5] My work will add to these works of general monastic history by conveying their themes through focusing on St Albans, and also bringing together the mixture of secular and religious themes, especially when looking at the relationship between the abbey and the town. Among other specific studies on monasteries in the Middle Ages are those by Mary Lobel and Antonia Gransden on Bury St Edmunds, R.A.L. Smith on Christchurch Canterbury, and Barbara Harvey on Westminster.[6] These studies will be invaluable for my work as a comparative study with St Albans and these towns, and will hopefully add to them with this comparison.

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[2] *Account rolls of the obedientiaries of Peterborough*, ed. by Joan Greatrex (Northampton, 1984); Joan Greatrex, *The English benedictine cathedral priories : rule and practice, 1270-1420* (Oxford, 2011).
[3] David Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1948), I.
[4] Barbara F. Harvey, *Westminster Abbey and its estates in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1977).
[5] P. D. A. Harvey, *Manorial records* (London, 1984).
[6] Mary Doreen Lobel, *The borough of Bury St. Edmund's* (Oxford, 1935); Antonia Gransden, *A History of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds 1182-1256* (Woodbridge, 2007); R. A. L. Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory A Study in Monastic Administration* (Cambridge, 1943); Harvey, *Westminster Abbey and its estates in the Middle Ages*.

The material on St Albans during the Middle Ages is exhaustive and is spread out over various libraries and archives. I will be using evidence from many areas including: manorial court records, abbots' registers, wills, and of course chronicles. I will have to be selective when using these sources, as there is too much material to cover during the course of this thesis. Therefore, I will select material that provides a direct relevance to the relationship between the town and abbey. Many of these sources have limitations, particularly with reliability, which I will discuss below. In regard to the chronicles, I will focus primarily on those of Matthew Paris and Thomas Walsingham, because the time in which they were alive includes many of the events that I wish to investigate. St Albans is renowned for its rich chronicle history; the works are by monks of the monastery and include: Roger Wendover, Matthew Paris, William Rishanger, John de Trokelowe, and Thomas Walsingham, all of whom wanted to continue the tradition of their predecessors.[7] St Albans was a place of learning and was considered to be an 'exemplar of monastic education', this would have been beneficial for the monks and their writing.[8] These chronicles give us an insight into the monastery, how it was run, how the monks lived and events on both a local and national scale. These chronicles allow the reader to discover the opinions of the monks. They can be an extremely helpful source, but there is an inevitable bias on the part of the monks. Vaughan writes that the tradition appears to have started with Roger Wendover (d. 1236), although he may have used work by an unknown monk of the twelfth or thirteenth century.[9] Wendover is not as well known as the other chroniclers of St Albans, so much so that his work was mistaken for that of the later chronicler Matthew Paris. The accepted view is that Paris heavily relied on Wendover's work. Wendover's writing, *Flores Historiarum*, claims to be a history from creation to 1235.[10] It can be split into three parts; the first is prior to 447, which Coxe, who printed the edition in Latin, believes to have so little value that he has not included it in his version. The second section is from 447 to 1200, and includes information based on sources that do not exist any more. The third section contains his own writing of the 50 years before Wendover's death in 1237.[11]

Matthew Paris appears next in this tradition; he became a monk at St Albans in 1217 and died there in 1259.[12] His *Chronica Maiora* spans from 1236 to 1259 and includes details of events not only occurring in the monastery and England, but also in Wales and France. He also wrote the *Historia Anglorum sive historia minor*, his version of his *Gesta Abbatum,* and the *Liber additamentorum*, the latter of which contains maps and illustrations. The copying of letters and drafts has

[7] Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England: c. 1307 to the early sixteenth century* (London, 1996).

[8] Thomas Walsingham, *The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham, 1376-1422*, trans. and ed. by James G. Clark and David Preest (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 2, 6.

[9] Richard Vaughan, *Matthew Paris* (Cambridge, 1958), p. 23; David Corner, 'Roger of Wendover', in ODNB (https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/29040] accessed 16 Dec 2017, 2004).

[10] Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum*, ed. by Henry Cox, IV vols., RS 84 (London, 1842).

[11] *Roger of Wendover's flowers of history*, trans. and ed. by J. A. Giles (London, 1849).

[12] Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, pp. 1-2; Simon Lloyd and Rebecca Reader, 'Matthew Paris', in ODNB (https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odmb/21268] accessed 16 Dec 2017, 2004).

unfortunately created errors in much of his work and he chose to use fictitious stories in the place of fact to make the chronicle more pleasing to the reader.[13] Vaughan, who has written extensively on Matthew Paris, claims that the chronicler does redeem himself with his chronology of events, which are considered to be correct.[14] Overall, the *Chronica Maiora* is an excellent resource when looking at St Albans, for the town and for the rest of England. Within Matthew's *Liber Additamentorum* is his *Gesta Abbatum*, which was printed by Wat in 1640.[15] In a margin of the *Gesta* there is a note which says, 'According to (*secundum*) the ancient roll of Bartholomew the clerk, who for a long time had been servant to Adam the Cellarer, a twelfth-century monk, and who kept this roll for himself from among his writings (*scriptis suis*), choosing this one alone.'[16] Vaughan demonstrates that Paris may have used an ancient roll for the earlier part of his *Gesta,* written by Bartholomew the clerk, which had either been in the possession of Adam the Cellarer or had been dictated to him by Bartholomew.[17] Adam was the first notable occupant of the office of cellarer. He was brother to Godfrey, a monk who became the abbot of Croyland. Adam spent some time at Croyland before being recalled by Abbot Robert (1151-66) and made cellarer at St Albans. He was skilled in this position and he is assumed to have been influential in the monastery.[18]

William Rishanger was the next chronicler to come from St Albans, having entered the monastery in 1271, and dying there in 1312.[19] Wishing to continue the tradition of chronicles after Matthew Paris, his work covers the period from 1258 to 1267, and includes *The Wars of the Barons,* and *The Battles of Lewes and Evesham*, in BL Cotton MS. Claudius D. vi., a manuscript that belonged to St Albans abbey.[20] Following Rishanger came John de Trokelowe, whose work was previously thought to be that of Rishanger's. Trokelowe's work includes *The Opus Chronicorum*, which is in BL Cotton MS. Claudius D. vi., the date of compilation is uncertain, but it is likely that it would have been composed around 1327. Tokelowe also wrote the *Annales*, covering 1307 to 1324, it is thought to have historical value but is not chronologically accurate.[21]

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[13] Ibid. pp. 131-132.
[14] Ibid. p. 136.
[15] Matthew Paris, *Historia Major*. ed. by W. Wats (London, 1640).
[16] BL Cotton MS Nero D I, f. 30a, Thomas Walsingham, *Gesta abbatum monasterii Sancti Albani*, ed. by Henry T. Riley, III vols., RS 28 (London, 1867-69), I, p. xiv.
[17] Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, p. 182.
[18] Levett, *Studies in Manorial History*, p. 110.
[19] James P. Carley, 'William Rishanger', in ODNB ([https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/23669] accessed 16 Dec 2017, 2004)
[20] William Rishanger, *Quondam monachi S. Albani, et quorundam anonymorum, chronica et annales, regnantibus Henrico Tertio et Edwardo Primo : A.D. 1259-1307*, ed. by Henry T. Riley, RS 28 (London, 1865), p. ix.
[21] John de Trokelowe and Henry Blaneforde, *Johannis de Trokelowe et Henrici de Blaneforde, monachorum S. Albani, necnon quorundam anonymorum chronica et annales, regnantibus Henrico Tertio, Edwardo Primo, Edwardo Secundo, Ricardo Secundo, et Henrico Quarto*, ed. by Henry T. Riley, RS 28 (London, 1866).

Thomas Walsingham was a monk at St Albans when he wrote his *Chronica Maiora,* covering the period from 1376 to 1422 and oversaw the composition of his version of the *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani.*[22] There are various translations of these works, the *Gesta* was translated by Henry T. Riley as part of the Rolls Series in the late nineteenth century. The *Chronica Maiora* has been through many editions.[23] It is James Clark's belief that Walsingham planned to continue the chronicling of St Albans and was inspired by Paris so that the commemoration of St Albans would continue and to give a commentary on current events.[24] As a monk at St Albans Walsingham was appointed as precentor for the abbey and as such would have directed the chant of the monks and, if we are to use Peterborough's precentor as an example, maintained the monastery's library, giving him an ideal opportunity to compose his works.[25] According to Clark, Walsingham's work was independent of any other chronicler of his time, having used first hand accounts for his writing; Walsingham benefited from being in a monastery situated so close to London and so he had good access to many documents and could rely on first hand accounts, a highly valuable resource.[26] The *Gesta Abbatum* was compiled under the supervision of Walsingham and has three sections to the work, it can be found in BL Cotton MS Claudius E. iv. The *Gesta* begins at the start of the history of the monastery with the foundation of the abbey and runs to 1255, having been compiled by Matthew Paris. The second section is from the notes of an anonymous hand and goes through to 1308. The final section starts in 1308 and is the work of Walsingham himself. The chronicle evidence available for St Albans is extensive and covers much of the monastery's history until the fifteenth century and so they are a valuable source for this work. However, there are disadvantages and limitations when using them. Some of the chronicle evidence, particularly the *Gesta Abbatum*, was written prior to the author's lifetime, and so can be very unreliable, in addition to this, the monks would have been writing with their own interests in mind, and this would not necessarily be the same as the townspeople.

Court books of the manors owned by St Albans complement the chronicles as a source for looking at medieval St Albans. Elizabeth Levett wrote that there are no full court rolls prior to 1381 because of their destruction during the Peasants' Revolt.[27] Court rolls were records of the courts of the manor, Levett writes that these courts were recorded on the court rolls on one roll, and entries

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[22] John Taylor, 'Thomas Walsingham', in ODNB ([https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/28627] accessed 16 Dec 2017, 2004).

[23] There have been many editions of Walsingham's work, each builds on their predecessors as more work is being completed on the manuscripts, and some focusing on different time periods. These editions include: Thomas Walsingham, *Quondam monachi S. Albani, Historia anglicana* (London, 1862). *The St.Albans Chronicle*, ed. by V. H. Galbraith (Oxford, 1937). *The St Albans chronicle : the Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, ed. by Wendy R. Childs, John Taylor, and Leslie Watkiss (Oxford, 2003). *The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham, 1376-1422*.

[24] *The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham, 1376-1422*, p. 10.

[25] *Account rolls of the obedientiaries of Peterborough*, p. 15.

[26] *The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham, 1376-1422*, pp. 15, 17.

[27] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, p. 76.

were made consecutively for the different courts onto parchment.[28] Three extracts of court rolls from the manors of Croxley, Oxhey, and Rickmansworth are dated prior to 1381. The manor of Croxley's court roll dates from 1330 to 1337[29], Oxhey dates from 1367 to 1376[30] and Rickmansworth dates from 1372 to 1377.[31] These three are all loose pages from St Albans abbey manorial court book and are stored at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALs).[32] These court books run from the early thirteenth century to the middle of the sixteenth century, with some ending in the fourteenth century and others ending in the fifteenth century. These books are copies of the court rolls, and resemble registers of the court rolls.[33] They are a valuable resource, but they have been copied, and when looking at the information on the thirteenth century, the information has been copied by someone three centuries later, and so may contain errors. The lack of court rolls at St Albans is very noticeable, especially when comparing them to the monastic town of Bury St Edmunds, for which 1,083 remain despite the abbey surviving a far more violent revolt than St Albans in 1381. There are other sources that have not survived to the present day that we have for other monasteries but not for St Albans, which include bailiff's accounts and obedientiary rolls. However, there are also ten remaining court books, for the manors of Abbots Langley, Barnet, Cashio, Codicote, Croxley, Kingsbury, Newland, Norton, Park, and Winslow.[34] Folios from the manor of Tyttenhanger also survive and are held at Hertfordshire Archives.[35] Two further court books are mentioned in other manuscripts, Hexton and Rickmansworth, but they are not known other than this.[36] As a result of the number of court books that have survived, I will be using the court book and extent of Codicote for my case study of the manor. This leaves room for further study beyond this thesis of the other manors of St Albans.

The registers of Abbot John Whethamstede (1420-1440 and 1451-1465) of both of his abbacies have been printed.[37] These registers describe the business that the abbot tended to on a day-to-day basis. They mention national events, for example, the Battle of St Albans in 1455, which is dealt with in detail, including its effects the battle had on the monastery. They make reference to the financial state of the abbey, and what the abbot had to do to keep the peace, not only with the townspeople of St Albans, but also within the monastery itself. The registers also detail the lengths Abbot Whethamstede went to in order to secure financial security for the abbey, which included petitions to the king and acquiring property.

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[28] Ibid. pp. 77-78.
[29] HALS 49153
[30] HALS 49160, 49162
[31] HALS 49163
[32] Ibid. p. 76.
[33] Ibid. p. 81.
[34] Ibid. p. 82.
[35] HALS DE/B2067B/M3
[36] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, p. 82.
[37] *Registra quorundam abbatum monasterii S. Albani*, ed. by Henry T. Riley, II vols., RS 28 (London, 1872).

As Isobel Thompson writes in *Alban's Buried Towns*, the archaeological evidence for St Albans is sparse; the relatively new discipline of medieval archaeology in the 1960s, twinned with the fact that not much of the work done on St Albans has been published does not aid the situation.[38] However, some archaeological evidence can be used in my research, and provides information on the mills that belonged to the monastery which were in the town, and the cemetery where the monks were buried. The wills of the townspeople in the fifteenth century are held at HALS; these have survived in registers that were held by the archdeacon. The wills are available from 1415 onwards and Susan Flood has edited these dated between 1471 and 1500.[39] These documents can be used to exhibit what is being left by the townspeople to the monastery, parochial churches, and the religious guilds of St Albans. They may be used to examine the religious devotion of the community and the popularity of the abbey by looking at the amounts bequeathed to these religious institutions. These wills do however have limitations, they would have been written in the presence of a priest or another member of the clergy and so this may have had some influence on what they bequeathed and to whom. They are also only a snap shot of the deceased's life, and at their death, when they are more focused on their life after death as opposed to what their feelings throughout their lives were.

Visitation records can also be a very valuable source when looking at the monasteries. Episcopal visitations were deemed a necessity, the knowledge we have of them is fragmentary, and evidence is held in official records, bishop's registers, and chronicles. The basic procedure was for notice to be sent to the monastery of the upcoming visitation, on the bishop's arrival, sometimes a receipt of this was required. Each monk was then examined and a clerk would write down all the evidence. From this, the bishop would give verbal advice, followed by a written report to be sent to the monastery once he had left.[40] The earliest of these visitations were in the times of Richard of Dover (1184-84), Baldwin (1184-90), and Hubert Walter (1193-1205).[41] These records could often be very biased, particularly those ordered by Thomas Cromwell in the 1530s , with the visitors having an agenda before they even reach the monastery itself.

Finally, certain other sources are of great use to my research. The *Valor Ecclesiasticus,* another printed source, gives the financial situation of the monastery, and the other religious houses I will be using in my research, towards the end of their history, allowing me to compare how stable their finances were at this time. *The Calendar of Close Rolls* of various medieval kings allow me to look at St Albans, and what business it had with the crown. *The Letters and Papers of Henry VIII* are

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[38] Rosalind Niblett and Isobel Thompson, *Alban's Buried Towns: An Assessment of St Albans' Archaeology up to AD 1600* (Oxford, 2005), p. 264.
[39] Susan Flood, *St Albans Wills 1471-1500* (Hitchin, 1993).
[40] Christopher Robert Cheney, *Episcopal Visitation of Monasteries in the Thirteenth Century* (Manchester, 1931), pp. 1-3.
[41] James G. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 91-123.

very useful to my research, as they allow me to look at what was being said about St Albans, leading up to and during the dissolution of the monasteries.

1.2 Introducing St Albans

During the Roman period St Albans was a settlement called Verulamium. It was reported in the *Vitae Duorum Offarum*, the work of the thirteenth century monk, Matthew Paris, and in the *Gesta Abbatum Sancti Albani* that in c.793 Offa II, King of Mercia, discovered the bones of Alban.[42] In order to preserve the relics, he founded a monastery on that site under the Benedictine Rule.[43] The date of the involvement of Offa with St Albans is similar to when Charlemagne buried his wife Fastrada in the church of St Alban of Mainz. Laynesmith questions whether it is possible that Charlemagne inspired Offa.[44] Although there is no evidence for the role of Offa II in the foundation of the monastery, or for the date given, it was an important tradition that the monks held onto and wrote about in their history.[45] Julia Crick questions the foundation by Offa II; she maintains that although Offa was a well-documented king, there is nothing to tie him to St Albans.[46] Crick suggests that the pre-Conquest sources give no support for the date of foundation or the founder. In c.1100 a Canterbury scribe recorded in the F version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle the translation of Alban's relics and the date of 793. Crick writes that this is within Offa's geographical location and timeframe and that therefore, it is not impossible that there was an association between Offa and St Albans, but that the evidence is a product of later generations.[47] Writing in 1911, Vivian Galbraith concluded that, 'in the eleventh century when the monastery had become 'the school of religious observance for all England' there arose the idea of a miraculous origin; it received its final consecration in the *Gesta Abbatum* of Matthew Paris.'[48] From then on the tradition of the foundation by Offa II after finding Alban was made to run without a break listing successive abbots with dates of their reigns, and their vast acquisitions.[49] Regardless of who was the founder, the foundation brought privileges and liberties for the abbey obtained from Pope Adrian I (772-795), and Willegod (793-?) was appointed as the first abbot of the monastery of St Albans.[50] John Blair writes of the landscape of churches and monasteries in Anglo-Saxon England. Minster was the

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[42] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, p. 4; Matthew Paris, *Historia Major*, ed. by W. Wats (London, 1640), pp. 35-145. For more information about Alban and claims of the GASA that he was being the proto-martyr of England see p. 40.

[43] See pages 17-18 for the history of the Benedictines.

[44] Laynesmith, M. D., 'Translating St Alban: Romano-British, Merovingian and Anglo-Saxon Cults', *Studies in Church History*, 53 (2017), 51-70, p. 56.

[45] Still, *The abbot and the rule : religious life at St Alban's, 1290-1349*, p. 13.

[46] Julia Crick, 'Offa, Ælfric and the refoundation of St Albans', in *Alban and St Albans : Roman and medieval architecture, art and archaeology,* ed. by Martin Henig and Phillip Lindley (Leeds, 2001) (p. 78).

[47] Ibid. p. 79.

[48] V. H. Galbraith, *The Abbey of St. Albans from 1300 to the Dissolution of the Monasteries.* (Oxford, 1911), p. 4.

[49] GASA, p. 73.

[50] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, p. 4.

term used to classify a religious establishment with a church, which presumably St Albans began as. These establishments would have been very different from the monasteries where the meaning of the word is an enclosed and contemplative community living under a rule. Some communities were living enclosed and under a rule, however, Blair suspects that many of the minsters of this time period were not.[51] By c.750 the monasteries in England were diverse in size and wealth, and devised ways by which the communities provided education and economic support, making the monastic model flexible and so could suitable for a number of situations and people.[52] By 850, Blair concludes that the age of Anglo-Saxon minsters was over and monastic towns were to become more urban, and less monastic.[53]

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[51] John Blair, *The church in Anglo-Saxon society* (Oxford, 2005), p. 3.
[52] Ibid. p. 83.
[53] Ibid. p. 290.
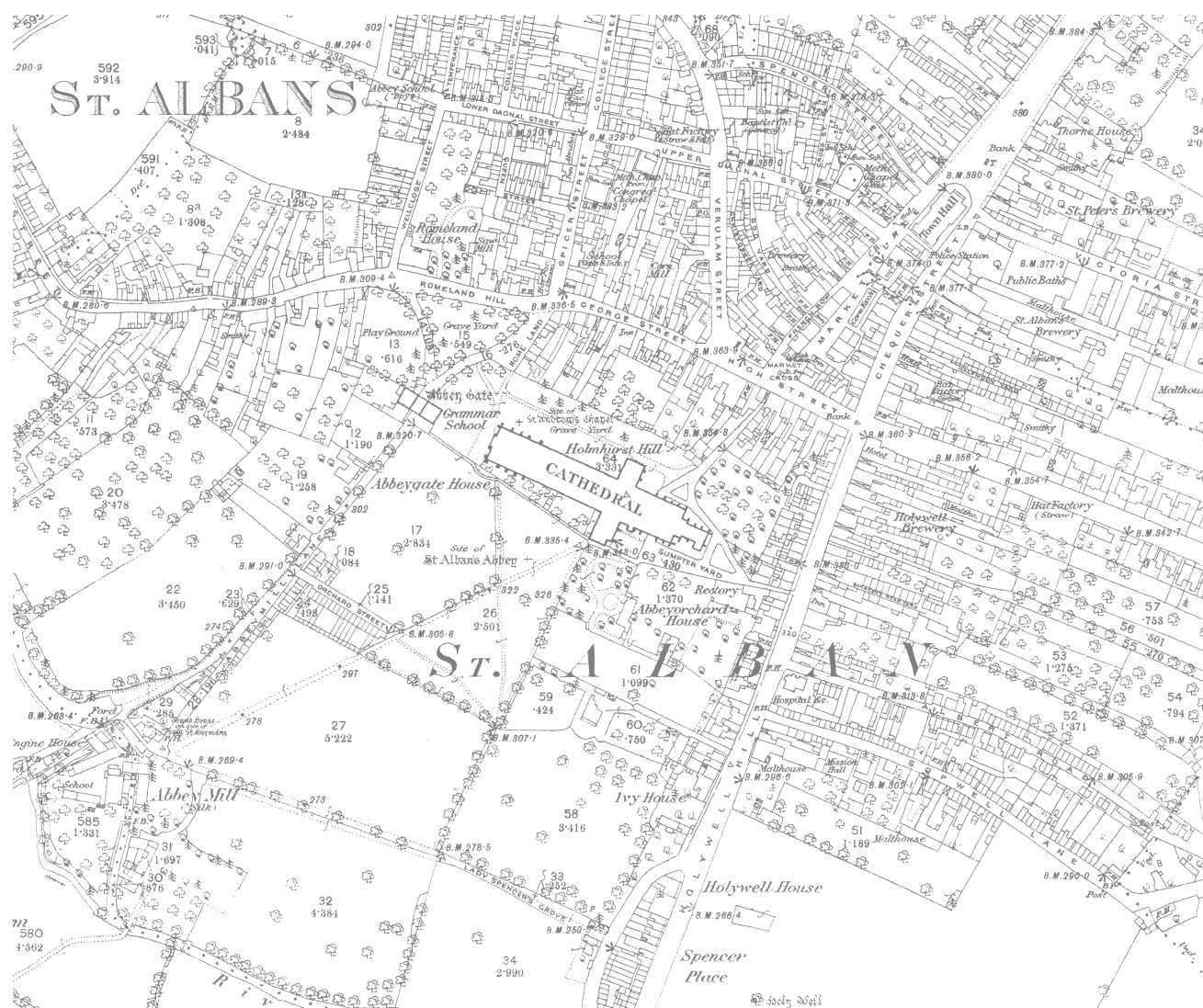
Figure 1. 1   Map of St Albans in c. 1800.[54] This shows the location of the cathedral and the roads that lead up to St Peters church that form the triangular market place.[55]

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[54] 1:2500 County Series 1st Edition [TIFF geospatial data], Scale 1:2500, Tiles: hert-03407-1,hert-03408-1,hert-03411-1,hert-03412-1, Updated: 30 November 2010, Historic, Using: EDINA Historic Digimap Service, <http://digimap.edina.ac.uk>, Downloaded: 2017-03-26

[55] See page 28 for more details on the topography of monastic towns.

Over the next century, the monastery was either abandoned or the monks were not following the Rule of St Benedict, which led to a revival of the abbey in the tenth and eleventh centuries. St Albans was not alone in experiencing such a revival and there was a monastic reform across the country. Three men, Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury 959-88, Æthelwold, Bishop of Winchester 963-84, and Oswald, Bishop of Worcester 961-92 and Archbishop of York from 971 were crucial in this reform, men to whom David Knowles was sympathetic. They all spent time in the court of King Æthelstan and, according to Blair, absorbed intellectual currents of the 930s.[56] Dunstan and Æthelwold then spent their time developing the monastic life and studying Benedictine texts at Glastonbury, which was the first to be reformed. When King Eadgar came to the throne in 959 he continued with this reform.[57] The monasteries of both Peterborough and Ely were destroyed by the Danes and were revived in 970 and 966 respectively.[58] Bishop Æthelwold of Winchester, who had been abbot of the formerly derelict monastery of Abingdon, would have met monks from reformed Benedictine communities in Europe as a member of Æthelstan's court. He carried out monastic reforms in the late tenth century, and revived Peterborough, Ely, and Thorney.[59] Although he was unlikely to have been involved in the revival at St Albans, it is possible that the abbey received help from the monks of Abingdon and Bishop Oswald.[60] Likewise, Canterbury and Bury St Edmunds experienced a revival in the eleventh century.[61] At Christ Church reform began under Dunstan with the liturgy and adoption of monastic vows, and continued with his successors, the Archbishops from 988 to 1020 had all been monks themselves, and so would have wanted to ensure the tradition of monks at Canterbury remained. According to Brooks, this reform was an evolutionary, as opposed to a radical change, and thus ensured continuity.[62] While there is no direct evidence for the decline at St Albans, the *Gesta Abbatum* gives an indication of deterioration at the abbey. The *Gesta* shows that there was a possible breakdown in leadership leading up to the re-foundation. It lists the shortcomings of the fifth abbot, Eadfrith, and describes how the abbacy was vacant for around a year following his resignation, causing a schism between the monks.[63] Subsequent abbots appear to have been beneficial for both the town and monastery; they made improvements to the town, procured a pond for the monastery and looked into the abbey's history.[64] Unfortunately for the monastery, the *Gesta* claims that Eadmar, the ninth and final abbot

[56] Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, p. 350
[57] Ibid. p. 350.
[58] *The heads of religious houses, England and Wales I, 940-1216*, ed. by David Knowles, Christopher Nugent Lawrence Brooke, and Vera C. M. London (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 56, 64.
[59] *Tenth-Century Studies: Essays in commemoration of the Millenium of the Council of Winchester and Regularis Concordia,* ed. David Parsons (London, 1975), p. 40.
[60] Barbara Yorke, *Bishop Æthelwold : his career and influence* (Woodbridge, 1988), pp. 1-4.
[61] David Knowles and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses, England and Wales*, New edn (London, 1971), pp. 61, 63.
[62] Nicholas Brooks, *The early history of the church of Canterbury : Christ Church from 597 to 1066* (Leicester, 1984), pp. 255-256.
[63] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, pp. 20-22.
[64] Ibid. pp. 23-27.

before the revival, left the monastery in debt after his death.[65] However, the *Gesta* cannot be heavily relied upon as a source for looking at the early history of the monastery. The first version by Matthew Paris was compiled in the thirteenth century and the second version by Thomas Walsingham was compiled a century later in c.1394, three to four centuries after the events had taken place.[66] Crick also takes issue with some of the dates of the abbots given by the *Gesta* leading up the revival and suggests that names and events have been added to fill a vacuum, that there is often no corroboration, the abbots are unevenly distributed, and are even in the incorrect order.[67] This wrong ordering can be seen with the tenth and eleventh abbots of St Albans. The monks Ælfric (c.969-c.990) and his brother Leofric (c.990-?) are most likely to have become the first two abbots of St Albans after the revival. The *Gesta* places Leofric as the first abbot after the re-foundation, however, according to David Knowles, the *Gesta* changed the order of the brothers because they are reversed in Matthew Paris's copy of the *Gesta*.[68] These brothers helped the abbey enter into a period of wealth and significance, and to recover lands that had previously been granted to the monastery by Offa II.[69] Leofric was a successful and charitable abbot who left St Albans when he was appointed to the position of the Archbishop of Canterbury.[70] If we are to trust the *Gesta*, Ælfric, his brother, appears to have been a popular abbot with his monks; the *Gesta*, the purpose of which was possibly to help inform future monks and abbots, details his virtues, saying that he was a careful planner, a bountiful host, and a pious brother.[71] The *Gesta* also claims that it was Abbot Ælfric who was responsible for the moving of the relics of St Alban during the Danish invasion.[72] In the eleventh century there was a vast increase in the founding of towns, the earliest of these towns are those that were developed by reformed Benedictine houses including St Albans, where there was intended urban development at the edge of the monastic precinct.[73]

Paul de Caen (1077-1093), a Norman, and the nephew of the Archbishop of Lanfranc, was the next notable abbot of St Albans who held office in the eleventh century.[74] Brooke concludes that it is probable that Lanfranc's Monastic Constitutions were completed in or just after 1077, when his nephew became Abbot of St Albans, a position Lanfranc gave him. This is because it appears to have been rushed to ensure its completion, which means that there was a link between Lanfranc

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[65] Ibid. p. 28.
[66] Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, p. 182.
[67] Julia C. Crick, *Charters of St. Albans*, Anglo-Saxon charters no 12 (Oxford, 2007), p. 20.
[68] *The heads of religious houses I, 940-1216*, p. 66.
[69] *Charters of St. Albans*, pp. 18-19.
[70] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, pp. 28-31.
[71] Ibid. p. 32.
[72] Ibid. pp. 12-17. It is possible that Ælfric moved the relics because of the previous stories of how the relics had been stolen in an earlier Danish invasion. For the story of how the relics were stolen and retrieved see section 2.2 in Chapter 2.
[73] Blair, *The church in Anglo-Saxon society*, p. 338.
[74] *The heads of religious houses I*, p. 66.

and St Albans.[75] Paul was elected after the previous abbot, Frederic, fled St Albans from King William. Abbot Ecgfrith (Frederick) was a Saxon, and a relation of Cnut. According to William Page, the King said that the English were easily conquered, to which Frederic replied that the King owed his victory to the Church because it held so much English land. William retaliated by seizing much of the monastery's land. The feud between the two continued and after being involved in a rebellion against William, Frederic fled to Ely in 1077 where he became ill and died.[76] The *Gesta* reports that the people of Ely incorrectly said that Frederic took the relics of Alban with him, causing more confusion as to where they really were.[77] According to the *Liber Eliensis* while Archbishop Stigand was fleeing from the King he made his way to Ely with his treasure. While there he instructed Frederick, to come to Ely with the relics of Saint Alban whilst Stigand's trial was on going. Once Stigand was deposed and replaced with Lanfranc and Abbot Paul was given the abbacy of St Albans, Frederic wanted to punish the abbey, to do this he agreed with Thurstan, abbot of Ely, that the relics of Alban should be translated in front of a gathering of people and then secretly be removed and placed in the guardianship of the people of Ely and that he would be received into the brotherhood.[78]

Abbot Paul reformed the discipline of the monastery, which had become lax under Frederic.[79] According to Crick, it was Ælfric who probably reformed St Albans abbey, but the best evidence for a revival comes from the rule of Abbot Paul.[80] The evidence from the *Gesta* indicates that the brothers revived the monastery financially by reclaiming lands, and that Abbot Paul continued this restoration by ensuring religious discipline but also that the Rule of St. Benedict was being followed. During his abbacy, Paul made regulations for the nuns living near the almonry in 1077 and later, in c.1140, the nuns were moved by Abbot Geoffrey to Sopwell, which became a nunnery that was dependent on the monastery. According to Sally Thompson, Geoffrey was, 'first attracted by the sanctity of two ladies following a religious life at Eywood, housed only in rough shelters'.[81] St Mary de Pré, a second nunnery, was also a dependency of the monastery. Over time other dependencies included smaller houses: Beadlow, Belvoir, Binham, Hatfield Peverel, Hertford, Millbrook, Pembroke, Redbourne, Tynemouth, Wallingford, Wymondham (until 1449), and St Albans Hall at Oxford.[82] During Paul's abbacy Norman benefactors, who would have wanted to have a religious foundation on his estates but were unable to give enough land for a monastery, founded six of St Albans' dependencies, including Belvoir, Binham, Hertford, Tynemouth and

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[75] Lanfranc, *The monastic constitutions of Lanfranc*, trans. and ed. by David Knowles and Christopher Brooke (Oxford, 2002), pp. xxxiii-xxxv.
[76] William Page, *The Story of the English Towns: St. Albans* (London, 1920), pp. 20-21.
[77] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, p. 51.
[78] *Liber Eliensis : a history of the Isle of Ely from the seventh century to the twelfth*, trans. and ed. by Janet Fairweather (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 207-208.
[79] *GASA*, I, pp. 50-52.
[80] Crick, *Charters*, p. 81.
[81] Sally Thompson, *Women religious : the founding of English nunneries after the Norman Conquest* (Oxford, 1991), p. 23.
[82] Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses, England and Wales*, pp. 74-75.

Wallingford. Similarly, Wymondham was founded during the abbacy of Richard d'Albini. The last three, Hatfield Peveral, Redbourn, and Beadlow were founded in the same way throughout the following century.[83] In addition to these dependencies, the monastery owned manors including: Abbots Langley, Barnet, Cashio, Codicote, Croxley, Hexton, Kingsbury, Newland, Norton, Park, Rickmansworth, Tyttenhanger, and Winslow.[84]

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[83] Still, *The abbot and the rule*, pp. 130-131.
[84] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, p. 82.
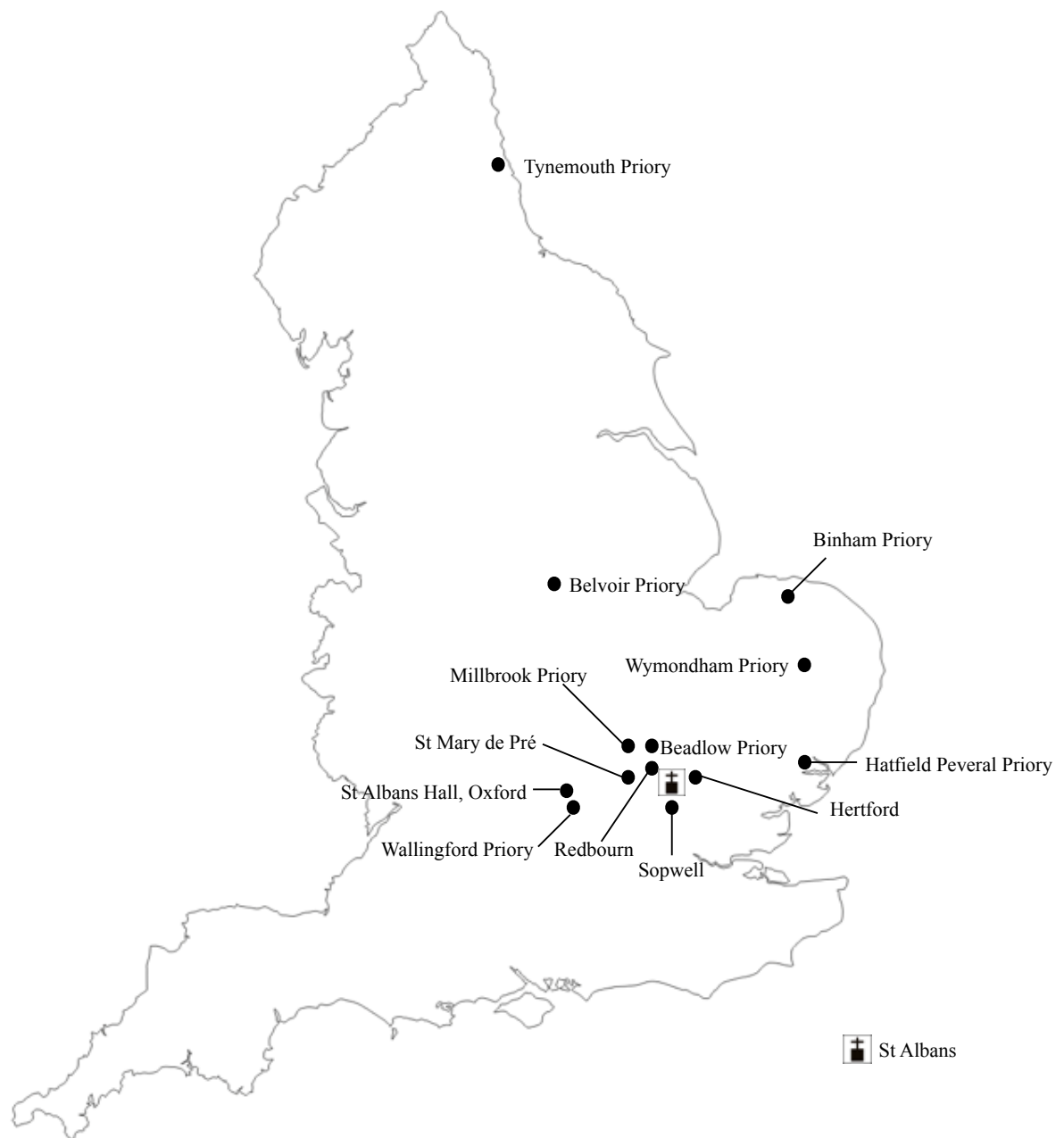
Figure 1. 2 **Map showing the dependencies of St Albans Abbey. Most of the dependencies were close to the town, making it easy for the abbots and other officials to travel between them. However, Tynemouth Priory was far further away and was prone to attacks due to its distance from the Scottish border.**

The prosperity of the house continued well into the twelfth century when Nicholas Breakspear became pope in 1154. Breakspear had close connections to St Albans. He took the name of Adrian, as Pope, had a father who was a priest and later became a monk. Matthew Paris writes that his father abandoned Nicholas when he became a monk and Nicholas had to rely on the charity of the monastery. He eventually went to Saint-Ruf, Provence and became abbot there.[85] He and his canons argued frequently enough that Nicholas had to attend the papal Curia and become friends with Pope Eugenius III who made him a cardinal.[86] Having a local man as pope proved to be highly beneficial for the abbey and it was granted papal bulls. The most important of these were two bulls, one in 1156 and the other in 1157, which, once granted by Adrian IV prevented the Bishop of Lincoln from having diocesan rights over St Albans.[87] This created the Liberty of St Albans, allowing the abbot the right to govern the town without having to answer to the Bishop, and fifteen churches were given freedom from subjection to the bishop.[88] The Bishop, Robert de Chesney, attempted to challenge these rights, but failed because of the papal bulls St Albans had obtained. St Albans was also at the border of the diocese of Lincoln, so the abbot and monks were able to resist more than others who were situated closer.[89] Through this exemption, Jane Sayers writes that the abbey 'came nearer the exemption of certain major European houses than any other English community.'[90] The abbey also had exemptions from royal government being a liberty, however, by the end of 1278 Quo Warranto proceedings began in Hertfordshire and the Abbot was among many who had to give proof that St Albans had a legitimate claim to the liberty.[91]

Chapter 2 will examine at the relics of St Albans and the importance they had in securing pilgrimage to the abbey and therefore increasing traffic to the town. It will then look at the school, hospitals, and nunneries that were founded by the monastery and had an impact on those living in the town. The purpose of this chapter is to show how the town was developing, in what way the monastery aided in this development, and whether this affected the relationship between the town and the monastery. Chapter 3 offers a case study of the manor of Codicote, one of the many owned by monastery. It will discuss the tenants of the manor and their lives through the extent and court records that survive. This chapter considers the social structure on the manor of Codicote, whether there was any social mobility on the manor, and whether this changed through periods of

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[85] Christoph Egger, The Canon Regular: Saint-Ruf in context, in *Adrian IV The English Pope 1154-1159. Studies and Texts,* ed. by Bolton, Brenda and Duggan, Anne (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 15-28 (p. 18).
[86] Introduction in *Ibid*, pp. 4-5.
[87] Still, *The Abbot and Rule*, pp. 22-23.
[88] Crick, *Charters*, p. 35, Still, p 23.
[89] Jane Sayers, 'Monastic Archdeacons', in *Church and Government in the Middle Ages,* ed. by C. N. L. Brooke, D. E. Luscombe, G. H. Martin, Dorothy Owen (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 177-203 (p. 182).
[90] Ibid.
[91] Sandra Raban, *A second domesday? : the hundred rolls of 1279-80* (Oxford, 2004), p. 44.

uncertainty such as the famine of 1315 and the Black Death in 1348. Research has also been completed on the manor of Norton, another dependent of the monastery.[92] The manorial records that survive for the manor of Norton are similar to that of Codicote, court books and court rolls from 1244. Unfortunately, like Codicote, there is no surviving manorial survey, which gives us an incomplete picture of the manor. However, the study of the manor of Norton is incredibly useful to this thesis and will be used as a comparison to the manor of Codicote in many ways. This includes a comparison of the population on the manor and the death rate during the Black Death, the size of holdings on the manor, labour services and how the Abbot managed this manor.

Chapters 4 and 5 will explore the fourteenth century in detail, which was the lowest point in the relationship between the town and abbey. This century saw plague and dissent come to England. In 1327, the townspeople of St Albans rebelled against the abbot to acquire liberties for themselves and the town, however, this ultimately failed. In 1349, the Black Death was rampant around England and visited St Albans; the monastery lost the abbot and forty-seven monks, with the manors also incurring heavy losses.[93] The loss of life across the country and continuous taxes led to the conditions for another revolt, which occurred in 1381. The Peasants' Revolt was an almost nationwide event with townspeople rising up against their lords and abbots in an attempt to gain more rights. Unfortunately, for the rebels, the revolt was unsuccessful in the short term; however, it did have some long-term repercussions. There was a long-term trend away from labour rents towards money rents, and a trend towards free tenants. However, Rodney Hilton writes that it can be argued these changes were not solely the result of the revolt, but combined with external factors including supply and demand and the benefits to landlords of enticing free tenants.[94] Chapters 4 and 5 will examine the effects that these events had on those living through this century, which included the monks, the townspeople, and those living on the manors.

The fifteenth century was a calmer period for the monastery compared with the previous calamitous century, despite being the setting for two battles during the Wars of the Roses. The continuing issue of the mills caused some disturbances but the worst of the troubles seem to have been left in the previous century. John of Whethamstede was the abbot of St Albans twice during this century, once from 1420 until his resignation in 1440, and also in 1452, when he was unanimously re-elected until his death in 1465.[95] His abbacies are recorded in two registers, which give details on the troubles he faced regarding the mills and statutes of the school for poor

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[92] *Records of the manor of Norton, in the Liberty of St Albans, 1244-1539*, ed. by P. Foden and Norton Community Archaeology Group, Hertfordshire record publications v. 29 (Hertford, 2014).
[93] Thomas Walsingham, *Gesta abbatum monasterii Sancti Albani*, ed. by Henry T. Riley, III vols (London, 1867-69), II, pp. 369-370.
[94] R. H. Hilton, *Bond men made free : medieval peasant movements and the English rising of 1381* (London, 1988), pp. 233-235.
[95] David M. Smith, *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales, III. 1377-1540* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 62.

scholars.[96] This century will be discussed in chapter 6 through John of Whethamstede's abbacy and also the wills that were written and the bequests made in them by the townspeople to understand the relationship between the monastery and townspeople and whether that had changed in the century after the Black Death and Peasants' Revolt.

After almost eight centuries in 1539 the Abbey of St Albans, along with the other monasteries in England under the rule of Henry VIII, was dissolved. Richard Boreman was the last abbot of St Albans, and it was he and his thirty-nine monks who surrendered the abbey on 5 December 1539. The monastery was generally successful throughout most of its history. From its foundation it received royal patronage and through this land and property. The abbey triumphed over financial hardship due to mismanagement and unexpected costs, the Black Death, and maintained its control over the town after the Peasants' Revolt. Finally, the community stood together to surrender the abbey under Richard Boreman.[97] The Dissolution and its impact on the town and townspeople will be considered in chapter 7, where I will consider at the final abbot and the final stage of the relationship between the monastery and town.

1.3 Historiography

St Benedict (c. 480-550), a monk from Nursia, central Italy, began the Benedictine movement. Initially, Benedict was sent to Rome to study, but took offence to the debauchery of his fellow students. He made the decision to flee, found a monk who taught him of the ascetic life and he lived in a cave for three years whilst attracting a following of disciples. He organised these followers into groups of twelve, with each group having an abbot to govern over them. He took them to the hilltop of Monte Cassino, where he built a coenobitic monastery where they could live. There are few sources for Benedict's life, and so we must rely on *The Life of St Benedict*, written by Pope Gregory the Great, who himself had been a monk, that depicts Benedict not only as a holy man but also as a miracle worker. This book became popular in the Middle Ages, and began the cult of St Benedict. It was at this monastery at Monte Cassino that Benedict composed his *Rule*.[98] There is a controversy as to whether Benedict bases his *Rule* on an earlier anonymous text, *Regula Magistri*.[99] *The Rule of St Benedict* (*RB*) was written over a period of time and gave a detailed plan for the community of monks, a treatise on ascetic life, the process of entering the monastery, the daily routine for the monks, and the discipline of the monks and monastery. Both Benedict's and the Master's Rule had a common emphasis on obedience to a superior. The monks were required to

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[96] *Registra quorundam abbatum monasterii S. Albani.*
[97] Clark, *'Reformation and Reaction',* 297-328, p. 314.
[98] C. H. Lawrence, 'The Rule of St Benedict', in *Medieval monasticism : forms of religious life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (London, 1984), pp. 17-35 (pp. 17-19).
[99] For a detailed discussion on both texts and the controversy surrounding them see David Knowles, 'The Regula Magistri and the Rule of St Benedict', in *Great Historical Enterprises : problems in Monastic History,* ed. by David Knowles (London, 1962), pp. 135-195.

model themselves on Christ, and obedience formed a large part of this. This was both outward and inner compliance, which was prompt, willing, and without murmuring. The abbot was the authority, and therefore indispensible to the community. [100]

The abbot was elected from the community of monks; votes were based on the correct person for the position, meaning that his experience and learnedness could be poor. Once elected, the abbot held this position for the remainder of his life; however, should he not be fulfilling his duties correctly, the surrounding abbots and bishop could take action if required. The *RB* also gives the position of a prior, and allows for obedientiaries, the monastic officials who were to help manage the monastery and its estates should it have any. The official was appointed by the abbot and reported to him; Benedict did not want these monks to dilute the overriding power of the abbot. There was soon a need for further delegation, and so the cellarer, a new official was brought in. Benedict wanted the monasteries to have buildings and land and to ensure that there would be tenants to perform labour on the estate. This inevitably brought wealth to the Benedictine monasteries.[101] Therefore, in the twelfth century, when the monasteries grew both in size and in the ownership of estates, other obedientiaries were needed, a Master of children, followed by assistants for the current obedientiaries, after which were the offices of chamberlain and almoner, followed by the remaining offices of kitchener, refectorer, pittancer, gardener, guest-master, wood-ward, infirmarian, and in some cases a dean or archdeacon.[102] The officers would have had an income and would have been required to keep accounts as to his expenditure. The monks in medieval England had two reasons for a developed obedientiary system; to organise and manage their monastery, especially if it was large, and to give certain monks with ambition and talent the responsibility of an office. The obedientiaries of medieval monasteries had different responsibilities depending on the office to which they were assigned. G. W. Kitchin has divided the obedientiaries of St Swithin's, Winchester into four categories. Although there will be variations regarding officers and their duties, these groupings can be applied to other monasteries with obedientiaries.

The first group of officers is attached to the prior, including the sub-prior, third prior, and sometimes a fourth prior, also in this group is the seneschal or steward, who was not a monk. The second group were attached to the church, the sacrist, precentor, and the anniversarian. The third group is the largest, and includes the internal officers of the monastery, the receiver, who received the rents from the estates, and the hordarian, who had charge of the material resources needed by the convent, the chamberlain, cellarer, almoner, infirmarian, master of novices, and the gardener who was not necessarily a monk. The fourth group were a small group of officers who dealt with the external affairs of the house. They were the doorkeepers or porters, who would be at the gate of

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[100] Lawrence, 'The Rule of St Benedict', pp. 21-23.
[101] Ibid. pp. 25-27.
[102] David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England. A history of its development from the times of St. Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council, 943-1216* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 427-431.

the cloister and at the entrance to the precincts, and the guest-master, who looked after travellers or visitors to the monastery.[103] Joan Greatrex suggests that the supervision of the manors owned by the monasteries would have been a considerable responsibility because the produce of these manors was needed to feed the monks and to supply them with an income.[104] The obedientiaries of the abbeys would have gained their income from manorial properties, rents, pensions and offerings to fund their office.[105] At Christ Church Canterbury, Lanfranc's Monastic Constitutions detailed the roles and functions of seven obedientiaries, including the conventual prior, circa, sacrist, cantor, chamberlain, cellarer, and infirmarian.[106] The obedientiary system caused arguments in many monasteries and had other dangers associated with it, including personal ambition and privacy. At Canterbury there was a temptation for the monks to withdraw from the common life for long periods at a time, and also the tendency of the obedientiaries to live in private apartments. The more senior monk officials, the prior, sub-prior, sacrist, cellarer, infirmarian, and almoner had private households at Christ Church, and were waited upon by servants. This was not unusual though, as it happened in many large monasteries, some of which had more servants than monks.[107] Although no obedientiary rolls survive for St Albans, we do know that they did use the system. We know that there was a prior, precentor, almoner, refectorer, sacrist, cellarer and kitchener, and that the latter four held the manors, the cellarer holding the majority.[108]

According to the *RB*, a recruit seeking entry to the monastery had to be trained for spiritual warfare under an experienced commander, who was the abbot, and so there was a strict routine in place. The recruits were not discriminated against by their social status, but having an education was a necessity. Having a routine meant that there was no idleness by the monks, which Benedict saw as the enemy of the soul. The daily life, the horarium, of the monastery differed depending on the season, of which there were three, winter, Lenten and summer. Winter was from 13 September to Ash Wednesday and the day started at 2am to finish at 6.30pm, allowing the monks eight hours sleep. The day throughout Lenten was similar, but the meal during that day would have been after Vespers at 6pm. Summer, which was based on the summers of southern Europe, saw the monks going to sleep later and having a siesta during the day, two meals were permitted in the summer as opposed to the one meal during the other two seasons, one at midday and the other at 6pm.[109] It was Benedict's intention that during the summer there was to be seven hours of work and three of reading, in the winter, the hours of work were decreased and the reading increased.[110] The day

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[103] *Compotus rolls of the obedientiaries of St. Swithun's priory Winchester, from the Winchester cathedral archives*, trans. and ed. by G. W. Kitchin (Hampshire Record Society, 1892), pp. 31-33.
[104] Greatrex, *The English benedictine cathedral priories*, p. 165.
[105] Ibid. p. 163.
[106] Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory,* p. 32.
[107] Ibid. pp. 48-49.
[108] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, p. 82. For a list of cellarers at St Albans see ibid. pp. 163-169.
[109] Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England 943-1216* pp. 448-9.
[110] Lawrence, 'The Rule of St Benedict', p. 30.

began at 2am when the monks, who slept in a common dormitory, would wake and attend choir in their habit, which they slept in, and their night shoes, they recited prayers and then Nocturns, followed by Matins. Prime would be the next office, recited at dawn, or immediately after Matins, if dawn had already come. From the end of Prime until 8am the monks could read in the cloister and at 8am they washed they hands, face, combed their beards and hair, and putting on their day shoes went to the choir for Terce. Following this, at 9am, there would be a time for confessions until 9.30am when the daily work would start. This work could be manual, intellectual, or artistic and continued until 12.30 when the next office, Sext, was recited before High Mass. None was then recited and at 2pm the monks would eat their meal of the day. Following dinner there would be a second period of time for reading until 5pm when Vespers would be recited. After Vespers, the monks put on their night shoes and performed Maundy. They were then permitted to have a drink in the refectory before Compline and then at 7pm they went to bed.[111] Benedict organised these offices in order that the entire psalter would be heard in a single week and later, more text and music was added.[112] As the monasteries grew and those who took up obedientiary offices could not attend all the liturgical services, this led to two different groups of monks, those who attended the services partially, and the monks of the cloister who followed the full daily routine.[113] These offices are given in Lanfranc's Monastic Constitutions, where the office and role is described and so more detail can be seen as to what the obedientiary was meant to be doing. For example, Lanfranc wrote that the prior was able to depose of officials who were carrying out their office to the detriment of the monastery and that when he entered the chapter-house all should rise until he was seated.[114]

The number of meals and what those meals should have been made up of has been continually altered from the beginnings of the Benedictine order until the Dissolution. The Rule allows for the meal to be two cooked dishes of flour, beans, eggs, or cheese and a third dish of vegetables and fruit, if they were available, there was also a ration of a pound of bread. There is evidence that prior to the Conquest, many monasteries were eating meat regularly, which was forbidden.[115] Abbot Paul de Caen stopped meat eating at St Albans, only allowing those who were sick to consume it.[116] Another issue for the Benedictines was that the abbot often had a separate table from the monks and would entertain guests at this table, serving them meat; on occasion he might invite other monks to dine with him, who would also then eat meat. Gradually the monasteries also started adding pittances, which were small dishes of fish or eggs. On feast days, ordinary bread was replaced with spiced cakes and the same occurred on the anniversaries of abbots. This meant that on Sundays and for one or two days of the week there would have been finer food and higher

[111] Knowles, *Monastic Order in England, 943-1216*, pp. 450-1.
[112] Lawrence, 'The Rule of St Benedict', p. 28.
[113] Knowles, *Monastic Order in England, 943-1216*, pp. 452.
[114] Lanfranc, *The monastic constitutions of Lanfranc*, pp. 112-135.
[115] Knowles, *Monastic Order in England, 943-1216*, p. 462.
[116] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, p. 59.

quantities than Benedict originally intended.[117] Abbot John (1195-1214) attempted to curb this trend by putting a stop to some of the feasts that were celebrated at St Alban's Monastery.[118]

James Clark suggests that the monastic historiography originated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when there was an enthusiasm for collecting monastic remains immediately after the Dissolution that can be seen in the work of William Dugdale.[119] Clark continues by saying that the monastic culture has been studied in separation from the monastic economy. This trend started with the antiquarians, who had a political agenda after the Dissolution, that the monasteries must be stripped yet modern scholars who do not have this political bias still separate the culture.[120] David Knowles studied the Benedictines extensively; his *Religious Orders in England* of three volumes examines the monks and friars of England, and St Albans is frequently featured. The period from 1216-1340 is one in which discipline was good and the monasteries were thriving and is portrayed as being the golden age of the religious orders, despite numerous incidents regarding the discipline of certain monasteries across the country.[121] Despite their drawbacks, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Benedictines were an integral and influential part of society.[122]

A large responsibility of the monastic house, obedientiaries, and the Rule of St Benedict was the giving of charity and the provision of hospitality, especially in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Guests would visit the monastery; they might be relatives of monks, or just laypeople who were often wealthy and wanted to connect to the monastery. They were required to have separate quarters and meals from the monks, and only those guests who were monks themselves were allowed to have free access to the cloister and the church. The monasteries situated in large cities or towns and those on main routes would have entertained far more visitors than those in more rural areas. According to Knowles no other organisation in England in the twelfth century could have replaced the monasteries in regards to helping those who were suffering from war, famine, physical disability, or misfortune.[123] The almoner of the monastery had a fixed income to aid the poor and he distributed alms to those in the vicinity of the house and would clothe and feed people on certain days or for certain periods. The monasteries could also find themselves having to cope with large numbers of refugees, who would come to them during times of war or famine. For example, Abbot Geoffrey had to melt silver plates into coin at St Albans to help those who came to him during the famine of King Stephen's reign (1135-1154).[124] The monasteries were also the providers of hospitals; Abbot Samson of Bury St Edmunds founded the hospital of St Saviour's

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[117] Knowles, *Monastic Order in England, 943-1216*, pp. 462-463.
[118] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, p. 235.
[119] James G. Clark, *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 1-2; William Sir Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (Bohn, 1846).
[120] Clark, *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism*, pp. 1-2.
[121] Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, I.
[122] Ibid. pp. 308-319.
[123] Knowles, *Monastic Order in England, 943-1216*, pp. 479-481.
[124] *GASA*, I, p. 82.

outside the North Gate, which was, according to Harper-Bill, generously endowed.[125] Education was another important aspect in the Benedictines' lives; for example, Abbot Thomas de la Mare (1349-1396) at St Albans did not allow unlettered novices to enter the nunnery of St Mary de Pré. However, when the Cathedral schools grew in mainland Europe and there was a loss of secular students from the monasteries.[126]

Knowles believed that there was a decline in the spiritual life in the discipline within the houses and in the loss of societal influence after the fourteenth century. His approach was to examine the monasteries in the later Middle Ages in decline, as opposed to what Clark and Greatrex have done which is to see them as altering as society changed. According to Knowles there was no one in the fifteenth century to follow the previous centuries of mystics, neither were there any notable religious people or English saints.[127] He saw the fifteenth-century Benedictines as less observant than before with a 'lack of an absolute standard of excellence'.[128] However, the monasteries can also be seen as having to bend to societal pressures and changes so that they were not lost and could still remain relevant within their community. This leads on to another major change that Knowles saw, which was the monastery's place within society when the abbots were no longer involved in national life with parliamentary roles as they once were. However, they were still great and wealthy landowners and the larger monasteries still had regional civic and spiritual control, St Albans especially.[129] Knowles cites St Albans as one of a few exceptions to this monastic decline and in particular Abbot Thomas de la Mare (1349-1396) and clearly holds this man in high regard. Thomas succeeded in ensuring the monastery's survival, both economically and spiritually during this time.[130] Knowles makes his opinions clear on the decline of the monasteries and of the influence the religious had in English society from the start of the fourteenth century, which although cannot be blamed entirely on the Black Death, it certainly can be considered a contributing a factor.[131] He sees the monasteries in further strife in the Tudor Age. Citing visitations in the diocese of Norwich as an example, some of the houses, according to Knowles, were decadent with cases of sexual misconduct. At Norwich itself the faults included having women present, the choir observance was faulty, and time was being wasted in useless conversation.[132] More recent scholars, such as James Clark, disagree with Knowles's assessment of the decline of the monasteries. Clark agrees that the conditions in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in England, caused by population increase, exploitation of land, and the Black Death did

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[125] Christopher Harper-Bill, *Charters of the medieval hospitals of Bury St Edmunds* (Woodbridge, 1994), p. 2.
[126] Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, pp. 83-86.
[127] David Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England The End of the Middle Ages*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1955), II, pp. 115-124.
[128] Ibid. p. 364.
[129] Ibid. pp. 280-287.
[130] Ibid. pp. 39-48. See chapter 5 for a more detailed look into Thomas de la Mare's abbacy.
[131] Ibid. pp. 354-364.
[132] *The Religious Orders in England The Tudor Age*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1959), III, p. 157.

not allow for further growth of the monasteries and the Benedictine communities were, according to Clark, destabilised by disobedience and physical violence. [133] Despite these problems, Clark maintains that, 'no Benedictine monastery maintained complete cultural isolation and traces of secular trends in domestic, social and personal behaviour are perceptible in every period: at any rate, there was no sudden descent into secularism at the end of the Middle Ages.'[134]

The Benedictines were very much influenced by the society around them and they were in medieval towns so the culture of society was unavoidable. However, this assimilation was the cause of many problems that the monks had to face. The monks wanted to defend their position in the world and as such had to protest their forced closure in the sixteenth century.[135] Clark examines the surrender of St Albans in 1539. The assumption has been that there was not much resistance given by the monks against the reformation. However, there were protests throughout the 1530s by the monks and the final abbot of St Albans had no choice but to surrender the monastery. That 39 monks all signed the surrender would indicate that the final abbot held the community together despite what was occurring outside the monastery's walls.[136] There were known protests of the lay population in the northern parts of the country. The Pilgrimage of Grace saw Robert Aske lead groups of people to attempt to prevent the Dissolution of the monasteries and in some areas managed to restore religious houses for a short period of time, something that will be discussed in more detail in chapter 7.[137] In the sixteenth century Clark suspects that the boundary between the culture of the Benedictines and the society in which it was situated were being eroded. However, he is in disagreement with Knowles that there was a decline leading up to the Dissolution.[138] Instead, Clark writes of an evolution of monasticism in England, suggesting that discipline survived until the middle of the sixteenth century but it was surrounded by many cultural patterns.[139] Joan Greatrex, writing fifty years later than Knowles, accepts that his limitations of the primary sources that are available to us, is to blame for his conclusion on the decline of the monasteries, something that he himself admitted.[140] Greatrex's work attempts to show that the world outside the monastery was changing and that the monks reacted to this. Her work concludes that the monasteries were not in decline and this can be demonstrated with the larger monasteries having men still seeking admission to the religious life.[141] St Albans was a house that although did not recover from the Black Death in terms of the population of monks there, it did remain integral to the intellectual community right up until the Dissolution with the use of its printing press.

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[133] Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, pp. 124, 139.
[134] Ibid. p. 125.
[135] Ibid. p. 130.
[136] Clark, *Reformation and Reaction*, 297-328. For a more detailed explanation on these protests and the surrender at St Albans see Chapter 7.
[137] M. L. Bush, *The pilgrimage of grace : a study of the rebel armies of October 1536* (Manchester:, 1996), pp. 7-13.
[138] Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, p. 254.
[139] Clark, *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism*, p. 17.
[140] Greatrex, *The English benedictine cathedral priories*, p. 331.
[141] Ibid. pp. 323, 329-331.

When examining St Albans as a town it is important to recognise the historiography of the study of urban areas, which is a contested area. The trend in the middle of the nineteenth century was to study urban history through individual towns.[142] Despite this trend, Susan Reynolds and others have studied medieval towns as a general topic and suggests that English towns should be compared not only with each other, but also with towns in continental Europe.[143] Writing in 1977, Reynolds' book *An Introduction to the History of English Medieval Towns* encourages historians to think more broadly. She writes that historians have been working in isolation and have often misunderstood the technical evidence they have come across, not showing much interest in themes or problems people have with other towns. Therefore, her book asks questions as opposed to answers them in an attempt to 'suggest issue for investigation'.[144] Reynolds was also concerned with the technical terminology used, citing the terms borough, franchise, and guild, she writes that historians have not sought to discover whether the definitions of these words have changed over time.[145] Town growth was probably affected by invasions of the Danes and the Norman Conquest; according to Reynolds the population probably grew after the initial shock. During the Norman Conquest, bishops' Sees saw a movement from a rural to an urban setting, which would have aided the growth and prosperity of towns.[146] Colin Platt who has used a substantial amount of archaeological evidence in his study on the medieval town writes that caution must be used when looking at the urbanisation of England, because medieval English towns were small and retained rural characteristics, and so the country was never urbanised.[147] Christopher Dyer gives the definition of the medieval town as 'a relatively dense and permanent concentration of residents engaged in a multiplicity of activities, a substantial proportion of which are non-agrarian'.[148] Scholars including Gervase Rosser generally agree upon this definition, but the medieval town is incredibly difficult to define on account of its varied nature.

According to Christopher Dyer, when a borough was created, the tenants gained the privileges of burgesses, meaning that they could hold a plot of land for a fixed money rent, and did not have any labour services or servile dues. The burgesses could sell, sublet and mortgage their land, and trade in the borough market without paying tolls. Every borough had a market, and most also had at least one fair. In England there were around 100 boroughs in 1086, by 1200 there were 218 and by 1300 there were over 500. Bury St Edmunds was one of these boroughs, and Mary Lobel has studied the town and its government with the borough status. The borough, like the liberty, was not without its problems. The authority and power of the lord of the monastic borough stunted the growth of the

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[142] Alan Dyer, *Decline and growth in English towns, 1400-1640* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 4.
[143] Susan Reynolds, *An introduction to the history of English medieval towns* (Oxford, 1977), p. 81.
[144] Ibid. pp. v-vii.
[145] Ibid. p. viii.
[146] Ibid. pp. 16-45.
[147] C. Platt, *The English mediaeval town* (London, 1979), p. 1.
[148] Christopher Dyer, 'The hidden trade of the Middle Ages: evidence from the West Midlands of England', *Journal of Historical Geography,* 18 (1992), 141-157 (p. 142).

town, which caused severe disputes between the town and convent in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[149] Government in medieval towns varied from place to place, depending on the legal status of the town and the type of lord of the town. As we have seen, despite both being monastic towns, St Albans was a liberty, whereas Bury St Edmunds was a borough. According to Alan Harding, a liberty was 'the power to act in the affairs of the community and to exert influence on one's fellows, free from the interference of the sovereign government'.[150] Liberties have been considered by some to be insignificant in the history of England, but for others, such as Michael Prestwich and Keith Stringer they are an integral part of medieval society. Although each had their individual features, a common dilemma for the medieval liberty was maintaining public order, as can be seen throughout the history of the abbey of St Albans.[151] Ecclesiastical lords maintained their power well by using papal confirmation, excommunication and the protective power of their saint.[152]

Many towns in England were monastic towns, that is, were founded and governed by a monastery, just as St Albans and Bury St Edmunds were. The monastic town was a distinctive type of town and it was in the interest of the monasteries to encourage growth of towns, to increase their revenue from rents and markets. According to T. R. Slater, almost all Benedictine monasteries were in towns that were urban and planned to promote the monastic community, although in some places it is unclear as to whether the town or the monastery came first. St Albans is possibly the earliest documented planned monastic town. A monastic town tended to have a triangular market place, which would usually be from the abbey precinct going north and ending at the parish church.[153] The majority of the market would have taken place at the wider end of this triangle; there were two weekly markets and three annual fairs.[154] The lords of the towns used them to make a profit, and as such would promote their growth by investing in urban property, markets, and fairs. Few new towns are recorded in Domesday Book, but this increased in the following two centuries. In addition to the revenue towns provided, they also bestowed prestige onto their lords.[155] Many towns had an ecclesiastical landlord. Much of the life in a medieval town centred on the monastery and in addition to the convent there would probably have been numerous parish churches.[156] The

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[149] Lobel, *The borough of Bury St. Edmund's*, pp. 16-17.
[150] Alan Harding, 'Political Liberty in the Middle Ages', *Speculum,* 55 (1980), 423-443 (p. 423).
[151] *Liberties and identities in the medieval British Isles*, ed. by Michael Prestwich (Woodbridge, 2008), p. 2.
[152] Keith Stringer, 'States, liberties and communities in medieval Britain and Ireland (c.1100-1400)', in *Liberties and identities in the medieval British Isles,* ed. by Michael Prestwich (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 5-36 (pp. 23-24).
[153] *The Church and the Medieval Town*, ed. by T. R. Slater and Gervase Rosser (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 156-159.
[154] David Dean, 'Alban to St Albans, AD 800 to 1820', in *A County of Small Towns: The Development of Hertfordshire's Urban Landscape,* ed. by Terry Slater and Nigel Goose (Hatfield, 2008) (p. 315).
[155] Christopher Dyer, *Making a living in the middle ages : the people of Britain 850-1520* (London, 2002), pp. 145-146.
[156] *The Church and the Medieval Town*, p. xiii.

monasteries were the landlords, religious figures, and also bringers of trade and employment. Depending on the importance and position of the house, it would have boosted trade from pilgrims and important visitors possibly even royalty.

The Black Death, including the population leading up to 1349, the death rate and whether the country returned back to relative normality fairly soon after the Black Death is the next point of contention among historians that I want to consider. The fourteenth century was disastrous for St Albans, England, and indeed Europe. The Black Death entered England in the summer of 1348 when it reached Dorset.[157] It is exceedingly difficult to make an estimate of the death rate of the Black Death because of a lack of parish registers and national censuses, apart from Domesday Book, despite the vast work completed on manorial records, and so there have been many attempts and contentions. However, the death rate of 30-35% is now generally agreed, with a slightly higher rate for the clergy, who would have been in direct contact with the dying and were also in confined spaces together when in the monasteries.[158] When looking at the manor of Codicote, which belonged to St Albans, the death rate appears to have been in line with the national average.[159] The other difficulty is estimating the population size during this time. By 1300 Europe had a population it could not feed due to soil exhaustion from land cultivation and population growth in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[160] Estimates by Dyer and Hatcher would put the population between 4.5 and 6 million before 1348 and 2,800,000 after. The population of England did not start to recover again until the sixteenth century.[161] Phillipp Schofield gives similar figures with a high point of around 5-6 million at the beginning of the fourteenth century which then declined throughout the first half of the century to be cut to around half and then stagnating until the late fifteenth century.[162]

Hatcher's opinion is that England was already in a crisis before the Black Death, and that because of overpopulation, within a few years, land was fully occupied again. Further to this, he argues that although wages saw a significant increase after the Black Death, the price of basic goods also rose, meaning there was no change in real terms.[163] M. M. Postan shares Thorold Rogers view that the population of England rose throughout the Middle Ages, but that there was an interval of uncertain

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[157] David Stone, 'The Black Death and its Immediate Aftermath: Crisis and Change in the Fenland Economy, 1346-1353', in *Town and Countryside in the Age of the Black Death: Essays in Honour of John Hatcher,* ed. by Mark Bailey and S. H. Rigby (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 213-241 (p. 213).
[158] John Hatcher, *Plague, population and the English economy, 1348-1530* (London, 1977), pp. 21-25.
[159] See chapter 4 for more details about the population of the manor of Codicote.
[160] Barbara F. Harvey, 'The Population Trend in England between 1300 and 1348', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 16 (1966), 23-42 (p. 23).
[161] Dyer, *Decline and growth*, p. 5.
[162] Phillipp R. Schofield, *Peasant and community in Medieval England, 1200-1500* (Basingstoke, 2003), p. 7.
[163] John Hatcher, 'England in the Aftermath of the Black Death', *Past and Present,* 144 (1994), 3-35 (pp. 6-7).

duration after the Black Death where growth was broken. He also writes that peasants would have been fairly protected from the rising prices because the main bulk of their produce did not go to the market. Landlords however did lose income as a result of falling rates, which would have had more of an affect on the smaller landlords as opposed to the larger monastic landlords.[164] Bridbury paints a picture of a quick recovery by the country after Black Death. He writes that it did not have much of an effect on the country, that the country recovered fast, and that landlords gave tenants leases of demesne lands on any terms, something that would have been far more beneficial for the tenants than the landlords. He maintains that the Black Death was good for England, that the high population had caused famine and the disease altered that. He goes as far as to say that the time for demesne farming was in the decades after the Black Death rather than the first decades of the fourteenth century.[165] Those who have argued for decline have attacked Bridbury's view of prosperity after the Black Death.[166] Levett has studied the St Alban's manors after the Black Death to see if they returned to function properly as a manor with minimal amount of vacancies. She concluded that the manors had fewer vacancies and were able to maintain their court records throughout the Black Death, with land being taken up by children, spouses, kin, or even strangers.[167]

It has been demonstrated that the most discussed aspect of the Black Death is the medium and long-term impact of the disease on medieval Europe.[168] The primary question being asked is whether the population of England's towns was growing or declining in the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, and whether their economies were depressed, thriving or coping. This has led to a debate among historians with no clear answer. The main issues are that there is no agreement as to the definition of a 'town', 'decay' or 'prosperity' and that there is no agreement on how the population was changing or whether the wealth was increasing or not.[169] Dyer writes that during the 1940s and 1950s, a falling population after the Black Death was used to determine economic history after 1350, which led to the belief of decline in towns. Bridbury's study of 1962 argues the opposite, that the latter Middle Ages were prosperous and that the towns were rich, a view that was received poorly.[170] Bailey's work demonstrates how there are different opinions on the debate into English towns. A declining population saw a decrease in settlement and trade, but an expansion in income and output per capita, meaning that after 1348, a town could be smaller but those living

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[164] M. Postan, 'Some Economic Evidence of Declining Population in the Later Middle Ages', *The Economic History Review,* 2 (1950), 221-246 (p. 222).
[165] A. R. Bridbury, 'The Black Death', *The Economic History Review,* 26 (1973), 577-592.
[166] R. B. Dobson is one who has argued for the decline of towns after the Black Death in 'Urban decline in late medieval England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 27 (1977).
[167] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 248-256.
[168] *Town and countryside in the age of the Black Death : essays in honour of John Hatcher*, ed. by Mark Bailey and S. H. Rigby (Brepols, 2012), p. xx.
[169] Dyer, *Decline and growth*, pp. 1-3.
[170] Ibid. pp. 4-5.

there could be richer.[171] If we look at St Albans during the time that the urban decline was meant to be occurring, the monastery, although still able to maintain their records, must have struggled with losing forty-seven monks and their abbot. Abbot Thomas de la Mare was elected, and he was able to maintain the monastery, and despite not having the numbers, remained influential in St Albans. Wills from the town show that people did become richer and the town still benefitted from its proximity to London, demonstrating that the town was probably not in decline other than having a lowered population.[172]

The position of peasants, whether they were free or unfree, is one that continued to be an issue throughout the Middle Ages and one of the reasons the peasants revolted was to gain more freedom. Paul Hyams suggests that in the thirteenth century, for a jurist, in theory the definition of a villein would have been that the lord owns his villein as chattel, and can sell him. The villein owns nothing because everything he has belongs to the lord, he also cannot leave his land and can be evicted or have his rents raised, finally, since he does not own anything, he has no legal heir.[173] To define the term freedom is another highly disputed topic. For Frederic Seebohm, serfdom was a step up from slavery and towards freedom.[174] Rodney Hilton believes that by 1280, this was easier; the landless labourer was free if there were no ancestors to demonstrate otherwise. Prior to this, Domesday Book assumes villeins to be free whereas thirteenth century records assume them to be unfree. The villein was considered unfree because he had labour services and owed merchet (payment made on marriage of daughter or son) and heriot (death duty). Hilton argues that if money was paid instead of services, then the tenant was freer than one who did not pay money.[175] This was a further step away from slavery and towards freedom. Despite the need to move away from being an unfree villein, Rosamund Faith writes that at St Albans in the thirteenth century, the need for land was so bad that there were peasants who agreed to hold land in villeinage.[176]

This chapter has introduced both the issues that will be raised in this thesis and St Albans as a town and monastery. The debates including the population surrounding the Black Death, the aftermath of the Black Death, the social composition of the rebels in the Peasants' Revolt, and the condition of the monasteries at the time of the Dissolution. The coming chapters will explore these themes in more detail and relate them to the monastery and town of St Albans and to the manors that the

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[171] Mark Bailey, 'A tale of two towns: Buntingford and Standon in the later Middle Ages', *Journal of Medieval History,* 19 (1993), (p. 352).

[172] Mark. Bailey, 'The economy of towns and markets, 1100 to 1500', in *A County of Small Towns: The Development of Hertfordshire's Urban Landscape to 1800,* ed. by Terry Slater and Nigel Goose (Hatfield, 2008), pp. 46-66.

[173] Paul R. Hyams, *Kings, lords and peasants in Medieval England : the Common Law of villeinage in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries* (Oxford, 1980), p. 2.

[174] Frederic Seebohm, *The English Village Community examined in its relations to the manorial and tribal systems* (London, 1883), p. 438.

[175] R. H. Hilton, 'Freedom and VIlleinage', *Past and Present,* 31 (1965), 3-19.

[176] Rosamond Faith, *The English peasantry and the growth of lordship* (London, 1997), p. 222.

monastery owned and managed. By doing so, I shall hope to analyse the relationship between the townspeople and the monastery.

Chapter 2: The Early Growth of the Town and Monastery

This chapter will consider the growth of the monastery of St Albans and the way in which the monastery developed the town at its gates. It will look at charitable institutions including the school, hospitals, and nunneries, and demonstrate the benefits the abbey bestowed on the town through its presence and its development over its early history. The benefits of having a large and prosperous monastery with a popular saint will then be explained, as will the effect this had on the nature of the relationship between the abbey and the town. This will include pilgrimage to the town, and the miracles that Saint Alban was said to have performed. This chapter's discussion of the school, hospitals, and nunneries, and subsequent discourse on pilgrimage allows for a limited view of the town and monastery and the relationship between the two during this time period. Ideally, the market place and management of the town would have been discussed during this time period, as would the obedientiary system. This would have allowed for a fuller discussion of how the monastery managed the townspeople and how their lives were affected by this. Unfortunately, missing sources, including the obedientiary accounts, do not allow for these themes to be discussed.

2.1 Schools, Hospitals, and Dependencies

The early abbots of St Alban's Abbey founded two schools, a hospital, a nunnery and a second hospital that eventually became a nunnery. These charitable institutions had benefits for the town, its inhabitants, and the abbey itself. These foundations are recorded in the first volume of the *Gesta Abbatum*. The *Gesta* is often cited for errors regarding dates and names, especially in the first volume, demonstrated with the confusion of the brothers who were abbots, Ælfric and Leofric.[177] Extracts related to the school were also found and transcribed in the fourteenth century into the almoner's register; these include the rules that are in the second volume of the registers of Abbot Whethamstede.[178] The school is first mentioned in the *Gesta Abbatum* with the master, Geoffrey of Gorron in the twelfth century, although it is likely that the school probably existed from the ninth century. Abbot Richard (1097-1119) summoned Geoffrey, from Maine, while he still a secular clerk, but when he arrived to teach at St Albans, he was late, and another master had been given the position. Instead, Geoffrey taught at the school at Dunstable while he waited for the school of St

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[177] See Chapter 1 for details of the confusion.

[178] BL Landsdowne MS, 375, ff. 96-7; *Registra quorundam abbatum monasterii S. Albani*, ed. by Henry T. Riley, II vols (London, 1872), II, pp. xlix, 309-315; William Page, *The Victoria history of the county of Hertford*, IV vols (Westminster, 1902), IV; ibid. p. 49.

Albans to become available.[179] Whilst teaching at Dunstable, he held a miracle play of St Katherine in c.1109/10.[180] He wrote the play for it to be performed by his pupils on the saint's feast day. He borrowed copes belonging to the abbey for the play, which he kept in his house, however, there was a fire and they were all destroyed. 'Not knowing how to restore the loss to God and Saint Alban, he offered himself to God as a burnt offering, assuming the religious habit at the house of St Alban'.[181] He became a monk at St Albans and was elected as abbot in 1119 after Richard's death. Although no copy of the play survives, it is clear that Katherine was important to Geoffrey, who was ordained on St Katherine's day, 25 November, ordered her feast day to be a major feast, and had her featured in the two calendars and the Psalter that were compiled when he was abbot.[182]

Although the school was managed and under the control of the monks, it was not a monastic school as there were secular masters and scholars were not entitled to progress into the monastery.[183] Evidence from the *Gesta Abbatum* shows that the school was not free. It was attended by the children of nobles and local boys who paid fees, and was not necessarily a way to enter the monastery as a novice, although it was surely a route for some.[184] A. F. Leach estimates the fees of St Albans at 4d. per term in the late thirteenth century, using the Merton College Grammar School as an example.[185] Later, on 4 April 1339 an almonry school, was founded for poor scholars who could stay at the school for a maximum of five years. The servant of the almoner was to collect the broken meats from the monastery and distribute them to the boys of the school, and the friars and beggars; he was also to instruct the boys in morals and learning.[186] Other than the provisions made for these poor scholars, we know nothing else about them. Abbot Samson of Bury St Edmunds made a similar charitable donation in the twelfth century regarding the education of poor scholars in the town by purchasing houses to provide lodging for them.[187] The *Gesta Abbatum* also discusses the education of the sons of nobles in England. Abbot John of Hertford (1235-1263) educated, or brought up, these sons in the monastery, where they might have attended the town's school.[188]

The grammar school appears to have been an important part of life in the town. It had a good reputation and was attended by William Grindecobbe, a major rebel during the Peasants' Revolt in

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[179] *VCH*, II, p. 47.
[180] This is the first theatrical representation in England to have been recorded. William Marriott, *A collection of English miracle-plays or mysteries* (Basel, 1838), p. xi.
[181] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, p. 73.
[182] Christine Walsh, *The cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in early Medieval Europe* (Aldershot, 2007), p. 120.
[183] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, p. 223. Still, *The abbot and the rule*, p. 183.
[184] Still, *The abbot and the rule*, pp. 182-183; Page, *VCH*, II, p. 49.
[185] Arthur Francis Leach, *The Schools of Medieval England* (London, 1915), p. 184.
[186] Ibid. p. 218.
[187] Gransden, *A History of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, p. 50.
[188] Nicholas Orme, *Medieval schools : from Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven, 2006), p. 285.

1381. The *Chronica Maiora* states that Grindecobbe was not only fed, educated and maintained at the monastery, but that he was also related to some of the monks, implying that he may have been one of the poor scholars in the almonry. The monks of St Albans were primarily from the local area and so Grindecobbe and the other rebels could have been related to the monks they were rebelling against.[189] In the fifteenth century statutes were entered in the registers of Abbot John of Whethamstede, demonstrating that provisions were still being made for the poorest scholars in the fifteenth century.[190] The boys were permitted to reside in the almonry for a term of five years. They were to have tonsures, and were not permitted to leave the almonry without the licence of the sub-almoner. It is here that the almoner's duties are also listed in regard to the boys. It is his responsibility to ensure the upkeep of the almonry and of the grammar school, for paying the master to teach the almonry boys, he is to give the boys 12d. on the feast day of St Nicholas, and to maintain the napkins and table cloth for the boys and servants. Lastly, he is required to pay the expenses of the monks who are to be ordained and the treasurer for the pensions of the scholars.[191]

The medieval hospital played an important part of social life and was an ecclesiastical, rather than a secular institution. There was a sense of charity among the clergy and laity, who, she says were 'battling bravely with social problems'.[192] It was either this sense of charity or the need to house the sick, old and infirm brethren that led monasteries to found hospitals. Hospitals provided for the needy whilst performing the Christian need for charity. In England there were 200 hospitals founded in the twelfth century and then 310 in the thirteenth century with donors giving clothes, food, money and spiritual care.[193] Throughout the Middle Ages there were around 750 hospitals in England, 200 of which were occupied by lepers. Clay argues that this high proportion of hospitals for lepers indicates the extent of the disease in medieval England. However, it is important to note that some of the hospitals for lepers did not only house lepers and that the term leprosy was commonly used as an umbrella term that could cover other illnesses.[194] Hospitals for lepers tended to be founded outside of the town boundaries so that the healthy would not get sick.[195] Medieval theologians who wrote of leprosy were not kind to its sufferers; the disease was thought of as a symbol of moral decay and that the sufferer or their parents would have been wicked.[196] After the thirteenth century, there were no new religious charitable foundations, instead, they were secular foundations, including hospitals, almshouses, and chantries.[197] The hospital of St Julian's was founded during the abbacy of Geoffrey (1119-46), and was not dissolved until 1505. According to the *Gesta* the hospital was built for lepers just outside St Albans. Geoffrey ensured the hospital had

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[189] Walsingham, *The Chronica maiora*, ed., Clark and Preest p. 132.
[190] *Registra quorundam abbatum monasterii S. Albani*, II, p. 309.
[191] Ibid. pp. 309-315.
[192] Rotha Mary Clay, *The Medieval Hospitals of England* (London, 1909), pp. xvii-xvii.
[193] Miri Rubin, *Charity and community in medieval Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 1.
[194] Clay, *The Medieval Hospitals*, pp. 48-49.
[195] Rubin, *Charity and community*, p. 106.
[196] Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society in Later Medieval England* (Stroud, 1999), p. 14.
[197] Rubin, *Charity and community*, pp. 146-147.

revenue and Henry II confirmed its endowment and granted the lepers 1d. per day. In addition to this, 30s. 5d. was to be paid to them annually by the Sheriff of Hertfordshire from 1160.[198] The *Gesta* gives a narrative of the foundation of St Julian's; the hospital was founded and built with the advice and consent of the convent in honour of God and St Julian and was situated on the road to London. The hospital was to be funded by tithes, including, 60s. from the tithes from the town of St Albans, all tithes from the lord of Kingsbury, and two parts of the tithes of corn from the parish churches of St Michael's and St Stephen's.[199] At the hospital, beer was served on feast days.[200] An undated petition from the early fourteenth century from the brothers residing in the hospital to the king and his council states that the abbot was harassing them. They complained that although the hospital was founded by Geoffrey, abbot of St Albans, the current abbot was oppressing them by ordering the brothers to hand over their keys for their chambers and common coffer and has stolen from them, but the outcome is unknown.[201] Carole Rawcliffe writes that it had a vigilant vetting procedure and from 1344 the abbot was to personally approve of all new entrants to the hospital.[202] It is likely that St Julian's became a hospital for the poor and the sick after the Black Death when leprosy became less common; however, it was still designated as a hospital for priests and lepers in 1470, so it may have been that lepers, the poor and the sick were looked after together there.[203] The *Gesta* reports that the preference for lepers entering the hospital, which was limited to six after 1344, was given to monks of St Albans or those born within the abbey's jurisdiction. However, for married men, their wives had to enter the religious life in order that the husband could be free to join the religious life at the hospital.[204] Therefore, although the hospital did serve the local community those entering would have made great familial sacrifices in order to receive these benefits. A second hospital named St Giles was founded in 1327, however, little is known of the type of hospital it was or when it was dissolved.[205]

Finally, the two nunneries were dependencies of the monastery: St Mary de Pré and Sopwell. Benedictine nuns at St Albans were attached to the monastery, living near the almonry until 1140 when they were moved to Sopwell, and the nunnery was founded.[206] The *Gesta* tells us that Geoffrey founded the cell of Sopwell, gave it an income and its name. The Abbot, for the reputation and safety of the nuns, would have the doors locked at night under his seal, and insisted

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[198] *GASA*, I, p. 77. The charters pertaining to the grants and the foundation of the hospital can be found in BL Cotton MS Nero, D, I, f. 193.
[199] Walsingham, *GASA,* I, p. 77.
[200] Rubin, *Charity and community*, p. 166.
[201] TNA SC 8/142/7075
[202] Carole Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 294.

[203] Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, pp. 331, 388.
[204] Walsingham, *GASA*, II, pp. 315, appendix 483-502. The statutes of the hospital can also be found in Matthew Paris's *Liber Additamentorum*, BL Cotton MS Nero D I, f. 194v. Still, *The Abbot and Rule*, pp. 281-91.
[205] Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, p. 331.
[206] Ibid. p. 264.

that only women could enter and limited the number of nuns who could be in the house.[207] The *Gesta* suggests that the monks were not as keen on religious women as Geoffrey was. However, when it came to founding the nunnery at Sopwell, there was no opposition. Sally Thompson writes that this was presumably because the monks did not want the women in the monastery.[208] The control the abbey maintained over the nunnery was substantial, and was similar to the nunnery at Stamford, established by the monastery at Peterborough. The Peterborough Registers write of a promise of obedience to the abbey, subjection of the community, and that all belongings of the nuns were at the disposal of the abbot and monastery. However, this was clearly not the case in all nunneries dependent on a monastery. Westminster allowed a community of nuns at Kilburn and they had a considerable amount of freedom; the abbot and prior could not force anyone to enter the nunnery without the permission of the women, nor could the chaplain enter against their wishes.[209] There were benefactors to Sopwell nunnery, the *VCH* names one of the earliest as Henry of Albini, who was also a supporter of the monastery. He gave two hides of land in his manor in Bedford, and another virgate of land when his sister became a nun at the house. Furthermore, Henry III granted 50s. from the issues of Hertfordshire in 1247 in order to support a chaplain celebrating the daily mass of the Virgin in the nunnery.[210] The second nunnery, St Mary de Pré, began as a hospital. According to the *Gesta* Abbot Warin founded the house in 1194 because of a vision; St Amphibalus appeared to a man in a dream, and told the man to tell the abbot to honour the place where his relics were.[211] Dutifully, Warin built a church and buildings in that place dedicated to the Virgin Mary, to house leprous women.[212] Warin gave to the house a church, buildings, various tithes, and a rent of 20s. in Cambridge for the nunnery in addition to allotments of food for the nuns and sisters. However, by the thirteenth century, the house was incredibly poor and did not even have the basic necessities. Abbot Thomas de la Mare (1349-96) issued new rules for the dependency, he ensured that there was to be a higher standard of education for the women, and that women entering the house must profess the Rule of St Benedict and take their vows before the Archdeacon of St Albans. The last prioress of the nunnery, Eleanor Barnard, died 4 June 1527, a decade prior to the dissolution.[213] The nunnery was dissolved in 1528 when the pope was told that life there had become relaxed.[214] These institutions would have had an impact on the town, and would have shaped the town in their own ways, enhancing it and providing some of the social services in St Albans. Some of these institutions would have been helpful to the local community, such as the school and to a certain extent the hospital, even the nunneries for the women who

[207] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, p. 81.

[208] Thompson, *Women religious*, p. 60.

[209] Ibid. pp. 61-63.

[210] Page, *VCH*, IV, p. 423. William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. by J. Stevens R. Dodsworth, J. Caley, E. Ellis, B. Bandinel (London, 1846), pp. 363-365.

[211] See p. 37 for the mistranslation of Amphibalus.

[212] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, pp. 199-201.

[213] Page, *VCH*, IV, pp. 428-432; Walsingham, *GASA*, I, pp. 213-214, 402.

[214] Francis Aidan Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English monasteries* (Hodges, 1893), p. 27. For more information on the Dissolution of the nunnery see chapter 7.

wished to enter them, however, there may have been some resentment due to the conditions of the help given.

2.2 Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage to sites of the relics of saints occurred regularly, and many believers travelled great distances to their chosen saint, possibly even hoping for a miraculous recovery from an ailment they may be suffering from. This had an effect on the towns and sites of these relics, who benefitted from the increasing traffic bringing trade. Saints' cults were a common theme in the everyday life of medieval England; every day was some saint's day, occupations had their own patron saint, and every parish church was devoted to a particular saint.[215] The relics of the martyr, Alban, made the monastery of St Albans an obvious site for pilgrimage, not only was Alban there, but St Albans was conveniently situated on the main route out of London heading to the north of the country. However, there is no real evidence for pilgrims coming to the town other than a few surviving pilgrims' badges featuring the saint on them found in London. Bede, writing in the eighth century using a later copy of a *Passio Albani*, tells the story of Alban and Amphabilus in his *Ecclesiastical History*. Amphibalus, a third century priest, came to Alban, a pagan living in Verlamium, seeking shelter from persecution. During his stay the priest was in a continual state of prayer, and inspired Alban who converted to Christianity. Amphibalus remained in Alban's house for a few days before the Romans discovered them, when they came Alban went with the soldiers instead of Amphibalus, wearing the priest's long cloak and he was taken before a judge, who according to Bede was offering a sacrifice to the devils. Because Alban had given himself up and had concealed a Christian, the judge ordered that he should take on the punishment that was to have been inflicted on that Christian. On being asked by the judge of what race he was, Alban stated that it did not matter, for he was a Christian, giving his name as Alban. The judge ordered that Alban be put to death, and so he was led to his place of execution, on 22 June. On the way, he came across a river; the bridge to cross the river was so full of people that he could not cross it. Instead, he approached the river, looked up to heaven, and the stream dried up, allowing for him to cross. Alban then climbed a hill and prayed to God for water, immediately, a spring came up at his feet, so that he could drink and when he was finished the water it returned to where it had come from in the river. Alban was executed, his head was cut off and at the same time the eyes of the man who executed him fell out. The judge, on seeing this, ordered that the persecution cease.[216] According to *The Life of Saint Alban*, Amphibalus fled to Wales, and converted more Britons to Christianity, including the saints Stephanus and Socrates. However, he was eventually caught by

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[215] Anthony Paul Bale, *St Edmund, king and martyr : changing images of a medieval saint* (Woodbridge:, 2009), p. 20.
[216] *Bede's ecclesiastical history of the English people : an introduction and selection*, ed. by Rowan Williams and Benedicta Ward (London, 2012), pp. 47-50.

the Romans, and was taken back to Verulamium, where he was martyred.[217] His remains were said to have been discovered in 1178 at Redbourn, and they were translated to a new shrine within St Albans Abbey, encouraging more pilgrims to the town.[218] Other early sources corroborate at least that Alban was martyred in Verulamium, and that there is a possibility of a Roman shrine to him at the place of his burial. Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle argue for the existence of a Romano-British cemetery where the current abbey is standing.[219] Gildas, writing before 549 mentions that Alban, of Verulamium, was martyred and that there was a shrine on his grave.[220] Although there is archaeological evidence for a late Roman cemetery, there is no evidence for a Roman shrine other than what is written. St Albans is the only place that had a Roman Saint, which must have made it more appealing for some pilgrims to come to.[221] The cult of Alban also spread to continental Europe, there is a church in Odense, Denmark, which had a connection to Alban due to the supposed theft of the relics to this church.

The relics of a medieval monastery were a vital way for it to remain influential in society and to enrich profits from pilgrims. Some monasteries were in a good position to do this; they had saints who were said to perform miracles, and saints who were very popular. There are many lives written about St Alban and St Amphibalus by Bede, Gildas, Matthew Paris, and Geoffrey of Monmouth, which would have helped the cult at St Albans to grow. In his article on the cult of Alban, Laynesmith writes that there is no evidence that points to Alban's cult being promoted elsewhere in England prior to the eighth century. He also notes that Gaul 'acted as a reservoir for the cult' because three pre-eight century versions of Alban's passion were created there, possibly causing the Norman elite to take note.[222] The relics of Alban were originally placed under the high altar within a sarcophagus, in 1129 during the translation of his bones. The shrine was then placed in its current position after the erection of the Great Screen in the 1480s. Unfortunately, the shrine of Alban was destroyed during the reformation.[223] Alban's martyrdom as recounted by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the early twelfth century began the cult of Amphibalus, however, it came about because of a mistranslation of amphibalus in Latin meaning cloak.[224] This story gave the monks another avenue of income and a chance to renew interest in pilgrimage to the town. The relics of Amphibalus were then discovered in 1178, during the abbacy of Simon (1166-1183). The burial

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[217] Matthew Paris, *The life of Saint Alban*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and Thelma S. Fenster et al. (Tempe, 2010), pp. 89-103.

[218] Niblett and Thompson, *Alban's Buried Towns*, p. 196.

[219] Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjøbye-Biddle, 'The Origins of St Albans Abbey: Romano-British Cemetery and Anglo-Saxon Monastery', in *Alban and St Albans Roman and Medieval Architecture, Art and Archaeology,* ed. by Martin Henig and Phillip Lindley (Leeds, 2001), pp. 45-77 (p. 46).

[220] Gildas and Michael Winterbottom, *The ruin of Britain, and other works* (London, 1978), pp. 19-20.

[221] Diana Webb, *Pilgrimage in medieval England* (London, 2000), p. 58.

[222] Laynesmith, 'Translating St Alban', p. 58.

[223] Niblett and Thompson, *Alban's Buried Towns*, pp. 211, 277.

[224] Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia regum Britanniae*, ed. by A. Griscom (London, 1929), p. 367. John Lydgate, *The life of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibal*, ed. by J. E. van der Westhuizen (Leiden, 1974), p. 35. Still, *The abbot and the rule*, p. 17.

place of Amphibalus was shown to Robert Mercer, a townsman of Redbourn, by a vision of Alban, who answered his questions. He was described by Roger Wendover, a chronicler before Paris, as lying between two others and a third person lying crossways by itself. There were six other martyrs found, which means a total of ten bodies were there. When Amphibalus was supposed to have been martyred, he was disembowelled, pierced with knives before being stoned to death. Seemingly corroborating this story, and confirming that the body was that of Amphibalus, a knife was found in his skull with a second knife by his chest. His bones were the only ones that were broken, and they were taken out. The feretory of the monastery was taken to meet the bones, and there was a procession to bring them back to the abbey. Amphibalus's shrine was situated to the north side of Alban's shrine, by the high altar. In 1323 part of the abbey roof collapsed and fell onto the shrine and feretory of Amphibalus, which somehow survived even though the shrine itself was damaged, and was moved temporarily to the north aisle of the presbytery.[225] According to the Victoria County History, Amphibalus was moved again in 1350 to a new location by Ralph Whitchurch under Thomas de la Mare.[226] St Albans gave two bones of Alban and part of the cloak in which his head was wrapped in to Reading Abbey and also gave them the little finger of Amphibalus.[227] Laynesmith writes that the cult of Alban had both a physical and cultural translation in the early medieval period. There was limited British promotion of the saint yet abroad there may have been a translation by Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Mainz. However, it was the French involvement that allowed the cult of Alban's to survive.[228]

There has been doubt cast on these relics, according to the *Victoria County History* and the archaeologist Thomas Wright, the knife at the head could have been the head of a spear placed beside a warrior, and the knife by the waist was common for burials of pagan Anglo Saxons.[229] The discovery of Amphibalus was a community event and miracles occurred during the translation of the relics to the abbey church. Diana Webb questions whether the discovery of Amphibalus was in response to the claims of Ely having the relics of Alban, giving pilgrims another reason to visit the monastery. Translation was an ideal way to refresh the cult of a certain place or saint. After Amphibalus there were another two new saints at St Albans, Roger and Sigar of Northawe, who were buried in the abbey church, which would have added to the relics pilgrims could come and visit. Further to this, there was another discovery that would have kept the cult of Alban popular, which was the original mausoleum of St Alban, found during building works at the east end of the church.[230] Both Alban and Edmund were too early to be considered for sainthood by a papal commission of enquiry, instead, they were included in martyrologies and calendars much like John

[225] Walsingham, *GASA*, II, p. 128-9.
[226] Page, *VCH*, II, p. 490.
[227] Ron Baxter, *The Royal Abbey of Reading* (Woodbridge, 2016), p. 46.
[228] Laynesmith, 'Translating St Alban', pp. 69-70.
[229] William Page, *VCH*, IV vols (Westminster, 1902), I, pp. 256-257.
[230] Webb, *Pilgrimage*, pp. 58, 65, 78, Walsingham, *GASA*, I, pp. 192-3.

the Baptist, the Apostles, and St Katherine.[231] The cult of Alban was incredibly important to the monks and monastery, and to maintain their position within the important monasteries of medieval England, they had to promote his cult and the cult of Amphibalus. To do so meant making claims about these saints in order to tie them to the monastery and to demonstrate that they had the real relics. As with the foundation of the monastery by Offa and the land that was granted to the monastery, the discoveries and miracles of these saints have to read with these motives in mind.

Under the abbacy of Wulnoth in the tenth century, a Danish invasion took place in c.930. According to the *Gesta* the Danes in England were getting more ferocious, and the church of St Alban was plundered, with all the treasures being taken. The relics of Alban were stolen and taken back to Denmark to a Benedictine monastery in Odense, and the monks prayed to God that the martyr would return to England. The sacrist at the time was a monk named Egwin, who felt the need to retrieve the relics from Denmark. He travelled to the monastery in Odense, and became a monk there; he gradually proved himself to the monks there and gained their trust, so much so that he was appointed sacrist. Once he had access to the relics, he stole them, packed them in a pre-prepared chest, and he returned safely home five years after the relics had originally been taken in c.935.[232] When Egwin returned the abbot and monks all came out to greet him. Egwin opened the box with the relics in and showed them to his brethren. Those at the time, both laypeople and monks, who were suffering from a variety of illnesses, were miraculously cured after asking for the martyr's help. The brothers replaced Alban's bones back into a tomb and they gave thanks that he was in his rightful place, laying next to Verulamium in the same way that Calvary was next to Jerusalem, and that he was in the place where he would remain from then on. That place was particularly important to the monks because it was supposedly where King Offa II was led by a divine oracle to discover the relics a century and a half before. This story has been doubted by the lack of archaeological evidence for any Danish invasion at the town or within the Abbey precinct.[233] Abbot Ælfric (995-1005) did not want a repeat of the theft of the relics when the Danes were set to invade again. Therefore, the *Gesta* reports that in King Edward's reign the king of the Danes readied his soldiers and entered England in a hostile manner; the English knew that they would be fierce and feared them. To prepare, the community hid their treasures and Abbot Ælfric decided to wall up the relics of Saint Alban under the altar of St Nicholas to ensure that they remained safe. At the same time they sent fake relics to be kept at the monastery of Ely for safekeeping, claiming that their island was impassable surrounded by marshes and reeds, making an enemy invasion unlikely. Unfortunately for the Danes their king drowned at sea on the crossing to England. Naturally, St Albans wished to have the relics of their saint returned to them, but Ely refused. Eventually, Ely sent back fake relics, keeping what they believed to be the genuine bones. But Ælfric then revealed that he had the true relics the entire time, retrieved them from their hiding

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[231] Ibid. p. 65.
[232] Walsingham, *GASA,* I, pp. 12-17.
[233] Niblett and Thompson, *Alban's Buried Towns*, p. 196.

place and placed them in the middle of the church.[234] Abbot Geoffrey (1119-1146) translated the relics on 2 August 1129 in order to prove that the bones of Saint Alban were genuine and in the possession of the monastery itself. The relics were examined in front of the monks of the abbey and others including Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln. The venerable brother Radulph confirmed that they were genuine by finding gold letters saying saint on the back of the skull and a circle of hold with the inscription "This is the head of Saint Alban, England's proto-martyr."[235] As further proof many brethren saw the appearance of the martyr. Herbert Duket however doubted that the bones were Alban's and was shrunk to the size of dwarfish proportions. When the youth Solomon from Ely told the monk Anketil, the goldsmith, that he did not believe the relics were the martyrs, Anketil rebuked him and was rewarded with a vision of Alban during which the martyr told him that he was correct. The only bone found to be missing was the left shoulder blade, which was known to be in Spain.[236] Both Richard Vaughan and Mark Hagger have concluded that Ely's version of events is more likely to be true. This is because the Ely version is simple whereas the St Albans version seems to be a 'clumsy fabrication', despite the fact that Hagger thinks that the relics may have never left St Albans.[237] The events according to St Albans, and their persistence does appear to have been an attempt to conceal the fact that the story from Ely was true. The existence of the number of miracles that occurred during the translation of the relics could also indicate a renewed attempt by the monks to not only avoid any doubt that they were in possession of the relics, but also to encourage further pilgrimage to their site. For medieval Christians, miracles could potentially be something that could happen to them and help them in their everyday lives.[238] At St Albans, Amphibalus was said to have intervened and therefore performed a miracle in the early fourteenth century when the roof of the church fell down. Amphibalus is said to have ensured that no one was hurt, and that the monk who was at the saint's altar also escaped miraculously.[239] To avoid a decline in the cult of St Alban the abbots were continuously promoting the saint, not least by completing building works to enable pilgrims to come and to ensure that the shrines and altars were well kept.[240]

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[234] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, pp. 35-38.

[235] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, p. 86. The term 'proto-martyr' is one that was promoted at the end of the tenth century, presumably to encourage the traditions at St Albans. However, Alban was not English and so Richard Sharpe refers to him as one of the Romano-British martyrs. Paul Antony Hayward, 'The Cult of St. Alban, Anglorum Protomartyr, in Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman England', in *More than a memory : the discourse of martyrdom and the construction of Christian identity in the history of Christianity,* ed. by Johan Leemans (Leuven, 2005), pp. 169-200 (p. 185). Richard Sharpe, 'The late antique Passion of St Alban', in *Alban and St Albans : Roman and medieval architecture, art and archaeology,* ed. by Martin Henig and Phillip Lindley (Leeds, 2001), pp. 30-37 (p. 30).

[236] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, pp. 85-88.

[237] Mark Hagger, 'The *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*: litigation and history at St. Albans', *Historical Research,* 81 (2008), 373-398.

[238] Simon Yarrow, *Saints and their communities : miracle stories in twelfth century England* (Oxford, 2006), p. 1.

[239] Walsingham, *GASA,* I, p. 129.

[240] Webb, *Pilgrimage in medieval England*, p. 24.

Pilgrimage is a very old tradition and in medieval Europe it was incredibly popular with thousands of shrines that pilgrims could visit for both local and long distance pilgrimages. Pilgrims had various motives for undertaking their journey; to express piety, to show opposition to a king by visiting the relics of their enemy, to carry out a penance, to collect alms, to have a holiday or retreat, to ask something of the saint, or to be cured. Medieval society looked to the saints as protectors by both the lower classes and the royals. Whatever the reason, by the twelfth century royals, nobles, and the lower classes had pilgrimage as part of their everyday lives, with some even using it as a profession and were paid to undertake a pilgrimage on behalf of another person.[241] Pilgrimage shows the benefits of the cults of saints to the churches through the offerings they received.[242] It held two purposes; the first and primary purpose was to seek the holy in the form of a place, image, or relic, and the second was the ability to get away from the constraints of normal life, and for the lay to 'share in graces of renunciation and discipline which religious life, in theory at least, promised'.[243] Pilgrimage was so normal in medieval lives that it was written about in contemporary literature. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* are told by characters who are pilgrims, heading to Saint Thomas Becket's shrine in Canterbury. Piers Plowman by William Langland also mentions pilgrims, saying that we are all pilgrims in life, and that pilgrims should be humble, gracious and clothed as a poor person, for God is among the needy.[244]

A monastery as large and as influential as St Albans during the Middle Ages is highly unlikely to have had few or no pilgrims, but it was probably not as popular as Canterbury or even Bury St Edmunds. There must have been a steady flow of pilgrims coming to St Albans during the time of Abbot Leofstan. The *Gesta* records that he took pity on the travellers, merchants and pilgrims who came to the church of St Alban and he made the roads safer, had the trees cut back, smoothed out the road and made it more level, and built bridges.[245] The rich, nobles, and royals would have stayed as a guest of the monastery or at a local inn and the monastery would also have provided hospitality and alms to the poorer pilgrims who often relied on this to survive their journey.[246] The numerous inns in medieval St Albans demonstrated the number of visitors who came to the town, and the majority of the inns were situated by the monastery, meaning that their primary reason for visiting was visiting the abbey or monks there. A variety of accommodation existed in St Albans to house the different classes of people visiting the town. These inns tended to be on either Church Street or French Row, which had larger tenements suitable for grand inns, with long plots and enough space for stabling and inn-yards. We know that the monastery hosted royal visits; in

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[241] Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and pilgrims : popular beliefs in medieval England* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 39-45.

[242] Bale, *St Edmund, king and martyr*, p. 20.

[243] Eamon Duffy, *The stripping of the altars : traditional religion in England, c.1400-c.1580* (London, 2005), p. 191.

[244] William Langland, *The vision of Piers Plowman*, ed. by A. V. C. Schmidt, 2nd edn (London, 1995).

[245] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, p. 39.

[246] Finucane, *Miracles and pilgrims*, p. 47.

addition to royalty, the nobility were passing through the town, whether on pilgrimage or not, the monks and especially abbots of the abbey would have been in the same social circles as the nobility and royalty. There were also merchants who would have come to the town to trade, the town held a market and so people would have come to St Albans to buy and sell. Ramsey Abbey required its peasants to take produce from its manors to London, Cambridge and also St Albans.[247] Abbot John de Hertford (1235-1260) purchased a guesthouse with the intention of making it an inn for the great men and nobility. The inn, later known as The Tabard, was in Church Street and was close to the existing abbey's visitors' accommodation within the monastery, The George, another inn was also used to house the important guests of the abbey. There were other inns that we know of that existed in the fifteenth century along these roads.[248] At the time of the Dissolution the inns close to the monastery lost custom and instead were moved to Holywell Hill, further showing that the primary reason to visit the town during the Middle Ages was the monastery.[249]

Pilgrim badges were a popular trinket to buy at a pilgrimage site. They offered a means by which to show to others where the pilgrim had been and they were also a way of promoting the saint, as well as providing a safe conduct to cross territory. The pilgrim badge could present the miracles performed by the saint with the aim to share this knowledge of the cult.[250] The pilgrim badge of St Albans does this particularly well; it demonstrates the beheading of the saint and the loss of the eyes of his executor. These badges have been found in London, which is to be expected considering that pilgrims could come easily to St Albans from London on their way north. There were also those who were leaving St Albans to go on their own pilgrimage. Women from both Bury St Edmunds and St Albans were said to have gone to St Frideswide who performed miracles for women.[251] But locals also enjoyed the miracles of their patron saint. A youth, William was said to have been cured of his insanity by Alban, but he also had to go to Canterbury for relief from the epilepsy that he had for nine years.[252]

In order to keep the pilgrimage income high, churches and monasteries would need alternative revenue sources other than just one shrine. Therefore, the major churches would have a variety of shrines, altars and needs. For example, a pilgrim going to Canterbury could enjoy an entire Becket itinerary after 1220; they would visit his place of murder, his original tomb, his shrine, and the shrine for his severed scalp. At every stop there would be an offering, thereby multiplying the amount a church would get from a pilgrim. At St Albans, there were many altars including, the

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[247] J. L. Bolton, *The medieval English economy, 1150-1500* (London, 1980), p. 95.
[248] Niblett and Thompson, *Alban's Buried Towns*, pp. 264, 281-262.
[249] Ibid. p. 309.
[250] Rebecca Pinner, 'The Medieval Images of St Edmund in Norfolk Churches', in *St Edmund, king and martyr : changing images of a medieval saint,* ed. by Anthony Paul Bale (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 111-132 (p. 111).
[251] Webb, *Pilgrimage*, p. 53.
[252] James Craigie Robertson, *Materials for the history of Thomas Becket*, 7 vols (London, 1875), 1, p. 166.

Virgin Mary, St Wulfstan, St Oswiu, with which there was a Northumbrian connection, and obviously St Amphibalus could be devoted as well as the martyr Alban. Secondary shrines were also developed, which were due to responding to the public wanting contact with the holy. They could have either been within the mother church or alternatively at a dependency. For example, Tynemouth had its cult of Oswiu, at Ramsey the monks used the healing spring at St Ives as a secondary site.[253] When Thomas de la Mare was the prior at Tynemouth, he moved the shrine of Oswiu so that the pilgrims could see the saint in peace.[254] Later on when he was abbot of St Albans, he decorated the shrine of Alban and also moved Amphibalus's shrine from its place behind the altar of St Hugh, which was where the subsidiary relic collection was kept. In the fifteenth century, a watching loft was built on the north side of the feretory allowing the feretor to keep a constant watch over the shrine if necessary. Later developments made by Abbot William Wallingford (1476-84) included a high stone screen, which separated the pilgrims from the monks.[255] During the abbacy of Michael Mentmore (1335-49) the monks discovered that there was a pilgrimage to St Michael's church within the parish, pilgrims were coming to a new crucifix, which was carved by Master Roger Stoke for his own burial place. The monks were not happy about any lost income they might have had and so they wanted the offerings to go to the infirmarer, because it was under his jurisdiction. The vicar, William Puff, unsurprisingly disagreed with this, and so a case was heard in the abbey and Puff was found guilty. He was made to pay the infirmarer 40s. and costs.[256]

When the King gave offerings to saints' altars he was fulfilling two roles, the first was to have the saints' goodwill, and the second was to set a good example to his subjects. Many royal pilgrims come to the doors of St Albans; much of this was probably to do with the geographical position of the town on the main road north from London. Edward I was known to summon parliaments to St Albans and Bury St Edmunds, and thereby making him and his nobles travel to that place.[257] King John visited both Bury and St Albans on a pilgrimage after his coronation, and on later visits, but unfortunately upset Jocelin by not giving a rich offering.[258] Henry III went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Cross of Bromholm and Walsingham in early April 1226. When he visited these places he usually also visited Bury, Norwich, or Ely, and sometimes St Albans. Edward, like his father before him visited Walsingham and on these visits often came to both Bury St Edmunds and St Albans.[259] Queen Eleanor came to the monastery in 1236 and again in 1257.[260] Edward II enjoyed spending time at his royal residence in Langley, which of course was close to St Albans, so he

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[253] Webb, *Pilgrimage*, pp. 78, 80.
[254] Walsingham, *GASA*, II, p. 379.
[255] Webb, *Pilgrimage*, p. 84.
[256] Walsingham, *GASA*, II, p. 335.
[257] Webb, *Pilgrimage*, p. 112.
[258] Ibid. p. 116.
[259] Ibid. p. 123.
[260] Matthew Paris, *Matthaei Parisiensis, monachi Sancti Albani Chronica majora*, ed. by Henry Richards Luard, VII vols (London, 1872-1883), V, pp. 653-654.

visited the abbey many times, often with gifts, on the eve of Palm Sunday in 1314 he gave a gold cross inset with jewels and relics and also gave a grant towards the completion of work to be done in the choir. This was what his father intended to do. He visited again during the famine in August 1315, but by then there was barely enough bread to feed his household.[261] In March 1394 King Richard was another royal personage to be received at St Albans, and he was received so with a solemn procession, as was customary for royals and nobility.[262] In 1448 King Henry VI undertook many pilgrimages, visiting both the north and south shrines of England. Starting in March he visited Canterbury, Westminster, Waltham Abbey, Walsingham, Norwich, and Bury, then he started again, going to Shaftesbury, Glastonbury, Bristol, Malmesbury, then again to York, Durham, Beverley, and Lincoln before heading back south visiting St Albans on 31 October. The king realised that he was able to make this pilgrimage to show his devotion to the saints, but also to allow his subjects a chance to honour him. According to the monks of St Albans, Henry was saved by the intervention of the martyr, as the King was not present in St Albans during the first battle of St Albans, and instead, the Duke of York found him in a tradesman's house.[263] It was not only royals who made important visits to the monasteries, but also the nobility. In 1423 Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester spent Christmas at St Albans, visiting again twice in 1427, the same year that the former abbot of St Albans, the Bishop of Chester visited. In 1424 the Bishop of Winchester and the Earl of March both visited. The Earl of Warwick fell ill and was there for six weeks in 1428. Some of these visitors, like the Earl of March acted much like pilgrims, staying one night and making offerings to the martyr. However, others such as the Bishop of Chester, were there for more of a retreat than a pilgrimage. The Duke of Gloucester also may have had other motives for visiting, because he wanted to be buried in the abbey.[264] With these many noble and royal visitors it is no surprise that St Albans invested in their inns. Abbot John built a new hall for guests and for important pilgrims. In 1484 the landlord of The George, Thomas Hethnes, was allowed to have Mass said in the chapel at the inn if great men came with their chaplains.[265]

The pilgrimage to the monastery was an important tradition that the monks wished to maintain, not only did the town receive increased business from pilgrims, but the monastery would also have made money from offerings made at the shrines. Therefore, it was in their best interests to promote their shrine and cult of Alban and pilgrimage to the town. This meant that various translations of relics and discoveries of new relics were made throughout the early part of the monastery's history. There were also many lives of both Alban and Amphibalus told by writers, which may have encouraged pilgrimage from not only England but also possibly from abroad. We can see that the

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[261] Trokelowe and Blaneforde, *Johannis de Trokelowe et Henrici de Blaneforde, monachorum S. Albani, necnon quorundam anonymorum chronica et annales, regnantibus Henrico Tertio, Edwardo Primo, Edwardo Secundo, Ricardo Secundo, et Henrico Quarto*, RS 57 pp. 83, 92.
[262] Ibid. p. 167.
[263] Webb, *Pilgrimage*, p. 137.
[264] Ibid. pp. 135-136.
[265] *Registra quorundam abbatum monasterii S. Albani*, II, p. 269.

cult spread to continental Europe, specifically in Denmark. Unfortunately, many of the stories told of the miracles performed by the saint and the discoveries and recoveries of the relics by the *Gesta* have doubt cast upon them because of these motives of promoting the cult and attempting to increase their importance on a pilgrim's route.

The monastery and the actions of its monks either directly or indirectly affected the town in an effective way by developing it in many ways. This chapter has shown how the monastery strengthened its position in the community with the school, hospitals and nunneries, and showed its charitable nature towards the townspeople, even if this charity came at a cost to the townspeople. It has also examined how the monks encouraged pilgrimage to the town and how this had a beneficial impact on the town and those living there. All of this was aided by the geographical position of St Albans, close to London and on the route to the north of the country, so visitors would have stopped in St Albans regardless of the abbey, but the shrines certainly attracted many royal and noble guests. However, the monastery was also reliant on the town and the manors surrounding the town during this time for rents, food, and labour, and therefore the development of the town was highly beneficial for the abbey. At this time, the relationship between the town and monastery would have been beneficial to both parties; however, the monastery maintained the advantage over the town and townspeople by having dominance over them, something of which the townspeople would have been aware of.

Chapter 3: A Case Study of the Manor of Codicote

For this chapter I will largely base the analysis of the manor of Codicote on the extent that was produced in 1332 and the halimote court records that range from the thirteenth century through to the fifteenth century. The halimote court was held every six months by the cellarer and dealt with issues of the manor. There was also the *libera curia*, a court for the abbot's free tenants; unfortunately, no records survive from this court.[266] Codicote has been chosen as a case study for this chapter because it has the surviving documents needed to study it, and I hope to expand on the work already done on the manor by Levett in the 1930s. I will also compare my study of Codicote to the work that has been completed on the manor of Norton.[267] The court books and court rolls shed light on the management of Codicote by the cellarer, who ran the manor on behalf of the abbot. It also allows us to look at the tenants themselves and gives us a glimpse into their lives, their land, and their families. From these documents, we can examine the relationship between the tenants of the manor of Codicote and the cellarer and abbot of St Albans, and therefore have an idea of what that relationship was like on the other manors managed by the abbey.

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[266] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 102, 117-118.
[267] *Records of the manor of Norton.*

Figure 3. 1   Map showing the manors of St Albans Abbey. The majority of the manors of St Albans were situated in Hertfordshire; this made it far easier for the cellarer to move between manors and manage them effectively, most being within a day's walk. Many other abbey's, such as Christ Church Canterbury, had to travel far further, which made managing their manors more difficult and mean that there was a need for different systems of management.[268]

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[268] See page 55 for more information on how Christ Church managed its manors.

3.1 Manors, Peasants, and Medieval England

The manor and the manor court was a primary feature across medieval England. The farming, labour, and economy relied on supply and demand much like as does today, therefore the estate management of the manor was continually changing to adapt to changes in the market. Across the country there were trends that the estates followed when writing their manorial accounts and the way in which the landlords managed their estates; whether they farmed them directly, or indirectly.[269] At the heart of these manors, living and working on the land, were the peasants. They were the people who held land on the manor, paid rents, provided labour services, attended the manorial court, and paid their landlord for various rights and privileges. The relationship between the landlord and tenant was not always a good one and throughout the fourteenth century, with economic pressures rising, the peasants wanted their freedom demonstrating this after the Black Death during the Revolt of 1381.

In his work on manorial records, P. D. A. Harvey, has outlined the manorial accounts of the middle ages alongside the trends in farming. He has divided these accounts into three categories, the first of which occurs in the first half of the thirteenth century; there would have been no need for them before this time because the account is a product of demesne farming, which started to appear in the early thirteenth century.[270] At this time there were very few estates that used accounts and they tended to be produced by the central organisation, after being agreed with the lord.[271] The first phase of these accounts were characterised by its variety to them, and only began to become more uniform over time, when manorial accounts became more popular.[272] The second phase is from one mid-thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth century and was far more consistent than the phase before them. Despite this, they would still reflect the nature of the manor for which they were written. They were no longer produced by the central organisation but locally, and were altered by auditors as necessary.[273] Phase three of the accounts is from the middle of the fourteenth century, they were drawn up locally to present to the audit, as phase two were, but they reflected the change to the leasing of entire manors.[274] Unfortunately, no manorial accounts survive from the manors of St Albans. Instead, the court books that we have start at around 1237 and become standardised by around 1250, and if the manorial accounts were treated similarly, they would fall into the first and second of Harvey's phases.[275] The presence of a bailiff from c.1248 indicates that this man would have helped with the accounts and indicates a change to farming the demesne indirectly. This could lead to the speculative conclusion that the court books for the abbey would have followed the three

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[269] Harvey, *Manorial records*, pp. 1-14.
[270] Ibid. p. 25.
[271] Ibid. p. 29.
[272] Ibid. pp. 30-31.
[273] Ibid. pp. 31-33.
[274] Ibid. p. 37.
[275] Leon Adam Slota, 'The Village Land Market on the St Albans Manors of Park and Codicote: 1237-1399', (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Michigan, 1984), pp. 121-122.

phases similar to the manorial accounts Harvey discusses, but would have also been unique to the manor and to St Albans.

There were two main ways in which to gain an income from lands, such as the manors held by the ecclesiastical and secular landlords. The first option was through demesne farming using bailiffs and reeves who would supervise the work and sell the surplus goods on the open market. This would provide an income, but it fluctuated depending on the market, and so it was not guaranteed. The second choice was for the landlord to lease the farm demesne for money rent, which was a more regular income and not dependent on the market, only the demand for land.[276] The option of renting to a lessee was the favoured choice, because it was the safest and involved the least possible effort. This was popular in the Middle Ages apart from during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, where the trend was to keep estates managed through the bailiff or the reeve. The reeve was not a popular position on the St Alban's estates, and on most manors a tenant could pay to be exempt. For example, at Abbots Langley, in 1248 a tenant gave 10s. to be exempt.[277] This change in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is a result of the overpopulation of the countryside leading to a surplus, and therefore cheap labour, soil exhaustion, and high prices of food.[278] After the fourteenth century, there was a reversion back to the old style of estate management.[279] It is Hatcher's opinion that because of the overpopulation prior to the Black Death, after 1349, the cost of labour rose, making it was more beneficial for landlords to return to the older ways of farming.[280]

The way in which the manors were farmed can also be seen through the officials that were used. According to Levett, there were no bailiffs of either the liberty, Hundred, or of the Vill of St Albans before c.1248, unless the bailiff simply was not mentioned in the remaining sources.[281] Prior to the thirteenth century, the method of farming on the St Albans manors is likely to have been to lease out the demesne farm for money rents; a method practised by many ecclesiastical landlords since the Anglo Saxon period.[282] The lack of a bailiff prior to the middle of the thirteenth century can be seen as further testifying to this method of farming used by the monastery. This then changed to farming the demesne directly in or before c.1248, when the first bailiff makes an appearance in the sources. The bailiff would have had the task of running one large manor, or two, three or even more smaller manors. He would have been a professional man, possibly a free layman or a clerk in minor orders. [283] The bailiffs of Christ Church Canterbury had to take an oath

[276] Bolton, *The medieval English economy*, p. 40.
[277] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, p. 117.
[278] Harvey, 23-42.
[279] P. D. A. Harvey, *Manorial records of Cuxham, Oxfordshire, circa 1200-1359* (London, 1976), p. 12.
[280] Hatcher, 3-35.
[281] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, p. 116.
[282] Bolton, *The medieval English economy*, p. 40.
[283] Ibid. p. 90.

of service to the Archbishop of Canterbury, which describes their duties. The bailiff was required to hold manorial courts, to become acquainted with the properties in their charge, put the land to profit, survey repairs, fill vacant tenancies, supervise the sale of wood, watch the numbers and health of the livestock, levy debts, and uphold the archbishop's tenants against outsiders.[284] The reeve was also an important part of medieval estate management; he was an official chosen either by the abbot, or an election held by the peasants, usually from the wealthier customary tenants. He was responsible for organising the day-to-day work on the demesne and oversaw that labour services were performed and rents collected.[285]

On the manors of England in the twelfth and thirteenth century there was conflict between the villeins of manors and their lords concerning their freedoms. For Hilton, freedom in the thirteenth century meant freedom from the customs, such as heriot (death duty), merchet (payment made on marriage of daughter or son), licence fee for sale of stock, and annual tallage (land tenure tax).[286] In the thirteenth century the villeins of St Albans attempted to fight, albeit unsuccessfully, against the services to their lord, the abbot.[287] They wanted to be able to make money payments instead of performing their services, or have fewer of the services, by paying money instead of completing the service, the freer the tenant was, or at least felt he was.[288] The lords would inevitably have been unwilling to relinquish these labour services to keep their labour costs as low as possible. The source of the villeins' issues were not only with their services, which Levett claims were low, and possibly lighter than other manors in central and southern England; but they were unhappy with the excessive subdivision of holdings, the lack of use of good land, and an influx of migration as a result of the close proximity to London, leading to a increased demand for wealth.[289]

In comparison to St Albans, Bury St Edmunds has a wealth of court rolls and a first hand account of the earlier estate management by Jocelin de Brakelond (1173-1202).[290] Jocelin appears to be a reliable chronicler who both criticised and praised his abbots for their various deeds. However, it is clear that he thought highly of Abbot Samson for his good deeds, which included the expulsion of the Jews from Bury St Edmunds, and the foundation of a hospital. Therefore, he could be seen to exaggerate the other excelling qualities of Samson. Bury St Edmunds was a monastic borough, and as such, had a large measure of authority over the town.[291] The town of Bury formed part of the convent's property and the sacrist, in conjunction with his responsibilities for the abbey church and altars, was, for practical purposes, the lord of the borough; Bury would have benefited greatly from

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[284] Ibid.
[285] Ibid.
[286] Hilton, 3-19.
[287] Bolton, *The medieval English economy*, p. 118.
[288] Hilton, 3-19.
[289] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, p. 179.
[290] Brakelond, Jocelin, *The Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond*, ed. by H. E. Butler (Edinburgh, 1949).
[291] Lobel, *The borough of Bury St. Edmund's*, p. 16.

the patronage of the monastery, especially one so powerful in the earlier Middle Ages. The draw of the saint would have brought pilgrims; who would have brought trade with them. Townspeople were also exempt from the common fine, protected from interference from the sheriff, and sessions of royal justices. The monastery provided the town with hospitals, schools, charity for the poor, and even access to the monastic library. The burgesses appeared to be happy with the benefits the borough received from the abbey until the end of the twelfth century, when they felt that the advantages of the monastery did not outweigh the disadvantages of monastic restrictions in the progress and the future of the town. In Bury St Edmunds, the townspeople demonstrated their feelings during the abbacy of Abbot Hugh (1157-1180). Hugh is described as incompetent, which led to slackness and inefficiency, with his obedientiaries falling into debt, which is what Abbot Samson had to contend with when taking over the abbacy in 1182.[292] Samson managed to avoid conflict with the town by making concessions to the burgesses, something that did not occur later on when the townspeople revolted. However, this came at a price; the monks were not happy about the compromises made.[293] Samson's popularity was enhanced when he founded St Saviour's hospital in c.1185 for the relief of the infirm and the poor, and bought houses in the town to provide lodging for poor scholars.[294] Overall, Samson did well to appease the townspeople, and delay the violent uprisings that were to come later.

The situation at Christ Church, Canterbury, a monastic cathedral staffed by monks, differs from other Benedictine monasteries like St Albans and Bury St Edmunds in that it was a cathedral church in which the archbishop was both the abbot of the monks and the archbishop of the church. Before the middle of the eleventh century, the archbishop was the abbot of the priory as well as fulfilling his role as the archbishop and as such, he lived with the monks. However, as a result of the constant quarrelling between the monks and archbishops, the archbishop became the titular abbot and the prior assumed the functions of abbot. Christ Church maintained its monastery and offices with the revenue from its landed properties. The twelfth century saw the monks of Canterbury consolidating and organising their possessions, and a central financial system began at the priory.[295] The treasurer of the monastery gave certain amounts of money for specific purposes to three obedientiaries, the cellarer, chamberlain, and sacrist. The cellarer could make large demands on the treasury and so changes were made to ensure his power was not abused; in 1216, the office of kitchener was created and although it only lasted for a year, it took over the role of feeding the household, the cellarer's most important function. Furthermore, between 1221-1223, three monks occupied the office of cellarer at different points during the year.[296] In the thirteenth century Prior Henry of Eastry (1285-1331) reformed the financial system of the priory in 1289 by

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[292] Ibid. pp. 118-121.
[293] Gransden, *A History of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, p. 47.
[294] Ibid. pp. 49-50.
[295] Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory,* pp. 4-14.
[296] 'Central Financial System of Christ Church, Canterbury, 1186-1512', *The English Historical Review,* 55 (1940), 353-369 (pp. 353-357).

transferring financial responsibility to monk-wardens, a system that was unique to Christ Church; the financial system worked for one hundred years, despite adverse conditions such as flooding and drought.[297] The estates of Christ Church were held in eight counties, separated into four administrative divisions, with a warden for each, who did not intervene unless it was necessary to do so, supported by proctors, bailiffs, and rent collectors.[298] The simplicity of the accounts of a centralised system would have made the work of auditors and obedientiaries far easier, and makes it more accessible for scholars to look at the solvency and insolvency of the priory.[299]

Peasants on a manor in England held land for a certain rent, this rent would generally be in the form of cash, but would also include labour services. The amount of rent and the services owed would vary from manor to manor, and from holding to holding. Some manorial tenants had more than one holding, and some were entrepreneurial, and built for themselves and their families vast holdings. Their services and dues would largely depend on whether they were free or un-free tenants. If a peasant had free tenure, then he had more freedom, but might have still been required to give labour services to his lord; often these services could be exchanged for a money payment. A villein was an un-free tenant of the manor, and as such would have been constrained by the terms of the manorial court and generally would not have been able to take issues to courts that were outside the abbey's control; a villein was unable to inherit land, or sell or transfer it.[300] He would have paid rent, and would have been required to pay an entry fine when beginning his rent of the land. The types of labour services would have included harvesting, reaping, sowing, and carrying on the lord's demesne; sometimes this would be with food, other times without.[301] Often, the tenants had to bring food and other basic supplies from the manor to the landlord.[302] These tasks could be week-work, or services for the lord at a certain time that he knew he would need help with his land, such as harvest time. Although the manor was managed by an official and in the case of a monastery an obedientiary, a reeve or bailiff was often used to take care of the day-to-day business of the manor. A bailiff could be a professional person and the reeve would tend to be a man chosen from the tenants of the manor, an unpopular position that many of the tenants attempted to get out of. The seneschal was the head of the judicial system in St Albans, responsible to the abbot and convent and representing their interests.[303] Furthermore, as a liberty, the town was outside royal interference.[304] On the large estates held by the monastery two officials managed the legal and

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[297] Ibid. p. 358.

[298] Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory,* pp. 100-101. The counties in which Christ Church held estates were: East Kent, Surrey, Oxford, Buckinghamshire, West Kent, and London.

[299] Ibid. pp. 25-26.

[300] Hilton, 3-19.

[301] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, p. 198.

[302] Edward Miller and John Hatcher, *Medieval England : rural society and economic change, 1086-1348* (London, 1978), p. 199.

[303] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 109-117.

[304] Julia Crick, 'Liberty and Fraternity: Creating and Defending the Liberty of St Albans', in *Expectations of the law in the Middle Ages,* ed. by Anthony Musson (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 91-104 (p. 91).

economic functions. The seneschal, who was responsible for the legal concerns, and the cellarer who would administer the manors that were not assigned to other obedientiaries. The seneschal and obedientiaries were aided by executive officials including the bailiff of the liberty. The bailiff of the liberty would have collected dues, held inquests, arrested malefactors, and served summons and writs. Each manor also had its own serviens; there are no distinctive functions to them and there is no evidence of their stipend. In the fourteenth century, a rent-collector was also on some estates, including at Codicote in 1307 and Barnet in 1314, where he was often elected into this position.[305]

In the extent of 1332, reeves are rarely mentioned, the name in the extent is John, son of the reeve, and although the son of the reeve is mentioned throughout the manuscript, it is always in relation to other people and their land, or land that he once held, so this extent provides us with no information about the reeve, other than that he had a son named John. Laurence the reeve is then mentioned in the court book in the summer of 1247, but only in relation to an entry fine he has to pay.[306] From a thirteenth-century treatise, we can see that the duties of a reeve were to include: ensuring farm servants got up for their work; that the land was well ploughed and cropped; that the lord's sheep were folded to enable them to manure the demesne; that the grain was threshed and stored correctly among other duties. He was then required to account for the proceedings of the manor at the end of the year, and was only meant to stay in the post after that year if he had proven himself to be capable of doing so.[307] By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the position of reeve had become a semi-professional one.[308]

The land that the peasants would normally have held consisted of a house, and their land, which could include a meadow, but would certainly include a plot or more of arable land. The size of the land would vary depending on the manor, but at St Albans in 1332, the average size of one holding of a peasant would have been around half an acre with the richer tenants holding much more, and the poorer much less, whereas the average holding on the manor of Norton was one virgate.[309] The food that peasants produced in these holdings not only had the purpose of sustaining their household, but would also be sold.[310] The peasants responded to the demands of the market and change their farming practices accordingly.[311] The fees that the un-free tenant had to pay would include merchet, which was a fee for permission from the lord for their children to marry; heriot, a death duty that the lord took from the estate of the deceased; and of course the entry fine, which was required to be paid when taking up a holding. At St Albans the entry fine was originally paid

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[305] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 109-117.
[306] BL MS Stowe, 849, f. 3r.
[307] *Walter of Henley and other treatises on estate management and accounting*, ed. Dorothea Oschinsky (Oxford, 1971), pp. 274-281.
[308] Miller and Hatcher, *Medieval England*, pp. 192-194.
[309] *Records of the manor of Norton, p. xli.*
[310] Dyer, *Making a living in the middle ages*, pp. 164-165.
[311] Mark Bailey, *Medieval Suffolk : an economic and social history, 1200-1500* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 204.

entirely in kind; ploughshares, wine, or corn, and in the thirteenth century it was sometimes paid in gold. The average payment was 30s. per virgate of land, and because the pieces of land were so small, so was the entry fine itself.[312] There was one other payment that was required on certain manors, those of St Albans in particular, which was multure. This was a charge to grind corn at the Lord's mill, which was compulsory and very unpopular, with many tenants attempting to use hand mills in their own home instead. [313]

The manor court was a large part of the life of the medieval peasant. The court was there to ensure that the labour services and dues were carried out and also to restrict the movement of the villeins.[314] Nicholas Karn writes that the medieval courts had a wide range of business that can be put into five categories: the management of the status of peasant suitors; the enforcement of attendance at the manor court; the punishment of petty infractions; disputes between peasants; transfer of holdings among the peasants.[315] According to Leon Slota the jurisdiction that the abbots held over the manors served two purposes; the first was to exploit the land effectively, thereby maximising their profits, and the second was not to lose manorial jurisdiction as they often had with the free tenures.[316] Levett suggests that before the fifteenth century it is almost impossible to see which rents are paid by freeholders and which are villeins.[317] The court itself could be held in a variety of places; the lord's hall or the church were common, and less usual are 'in a certain green place over against the house of Hugh de Gardin when it was fine, and in wet weather, by leave of the bailiff in the manor house or in that of one of the tenants' as at Knyttington, Berkshire. At St Albans the court was either held somewhere on the manor or 'under the ash-tree in the middle of the court of the abbey'.[318] The suit of court meant that some tenants, free and un-free, of the manor were required to attend court.[319] The lord himself tended not to appear at the court, sending instead his steward or bailiff.[320] On the St Alban's manors, the cellarer was present for the halimote courts.[321] The jury of the court was comprised of twelve men and it is difficult to discover how they were selected for this position; certainly in Codicote there is no evidence as to why or how the men were chosen. In general, the jurors appear to have been both free and un-free. At Ramsey Abbey the juries include both free and un-free tenants, with some even refusing to serve on the jury

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[312] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, p. 197.
[313] Richard Holt, *The Mills of Medieval England* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 48-53. The issue of the hand mills is discussed on pages 24-27.
[314] Miller and Hatcher, *Medieval England*, p. 195.
[315] Nicholas Karn, 'Introduction', in *Peterborough Medieval Court Rolls,* ed. by Margaret E. Briston; Nicholas Karn (Northampton, 2015), pp. ix-xxxvii (pp. ix, xxi).
[316] Leon A. Slota, 'Law, Land Transfer, and Lordship on the Estates of St. Albans Abbey in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', *Law and History Review,* 6 (1988), 119-138 (p. 135).
[317] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 55-56.
[318] H. S. Bennett, *Life on the English manor* (Cambridge, 1938), p. 203.
[319] Mark Bailey, *The English manor, c.1200-c.1500* (Manchester, 2002), p. 246.
[320] Miller and Hatcher, *Medieval England,* p. 195.
[321] The halimote or hall moot court was a manorial court named after the place it met, the moot hall.

claiming they were free and therefore exempt.[322] At Codicote there were almost always twelve men serving on the jury, even during the years of the Black Death. We also see some family names recurring on the jury, sons probably taking over from their fathers once they had died. This certainly seemed to be the case with the Childemere and Haleward families.[323] Offences seen in court were often holding land without paying rent, allowing animals to trespass, taking too much wood, and not completing labour services as required of them. The court would also discuss the transfer of land held in villeinage and other matters such as villeins wanting to marry, and at St Albans there is also the case of a tenant who wants permission to send his son to school away from the manor.[324] The manorial court rolls have often been used to attempt an estimate of the population size of the manor. In their essay on population history in villages, Poos, Razi and Smith concur that the manorial court rolls when looked at in isolation do not allow for a full demographic reconstruction. However, Razi believes that good court rolls can allow for a 'partial but still wide-ranging demographic inquiry.'[325] Unfortunately, it is only the landholders who are mentioned in the records, which leaves spouses, children, and servants not listed. A multiplier can be used to estimate the entire population, but it can only ever be an estimate.[326]

A large proportion of a peasant's time would have been spent farming. It is impossible to generalise about the farming of England as a whole because the variables in local areas are too high. Christopher Dyer gives these variations as: the portions of enclosed and common land; private or public control of resources; different balances of arable to pasture; cultivation intensity and therefore what land lay fallow and at what times; and the choice of crops and animals.[327] In the west and southeast of England, there were areas of open field with much of the land enclosed in crofts or closes. With the cultivation of land these enclosures increased and a hedge normally surrounded the new land, which was held by a single tenant. After time the cleared land could be subdivided and strips sold, making the land look like an open field. The produce that tended to come out of these areas was grain, dairy, and livestock. In the lowland zone, the area from southern Scotland to south-west England, there were communally controlled fields, which were operating on a two or three-field rotation producing both winter and spring crops. The fields also allowed for animals to graze, mostly sheep and cattle.[328] Common fields, in the lowland zone, were fully co-operative over the entire land of the village.[329] David Roden who has studied the Chilterns in detail

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[322] Bennett, *Life on the English manor*, pp. 210-211.
[323] Simon de Childemere and Hugh Haleward are both on the jury in the November court of 1315, and John, Simon's son and William Hugh's brother are both on the jury in Mary 1348. BL MS Stowe 849, ff. 37r and 74v.
[324] Bennett, *Life on the English manor*, pp. 215-217.
[325] Zvi Razi and Richard M. Smith, 'The Population History of Medieval English Villages: A Debate on the Use of Manor Court Records', in *Medieval society and the manor court,* ed. by Zvi Razi and Richard M. Smith (Oxford, 1996), pp. 298-368 (p. 367).
[326] The population of the manor is discussed later in more detail in chapter 4.
[327] Dyer, *Making a living in the middle ages*, p. 165.
[328] Ibid. pp. 165-166.
[329] Bolton, *The medieval English economy*, pp. 15-16.

gives the farming trends of the area. The Chilterns cover the area from the Thames at Goring to the Hitchin Gap, thus placing Codicote in the North East of the area. Holdings in the Chilterns produced grain and wool, which were taken to London to be sold. In this area strips of land tended to be at most an acre in size and were grouped together into furlongs and hedged fields. The tendency was to leave a section fallow, which was used for the pasture of animals, giving the field much needed manure. On demesne land normally between one third and one half of the land was left fallow, depending on the season and weather.[330] At Codicote in particular, a three-course rotation operated and individual holdings were divided between winter, spring, and fallow. This can be seen at the beginning of the extent where it lays down the three seasons for the demesne land, a pattern that villeins also followed on their own land. Roden states that there probably would have been fixed rotations in the common fields because they would need to be cleared in order for them to be open to common grazing.[331]

In East Anglia, Suffolk laid more of an emphasis on pastoral farming. Mark Bailey gives figures for the land usage in 1300; one per cent was meadowland, five per cent was woodland, ten per cent was heathland, 25 per cent was other pasture, five per cent was marshland and 50 per cent was arable. All of this land provided resources that could be used to make a profit, a theme that was presumably followed on many manors including Codicote. The arable land in Suffolk was in irregular open fields containing parcels of land belonging to different farmers with no permanent barriers between them, instead using stone markers, wooden posts, or narrow access paths to mark the land.[332] Open fields, as seen in the south east of England were farmed either by a group of farmers or individuals and they used the rotation system. Three courses of rotation were the most usual; part of the land would be used for the winter crops, wheat or rye; part of the land was for spring crops, barley, oats, or legumes; the remaining land was left fallow. Later on in the thirteenth century, legumes would be separate from the other crops, and so there were four courses. There could also be two-field system, where half of the land was fallow and the other half to be divided between winter and spring crops.[333]

The large landlords of England included the ecclesiastical landlords, the bishops and the monasteries, and the lay aristocracy, including the earls and the barons. The smaller lay landlords included some barons, knights who held a single manor, and lesser landlords also holding a single manor. The free tenants of lay landlords appeared at the honour court, where they would be dealing with disobedience including failure to do services. Although the landlords claimed to have great

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[330] David Roden, 'Field Systems of the Chiltern Hills and their Environs', in *Studies of field systems in the British Isles,* ed. by Alan R. H. Baker and R. A. Butlin (London, 1973), pp. 325-376 (pp. 328-335).
[331] 'Studies in Chiltern Field Systems', (Ph.D Thesis, University of London, 1965), p. 194.
[332] Bailey, *Medieval Suffolk,* pp. 91-102.
[333] Bolton, *The medieval English economy*, pp. 15-16.

powers, these were always limited by the King.[334] The size of the estate also played a part in how it was managed for example; many larger Benedictine monasteries had vast estates that were spread over many counties whereas smaller secular landlords may only have had one manor. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the monastic landlords increased their holdings by having apt managerial skills and through generous lay benefactors.[335] This certainly happened at St Albans during the tenth century under the rule of the brothers Ælfric and Leofric.[336] At the same time, certainly in the twelfth century, the English knights and gentry of the country were also increasing their holdings. Faith notes that after the Conquest there was more of a move to tie military service to individual landholdings, which was the 'knight's fee'.[337] There were even smaller landholders who came from a military background; although some of these smaller landholders were very successful, there are far fewer records that survive for them, therefore, we do not know as much about them as we do for the greater landlords, especially the Benedictines.[338] The smaller estates tended to have a higher proportion of land in demesne, because the primary purpose of these estates was to ensure the household had enough produce.[339] Miller and Hatcher write of a three-fold structure: small groups of great lay and ecclesiastical landholders, substantial landholders who held land in a number of counties, and small-localised landholders.[340] The larger lay landholders included the earl of Cornwall, who by the end of the thirteenth century held lands in Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Wiltshire, and Dorset, an estate that stretched between Oxfordshire and Middlesex, an estate that covered Northamptonshire, Rutland, Huntingdonshire, and Lincolnshire, and a northern estate at Knaresborough. His sixty demesne manors had a net yield of £3,100 in 1296-97. For these larger landlords, both lay and ecclesiastical, the estate management involved two distinct factors, the first was to manage the individual manors, and the second was to manage the estates as a whole.[341]

The Black Death followed by the Peasants' Revolt was a time of massive change for the peasants and landlords of England.[342] The high death rate caused huge consequences for the manors and estates and more importantly it had an effect on the remaining population, who now wanted lower entry fees, higher wages, and a higher standard of living. The un-free tenants were those who were living on land they did not own, had restricted freedom of movement, who could not buy nor sell land and goods, who could not freely marry, and could not freely leave property to their heirs.[343] It is hardly surprising that these peasants wanted change, however, despite the revolt in 1381, long-

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[334] Dyer, *Making a living in the middle ages*, p. 106.
[335] Miller and Hatcher, *Medieval England*, pp. 171-179.
[336] For more information on Ælfric and Leofric see chapter 1.
[337] Faith, *The English peasantry*, p. 98.
[338] Miller and Hatcher, *Medieval England*, pp. 171-179.
[339] Ibid. pp. 171-198.
[340] Ibid. pp. 177-178.
[341] Ibid. pp. 181-189.
[342] For a more detailed discussion on the Black Death see chapter 4, and for the Peasants' Revolt see chapter 5.
[343] Hilton, *Bond men made free*, p. 55.

term changes took a long time to achieve.[344] One of the smaller changes clearly demonstrates their longing for a better life, and this was their choice of food. Prior to 1349, the peasants were mainly eating rye and oats, which were the cheaper crops. After the Black Death, and the reduction of the population, there was a surplus of these crops. At the same time the lower classes increased the demand for wheat, as the best grain for bread, and barley, the best malting grain, now having the ability to purchase them. Before 1349 in northwest Suffolk, barley was found on around one third of demesne land, which went up to almost two thirds by the mid-fifteenth century.[345] Meat eating also increased following the Black Death. In addition to changes in diet, there were changes in cooking equipment between 1200 and 1500, including the increased use of frying pans and developing kitchens within great institutions.[346]

Unfree peasants were at the mercy of their landlords, whether lay or ecclesiastical. They gave their labour services and dues whilst toiling on their own land to feed their families, which was often difficult enough without outside factors. There was a substantial amount of sub-division of land. In the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century tenants at Codicote were having to farm smaller and smaller plots of land. Famine followed in 1315 and provided even more hardship for the tenants and their families. After the famine came the Black Death, a disease responsible for the death of many tenants on the manor. Although there were few vacancies at Codicote, this allowed the peasants to fight for their freedom, and they did so in 1381 during the Peasants' Revolt, showing their displeasure with their suit of multure by burning down the manor's mill. Despite the Abbot's defeat of the rebellion, the effects were still felt throughout the following century, where freedom of tenants became a more familiar concept. Despite this hardship and lack of freedom, some tenants became prominent members of society, serving on juries and holding substantial amount of land within the manor. Some even managed to leave to go to school, even if they had to pay a fee to do so.

3.2 The Manor of Codicote

Prior to 1086 two estates, Codicote and Oxwick, were combined into one to make the medieval manor of Codicote. In 1002 King Æthelred gave his minister Ælfhelm Codicote and four further manors for him to do with as he wished throughout his life and on his death, which means that originally it was a royal estate. When he did die, Ælfhelm passed the manor of Codicote to the abbot of St Albans.[347] Domesday reports that the value of the manor was £12 in 1066 falling to £6 in 1086. Living there were sixteen villagers, four slaves, three cottagers, one Frenchman, and their

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[344] For a more detailed look at the long-term changes and how they are measured see chapter 4.
[345] Bailey, *Medieval Suffolk*, pp. 205-212.
[346] C. M. Woolgar, *The Culture of Food in England 1200-1500* (London, 2016), p. 238.
[347] Page, *VCH*, II, p. 345; Matthæi Parisiensis, *Chronica Majora*, ed. by Henry Richards Luard, VII vols (London, 1872-80), VI, p. 18.

families. St Giles church in Codicote was dedicated by the Bishop of Rochester in the early twelfth century, still remaining there today.[348] St Giles is listed as being one of the churches that gave a total of £12 to the almoner of St Albans and by 1535 it had become a vicarage worth £7 5s. 8d. per year.[349] In 1262, Abbot Roger of Norton obtained a charter from Henry III granting a market to be held in Codicote on Fridays, and the liberties and customs that came with it. Further to this, in 1272, the same Abbot obtained a charter permitting a fair there for four days per year. These days were to be the vigil and feast of Saint James and the two following days.[350] Following the Dissolution the manor belonged to King Henry VIII until 1544 when he granted it to Robert Langely with the power of redemption. In 1545 the King then gave the manor to John Penne, who was the King's barber surgeon and groom of the Privy Chamber.[351] Within the parish of Codicote was the manor of Sisseverne, and it is known that as early as 1166, William de Sisseverne was a knight who was under the Abbey of St Albans. In 1210, he held one hide and half a virgate of land from the abbot, also owing service to the king. In 1245, Thomas de Sisseverne seems to have had the same fee, and it was then passed on to William in 1258. By 1301-2 Sisseverne had passed to Cheval, and in 1428 the Cheval family were still holding the estate. John Cheval, who held the estate in 1428 had a son, Edward, and he had one child, a daughter, who apparently married John Penne in the early years of the reign of Henry VIII, who is the same Penne who was the King's barber-surgeon and was granted the manor of Codicote.[352]

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[348] Crick, *Charters of St. Albans*, p. 174.
[349] Still, *The abbot and the rule*, pp. 247-248.
[350] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, p. 472.
[351] Page, *VCH*, II, p. 346. HALS DE/Hm/T39
[352] Ibid. IPM 5 and 6 Philip and Mary, part 2, No. 87. Printed in Brigg, William, Herts Genealogist and Antiquary II vols. (St Albans), II, p. 24.

Figure 3. 2   This map shows Codicote in c. 1800.[353] The high street runs from north-west to south-east. St Albans is to the east of the village. St Giles church is in the north-east of the village, on the way towards Stevenage.

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[353] 1:10 560 County Series 1st Edition [TIFF geospatial data], Scale 1:10560, Tiles: hert-02000-1, Updated: 30 November 2010, Historic, Using: EDINA Historic Digimap Service, <http://digimap.edina.ac.uk>, Downloaded: 2017-03-26

The survival of manorial documents is far more likely from larger landlords, particularly monastic, and even more so with the Benedictines. This is because the way they ran their manors was far more controlled and conservative, they also had the space within the abbey grounds for the storage of these documents.[354] The abbey was considered to be a traditional landlord and had a high number of villeins and maintained a strict way of managing their land.[355] At St Albans many of the court rolls were destroyed in 1381; luckily some were copied into court books and survived.[356] According to Foden, some of the court records were kept in the stable in the courtyard of the monastery and that by the time of the revolt in 1381 many of these would have been copied into books. This may have meant that the loss of the court rolls may not have had a serious impact on the abbey's management of the manors.[357] The extent of the manor of Codicote comes from BL Additional MS, 40734, a manuscript purchased by the British Museum in 1923. It is the first of two parts of the manuscript, ff. 1-16 form the extent of the manor and is probably part of a series of such extents of the manors managed by the cellarer of the abbey. The other manors managed by him were Tyttenhanger (Additional MS, 36237), Caldecote (Lansdowne MS, 404), Croxley (Additional MS, 6057), Barnet (Additional MS, 40167), Park (Additional MS, 40625), and Cashio (Additional MS, 40626). The abbot of Bury St Edmunds also made similar extents of his manors in 1357.[358] The second part of the manuscript, ff. 18-30, is a chartulary of St Albans abbey, containing 45 deeds relating to Codicote, also in a fourteenth-century hand. This second part of the manuscript would have formed part of Cotton MS Otho D. iii., a cartulary of the monastery from the fourteenth to fifteenth century. This is thought to be because there is no portion on Codicote in the Cotton manuscript, despite it being arranged topographically.[359] The extent details the valuation of the manor and its lands and tenants, with the tenants in the market and burgage of Codicote being a distinct section. The total values are then given for the manor of Codicote at the end of the extent. The extent of 1332 in Codicote appears to be part of a group of extents made around that time, the others being at Tyttenhanger, Cashio, and Park, which were part of a systematic survey of the Abbey's possessions and an increasing interest in the management of the demesne land in the thirteenth century produced the extents, made at a time when the monastery had heavy financial burdens.[360]

An extent was 'a written description of the manor', by itemising the land use and giving it a value.[361] It is based on a sworn testimony of a group of the tenants from the manor, who were normally un-free. It gives, in detail, what the lord was entitled to receive from his manor in the

[354] Bailey, *The English manor*, p. 20.
[355] *Records of the manor of Norton*, p. xl.
[356] Still, *The abbot and the rule*, p. 6.
[357] *Records of the manor of Norton*, p. xxvii.
[358] Rodney M. Thomson, *The Archives of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds* (Woodbridge, 1980), p. 134.
[359] B. Schofield, 'Leaves of a St Albans Chartulary', *British Museum Quarterly* VII (1923-33), 15.
[360] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 99-100.
[361] Bailey, *The English manor*, p. 24.

form of rents and services due. It also provides us with the name of every tenant on the manor at that time and details of what they held and their legal status.[362] These may have been a way for the cellarer and other obedientiaries to be able to exact their services and possibly had a similar motive for their creation as the 1355 entries in the court books of Barnet and Newland. John Mote, cellarer from 1354-1373 had a period of intense activity, and it appears as though Mote was making a reform of his office in his first few years. The note in the entries from 1355 in the court books of Barnet and Newland states that the cellarer made this book to aid the future cellarers.[363] Foden writes that this was an attempt by Mote to have a 'leaner administration'.[364]

The format of an extent tends to give the values of the capital messuage, demesne arable, meadow, pasture, woodland, mills and their revenue, and other sources of income, followed by money rent from free and villein holdings, labour dues of villeins and the money equivalent, and the revenues of courts.[365] Below is an extract from the Codicote extent that demonstrates the format above with the different sections laid out and documented After the date is given, the extent discussed the manor's garden with fruit and herbs, and then the amount of arable land there is for the three seasons for farming. Then the extent gives details of the meadows, pasture, woodland, pannage, money made from the court and money made from the water mill.[366]

Extent of 1332[367]

[f. 1r]

Redditus et consuetudines de Codicote. Extenta Manerii de Codicote facta Mense Junii Anno Regni Regis Edwardi tercii a conquestu sexto

Per sacramentum Edwardi atte Hathe, Thome atte Pirye, Johannis by Southe, Walteri Ernold, Simonis de Childemere, Willelmi Halewarde, Reginaldi Aleyne, Radulphi Thikeneye, Willelmi Thikeneye, Willelmi le Marchal, Johanni Laurence, Roberti atte Strate, Walteri atte Strate. Qui dicunt quod:

Situs Manerii cum gardino et curtilagio continent iiii. acras. Et fructus in gardino valet per annum ii.s. Et herbagium in gardino valet per annum xii.d.

Summa iii.s.

Terra arabilis.

Prima Seisona.

In Cokrethefeld sunt lv acre terre. Et valet acra per annum. ii.d. ob.

In Eldeburyfeld sunt xxxi acre et dimidium, precio acre ut supra.

In Halywelldene sunt xxii acre et dimidium, precio acre ut supra.

[362] Warren Ortman Ault, *Open-field farming in medieval England : a study of village by-laws* (London, 1972), p. 18.
[363] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 80, 89, 204.
[364] *Records of the manor of Norton,* p. xxvii.
[365] Bailey, *The English manor*, pp. 21-25.
[366] BL Additional MS, 40734, ff. 1r-1v
[367] BL Additional MS, 40734, printed in Levett, pp. 338-68.

In Evorlong sunt ix acra precio acre ut supra.

In Le Westfeld sunt xviii acre precio acre ut supra.

Summa, cxxxv acre et dimidia. Et valent per annum, xxviii.s. ii.d. ob.

Secunda seisona.

In Churchefeld sunt c et xl acre. Et valet acram per annum ii.d. ob.

In Pollefordefeld sunt xxxv acre. Per acram ut supra.

Summa CLXXV acre. Que valent per annum xxxvi.s. v.d. ob.

Tercia seisona.

In Catesdon sunt xiiii acre terre. Et valent acra per annum ii.d. ob.

[f. 1v]

In Brambelhulle sunt xl acre. Et valet acra per annum ut prius.

Tercia Seisona.

In Woodfeld sunt xl acre terre. Et valet acra per annum ut prius.

In Heyhathefeld and Coksate sunt lviii acre et dimidia terre et valet acre ut prius.

Summa acrarum ciii acre et dimidia que valet per annum xxxi.s. ix.d. qu.

Pratum.

In Pademade est unum pratum que valet per annum xv. d. et non plus quia dictum pratum in stagno Molendini. Summa xv.d.

Pastura.

In Whiteheth, Westmade, Brodemade, et Lytelmade sunt iiii acre pasture et valet acra per annum vi.d.

Boscus.

In bosco de Cokereth sunt xiiii acre bosci unde subboscus valet per annum iii.s.

In le Homwod sunt xvi.acre unde subboscus valet per annum xv.d.

In le Conyngger est dimidia acra bosci unde subboscus nullus.

Pannagium.

Pannagium in predictis bosscis cum contigerit esse valet ii.s.

Perquisita Curie.

Fines et perquisitus Curie valent per annum xiii.s iiii.d.

Molendina aquatica.

Sunt ibidem duo Molendina acquatica que dimittuntur pro vi li. argenti.

Et valent ultra reprisam per annum cum perficua piscaria iiii. li.

Summa summarum predictarum ii. li. xix.s. ix.d. qu.

The Codicote extent provides a wealth of information that can be used in this assessment of the manor as one of those managed by the cellarer of St Albans. It can be used to examine the reeve, the market and shops that were there, labour services performed by the tenants, mills, and overall the relationship between the cellarer and St Albans with the tenants of this manor.

This Codicote extent falls into the classical description of a medieval document of this kind regarding the ordering of the items described. The manuscript first gives the title, then the month and the year; '*Redditus et consuetudines de Codicote Extenta Manerii de Codicote facta Mense Junii Anno Regni Regis Edwardi tercii a Conquestu sexto.* (The rents and customs of Codicote. Extent of the manor of Codicote made in the month of June in the sixth year of the reign of King Edward III, therefore, 1332.)'[368] It continues with details of the manor itself, its garden, fruit, and herb garden. This is followed by the arable land, meadow, pasture, woodland, pannage, profit from the manorial court, and the water mills owned by the manor. From here it then gives the tenants, the land they held, how much rent they paid, and the labour services that were required of them for this land. This continues until folio 10 verso, when the extent looks at the tenants in the market of Codicote, '*Tenentes in Foro et Burgagio de Codicote. Et iuxta forum et Burgagio'.* Under this heading are further tenants, the land they rent, the money rent they pay and then the labour services required, the difference being that some of these tenants have shops. This section gives some idea as to the marketplace of Codicote, what was sold, and what state it was in. Finally, from folio 15 verso there are the revenues of the manor, the money from rents, fines, and other payments, giving a grand total of the value of the manor at the end. In 1332 the demesne land was made up of arable land, meadow, pasture, woods, and pannage. In the first session there is a total of 135 acres in five areas, in the second session there are 75 acres in two areas, and in the third season there are 157 and a half acres in five areas. There is one meadow in Pademade, four acres of pasture in four places, and 30.5 of woodland, some of which was used for pannage.[369] Therefore, in the first session the percentage of land that was arable was 80, the percentage of pasture was two and the percentage of woodland was 18. The majority of the tenants held arable land, which seems to have been either an acre or half an acre, with some tenants only holding one piece and others holding multiple acres. Tenants also held messuages, which would come with curtilage and land for the tenant to use.

The Halimote records are found in BL MS Stowe 849, which records these courts from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. The Halimotes at the manor of Codicote were held twice a year. The cellarer held them every six months, and by examining at the days of the court rolls for all the manors we can see where the cellarer was throughout the year.[370] In the court rolls from 1349 and

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[368] BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 1r
[369] BL Additional MS, 40734, ff. 1r-1v, *Item sunt vii. schope sub uno tecto discooperte et ruinose. Pro una causa deficientium tenentum.* f. 15r.
[370] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, p. 136.

1383, and others, the court is referred to as being *sub fraxino*, so we know that the manor court was often then held under the ash tree, in St Albans.[371] In June 1349, the court held *sub fraxino* was separate from the other Halimote that had taken place just a month before in May. This was at a time when the death rate from the Black Death was at its highest on the manors of St Albans, including Codicote, where 59 tenants had died out of a total of around 600 in the 6-8 months prior to the court.[372] According to Levett the court under the ash tree tended to be more important and dealt with difficult cases; it was also used for many types of meetings including judicial assemblies, as well as being the court for freeholders. A case might begin in the manor court and move to St Albans before returning once again to the manor court, a process seen as an imitation of one of the royal processes initiated by writ.[373] In his work on the manor court Razi writes that it is difficult to see how landlords would have maintained their manor courts without their free tenants being involved. In order to attract free tenants the abbots of St Albans used the popularity of the royal courts by introducing procedures from such courts. Not only this but Razi argues that the court rolls may have been used in a similar manner to entice free tenants by providing 'better legal services'.[374]

3.3 Land Make-up and Sub-division

The subdivision of the land in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries was a common feature in England. The fragmentation is thought to have been caused by an increasing population, putting pressure on the land. This meant that there were peasants living on smaller and smaller pieces of land that could barely sustain themselves and their families.[375] From the eleventh to the fourteenth century there is evidence of a rising population in England and therefore reclamation of land. Postan writes that there was a land hunger among the peasants and there were high entry fines and tallages. There were also many landless men and the number was increasing. On the estates that Postan has studied, those of the abbots of Glastonbury and Bury St Edmunds, the bishops of Winchester, priors of Christ Church, Canterbury, and the abbots of Ramsey, he has found that there were men who were 'all-but-landless'. These landless men were one third of the population, and the average holding for a family on these estates was two acres or less. It was not only men who were affected, but also women; if they did not have a dowry then they could be landless spinsters. Therefore, it is clear that with such small amounts of land, the peasants would have severe problems in years of bad harvests, particularly consecutive years. In the first quarter of the

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[371] Ibid. p. 120. *Curia tenta sub fraxino apud Sanctum Albanum die Sabbati proximo festum Sancti Albani anno supradicto*. BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 76v.
[372] Ibid. p. 249.
[373] Ibid. pp. 128, 137.
[374] Zvi Razi and Richard Michael Smith, *Medieval society and the manor court* (Oxford, 1996), p. 46.
[375] Edwin Brezette DeWindt, *Land and people in Holywell-cum-Needingworth. Structures of tenure and patterns of social organisation in an East Midland village, 1252-1457* (Toronto, 1972), p. 41.

fourteenth century Postan found that the population ceased to expand, and the century instead shows a decline, meaning more land for fewer people.[376]

The land in Codicote had already been sub-divided into small areas by the thirteenth century, and this was a cause of friction on the manor. According to Levett, and the work she has completed on the court books of the manors of St Albans, a particular cause of tension on the St Albans manors was the lack of the use of grazing on the Downs, an area that would have been ideal for sheep farming.[377] On the St Albans manors the holdings were being divided, and this process was happening faster during 1315-1325. From the first quarter of the fourteenth century half virgate and ferlings of land were being divided between many tenants.[378] In the extent, Roger Dryvere's entry demonstrates this division of land; he held half a virgate except for eleven and a half acres that were held by eleven tenants.[379]

In 1315 Codicote and the rest of the country suffered a famine. On all the manors belonging to St Albans there were land surrenders during the famine years, but these surrenders do not appear to have been permanent, by 1332 there were only a few vacancies left in the market place. In fact, some people did very well during this time, including Simon de Childemere, who took over the land from Alice Thurberne.[380] Later on in the fourteenth century the Black Death visited the manor, Levett has studied the Black Death on the manors in detail and her conclusion is that the plague did not have a devastating effect on them. The halimote records clearly show the initial impact, the folios recording the May 1349 court showing many deaths among the landholders. Heriot continued to be paid, which in some cases was a few pence, but was also as high as 6s. The records show a number of deaths, but the officials were still able to maintain these courts and documents.[381] This is despite the loss of many of the monks and the many deaths on the manor itself. Therefore, the effects of the Black Death were probably longer lasting. In October of the same year the deaths recorded in the halimote continue but there are far fewer and there is also a licence to marry.[382] These records show that Codicote did suffer a dramatic numbers of deaths during the Black Death years, but officials also maintained records well and followed the protocols of the previous courts. This demonstrates that despite the loss of life on both the manor and among the monks, they

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[376] M. M. Postan, *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe volume I : The Agrarian life of the Middle Ages*, 8 vols (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 563-565.

[377] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, p. 179.

[378] Levett describes a ferling as the most common tenement. Ibid. p. 200.

[379] *Rogerus le Dryvere tenet dimidiam virgatam terre quam Johannes le Dryvere tenuit exceptis xi. acris et dimidia terre. Quas undecim tenentes tenent.* BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 5v

[380] *Alicia Thurberne reddit sursum in manus domini unam dimidiam acram terre cum haiis et aliis pertinentiis sicut iacet in Thurberncroft. Et Simon de Childemere dat domino xii. d. pro dicta terra cum pertinentiis tenenda sibi et suis faciendo inde servicia debita et consueta.* BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 40r.

[381] BL Stowe MS, 849, ff. 75v-76v.

[382] BL Stowe MS, 849, ff. 77r-77v. For more detailed information on the impact of the Black Death on the manor of Codicote and other manors belonging to St Albans, see Chapter 4.

preserved their authority over the manors, still demanding heriot, merchet, and control over their tenants. Very few holdings were left vacant for a long period of time throughout the fourteenth century on the manor of Codicote, even after 1349 most were taken over by family, neighbours, or kin.[383]

3.4 Social Structure on the Manor

The records of the manor can give us some insight into the tenants' daily lives, how much land they held, and what services and dues they were required to give to their lord. They can also tell us about the social structure on the manor. We can use the 1332 Halimote court jury of that summer to see what kind of men were sitting on the jury and what land they held in the extent of 1332. The twelve men on this jury were Walter Arnold, Ralph de Thikkeney, Roger Blostine, John Salecok, William Marshal, John Laurence, Richard le Dryvere, Adam le Bedell, William Haleward, Simon de Childemere, Reginald Aleyn, and John Boveyere.[384] Of these twelve men ten of them are mentioned in the extent and hold land. The majority of these ten had extensive lands and as such rendered a large amount of rents and services. Those who held more include John Salecok who held one mesuage building and half a virgate of land, two crofts, and half a rood of a meadow.[385] Ralph de Thikkeney held half a virgate of land, one cotland, one croft, and eight and a half acres of land.[386] In contrast, Adam le Bedell only held one messuage and one ferling of land, and John Boveyere held one ferling of land also.[387] Therefore, there is some variation of wealth among those jurymen, but they did all hold land. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing how these men were elected. The family names on the juries are repeated throughout the halimote records, indicating that these men were among the higher ranks of the society in Codicote, and that their sons took over their positions on the jury, so the positions could be hereditary as opposed to elected. The economic status of tenants was clearly a factor when deciding jurors at Codicote and in turn will have given them a higher social status. Simon de Childemere, who served on the jury multiple times, appears frequently in the halimote records and so he can be followed throughout the years to see what land he held, when he was on the jury, and what can be seen of his family. Being on the

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[383] Ian Kershaw, 'The Great Famine and Agrarian Crisis in England 1315-1322', *Past and Present,* 59 (1973), 3-50 (p. 40). Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 253-294.

[384] BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 56v.

[385] *Johanes Salecok dictus be Southe tenet unum mesuagium edificatum et dimidiam virgatam terre que fuerunt Matillidis Salerok. Et reddit inde per annum [f. 2r] ad liberum redditus. xvi.d. ad festa Natalis domini.* BL Additional MS, 40734, ff. 1v-2r.

[386] *Radulphus de Thykeney tenet dimidiam virgate terre et reddit inde per annum ad liberum redditum xiii. s. viii. d. et ad auxilium vicecomitis ii. d.* BL Additional MS, 40734, ff. 8r-8v.

[387] *Simon Childemere tenet unam ferlingata terre et reddit inde per annum ad liberum redditum viii. d. et ad firmam coquine iiii. d. et ad auxilium vicecomitis. i. d. qu. et ad averagio vii. d. et arabit vii. acras et dimidia. Et herciabit si habeat equum per unam diem. et debet xlii. opera, et i. love, unam gallinam et xv. ova. Falcabit et levabit fenum. Et purgabit filum aque. Et ad quamlibet precariam i. hominem. Et metet tres acras ad cibum proprium et cariabit blada domini si habeat carectam.* BL Additional MS, 40734, ff. 9r and 14v.

juries would have helped Simon as a juror would have had an influence in the manor court and therefore had significant power.[388] He appears to hold a substantial amount of land and so was a prominent member of society. From the extent we can see what his holdings were in 1332 and the services and dues he had to pay. Simon is mentioned at the very start of the extent as being one of the villagers required to swear by oath that what is in the extent is correct. His holdings are then mentioned as detailed in table one below.

Land Held	Service Due	Amount
One ferling of land	Free Rents	8d.
	Farm Kitchen	4d.
	Sheriff's Aid	1 1/4 d.
	Carrying Services	7d.
	Ploughing	7 1/2 acres
	Harrowing	One day
	Works	42
	Loveloaf	One
	Hens	One
	Eggs	15
	Mowing	
	Lifting Hay	
	Clearing Water (Ditch)	
	To each boon worker	One man
	Reaping	3 acres with meals
	Carrying the lord's corn	
One acre of land in Vireboldescroft and Asshfeld	Free Rents	3d.
	Harvest Works	1/2 acre without meals
One acre and one rood in Ayrichesfeld and Asshfeld	Per year	5d.

Table 3. 1   This table shows the holdings of Simon de Childemere in 1332.[389] Childemere was an influential man in Codicote, holding a large amount of land and appearing on many juries in the halimote court.

Therefore, in 1332 in total Simon de Childemere held one ferling, two acres, and one rood of land. The ferling appears to have been the most valuable, with the long list of services and dues it came with. The total money Simon would have been paying per year for all of this land was $28^{1/4}$ d., of which 7d. was paid presumably to commute the carrying service. His services covered 11 acres of land, but also other services owed that were not given an acreage. Some of these services had meals

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[388] Bailey, *The English manor*, p. 176.
[389] A furlong is a subdivision of open arable fields. Ibid. p. 243. A boon-worker is providing the labour services due on the land held.

included, but others did not. He also had to pay rent in kind, which was one hen and 15 eggs every year.[390] Although he appears to have been a prominent member of society in Codicote, he was certainly not the richest with other tenants holding far more land. Simon de Childemere and his family are hard to miss in both the extent and the Halimote records as they appear so often. We come across Simon himself in the summer Halimote of 1305, which took place in July. At this court, he paid the fine to take over all the land with appurtenances that his father held before his death; unfortunately the record does not tell us how much land it is. He said that he will hold himself in villeinage and gives the services, dues, and customs required of him to the lord from that point on. For this land and for a licence to marry he is to pay 5s., an amount, which is pledged by William atte Felde, Hugh Coke, and John by South.[391] This indicates that he was an un-free tenant of the manor. Simon comes up again in 1315, and this time, 10 years later, he is on the jury at the halimote court on the Monday after the feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle, which is on 30 November.[392] At the same court the land is transferred from Thomas le Dryvere to Simon. Thomas's land is in two parts, one of which is said to be situated between Heyden and land held by Simon. Simon gives the Lord 12d. for the land, thereby making his own holding bigger and gaining a second holding elsewhere.[393] During 1315, Alice Thurberne gave up her land and Simon paid the lord an entry fine for this land.[394] In 1316, the court held in June had Simon serving on the jury again and in the second court of the year, Alice Thurberne gave Simon her land without permission from the Lord, for which he was required to pay 12d.[395] These land surrenders might have a connection to the famine, and it may be that the tenants could not keep up their land.[396] Margaret also had land that was situated next to Simon's and she gave it up to the Lord and Simon paid 12d. for the land in the same court.[397] His final business transaction for this court was with Thomas le Dryvere, who gave up half an acre to the Lord's hand, which again is next to Simon's, for this land,

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[390] *Unam gallinam et xv. Ova.* BL Additional MS, 40734, ff. 13r.

[391] *Simon de Childemere venit et gersummavit totam terram cum pertinentiis unde pater eius obiit seisitus tenendam sibi et suis in villenagio pro voluntate domini faciendo inde servicia debita et consueta nec faciet vastum. Et dat domino pro gersumma et pro licencia se maritandi v s. plegii Willelmus atte Felde, Hugh Cok et Iohannes bi Southen.* BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 27r.

[392] BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 37r.

[393] *Thomas le Dryvere reddit sursum in manus domini unam rodam terre et dimidiam cum pertinenciis in le Naysfeld' in duas partes quarum una pars iacet inter Heydene et terram Simonis Childemere: et alia pars iacet inter terram Iohannis Haukyn ex utraque parte. Et Simon Childemere dat domino xii d. pro dictis tribus rodis terre cum pertinenciis tenendo sibi et suis faciendo inde servicia debita et consueta.* BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 38r.

[394] *Alicia Thurberne et Emma Thurberne reddiderunt sursum in manus domini unam acram terre iacentem in Thurbernescroft iuxta terram Philippi Thikeneye cum una viva haya iuxta eandem terram et ad caput iuxta stratam et cum omnibus aliis pertinentiis. Et Simon de Childmere dat domino. xii d. pro dicta acra terre cum pertinentiis tenendo sibi et suis faciendo inde servicia debita et consueta.* BL Stowe MS, 849, f.38v.

[395] *Item dicunt quod Alicia Thourberne dimisit terram Simoni de Childemere sine licencia domini. Ideo in misericordia xii d.* BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 40r.

[396] For more information on the famine and its effects at Codicote see chapter 4.

[397] *Margareta Haukin reddit sursum in manus domini unam rodam terre sicut iacet in duas partes in le Aysfeld inter terram Simonis de Childemere ex utraque parte. Et Simon de Childemere dat domino xii d. pro dicta roda terre sicut iacet tenendi sibi et suis faciendo inde servicia debita et consueta.* BL Stowe MS, 849, f.40v.

Simon gave the Lord another 12d.[398] From the years 1317 to 1331, Simon appeared on the jury only and did not increase his holdings; this is probably due to the famine during this time. Despite this, he had built up a substantial amount of land in the years preceding the famine, and would have been able to feed his family far better than others who only had half virgate holdings.[399] In 1331, Simon is mentioned but in regards to disputes between him and other tenants, some of which he was found to be in the wrong, others he was found to be right.[400] From 1332 to 1348 he was on the jury, but again did not seek to increase his holdings. In 1348, Simon's son John paid 2s. for a licence to marry, but the woman he intended to marry was not named.[401] This would mean that the fee of 2s. at Codicote was the common fee for a license to marry at that time. In 1349, Simon is on one jury and his son is on the other and this is the last time we hear about Simon who probably died sometime between 1349 and 1350. Other Childemeres served on future juries, William, John, Hugh, and Walter, but he does not. There is no mention of his death specifically in the Halimote, and because of the timing of his death, it could have either been natural causes, or more likely, the Black Death, which would explain why it is not recorded.[402]

For women, holding land gave them power over their own lives and status within the community. They appear frequently in the halimotes and are no stranger to attending court or paying fines. It is therefore no surprise that they would need to be aware of the laws surrounding the land they held.[403] However, for poor women, holding land on a manor would have been very difficult, or even impossible. Childcare and farming were very time consuming for women and so poor widows tended to surrender their land when they were unable to hire the labour required.[404] Eleanor Blostine is one of the few women who held land in 1332 on the manor of Codicote. She held a cotland, which used to be held by Maurice Blostine, presumably her husband. She paid in sheriff's aid half a penny. She was also required to give labour services including, lifting hay, reaping and lifting crop, and to clear the ditch.[405] Margaret Palmere was another woman who held land; she held three roods of land that were once in the hands of Robert le Coliere. Her land was in Ayrichesfelde and Thikkeney and she paid 3d. to free rents. Margaret appears to have been a fairly

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[398] *Thomas le Dryvere reddit sursum in manus domini unam dimidiam acram terre sicut iacet in Arichesfeld inter tenementum Iohannis Haukin et tenementum Simonis Childemere. Et Simon Childemere dat domino xii d. pro dicta dimidia acra terre cum pertinentiis tenendi sibi et suis faciendo inde servicia debita et consueta.* MS Stowe 849, f. 40v.

[399] For a detailed discussion of the famine see chapter 4.

[400] BL Stowe MS, 849, ff. 54v-55v.

[401] *Iohannes filii Simonis de Childemere habeat licenciam se maritandi. Et dat ii s. etc.* MS Stowe 849, f.73r.

[402] BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 73v.

[403] Sue Sheridan Walker, *Wife and widow in medieval England* (Michigan, 1993), p. 82.

[404] Elaine Clark, 'The Custody of Children in English Manor Courts', *1985*, 3 (1985), 333-348 (p. 338).

[405] *Alienora Blostine tenet i. cotlonde quod fuit Mauricii Blostine. Et reddit ad auxilium vicecomitis ad tercium terminum ob. Et debet xlii opera et love, et levabit fenum cum uno homine. Et purgabit filum aque. Et inveniet ad quamlibet precariam i. homines. Et metet tres acras ad cibum proprium et ligabit easdem.* BL Additional MS, 40734 ff. 5v

wealthy woman because she also had another three roods for which she paid $1^{1/2}$d., fifteen and a half acres for $10^{1/4}$d. plus three bushels of sprig, two parcels of land for half a penny, and a toft, a grove and a croft for which she paid 23d.[406] In most cases women would have held land because they had inherited it or as dower. If the woman decided to remarry, her husband had a life interest in her land.[407] Women also tended to pass on their land to their daughters when they died, just as fathers had more of a tendency to pass land to their sons.[408]

Merchet was the payment given to the lord for a tenant's child to have permission to marry, something which is found frequently in the Halimote records of St Albans. Eleanor Searle states that the fee is about property; not girls or marriage, this is because the steward was to ask whether the un-free tenant's daughter has married without permission and what goods the father has given with her, linking property to merchet.[409] At Codicote merchet appears to have been a straightforward matter, the payment seems to have been based on the father's land and so was more based on the fee that was required rather than property. However, it can be difficult to follow a family tree and see who is responsible for paying merchet because daughter's would often keep their father's surnames. In addition to this the surnames on the manors would be related to an occupation, name, place, or nickname, and so there could be multiples of one name.[410] Bailey writes that this payment was typically a few shillings but it was not a fixed amount, and was charged to the higher ranked villeins, if the landless women were charged, it would have only been charged a few pence.[411] In 1316 Hugh de Cokreth procured a licence to marry Agnes Haleward. They gave the Lord 2s.[412] In 1319 John Salecok applied for a marriage licence for his daughter Margaret to marry John Capere of Sandridge, and gave 18d.[413] A John Cuppere is mentioned in the extent of 1332 as having a croft in the market place; it is possible that this is the same man.[414]

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[406] *Margareta Palmere tenet tres rodas terre que fuerunt Robertus le Coliere in Ayrichesfelde et Thikkeney et reddit inde per annum iii. d. ad liberum redditum. Eadem Margareta tenet medietatem iii. rodas terre in Ayrichesfelde de terre durant quam dictus Walterus tenuit et reddit inde per annum i. d. ob. et medietatem iiii. acras terre in Vireboldescroft que quondam fuerunt Henricus Blostine quas dictus Walterus tenuit et reddit inde per annum ix. d. qu. et medietatem ii. acrarum et iii. rodas in Longecroft.* BL Additional MS, 40734 ff.6v-7r

[407] Slota, The Village Land Market , p. 110.

[408] Ibid. p. 158.

[409] Eleanor Searle, 'Seigneurial Control of Women's Marriage: The Antecedents and Function of Merchet in England', *Past and Present,* 83 (1979), 3-43 (p. 20).

[410] *Records of the manor of Norton*, p. lvii.

[411] Bailey, *The English manor*, p. 32.

[412] *Hugh de Cokreth habeat licenciam se maritandi cum Agnete Haleward. Et dant domino ii s. plegii Hugh Haleward.* BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 39v.

[413] *Rogerus Ernold venit post mortem Rogeri Ernold prius sui et gersummavit totum tenementum cum pertinentiis quod fuit dicti Rogeri patris sui die quo obiit tenendi sibi et suis faciendo inde servicia debita et consueta nec faciet vastum. Et dat domino pro gersumma et pro licencia maritandi viii s. Iohannes Salecok habeat licenciam maritandi Margareta filiam suam eundi Iohanni Capere de Sandridge et dat xviii d.* BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 42r.

[414] *Johannes Cuppere tenet unam croftam in Foro. Et reddit inde per annum ad liberum vi d.* BL Additional MS 40734, f. 13v.

Again in 1319, we see charges as high as 8s. for Roger Ernold.[415] In 1348 John de Childemere paid 2s. for his son to have a license to be married. In 1347 William Haleward also paid 2s. for his son's license to marry. Haleward is again another who is prominent within society, his family name comes up many times in the halimotes and features on the juries.[416] Lower amounts were paid to the lord in 1319 for the same license, two men, Walter Osbern and Thomas le Coweherd paid 6d. Interestingly, Thomas le Coweherd paid for his license after marrying and paid the same amount as Osbern. This demonstrates that the merchet charged depending on the person, and those with more land and a higher income would have paid more, also that the lord did not enforce a high penalty on those who were married before gaining a licence to do so. Thomas le Coweherde also appears in a record in 1316; this court records that Edward le Coweherde, presumably Thomas's father, died, and Thomas took over the tenement, paying the lord 2s. to do so.[417] Some people had a guarantor for their merchet, to make sure that they paid it. The name of the guarantor was almost always a person of higher standing within the community, who was serving on the jury, and who held a substantial amount of land. In the court of September 1316 Hugh de Cokereth secured a licence to marry Agnes Halward, for payment of 2s. and the guarantor was Hugh Halward, presumably her father.[418] These records show that the amounts differed greatly even within the same court during the same year and although the amount given for these licences varies, they are a constant feature of the courts. Higher payments are made in shillings; a particularly high payment was for eight shillings. Lower payments were in pence, normally six pence. Those paying the higher amounts were tenants such as Hugh de Cokrethe and Roger Ernold. Roger Ernold's father was a prominent member of society at Codicote, having served on the jury of the halimotes and Roger inherited his father's lands on his death, which is possibly why they had a higher payments. The bride or groom's father, or the groom himself paid the merchet. Therefore, the merchet charged on the manor of Codicote very much varied depending on the person being charged for the license; there was no standard charge to gain a license to marry and it ranged from 6d. to 8s. It was in the best interests of the lord to levy a charge that the villein could pay if they wanted to marry because it would probably lead to children being born and therefore more tenants to work the land and inevitably pay rents and carry out services.

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[415] *Rogerus Ernold venit post mortem Rogeri Ernold patris sui et gersummavit totum tenementum cum pertinentiis quod fuit dicti Rogeri patris sui die quo obiit tenendi sibi et suis faciendo inde servicia debita et consueta nec faciet vastum. Et dat domino pro gersumma et pro licencia se maritandi viii. s.* BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 42r.

[416] *Willelmus Haleward habeat licenciam maritandi Amabil filii suam. Et dat de fine ii. s.*
Walterus Osbern fecit finem cum domino pro licencia se maritandi. Et dat vi. d.
Iurati dicunt quod Thomas le Coweherd maritandi se sine licencia domini. Et postea venit et finem et dat vi. d. BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 42v.

[417] *Thomas le Cowherd venit post mortem Edwardi le Cowherde frius sui et gersummabit totum tenementum cum pertinentiis quod fuit dicti Edwardi die quo obiit tenendi sibi et suis faciendo inde servicia debita et consueta nec faciet vastum. Et dat domino ii. s. plegii Hugo Haleward et Reginaldus Kynne.* BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 40r.

[418] Hugh de Cokreth habeat licenciam se maritandi cum Agnes Haleward. Et dant domino ii. s. plegii Hugh Haleward. BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 39v.

The halimotes could impose a fine that was to be paid when a villein wanted to send their son to school, similar to merchet when a villein was to get married. The fine paid by the parents was usually six pence or a shilling; at most it would have been 5s. Levett writes that the fine was more of a registration so that the lord knew what had happened to the villein boys and where they had gone.[419] These fees at St Albans were low compared to other manors at this time, Nicholas Orme writes that some lords may not have approved of the education of villeins, or that they were just looking to exploit the situation. On the manor of Wolston in Warwickshire, owned by the Turvill family between 3s. 4d. and 13s. 4d. was charged from 1361 to 1371 a sum that Orme thinks may have also bought their freedom to take holy orders.[420] Orme writes that the restrictions on the villeins in terms of their education was not intended to keep them illiterate, but was because to go to school often meant to become a member of the clergy, or to take up a trade or other profession, meaning the loss of an un-free tenant and the services he would owe.[421] In the Boroughbury manor court rolls, a manor belonging to Peterborough Abbey, on 29 April 1335 the court discusses William Gere, who gave the lord 3s. 4d. for Roger his son to be educated. There was no note giving specific limitations or instructions regarding his education.[422] Sometimes there was a note left in the records that a boy may go to the clerical schools but may not take orders. At Hexton, a boy could go to school if he was not the eldest son, and he was not to take the order of a sub-deacon, and therefore begin entry into holy orders, without special permission. Two boys had the licence in the court at Hexton, 22 Edward III, and they were allowed to choose their school and the date at which they were to leave to attend. For this, each boy was to pay one shilling. At Norton, nine boys received permission to attend school between 1331 and 1333, something Levett connects to the revival of the Almonry School in 1328.[423] On other manors we can see the fees and conditions of the boys attendance of school, in 1314 the Prior of St Germans in Cornwall manumitted two boys in order that they could be tonsured and study, with a limit of three years. Some manors allowed complete freedom, which happened in 1333 at Gloucester Abbey where the cellarer and lord of the manor of Coln Rogers gave full manumission to Walter son of Henry atte Yate so that he can learn and then proceed to holy orders; however, he was to be made servile again if he ever returned to manual labour. On the manor of Chevington, belonging to Bury St Edmunds, there were no payments required for schooling, apprenticeships, or to enter holy orders.[424] By the fifteenth century the process of procuring a licence was happening less and less and eventually disappeared on some manors, allowing the boys to attend school freely, perhaps demonstrating greater peasant freedoms. Some have attributed this to the Statute of Apprentices of 1406 that stated that any man may put any son or daughter to learn letters, but Orme believes that this is more likely not to apply

[419] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 235, 246.
[420] Nicholas Orme, *English schools in the Middle Ages* (London, 1973), p. 51.
[421] Ibid. p. 50.
[422] Margaret E. Briston and Nicholas Karn, *Peterborough medieval court rolls* (Northampton, v. 48, 2015), p. 143.
[423] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 235, 246.
[424] Mark Bailey, *The decline of serfdom in late medieval England : from bondage to freedom* (Woodbridge, 2014), p. 181.

to the villeins and that the landlords would not have allowed the control of their villeins to disappear so easily. Permission can be seen to be sought after 1406, when in 1410 two boys left the manor of Barton in Bedfordshire to attend school and were fined for doing so. However, as the fifteenth century went on, the need to gain permission was no longer required.[425] Those un-free students may have had a more difficult time continuing their education than their free counterparts because to be un-free was seen as not being compatible with the life studying at a university. All Souls' College required its students to be free before attending in their statutes of 1443, but there were ways around this. There is evidence that some were acquiring letters of manumission in order that they might continue to university, Robert of Heighington had such a letter from the Bishop of Durham in 1312. Students also sometimes had to defend themselves against accusations of being un-free; in 1343 Richard Stoketon, a student at Oxford, had to prove that he was free by having letters sent to him by the Prior of Durham stating that his father was a freeman.[426]

At Codicote, in the court of January 1331, John, the son of Hugh Haleward, was given a licence to attend clerical school, for the payment of six capons. There is no note to prevent him from taking orders written, although this may have been verbally stated to him instead.[427] We know quite a lot about the Haleward family from the halimote records. John's father, Hugh was one of at least two brothers, the other called William. Presumably Hugh was the elder because he is the heir to their father's holdings. Their father, Roger, died in late 1310 or early 1311 leaving Hugh to pay the fine of 13s. 4d. for all of Roger's holdings and for a licence to marry.[428] Hugh first appears on the jury in the halimote court of December 1315 and is found on the court frequently between that time and his death, as was his brother William.[429] In 1332, according to the extent, Hugh held one and a half furlongs of land within the market of Codicote, and paid for it with money rent, rent in kind, and of course labour services.[430] Throughout the halimote records Hugh was adding to his holdings, but not as well as his brother William did, who, despite being the younger of the two managed to obtain more land.[431] In the court of the summer of 1347 John Haleward, Hugh's son, and

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[425] Orme, *English schools*, p. 52.

[426] Alan B. Cobban, *English university life in the Middle Ages* (London, 1999), p. 18.

[427] *Iohannes filii Hugonis Haleward habeat licenciam eundi ad scolas clericatus. Et dat pro licencia de fine vi. caponis.* BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 55r.

[428] *Hugh filius et heres Rogeri Haleward venit et gersummavit totum tenementum cum pertinentiis quod dictus Rogerus pater eius tenuit die quo obiit tenendi sibi et suis in villenagio pro voluntate domini faciendo inde servicia, debita, et consueta. Et dat domino pro gersumma et pro licencia se maritandi xiii s. iiii d. plegii Henrici Cokreth et Rogerus Ernold.* MS Stowe 849, p. 65

[429] BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 37r

[430] *Hugo Haleward tenet unam ferlingatam terre et reddit inde per annum ad liberum redditum xii. d. ad auxilium vicecomitis i. d. qu. ad firmam coquine viii. d. per annum ad averagio iii. d. ob. et arabit tres acras et tres rodas et herciabit si habeat equum per dimidie diem, et debet xxi. opera et i. love. Dabit unam gallinam et xv. ova. Falcabit et levabit fenum. Et ad quamlibet Bederepen unum hominem. Et metet et ligabit unam acram et dimidi ad cibum proprium. Et cariabit blada pro dimidia die cum carecta si habeat et purgabit filum aque. Idem Hugo tenet dimidiam ferlingatam terre et reddit inde per annum ad liberum redditum ii. s. x. d. et ad auxilium vicecomitis ad tercium terminum. ob. et ad quamlibet precariam unum hominem.* BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 10v.

[431] Roden, p. 168.

presumably the same John who attended school sixteen years previously is required to pay the fine for the land that was Hugh's. Therefore, we can assume that Hugh died in the first half of 1346.[432] His brother William died not long after him, in 1349, presumably from the Black Death.[433] In the court of November 1347 John Haleward returned to the lord one piece of land with appurtenances and granted that land to John le Haster and Agnes, his wife, for which they gave 2s.[434] In May of the following year, 1348, John was in the records again, this time he has had his land seized from him and the two acres and three roods have been returned to the lord, because John had held them beyond his term.[435] Despite this, John is found on the jury of the halimote of October 1349, he is then on the jury again in 1350 and numerous times thereafter. His last appearance was on the jury of the October halimote in 1355, with no notice of his death mentioned anywhere in the halimote records.[436] Other than serving on the jury, there is no knowledge of what John did with his education and whether or not he joined the clergy after he gave up the lands and had others seized from him.

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[432] *Iohannes Haleward habuit recordum Rotuli de fine facto pro terris et tenementum sibi accidentibus post mortem Hugonis Haleward patris sui et recessit quietus etc.* BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 72r.

[433] BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 76r.

[434] *Iohannes Haleward reddit sursum in manus domini unam peciam terre cum pertinentiis sicut iacet in Heyden inter terram Iohannis Poleyne et terram Simonis Childemere. Et dominus concessit et tradidit dictam peciam terre cum pertinentiis Iohanni le Haster et Agneti uxori sue tenendi eisdem et heredibus eorum domini in villenagio et ad voluntatem domini per servicia inde debita et consueta. Et dant de fine et pro ingresso ii. s. Et fecit fidelitatem etc.* BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 74v.

[435] *Pro enim capere in manus domini duas acras et tres roda terre quas Iohannes Haleward tenet ultra terminum et quod ballivus respondeat de exitus.* MS Stowe 849, f. 74v.

[436] BL Stowe MS, 849, ff. 76v-86v.

Haleward Family Tree
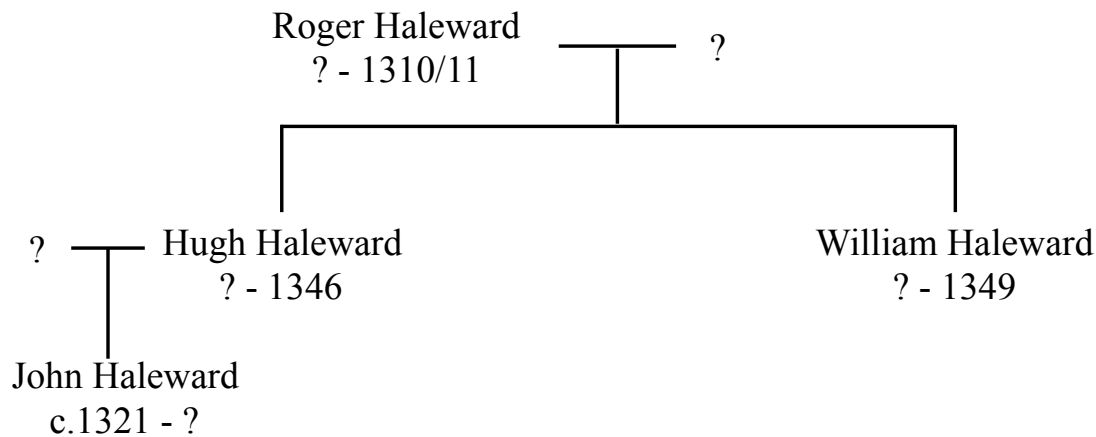
Figure 3. 3   This figure shows the Haleward family tree. Many dates and names are unknown from the extent and halimote records. However, we can still see that it is likely that William Haleward died from the Black Death.

Other payments found in the Halimotes include heriot and the sheriff's aid. In many of the entries tenants are required to comply with suit and heriot, for example: *Alicia Thorughberne tenet unum mesuagium quod fuit Emme Thorughberne pro ii d. per annum debet sectam et heriett.*[437] In this entry Alice holds one messuage that used to be Emma's for 2d. per year, and it is claimed that she has an obligation to attend court, a duty attached to certain properties on a manor; she would also have received a fine if she did not appear. Further to this, she was subject to heriot, a death duty, to be paid by the estate on the death of the tenant; in many cases this would have been the best beast.[438] The sheriff's aid, although not a service, is a land tax, that is a common feature in the extent with small amounts given, often only a few pence. This fee was another way for the abbot to make money, as he would have tended to keep it for himself because the liberty belonged to him and not the crown.[439]

There appears to have been the possibility for social mobility on the manor. Simon de Childemere demonstrated this through his increasing land holdings until his death and his position on the jury would have given him influence within the manor. However, there were also those who were not

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[437] BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 8r
[438] Bailey, *The English manor*, pp. 244-246.
[439] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, p. 198.

able to do so. The tenant Michael Goman who surrendered his land during the famine crisis before dying in 1321, would have lived and died in poverty.[440] An education could also have been a way of becoming socially mobile; by paying a fee and attending clerical school, a child could sometimes go to university and have a profession different to his father's and could even secure his free status. We do not see this happen on the manor of Codicote; nevertheless, the boys who were allowed to attend schools did have a chance to move upwards socially.

The tenants who are recorded in the halimote courts and the extent of 1332 give us a good idea of who was living on the manor at the time and therefore a social structure can be built. Those who were paying higher levels of merchet, who were on the juries, and who held multiple holdings were among the higher ranks of the peasants on the manor, and those who only held half a virgate of land and who had guarantors when they owed money to the lord were among the lower ranks. Finally, we have those who were not mentioned in the halimotes, women, children, those who were landless, and servants. Around two thirds of the tenants, held one messuage, cottage, or building, with around a few acres of land with it. The remaining third of the tenants on the manor were wealthier holding multiple acres and pieces of land with more than one messuage or cottage, and some also held shops.

3.5 Codicote Market Place

In 1262 Abbot Roger had obtained a charter allowing Codicote to have a market every Friday. Ten years later a second charter was obtained allowing a fair there four times a year.[441] Codicote market place is well described in the extent, and by using this document we can gain a picture as to what the market place looked like and the possibility of the sort of shops and workshops it held. Thomas Cuppere's shop was on the high street; his shop was next to the mesuage of John de Brykendone. Next to Brykendone's mesuage were three shops all held by Roger le Heldere. William atte Dane held one piece of land in the market that was seven feet by seven feet, and was required to pay 6d. per year for it. His shop was situated opposite the three shops of Roger le Heldere.[442] Of the tenants who held property in the market in 1332, eight of them held buildings that were said to be shops or workshops. Some also have names that could suggest their profession and the type of shop or workshop they had. Roger le Heldere is the first; he appears to have been relatively productive with three shops under one roof, and paid 18d. in rent, but there is no indication as to his profession,

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[440] BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 43v; Kershaw, 'The Great Famine', 3-50 (p. 39).

[441] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, p. 472.

[442] *Dominus tradidit Willelmo atte Dane unam placiam in foro de Codicote continentem vii. pedes in longitudine et vii. pedes in longitudine ex opposito shoppe Rogeri le Heldere ad ponendi ibidem quod scabellum cum coopertur sine edificatione domo tenendi sibi et suis in villenagio reddendo inde annuatim vi. d. ad terminos consuetos portionis. Et dat pro ingressu habendo xviii d.* BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 57v.

other than it meant holder or a tenant. He also held a substantial amount of land and other buildings in various places and paid a large amount of rent for them, plus the suit of court. However, there is also no indication as to the purpose of the three shops.[443] The next shop holder is William le Smyth, and by his surname, there is a good possibility that he was a blacksmith. He held a workshop for 6d. a year, and also a mesuage and a pasture, which is included in the rent. [444] John de Brykendone held one mesuage in the market for 4s., and also held one shop near Thomas Cuppere's shop, for these he paid 7d. Unfortunately, his entry gave any indication as to what work he did in his shop. The next entry is a croft held by John Cuppere, presumably a relative of Thomas's, however, the extent does not mention Thomas's shop, only the croft belonging to John in the market, so it is unclear as to when Thomas held his shop.[445] After the Cupperes is William Synoth, whose name could be a variant of Smyth, who held one shop in the common market, paying 6d. in rent. Two places of vacant plots upon which two shops were being built in the market, owed 2s. rent for one and 7d. for another.[446] William le Fisshere held one shop for 6d. per year in rent; judging by his name it was possible that he was a fisherman. There were known fishermen, presumably of freshwater fish, in St Albans.[447] William Blackberry also held one shop, for 4d. in rent and nothing else is said about either man.[448] Finally, we have Richard Rosun, who held one shop for 12d. per year. But, more interestingly, he also held seven shops all under one roof; they were uncovered and ruined, and one cause given was a lack of tenants. No explanation is given, but the year was 1332, a time when the manor would have been still recovering from a famine. It is also possible that a land shortage and subsequent lack of disposable income may have reduced demand for goods purchased in the market place. It is interesting to see that there were a lack of tenants for these shops in the market of Codicote, and it was so bad that they were even in ruin.[449] This is at a time when land was still in great need for an overpopulated country. There were a couple of people who held property within the market place in 1332 who are mentioned in the extent but not under the section dedicated to the market itself. The first is John Poleyn, who held two mesuages within the

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[443] *Idem Rogerus tenet tres schopas sub uno tecto. Et reddit inde per annum ad liberum redditum xviii d.* BL Additional MS, 40734, ff. 12v-13r.

[444] *Willelmus le Smyth tenet medietatem unius mesuagii quod fuit Walteri filii Henrici de Cokereth. Et reddit inde per annum ad liberum redditum vi d. Et idem tenet unam fabricam de novo captam et unum herbarium de communas pro iiii d. per annum.* BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 13r

[445] *Johannes Cuppere tenet unam croftam in Foro. Et reddit inde per annum ad liberum vi d. Baughel.* BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 13v

[446] *Willelmus Synoth tenet unam Schopam in medio Fori pro vi d. ad liberum redditum. Et una placea vacua super quam edificata fuit una Schopa in communi foro. Que solebat reddere per annum. ii s. ad firmam. Idem est alia placea vacua super quam edificata fuit una Schopa in communi foro. Quam Johannes de Enefelde tenuit et solebat reddere per annum vi d. et nullum est edificium.* BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 15r.

[447] *Willelmus le Fisshere tenuit unam Schopa pro vi d. per annum unde nullum est edificium.* BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 15r. For more details on the professions in St Albans see my lay devotion chapter, p. 6.

[448] *Willelmus Blackbery tenuit unam Schopam pro iiii d. per annum ubi nullum est edificium.* BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 15r.

[449] *Ricardus Resoun tenuit unam Schopam pro xii d. per annum ubi nullum est edificium. Item sunt vii. schope sub uno tecto discooperte et ruinose. Pro una causa deficientium tenentum.* BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 15r.

market place, paying 12d. for one and 4d. for the other.[450] The second is William Haleward, who held one cottage close to the market, and rendered one penny for warranty, or surety.[451]
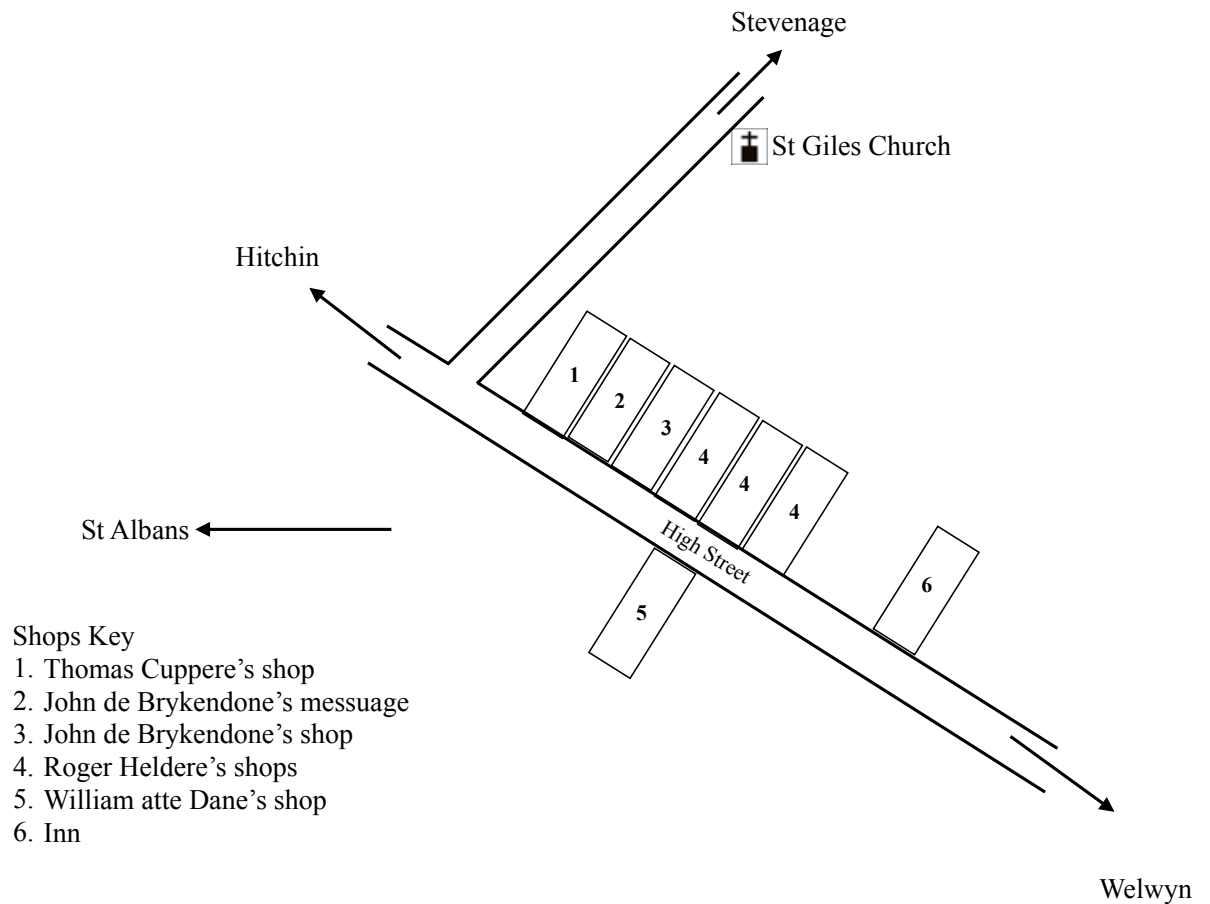
Figure 3. 4 **This figure shows the possible positioning of shops in Codicote market place from what the extent of Codicote notes of the shops in the market place and where they are situated.**

[450] BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 7r.
[451] *Willelmus Haleward tenet duas acras terre iuxta predictas iiii acras terre. Et reddit inde per annum xiiii d. Et partem suam ad precariam quas Willelmus de Thikeney debet. Et idem tenet Cotagium iuxta forum et reddit ob. pro warantia.* BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 8v.

3.6 Mills

The monks used the mills both to sustain themselves and to make a profit, for example, in 1130 the cellarer was owed one thousand good eels from four different mills; one each at Sopwell and Stanekefield, and two at Park.[452] At the start of the Extent of 1332, there were two water mills that were let again for six pounds in silver, a high fee indicating that the tenants would be able to make a high profit from them.[453] There is also a type of labour service given regarding the lord's mill, which was to clear the water-course to the mill for half a day with one man if necessary. This service was assigned to John Salecok, the first of the tenants listed in the extent, who held a large amount of land and as such had to give quite a number of labour services. Salecok holds two mesuage buildings, half a virgate of land and a croft for which he paid sixteen pence to free rents, two pence in sheriff's aid and eight pence in fixed rent on feast days. His labour services for these holdings included ploughing, carrying, and lifting crops. He also had to give a rooster and a hen at Christmas and 30 eggs at Easter. In addition to this land he has a croft called Gonnyldecroft for which he paid six bushels of sprig, and half a rood of meadow in Westmade, two parcels of land and one and a half roods of land in Gonnyldecroft for which he pays 5d..[454]

In the documents mills appear at the very start of the Halimote records at the court in 1236. Stephen Molendinarius had taken on the mill of Codicote then for the term of seven years; his rent was pledged by Roger Walense and others, but there is no fee or price given for this term.[455] The name Molendinarius, which translates as Miller, is mentioned numerous times throughout the extent although the profession is not in the extent other than in the entry of 1236. The first Miller family mentioned are John Molendinarius, his son Osbert and his wife Alice; they held one messuage and two acres of land, but there is no mention of a mill. Then John Lorugh who held one cotland that the 'Molendinarius' held, presumably meaning John, as he is named in the entry immediately prior, but again, there is no mill mentioned. Also, on the same folio is Reginald Doget, who held one croft of land that Martin Miller once held, but not mention of a mill in the extent of 1332.[456] Later on in the extent, John and his wife Alice are mentioned again, as is their son Osberti

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[452] Walsingham, *GASA*, I, p. 75.

[453] *Sunt ibidem duo Molendina acquatica que dimittuntur pro vi li. argenti.* BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 1v.

[454] *Johanes Salecok dictus be Southe tenet unum mesuagium edificatum et dimidiam virgatam terre que fuerunt Matillidis Salerok. Et reddit inde per annum [f. 2r] ad liberum redditus. xvi.d. ad festa Natalis domini. Idem tenet unum crofti coarum Gonnyldecroft et reddit inde per annum vi. busellos de sprig ad festum sancti Michaelis et i.d. vocatum coumbepany ad dictum terminum. Et idem tenet dimidiam rodam prati in Westmade in duabus parcellis et unam rodam et dimidiam terre in Gonnyldecroft quod quidem croft et partum Margareta Hankyn quondam tenuit et reddit inde per annum ad liberum redditum v.d.* BL Additional MS, 40734 ff. 1v-2r.

[455] *Stephen Molendinarius cepit molendina de Codicote ad terminum vi. annorum plegii Rogerus Walense etc.* BL Stowe MS, 849, f. 1r.

[456] *Reginaldus Doget tenet unum mesuagium et vi acras et dimidiam terre. Et reddit inde per annum ad liberum redditum iiii s. et ii s. viii d. pro iiii vomeribus. Et idem tenet i. croftum terre quod Martinus Molendinarius tenuit. Et reddit per annum vi d.* BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 3v.

in a separate entry, but no mention of a mill. In the Halimote court of November 1347 a licence for a hand mill for the term of life is given to William Terry, for which he pays 6d. per year to the Abbot.[457] William is also in the extent of 1332 where he held one acre that is built upon and paid per year at the Michaelmas 5s. per year in free rents.[458]

The mills on the manors of St Albans were a continuous source of contention between the tenants and the abbot. The abbot would enforce the fee of *multure* to profit from the mills in addition to the rent they received when letting them, and the tenants grinding their grain, which was one of the main problems leading to the uprisings in both the revolts of 1327 and 1381 at St Albans.[459] The tenants probably had a harder time regarding the mills under an ecclesiastical landlord than those under a secular landlord, because the monasteries did not want to lose their traditional rights over their tenants.[460] In the century prior to any major rebellion in St Albans, there were issues regarding using the mills belonging to the monastery, both in Codicote and elsewhere. Abbot Roger (1260-1290) had to deal with townsmen who had their own hand mills and others who refused to pay multure to the abbey. According to the bailiff, William de Eycote, Michael Bryd of St Albans had constructed a hand mill, which he was not permitted to do, and used this to grind all of his corn, for which he was made to pay a fine.[461] Following these problems, the Abbot wanted protection from loss when corn was ground at the abbey mill. Therefore, he made the millers and their men take an oath of fealty to him to ensure that he was protected.[462] Unfortunately, we know now that this was not to be the case, and would not protect the abbot or abbey from what was to come. Abbot Hugh (1308-1327) had problems concerning mills during his time as Abbot. The townspeople of St Albans refused to pay to grind their corn using the abbey mills, having the same feelings against multure as the tenants of the manors had. Robert de Lymbury is named as one townsman refusing to grind his grain at the abbot's mills and also keeping a hand mill at his house. Further to this, he resisted the bailiff in 1314. He was eventually made to pay 100s. to the abbot after a jury found him to be the one at fault.[463] This fine appears to be very high considering his crime, and so it is possible that the large fine was for his resisting arrest as well as the failure to use the abbot's mill, making an example of him. Hugh's successor, Richard (1326-35), did not have much luck either with the mills and townspeople. The troubles with them withholding multure continued and

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[457] *Dominus concessit Willelmo Terry ad terminum vite sue quod possit tenere unam Molam manualem reddendo inde annuatim domino Abbati vi. d. usuatis incipiente termino 'pine solutionis' ad festum Annunciationis Beate Marie proximo sequens post datus Curia. Et non licebit predicto Willelmi molere frumentum nec brachium sub pena amittendi dictam Molam etc.* BL Stowe MS, ff. 74r-74v.
[458] *Willelmus Terry tenet unam acram edificatam, et reddit inde per annum ad festum sancti Michaelis proximum futurum videlicet anno Regni Regis Edwardi iii a conquestu sexto v. s. per annum ad liberum redditum.* BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 11v
[459] For more details on the rebellion in 1327 and the revolt of 1381 see chapters 4 and 5 respectively.
[460] Holt, *The mills of Medieval England*, pp. 40-41.
[461] Walsingham, *GASA*, II, pp. 415-419.
[462] Ibid. p. 423.
[463] Ibid. pp. 149-154.

charges were made against the townsmen, including Adam le Hussher, John de Newbyry, and Gilbert de Hertford, a jury again, sided with the abbot deciding that they were to do the suit of multure.[464] In addition to refusing to pay multure thirteen townsmen claimed that they had the right to use hand mills. However, they also lost their case and had to submit to the abbot, pay his expenses, pay to use his mill, and to give him surety that they would not repeat this claim in the future. According to Walsingham, they also gave up their hand mills after the Abbot threatened one townsman with persecution to death, demonstrating his frustration of the matter, and convinced him to persuade his fellow townsmen to comply.[465]

During the rebellion of 1327, the townsmen forced Abbot Hugh to hand over a charter, which gave them the right to their own mills, their own assize of bread and beer, their own mayor and seal and the right to elect their MP's. Hugh's successor, Richard of Wallingford, was not willing to allow this to continue and so, after the Abbot made frequent appeals to the King, royal judges were sent to St Albans to settle the matter between the new abbot and the townsmen. Wallingford dined with the judges who ruled in his favour; the charter and millstones were surrendered, and Wallingford used them to pave his parlour, which appears to have been a way for him to demonstrate his ability in winning the battle against the townspeople. However, the problem was clearly not resolved and in 1381, the rebels forced Abbot Thomas de la Mare to sign a charter allowing them to use hand mills, and when they stormed the abbey they destroyed the hand millstones in the abbots parlour, and gave the pieces out as if they were holy relics.[466] In Codicote, just after the Revolt in 1381, the mill of the manor was set fire to, which was just one in a series of arson attacks. Luckily, the miller was close by and managed to arrive quickly and extinguished the fire.[467]

This chapter has examined the manor of Codicote using evidence concerning the population, the tenants, the land, and has shown the tensions between the tenants and the cellarer. There were obvious tensions in Codicote between the peasants and the cellarer and abbot, including leading to an arson attempt at the mill on the manor, but Codicote is not on the list of manors that attempted to extort charters from the abbot during the Peasants' Revolt in 1381.[468] The records of the halimotes held throughout the fourteenth century and the extent made in 1332 give an idea of the social structure and social mobility in Codicote, despite its limitations of only mentioning those who held land. A social hierarchy existed on the manor, the men who served on the jury seem to have been at the top of this hierarchy, the family names of these men are repeated on future juries as their brothers, sons, and grandsons took over the position. These higher-ranking men generally held a lot of land, and for this land paid high money rents and gave quite a number of services. They also were charged more for a marriage licence for both themselves and their children, and

[464] Ibid. pp. 237-248.
[465] Ibid. pp. 249-257.
[466] Gransden, *A History of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, p. 313.
[467] Thomas Walsingham, *GASA*, ed. by Henry T. Riley, III vols (London, 1867-69), III, p. 363.
[468] Ibid. p. 330.

were often guarantors for those less wealthy than themselves. The lower ranks were those with less land who were paying far less in money rents and services. They were landholders who were struggling with half virgates of land during the famine or held just one shop in the market place and those who had a guarantor when they owed money to the lord. The halimotes also indicate the possibility for a small amount of social mobility within the manor and, on occasion, the chance to leave the manor to fulfil an education. Not everyone was able to be socially mobile, and often the poor of the manor remained poor. Finally, the halimote records demonstrate the monastery's resilience during the Black Death as a result of their ability to keep recording the deaths, marriages, and land transfers.

Chapter 4: The First Half of the Fourteenth Century: Famine, Rebellion, and Plague

The previous chapter on Codicote examined the manor in the fourteenth century using the court records to provide an overview of the manor, and briefly touched on issues such as the Black Death and Peasants' Revolt. This chapter will now consider the events at St Albans during the first half of the fourteenth century in more detail. This century was a tumultuous time for both England and the entire continent. The issues began in the late thirteenth century during which time there was overpopulation leading to the heavy reclamation of land, which led England to become a country that could not feed many of its own population. This, coupled with extreme weather, led to the famine of 1315, which continued for many years following a succession of rains, bad harvests, and animal murrain. Nor did the times improve; in 1327 there were uprisings by the peasants in both St Albans and Bury St Edmunds who were starting to test their boundaries and question the lack of freedom they had. Two decades after these rebellions the Black Death swept across the continent and ravaged both England and Scotland. I will consider these three major events in this chapter, and how St Albans fared during this century. First, how overpopulation led to the subdivision of land and how the famine caused the start of a contraction in the population. I will then look at the rebellion of 1327 and how successful it was. Lastly, I will examine the Black Death itself and how it affected the town, monastery, and manors, looking at the immediate aftermath to see how the area surrounding the town coped with the drastic loss of life and discussing whether the country recovered from the heavy loss of life quickly or slowly and what happened to the population during this time. Whilst doing this, I will take into account the abbots who ruled during this time including Hugh of Eversdone, Richard Wallingford, and Michael Mentmore, and their actions in order to examine whether they angered the townsmen or appeased them, thereby examining the relationship between the abbey and town at a terrible time in the monastery's history. In this chapter I will argue that the relationship between town and monastery was heading towards its lowest point in the history of the abbey and that this was a result of the conditions on the manors, which included paying to grind corn at the lord's mills, other dues that constituted a lack of freedom, and the overpopulation of the manors leading to smaller holdings among the peasants.

4.1 Famine

According to the evidence at St Albans, and the work completed by Michelle Still, the land management before 1290 was relatively simple; food was to be used to feed the house, including servants and guests, and then the remainder was sold off. During the last quarter of the twelfth century growth occurred in English commerce, which led to an increase in the trade of wool, cloth,

and tin. This century was time of both direct management and high farming, landlords were able to market large amounts of produce and during this time monastic populations grew.[469] Throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the population of Europe increased dramatically. Cautious conclusions can be drawn giving approximate numbers; in England, from the late eleventh century to 1300 the population increased from around 1.3-1.5 million to 5 million. During the same time frame the population of France grew from 6.2 million to 17.6 million, with some estimates as high as 21 million and the population of Denmark almost doubled from 850,000 to 1.5 million. It is argued that this population growth could not be sustained and caused a significant amount of strain on resources because the economic growth that was needed to support the standard of living had slowed before the population growth did.[470] This meant a need for more food, and so woodland, fen, and wasteland began to be reclaimed. Land values and the price of corn increased and this twinned with an over supply of labour caused a fall in real wages, meaning that the population was already struggling at the turn of the century.[471] M. M. Postan, writing in the 1960s, examined ecclesiastical estates and concluded that there was a peasant land hunger because of the evidence of high entry fees and tallages. He saw that the amount of land the peasants had was very small, with many having a mere two acres or less, which was certainly true of the manor of Codicote belonging to St Albans.[472] According to Barbara Harvey, the case for overpopulation relies on three pieces of evidence. Firstly, in 1300 the level of rents was, despite some local fluctuations, slightly raised, but not by a substantial amount. Secondly, the size of peasant holdings was decreasing and by 1300 many peasants had holdings too small to provide for their families, which again was true of Codicote. Harvey argues that this cannot be used to support the argument for overpopulation because there were no signs of distress in the early fourteenth century. Thirdly, soil exhaustion is used to demonstrate overpopulation. The poor land resulted from infertile soil in arable areas and marginal soil on the edge of main arable areas. Therefore, Harvey concludes that there was soil exhaustion in the fourteenth century, but there is no evidence for this being a more dramatic problem after 1300, and that there is no evidence for a serious change in the whole population trend, believing it to be stable in the first half of the fourteenth century.[473] It is clear that the manor of Codicote had small holdings for the families living there, which would have affected those with one holding, but we do see men such as Simon de Childemere increase their holdings, and so there was not a crisis on the entire manor, as Harvey concludes. Postan agrees with James Rogers, that the population of England rose throughout the Middle Ages; however, there was an interval where this rise was broken during the years of the Black Death.[474] Furthermore, we can see that the

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[469] Still, *The abbot and the rule*, pp. 78-79.

[470] William C. Jordan, *The great famine : northern Europe in the early fourteenth century* (Chichester, 1996), p. 12.

[471] Kershaw, 'The Great Famine', 3-50 (p. 3).

[472] Postan, *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe volume I*, pp. 563-565.

[473] Harvey, *The Population Trend*, 23-42.

[474] Postan, *The Cambridge Economic History*, 221-246 (p. 222); James E. Thorold Rogers, *Six centuries of Work and Wages : the history of English Labour* (London, 1909), pp. 215-242.

population was increasing in the thirteenth century because of the rent prices increasing.[475] Josiah Russell writes that there is an agreement about the population growth in the thirteenth century, but the disagreement lies in whether the population was at its highest point at the famine of 1315, or whether it was at the Black Death in 1348.[476] Between 1310 and 1319, Russell estimates that the increase in population had ceased and there was even a drop of a few per cent. The evidence also points to a gradual increase in population in the first half of the fourteenth century leading up to the Black Death. The fief-holders, and therefore probably the serfs, had enough children to provide this increase.[477] Therefore, he concludes that the population would have gradually increased, despite the famine of 1315, until the Black Death, entering the plague years with a population in England of 3,700,000.[478]

Using the extent of 1332 and entries from the same year in the Halimote records, we can roughly estimate the population of the manor of Codicote in that year. A multiplier of five persons per household will be used. This is taken from Rodney Hilton's work, while admitting that it is a modest number, he used it to estimate the population of the borough of Thornbury.[479] The multiplier will be applied to the number of men who appear to hold their own land, and the women who also appear to hold their own land, generally through inheritance when her husband dies. The number of men and women mentioned in both the Halimote and the Extent is around 125, using Hilton's multiplier of five persons in a household, we can estimate that the manor of Codicote had between 600 and 650 people living there in 1332. The Domesday population of Codicote was around 100, which means that within three centuries the population increased by 600 per cent.[480] Population growth in England during that time was around 1.3-1.5 million to around 5 million people, and so the increase in Codicote is roughly in line, if not slightly higher than the general population of the country as a whole.[481] We can also compare this with the manor of Norton; the Domesday records show that Norton had a population of 14 villagers, five cottars, a Frenchman, a priest, and a slave, which if a multiplier is used gives a population of 120. In 1277, the contributors to tallage gives another opportunity to see the population size, which was 50 households and therefore 250 people. Finally, figures from the Lay Subsidy of 1307 show a population of 360 and the court records at the same time indicate a conflicting figure of between 250 and 300.[482]

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[475] Postan, *The Cambridge Economic History*, 221-246 (p. 236).
[476] Josiah C. Russell, 'The Preplague Population of England', *Journal of British Studies,* 5 (1966), 1-21 (p. 1).
[477] Ibid. p. 11.
[478] Ibid. p. 21.
[479] Razi and Smith, *Medieval society*, p. 490.
[480] For the Domesday entry for Codicote see TNA E31/2/1/5345, f.135v.
[481] For the population figures see: Jordan, *The great famine : northern Europe in the early fourteenth century*, p. 12. Hatcher, *Plague, population and the English economy*, pp. 13-15. Dyer, *Decline and growth*, p. 5.
[482] *Records of the manor of Norton*, pp. xlviii-lii

From 1315 to 1322 a famine was experienced by almost everyone from Russia to Scotland. Famine was a common theme in medieval Europe and the continent was dependent on what it could farm, and cities, which were growing substantially at the time, relied on the rural areas for their food.[483] This famine covered an area estimated to be around 400,000 square miles, affecting a population of 30 million people.[484] The manorial accounts of the time give the torrential rain as the cause of the catastrophic harvest of the summer of 1315. Pierre Alexandre suggests that a warming trend took place from the twelfth century through to 1350 and the heaviest rainfall during the period from 1150 to 1450 occurred between 1310 and 1320.[485] Throughout the autumn and winter of 1315, the famine must have continued to get worse, with the prices of food demonstrating the desperation in the spring and summer of 1316. Even the King was not immune to the famine and on 10 August 1315 Edward and his party stopped at St Albans, where there was barely enough bread to feed them.[486] During the first half of 1316, grants were made to allow merchants to have safe-conduct when transporting grain long distances, including overseas, in order to try and alleviate the famine. During the same year, a disease, possibly typhoid, was virulent among the population, killing many who were already suffering from starvation and apparently killing more men than women.[487] There is very little evidence on which to base an estimate of the death rate during this time. However, there were increasing numbers of heriots on the manors, and the death rate in the towns and cities are likely to have been even higher because of their reliance on food brought in from the country. During May to October of 1316, there were reports of 2,000 people dying in Bruges, and 3,000 in Ypres. On the manors of the bishopric of Winchester a twenty-five per cent higher mortality rate occurred between 1310 and 1319, which Josiah Russell estimated was sufficient to prevent any further increase and perhaps even reduce the population.[488]

In the summer of 1316, the rain continued to be even worse than the year preceding it and it was not until 1317 that a better harvest was seen.[489] On the Bishop of Winchester's lands wheat yields fell to 60 per cent of the average in 1315 and again to 55 per cent in 1316. After saving some seed for the following year, the peasants had little to spare for the animals, servants, the lord's households, and to sell. Bolton Priory in Yorkshire saw an even worse yield. Their rye crops fell to 28 per cent in 1315 and then to 11.5 per cent in 1316. East Anglia and Cornwall are two areas that appear to have escaped the worst parts of the famine.[490]

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[483] Henry S Lucas, 'The Great European Famine of 1315, 1316, and 1317', *Speculum,* 5 (1930), 343-377 (p. 345).
[484] Jordan, *The great famine*, p. 8.
[485] Ibid. pp. 16-17.
[486] Trokelowe and Blaneforde, *Chronica et annales, regnantibus Henrico Tertio, Edwardo Primo, Edwardo Secundo, Ricardo Secundo, et Henrico Quarto*, p. 92.
[487] Ibid. p. 8; Russell, 'The Pre-Plague Population', 1-21 (p. 8).
[488] 'Effects of Pestilence and Plague, 1315-1385', *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* 8 (1966), 464-473 (pp. 467-469).
[489] Kershaw, 'The Great Famine', 3-50 (pp. 7-11).
[490] Dyer, *Making a living in the middle ages*, p. 229.

Nor was the famine was just confined to crops; there was a murrain of sheep and then of cattle in the following years, further destroying the food sources. The sheep murrain occurred during the years 1315-1317, and probably came from the continent. Then from Easter 1319 through to the year 1321, the cattle also suffered from an epidemic, probably Rinderpest.[491] In his chronicle, John Trokelowe describes how people were allegedly taking to eating cats, dogs, and even their own children in order to survive.[492] These reports were probably an exaggeration of the truth, but it demonstrates the gravity of the situation of those living through the famine.[493] Adding to the problems faced by the poor, alms given by the monasteries were often reduced, and at Bolton Priory in Yorkshire, the number of servants employed was halved.[494]

By the 1300 the economy of Northern Europe allowed for prices and wages to be dependent on supply and demand.[495] The price of crops is the most obvious pointer to the famine and agrarian crisis. During the first ten years of the fourteenth century, the price of a quarter of wheat was 5s. $7^{1/4}$d. By the autumn of 1315, the manorial lords were getting 8s. for the same quarter and in 1316 this rose again to 26s. 8d., demonstrating their ability to profit from the famine. The price of oats rose less dramatically than corn, probably as a result of the crop being more resilient than the others. Salt was another commodity that had a rise in price during the crisis, possibly because there was a need to preserve more food than would normally have been needed, increasing to as high as 30 or 40s. in the years 1315 and 1316.[496] During the Parliament of Lent 1315 an attempt to solve the price issue was made. The King issued an ordinance to fix the prices at slightly lower than the prevailing prices, indicating that this was an attempt to stabilise rather than to actually reduce the prices.[497] These price increases were not limited to England, but were also being felt on the continent where, in Germany and France, the price of grain increased. In 1316 a sextarium of wheat sold for between 55 and 60 Parisian solidi; in Germany, a quarter of corn cost 30s. in 1316.[498] The prices of meat also went up as a result of the lack of supply; sheep, cows, and oxen were all affected by murrain, despite substitutes of horses for oxen and swine and fowl for sheep and cows. The peak of the prices of animals in the Middle Ages occurred between 1310 and 1320, although these rises differed from area to area. The price of animal products also inevitably increased, from 1315 onwards there were steep increases in the price of cheese, butter, grease, fat, and eggs; the over-slaughter of fowl causing the latter. Real wages fell and, although the cost of labour tended to be relatively stable, it saw a rise in 1316 in most rural areas, but not in line with inflation.[499] Rogers

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[491] Kershaw, 'The Great Famine', 3-50 (pp. 14, 24).
[492] Trokelowe and Blaneforde, *Chronica et annales, regnantibus Henrico Tertio, Edwardo Primo, Edwardo Secundo, Ricardo Secundo, et Henrico Quarto*, p. 95.
[493] Kershaw, 'The Great Famine', 30-50 (pp. 9-10).
[494] Ibid. pp. 11-12.
[495] Jordan, *The great famine*, p. 43.
[496] Kershaw, 'The Great Famine', 3-50 (pp. 8-9).
[497] Ibid. p. 6.
[498] Lucas, 'The Great European Famine', 343-377.
[499] Jordan, *The great famine*, pp. 57-59.

notes that the increase in agricultural wages during this time indicates a substantial death rate because of the famine.[500] Some lords of manors were able to benefit from the higher prices they could command. Many of these landlords would send their corn long-distances to ensure that they maximised their profits. This meant that the poor could not survive, some leaving their homes and becoming heavily in debt.[501] The landlords stood to make a profit from high prices, but lords were also able to make additional money from the extra fines paid on land transfers in their courts. Unsurprisingly, manor courts and royal courts name thousands of people accused of crimes during this time, especially for the theft of food. Not only were the people hungry, but also those in authority may have felt threatened by the poor and would not tolerate any misbehaviour.[502]

The effects of the famine were regional, and often depended on the size of the manor or monastery. The manors of Titchfield Abbey had no land vacancies during this time; however, the Abbey's manor of Inkpen in South Berkshire, which was situated on poor soil, did suffer from such vacancies.[503] The entry fines for the land on manors in England further indicate the severity of the famine. Before the crisis, in the years 1312 and 1313, the entry fines were around 6d. per acre, and were rarely above 2s. However, between 1314 and 1317, the entry fine rose to around 3 - 4s. and in some places between 5s. and 7s. per acre. The entry fines went back down after 1323 to around 1 - 2s. per acre, which was still higher than the original pre-famine prices.[504] During this time war on the continent was not helping matters. There were dynastic struggles in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden which, throughout the famine and through to 1319, meant that desperately needed food was being diverted away to the military instead.[505] During this century England also faced the Hundred Year's War that began in 1337 with France, and on-going wars with Scotland.[506]

The evidence we have available for the St Albans manors demonstrates very well the overpopulation of the area, on account of subdivision of land. On these manors, there is clear evidence of overpopulation in the first half of the fourteenth century and the process of dividing the tenements had begun before 1315. Half virgate holdings were increasingly being given to many tenants. In the extent of 1332 on the manor of Codicote, Robert Dryvere talks of 11.5 acres of land being divided up between eleven different tenants.[507] Despite these changes happening on the manors, St Albans does not appear to have experienced any large-scale land vacancies for a lengthy period of time.[508] However, the court books do demonstrate that the manors of St Albans saw land

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[500] Rogers, *Six centuries of Work and Wages*, p. 217.
[501] Jordan, *The great famine*, p. 182.
[502] Dyer, *Making a living in the middle ages*, pp. 231-232.
[503] Kershaw, 'The Great Famine', 3-50 (p. 41).
[504] Ibid. pp. 44-45.
[505] Jordan, *The great famine*, p. 19.
[506] Barbara A. Hanawalt, *Crime and conflict in English communities* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 223-226.
[507] BL Additional MS, 40734, f. 5v
[508] Kershaw, 'The Great Famine', 3-50 (p. 40).

changing hands multiple times during the agrarian crisis. On the manor of Park, the number of holdings surrendered in 1314-15 was five, which increased to 30 the following year, it did not go back down to five until the year 1319-20. Similarly, the manor of Codicote saw nine surrenders in 1314-15, 29 in 1315-16, and 38 in 1316-17, before going back down to seven in 1320-21.[509] Finally, the manor of Barnet saw 20 surrenders in 1314-15, increasing to 31 in 1315-16, decreasing slightly to 28 in 1316-17 before going back down to five in 1319-20. There was obviously significant pressure on the tenants to take over holdings during this time.[510] Guardianship was often a necessity and could be performed by a parent, another family member, or even a stranger. It entailed four things; paying the fines that were attached to the minor or holding, care for the property, ensuring proper disposition of the property to the heir, and sometimes there was concern for the care of the minor themselves and would have maintenance agreements.[511] Simon de Childemere was one man who managed to become successful throughout the famine, at a time when many other tenants were struggling; he was increasing his holdings at a time when they would have been giving him a poor yield.[512]

Some, such as Henry Lucas, see the end of the famine to have been only two years after it began. However, the result of a relatively poor harvest in 1320 meant that corn prices rose once again to high rates and were as high as their 1316/17 levels in 1321 because of another bad harvest. This, combined with the murrains of both sheep and cattle, and the epidemic suffered, meant that the famine continued for most people. It finally ended by 1322, when the conditions and prices both settled.[513]

There is evidence that in addition to the famine St Albans also had to deal with financial burdens. Scottish raids had lowered the value of the monastery's possessions in the north of the country. Edward I occasionally stayed at Tynemouth Priory during conflicts between England and Scotland, which may have put additional pressure on the finances of the dependent house. The monastery was also struggling with the pensions it was required to pay.[514] In 1320 the *Gesta* reports that the pension paid to Sir Hugh de Bolebeck in the manor of Hartburn in the diocese of Durham was a burden on the abbot and church especially because they had been collecting little revenue from the church there due to the wars between England and Scotland.[515]

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[509] Ibid, p. 40.
[510] Ibid. pp. 38-40.
[511] Lawrence R. Poos and Lloyd Bonfield, *Select cases in manorial courts 1250-1550 : property and family law* (London, 1998), p. cxxxvi.
[512] See Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of Simon de Childemere.
[513] Kershaw, 'The Great Famine', 3-50 (p. 14-15).
[514] Still, *The abbot and the rule*, p. 89.
[515] Walsingham, *GASA*, II, p. 118.

4.2 Rebellion

The fourteenth century saw both disease and dissent come to England and in 1327. The townspeople of St Albans rebelled against the abbot to acquire liberties for themselves and the town, however, this ultimately failed.[516] Political and social conditions in the reign of Edward II were largely dysfunctional, giving ideal conditions for rebellions. When he was deposed, his young son, Edward III came to the throne during a war with Scotland and the Hundred Years' War with France, but 'internal political stability' seems to have survived.[517] A high level of crime was recorded across the country, with so large an increase in 1327-1328 that Barbara Hanawalt suggests these might have resulted from Queen Isabella's release of prisoners from gaol in London and other areas.[518] This situation was made much worse by the Queen's invasion, and she was able to create further disruption in the towns she passed through, thus giving rise to the rebellions in St Albans, Bury St Edmunds, and Abingdon.[519] Burgesses in monastic towns took this opportunity to gain their freedom with these outbreaks becoming violent.[520] These towns felt the brunt of these rebellions because they were seen by their townspeople as being conservative, which the tenants felt was holding them back from growth. The *Gesta Abbatum* reveals that, while in 1314 the townspeople of St Albans were refusing to grind their corn at the Abbot's mill, this was not an uncommon situation but became one of the issues in the rebellion of 1327.

According to Walsingham who it must be remembered was a monk of the monastery, the revolt began when the lower classes of the town made an oath together to resist Abbot Hugh (1308-1327), encouraged by several Londoners who were sent to St Albans, presumably those who had been rioting in London, some of whom were supporting Queen Isabella. The *Gesta* reports that the townspeople were imitating rebels in London. A servant of the abbot was attacked and pursued by the mob of rebels which built a scaffold in the market place, while threatening to behead anyone who did not join them. In nearby Watford, the townsmen fished in the Abbot's fishery. The following day twelve townsmen, who had previously tricked the abbot into thinking they were on his side and convincing him not to call for aid asked him to sign a petition with seven articles. This included a restoration of charters and liberties; the election of two burgesses to send to parliament; to have control over the assize of bread and beer; have the right of common in lands, woods, and fish-ponds; to have hand-mills; to allow the town-bailiff to perform executions without interference; to be free as a borough; to respond through twelve burgesses before the justices in eyre. The abbot requested for four days to consider their demands, but the townsmen would only give him one, and when that day was done they once again demanded an answer, getting only

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[516] Norman Maclaren Trenholme, 'The Risings in the English Monastic Towns in 1327 ', *The American Historical Review,* 6 (1901), 650-670 (p. 663).
[517] Hanawalt, *Crime and conflict*, pp. 223-226.
[518] Ibid.
[519] Anthony Verduyn, 'The Politics of Law and Order during the Early Years of Edward III', *The English Historical Review,* 108 (1993), 842-867 (p. 842).
[520] Trenholme, 'The Risings', 650-670 (p. 663-4).

verbal consent and nothing signed. That evening, the townsmen attacked the abbey and a siege was mounted for ten days; unfortunately for the townspeople, the monastery was well-stocked and thus able to hold out. According to Walsingham, the sheriff of Hertfordshire relieved the abbey and those stuck inside.[521] The king's peace was then proclaimed in St Albans, and whoever resisted was to be arrested and imprisoned. The threat of imprisonment appears to have worried the townspeople, who returned home; however, they still wanted the liberties they believed were their due. Therefore, the townspeople and abbot obtained legal help and the case was held in the royal court and after a full investigation the outcome was in the monastery's favour. The townspeople and abbot met and a contract was drafted and then finalised on 6 March 1327. The Abbot handed over a charter, which gave the townspeople the town with a market and the liberties of a borough. However, the townspeople also wanted to be burgesses, something the monastery delayed confirming before eventually agreeing that twenty-four men were to report to the abbot of the town limits and ancient boundaries. Conservative landlords such as St Albans would not have liked to give concessions to the townspeople for fear of losing control over them. Both parties confirmed these boundaries to the burgesses of St Albans. Yet again the monks delayed this agreement, but eventually, after being persuaded by Abbot Hugh, they allowed the conventual seal to be used, under fear of violence. From that moment on St Albans was to be a borough, but the townspeople were still required to use the abbot's mill and had a few other restrictions. Soon after, the townspeople began abusing their newly found freedom; they fished in the abbot's ponds and set up eighty hand-mills. It was at this time that Abbot Hugh died and fortunately for the monastery Richard de Wallingford was elected the new abbot.[522]

Richard of Wallingford was born in around 1292 in Wallingford, near Oxford. In 1302, when he was ten years old, his father died and he was taken in by William Kirkeby who was the Prior of a Benedictine cell of St Albans in Wallingford. In 1308, Richard was sent to Oxford to learn before he came to St Albans and became a monk in 1315, he was ordained deacon on 18 December 1316 and then as a priest on 28 May 1317. He returned to Oxford around 1318 to study for a further nine years in theology. He returned to the monastery on the death of Abbot Hugh and on 29 October, he was elected, considered to be the one most worthy of the position.[523] Wallingford did not have confidence going into the position, and apparently even regretted that he had consented to it because he was afraid that he would dishonour the Holy Spirit.[524] In 1331 Wallingford was given his chance to gain the liberties back that had been given to the townspeople. The Abbot's marshal, Walter de Amundesham, and his squire were attacked and John Taverner, a man who had been accused of adultery was killed, as was Amundesham. The deaths caught the attention of the royal

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[521] Walsingham, *GASA,* II, pp. 216-218.
[522] Walsingham, *GASA*, II, pp. 216-260.
[523] A. B. Emden, *A biographical register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500. Vol.3, P to Z* (Clarendon P, 1959), p. 1967. J. D. North, 'Richard of Wallingford (c.1292-1336)', in ODNB, ([https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/23525], accessed 15 Dec 2017, 2004).
[524] Walsingham, *GASA*, II, p. 184.

coroner and there was an inquisition into them. The judges were sent to St Albans in September 1331 and Wallingford dined with them at his abbey's dependent priory in Hertford. The judges examined the events that had happened since 1326, ruled in his favour finding some of the townsmen guilty and brought charges against those who did not pay multure. [525] The charter and millstones were surrendered, and Wallingford used them to pave his parlour.[526] At last St Albans saw some semblance of peace, however, it was not to be for long, because which in half a century, the townspeople would revolt once more.

When Wallingford travelled to Avignon for the confirmation of his election, he took only a few people with him in order to keep the costs down, wishing to reduce the debt of the house. On his return he discovered that he was suffering from leprosy, causing him temporary blindness in 1328 and increasing loss of speech by 1332.[527] However, changed neither the way he managed the monastery nor how he behaved with the monks. Wallingford made a general visitation of the monastery and the cells to see where reform could be encouraged. Richard, the prior of Tynemouth and the monk John of Sulsull, helped him in this task. At St Albans itself monks confessed to sins of the flesh, the ownership of property, and some confessed to having entered the monastery by purchasing their place and were given two months to enter a different religious order. A revolt took place within the monastery with protests by the young monks who had been accused by others. Wallingford was firm; those who did not agree to behave according to the new reforms had to renounce their order.[528] Wallingford also managed to obtain rent from Queen Isabella from a mill at Little Langley in 1334.[529] Despite his leprosy, reforms of the monastery both disciplinary and financially, Richard Wallingford became well known for the astronomical clock he was building during his abbacy, which unfortunately was lost, probably after the Dissolution.[530] According to the *Gesta*, in 1334, there was a great thunderstorm that set fire to his chamber, and after that event his leprosy worsened.[531] Wallingford died on 23 May 1336 and was buried in the abbey church.[532]

St Albans was not the only area to suffer in the early part of the fourteenth century; both Bury St Edmunds and Abingdon had similar uprisings. According to Mary Lobel the townspeople of Bury St Edmunds were looking for an opportune time to rebel against their abbot in order to achieve independence. Like at St Albans, the burgesses found that the problems felt during the reign of Edward II gave them this opportunity. There was already discontent between the monastery and

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[525] Ibid. pp. 216-260.
[526] E. Wigram et al., 'Richard of Wallingford: Abbot of St Albans, 1326-1335', *Transactions of St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society,* (1926), 221-239 (p. 229).
[527] Emden, *A biographical register*, III p. 1967.
[528] John David North, *God's clockmaker : Richard of Wallingford and the invention of time* (London, 2005), pp. 96-97. Walsingham, *GASA*, II, pp. 196-197.
[529] TNA SC 8/160/7997, TNA SC 8/160/7996
[530] North, *God's clockmaker*, p. 16.
[531] Emden, *A biographical register*, III p. 1967.
[532] Ibid.

town; in 1320 there was a struggle between the two parties regarding the patronage of the Hospital of St Saviour, concerning which the burgesses petitioned in Parliament, because the monks were diminishing the number of occupants of the hospital and the endowment.[533] On 13 January 1327 men of the town met in a tavern, they and other townsmen plotted the destruction of the abbey, and the men took an oath to be united against the abbot. The revolt began the following day and reports say that 3,000 armed townspeople arrived at the abbey gates, although this number is likely to be exaggerated considering that Lobel puts the population of Bury St Edmunds in 1377 as 2,445.[534] No matter how many men they had, they still managed to force their way into the abbey and took registers and charters, and the group imprisoned the prior and four other monks. On 15 January 1327 nine more monks were imprisoned, the townsmen appointed their own alderman, and they took over the government of the borough, including taking the rents that were previously due to the convent. Anyone who refused to join the rebelling townsmen was threatened with execution in the market place, a threat that has striking similarity to the events at St Albans, with similar demands regarding charters. On 28 January Abbot Richard returned from London and the townsmen presented him with a charter relieving the town of its monastic lord, which the abbot was forced to sign. He was also forced to sign a document stating that he would not take any legal action against the rebels and that he would enrol the charter in the King's Treasury or pay a fine of £5,000. He returned to London in order to do this, but was advised to ignore the documents because they had been signed under duress. On 16 February the burgesses offered the villeins of the borough their freedom, thus adding to their ranks. From this date through to the end of April, the town appeared to be content, with no major events occurring.[535] In April the aldermen obtained a writ of protection for a year and following this there were royal mandates to both the abbot and the townspeople stating that they were not allowed to assemble armed men or attack each other and that they were required to send representatives to York by the second week of June. We know nothing of this conference, but the two sides were told to keep the peace. On 26 May the abbey was taken into the King's protection and two months later on 1 August the King told the townspeople that he was going to proceed against them.[536] However, the worst was still to come for the inhabitants of Bury, when on 18 October, according to the alderman and burgesses, the monks launched an armed attack on the burgesses.[537] This was a mistake, because the entire town was now against the monks and monastery, the burgesses retaliated and entered the abbey church and met with them, whilst ringing the tollhouse bell, which summoned the townspeople who burnt much of the monastery, including the abbey gates and manors. The monks were told to appear at St Mary's Church, and twenty-four were sent, who were then kept for a week. The abbot appealed to the Earl of Norfolk for armed aid and to the Pope to be able to excommunicate those who did not return stolen items.

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[533] Lobel, *The borough of Bury St. Edmund's*, pp. 142-143.
[534] Ibid.
[535] Mary Lobel, 'A detailed account of the 1327 rising at Bury St. Edmund's and the subsequent trial', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Archaeological Institute,* 21 (1934), 215-231 (pp. 215-218).
[536] Ibid. pp. 218-225.
[537] Bailey, *Medieval Suffolk*, p. 138.

Soldiers entered the town and rescued the imprisoned monks and thirty cartloads of prisoners were sent to Norwich. Finally, on 26 May 1328, around 16 months after the rebellion began, those responsible had their property forfeit and 154 people were outlawed.[538] The differences between town and abbey were clearly not settled because on 17 October 1328 Gilbert Barbour, John de Berton, and others went to the Abbot Richard of Draughton's manor and kidnapped the abbot, they took him to London, disguised him, and then took him to Brabant, Belgium. In April the following year the abbot was found and brought back to Bury St Edmunds, and his temporalities were restored on 5 May 1329. The Archbishop of Canterbury excommunicated all those involved in the abduction of the abbot, and John Berton is said to have died in prison.[539]

In Abingdon there was help from London, Queen Isabella, and, according to Gabrielle Lambrick a feeling of anti-clericalism fuelled the rebellion against the abbey. During the 1320s the abbey was in financial trouble leading to the Abbot John de Sutton being deposed in 1322. Five years later, on 20 April 1327 the bell of St Helen's parish church indicated the start of the rebellion, it rang again two days later and the townspeople convened to discuss their plan against the monastery. The following day they set fire to the Geldhall in the market place, the building where the abbey collected its dues from the townspeople and where courts were held. Some townspeople tried to attack the monastery itself, but two of them were killed in the attack, others fled, and some were imprisoned in the abbey. Abbot John de Cannynges returned to the monastery and set some of those imprisoned free. The second part of the rebellion was more violent, with more looting, damage, and more rioters from Oxford. On 26 April, there was an attack on the abbey buildings and on other properties owned by the monastery causing many monks to flee, leaving the rebels to destroy charters and steal goods. Apparently, there were 3,000 rioters in Abingdon, the same number that is quoted for the number of rebels in Bury St Edmunds. The leaders of this group of 3,000 summoned the prior and some of the monks to Bagley Wood; where they were forced to agree that the townspeople could have their own provost and bailiffs, and that the abbot was to abandon all rights that they claimed by royal grants, and, again mimicking Bury St Edmunds, to not pursue charges against the rebels. During this time, the Abbot went to the King to ask for royal protection and was given an armed guard and royal officials who hanged twelve of the rebels; the Abbot managed to save sixty more from the same fate. The abbey was taken into the custody of the King for the next few years, which judging by the events of Bury St Edmunds, was favourable for the abbot and monks. The legal proceedings began and Abbot Cannynges began with leniency, unfortunately for the townspeople, he died in 1328, and Abbot Robert de Garford, his successor, was much harsher on the townspeople and made sure to prosecute them.[540]

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[538] Lobel, 'A Detailed Account', 215-231 (pp. 218-225).
[539] Ibid. pp. 225-229.
[540] Gabrielle Lambrick, 'Abingdon and the Riots of 1327', *Oxoniensia,* xxix-xxx (1964-5), 129-141.

The rebellions in these monastic towns in 1327 demonstrate a growing of discord between the townspeople and the abbot and monks. This was clearly a problem in all three monastic towns at the same time, and they demonstrate parallels in their revolts, suggesting the possibility that they were influencing each other and were encouraged by those from London. The journey of Queen Isabella obviously emboldened these townspeople to speak up against their monastic lords and people from both London and Oxford went to these towns to help and encourage the townspeople. It is clear that the townspeople were not happy with their labour services, small plots of land, and the payments and dues they owed and felt the need to do something about it.

4.3 The Black Death

The Black Death spread from China through Asia Minor and reached Europe in 1346, entering France by January 1348.[541] England first saw the epidemic in the summer of 1348 in Dorset, where ships came to port from Europe, and from there it swept across the country.[542] In the autumn of that year the Black Death was heading to London along three routes, south-eastwards from Gloucester, north-eastwards from Weymouth, and by ship along the coast; the latter allowed the epidemic to arrive in London with great speed, demonstrated by a faster outbreak in the city than the surrounding countryside.[543] In January 1349 the King postponed parliament because the epidemic had broken out in London.[544] The population of London at the time of the Black Death would have been around 80,000 to 100,000. The number of people meant that there were more rats, something Benedictow writes allowed for the Black Death to linger in London until 1350.[545] However, Samuel Cohn has examined the Black Death and argues that the plague was not bubonic, and therefore the rats in London would not have made a difference to the disease, because the symptoms that the medieval evidence provides are different to the symptoms of the modern bubonic plague and this, as well as the plague visiting in different seasons, and its speed, all aid his argument.[546]

Thomas Walsingham recorded at a later date what happened at St Albans during the time of the plague. It is likely that he was alive, but was very young at the time, and certainly too young to have been at the monastery. The Abbot, Michael de Mentmore was the first monk of the house to die. He fell ill on Maundy Thursday and despite his illness he celebrated high mass before dinner

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[541] Ole Jørgen Benedictow, *The Black Death, 1346-1353 : the complete history* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 60-109.
[542] Stone, 'The Black Death', p. 213.
[543] Benedictow, *The Black Death*, pp. 134-135.
[544] Michael Prestwich, *The three Edwards : war and state in England 1272-1377* (London, 1981, 1980), p. 255.
[545] Benedictow, *The Black Death*, p. 135.
[546] Samuel Kline Cohn, *The black death transformed : disease and culture in early Renaissance Europe* (London, 2002), pp. 38-98.

after which he washed the feet of the poor. After dinner he bathed and kissed the feet of all the monks and performed the day's offices. He deteriorated the following day and made his confession and received his last sacrament. He died on Easter Day 1349 while the convent was at dinner. Following his death, no fewer than 47 monks died from the Black Death. [547] In 1190 the monastery had fixed the maximum number of monks at 100 and this number was reached at the start of the thirteenth century. [548] Therefore, it is likely that there would have been between 50 to 100 monks at St Albans at the time of the Black Death, which means that if 47 of them died, the death rate was around 50 per cent. The monks were more likely to contract the Black Death because they were active within their community; some obedientiaries would be attending courts both on the manors and in the town itself and the clergy would have been hearing confessions from the dying and probably interacted with the sick and poor to give them charity, and attending funerals, but they were also living in close quarters. In the case of St Albans, having close contact with the Abbot, who we know was sick at the time, would have in part, added to this high death rate.

The Black Death reached the manors belonging to St Albans abbey, but did not appear to have had a significant affect on them. The manors were situated relatively close to the town of St Albans, most being within the three surrounding counties. The death rate on the manors was spread very irregularly from around July 1348 to October 1349. Because of this, the death toll on the manors varied, at Winslow and Abbots Langley there were 71 deaths of landholders, yet in other places there were only five. The court books give us details of the manors, and do allow us to examine the death toll but only for the landholders themselves, who would have been men over the age of 16. This does not account for the women and children, who must have made up a considerable additional number. There is no way for us to know the population of a manor, in addition to the landholder and his family, there would also have been sub-tenants, servants, and the elderly who would not have been named in the court books. Therefore, we can only know the minimum number of deaths on a manor from the deaths listed in the court book. The death rate appears to have been at its highest in the spring of 1349. At Norton, four deaths occurred in the autumn of 1348, a further four between the autumn of 1348 and April 1349 and then again between April and June 1349 a further 20 deaths. On the manor of Codicote 59 deaths occurred between November 1348 and May 1349, and only six deaths thereafter. At Cashio there were 55 deaths May 1348 and 18 after. At Langley the court in May gave 73 deaths and the court in autumn gave only nine. [549] This means that between November 1348 and May 1349 the death rate of the landowners mentioned in the Halimote courts at Codicote would have been 47.2 per cent, which is higher than the national average. [550] This is higher than Razi's calculations for Halesowen where the highest death rate among the men was 45.9 per cent. This means that the months from February to May would have

[547] Walsingham, *GASA*, II, pp. 370-371.
[548] Ibid. p. 234; Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, pp. 74-75.
[549] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 248-255.
[550] I have used 125 for the number of landowners in Codicote in 1348 from a calculation of the landowners in the 1332 Extent and Halimote court roll.

been the most dangerous, which seems to be true of the East of England, the Black Death taking around six to nine months to reach that part of the country. This was economically advantageous as it meant that crops would have been able to be harvested and the next years sown in 1348, by which time there was only a ten per cent population loss. The crops could then take care of themselves until they needed harvesting the following year.[551]

Inevitably there were orphans as a result of the Black Death, and these orphans often had land and were in need of someone to help them manage this land as well as look after them. The age of majority varied on manors across England; on the manors belonging to the abbot of St Albans, the age of majority was 16 until 1337, rising to 20 in later years. As a result of labour shortages caused by the Black Death, the age of majority was fell back again to around 16 or 17.[552] The orphaned children were given a guardian, usually male who would provide a home for the child, manage their land and property and also care for them as a parent. During the Black Death, more guardians were needed and so children who had been orphaned were often grouped together and had one guardian between them. In 1348-50 on the manor of Winslow, there were seven boys and a baby girl from two weeks to fourteen years old who were looked after by three priests. Others were not so lucky and had to move between guardians.[553]

Levett has examined the accounts from the nunnery of St Mary de Pré, and from these we can see the effects of the Black Death on the nunnery. In 1341-42 the income to the nunnery was £55 6s. 3 1/2 d. whilst their expenditure was £46 5s. 5d. In 1350-51 this income had increased to £63 14s. 5 1/2d. and expenditure had also increased to £75 3s. 9 1/2 d. as a result of heavy building repairs, higher wages, and heavy purchases of corn.[554] To view the full effect the Black Death had on the manors it is useful to look at the amount of tenements or landholdings, that were left vacant; by doing this we can see whether there is some evidence of overpopulation of the St Albans manors by seeing if they were taken over relatively soon after the death of a previous tenant. However, the recurrence of the epidemic in the 1360s and 1370s might have caused later problems. Despite the high death toll at Abbots Langley, few tenements were left vacant. 71 landholders died, and of those 71 tenements left, 44 were left to either a man or a woman who was of full age, presumably a wife, son or daughter, and in a few rare cases a brother. 21 of those tenements were left to minors, who were probably the surviving children of the deceased. In a few cases this included very young children, and for them there was a communal guardianship. One or two tenements were even taken up by strangers and only a few left vacant which, considering the death rate, is very low. On the

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[551] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 251-252.
[552] Clark, 'The Custody of Children' 333-348.
[553] Ibid. pp. 343-344.
[554] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 297-298.

manors there are no breaks in the court records, documenting the manors courts and management that we know of.[555]

Evidence does exist to show an increase in marriage in the two years after the Black Death, yet after this, things returned to normal. Using Levett's example of Abbots Langley, it would indicate that the manors were able to carry on after the Black Death and returned to normality relatively soon, which she confirms was true of the manors belonging to St Albans.[556] Without a specific breakdown of those who died by sex, age, and marital status, it is difficult to know whether or not there was overpopulation prior to the Black Death and how quickly the country regained normality. What we do know though is that the St Albans manors did in fact return to some sort of normality within two or so years of the plague. This can be seen by the subsidy, which was a tax based on part of the value of movable goods, exacted by the Abbot in 1351, which was paid by all tenants. The paying of the tax demonstrates that the tenants could pay it, that they had the means to, and therefore were at full capacity once more. Therefore, Levett concludes that the argument that the peasant farmers were at capacity before the plague and that after it they roamed around to try and find the highest wage does not hold true on the St Albans estates as by 1350, the manors had returned back to normality.[557] This is surprising considering entry fines do not appear to have decreased; in 1346 through to 1352 the fine for one cottage with a courtyard was 12d. Similarly, in 1348 the fine for one mesuage with one acre and three roods of land was 3s. 4d., and for one mesuage, two acres and three roods of land in 1352, the fine was the same.[558]

It is exceedingly difficult to make an estimate of the death rate of the Black Death because of a lack of parish registers and national censuses, apart from Domesday Book and as such there have been many attempts and contentions, however, numbers can be gathered from lay subsidies and poll tax records. The contemporary authors of the time were making estimates, but even they could not know the true number. Reports in Paris spoke of 800 people dying every day.[559] Walsingham said himself that scarcely half of mankind was left alive because of the destruction of the pestilence, however, these reports were probably exaggerated because of the death that these people were seeing around them.[560] The cities were far more likely to have had a higher death rate because they would have had people travelling through and people would have been living more closely together. As the majority of the population lived in villages, it is by looking at the death rate of peasants in these villages that mortality from the Black Death is best estimated. At Halesowen, as at Codicote, the manorial administration continued throughout the Black Death. Halesowen had four court sessions that solely recorded the deaths from the plague. The worst month was in June

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[555] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 253-255.
[556] Ibid. p. 253.
[557] Ibid. pp. 248-255.
[558] BL MS Stowe, 849, ff.73r-78r.
[559] Rosemary Horrox, *The Black Death* (Manchester, 1994), p. 58.
[560] Ibid.

1349, when 25 peasants died, and the total number of plague deaths was 88, which was 18 times the annual average death rate from 1340 to 1348. Razi estimates that the death rate of male tenants was between 399 per 1000 and 459 per 1000, which would be between 39.9 and 45.9 per cent. Of the 12 hamlets of Halesowen, the death rate was never under 33 per cent. Razi also estimates the death rate of women to be just as high, at 42 per cent. Finally, Razi found indirect evidence that shows that child mortality was high. Although he could not estimate the numbers or a percentage, he has compared the mortality of children in the Black Death to that of the famine of 1316-17. He found that of the 17 people who died from the famine between the ages of 20 to 39, five were childless, and of the 26 people from the same age group who died from the plague, 19 were childless at the time of their death. Therefore, it can also be concluded that entire families would have died.[561]

A death rate of 30-35 per cent is now generally agreed, with a slightly higher rate for the clergy, who would have been in direct contact with the dying and were also in confined spaces together when in the monasteries.[562] A higher death rate occurred among the poor and men appeared more susceptible than women.[563] R. N. Swanson connects the increased mortality throughout this time with the rise in the popularity of death within the context of spirituality. Although this occurred before the arrival of the Black Death, he links this popularity, and need to rush through purgatory, with the social and economic situation of the beginning of the fourteenth century, which was accelerated by the Black Death.[564]

The other difficulty is estimating the population size during this time. By 1300 Europe had a population it could not feed due to soil exhaustion from land cultivation and population growth in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[565] Josiah Russell has estimated the population of Europe in the fourteenth century, before and after the Black Death using Domesday Book and the Poll Tax of 1377. He gives the pre-plague population of England as 3,700,000, which dropped to 2,200,000, giving a loss of 1,500,000, a third of the population.[566] Both Postan and Hatcher warn that there are flaws in Russell's work and that his estimates might be understated.[567] Estimates by Dyer and Hatcher would put the population between 4.5 and 6 million before 1348 and 2,800,000 after. The population of England did not start to recover again until the sixteenth century.[568]

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[561] Zvi Razi, 'The Black Death', in *Life Marriage and death in a medieval Parish : Economy Society and Demography in Halesowen 1270-1400* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 99-113.
[562] Hatcher, *Plague, population and the English economy*, pp. 21-25.
[563] Russell, 'Effects of Pestilence', 464-473(p. 470).
[564] R. N. Swanson, *Religion and devotion in Europe, c.1215- c.1515* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 199.
[565] Harvey, 'The Population Trend' 23-42 (p. 40).
[566] Russell, 'The Pre-Plague Population, pp. 1-21.
[567] Hatcher, *Plague, population and the English economy*, pp. 13-15.
[568] Dyer, *Decline and growth*, p. 5.

There is however evidence of lower mortality among the upper classes. Michael Prestwich writes that the death rate of the royal tenants in chief was 27 per cent, the death rate of those summoned to the House of Lords was 4.5 per cent in 1348, which rose to 13 per cent in 1349. Prestwich puts this lower death rate down to the better living conditions of the wealthy who would have had less exposure to fleas and rats, the supposed carriers of the epidemic. The same can be seen on the continent with the upper social classes in France. The only member of the royal family to die in England was the King's daughter Joan, who was travelling in France at the time. In the second wave of the plague in 1361 where although the overall death rate was lower, the death rate of the tenants in chief was higher at 22 per cent.[569] This wave was considered by many, including the composer of the graffiti in Ashwell, Hertfordshire to be the *mortalité des enfants*.[570] Cohn argues that those living through the plague years were able to adapt to the disease, allowing them to survive later outbreaks.[571] This meant that the children who had not experienced Black Death before would be far more vulnerable to it.

The aftermath of the Black Death is a contested time in historical study. Some are of the opinion that because of the overpopulation in the previous century, the immediate effects of the population loss suffered were overcome very quickly and that land holdings were filled relatively quickly, as they did on the St Albans manors. However, others disagree saying that there were long-term effects of the Black Death. The chronicle evidence available for the Black Death is very helpful. David Stone's work on the immediate aftermath of the plague uses Henry Knighton's chronicle, which gives remarkable detail on wages, prices and the landscape. Some chroniclers had a tendency to exaggerate, especially when writing about something that is not in the monastery's best interests. For example, Knighton believed that after the Statute of Labourers was published in 1351, the workers 'served their masters worse than ever before'.[572] The manorial accounts from the middle of the fourteenth century can be another valuable source. They can show the wage and price increases, and also in some cases, how landlords did not keep to the Ordinance of Labourers, when an auditor would cross out the wages he wanted to conceal.[573]

The generally agreed upon death rate in England during the years of the Black Death is around 30-35 per cent.[574] If we use that percentage, it would mean that in Codicote between 195 and 230 people died, reducing the population to between 385 and 420 people. Levett suggests that 59 deaths were recorded in the court books for Codicote between the period of 1 November 1348 and 19 May

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[569] Prestwich, *The three Edwards*, p. 257.
[570] Colin Platt, *King Death : the Black Death and its aftermath in late-medieval England* (London, 1996), p. 1.
[571] Cohn, *The Black Death transformed*, p. 703.
[572] Stone, 'The Black Death', p. 236. The Statute of Labourers was introduced in 1351 to prevent higher wages and peasants being able to move to another manor to find better conditions.
[573] Ibid. p. 231.
[574] Hatcher, *Plague, population and the English economy*, pp. 21-25.

1349, after which time there were only six further deaths.[575] Around 47.2 per cent of those listed in the court books died between Novermber 1348 and May 1349, and, the highest possible death rate might have been 306 people out of the 600-650 who lived there at the time. These deaths are of course only those who are mentioned in the court book, a total of around 200 deaths is likely, which is what we would expect from the population levels given above. The manor of Norton had a death rate of around 50 per cent.[576] The manor of Halesowen in the Midlands can be used as a good comparison to Codicote and Norton with regards to the demographic data because Razi has examined it in detail. His research shows that the population of Halesowen increased from 1270 to 1349 when it stagnated after the Black Death.[577] According to Razi there were 71 tenants in Halesowen in 1086, increasing to 215 in 1313-1315, which suggests that land land was being reclaimed during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However, this reclamation did not increase the arable area substantially or meet the demand of land. Therefore, Razi determines that 43 per cent of families living in Halesowen between 1270 and 1348 had only one quarter of a virgate of land or even less. The dire situation is shown by 67 villeins leaving the manor, some with and others without permission to do so.[578] This large reclamation of land and size of the arable land per family being so small is also typical of Codicote, where there was also a massive rise in population. Halesowen was ravaged by the Black Death in 1349, which arrived in May and stayed until August, the highest rate of deaths happening in June of that year. Despite this, as at Codicote, the manorial court continued, and managed to record many of the names of the dead. The parish of Halesowen saw a death rate of 40 per cent, with 88 peasants dying, some including entire families.[579] The population figures for the manor are important. By knowing the death rate on a manor we can see if it was over populated prior to the Black Death and therefore if peasant conditions improved after. It also allows us to see if the peasants were able to use this to demand better conditions from their landlord in 1381.

Razi has concluded that because the proportion of young people under the age of 40 were still alive after the Black Death, this aided the rapid recovery in the rural areas of England, including Halesowen. The same thing happened in Halesowen as it did in Codicote regarding vacant holdings after the plague. At Halesowen, within a year, 76 vacant holdings were taken up, 32 by children, 20 by other close relatives, 16 by guardians, and 18 by peasants with no ties to the family. He writes that generally, land became cheaper, a large amount of land remained for those who had survived the plague years and as the peasants were able to be selective and for the good land so they were also prepared to pay high entry fines. For the holdings that were not as high in quality, the abbot admitted them with no entry fines and with lower rents. Two arguments are used to attempt to explain how the same amount of land was cultivated with fewer men to do it. The first is that a

[575] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 277-278.
[576] *Records of the manor of Norton*, p. xlviii-lii.
[577] Zvi Razi, *Life, Marriage and death in a medieval Parish* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 29.
[578] Ibid. pp. 28-30.
[579] Ibid. pp. 101-104.

severe shortage of male tenants did not occur because tenants moved from other manors, this would tie in with them now having a manageable amount of land as opposed to a plot that was too small to feed his household, however, Razi does not think explains the situation at Halesowen. The second is that just prior to the Black Death there occurred an imbalance between the population and the land available to support it, hence those who remained on the manors were able to take up the land and also cultivate it. This explains events at Halesowen, where the survivors were mainly under forty and able to work the land.[580] This may also have been the case in St Albans, where much of the land was occupied by the younger generation who were old enough to be able to work. In cases where there were no children, the surviving spouses or brothers and sisters, would have been of similar ages to the deceased and thus able to farm. On the manor of Norton, the records indicate a period of decline after the Black Death and that the population does not recover until 1460. The manor was also close to Baldock, an economically successful town where money rents were paid from around 1185. The town attracted people from Norton, including fugitives, which did not help the situation on the manor economically or with regards to the population.[581]

The most discussed aspect of the Black Death is the medium and long-term impact of the plague on medieval Europe.[582] The primary question asked is whether the population of England's towns was growing or declining in the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, and whether their economies were depressed, thriving or coping, which has led to a debate among historians with no clear answer. The main issues are that there is no agreement as to the definition of a 'town', 'decay' or 'prosperity' and that there is no agreement on how the population was changing or whether the wealth was increasing or not.[583] Dyer and Bridbury are on opposite sides of the debate as to whether the country was in decline or not after the Black Death. Bailey's remarks demonstrate how subjective the debate about English towns can be. A declining population saw a decrease in settlement and trade, but an expansion in income and output per capita, meaning that after 1348, a town could be smaller while those living there could be richer.[584] However, in his article on class structure Brenner argues that the structure of class relations and the power that each held affected the demographic and economic changes, which would include the distribution of wealth.[585] Whatever method used to examine the changes after the Black Death, the larger towns and the larger monastic landlords, particularly the Benedictines, managed to survive the event and the years that followed. In St Albans, despite a lowered population, the some survivors appear to have been richer, in the 1470s John Sendall had domestic goods that was wider than owned by similar people prior to the Black Death, but the question of whether this was urban decline or growth remains to be answered. London's economy grew in relative terms and had a larger influence on the

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[580] Ibid. pp. 112-113.
[581] *Records of the manor of Norton*, pp. liv-lv.
[582] *Town and countryside in the age of the Black Death*, p. xx.
[583] Dyer, *Decline and growth*, pp. 1-3.
[584] Bailey, 'A Tale of Two Towns' (p. 352).
[585] Brenner, 'Agrarian Class Structure', 30-75 (p. 30).

surrounding area in c. 1500 than it did in c. 1300. For the Hertfordshire towns this meant that they were still providing at least as much pastoral produce to the city as they were previously, and that the traffic through the county would not have dramatically decreased.[586]

Hatcher's opinion is that England was already in crisis before the Black Death, and that because of overpopulation, English life returned to normality within a few years, with land being fully occupied. Further to this, he argues that although wages saw a significant increase after the Black Death, the price of basic goods also rose, meaning there was no real benefit.[587] Postan shared Thorold Roger's view that the population of England rose throughout the Middle Ages, but that there was an interval of uncertain duration after the Black Death where the growth was broken. He also writes that peasants would have been fairly protected from rising prices because the main bulk of their produce did not go to the market. Landlords however did lose income as a result of falling rents and prices, which would have affected the smaller landlords rather than the larger monastic ones.[588] The landlords also attempted to stifle any attempt on the part of the tenant to try and improve their lives, according to Hilton; these same landlords were freezing wages in 1351.[589]

Bridbury paints a picture of a quick recovery by the country after Black Death. It had little effect on the country, which recovered fast and that landlords gave tenants farms on any terms. He maintains that the Black Death was good for those who survived in England. He goes as far as to say that the time for demesne farming was in the decades after the Black Death rather than in the first decades of the fourteenth century.[590] Those who have argued for decline have attacked Bridbury's view of prosperity after the Black Death. It can be argued that his approach is very optimistic, but many manorial accounts demonstrate that there was growth as opposed to decline.[591] David Stone notes the words of an anonymous contemporary, writing in c.1352-3 that there were 'winners' and 'wasters' when disruption occurred on a scale such as that of 1348.[592] Certainly some benefitted in the years after the plague, but the debate as to whether more people were winning or wasting is still on going. According to the manorial accounts, some peasants used the decreasing population to their advantage by making demands on their employers. Some smaller landlords did not survive the Black Death, whereas others, the larger ones did. The cloth industry is also missing from the picture because it was not recorded in the accounts. Although there will probably never be an agreement on what happened in the years after the Black Death, what is clear is that the changes the plague made to the country were drastic, so much so, that thirty years later, the country was in

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[586] Bailey, *The Economy of Towns and Markets,* pp. 60-62.
[587] Hatcher, 'The Aftermath of the Black Death', 3-35 (pp. 6-7).
[588] Postan, ' Some Economic Evidence', 221-246 (p. 222).
[589] Hilton, *Bond men made free*, p. 152. For more detail on the Statute of Labourers and the freezing of wages see Chapter 5.
[590] Bridbury, 'The Black Death', 577-592.
[591] R. B. Dobson is one who has argued for the decline of towns after the Black Death in 'Urban decline in late medieval England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 27 (1977).
[592] Stone, 'The Black Death', p. 234.

turmoil again. As we can see from the St Alban's evidence, although the numbers of monks never again returned to their highest numbers, the number of tenants on their lands did return to normal a few years following the first pestilence.

This chapter has examined the first half of the fourteenth century and as such the events leading up to the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. These fifty years were extraordinarily difficult for those living in England and Europe with successions of bad harvests causing famine and then a plague that swept through the entire continent. Those living under the control of the monastery were already starting to question what freedoms they had and tried to act upon this in 1327. Though unsuccessful, we can however imagine that the state of the relationship between the abbot and convent and the townspeople was not good at this time. The high death rate across the country put the peasants in a good position in the short term, prior to the Black Death recurrences, to be able to demand more and they certainly did. As 1381 approached tensions were probably at an all time high between the townspeople and the abbey. The fourteenth century saw a drastic change in the dynamic of the relationship between the monastery and its towns and manors. The inhabitants of the town and those living on the manors benefitted from having St Albans close by, thus ensuring that business was attracted to the town and thereby providing mutual benefits. This century was a turning point in both the relationship between the monastery and town, which had turned sour, and the benefits each obtained from each other. The town clearly felt that it could not only function on its own by having its freedom from the monastery but also perhaps be more successful.

Chapter 5: The Second Half of the Fourteenth Century - Revolt

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the fourteenth century witnessed an increase in population, and a famine. After the famine came both war and plague and these conditions left England with a diminished population seeking more freedom than they had previously. An attempt to prevent labourers from making extreme demands and commanding high wages was made through the Statute of Labourers. The Hundred Years' War worsened the conditions in England because of increased taxation to fund the war. This and other underlying socio-economic grievances caused a rebellion similar to that of 1327 save that it was far more widespread and violent than the earlier one. The revolt was largely centred on London, and so inevitably reached St Albans relatively rapidly in the summer of 1381. Unfortunately for the rebels, their demands were not met, and the King and other members of the aristocratic classes soon quashed the revolt.

5.1 The Events Leading up to the Revolt

The reasons that led to the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 varied from place to place. Feelings were aroused not not only in different counties, but also on different manors and in different towns within those counties. However, had it not been for the Hundred Years' War, and the third poll tax demanded because of it, there would have been no beginning of the revolt, and others around the country may not have joined in, fighting for their own causes. The Hundred Years' War began during the reign of Edward III over the French throne, which Edward believed he had a better claim to than the French King. Failures too occurred on the side of the English, which led to resentment wartime taxes. Both sides fought back and forth over French territory, with many interruptions throughout, including for the plague years. In 1356, Edward, the Black Prince the King's son, defeated and had captured Jean II of France, but England did not manage to push forward with the war. Four years later in 1360, Edward III renounced his claim to the French throne, instead, accepting the duchy of Aquitaine. In 1369 war resumed, the French being unhappy with the hearth-tax that Edward, had made those in Aquitaine pay. With the help of a renewed army, Prince Edward managed to defend Aquitaine. A mere few months later an army was preparing to invade England that John of Gaunt was sent to contend with. Although there was no invasion, Gaunt did not secure any victories in France and returned to England to criticism. In 1372 England began to face naval defeat when the earl of Pembroke's flotilla was attacked. The Black Prince died in June 1376, a year before his father in June 1377. This meant that In the July of 1377

Richard II, the Black Prince's son became King as a ten-year-old boy.[593] War puts strain on any country, and this war was no different. The English did achieve victories at the start, but began to feel the expense of having to pay wages and feed an army across the channel. John of Gaunt, Richard's uncle, was now in control of the war, alongside his brothers, and England was unable to defeat the French by sea in the next few years. Expeditions were now also facing fiscal shortages due to the evasion of the poll taxes.[594]

Three poll taxes were raised to fund the war, in 1377, 1379, and 1381. Prior to 1377, taxes were lay subsidies, where the value of a proportion of every household's movable property, which was usually one fifteenth. These taxes were designed by the rich, and benefitted the landholders, because land and capital was not taxable. This form of taxation had worked up until 1377, when a new method was needed. This was mainly the result of population decline caused by the Black Death; those who were not taxed before had to be from now on.[595] Therefore, on 2 February 1377, Edward III summoned Parliament at Westminster. His chancellor put his case forward for raising taxes because the costs of war were increasing daily. The tax was set at four pence per adult over the age of fourteen, and was to include the clergy; the only people who were exempt were the poor. That year, there was no resistance to the tax, and it brought £22,000 for the crown.[596] Thomas Walsingham recorded this Poll Tax as Parliament was called on 2 February. In fact it was summoned on 27 January by the Duke of Lancaster, acting of behalf of the King, who was now ill beyond recovery. Walsingham's words on the tax were, *'quatuor denarios, exceptiis notoriis pauperibus'*, which translates to four pence, except acknowledged paupers.[597]

At parliament on 27 April 1379 the Commons agreed to a second poll tax in the country. Although it still included both the lay-folk and the clergy, this one differed from the last in that it was graded.[598] Seven broad categories were used for the grading of the tax: landowners; knights; men of law; townsmen, municipal officers, and merchants; notaries, legal apprentices, pardoners, common married men and women; foreign merchants; religious. However, corruption occurred in collecting the tax, and possibly bribery, and only £18,600 was collected, which was less than the tax two years previously. This was a small amount especially when compared to the wage bill for the first half of the year for John of Gaunt's army, which was £50,000.[599]

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[593] Alastair Dunn, *The Peasants' Revolt : England's failed revolution of 1381* (Stroud, 2004), pp. 45-63.
[594] Ibid. pp. 46-63.
[595] Ibid. pp. 67-69.
[596] Ibid.
[597] Thomas Walsingham, *Historia anglicana*, ed. by Henry T. Riley (London, 1862), p. 323. *The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, p. 29.
[598] *The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, pp. 80-81.
[599] Dunn, *The Peasants' Revolt*, p. 69.

On 5 November 1380 parliament opened at Northampton. During this parliament the Chancellor, Archbishop Sudbury repeatedly emphasised how the English army would be unable to pay wages if more money was not raised, and that there would be national humiliation should the crown default on its loans. There would also have been the possibility of losing the crown jewels, which had been given as security. The Chancellor wanted £160,000, and because it was such a high amount, Commons referred to the Lords, wanting other ways to raise the money than a poll tax. The Lords gave three suggestions, but the Commons did not use two of them because they and the mercantile class whom they represented would have been affected. These discarded options were a tax on all sales, and multiple subsidies on moveable goods. Instead, they chose the third option, which was a poll tax of 12d. for every man and woman over the age of 15. Not only was this three times the amount taxed in 1377, it was also more of a burden for married people, because they were now unable to divide the tax between them, which they were able to do before.[600] This tax was intended to be graded, the same as the one in 1379 had. In villages, the rich were expected to pay more than the poor, with the rich not paying more than £1 and the poor less than 4d. However, there were no official rules and the results varied in different areas.[601] It was not only the secular members of society who were unhappy about this third poll tax as even Thomas Walsingham complained about the clergy having to pay, and blamed this third tax as the primary cause of the Peasants' Revolt. He states that, 'This tax was the cause of unheard-of trouble in the land, as will become clear from what follows.'[602]

The local government generally collected the taxes in England; with a tax collected chosen for each county. He had sub-collectors who visited the villages and towns, and would have been helped by constables, mayors, and bailiffs.[603] Hilton writes that this revolt was not about grain because the prices show that the harvests of 1376 and 1378 were good, and that those of 1379 and 1380 were average. Therefore, although the taxes would have provided hardship for many, they were not demanded in particularly poor harvests.[604] However, for this third tax, a substantial amount of corruption was carried out by the sub-collectors and the constables; whether they were forced to do so or were bribed is unknown. The population between the 1377 tax and the 1380 tax fell by around two thirds, with some places showing a decrease as high as 50 per cent. Although there would have been a small decrease in the figures because of those being liable for this tax were those over the age of fifteen, instead of fourteen, it should not have been so drastic. Charles Oman puts the figures at a decrease in the adult population from 1,355,201 to 896,481. This was a result of people not declaring the unmarried dependent women in their communities. Oman says that, 'it failed because it was overdone', and the numbers given were so unbelievable that there was to be

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[600] Ibid. pp. 70-71.
[601] Hilton, *Bond men made free*, pp. 162-163.
[602] Walsingham, *The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, p. 117.
[603] Dunn, *The Peasants' Revolt*, pp. 72-74.
[604] Hilton, *Bond men made free*, pp. 160-161.

investigations into those who had lied and to punish them for it.[605] Therefore, on 2 January 1381 the royal council ordered inquiries. In March the collectors reported that there was systematic evasion and so commissioners were sent to interrogate village authorities to discover who had lied about the number of adults in their households.[606] Unfortunately, no actual poll tax returns survive for Hertfordshire. However, we do have a receipt and two views of accounts held by the National Archives. These documents show that in 1377 there were 19,975 adults over the age of 14 who were taxed. And the amount collected was £332 18s 4d. In 1381, the number of adults who were taxed had fallen to 11,363 and they paid £568 3s 0d. After a reassessment, this number increased to 13,296, bringing in over £100 more at £664 16s 0d. But this was still a substantial drop in those taxed compared with the number in 1377, showing that many people in Hertfordshire attempted to evade the tax, and many of them succeeded.[607] Despite this drop in numbers those paying the taxes were still paying on average the four or twelve pence rate meaning that there was no additional tax burden to make up for those who evaded. The commissioners slowly started collecting the missing tax, and whilst they were doing it, made three censuses of the adult population, to which some must have objected. This is because in April 1381 although the collectors reported that they would get the number of taxpayers in London and Middlesex, they would not take their names or ranks because they deemed it too dangerous to do so.[608] That there was a fall of those in Hertfordshire paying the taxes shows that they did not want to pay this tax, and many were presumably unable. This must have led to a resentment of the government in Hertfordshire just as it had in the rest of the country.

Those living in monastic towns surrounding London and on the manors owned by the monasteries were unhappy in the fourteenth century, including St Albans where there was a strained relationship between the townspeople and the monks and monastery. Levett wrote that the uprising in Kent was one against taxation and foreign policy, whereas the rebellion at St Albans and in other monastic towns was for completely different reasons.[609] The rebels from Kent were no doubt against the oppressive landowners such as St Albans because they themselves were free. No matter what their reasons were, the tenants on the manors and townspeople must have been agitated by the poll taxes that they had been subjected to. At St Albans the villein tenants were rebelling against their lords because they were unhappy with a number of things regarding their status as unfree. They were unhappy with the multure fee that they had to pay to grind their corn; the rights surrounding the warrens, hunting, and fishing; the inequality of dues; and the Abbey refusing to change their policy to adapt to the future and give up any of their rights. What we see from the halimotes is that these tenants did not have more dues and customs than other manors, and neither

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[605] Charles Oman, *The great revolt of 1381* (Oxford, 1906), pp. 27-29.
[606] Dunn, *The Peasants' Revolt*, p. 73.
[607] Carolyn C. Fenwick, *The poll taxes of 1377, 1379, and 1381: Part 1: Bedfordshire - Leicestershire* (Oxford, 1998), p. 384.
[608] Hilton, *Bond men made free*, p. 164.
[609] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 178-179.

did they have any severe economic pressure. Instead, they were unhappy with the subdivision of holdings that can be seen happening throughout the fourteenth century, and lack of unused land. This in addition to their close proximity to London caused an uprising.[610] There was also another underlying issue at St Albans, which appears to have been fairly specific to the town. Mills had been a problematic topic for St Albans since before 1327, and continued to be an issue up to 1381 and beyond. Mills were highly profitable for landlords and so the abbots and monks of St Albans were building new mills and repairing old ones throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the tenants were charged multure. The abbots implemented this over their tenants at St Albans, and this led to people using their own hand mills, illegally, as we have seen in the 1327 revolt, where the millstones used by the tenants were then used by Richard of Wallingford to decorate his parlour.[611] However, the problem was clearly not resolved and in 1381, the rebels forced the abbot to seal a charter allowing them to use hand mills, and when they stormed the abbey they destroyed the hand millstones in the abbot's parlour and gave the pieces out as if they were holy relics.[612] The issue of the mills continued well into the fifteenth century, and these problems with tenants were recorded in Abbot Whethamstede's Register, when the Abbot had to deal with tenants using hand mills once again.[613] In Codicote just after the Revolt in 1381, the mill of the manor was set on fire, which was just one in a series of arson attacks presumably resulting from the charging of multure. Luckily, the miller was close by and managed to arrive quickly to extinguish the fire.[614]

The Black Death had given the general populace of the country greater expectations of a higher standard of living. This was then fuelled by some landlords making concessions on rents and services in the 1350s. However, by the 1360s and 1370s the economy recovered and the government and landlords were taking back some of the concessions they had made. This caused there to be local acts of resistance and disobedience.[615] Furthermore, the enforcement of the Statute of Labourers must have raised already heightened social tensions; this would have been especially true in the south-east of the country where there were many wage earners. The peasants would have been unable to demonstrate their opinions on these matters and the growing fiscal pressure they were under and so inevitably had to resort to rebelling.[616] In Kent many of the peasants already had free status and so were not fighting for it; instead, from the early thirteenth century they were using their bargaining power to maintain this freedom and continue and improve their economic prosperity.[617] In Suffolk the tenants and townspeople experienced similar issues to those of St

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[610] Ibid. pp. 178-179.
[611] See Chapter 4 for more information on the revolt in 1327.
[612] Gransden, *A History of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, p. 313.
[613] *Registra quorundam abbatum monasterii S. Albani*, ed. by Henry T. Riley, II vols (London, 1872), I, pp. 199-202. See Chapter 6 for more details on the problems Abbot John Whethamstede had with tenants and townspeople using illegal hand mills.
[614] Walsingham, *GASA*, III, p. 363.
[615] Bailey, *Medieval Suffolk,* p. 184.
[616] Hilton, *Bond men made free*, pp. 146, 155.
[617] Ibid. p. 145.

Albans and its surrounding manors. Despite the small number of villeins in the county, they had heavy week-work obligations and were able to see other tenants with less demanding lords. The townspeople of Bury St Edmunds had to live and work under their ecclesiastical and conservative landlord whereas the rest of the county's towns did not have such a large influence from a lord.[618]

5.2 The Revolt

Walsingham's *Gesta Abbatum* and *Historia Anglicana*, give a detailed commentary on the events in London, Suffolk, Norfolk and, of course, St Albans in the summer of 1381.[619] On 30 May 1381, a royal commission was sent to the county of Essex to assess the evasion of the third Poll Tax, and it was here that the Revolt started to gather pace.[620] During the first week of June, Essex began mobilising their army of rebels. The rebels in Kent assembled at Dartford before marching to Maidstone and Rochester, and then entered Canterbury. During this time, the famous Wat Tyler emerged as the leader of the rebels. The Kentish rebels made the decision to march on London on 11 June, and on 13 June, the rebels, probably a few thousand men, entered London with no opposition and were aided by the poor of the city. The King, on hearing about the rebels, sent messengers to try and deter them from coming to London. However, when it was clear that the messenger had failed, it was decided that the best thing to do would be for the King to meet the rebels in person. The King went by barge to the agreed meeting place of Greenwich, but he did not disembark the barge and this enraged the rebels who drew up a list of royal councillors whom they wanted to have executed. King Richard refused and so the rebels repeated their request to see and meet with him. The following day, he did meet them at Mile End where Tyler presented him with his demands, to which Richard pretended to agree. On 15 June the King met the rebels a second time at Smithfield, just north of the city walls, where another set of demands was handed over by Tyler. However, the Mayor of London killed Tyler and the rebel army was dispersed.[621]

Despite being considered a national revolt, the spread of the rebels largely depended on the distance from London. The major revolt was situated in East Anglia and the Home Counties, including London, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Middlesex, Essex, Kent, Norfolk, and Suffolk. There was a 'spillover' into the north and the west of the country, but the disputes that occurred in these places were secondary to the events happening in the south. There were issues in Worcester, Winchester, York, and a few other places that were far from London. This could have been because the southern counties were more densely populated than the north, and that they were closer to London. Those living in northern rural areas tended to be freer and so would not have as much of a

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[618] Bailey, *Medieval Suffolk*, p. 185.
[619] Walsingham, *Historia anglicana. GASA*, III.
[620] Dunn, *The Peasants' Revolt*, p. 93.
[621] Walsingham, *GASA*, III, pp. 285-372.

need to take issue with their landlords than those un-free peasants of the south.[622] St Albans was very close to London and could be reached on foot. The people of St Albans would have had been in direct contact with people coming through St Albans to get to and from London; and so if there was a rebellion they would have heard and would have been encouraged by the Londoners. This would explain why the rebellion took place in St Albans despite the townspeople being relatively happy with their current abbot.

There were leaders of the rebellion, some national, others local. William Grindecobbe was the local leader for those in and around St Albans. He emerged as the leader but does not appear to have been as successful in gathering as many people as John Wrawe did in Bury St Edmunds. Wrawe was a former priest from Sudbury, who led the rebels to sacking the town and negotiating with the monks. When the rebels were suppressed in the area, Wrawe fled, and attempted to hide, but he was captured by the end of June. His trial was on 10 July in London, at which he confessed, but also gave over twenty-four names of his fellow rebels. On 6 May 1382 he was drawn and hanged.[623] Grindecobbe played an important role in the revolt by travelling to London and meeting with Wat Tyler, ensuring that the St Albans rebels had his support, and if necessary, his man power. Most sources agree that Tyler came from Kent, possibly Maidstone. Not much else is known about Tyler, apart from his actions as the rebels' leader. Some chronicles say that Wat had the single most important role in the revolt.[624] Of all the leaders of the revolt, the identity of John Ball is most certain. He was a radical preacher and had been preaching in Kent for many years prior to 1381. Henry Knighton's chronicle sees Ball being freed from the Archbishop of Canterbury's custody by the Kentish rebels when they met at Blackheath, however, Dunn writes that it appears that he had been released prior to this meeting.[625] Walsingham connects Ball with heresy and Lollardy, something Dunn says there is no evidence for.[626] When Tyler was killed at Smithfield, John Ball fled. He was found and arrested at Coventry, and from there he was sent to St Albans for his trial on 12 July, which Walsingham witnessed. On 15 July, after confessing, he was drawn and hanged and quartered, his quarters being sent to the four corners of the kingdom.[627] According to Dobson the chroniclers Froissart, Walsingham, and Knighton all agreed that John Ball was an important man with regards to the rebellion. These three men probably exaggerated Ball's significance because they wanted a 'scapegoat'.[628]

Thomas de la Mare had Grindecobbe arrested and sent to prison in Hertford. From there, he was released on bail and returned to St Albans. This appears to have been a mistake, because

[622] Hilton, *Bond men made free*, pp. 165-166.
[623] Dunn, *The Peasants' Revolt*, pp. 151-153, 173.
[624] Ibid. pp. 75-76.
[625] Ibid. pp. 78-79.
[626] Ibid. p. 81.
[627] Walsingham, *The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, p. 163.
[628] R. B. Dobson, *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381* (London, 1970), p. 372.

Grindecobbe was soon calling the townspeople to once again rise against the abbot, and so he was taken to gaol in Hertford to await trial before the royal justices. On 13 July, knights, men at arms and archers came to St Albans, and the trial was to be held in The Moot Hall. Grindecobbe was taken from gaol in Hertford to St Albans once again. His trial had to wait until after John Ball's. The jury returned on 13 October and Grindecobbe, among others, was found guilty, and taken away to be hanged, finally ending the revolt in St Albans.[629] Grindecobbe and the other local rebels would have known the monks, especially because the monastery tended to recruit locally.

At St Albans during the revolt, Abbot Thomas de la Mare was in charge, and he had John Moot as his prior. The two of them were treated very differently by the townspeople, as we can see from the reactions towards them during the revolt. Both had similar career paths, being cellarer, and eventually becoming Abbot. Thomas de la Mare held office from 1349 to 1396 having taken over from Abbot Michael Mentmore who died on 12 April 1349. The Pope confirmed his election, amidst the plague, on 8 July 1349.[630] De la Mare was born to a family with noble connections, yet he and his siblings all chose a religious life, with one of his brothers becoming a monk at St Albans. Thomas went to grammar school, but did not go to Oxford like other monks and abbots of St Albans, despite being considered to be very intelligent. He entered St Albans in 1326 and was sent to complete his novitiate year at the monastery's dependency in Wymondham, in Norfolk. In 1336, on the election of Michael of Mentmore, Thomas was recalled back to St Albans, where he was given positions of increasing importance and finally became prior of Tynemouth, another dependency of St Albans, in 1340. Tynemouth, in Northumberland was close to the border of Scotland, and suffered frequent attacks from the Scots. De la Mare appears to have been able to reform the house, both in religious and economic terms. He returned to St Albans in 1349 nine years later at 40 years old. He was not the first choice for Abbot of St Albans, however, the first choice, the prior of Wymondham, refused and so it was left for him.[631] After his election he travelled to Avignon, to seek papal benediction, as newly elected abbots did, and he had his licence to return on 14 July 1349 after a blessing by Bertrand, Cardinal Bishop of Sabina.[632] De la Mare clearly held an education and being learned in high regard, he is said to have taken 'special pride' in having learned councillors to assist him.[633] These councillors must have been disliked because they fled with John Moot to Tynemouth in 1381 to avoid the rebels.[634]

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[629] Walsingham, *GASA*, III, pp. 339-372.
[630] Vera C. M. London David M. Smith, *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales II: 1216-1377* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 63.
[631] Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, II, pp. 41-42.
[632] London and Smith, *The Heads of Religious Houses II*, p. 63.
[633] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, p. 32.
[634] Ibid.

Thomas de la Mare and Thomas Walsingham worked together to create the new scriptorium at St Albans.[635] Later on, Walsingham and other senior monks had a dispute with de la Mare and in 1394 Walsingham was sent to Wymondham Priory, which, according to the *Gesta,* was an inappropriate appointment for a scholar.[636] The Abbot's chaplain, William Wintershill composed a biography of the Abbot, which still survives today.[637] The abbot suffered from the second wave of the Black Death in 1360, yet he survived. However, by 1390, he was around 80 years old and so had to delegate many tasks to his prior, John Moot.[638] He was considered by David Knowles to be a key figure in the economic and spiritual success of the monastery during a time when many others were going into decline.[639] He died on 15 September 1396.[640]

John Moot was another important character in the times surrounding the revolt at St Albans. At St Albans he was cellarer and then prior before becoming the abbot after Thomas de la Mare's death in 1396. He was elected on 9 October 1396 and was abbot for five years until his death in late 1401.[641] As with any administration, the management of the manors of St Albans had periods of lax authority and periods of attentive authority. John Moot was an efficient cellarer who ensured dues were paid. This must have made this man very unpopular with the tenants, and would explain why he fled to Tynemouth when the revolt began in St Albans, taking the lawyers of the house with him.[642]

The cellarer at the time of the revolt was Robert Chestan, who held the position from 1374 to 1396, which is a considerably long time for a cellarer to be in office. In 1380, he was also described as being an archdeacon.[643] The villeins burnt many of the records of the manors of St Albans; many court rolls were burnt, which is why we have none that survive today, as were the records of the archdeacon, possibly because the villeins hoped that by destroying them they would no longer owe services on the lord's land. What survive instead are court books, which were far more convenient for the monastic officials. In the *Gesta Abbatum*, we see that the villeins of the manor of Barnet demanded the court book from the abbot in order that they could burn it. These court books were very useful for the abbey to keep in good condition, it allowed them to look at previous records if

[635] Walsingham, *The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, p. 6.

[636] Clark, 'Thomas Walsingham Reconsidered', 832-860 (p. 837).

[637] Walsingham, *The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, p. 19; *GASA*, III, pp. 375-423; Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 7, ff. 91r - 102v.

[638] James G. Clark, 'Mare, Thomas de la (c.1309–1396)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press,* ([http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18039, accessed 2 Sept 2016], 2004).

[639] Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, II, pp. 115-124.

[640] Ibid.

[641] Smith, *The Heads of Religious Houses, III*, p. 62.

[642] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 89, 92, 111.

[643] Ibid. pp. 222-223. St Albans was a monastic archdeaconry within the see of Lincoln according to papal bulls obtained from Pope Adrian IV in 1122 and 1157. Sayers, pp. 181-182.

anything is disputed and was very valuable to the administration of the abbey.[644] The Abbot promised the tenants that he would give it to them within three weeks, and fortunately for him, the revolt was over by that time.[645]

The halimote records for the year of 1381 can also give us some information as to what was happening on the manors at the time of the revolt. There were still two courts in the year of 1381, which is the same format as the halimotes prior to the Black Death; one court was in April and the second in September. However, the business at the court has been drastically reduced, which could mean that there was less land being exchanged at the time. The entry fines of 10d. in 1381 were very similar to those between 1346 and 1352, with 12d. being the fine for a cottage with a courtyard. The tenants were also entering land with the same terms as before, with themselves and their heirs in villeinage.[646] Similarly, in the September court of that year there was a marriage licence paid for by John Bovere for his daughter Margaret to marry, for which he pays 12d.[647] This appears to have been similar to the average payment in previous years. Therefore, between the extent in 1332 and corresponding halimotes, and these court records from 1381, fifty years had passed but not much had changed for the peasants. This could have been very frustrating for them, especially after the Black Death, where they should have been experiencing a higher quality of life because of the decreased population. Codicote was one of the manors that were not listed by Walsingham as those who revolted against the abbot during the revolt, although we cannot be sure that no tenants from the manor were involved, the only action that seems to have been taken by the Codicote manor was the arson of the mill.[648] The fact that the townspeople and those from the surrounding manors were rebelling shows that they wanted their freedom; this is presumably because they were starting to enjoy a higher standard of living and wanted this to continue. It also demonstrates that the peasants believed that they were in a strong enough position to make these demands.

Walsingham claims his account of 1381 to be a first hand one, in which the chronicler himself bore witness to the events and also the conversations had between the abbot and townspeople. This makes this account highly valuable, but should be read cautiously. During the revolt the townspeople of St Albans and the servants of the abbot went to London. The townspeople went to Bow, London, and discussed their enslavement to the monastery and how they might, 'effect the wishes they had long harboured in secret.'[649] It is difficult to know how many of these people included tenants of the manors. These wishes were for their animals to graze freely, that they could fish, hunt and hawk, that they could have hand mills and that they could have no interference from

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[644] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, p. 81.
[645] Ibid. pp. 32, 76-79.
[646] BL MS Stowe, 849, p. 214
[647] BL MS Stowe, 849, p. 214-5; see chapter 3 for a full discussion on the manor of Codicote.
[648] Walsingham, *GASA*, III, p. 330.
[649] Walsingham, *The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, p. 131.

the bailiff of the liberty inside of the town. The rebels from the town went to the King to get a letter to the abbot. William Grindcobbe who became the leader of the rebellion at St Albans, was said to have had some relatives who were monks of the monastery. He had also been involved in problems with the monastery prior to the as a result of the abbot's officials taking measures from some town houses. He had attended the almonry school at St Albans and so knew the monastery well. He was said to have held property in the town, so although he may have started life as a poor scholar at the school, he may have done well for himself in adulthood.[650] He was the principal negotiator with the King. He and others slandered the monastery, abbot and monks before the King and the mob, and the King gave him the letter he wanted. Grindcobbe had an interview with Wat Tyler, and he managed to persuade him to send some 20,000 men to kill the abbot and monks and destroy the abbey, should the abbot not yield to the requests of the rebels. However, Tyler only agreed if the men of St Albans would accept his leadership. It was at this point that John Moot decided to flee.[651] Levett explains that this may be the reason why the council of the abbot fled to Tynemouth with John Moot. It was fortunate that they did, because the tenants wished for the seneschal and members of the abbot's council to be handed to them, in order that they could kill them.[652]

The following day, the leaders of the rebellion went to the people of the area surrounding St Albans and said that those who could bear arms should join them, on pain of death and to bring weapons with them. Therefore, a crowd arrived at St Albans, Walsingham suggests a number of 2,000; the true number might well have been less than this because of exaggeration. Some townspeople, Walsingham says, 'whose hearts had been touched by God', warned the abbot of what the plans were, so the monastery was prepared.[653] The rebels went to the gates of the abbey, were let in by the gatekeeper, who had also been pre-warned, and promptly freed the prisoners held at the abbey's prison. They beheaded one prisoner, and attached his head to the pillory. They did this to show the people of the town who they would be answering to from now on. Richard of Wallingford, not to be confused with the abbot of 1327, arrived with the letter from the King. The abbot had decided on a speedy death in defence of the liberties of the monastery rather than doing anything that would harm the abbey and so he went out to meet the rebels. Walsingham recounts a conversation between the abbot and Richard, which he recorded for his chronicle. However, the records of these speeches could have been used as propaganda for the monastery. The abbot, Thomas, read the letter, and told them why he could not and would not grant their requests. Richard said,

'You should think of the thousands of people at the doors of the monastery waiting for a speedy answer, who will no doubt turn their anger on to us if we delay any longer in this matter. For they have made up their

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[650] Ibid. p. 132. Hilton, *Bond men made free*, p. 203.
[651] Walsingham, *GASA*, III, pp. 285-372.
[652] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 155, 161.
[653] Walsingham, *The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, p. 170.

minds either to get what they want immediately or to send messages to Wat Tyler, asking him to come with twenty thousand men to destroy this place and put the lives of the monks in danger.'[654]

The abbot was dismayed to hear this, and replied;

'For shame good neighbours! It is now thirty-two years since I became your abbot and father, and never have I shown you hostility or caused you sadness. Rather, as often as you were in trouble or distress, I have laboured to free you from the miseries by which you were beset. And you, for no reason, are doing all you can to overthrow me, your friend and peace loving lord.'[655]

Their reply was,

'We admit that you have been a fair and peace loving master towards us, and that is why we decided not to cause you any trouble during your abbacy in pursuit of our rights. Indeed we were waiting for the day of your death, so that the triumph of our cause might be over your successor after your death. But now there is no further business between us, except for you to escape danger by yielding at once, and for us to return to the commons with one answer or another, so that our lives are not put at risk by delay.'[656]

Thomas chose to grant the rebels what they wanted, which Walsingham describes as the lesser evil. The abbot promised to draw up charters of liberties for them; however, this did not stop the rebels burning the records of the monastery. During this time, the rebels also entered the monastery, destroyed the millstones and gave them out to the townspeople. However, the townspeople still wanted more; they wanted an ancient charter of liberties, something that the abbot said he knew nothing about. The demands made by the rebels in London included charters of freedom; the St Albans rebels demands show that they wanted their freedom too, but wanted to ensure it by burning the monastery's documents and by owing fewer dues. The rebels gave the abbot until 3pm to find it. At 3pm, the abbot gave them the charter he had drawn up that the rebels had requested, but because the rebels had not written it themselves, they were not satisfied. They drew up their own charter and a truce was made until 3pm the following day. According to Walsingham's account, overnight the monks were distressed, with almost all of them planning to somehow escape. But, the following morning, rumours spread of Wat Tyler's death, and a King's knight came into the town and read a proclamation of peace from the King. The King also sent a letter of protection to the monastery.[657]

The townspeople continued to demand their liberties, and the leading citizens of the town entered the abbot's chamber demanding the charters of manumission. They obtained the charter but not the ancient charter that they wanted and asked instead for a pledge of 1,000 pounds signed and sealed

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[654] Walsingham, trans. by Preest. p. 135.
[655] Walsingham, *Chronica Maiora*, trans. by Preest.
[656] Walsingham, *Chronicla Maiora*, trans. by Preest. pp. 135-136.
[657] Walsingham, *GASA*, III, pp. 308-315.

by the abbot, while giving the abbot more time to find the ancient charter. According to Steven Justice the rebels did not want to destroy 'the documentary culture of feudal tenure and royal government, but re-create it.'[658] The King visited St Albans towards the end of the month of June after hearing of the actions of the townspeople to ensure that those deserving punishment received it. Those who were known to be involved in the riot were arrested. The leaders were taken to Hertford. William Grindcobbe, and two other leaders, William Cadington, a baker, and John the Barber and some others were condemned to death for disturbing the peace. Along with fifteen other people they were drawn and hanged as traitors. Richard Wallingford and others were put in prison after their neighbours informed against them. Eighty others were sent to prison, but later were pardoned by the King and were set free.[659] Unfortunately, little is known about these men, as many of the abbey's judicial records were burned during the revolt.[660]

The reasons for the revolt at Bury St Edmunds differed from those at St Albans where the burgesses were revolting primarily because of tensions in the town such as the prohibition of the use of hand mills and other mills not owned by the abbey. At Bury St Edmunds, however, the poll tax was the primary reason to rebel, along with a feeling of unhappiness among the burgesses.[661] The rebellion of Bury St Edmunds had been a long time coming in coming. The revolt in East Anglia was far more violent than seen elsewhere, including St Albans. John Wrawe marched to Bury, on invitation by the townspeople, at a time when the position of abbot was vacant. John of Cambridge, the prior, was managing the monastery. On 13 June 1381, the rebels, the wealthy in secret, and the poor, arrived at Bury St Edmunds and told those living there to join them; refusal meant decapitation. The burgesses then turned their hostile focus on the monastery.[662] Wrawe's men plundered houses owned by the abbey officials. That night, the prior fled, much like John Moot, as he had heard of the rebels' intent to kill him. Unfortunately, he was not as lucky as Moot in his escape; he was betrayed and captured three miles from Newmarket, on his way to Ely. He had a mock trial in Mildenhall in front of Wrawe and was beheaded on 15 June; his head was put on a spike and taken back to Bury St Edmunds. The chief justice also succumbed to the same fate, and the monk who exacted the manorial dues and fines, John Lakenheath, was the third victim. Wrawe was in possession of the town for eight days. On 16 June, the burgesses and rebels wanted all charters and muniments concerning them to be handed over, refusal would have meant the death of the monks and destruction of the monastery. The monks, out of fear, promised the charters and to restore rights forfeited after the burning of the abbey in 1327. After being yet again threatened with death, the monks handed over the muniments and more than £10,000 worth of jewels.[663] However, the town was under royal protection, the burgesses were eventually ordered to give back

[658] Steven Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381* (Berkley, 1994)
[659] Ibid. pp. 317-354.
[660] Hilton, *Bond men made free*, p. 203.
[661] Lobel, *The borough of Bury St. Edmund's*, p. 152.
[662] Ibid.
[663] Ibid, p. 154.

the jewels. Nevertheless, despite the demands of the Earl of Suffolk, they were kept for fourteen weeks and then returned. Earl William Ufford arrived in Bury St Edmunds on 23 June with a royal army of 500 men, whom the rebels could not hope to beat. After the revolt was over, the King punished the town of Bury, despite burgesses appealing for protection of the innocent.[664]

Bishop Henry Despenser of Norwich had avoided capture by the rebels because he was staying at his Rutland manor of Burley. He had eight men and archers with him, and proceeded to Norfolk. Whilst on his way he came across Sir William Morely and Sir John Brewes who were taking a message to the King in London. These two knights were prisoners of the rebels, and once they told the bishop, he ensured the rebels were beheaded and displayed their heads at Newmarket. On his journey local gentry came out to support the bishop. On 25 or 26 June, the bishop and his forces met the rebels in North Walsham where fighting ensued until Despenser was victorious. The rebels who remained in Norfolk dispersed on hearing about Despenser and those with him. Finally, the rising in Cambridge was ended by some of Despenser's men who had ridden there.[665]

Walsingham's account of what occurred between the rebels and abbot allows us to see the motives of the rebels and also gives us a glimpse into what the townspeople thought of Abbot Thomas. Although it may be biased towards of the abbot the narrative shows that the townspeople did want the charter proving that the town was a liberty in order that they could be free from the rule of the monastery. On the manors the reactions were the same, they wanted their freedom from villeinage and their services and dues. It is obvious too that the mills were a point of contention as they had been a familiar theme throughout the past century for the monastery and would continue to be so. The fact that the only involvement of the manor of Codicote in the revolt was the burning of the mill shows that this may have been a priority for them. St Albans also differed from Bury St Edmunds in the violence that occurred during both rebellions in 1327 and 1381. The St Albans townspeople appear to not have wanted to be violent towards the monastery, and that it was only with the encouragement from London that there was a threat of violence. This demonstrates that although the townspeople did not agree with the actions of the abbot and monastery and the governance of the town, they do not appear to have wanted to incite violence against this particular abbot. If Walsingham's account is true, the townspeople respected Abbot Thomas and of course many of the monks would have been people they knew and even their kin.

5.3 Social Composition of the Rebels

The question of the social classes of those involved in the revolt has been much debated by historians. Rodney Hilton chooses to use the term the English Uprising to avoid using the term

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[664] Ibid, p. 155.
[665] Dunn, *The Peasants' Revolt*, pp. 163-165.

peasants, because it was not only the peasants who were rebelling.[666] Many chroniclers and writers referred to the rebels exclusively as peasants. The poet John Gower was one such writer.[667] Walsingham writes of rural peasants joining with townspeople, and chronicles from Westminster, Bury St Edmunds and Evesham all echo his words. Henry Knighton, an Augustinian canon from Leicester wrote about the commoners and the plebs, but also of apprentices at Blackheath. Of the leaders, we do not know for certain what social class they are from, but John Ball and John Wrawe were priests, Geoffrey Litster was a dyer, and Wat Tyler's surname may have referred to his occupation. However, these all may have been pseudonyms. Knighton believed that Jack Straw was a pseudonym for Wat Tyler. This view is also seen in the Dieulacres Chronicle, which suggests that Wat Tyler might be Straw, and that he was from a Kentish gentry family and a sheep farmer. When looking at the escheator's records we see further that there was less involvement by peasants and more of higher classes than is initially thought. These records show the confiscations after the revolt of the rebels involved, and lists, what Hilton describes as a 'substantial minority' of occupations next to the name of the rebel, where an occupation is not given, it is assumed that they have an agricultural occupation. The occupations given are those that would be essential to the peasants, including carpenters, cobblers, tailors, skinners, bakers, and butchers. There were some members of the gentry like Sir Roger Bacon from Norfolk, but they were an inconsequential minority. The majority of rebels in these records seem to be landless, but if they were unfree, their land would have reverted back to their lord when the villein was convicted. Using the escheator's records, Hilton concludes that the rebels were all those beneath the rank of the lord in both the country and the towns. Therefore, the revolt was of the general population against the lawyers, lords, and government.[668]

In the rural areas, it may have been the poor who were rebelling against paying the third poll tax, and were against giving their hard earned money, possibly as much as three days' wages to their King. However, in the urban areas, the townspeople wanted the right to self govern, and this would mean having people ready and able to do this. Such people are unlikely to have been the peasants of the town. There is evidence from the guild of St Alban in the town that indicates that the middle and upper classes of the town were involved in the revolt. The guild, of Saint Alban, first appeared in 1377, founded by Abbot Thomas de la Mare (1349-1396). It was then dissolved just a few years after its foundation, because of the part its members played in the revolt in the town in 1381.[669] This demonstrates that the revolt in St Albans was not merely limited to the peasants, and that the town fits into Hilton's social composition. Although the role of the middle and upper classes is unknown, it is possible that they provided the peasants with assistance or they may have been more

[666] R. H. Hilton and T. H. Aston, *The English rising of 1381* (Cambridge, 1984).

[667] John Gower, 'Vox Clamantis', in *The Complete Works of John Gower* ed. by G. C. Macaulay (Oxford, 1902).

[668] Hilton, *Bond men made free,* pp. 176-185.

[669] Page, *VCH*, II, p. 480.

actively involved with the rebellion itself.[670] Despite Walsingham wanting the rebels to be seen as ungrateful peasants, further evidence that the upper classes revolted at St Albans comes from the *Westminster Chronicle* when the King went to St Albans to repress the rebellion there and had to punish the upper classes who wanted to destroy the abbey, calling them, *nobiliores de villa*.[671] Just as those surrounding London were encouraged by the London and Kent rebels, it seems as though the villeins of St Albans and the surrounding manors could have been encouraged by the upper classes in St Albans, and were certainly encouraged by William Grindcobbe. Because of Grindcobbe's previous problems with the monastery it is hardly surprising that he followed those in London into rebelling against the monks and abbey.

5.4 Aftermath

Just after the revolt on 30 June, the King started issuing orders. He wanted it proclaimed in all towns and places in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire that tenants, both free and villein, should, without argument nor resistance, carry out customary dues that they owe to the abbot, the same as they did before the revolt.[672] During the revolt, a number of important officials died, and many records were burnt, which meant that these people and records both had to be replaced. As soon as the King had control of London he wanted the revolt to be suppressed quickly elsewhere. There were royal commissions and also private prosecutions so that people could regain some compensation for their losses of lands, buildings, and possessions. Later that year parliament was held in November. The new treasurer posed questions to the Commons as to how the Crown should respond to such challenges as they had seen during the summer months. The Commons wanted better ministers to the King, and so many were replaced. They also did not see themselves to blame for the revolt, despite using lower wages for their villeins and servants as a way to have a higher living standard for themselves and approving the Poll Taxes and Statute of Labourers. They also wanted three pardons, which they received: one was for executing those involved not using the proper process; the second was for those who had participated in the revolt; and the third was for those who had remained loyal. The King agreed to pardon those involved except those in Bury St Edmunds, Cambridge, and Canterbury.[673]

The century that preceded the revolt had seen some catastrophic events, which most developed societies would have struggled to cope with even now. With the famine of 1315, the Black Death of 1349, and subsequent visitations of the disease, the Hundred Years' War and the strain it put on the general population to pay to fund it, it is no surprise that the people revolted. This chapter has

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[670] See Chapter 6 on the fifteenth century wills and guilds for more information about religious guilds in St Albans.

[671] L. C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey, *The Westminster chronicle : 1381-1394* (Oxford: 1982), p. 14.

[672] Walsingham, *The Chronica maiora*, p. 165.

[673] Dunn, *The Peasants' Revolt*, pp. 167-185.

examined the Peasants' Revolt, which was probably the worst period for relations between the monastery and the townspeople, and also the tenants of the manors belonging to the monastery. A key figure in this revolt, Abbot Thomas de la Mare should also be mentioned as being instrumental in keeping the violence to a minimum; he was an intelligent Abbot in that he had a good rapport with the townspeople, despite being their landlord, and their supposed enemy. It is possible that the revolt in St Albans could have had a far worse outcome had he not been in charge. John Moot returned to St Albans, and became Abbot on Thomas's death. It is clear that there were serious grievances between the monastery and the townspeople. These had been lying dormant for many years; they surfaced during the 1327 rebellion and then again, far more seriously, in 1381. The cause of the revolts in St Albans and other places is probably a topic that will be discussed for a long time yet. It is difficult to put different weightings on these reasons that have been listed above. Certainly, the poll tax was a hard time for many people in England at the time, but it is also clear that those rebelling in St Albans were not doing so because of financial pressure caused by taxes, but a completely unrelated reason of their unfree status, which included paying to use the abbot's mills. The mills continued to be a problem even into the fifteenth century, with Abbot Whethamstede having to contend with people using their own hand mills.[674]

Those rebelling in Kent and Essex gave the tenants of St Albans an opportunity that they seized. It is also probable that the upper classes were involved in the revolt, and encouraged the villeins to use this opportunity to attempt to gain their freedom. Although the revolt of 1381 was not immediately successful, it did alert the landlords that things must change, and going into the fifteenth century, we do see more manumissions and freedoms given to the tenants of the manors of St Albans. Therefore, although there was not immediate change for those who had taken part in the revolt, there would have been for their children, grand children, and great-grand children.

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[674] For more information on this see chapter 6.

Chapter 6 - The Fifteenth Century

The fifteenth century was an easier time for both the town and the rulers of the town, the abbots of St Albans. Although there were still some differences between the abbots and townspeople, mostly regarding the use of the lord's mills, the townspeople appear to have been more settled and happy with their lords. John Whethamstede was one of these abbots; he was elected twice for the position and presided over the abbey during such times as the two Battles of St Albans. Although unpopular among his own monks, he appears to have been popular with the townspeople. He was a scholarly man and pushed for educational reform. This chapter will also briefly look at the manumissions granted by the abbots in the fifteenth century and how they might have improved relations between the tenants and the abbey. The second part of this chapter will analyse the wills left by the townspeople of St Albans, and will demonstrate their devotion to their religion, whether this be religious guilds, parish churches, or the monastery itself. From these wills I will form a conclusion as to the nature of the relationship between the abbey and the townspeople and what their religious affiliations were during this time.

6.1 Abbot John Whethamstede

John Whethamstede was born in around 1392, probably at Wheathampstead in Hertfordshire, around five miles from the monastery of St Albans. John's father, Hugh Bostock was from the Midlands and went to Wheathampstead after his marriage to Margaret. Margaret was the daughter of Sir Thomas Makery and so the marriage meant that John was a local landowner. Another local noble was the Lady Sudeley and her family, with whom John had dealings with later on in his monastic career. He was the eldest and only son and controlled his family's estates and manor despite being a monk and abbot. John attended a local grammar school and it appears that he was a proficient scholar, which may give some indication as to why he pushed for the education of monks during his abbacy. By the time he was sixteen, he had become a novice at St Albans, this was a young age to be admitted and so he must have demonstrated promise. He also had familial ties within the monastery; William Whethamstede, John's uncle, had been a prior at Tynemouth. It is not surprising that John was sent to Oxford at Gloucester College, Oxford, being given the position of the college's *prior studentium* in 1417. Shortly after returning to the monastery he was elected as abbot in September 1420. His intellect and promise was shown again when in May 1421 he, a young abbot, was selected with five other more senior Benedictine abbots, to represent the Benedictines at the Council of Westminster, and he was the most able spokesperson of those

selected.[675] Whethamstede belonged in the social circle of Humphrey, the Duke of Gloucester, and therefore was well connected.[676] Both men were humanists and exchanged books and gifts with each other; the abbot even gave Humphrey a copy of the *Historia Anglorum* and the *Chronica Majora 1254-9* by Matthew Paris.[677] In 1433, Humphrey gave £433 6s. 8d. in order that a chantry tomb should be built for him at St Albans Abbey, which is where he was buried on his death in February 1447.[678]

In November 1440 John resigned and went to live on his manor in Wheathampstead after receiving a papal sanction allowing him to do so.[679] The resignation was due to his difficulties with opponents of his, both within and outside of the monastery, and the strain on the conventual resources due to reforms that had damaged his public image. Whilst in retirement John probably focused on his scholarly interests, coming back to the monastery only to supervise the burial of Humphrey of Gloucester in 1447. However, he was persuaded to return to St Albans again in January 1452 on the death of Abbot John Stoke and was re-elected as abbot.[680] During Stoke's abbacy, William Wallingford was archdeacon and William Albon was prior, and the monks were divided on whom to elect as abbot.[681] Eventually, both Wallingford and Albone became abbot, Albone in 1465 to 1476 and Wallingford after him from 1476 to 1492.[682] Despite Whethamstede being considered to be the last option, and his reasons for retirement in the first place, the townspeople were apparently very happy to have him return and thanked God for his re-election.[683] Knowles regarded Whethamstede as having lost his enterprise of his first abbacy, but served the abbey well during the two battles of St Albans.[684]

The register containing the details of the abbacy of John writes of the senior brothers who approached the abbot asking for the reformation on three issues: the youth in the cloister; the number of brothers in study; and the preaching of the divine word by brothers in the pulpit.[685] The fifteenth century saw further problems that the abbot had to contend with regarding hand mills and

[675] James G. Clark, 'Whethamstede , John (*c*.1392–1465)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29197, accessed 25 May 2016]

[676] Margaret Harvey, 'John Whethamstede, The Pope and the General Council', in *The Church in pre-Reformation society : essays in honour of F.R.H. Du Boulay,* ed. by Caroline M. Barron and Christopher Harper-Bill (Woodbridge, 1985), pp. 108-122 (p. 109).

[677] Alessandra Petrina, *Cultural politics in fifteenth-century England : the case of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester* (Leiden, 2004), p. 351.

[678] Susanne Saygin, *Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (1390-1447) and the Italian humanists* (Leiden, 2002), p. 113.

[679] Smith, *The Heads of Religious Houses, III*, p. 62.

[680] Clark, 'Whethamstede'.

[681] David Knowles, *The Religious Orders In England volume 3 : The Tudor Age* (Cambridge, 1959), p. 8.

[682] Smith, *The Heads of Religious Houses, III*, p. 62.

[683] *Registra quorundam abbatum monasterii S. Albani*, I, p. 20.

[684] Knowles, *The Religious Orders In England volume 3*, p. 8.

[685] *Registra quorundam abbatum monasterii S. Albani*, I, pp. 24-25.

the refusal of the suit of multure. These can be seen the Abbot John Whethamstede's registers. The main case, in 1455, involves a man called John Chertesey and his wife in Watford. John, an outsider to Watford, moved there and built a horse mill to use to grind his barley. The millstones he used for his mill were seized by order of the abbot. Chertesey's wife was clearly not happy with the seizing of the stones, so she and other female supporters took the millstones back again. The abbot, who was probably infuriated by this stage, wanted John Chertesey to be accountable for the actions of his wife and to answer for her, and so he began legal proceedings against the man. Chertesey sued for pardon, but also asked for permission to grind his oats with his horse mill. The abbot, unsurprisingly refused and eventually, Chertesey removed the mill he built.[686]

The fifteenth century saw the Wars of the Roses, which brought two separate battles to St Albans, one in 1455 and the second in 1461. The war was a civil one and lasted for thirty years from 1455 to 1485, yet it did not have too much of an impact on the day-to-day life in England.[687] However, it did do damage to the towns where the battles took place. The Wars arose partly from the king's incapacity to rule. King Henry VI inherited his father's throne at nine months of age, turning 18 in 1439. In 1445, Henry married Margaret of Anjou, but in 1450, there was still no heir and so Richard, Duke of York was made the heir presumptive. Richard was exiled in 1452 after his army was intercepted in Dartford when he made an attempt to take control of the country. In August 1453 Henry had a mental breakdown and he could not communicate for fifteen months. He required a protectorate, and in 1454 Richard was appointed to the position being the most senior adult male of the royal family at the time. At the same time, the Queen produced an heir, Edward, meaning that Richard was no longer the heir presumptive. In 1455, the King recovered, and Richard withdrew from court, meeting Henry in battle later that year at St Albans.[688] In May that year, the Duke of York marched with his army to St Albans to meet the King, who was on his way to a great council meeting in Leicester.[689] The Duke of Buckingham was sent to Richard to see what his intentions were. Buckingham was told that Richard demanded the surrender of the Duke of Somerset, which the King refused.[690] The King's men were barricaded within the town, but it did not take long for the opposition to break through the houses into the market places. The Earl of Warwick and his men slayed Somerset, Northumberland, and Clifford and at the same time an arrow wounded Henry.[691] The register of Whethamstede gives some details of the fighting in St Albans, and describes a scene of a discarded head and severed limbs with bodies in the street. It goes on to describe the plundering, spoiling, and pillaging of the town by the northern soldiers. They also plundered the opposition's horses and armour. It looked as though they were going to do the same to the monastery, but the *Registra* claims that due to the protection of the martyr Alban,

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[686] Ibid. pp. 199-202.
[687] A. J. Pollard, *The Wars of the Roses*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 5.
[688] Ibid. pp. 19-21.
[689] M. A. Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses 1455-1485* (Oxford, 2003), p. 35.
[690] *Registra quorundam abbatum monasterii S. Albani*, I, p. 167.
[691] Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 35.

the abbey was saved.[692] After the first battle of St Albans the King was escorted back to Westminster where he became once again unable to perform his duties and Richard was the protectorate until his dismissal in 1456. Unfortunately, the new Duke of Somerset and Earl of Northumberland wanted to seek revenge for the death of their fathers and in order to achieve this allied with Margaret of Anjou. By 1459 Margaret had a great deal of support from the noble and gentry classes who were also still loyal to her husband. However, Richard also possessed a large following of lords from York who were very wealthy and some of the Welsh lords.[693] The battles included Blore Heath, Northampton, during which the Yorkists captured Henry, and Mortimer's Cross, and they arrived at St Albans on 17 February 1461, which has become known as the second battle of St Albans. On 30 December 1460, Margaret was victorious at Wakefield, and Richard of York was killed in battle, and so she headed south towards London where Richard was holding Henry VI. Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick made a defensive line north-east of St Albans, using cannon and handguns to make up for the lack of experience of his forces.[694] Unfortunately, unlike the first battle, the abbey did not escape being plundered, and the Queen looted much of the jewels there. According to Galbraith, the surrounding area was also pillaged causing a localised famine.[695] Abbot Whethamstede addressed the monks telling them that they should separate, and he himself went to Whethamstede.[696]

After 1445, John Whethamstede was becoming infirm and had to delegate to his officials. He went from St Albans to his family's manor and died on 20 January 1465. He was buried in the abbey church in the chantry chapel that he himself had built. It is likely that when he died he did not have many of those loyal to him remaining among the monks; only a decade after his death William Wallingford, the man he had opposed due to his fraudulent behaviour in the 1450s, was elected as abbot.[697]

The fifteenth century saw a change in how the estates were to be run around St Albans and in the rest of the country. The law meant that after 1300 there could be no new villeins. After the Black Death the serfs were able to travel to different manors and buy their freedom. There was also a shortage of cash in the fifteenth century, meaning that many villeins could not pay their dues and so they slowly disappeared. According to Bailey this century saw the production of servile genealogies, lists of serfs, and ensuring serfs who claimed to be free were. There could have been two reasons for this, the first is that they wished to keep the current social structure, and the second is that they could use this information to charge payments, which could include manumission.[698]

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[692] *Registra quorundam abbatum monasterii S. Albani*, I, pp. 168-172.
[693] Pollard, *The Wars of the Roses*, pp. 21-23.
[694] Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, pp. 9, 36-37.
[695] Galbraith, *The Abbey of St. Albans from 1300 to the Dissolution.*, p. 51.
[696] *Registra quorundam abbatum monasterii S. Albani*, I, pp. 396-399.
[697] Clark, 'Whethamstede'.
[698] Bailey, *The decline of serfdom,* pp. 13-14, 57-59.

Unfortunately, the court book for Codicote only goes up to 1416 and so does not allow us to get a full picture of the situation on the manor in the fifteenth century. This means that we have to rely on other sources including the abbot's registers. By not having access to the details of what was occurring on the manor, we cannot see if there were any real changes after the Peasants' Revolt for those in Codicote. The registers at St Albans show that in the second half of the fifteenth century manumissions were made to free villeins. Abbots William Albon (1465-76) and William Wallingford (1476-92) are the abbots who made manumission during this time. In July 1465 Thomas Cristmes of Redbourne and his family were all set free from villeinage.[699] In May the following year there was another manumission by the abbot of William Nasshe and Robert Nasshe from Sandridge.[700] In March 1477 we see the manumission by the abbot of a villein in Codicote, Robert Heth.[701] These manumissions continue through the register with a total of around 31 recorded. There may of course also have been many others whose names were not written down. Grants of manumission were not particularly common in the fifteenth century. On the estate of the earls of Strafford there were eight between 1435 and 1454. Throughout the fifteenth century Ramsey Abbey only granted 79. Manumissions were more commonly found later on at the ecclesiastical estates and these landlords also provide the best evidence for them, whether this was because they were more willing to grant the manumissions or were better at keeping records is unknown.[702] These manumissions granted by the abbots at St Albans must have helped a little to improve on the relationship between those who were granted their freedom and the monastery, which was improving during this time.

6.2 Lay devotion at St Albans

This part of the chapter will examine the lay devotion of the townspeople of fifteenth century St Albans. It will address three specific areas of lay religious involvement in the town: religious fraternities, parish participation, and support of the monastery. The wills made by the townspeople provide ample evidence as to where their loyalties lay. By assessing their bequests we can see the extent of their devotion to their religion and what kind of piety was most important to them. There are of course many pitfalls when it comes to looking at medieval wills; they were almost always given orally to a scribe, who was often a cleric. In England, it would have probably have been a local priest, and there could also have been bystanders.[703] John Arnold's work on medieval belief accepts that despite the scribe being present the will would still reflect the dying man's wishes; however, the possibility of an influence by the scribe, if only his presence, must be considered. Another issue is that the will, according to Arnold, only tells us of one point in a person's life, the

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[699] *Registra quorundam abbatum monasterii S. Albani*, II, p. 47.
[700] Ibid. p. 55.
[701] Ibid. pp. 177-178.
[702] Bailey, *The decline of serfdom*, p. 63.
[703] Swanson, *Religion and devotion*, p. 213.

point at which they are dying and so they would have been focused on that and ensuring their eternal salvation and the well-being of their loved ones.[704] The wills of Ramsey Abbey were made in the presence of either the reeve or bailiff; if neither were present then the will was thought by the Abbot not to be valid. On the manors of St Albans, we can see that the cellarer proved the wills, in comparison to those made in the town that were brought before the archdeacon's court.[705] Those made in St Albans itself do not give the name of any specific scribe, but someone would have been present to hear the will. The wills, although highly valuable for examining the piety of the townspeople of St Albans cannot be taken to represent the entire population of the town; not only is the sample of wills too small, but it does not include the very poor and some wills may be missing entirely. The time during which the wills were written must also be taken into account; the fifteenth century town of St Albans was a relatively settled time for the relations between town and monastery. However, not even a century prior, the town suffered through the Black Death and two uprisings leading to the townspeople to be very resentful of their governing abbots.

In the town of St Albans, there were three churches other than the monastery to which testators might leave bequests, the churches of St Stephen's, St Peter's, and St Michael's. The church of St Peter's was, and still is, at the top of the town, and was the church that the majority of the townspeople were buried in and the churches of St Michael's and St Stephen's were slightly further away from the monastery. Finally, there was the chapel of St Andrew's, which was situated within the monastery itself and was attended by some of the townspeople.

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[704] John Arnold, *Belief and unbelief in medieval Europe* (London, 2005), pp. 24-25.
[705] Bennett, *Life on the English manor*, p. 251.

Key:

✝ St Albans Monastery

■ St Peter's

● St Michael's
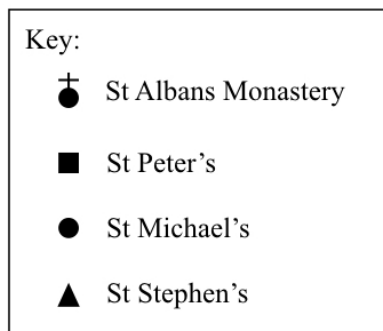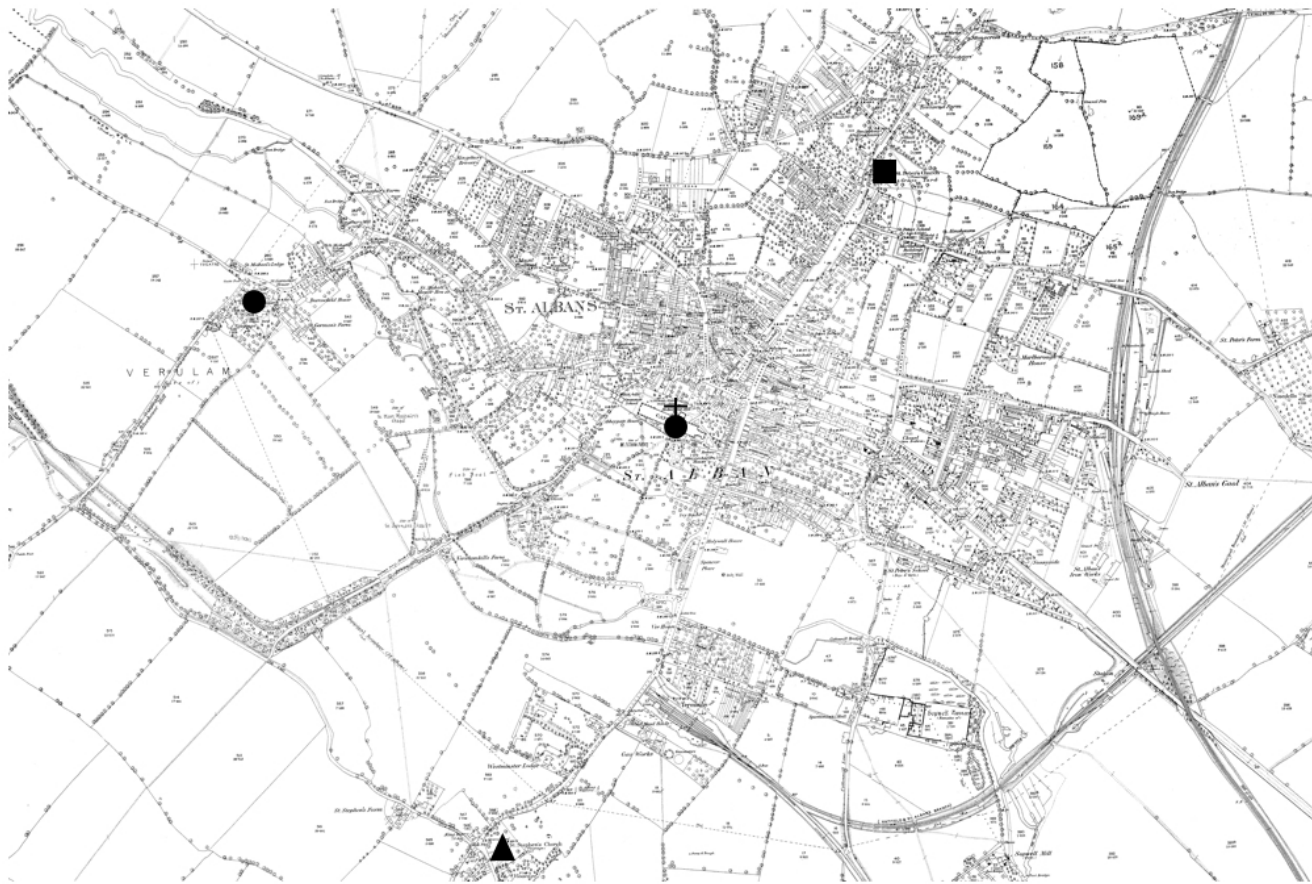
▲ St Stephen's

Figure 6. 1   This map shows the position of the churches in St Albans. The monastery was close to St Peter's and it is clear why St Peters was easy to use for burials in the town when the monastery's burial ground was full. Both St Michael's and St Stephen's are further away, which is why they do not have the same relationship with the monastery as St Peter's does.

The medieval will was composed to make a clear statement as to what was to be done with the property of the deceased.[706] Because the testator was concerned with their death and salvation when writing the will, it is fitting that there was money left to chantries, guilds, and to churches for masses to be said for his or her soul, which may also have been required of them. Almost all medieval wills have one sentence, or often more, at the beginning mentioning God, but this alone cannot be used as a measure of religiosity; instead, as Arnold writes, we need to examine the specific bequests.[707] From the thirteenth century onwards, the written will was becoming increasingly more popular and more important, with more people writing wills because of the growing prevalence of private documents. The introductory section of the will often began with the name of the testator and a statement that he was making his will and that he was ill in body but sound of mind. The main body of the will contained bequests, first for the testator's spiritual benefit, then his or her debts, followed by alms, friends, and relatives. Finally, there would be arrangements for the execution of the will and the name of the executor.[708] Executors were chosen by the testator and were required to bring the will for probate. They were commonly the testator's spouse, or members of the clergy; children and other relatives were often avoided because there was the assumption that they would not follow the wishes of the will.[709] For wives the will of their husband was important; the passage to widowhood not only included the death of a husband and their funeral, but also the proving of his will as the beneficiary of its estate.[710]

Fifteenth-century wills from St Albans are available from 1415 onwards and are held at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALs).[711] These wills are found in registers that contain registered copies of the wills that were presented to the archdeacon's court for probate.[712] The wills themselves provide details regarding the guilds of St Albans where little other evidence of them survives, they allow us to look at the members of these organisations and the gifts the members were prepared to leave their guild on their death. They also tell us of the people who lived in the town and where their allegiances lay, which of the parochial churches they gave money to and whether money was given to the monastery and the monks. Above all they show evidence of what value the townspeople put on the religious institutions around them. Even though the town lay within the diocese of Lincoln, the abbot was able to appoint his own archdeacon as a result of earlier privileges given to the monastery by Pope Adrian IV that were later recognised by Henry II.

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[706] Michael M. Sheehan, *The Will in Medieval England. From the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to the end of the thirteenth century* (Toronto, 1963), p. 177.
[707] Arnold, *Belief and unbelief,* pp. 24-25.
[708] Sheehan, *The Will in Medieval England.* pp. 193-194.
[709] Ibid. pp. 177-190.
[710] Audrey Douglas, 'Salisbury Women and the Pre-Elizabethan Parish', in *Women, marriage, and family in medieval Christendom : essays in memory of Michael M. Sheehan, C.S.B,* ed. by Constance M. Rousseau and Joel H. Rosenthal (Kalamazoo, 1998), pp. 79-117 (p. 96).
[711] Susan Flood has edited some of these wills from 1471 and 1500 in Flood, *St Albans wills.*
[712] Ibid. p. vii.

Therefore, the wills of the town were proved in the court of the archdeacon of St Albans. [713] A select few wills edited by Elizabeth Levett from the court books of the manors belonging to St Albans, provide a comparison to those composed within the town.[714] These wills from the manors demonstrate that villeins were allowed to make wills, despite that in theory, legally they did not own anything, their belongings instead being property of the lord. These wills would not have gone to the archdeacon for probate, but instead to the cellarer for probate in the halimotes. The wills show requests for the salvation of the deceased's soul as well as bequeathing chattels and land. Levett finds it unsurprising that the villeins on the St Albans manors were given the privilege to make wills; the church taught that all men have a duty to have a will and in it their confession. In the court books references to wills rarely occur during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the later wills after the first quarter of the fifteenth century reverts to death-bed surrenders to the bailiff of land for the use of a named heir.[715]

Religious guilds and fraternities became very popular in the fourteenth century; they had their beginnings in urban centres, but soon spread so that almost every village had at least one. The guilds were common throughout medieval Europe and the expansion of them in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries has been attributed to the Black Death, which left many without family and fearful of their own mortality.[716] In London alone, between 1350 and 1550 there is evidence of between 150 and 200 guilds.[717] These fraternities were normally founded for the dedication of a saint or a way of venerating Christ.[718] Swanson writes that merely a decision to pray together could be a reason to form a fraternity.[719] A typical medieval guild would have been founded by a group of men who would have donated either money or items to begin the guild, and an alderman, or keeper, would have been elected for the administration and maintenance of the guild. Following this, the guild had three primary functions. The first was the maintenance of a torch or candle in honour of the guild's saint. It was to be lit every Sunday and Holy Day at the elevation during Mass. The second function was the prayers and alms from living members for the souls of the deceased members. All the members would have been required to attend the funeral of a fellow brother or sister and they would often have given a monetary donation at the mass and with a second for the poor afterwards. Masses were then to be said after the burial for a certain amount of time. The third function was charity, there would have been a Mass on the guild's saint's feast day, and also a

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[713] See Crick's work for more detail on the charters and privileges of the monastery in Crick, *Charters of St. Albans*.

[714] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, pp. 224-234.

[715] Ibid. pp. 208-223.

[716] Gervase Rosser, 'Communities of parish and guild in the late Middle Ages', in *Parish, church and people : local studies in lay religion 1350-1750,* ed. by S. J. Wright (London, 1988), pp. 29-55 (pp. 32-33).

[717] Caroline M Barron, 'The Parish Fraternities of Medieval London', in *The Church in pre-Reformation society : essays in honour of F.R.H. Du Boulay,* ed. by Caroline M. Barron, Christopher Harper-Bill, and F. R. H. Du Boulay (Woodbridge, 1985), pp. 13-37 (p. 13).

[718] Duffy, *The stripping of the altars*, pp. 142-144.

[719] Swanson, *Religion and devotion*, p. 116.

dinner or feast commemorating the saint, during which the organisation of the guild may have been discussed. The fraternities would ensure that its members had a decent burial and would often pay for the burial of members too poor to do so themselves.[720] This was a particular benefit that is common in guilds in Germany, Italy, and Spain.[721] In addition to this, they would help members who were suffering with illness or hardship. The guilds would often have been the beneficiaries of various gifts and bequests, and would have invested their money in livestock, land and tenements, which would then be hired or farmed to members, giving the guild a fund for the maintenance of lights.[722] Normally they would have maintained their wealth from endowments, but they also charged a fee for membership.[723] The annual fee was most commonly one shilling, however, it was sometimes as low as four pence or could be paid in service or kind. Regardless of the amount, a fee was vital to maintain the exclusivity of the guild.[724] Some people could be members of multiple guilds, and fraternities could also have members from all over the country, the Palmers' Guild of Ludlow being one such guild.[725] Guilds are said by some to have been the pioneers of poor relief, and some guilds did give clothes and food to those in need in the way that Christ modelled charity. Despite what was written in their statutes regarding charity, they may not have given charity as they were said to have done, and certainly some only gave to the deserving poor and members of the guild itself.[726] A number of people seemingly unrelated to a guild left money to the poor of St Albans; this money was not to help members of the guilds or the 'deserving poor', but instead simply to the poor of the town. The money was either to be distributed at their burial or in the winter around Christmas time. For example, the will of William Smeth, esquire, in 1497 stated that he wanted his executors to distribute yearly at the feast of Christmas during the next ten years after his death twenty quarters of charcoal to the poor in the parish of St Peter.[727]

Charity was not solely limited to the guilds and the townspeople of St Albans. Those on the manors would also have provided charity to the poor. The priests would have encouraged this charity, they believed that giving alms was a way to purge sins and decrease the time spent in purgatory. Land was often given by those on manors to be sold for charity, but not before ensuring that the deceased's next of kin were going to be taken care of first. On the manors belonging to a Lord, land of the deceased had to be returned to the Lord and an entry fine would have been paid enabling the new holder to use the land. To not follow this procedure meant a fine and the possibility of bailiffs seizing the land. To ensure the safe passage of the soul, to reduce the time spent in purgatory, the sale of the land was often delayed by a generation. It could either be delayed by just one generation, or even simply until the death of a spouse, but it could also be delayed indefinitely,

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[720] Duffy, *The stripping of the altars*, pp. 142-144.
[721] Swanson, *Religion and devotion*, p. 117.
[722] Duffy, *The stripping of the altars*, pp. 142-144.
[723] Margaret Harvey, *Lay religious life in late medieval Durham* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 157.
[724] Rosser, 'Communities of Parish and Guild', p. 35.
[725] Swanson, *Religion and devotion*, pp. 116-118.
[726] Arnold, *Belief and unbelief*, p. 131.
[727] HALS 2AR ff. 85v-86v; edited in Flood, *St Albans wills*, p. 137.

until there was someone with no heirs to pass the land onto. This way the deceased could protect his soul and give to charity, but also take care of his own family first.[728] Elaine Clark argues for a sense of community among the rural people of medieval England explaining that the charity was given was often to their neighbours. Those living in rural England knew how easy it was to suffer hardship, through a bad harvest, sickness, or injury.[729] More simple wills are also to be found on the St Albans manors, the Barnet court book shows that Alice Hamond surrendered her land to the Lord in 1389 on the condition that the new tenant should find a chaplain to celebrate the divine mysteries in the church for the soul of Alice for one year.[730]

The first religious guild, the guild of Saint Alban, appeared in 1377, founded by Abbot Thomas de la Mare (1349-1396). The guild consisted of men and women of the middle and upper classes who would wear their liveries when the relics of Alban were processed outside the monastery. Not long after its foundation it was dissolved because its members were thought to have been involved in the revolt against the abbot in 1381.[731] A second guild, the guild of the Holy Trinity was founded in its place, in honour of the altar of the Holy Trinity within the abbey consisting of 200 men and women of the middle classes. Another guild for the wealthier townspeople was also founded at St Peter's church, called the fraternity of St John the Baptist. Both guilds shared the same fate as that which came before them and, according to the *Victoria County History*, were dissolved shortly after their foundation with no dates given.[732] However, the St Alban's wills show that the guilds of St John the Baptist and the Holy Trinity may have been operating well into the second half of the fifteenth century. Robert Hole's will, written on 23 September 1485, mentions the fraternity of St John the Baptist and gave 2d. for the lights there. Similarly, John Bourdeman's will, written on 7 July 1487 gave 3s. to the fraternity of the Holy Trinity. The only discrepancy is that the money left to the guild of the Holy Trinity in this instance is in the context of St Peter's church, not within the Abbey, where the earlier guild is said to have been.[733] This fraternity could either be the older guild transferred from the abbey to the church, or a new fraternity altogether. These two guilds, St John the Baptist and the Holy Trinity are only mentioned a few times in the wills, the former eight times and the latter only once.

Nevertheless, the guilds reflected the relationship between local lay piety and the abbey. In the thirteenth century, there had been cases of lay access in the naves of Benedictine monasteries. This

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[728] Elaine Clark, 'Charitable Bequests, Deathbed Land Sales, and the Manor Court in Later Medieval England', in *Medieval society and the manor court,* ed. by Zvi Razi and Richard M. Smith (Oxford, 1996), pp. 143-161.

[729] 'Social Welfare and Mutual Aid in the Medieval Countryside', *Journal of British Studies,* 33 (1994), 381-406 (pp. 387-388).

[730] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*, p. 218.

[731] Page, *VCH*, II, p. 480.

[732] Johannes Amundesham, *Annales Monasterii S. Albani, a Johanne Amundesham, Monacho, ut videtur, conscripti, A.D. 1421-1440*, ed. by Henry Riley, II vols (London: Longman, 1871), I, p. 446.

[733] HALS 2AR f. 52v; edited in Flood, *St Albans wills*, p. 87.

occurred at St Albans with secular priests using the nave altars. Access for the townspeople was in the north transept, the eastern ambulatory and the Lady Chapel, and the nave. By the fourteenth century, both the nave and north transept had altars that were used by confraternities. The guild of St Alban had its altar in the nave, and the fraternity of the Holy Trinity had its altar of the Holy Trinity in the north transept.[734]

The social composition of the deceased should be taken into account when examining the wills in relation to money and goods being left to the religious guilds of the town. Although there were a few gentlemen, esquires, seniors and widows in the St Albans wills, very few people left evidence as to their profession or their social standing within the community. The few professions that were given include fisherman, tailor, vicar, servant to the Sacristan, barber, tanner, smith, husbandman, and freemason. Therefore, we must judge from the bequests to the guilds how wealthy they were. Within this guild we do see some higher-class members, the gentleman Thomas Beverley and the esquires Edward Westby and Roland Payable suggesting that the guild was there for both the upper and the lower classes of the town.

The guild of All Saints, also known as the Charnel Brotherhood, at St Peter's church was the fourth religious guild at St Albans, and appears to have been very popular with the townsmen.[735] The Charnel Chapel, situated in the southwest corner of the graveyard of St Peter's church, served as the chapel for this fraternity and it was probably demolished at some point in the sixteenth century.[736] Although there is no known date of its foundation, it is first mentioned in 1416 but it may be far older.[737] There was also a charnel chapel at Bury St Edmunds that Abbot John of Northwold (1279-1301) had had constructed on 11 September 1301. The foundation charter of the chapel states that the Abbot was aggrieved when he saw the conditions of the townspeople's cemetery that was situated within the abbey precinct. A large number of burials had led to graves being violated and bones left uncovered and so the abbot ordered for the charnel chapel to be built so that future bones could either be placed in it or buried underneath it.[738]

The purpose of the Charnel Brotherhood guild is said to be to maintain two chaplains, the money for whom would have come from the guild's central funds; one chaplain was at St Andrew's chapel, positioned in the monastery, which was the parochial church of the town of St Albans, and the other at a separate chapel at St Peter's church.[739] Two other guilds are referred to in the wills; the

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[734] Paul Binski, 'Murals in the nave of St Albans Abbey', in *Church and city, 1000-1500 : essays in honour of Christopher Brooke,* ed. by Christopher Nugent Lawrence Brooke and others (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 249-278 (p. 271).
[735] St Peter's church was situated at the top of the market in St Albans.
[736] Niblett and Thompson, *Alban's Buried Towns*, p. 288.
[737] Flood, *St Albans wills*, p. 4.
[738] Antonia Gransden, *A History of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds, 1257-1301 : Simon of Luton and John of Northwold* (Woodbridge, 2015), pp. 221-222.
[739] Page, *VCH*, II, p. 480.

fraternity of St Mary's at the church of St Stephen's, the third church in the town, and the fraternity of St Clement and St Katherine at St Andrew's chapel. Only a small number of the wills gave money to these fraternities. John Kytwell's will, written on 14 February 1495, left a one-year-old calf to the fraternity at St Stephen's.[740] Similarly, Thomas Catlyn's will, written in 1491, left 2s. 4d. to the fraternity of St Clement and St Katherine, and states that it is within the chapel of St Andrew's.[741]

Religious guilds in England were forced to dissolve a decade after the monasteries succumbed to the same fate. After 1547 their beliefs in purgatory were outlawed, as were the fraternities themselves.[742] The Chantry Certificates for Hertfordshire provide details of just one guild in St Albans after its dissolution, the guild of All Saints, listing the property held by the fraternity. By 1547, the Charnel Brotherhood had a substantial amount of property including crofts, tenements, meadows, shops, land, and two inns, The Bere and The Bull. Much of what was owned by the guild was sold and, as with much of the monastic property after the Dissolution, it was sold to Sir Richard Lee.[743]

Many of the wills of St Albans left a donation to at least one of the guilds within St Albans, even if this was just a small monetary bequest, an animal, lands, or buildings. The guilds would use this donation for a central fund for the maintenance of lights. Most of the deceased left either money, land, or buildings to the guild of All Saints at St Peter's; a few donated to the fraternity of the Holy Trinity at St Peter's; a smaller number still to the guild of St Mary's at St Stephen's and to the fraternity of St Clement and St Katherine at St Andrew's, and only one in the time period of 1471 to 1500 to the fraternity of St John the Baptist at St Andrew's. Most wills state that the deceased left a monetary donation with most amounts being between 2d. and 12d. and generally no more than 40d., although there are a few wills that leave 3s. 4d. The lowest amount is 1d., left by John Bourton in June 1479. In his short will, he states that he wishes to have a Christian burial, and leaves 2d. to the high altar at St Peter's church and 1d. to the Charnel Chapel, the rest he leaves to his wife.[744] The highest monetary amount left to a guild is 6s. 8d. from Roland Payable, esquire, who left the money for the repairs to the Charnel Chapel.[745] Generally, the money left to the guild is similarly matched by the money the individual left to a church, either St Andrew's, St Peter's, or St Stephen's, and usually to the high altar for forgotten tithes, although there are some exceptions. The possessions left to the guilds included: a meadow, hay, lands, tenements, wheat, a sheet, a brass pot, and a calf. Some of the larger items left to the fraternity were left to the deceased's

[740] HALS 2AR f. 78v; edited in Flood, *St Albans wills*, p. 127.
[741] HALS 2AR ff. 59v-60r; edited in Flood. p. 100.
[742] Rosser, 'Communities of Parish and Guild', p. 47.
[743] James Edward Brown, *Chantry Certificates for Hertfordshire* (Hertford, c.1911), p. 21. See Chapter 7 for more information about Richard Lee and the property he acquired.
[744] HALS 2AR f. 30v; edited in Flood, *St Albans wills*, p. 47.
[745] HALS 2AR f. 20r; edited in Flood. p. 30.

family members, which were to be transferred to the guilds upon the death of that family member, in a similar manner to the land left by the villeins, the sale of which was to be delayed for at least one generation. The will of Thomas Beverley, gentleman, who died around April 1480, demonstrates this kind of large gift to the guild by leaving all his land and tenements in St Albans, Colney, and Tyttenhanger to the brothers and sisters of the Charnel Chapel. He wished for this to pay for the maintenance of a chaplain to say mass in St Andrew's chapel for his soul and the souls of the members of the guild.[746] A similar request was made by Edward Westby, esquire, who wished for his wife to inherit either a meadow or croft lying beside 'Barnetheth' (Bernards Heath) for the remainder of her life, and on her death it was to be transferred to the 'Master, guardians, brothers and sisters of 'le charnell', of All Saints'. His reason for giving the Charnel Chapel this meadow or croft was so that a priest would pray at St Peter's on the anniversary of his death for not only his soul, but the souls of his two wives, Joan and Margaret, his brother, father, and mother.[747]

The majority of money left to the Charnel Chapel at St Peter's was for repairs to the chapel itself. However, two wills mention a second chapel, the Cornwall Chapel. The first is in February 1474, where Edward Bensted, esquire, gave 20d. to the Charnel Chapel and then a further 20d. to the repairs of the chapel of the Holy Cross of 'Cornewayle'.[748] A second will mentioning the Cornwall Chapel, is that of John Tanner, who in May 1488, left 6d. for the charnel chapel and then a further 12d. for the new construction of the 'Cornewel chapell' at St Peter's church.[749] The Cornwall Chapel was first mentioned in 1440 and was situated at an unknown site in the churchyard of St Peter's. In 1458 William Datis wished to be buried by the Cross of Cornewayle; in 1459 John Purchas wished to be buried near the chapel of the cross called the Rood of Cornwaile; and in 1471, the chapel is called the chapel of the Holy Cross of Cornwaylle. There is a third chapel that is mentioned in the *Victoria County History*, a small chapel of St Appollonia, which is mentioned in 1479 and 1524.[750]

Some members of the guilds gave money for the maintenance of a chaplain and in most wills this chaplain was to pray for the soul of the deceased and the deceased's family on the anniversary of their deaths. Both Thomas Beverley and Edward Westby, whose wills left items to the fraternities, give their reason as the maintenance of a chaplain. Many wills simply do not specify any use for the donation left to the fraternities. They state the amount of money to be left for the Charnel Chapel, or for the guild of All Saints. John Frygelton wrote, 'To the charnel chapel 6d.' in his will of 1483.[751] The wills that mention Mass or saying prayers for the soul, leaving money for priests to say prayers for their soul and leaving money for the chapel was all preparation for what was to

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[746] HALS 2AR ff. 37v-38r; edited in Flood. p. 61.
[747] HALS 2AR ff. 3v-4r; edited in Flood. p. 8.
[748] HALS 2AR f. 16v; edited in Flood. p. 23.
[749] HALS 2AR ff. 54r-v; edited in Flood. p. 91.
[750] Page, *VCH*, II, p. 420.
[751] HALS 2AR f. 42r; edited in Flood, *St Albans wills*, p. 68.

come for the deceased after their death. They had knowledge of purgatory; it would have been taught to the lay people and so they would have been aware of the concept. These Masses and prayers for the soul are a direct expression of that and of their belief in it, they wanted to speed their passage through purgatory and so paid for someone to say prayers on their behalf to ensure this.[752]

The wills demonstrate that the religious guilds were active in St Albans within the three churches of St Peter's, St Andrew's, and St Stephen's, despite the unfortunate activities that led to their dissolution. The most popular guild was clearly the Charnel Brotherhood, otherwise known as the guild of All Saints of St Peter's to which the majority of people left their money. These guilds demonstrate a degree of piety on behalf of the townspeople, but the evidence is skewed by the fact that the only source we have is the wills that were made with death in mind. Despite this, many of the townspeople were involved with a fraternity, and left either money or goods to them to ensure that they would have prayers said for their soul, thereby concerning themselves with both the fraternity and their salvation.

Throughout the later Middle Ages there was an increasing overlap of lay and conventual functions. The transept at St Albans displayed images of the crucifixion and the Virgin Mary, imagery deemed suitable for simple devotion by the laypeople at Mass. At St Albans between 1320 and 1340, when relations between the abbey and town had been strained, the parishioners had the southern faces of the north piers painted with hagiographical images. The laypeople would have wanted to be buried near these images because they would have encouraged prayer close to their burial site. By the middle of the fourteenth century the nave, by then in use by the townspeople, was separated from the choir with a screen. It had its own rood and the shrine of Amphibalus, preventing the parishioners from disturbing the monks, as was the case in Dunstable, where in 1219 the burgesses were allowed an altar in the north nave aisle dedicated to St John the Baptist.[753]

Of the many churches that are mentioned in the wills of St Albans, all were located in Hertfordshire. There were four churches in use by the townspeople of St Albans: the parochial chapel of St Andrew's within the monastic precinct; the church of St Peter's; the church of St Stephen's; and the church of St Michael's that was less popular in the wills but was still used by some of the townspeople. The parochial chapel of St Andrew's was built in the twelfth century on the north side of the abbey-church nave's western end. This chapel had to be enlarged by Abbots John de Cella (1195-1214) and William Trumpington (1214-1235), and for a third time in the fifteenth century demonstrating its increasing usage.[754] The church of St Andrew's had the most donations from the wills, St Stephen's had a large amount donations and St Michael's had a smaller

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[752] Arnold, *Belief and unbelief*, p. 167.
[753] Binski, pp. 271-275.
[754] Ibid. p. 274.

but still generous amount. The church of St Peter's had money or items left to it by about a third of the wills. The majority of the townspeople only left small amounts of money to their chosen church on their death. Their donation was generally to the high altar for forgotten tithes and St Andrew's chapel was the recipient of the majority of the money. Those who were to be buried in St Peter's graveyard due to the closure of the lay cemetery still gave their tithes to St Andrew's. Other money was left to the holy rood light, the altar, other lights, the bell and the fabric of the churches. Some wills did not leave anything to any church in St Albans, whereas others left to multiple churches. Of the manor wills, all left money or goods to their parish churches and many of them left livestock, mostly sheep, to be used by the church.

In the second half of the fifteenth century most of the townspeople of St Albans were buried in the church of St Peter's. A minority of the townspeople were buried within the lay cemetery for the parishioners of St Andrew's and a smaller number still were buried in the monastery itself. The lay cemetery was in the monastery's grounds; it had the tenements of Church Street backing onto it and was next to the sacrist's garden. By the early fifteenth century many lay burials in the nave had taken place and while monastic burials were in the eastern limbs of the church and before the Holy Cross altar.[755] The cemetery was closed during the fifteenth century, and after this time a corner of St Peter's churchyard was used. The church had a large graveyard, and served the whole town apart from those who were buried at St Michael's or St Stephen's.[756] The monks themselves had their own cemetery, which was moved throughout the life of the monastery, some parts being moved entirely, and others becoming derelict only to be cleared and turned into the vintry. The abbots were considered among the rich and powerful and on their death, as was common practice in the Middle Ages, their bodies were buried in the chapter house or the Abbey church, while their main organs were given a separate burial elsewhere.[757]

It was not only the parishioners who were buried at St Peter's. In August 1479 Adam Barthelmey, a girdler was on his way back to London but was forced to stop in St Albans because he had fallen ill with the Black Death. In his will he wrote or dictated if he was too sick to write his will himself, that he was lying sick in the parish of St Albans monastery and requests that his burial be in St Peter's churchyard. He left 2s. 6d. to the high altar of St Andrews church and left money for people he knew in London. His will was written on 3 August and probate was given on 9 August, suggesting he died fairly soon after his will was written.[758] Following this, on 7 October 1479, Richard Stepneth wrote his will leaving his wife Alice money and also leaving 10 marks to 'the child if it should live'. Probate was two days after this on 9 October, suggesting another quick and

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[755] Ibid. pp. 273-274.
[756] Niblett and Thompson, *Alban's Buried Towns,* pp. 250, 251, 252, 288.
[757] Ibid. p. 251.
[758] HALS 2AR f. 31v; edited in Flood, *St Albans wills*, p. 49.

unexpected death.[759] In the fifteenth century, the average time between the composition of the will and probate was around six months.[760] Less than a month later, his wife, Alice, was also dead, her will was written on 25 October and probate was on 30 October. She gave money for her soul, and also the souls of her late husband and their son, John.[761] It would appear that the entire family had died quickly, indicating that they too may have contracted the Black Death. No other wills mentioned the disease, but it can be assumed that 1479 saw the Black Death return to the town.

In the thirteenth century in Canterbury, Exeter, and Durham statutes had been introduced that stated that a priest should be in attendance when a will was made, which was also ecclesiastical law in much of Europe. The likelihood is that the priest was there to ensure the testator left his obligation of alms and possibly also to persuade him to donate money to the local church or monastery.[762] There are chaplains, vicars, and professions such as a barber and a tailor named as witnesses and executors in the wills of St Albans. There are some wills that name the chaplain, James Fletcher of St Stephen's church, who witnessed the wills of John Kytwell and Marion Eylewarde. Eylewarde gave 4d. to the high altar of St Stephen's church, 2d. for the crucifix and another 2d. for the light of St Mary the Virgin.[763] Kytwell gave 12d. to the high altar of St Stephen's and 4d. to the crucifix there, he also gives money to other churches and money to the guild in the church of St Stephen's.[764] Nevertheless, when this is compared to the will of William Sprot, also from the parish of St Stephen's, a similar amount of money is given there, despite there being no chaplain or vicar being named in the will as being present as a witness, of course it is possible that there is someone present but not mentioned. Sprot left 4d. to the high altar, 2d. to the rood light there and 2d. to St Mary's light.[765] There does not seem to be a difference between the money left by those who had a member of the clergy present during the writing of the will and those who did not, indicating that there was no need for the pressure from the clergy for the testator to leave money to the church or that a member of the clergy was present but not mentioned. The wills taken from those living on the manors of St Albans in all but one show that a brother was present for the composition of the will; most of the time the monk would be the cellarer of St Albans monastery. It is interesting to note that the single will with no monk named as being present left a large amount of money to various different religious institutions including St Albans, however, it is likely that a clergyman was with him, but was just not named. All the deceased from the manor wills leave money to a church apart from one, and they were also very specific with how

[759] HALS 2AR f. 34r; edited in Flood. p. 54.
[760] Timothy S. Haskett, 'The Curteys women in Chancery: The legacy of Henry and Rye Brown', in *Women, marriage, and family in medieval Christendom : essays in memory of Michael M. Sheehan, C.S.B,* ed. by Constance M. Rousseau and Joel H. Rosenthal (Kalamazoo, 1998), pp. 349-398 (p. 357).
[761] HALS 2AR f. 34v; edited in Flood, *St Albans wills*, p. 55.
[762] Sheehan, *The Will in Medieval England,* p. 180.
[763] HALS 2AR f. 76r; edited in Flood, *St Albans wills*, p. 124.
[764] HALS 2AR f. 78v; edited in Flood. p. 127.
[765] HALS 2AR f. 52r; edited in Flood. p. 86.

the money was to be spent. Most would ask that it would be spent on the altar, the fabric, the vicar, or the improvement of the church itself. Interestingly, not all the wills that were made in the presence of a monk of St Albans left money to that monastery, meaning that there may not have been pressure on them to bequeath to the monastery itself, instead choosing for themselves which church or monastery to leave their goods to.

Money was often left to religious institutions outside the town of St Albans by those wills both inside the town and on the manors. In some cases there was a link between these places and the donor, but the majority of the wills contain nothing in the will itself to link the deceased with their chosen recipient. For example, the will of John Merston in 1487, left 12d. to the friars at Hitchin, but does not give money to St Albans, suggesting that despite living in St Albans, his preferred religious institution was the friary at Hitchin.[766] The widow, Dame Constance Cressy's will in 1486, left money to many religious institutions including the nuns at both Sopwell and Pré, the monastery at St Albans, and also the house of the friars of Langley. 'I wole & byqueth to the house of the Frerys of Langley wher I am a syster 3s. 4d.'[767] Dame Constance clearly had a strong link to the Friars of Langley, but also felt the need to leave money to the monastery of St Albans as well.[768] William Davy's will in 1478, gave money for pittance and the altar of Alban at St Albans monastery, money to St Stephen's, his parochial church, and money to the friars house at Hounslow, to the fabric of the church at Ealing, 6s. 8d. to the church at Pinner and even 6s. and 8d. to the nuns at Sopwell, despite seemingly having no link to any of these places.[769] Christopher Dyer has studied a sample of 50 west Suffolk wills of the fifteenth century to examine the horizons of country dwellers. His conclusion is that the deceased left money or goods to friends, relatives, and churches out of respect, and that they may have become familiar with a place outside their parish through a relative, migration, or marriage. The wills in Suffolk that name places are within a short distance of the will-maker's home, the distance from St Albans to Hitchin is around sixteen miles, and St Albans to Langley is five miles, also within walking distance. There was also a fashion in these wills to leave small sums to Friars, which could explain why Dame Constance left money to Friars of Langley and John Merston to the Friars of Hitchin.[770] Those who gave money to multiple institutions, including places outside their geographical location are far more likely to have given because they wanted to, or they had a social link, including familial ties, to that place, rather than giving because they felt that they had a sense of duty to do so.

Between 1471 and 1500, the monastery of St Albans had three abbots, William Albon (1465-1476), William Wallingford (1476-1492), and Thomas Ramrige (1492-1521). Out of the wills composed

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[766] HALS 2AR f. 53r; edited in Flood. p. 89.
[767] HALS 2AR ff. 49v-50r; edited in Flood. pp. 83-84.
[768] Ibid. It may have been that she paid the Friars later on in life to become a sister there so that she died a nun.
[769] HALS 2AR f. 27r; edited in Flood. p. 38.
[770] Christopher Dyer, *Everyday life in medieval England* (London, 1994), p. 274.

during this period, around a third donated to the abbey, comprising bequests far more substantial than the money left to the guilds. Unlike the guilds items were rarely given to the monastery; the townspeople preferring to give money instead. During the fifteenth century it was common practice to leave a small bequest of 4d. to the local cathedral church, although this does not seem to have happened at the abbey of St Albans.[771] Of the few items, the most common to be given to the monastery was a candle. The will of William Smeth in March 1497 left a cup of silver to the monk Thomas Wooton, a salte seler of silver, a feather bed and three curtains for a bed to the monk Thomas Rutlonde and a goblet of silver to the monk Geoffrey Wynter, so that these monks may pray for his and his family's souls. Again, the theme of death and eternal salvation is revisited with the giving of money to the monastery. The townspeople left money to the monks in order that they would pray for the deceased's soul, in the same way they are also leaving money to their fraternities for prayer from a chaplain or other members. Among other gifts to the monastery, Smeth left 12d. each for the monks who were present at his funeral, 6s. 8d. to the monastery church for his burial in the conventual church and 6s. 8d. to the shrine of Alban.[772] Of the townspeople who left money to the monastery most left 12d. or a similar amount to the shrine of Alban or to the mother church. The more wealthy townsmen, the gentlemen and esquires, of St Albans left more, especially if they were to be buried there. In Durham, St Albans, and the other monastic towns and cities, only the upper classes sought prayers from the monks of the monastery for themselves after their deaths and a way to secure this was to be a benefactor. The lower classes would instead have turned to their parish church for their prayers after death, which would usually be the bede rolls (bidding prayer) at Mass, but sometimes they could also have given money to chantries. Even the very poor made sure to include goods or money to a priest to pray for their soul. For example, in Durham a woman with very little gave the priest William Fabian a garment to ensure that her soul would be prayed for.[773] As well as leaving money to the shrine of the mother church, many wills left pittances to the monastery, demonstrated by Thomas Dyper's will in 1494 who entrusted his wife with the pittance to the monastery, that she shall provide a sufficient pittance to be given to the monastery of St Albans on the anniversary of his death.[774]

The majority of the wills that left money to the monastery specified that it was to be directed to the shrine of Alban within the monastery, or they simple state that their money was to go to the mother church of St Albans. Some wills left money to the abbot, to use at his discretion, and others left their money to individual monks, named and anonymous. Thomas Skall's will in 1472 left a house, after the death of his wife, to the sacrist and named him as William Newman. He wanted the sacrist

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[771] *Medieval wills from Wells, deposited in the Diocesan Registry, Wells 1543 to 1546 and 1554 to 1556*, ed. by Dorothy O. Shilton and Richard Holworthy (Somerset, 1925), 40, p. vi.

[772] Flood, *St Albans wills*, p. 135.

[773] Harvey, *Lay religious life in late medieval Durham*, pp. 59, 132. A pittance was a dish of cooked food served at the monks' dinner often containing a variety of food more appetizing than the normal dishes.

[774] HALS 2AR ff. 74v-75r; edited in Flood, *St Albans wills*, p. 123.

to use this house 'for the shrine of the glorious proto-martyr Alban'.[775] Edward Bensted's will also named a monk, John Bensted, presumably a relative, who, should Edward's son die without an heir, would gain the proceeds of the sale of mesuages and a croft.[776] Likewise, the sacrist's servant, Robert Berd left a wax candle to the shrine of Alban in 1479.[777] Following this, in 1480, Thomas Beverley, a gentleman, left money to the abbot of St Albans, to be distributed amongst his officials at his own discretion.[778] And in 1483 Adam Wytman's will left a feather bed to Thomas Ramrage, who he names as prior of St Albans, the same Thomas Ramrige who succeeded the abbacy following William Wallingford in 1492.[779]

A select few people were buried in the grounds of the monastery; of the 96 people who left money to the monastery between 1471 and 1500, eleven were buried there. They include: the widow Joan Swanley, buried next to her husband in 1472; Thomas Skall was buried next to his wife in 1472; John Harneys, a gentleman was buried in 1474; Benedict Edryche, the priest of St Andrews in 1476; Thomas Beverley, a gentleman, in 1480; William Waryn in 1490; John Cowper in 1492; William Gomond, a tailor, in 1494; William Smeth, esquire, in 1497; Robert Depyng was buried next to his wife in 1497; and William Heyworth in 1500.[780] The people who were buried in the conventual church, varied in their wealth, professions, and status, but most were relatively wealthy, which can be seen from the large gifts they left to the monastery in their wills. Their place of burial might have been owing to the large gifts they left the monastery on their death; likewise they could have also been generous benefactors during their lifetime.

Other than the will of Edward Bensted, who mentioned a monk of the same name, John Bensted, there is one other will that acknowledged a family member as a monk of St Albans. That is the will of William Cooke, a barber, in 1485, who named his son, Sir John Albon, as a monk of the monastery, and he gave him 40s. to pray for his soul. He also mentions Sir William Holme, his godson, also a monk at St Albans, and leaves him one of his gowns to make a coat.[781]

Money was also left to the nunneries of Sopwell and of St Mary de Pré, both of which were dependencies of the monastery. A small number of the wills left money to one of these nunneries, or both, some wills even left money to the nuns while neglecting to leave money to the abbey, suggesting they might favour the nuns to the monks, be it having a relative or friend there, or simply having a personal preference. John Lumbard, in his will of 1476 left 20d. to the nuns of Pré

[775] HALS 2AR ff. 11r-v; edited in Flood. p. 15.
[776] HALS 2AR f. 16v; edited in Flood. p. 23.
[777] HALS 2AR f. 30r-v; edited in Flood. p. 45.
[778] HALS 2AR ff. 37v-38r; edited in Flood. p. 32.
[779] HALS 2AR f. 42r; edited in Flood. p. 69.
[780] HALS 2AR f. 8r, 2AR ff. 11r-v, 2AR f. 17r, 2AR ff. 23r-v, 2AR ff. 37v-38r, 2AR f. 57r, 2AR f. 62v, 2AR ff. 73v-74r, 2AR ff. 85v-86v, 2AR f. 87v, 2AR ff. 98v-99r; edited in Flood. pp. 13, 15, 25, 33, 61, 97, 104, 119, 135-140, 144, 155.
[781] HALS 2AR ff. 46r-v; edited in Flood. p. 75.

and another 20d. to the nuns of Sopwell, without specifying what the money is to be used for.[782] Likewise, William Davy left the nuns of Sopwell 6s. 8d. as well as leaving money to various other religious institutions, both of these men possibly had relatives in the nunneries.[783] There is one will that names a nun, which was that of William Dyconson, a freemason, who, in 1499 left to his daughter, Lady Jane Dyconson, a nun at Sopwell, 6s. 8d. in money or other goods to the same value. He also left money to the prioress and convent of both Pré and Sopwell 12d. each.[784]

Whomever the money was left for; monks, nuns, monastery, or priory, it was either for the purpose of having the religious pray for the deceased in order to secure their eternal salvation, or was because they genuinely supported the monastery; in all likelihood, it was a mixture of these two reasons. The townspeople would have had an allegiance towards their saint, who was known to perform miracles. But, in writing their will with their death in mind, the fear of purgatory would have been in their thoughts, and requesting prayers from monks, they might hope that their passage to heaven would be a little easier.

I have examined the piety of the lay-folk of fifteenth century St Albans in three areas of devotion: fraternities, parochial churches, and the monastery. Despite the qualifications that need to be made, including that those making the will would have done so in the presence of clergy and that they were concerned with their death, we can make reasonable conclusions as to the religiosity of these people. Firstly, in the area of fraternities we have seen that many of the townspeople were involved with a guild in St Albans, but this does not include the very poor, who would not have been able to pay the annual fee, and is most likely to have had its members from the productive population, men and women who were had occupations and of the age at which they are working. Those who gave money to their guild concentrated on the prayer for their souls, which meant for them their focus was eternal salvation. They also would have given money to charity, probably because it was socially expected of them. But this should not take away from the fact that they were highly likely to be devoted people, to have concern for one's salvation needs a concern for one's religion and religious duty. The second area was the parochial duty; it is harder to determine piety within the parish from the wills regarding the churches because it was often either custom to give money for forgotten tithes to their parish church, or to have been persuaded by the presence of a cleric during the writing of the will. Again, it must be taken into consideration that there was money left for prayers for the deceased's soul. However, we see a common theme in the St Albans wills that people were leaving money and items for the church that was not required of them; they often left money for the improvement of the churches and also for religious institutions that were not where they lived. This meant they had a connection to another religious institution such as a personal connection through someone they knew. Finally, there was the money left to the monastery, an

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[782] HALS 2AR f. 23v; edited in Flood. p. 35.
[783] HALS 2AR f. 27r; edited in Flood. p. 38.
[784] HALS 2AR f. 92v; edited in Flood. p. 149.

issue that relates to the piety of the town, the devotion of the townspeople to their saint, and the relationship between the people and the monks. There was money left by a variety of people to the monks and monastery, and often to be used on the shrine of Alban, so there was a sense of devotion to the saint by the townspeople. There was also a sense that people were giving money or items to the monastery not only for the benefit of prayer from the monks on their death, or burial within the monastic precinct, but also from religious devotion, because they specify exactly how much is to be spent on various elements of the abbey. The relationship between town and monastery had healed slightly since the turbulence of the fourteenth century and these wills demonstrate that well. They show that the townspeople of St Albans were devoted to their saint and religion and made that known in their bequests after their death. Therefore, it can be seen through these wills, that the townspeople were giving more than was socially acceptable, expected of them from the clergy, and to avoid a lengthy stay in purgatory, indicating that their religiosity was not simply a matter of fulfilling duties but was also to a certain extent voluntary.

Chapter 7: The Final Years of the Monastery

Henry VIII's Reformation was to change the country drastically, and the Dissolution of the monasteries was part of this change, with a consequent loss of pastoral care, education, and artistic patronage. Religious houses of many different orders were an every-day sight in medieval and early Tudor England. In the 1530s, there were almost 900 religious houses holding around 12,000 people, 4,000 of whom were monks.[785] This final chapter of my thesis will examine the condition of the monasteries leading up to the dissolution, the events of the dissolution, and what happened to the monks after their abbey was dissolved. I will also look at the reasons for the dissolution at the commands of Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell. Finally, I will examine the reactions by the monks and those living near the monasteries in St Albans, and in the rest of the country, including the Pilgrimage of Grace in the north of England.

7.1 The Events Leading up to the Dissolution

When Henry VIII came to the throne in 1509 after the death of his father, Henry VII, the Catholic Church appeared to be secure.[786] Whilst Henry VIII was initially given the title as the 'defender of the faith' by the pope because of his anti-Lutheran views written in a treatise, some people, both on the continent, and in England, wanted church reform, with some ideas coming from John Wyclif and Lollardy. Wycliffism was a problem going back to the late fourteenth century, and the monks of St Albans were at the forefront of the fight against it by challenging Wyclif and at the same time searching for heretics in the area, something Abbot Whethamstede continued to pursue.[787] Cardinal Wolsey, who was obviously concerned by these people, attempted to turn opinions against Martin Luther, the German theologian, by commissioning universities to write against him, and by burning his books in 1521.[788]

By 1521, Queen Catherine of Aragon was forty, and although she had given birth six times, she had only had one child who lived, Princess Mary. King Henry was disappointed because he needed a legitimate male heir and he believed that his marriage to Catherine did not produce a living son because he had married his brother's wife as that is what was forbidden in the book of Leviticus, which said, 'A man who marries his brother's wife does an illicit thing; they shall be without children.'[789] However, according to mainstream theological opinion the law of levirate created an exception to this ban, and this applied to him and Catherine, which is that in Deuteronomy it is

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[785] G. W. Bernard, 'The Dissolution of the Monasteries', *History,* 96 (2011), 390-409 (p. 390).

[786] Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, 2nd ed. edn (Basingstoke, 2006), p. 135.

[787] James G. Clark, *A monastic renaissance at St. Albans : Thomas Walsingham and his circle, c. 1350-1440* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 247-249.

[788] Peter Marshall, *Reformation England, 1480-1642*, 2nd ed. edn (London, 2012), pp. 27-28.

[789] Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The matrimonial trials of Henry VIII* (Stanford, 1976), p. 35.

written that a younger brother should marry the widow of the elder brother if there had been no children born.[790] Pope Julius II had therefore given Henry and Catherine dispensation to marry in 1503 and since their marriage there had been similar cases that were also given permission to marry. Scarisbrick writes that if when Julius II originally granted the dispensation it was secure, then 25 years on it must have been even more so.[791] In addition to this, Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, was the most powerful ruler in Europe, and the nephew of Catherine, and on hearing of Henry's plans to divorce her offered her his full support. He also wrote to Henry to ask him to stop, and to the pope to recall the case to Rome, meaning that the divorce had become an international issue and Catherine had a very powerful supporter.[792] In 1533 the Act of Appeals prevented appeals to Rome, including papal measures against the King and realm, and ensured that no cases involving Englishmen were taken outside of England. The following year in 1534 the Act of Supremacy declared Henry as the supreme head of the Church of England and in the same year legislation spoke of the pope as the 'bishop of Rome'.[793] In May 1533 Henry got what he wanted, an annulment from his marriage, the following month, Anne Boleyn was crowned Queen, and in September that same year, she gave birth to a daughter, Princess Elizabeth. Prior to their marriage there was an act of succession that confirmed his new marriage and that their children would be his successors.[794] When Catherine died in 1536, and Anne was suspected of adultery and beheaded in the same year, there was a chance for Henry to reconcile with the pope, but it never happened.[795] The reformation did not stop with Henry's death in 1547, his son by Jane Seymour, Edward VI continued as his father had began and wanted the church to reject the saints, purgatory, sacraments, and mass.[796] Duffy writes that there must have been a strong government for the conformity that occurred across the country in the parish churches. Images were taken down, Masses stopped, Mass books and breviaries were surrendered in 1549 and 1550, wall paintings were whitewashed over, and in 1553 veils, vestments, chalices, and hangings were surrendered and were broken or melted to finance war-debt.[797] Edward died aged 15 in 1553 and Queen Mary, Catherine of Aragon's daughter, came to the throne and with the help of Cardinal Reginald Pole halted the reformation, attempting to revert the country back to its Catholic ways, which some, including Duffy see as an early Catholic reform movement. However, there were too many who were nationalist and anti-clerical for her reform to work, and many of those who did not revert back to Catholicism were burnt to death.[798] Mary's reign was not a long one, and when she died in 1558, her half sister, Elizabeth, the daughter of Anne Boleyn, came to the throne. In 1559 there were two Acts of

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[790] Ibid. pp. 14-15.
[791] J. J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, New ed. edn (New Haven, 1997), pp. 177-178.
[792] Ibid. p. 157.
[793] G. W. Bernard, *The king's reformation : Henry VIII and the remaking of the English church* (London, 2005), pp. 68-70.
[794] Marshall, *Reformation England*, pp. 36-39.
[795] Bernard, *The king's reformation*, p. 225.
[796] Marshall, *Reformation England*, p. 58.
[797] Duffy, *The stripping of the altars*, p. 478.
[798] Marshall, *Reformation England*, p. 86.

Parliament; the first ensured that the Pope did not have jurisdiction and that there was Royal Supremacy; the second brought back the Edwardian prayer book. These acts meant that the English reformation continued throughout Elizabeth's long reign.[799]

The condition of the monasteries was in contention leading up to the reformation and dissolution and is a topic that is debated by modern scholars. Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), painted the picture of the monasteries as being a waste of resources and superstitious, and wanted the bishop to be in charge of the monks. This was a view shared by many bishops at that time who wanted money to be spent on education, training for parish priests, and pastoral care.[800] Writing in 1911 Vivian Galbraith wrote that the monastery of St Albans was in need of dissolution. He wrote that the abbey had 'outlived its useful functions', that since the abbacy of Thomas de la Mare (1349-1396) the monastery had stagnated and was embarrassed both financially and morally, and that dissolution was necessary because of these faults and the loss of the manorial system that the monastery relied upon.[801] Knowles was of the opinion that religious houses after the fourteenth century saw a decline in the spiritual life and that the Benedictines were less observant.[802] More recent scholarship has shown that the monasteries, including St Albans were not in decline as Galbraith and Knowles suggested. James Clark suspects that in the sixteenth century the boundary between the culture of the Benedictines and the society in which it was situated was being eroded; however, he is in disagreement with David Knowles that there was a decline leading up to the Dissolution.[803] Instead, Clark writes of an evolution of monasticism in England and says that discipline survived until the middle of the sixteenth century.[804] Joan Greatrex, writing fifty years later than Knowles, accepts that his limitations of the primary sources, that are available now to us is to blame for his conclusion on the decline of the monasteries, something he himself admitted.[805] She says that he rightly notes the decline of obedience to the rule but believes that Knowles did not 'fully appreciate the impact of external pressures on all aspects of daily life, both individual and collective in the cloister.[806] Greatrex has similar views as Clark in that the world outside of the monastery was constantly fluctuating and that this influenced the monks' reactions to the Rule.[807] Her work aims to emphasise that the attention of the monks was caught up in long-established duties, obligations, and other practices. She claims that this meant that there was not much time left to cultivate the bond of fellowship that is so important to common life. Her conclusion is that the decline was not true and that this is proven due to the fact that some of the larger monasteries still

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[799] Ibid. p. 115.
[800] Bernard, 'The Dissolution', 390-409 (p. 393).
[801] Galbraith, *The Abbey of St. Albans from 1300 to the Dissolution.*, p. 35.
[802] Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, II, pp. 115-124.
[803] Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, p. 254.
[804] Clark, *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism*, p. 17.
[805] Greatrex, *The English benedictine cathedral priories*, p. 331.
[806] 'After Knowles: Recent Perspectives in Monastic History', in *The religious orders in pre-Reformation England,* ed. by James G. Clark (Woodbridge, 2002), 35-50 (pp. 36-37).
[807] Greatrex, *The English benedictine cathedral priories*, p. 323.

had men seeking admission, and even saw an increase of men in some houses.[808] In addition to this, the sources available when Knowles would have been writing were visitations, which naturally would have given a negative view of the monks and monasteries.

The arrival of the printing press in medieval Europe is thought of as an aid to the Reformation and signifies leaving the medieval era into the renaissance.[809] Its existence in the monasteries can also be interpreted as further evidence that they were not in decline, but still continuing with their tradition of education and scholarship. In 1479 St Albans was the second monastery after Westminster to have a printing press; the printer was also the schoolmaster of the school, but not much else is known about him. In the 1520s the monasteries of Abingdon and Tavistock also built printing presses within their precinct. In 1534 St Albans used their printing press to produce *Lives of St Alban and Amphibel* by Lydgate, and mere months prior to the dissolution published a polemic on religion.[810] According to Clark the monasteries were substituting their books for newer printed versions. Abbot Richard Boreman was a theologian and worked with John Herford, a secular printer who had worked in London but moved to St Albans working with the printing press within the monastic precinct. Together they printed at least five books, which included the *Confutacyon of the Fyrst Parte of Frythes Boke*, which attacked the early protestant John Frith. Clark writes that it is possible that Boreman viewed the author, John Gwynneth, of *Confutacyon* to be the 'defenders of orthodoxy' and not the 'supporters of sedition.'[811] Clark writes that the advent of printing and its popularity among the monks could have caused the monks to own books themselves and therefore own property, something Clark views as helping to 'stimulate a revival in learning and teaching', as opposed to the straying from tradition.[812] The printing press allowed the monastery of St Albans to remain within the intellectual and artistic community. They remained prominent through their use of the printing press and proved that they were not in decline. When looking at the total revenue the monastery had we can also see that it increased drastically between 1291 and 1535. When the *Taxatio* by Pope Nicholas IV the total revenue of St Albans was given as £850.[813] A century later there was an internal audit done at St Albans on the death of Abbot Thomas de la Mare in 1396 giving the total revenue of the monastery as £1053 8s. 6$^{1/4}$d.[814] Finally, the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* gives the final valuation of the total revenue of the monastery in 1535 as £2102 7s. 1$^{3/4}$d.[815] The only indication that the monastery could be seen as having been in decline is

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[808] Ibid. pp. 329-331.

[809] James G. Clark, 'Print and pre-Reformation religion: the Benedictines and the press, c. 1470 - c.1550', in *The uses of script and print, 1300-1700,* ed. by Julia C. Crick and Alexandra Walsham (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 71-92 (p. 71).

[810] Clark, *The religious orders*, p. 24.

[811] Clark, 'Print and Pre-Reformation', 71-92 (pp. 87-88).

[812] Ibid. p. 91.

[813] *Taxatio ecclesiastica Angliæ et Walliæ auctoritate P. Nicholai IV. circa A.D. 1291.* , ed. by S. Ayscough T. Astle, and J. Caley (Record Commission, 1802), pp. 52-53.

[814] BL Cotton Claudius E. IV. f. 342; Still, *The abbot and the rule*, p. 81.

[815] *Valor Ecclesiasticus temp. Henr. VIII. auctoritate Regia Institutus*, ed. by Joseph Hunter and John Caley, Six vols (Record Commission, 1810-34), I, p. 451.

the number of monks present when the dissolution occurred. There were thirty-nine monks who signed the surrender of the monastery. Prior to the Black Death the number of monks who could enter the monastery was capped at 100, after 1349 the number was never higher than 50.[816] However, even with the reduced number of monks, the monastery still retained its place as one of the most influential abbey's in England and so their reduced numbers should not be taken as a sign of decline.

7.2 The Dissolution of the Smaller Houses

The moves made to reform or dissolve the monasteries started some two decades prior to the end of the Dissolution when Cardinals Wolsey and Campeggio were granted legatine powers to reform the monasteries. Cardinal Wolsey appears to have attempted to carry out this reform and held conferences in Westminster. Many of the monks themselves even thought that reform was necessary, but they were also afraid that reform would lead to a loss of men in religious orders. After the break with Rome, Henry wanted Thomas Cromwell to ensure royal authority was held over the monasteries. This was when the royal visitations of the monasteries and the universities of Oxford and Cambridge occurred. Bernard writes that these visitations could logically have led to reform as opposed to the dissolution. However, the visitors, especially Dr Richard Layton were clearly already sceptical of the monasteries and were biased against them, disliking relics, pilgrimage, and the images of saints. These visitations did show that over seventy per cent did not admit to breaking their vows of chastity, but the visitors saw this as thirty per cent of monks who did break their vows.[817] According to Richard Rex they were done with the use of gossip and exaggeration, and some of Layton's letters to Cromwell can be seen to be lies. Cromwell was already drafting a bill for the suppression of the smaller and poorer houses; the evidence in these reports was vital for him to get the bill passed in March 1536.[818] Thomas Legh visited St Albans abbey when Catton was abbot on behalf of Cromwell in the second half of 1535 and wrote that he allowed the monks who were meant to leave the house due to their age to remain there if that is what they wished.[819] Clark puts this relative leniency down to Catton being placed as abbot by Cromwell.[820]

The smaller religious houses were the first to be suppressed. The Act of 1536 to suppress the smaller houses was aimed at those with less than £200 income. These were the houses that were considered to be in the worst conditions. The monks and nuns of these smaller houses were able to transfer to larger houses if they wished, which for Bernard indicates that this could be leading to

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[816] Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses, England and Wales*, pp. 74-75.
[817] Bernard, 'The Dissolution', 390-409 (pp. 394-98).
[818] Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, p. 47.
[819] LP Hen VIII, ix, 651.
[820] Clark, 'Reformation and Reaction', 297-328 (p. 309).

reform as opposed to dissolution.[821] Martin Heale's work on dependent cells of the monasteries demonstrates that only between twenty and thirty-seven cells were dissolved at the same time as their mother houses even though they should have been exempt from the suppression, being cells, not smaller houses.[822] St Albans was the only religious house in Hertfordshire to survive the first act of suppression.[823] Of the cells of St Albans, Beadlow was the only one not to survive to the sixteenth century, being dissolved in 1428. [95824] In 1528 the nunnery of St Mary de Pré, a dependency of St Albans was dissolved by Wolsey. According to Cardinal Gasquet, the pope was told that the nuns did not lead a good life in the nunnery and that the religious life had become relaxed. The revenues were transferred to St Albans in order that an increased number of monks could be supported at the monastery for the 'better celebration of the divine office.'[825] Later the king granted the site and possessions of the nunnery to Wolsey who then granted it to his new college at Oxford.[826] In the same year the priory of Wallingford was dissolved by Wolsey as one of 29 houses he suppressed between 1524 and 1529; Wallingford was an easy cell for him to dissolve having complete power over the cell because he was Abbot of St Albans at the time.[827] In 1537 Redbourn and Hatfield Peverel were both dissolved. At Hatfield Peverel the prior, Richard Boreman, soon to become abbot of St Albans, received a pension.[828] A year later Binham was suppressed after being described as pretending to be a cell of St Albans but had fines levied and leases made not naming the abbot of St Albans.[829] The prior of the cell, Thomas Williams was granted a pension of £4. Heale writes that it was probably only the priors who received pensions because the monks were given the option to return to St Albans.[830] The nunnery of Sopwell was also dissolved in 1537, and Richard Lee was granted it in December 1538.[831] The priory of Hertford was dissolved by 9 February 1538 and was granted to Sir Anthony Denny and Joan Champernown. However, it has been argued that the prior of Hertford's Amwell tithe suit of July 1539 implies that Hertford may have been dissolved later with St Albans.[832] Tynemouth was dissolved in January 1539; all monks were allowed a pension because, according to Heale, they were seen as a quasi-independent cell. Finally, the dependency of Belvoir managed to survive until the dissolution of its motherhouse on 5

[821] Bernard, 'The Dissolution', 390-409 (pp. 396-399).
[822] Martin Heale, *The dependent priories of medieval English monasteries* (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 277.
[823] Nicholas Doggett, 'The influence of the Dissolution on Hertfordshire's towns in the sixteenth century ', in *A county of small towns,* ed. by T. R. Goose Slater, Nigel (Hatfield, 2008) (p. 337).
[824] Heale, *The dependent priories*, p. 306.
[825] Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English monasteries*, p. 27.
[826] LP, Hen VIII, iv 4472; LP, Hen VIII, iv 5714; LP, Hen VIII, iv 5786.
[827] Heale, *The dependent priories*, pp. 278, 307.
[828] Ibid. p. 308.
[829] LP Hen VIII, 1538, March, 26-31.
[830] Heale, *The dependent priories*, pp. 279, 281, 309.
[831] Nicholas Doggett, 'Patterns of Re-use: The Transformation of Former Monastic Buldings in Post-Dissolution Hertfordshire, 1540-1600. 2 vols.', (University of Southampton, 1997). v. 1, p. 104
[832] Heale, *The dependent priories*, p. 309.

December 1539.[833] Hospitals were also a casualty of the Dissolution. There were around ten to eleven hospitals in Hertfordshire at the time of the Dissolution, but the majority of these were in serious financial and managerial difficulties by the second half of the fourteenth century. The only hospital to have survived past the Dissolution was Hoddesdon. It was originally intended as a hospital for lepers and by the sixteenth century had become an almshouse or hospital for poor men and women; however, it only survived until 1595.[834]

There were certainly lay people who were against the closure of the small houses; for many people the monasteries provided pastoral care, education, alms, and other spiritual activities. When the commissioners dissolved the smaller houses they stripped the roofs for lead, and there was a rumour that Henry VIII was also going to close the parish churches and take the valuables from them. This angered many people in the north of England and in the autumn of 1536 there were protests called the Pilgrimage of Grace led by Robert Aske. These rebellions prevented the Dissolution in the county of Lincolnshire and there were some monasteries that were even restored. In total there were nine armies, each consisting of several thousand people, some of them gentlemen, some townsmen, and some peasants. They were concerned for their faith, and possible economic losses, and resented the government, which they deemed heretical. Aske himself named the rebels as pilgrims and said that the purpose of the pilgrimage was to petition the King. Although successful at the beginning, the rebellion in Lincolnshire collapsed when the upper classes surrendered. Further north, the pilgrims continued on, until there was the October Truce, unfortunately, this led to more rebellions due to the suspicions among the peasants of the government and its ability to keep promises. This allowed the government to move on them with force, and they were defeated with many, including Aske, being arrested and executed.[835] Some of the monks both directly and indirectly supported the rebels, which unsurprisingly upset Henry and further turned him against the monks and monasteries.[836] Diarmaid MacCulloch writes that the Pilgrimage of Grace in the north demonstrates the importance of monastic life in the area and the support that it received. The dissolution of the chantries contributed to this as well, because these were also providing pastoral care in the community. Under Henry VIII and Edward VI the chantries were allowed to remain if there was a need for pastoral care within the community but in reality, this did not happen, because the endowments were found to have had superstitious purposes.[837] There were also people living in England who held a different view on the reformation and dissolution. Alec Ryrie writes that support was found in a number of ways among the general populace; first, that God did not strike down those who destroyed the shrines that were housed in the monasteries; second, that many local people were able to loot the monasteries before the royal

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[833] Ibid. pp. 281, 309, 312.
[834] Doggett, pp. 334-337.
[835] Bush, *The pilgrimage of grace*, pp. 7-13.
[836] Bernard, 'The Dissolution', 390-409 (p. 400-3).
[837] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The later Reformation in England, 1547-1603*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 129.

commissioners got to them, taking valuables, lead from the roofs, and stones from the walls; third, there was a new class of wealthy landowners created from the dissolution of the monasteries and the granting of the lands. Finally, there were people who were supporting the Dissolution because of their beliefs of nationalism, their feelings of anti-papalism, and their feelings towards the clergy as being wealthy and corrupt.[838] There was no such protest at St Albans or for their dependencies, but this does not necessarily mean that the townspeople wanted the monastery gone. The people of St Albans would have heard what happened to those who were involved in the Pilgrimage of Grace and may have decided it was in their interests not to fight the crown on the matter. Instead of protesting the close of the monastery, certain townspeople aided the monks and provided them shelter.[839]

7.3 The Dissolution of the Larger Monasteries

During the latter part of 1537 Henry must have ordered the dissolution of all the monasteries. In the following years, 1538, 1539, and 1540, the royal commissioners began to travel the country to persuade the abbots and their monks to surrender their houses. Some abbots attempted to remain; the abbots of Glastonbury, Reading, and Colchester were beheaded for various reasons. By 1540, the dissolution was over, and all the monasteries had disappeared from the country.[840]

In the eighteen years before its surrender St Albans saw three abbots. Abbot Thomas Ramridge died in 1521, something Vivian Galbraith saw as 'the first hint of the final catastrophe'.[841] The monks of St Albans went to the King at Windsor to ask that they be allowed to elect a new successor. The king thought about it, but later wished that the abbey be given to Cardinal Wolsey rather than a monk, so the revenues of the 'premier abbey' was given to him as a reward for secular services.[842] Henry VIII gave Thomas Wolsey the abbacy of St Albans in November 1521, with a papal bull being given to him by Pope Adrian VI granting him the abbey *in commendam* in November 1522. After Wolsey's death in November 1530, Robert Catton became abbot in 1531.[843] In 1535 Catton was having problems within the monastery, and there were disputes, including direct protests against Catton himself. The prior and other monks even wrote to Sir Francis Brian telling him that the monastery was in decay and misery.[844] In 1536 Catton asked for assistance, and

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[838] Alec Ryrie, *The age of Reformation : the Tudor and Stewart realms, 1485-1603* (Harlow, 2009), p. 143.
[839] See below for further details on the way in which the townspeople reacted to the dissolution of St Albans.
[840] Bernard, 'The Dissolution', 390-409 (p. 404-09).
[841] Galbraith, *The Abbey of St. Albans from 1300 to the Dissolution.*, p. 61.
[842] Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English monasteries*, p. 16.
[843] Smith, *The Heads of Religious Houses, III*, p. 62.
[844] LP Hen VIII, 1535, Misc.

in 1538 he left St Albans with a pension.[845] Richard Boreman, also known as Richard Stevenage, the last abbot of St Albans had been a student at Gloucester College, Oxford, by 1516, he then became the prior of Hatfield Peverel in 1528 and on its suppression returned to St Albans, being elected Abbot in 1538.[846] Boreman managed to hold the monastery for twenty-one months, before surrendering to the crown.[847] Historians have often viewed Boreman as being placed as abbot by Thomas Cromwell.[848] However, evidence brought forward by James Clark shows that it was not Boreman but Robert Catton, the penultimate abbot who was put into the position of abbot deliberately. Catton appears to have been the abbot placed by Cromwell; he was prepared to give some of the monastery's property to the crown and collected his reward when he relinquished control of the abbey in 1538. Once no longer abbot, he received a small pension and two benefices in Norfolk and Bedford. Boreman, on the other hand, was the monk responsible for a petition to the crown attempting to remove Catton from the abbacy. Boreman's actions testify to his commitment to traditional religion and to the monastery. He refused to attend Parliament until a writ forced him to do so and he was held in temporary custody at St Albans because he failed to pay the first payment of First Fruits. Clark also believes that Boreman's collaboration with John Herford the printer shows his support of traditional religion publicly through the books he wrote.[849]

George Bernard argues that the reason Henry VIII had for dissolving the religious houses in England did not involve greed, which is what many would believe it to be. Bernard argues that although Henry did take money that was taken from the religious houses, the majority of it was spent on war with France rather than investing it for his heirs. Henry believed, along with Thomas Cromwell, that the monasteries were challenging Henry's 'supremacy over the church.' These men, and the commissioners who visited the monasteries, claimed that devotion to the saints was superstition and that they were misguided in their religion. Henry was to offer no compromise to any sort of reform of the monasteries; dissolution was the only option.[850]

7.4 After the Dissolution

[845] Clark, 'Reformation and Reaction', 297-328 (p. 310).
[846] A. B. Emden, *A biographical register of the University of Oxford, AD 1501 to 1540* (Oxford, 1974), p. 540.
[847] Smith, *The Heads of Religious Houses, III*, p. 62.
[848] Clark notes three historians who have this view, the first is a historian of St Albans in the eighteenth century, Peter Newcome, who condemns Boreman's treachery and compliance; Peter Newcome, *A History of the Ancient and Royal Foundation called the Abbey of St Albans* (London, 1745), pp. 439, 447-438. The second is David Knowles who depicts Boreman as weak; Knowles, *The Religious Orders In England volume 3 : The Tudor Age*, p. 9. The third is Cardinal Gasquet who describes him as a pliant abbot. Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English monasteries*, pp. 349-350.
[849] Clark, 'Reformation and Reaction', 297-328 (pp. 309-10).
[850] Bernard, ' The Dissolution', 390-409 (pp. 393, 409).

During the dissolution, the lead roofs were taken from the monastic houses, and these houses were abandoned and eventually turned into ruins, some of which can still be seen today.[851] The monastery of St Albans and the manors it held were given to those Henry VIII wanted to reward. One of these people was John Penne, who was Henry's barber. He was given the manor of Codicote and some of the monastic buildings.[852] Sir Richard Lee was another to whom Henry granted part of the monastery. Lee was connected to St Albans and Hertfordshire because his father was from Sopwell. He was able to gain a position in Henry VIII's household as a yeoman of the jewel house and a page of the king's cups; he was also a building surveyor and was employed by Thomas Cromwell. He was granted the buildings of the nunnery at Sopwell after its dissolution, tore them down and rebuilt them into a new home for himself.[853] In 1544 Henry granted Lee the manor of Hexton, a large portion of the monastic land, and land that belonged the nunnery at Sopwell because of his service at Boulogne.[854] He also acquired the rectory of Hexton, the priory of Newent in Gloucestershire, and the fee farm-rent of the St Albans Abbey church. His daughters gained much of his property when he died at Sopwell on 11 April 1575. He was buried at St Peter's Church in St Albans.[855]

Many of the monks were provided with pensions at the Dissolution. Richard Boreman, the abbot, was given a pension of £266 13s 4d.[856] Other monks such as John Albon and Thomas Kingsbury lived at St Albans unbeneficed. Kingsbury, who died in 1545 requested that he be buried at the parochial chapel of St Andrews next to John Albon, who described himself as a priest, who did five years previously. Bernard writes that monks and nuns probably continued to live with each other after the Dissolution because of the social aspect, they would have been friends and for the practical convenience of living with one another. Alternatively, since they may have been doing so in defiance of the king and dissolution and to maintain their religious life.[857] Clark speculates that their living together may have meant that they established some form of common life together.[858] Among the townsmen there was a group of men who helped protect the abbey and sheltered its members. These men included James Gleadhall, Thomas Manningham, Richard Sharpe, and John Sibley; they all had substantial property, were involved in the government of the town, were members of the Guild of All Saints, and after the charter of incorporation to St Albans in 1553, all but Gleadhall were elected burgesses, and so were the higher-ranking members of society. Clark

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[851] Ibid. p. 391.
[852] For more information about the manor of Codicote and John Penne see chapter 3.
[853] LP Hen VIII, 1538, December, 26-31
[854] In 1544-1545 Lee went with the army to Boulogne and succeeded during a French assault, he remained there overseeing fortifications both there and in Calais.
[855] Marcus Merriman, 'Lee, Sir Richard (1501/2–1575)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/article/16303, accessed 13 Jan 2017]
[856] Page, *VCH*, II, pp. 57-58.
[857] G. W. Bernard, *The late medieval English church : vitality and vulnerability before the break with Rome* (New Haven, 2012), pp. 171-172.
[858] Clark, 'Reformation and Reaction', 297-328 (p. 316).

writes that the response of the lay community at St Albans is different to what happened elsewhere; the monks and abbey were protected as much as could be, whereas in places such as Bury St Edmunds, Protestantism was welcomed, and the monastery was destroyed soon after the Dissolution.[859] At St Albans many of the monks admitted to the monastery were local men and so would have been friends with or kin of many the townspeople. This is evident in the wills from the previous century where the local men were giving items either to a specific monk who shared the same surname as the deceased, or giving to the monastery itself whilst still naming a specific monk.[860] This may have meant that these townspeople would have been against the monastery's dissolution, and also why they worked with the monks after the Dissolution, including providing them with shelter. Unfortunately, the records do not tell us about the poor of the town, or those on the manors, who would not have written wills or been involved in the town's government. Therefore, it is difficult to know whether the entire town wanted to protect and revive the monastery, or whether it was just the higher-ranking members of society.

Boreman kept close ties to St Albans, and purchased the monastery on behalf of the townspeople from Sir Richard Lee for £400, for them to use it as a parish church in the place of St Andrews.[861] However, the abbey church was a heavy financial burden on the townspeople and its condition deteriorated until the nineteenth century.[862] Boreman was also instrumental in helping found a grammar school in the town; he gained a licence for it in 1549 and in 1551 a place for the school to be situated, the former abbey's lady chapel.[863] In 1556, Boreman granted the entire site to Queen Mary, presumably in the hope that the abbey would be re-established.[864] Mary restored Mass, traditional liturgy, prayers for the dead, and six religious houses including the Benedictine abbey at Westminster.[865] The townspeople clearly supported Boreman in his efforts for a revival of the monastery, and made bequests in 1557 and 1558 for this revival. In March 1557 Elizabeth Kentish bequeathed money for the repair of the church, and the following year Christopher Harman and Robert Stephen also made similar requests to the parish church. In January 1558 John Nonney left two tenements to the parish church, but said that if the monastery was to be restored these tenements should go to the abbey instead. Similarly, in August 1558 Henry Gape left tenements to the abbey if it were to become a monastery again. In September 1558 Richard Brond, who was the nephew of Robert Catton, bequeathed vestments and altar hangings to the abbey and that whoever possessed his lease to the Fleur de Lys, the largest and oldest inn in St Albans, should pay a yearly

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[859] Ibid. pp. 318-319.

[860] In his will Edward Bensted named a monk John Bensted, HALS 2AR 16v; edited in Flood, *St Albans wills*, p. 23.

[861] See chapter 6 for the parish churches in St Albans.

[862] Page, *VCH,* II, p. 488.

[863] James G. Clark, 'Boreman, Richard (*c.*1485x90–*c.*1558)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/article/67199, accessed 13 Jan 2017]

[864] Page, *VCH,* II, p. 58.

[865] Martin Heale, *The Abbots and Priors of Late Medieval and Reformation England* (Oxford, 2016), p. 371.

rent to help the abbey.[866] Clark writes that a loose extract from the early seventeenth-century memoirs of Robert Shrimpton, mayor of St Albans, implies that the monks and Boreman did return to St Albans and lived there as monks for some time, but that when Queen Mary died, the abbot took to his chamber and died within a fortnight from grief. Clark notes that the Shrimpton family were probably the most well informed family on the abbey, Shrimpton's son John wrote *The History and Antiquities of Verulam and St Albones* in which he writes that the Dissolution of the monastery was an impious sacrilege.[867] The monks must have realised it was definitively over for their monastic lives when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne, the monasteries had been lost forever.

The religious fraternities at St Albans also suffered as a result of the dissolution. Religious guilds had already been the condemned by some prior to the dissolution; in the fifteenth century lollards thought of them as a form of idolatry because of their veneration of images. Wycliff thought of images as displaying faith in the wrong thing.[868] However, for those who were not lollards the religious guilds were important within society; they provided community and charity for those who were members. We can see a record of the property belonging to the guild of St Alban in the Chantry Certificates for Hertfordshire. A lot of this property was sold to Sir Richard Lee at the dissolution.[869] Presumably, this must have been a loss for many residents of St Albans who were members of these guilds in terms of religion and charity, and a loss of a way in which the townspeople were a community. According to Galbraith, the main social services provided by the monastery were primarily hospitality and education, the former being aimed at the aristocratic class.[870] Galbraith concludes that those who would have been sympathetic to the abbey's plight would have come from the aristocratic class. This is because none of the monks remaining at the abbey appear to have come from the lower classes, and also because the gentry were sending their sons to board and be educated at the monastery.[871] The monastery provided education for not only paying scholars but for a certain number of poor boys as well, the abbey would also have been giving alms to the poor; therefore, all classes may have suffered the loss of the monastery in the town.

This chapter has sought to examine the final part of the history of the abbey of St Albans and has concluded this study of the town, monks, and monastery. Firstly, I have examined the argument for the decline of the monasteries in the century leading up to the dissolution. More modern scholars are arguing that the monasteries were not in fact in decline at the Dissolution but were thriving as

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[866] Clark, 'Reformation and Reaction', 297-328 (pp. 321-23).
[867] Ibid. pp. 324-325.
[868] David J. F. Crouch, *Piety, fraternity, and power : religious gilds in late Medieval Yorkshire, 1389-1547* (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 22.
[869] Brown, *Chantry Certificates*, p. 21. For more detailed information about the guilds in St Albans see chapter 6.
[870] Galbraith, *The Abbey of St. Albans from 1300 to the Dissolution*, p. 63.
[871] Ibid. pp. 62-63.

they had been in the fourteenth century and earlier, embracing society as it changed around them. St Albans has shown that although it had times in the final century that were difficult, it was not in decline. The numbers of the monastery never reached what they had done before the Black Death, but neither had the entire population of the country. Despite the monastery being sacked during the two battles of St Albans in the Wars of the Roses, it was wealthy enough to fund a printing press. The monastery did not continue its tradition of chronicling and artistic scholarship in the sixteenth century, but they did make use of the printing press and from the fifteenth century St Albans had become a centre of humanist learning, encouraged by Abbot John Whethamstede.[872] Finally, there must have been unity among the monastic community in the town, at the surrender, the monks clearly stood behind their abbot in his decision. St Albans appears to have varied from the majority of the other monasteries at the Dissolution; only a few had the same sense of religious community after 1539.[873] This sense of community proved to be beneficial for the townspeople of who worked with the abbot to purchase the abbey church for use as a parish church and to found the grammar school.

This chapter also demonstrates the final stages of the relationship between the townspeople and the monastery. We have seen that the relationship between these two entities has changed and evolved throughout the eight centuries studied in this thesis. For the final part of the history, we can see that the relationship appears to have mended since the troubles of the fourteenth century. Though there were very minor issues during the fifteenth century, in the sixteenth century the abbot had a good relationship with his townspeople, which is clear because of the close ties he keeps with them after the Dissolution, part of this could be the manumissions made to townspeople during the fifteenth century. Although there were no actions comparable to the Pilgrimage of Grace at St Albans, there may have been some collaboration between the abbot and the townspeople with regards to the school and purchase of the parish church and the townspeople ensured that the monks had shelter. Despite the loss of the monastery to the aristocratic class, those such as Richard Lee would have become very wealthy after the Dissolution and supported it. Many townspeople probably embraced their newly found freedom from the monastery and possibly even profited from it, but some must have missed the social care the monastery provided, and also the business that came from the monastery.[874] Although the town could function well and be successful on its own, it never again held such importance as it did when there was an active monastery situated there.

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[872] Clark, 'Whethamstede'
[873] Clark, 'Reformation and Reaction', 297-328 (p. 297).
[874] For more detailed information on what business the monastery provided to the town see chapter 2.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This thesis has covered the medieval history of the monastery of St Albans from its foundation in c. 793 to its dissolution in 1539, and by doing so has asked questions regarding the relationship between the monastery and the townspeople. In examining the town and abbey I have focused on some main events in its history that affected both the monastery and the townspeople, and therefore the relationship between the two. The way in which I have evaluated this relationship is therefore through the main historic events that occurred at St Albans, the evidence we have from the manors belonging to St Albans, and the chronicle evidence that we have primarily from Thomas Walsingham. The questions that I wanted to ask throughout the research were: how dependent was the town on the monastery, and did this dependency go both ways; at what point did the townspeople feel that they did not need the monastery any more; and whether the relationship repaired itself at the end of the abbey's history after the Peasants' Revolt. The answers to these questions have allowed me to draw conclusions as to the nature of the relationship between the monastery and the town of St Albans.

There has already been a lot of scholarly work done on St Albans, the town, monastery, and its manors. These scholars include Levett, whose work on the St Albans manors I have used extensively in this work; Michelle Still, who has published her work on the monastery itself up until 1349; James Clark, who has studied St Albans extensively; and Leon Slota, who has also worked on the manors.[875] This thesis builds on these works adding to the knowledge we have on St Albans, and looking at St Albans through the complex relationship it had with its townspeople and tenants over a period of 800 years.

The historical setting that we see the monastery at St Albans live through had ups and downs for both the wealthy and the poor. The monastery gained its wealth through royal endowments and wealthy benefactors that saw it come into the era of high farming with multiple manors from which it made a great profit selling excess produce. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were times that were highly beneficial for the landlords of England, both ecclesiastical and secular. During this time, the town was growing, and was benefitting from those coming to the town to visit the monastery. The monastery was supporting the town economically by bringing in business and also providing employment. Many of the houses rented by the townspeople were owned by the monastery, and the market place that was established there was also the abbot's doing. This was also a time of increasing population, and therefore land reclamation and division of peasant holdings. England was slowly growing a population that it could no longer feed, and with peasant holdings getting smaller, the peasants were becoming unable to feed their own families with their

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[875] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*; Still, *The abbot and the rule : religious life at St Alban's, 1290-1349*; Clark, *A monastic renaissance at St. Albans*; Slota, 'Law, Land Transfer and Lordship', 119-138.

small plots of land. Poor weather from 1315 for the next seven years caused a succession of bad harvests, the already struggling population could not survive on what they had, and there was a famine. This depleted some of the population, but the effects were very dependent on different conditions on the manors. Shortly after the famine some estates, including St Albans and Bury St Edmunds experienced a rebellion in 1327. Although this caused ripples in both places, neither were serious enough to cause any permanent changes, and if anything, were just a warning of what was to come 50 years later. A mere 20 years later the Black Death came to England in 1348, which struck indiscriminately, old and young, rich and poor. One third of the population is thought to have died during the epidemic, which was a substantial amount. This left land holdings empty and unable to produce. However, due to the overpopulation from the previous century, the country recovered relatively quickly, and after a few years of uncertainty, was doing well, which can be seen on the manors of the monastery. This decreased population allowed the peasant classes to demand better working conditions, and they did, including no labour services, lower rents, and higher wages. The king and government attempted to resist these demands by issuing the Ordinance (and later Statute) of Labourers prohibiting the demanding of high wages and also the paying of them. During the Hundred Years' War, and following three poll taxes, a revolt broke out in 1381, spreading from the South East and London to the northern Home Counties and into East Anglia. This rebellion had more power to it than the rebellion of 1327 and became very violent in many places. Once again though, the rebellions did not succeed in their attempts at freedom, and those who were prominent in the revolts were imprisoned or executed for their roles. However, from this time on, serfdom was in decline, and labour services started to be replaced by money rents, we see more examples of manumissions, and more children on manors being allowed to leave the manor to attend school. Other than the Wars of the Roses, which visited St Albans twice, there were no further events to affect both the monastery and the townspeople in a manner that would affect the relationship between the two; this was until the Dissolution in 1539. The Dissolution by Henry VIII marked the end of the monasteries and of the Catholic Church as the official church in England, and this instantly stopped the rule of the monastery over the town and townspeople. The manors went into the hands of secular men, as did some of the monastic land and buildings. Certainly, many monks and townspeople thought that this was a brief break in the monastic communities, and not an end, and so some of the monks of St Albans stayed in the area in the hope that they would be able to return to their home. This was not the case, and 1539 marks the end of both the monastery of St Albans, and the scope of this study. The abbey church continued as a protestant parish church, and the church building itself survives today with a pilgrimage there every year at Easter, and a parade for the feast of Alban in June.

Knowing the relationship between the monastery and townspeople is important, because it helps us see why certain events, such as the revolt in St Albans happened. It also allows us to use this work to compare with other monasteries to see if they struggled with similar problems, and similar times of peacefulness to judge the feelings of the peasants in England at the time. The primary aim of this

thesis was to examine the relationship between the monastery and the town of St Albans during the medieval period. The way I have examined this relationship is to look at the monastery in three different time periods, the early period up to the fourteenth century, the fourteenth century, and from the end of the fourteenth century through to the Dissolution. The first time period was from its foundation through to the start of the fourteenth century. The monastery was founded on the site of Alban's martyrdom, and the town then grew up around it. This meant that for the first part of the town's history, it and those living there were very much dependent on the monastery. This was in the form of jobs for the townspeople, but also the monastery brought a lot of business to the town. There were many inns in the town that would provide for the monastery's guests, but also pilgrims, who would need somewhere to stay, eat, and also who would buy trinkets.[876] As St Albans became an important monastery, and because it was on the main road north from London, there were many people who would come to the town, and many people would stop in St Albans on their way to another destination. In this way, the townspeople and the town benefitted greatly from the monastery and the business it provided them. But there were also social provisions made by the monastery who also provided some infrastructure to the town, in the form of a school, hospitals and by giving alms. Charity was an important part of the Rule of St Benedict, and the monastery provided this to the town and so benefitted the town in this manner.[877] The religious fraternities that formed, particularly those for the upper classes of the town demonstrate that there were those who were wealthier in the town and had a higher social standing, including some nobility. Therefore, at this time, the town really needed the monastery to enable it to grow, and so the townspeople appear to have been relatively happy with their landlords and governors because of the benefits they brought with them. However, the interdependency of the relationship must not be forgotten, at this time, the monastery needed the townspeople, they needed people to work the land on their manors, and they needed people to work within the monastery.

The second part of the monastery's history is the fourteenth century; we have seen that this was an extremely tumultuous time for both the monastery and the town. The rebellions make it very clear that the townspeople were not happy with the monastery any more. The relationship had become strained over the thirteenth century, with the townspeople and the peasants on the manors wanting more freedom than they had. This led to both the rebellion and revolt in both Bury St Edmunds and St Albans. Therefore, the interdependency that had been enjoyed by both the town and the monastery up until now was in jeopardy. The townspeople no longer needed the monastery, they were prepared to govern themselves, and had people willing to do so, of course, they still would have been enjoying some of the benefits of having a monastic town at this time, but did not necessarily need these any more. Presumably the monastery still needed the town and the people for income, produce, and workers, some of which would still have been available with the self-government of the town. Therefore, the monastery of St Albans and the town did not have a good

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[876] Finucane, *Miracles and pilgrims : popular beliefs in medieval England*, p. 47.
[877] Saint Benedict, *Regula* (Turnhout, 2010).

relationship with each other during the fourteenth century, and the townspeople believed that they did not need the monastery any more. During this time period I have also analysed the manor of Codicote, held by the abbey. Much has been written on the manors by Ada Levett, her work has provided an excellent basis for me to examine the manors. She compiled an incredibly detailed examination of the manors, courts, and how the monastery managed the manors and its tenants.[878] The work I have completed on the manor of Codicote has allowed me to draw conclusions as to the social structure on the manor. The extent and halimote records from the manor of Codicote, which were looked at in chapter three were at a time of trouble for the country. The extent was completed just after the great famine had occurred, and there was a lot of discontent on the manor due to excessive sub-division of land, which meant that some families had struggled to feed their families. These tenants of the manor came into contact with the cellarer at least twice a year, and possibly the abbot if they had an issue that was taken to the court under the ash tree in the courtyard of the monastery. By using these documents I have been able to focus on a few of the tenants individually and use their experiences of life to see what life on the manor was really like. I have concluded that there was a social structure on the manor, that there were higher ranking members of society who held substantial amounts of land, paid more merchet than the poorer members, were on the halimote juries, and were guarantors. Those who held less land were mentioned far less in the halimotes, but paid less rent, held less land, and less merchet. Despite there being many problems for the tenants of the manor of Codicote, the only violence that occurred there during the Peasants' Revolt was the arson of the mill.[879]

The third and final part of the monastery's history is the last one and a half centuries, the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth, until the Dissolution. During this time the monastery and the town appear to have settled their differences somewhat. There are, of course, those who do not agree with the monastic government, particularly regarding the mills and restricted use of hand mills, but overall, the tensions of the previous century appear to have died down. By examining the wills from the townspeople in the fifteenth century I have been able to assess the lay devotion that the town had. Unfortunately, there are many drawbacks to using wills as evidence, but I have taken these into account whilst drawing conclusions. This time was far different to that in the fourteenth century, and it was also a time where there is a school of thought that the monasteries were in decline. At St Albans, this was not the case; the monastery was still very active within the community, both within the town and on the manors. In John Whethamstede St Albans saw an abbot who fought legal battles and won on behalf of the monastery, and who came back to the monastery despite having resigned once already. The wills also show that the townspeople were not giving up on their monastery. Many of the wills bequeath either money or possessions to the monastery itself, a few even stating what they specifically would wish for the money to be used for. If they did not leave money to the monastery, they were leaving it to other religious institutions,

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[878] Levett, *Studies in manorial history*.
[879] Walsingham, *GASA*, III, p. 363.

including the nunnery of St Mary de Pré, a dependency of the abbey. This shows that during this time the townspeople still retained respect for their monastery as a religious institution, despite the animosity that had occurred a year prior. The work I have completed on the monastery would indicate that it was not failing during its final years as some scholars, including David Knowles would have believed.[880] Instead, it was thriving within the Benedictine community, as Greatrex and Clark conclude.[881] Once the Dissolution occurred, we can see that the town can survive with the monastery in its background, however, it would never be the great town it once was prior to 1539, being overtaken in size and wealth by many other towns in the country. This amicable and productive ending did not finish altogether at the Dissolution though, some hoped that the destruction of the Catholic Church was temporary, and expected that the monasteries would be restored. Many townspeople ensured that the monastery at St Albans was kept intact so that the monks could return, and offered the monks themselves shelter.[882] The prominent members of society in the town, those who offered to shelter monks, and aid the previous abbot to secure the abbey church as their parish church and a school, become burgesses later on. These men worked with the abbot at a time when they were being granted freedom from the monastery and were under no obligation to offer loyalty to him. This does not represent the same townspeople who revolted against their lord 158 years before, but a completely changed set of people, who respected their lord and hoped for their imminent return, despite their ability to survive without them.

There are limitations to this study, the primary limitation is the lack of documents we have for the monastery. This thesis has used the manor court rolls of Codicote and the chronicle evidence from the monks, as its primary sources.[883] These two sources have provided me with a substantial amount of evidence to use in this study, but there is still much that is missing. The chronicle evidence for St Albans is incredibly rich, mostly because the writing of chronicles was a tradition at the monastery, one that was taken seriously by the monks including, Matthew Paris and Thomas Walsingham.[884] We are very lucky that these men were writing what they had experienced during their own lives, making their commentary first hand as opposed to hearsay on much of what was happening. However, these chronicles have flaws, they are in the opinions of the monks themselves, and they were the ones with the power and control over the townspeople and the peasants. To see the side of the peasants we can look to the court rolls, but they also have their flaws, again being written by the ruling class in their court that they had full control over. To see some of what the peasants from the manors and the townspeople really thought we can assess the wills of these people, as I have done, however there are also flaws in using wills as a resource. A clergy member or even a monk was usually present, and so it may not have represented the full

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[880] Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England The Tudor Age*, III.
[881] Greatrex, *The English benedictine cathedral priories*; Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*; Greatrex, 'After Knowles', 35-50.
[882] Clark, 'Reformation and Reaction', 297-328 (pp. 318-9).
[883] BL Stowe MS, 849, BL Additional MS, 40734.
[884] Walsingham, *GASA*, I.

views of the dead, and even if it did it is not representative of the population because of the number of wills that we either do not have or simply were not composed.

St Albans has a substantial amount of records that survive from its medieval period, but there are also those that did not survive that would allow us to have a far fuller picture of the monastery and town. There is a lack of account rolls for the obedientiaries of the monastery, these accounts, which survive for other monastic communities, would provide us with details of the obedientiaries themselves, what their income and expenditure was, and more importantly, what they spent their money on. By knowing these things we would be able to make more informed conclusions about the estate management of St Albans, without relying on account rolls from other monasteries to make assumptions. There are also missing court rolls, which would inevitably make looking at the St Albans manors far easier because the comparison with other manors would be easier. For many manors we do have full accounts, but for others we only have a partial account, which means a partial picture. These accounts may of course come to light at some point in the future, and then we should hopefully be able to have a fuller view of what was happening in medieval St Albans. Due to the substantial amount we do have on both the manors, and within the chronicle evidence, and therefore, I have not been able to utilise and analyse these resources fully, further work would be needed to look at St Albans and the manors using the court rolls, chronicle evidence, and wills to further examine how St Albans and its manors was managed and by whom. There are opportunities for further study in this area, there are many more of St Albans manors that could be analysed in and compared to Codicote in more detail. There is a substantial amount of material, which I have mentioned, which would be ample for further work to be completed on St Albans.

In my final remarks, I would like to conclude that the relationship between the monastery and the townspeople of St Albans changed throughout the 800 years that the monastery was governing the town. The relationship had volatile moments but also times where the monastery and townspeople did agree, the times that they did not get on were the times when there was problems nationwide and times were very difficult, and understandably the peasants would want to have more control over their lives when all around them there was death, disease, and famine. The times that were better proved to be better relations between the two, and by the Dissolution, the townspeople appear to, at the very least, respected the monks and the monastery. So much so, that the townspeople looked after the monks and the monastery just in case there was a chance that they would be able to return to the way things were. Eventually though, with Queen Elizabeth coming into power, this was not meant to be, and the monasteries and the Catholic Church were no longer a commanding power within England, and St Albans never again achieved the prestige it had during the Middle Ages.

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