

## **Archival Exercise**

### **Fineshade Priory**

#### **Introduction**

The former site of Fineshade Priory is located six miles south west of Stamford in Lincolnshire. The aim of this exercise was to identify some of the key medieval and early modern archival sources associated with this site, thereby establishing the scope for further research into the history of Fineshade Priory.

#### **Methodology**

The first stage involved consulting British History Online, which is run by the Institute of Historical Research, to obtain some background information on the Fineshade site. This revealed that during the medieval period there was a castle, known as 'Castle Hymel', which was demolished around 1200 and replaced by the 'Augustian Priory of St. Mary'.<sup>1</sup> Richard Engayne, whose family owned the castle, founded St. Mary.<sup>2</sup> He died in 1208 and in 1536 the 'priory was dissolved'.<sup>3</sup> The National Archive online catalogue was then searched for the dates 1200 – 1599 and 51 returns under the search 'Fineshade' were obtained. Some of these records were located in The National Archive and some were located at other archives. The most promising of these references were then followed up, including searching other archive websites, for example, Lambeth Palace Library and The Vatican Library.

#### **Archival sources**

Kew

The National Archive

E 25/51/1 PRO 23/62

This is a plaster mould cast of the original monastic seal of 1534. It is part of the Exchequer Records. The E25 series contains acknowledgements of royal supremacy over the Church of England and includes some loose seals.

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1 British History Online, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/northants/vol1/p38> [Accessed 01 November 2020]

2 British History Online, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/northants/vol1/p38> [Accessed 01 November 2020]

3 British History Online, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/northants/vol1/p38> [Accessed 01 November 2020]

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Kew

The National Archive

SC 2/195/104

This source relates to the operation of the Courts of the Prior of Fineshade, dated 1484 – 1490. This is a special collection of Court Rolls brought together in the nineteenth century.

Kew

The National Archive

E 118/1/22

This is a legal document that makes reference to Simon, Prior of Fynneshed. It is dated to the 22 regnal year of Edward IV, 12 November. The E118 series spans 1327 – 1547 and contains leases of lands, and profits from tithes and rectories made by religious houses.

London

Lambeth Palace Library

Records of Court of Arches (Exhibits)

The Court of Arches is the Archbishop of Canterbury's court of appeal. The Fineshade Cartulary is included in this collection. A cartulary is a collection of deeds and charters.

London

The British Library

Add Ch 19979, 21532, 21545, 22080-1

This contains four deeds from the thirteenth century relating to Fineshade Priory.

London

The British Library

Cotton MS Cleopatra D IX, ff 84–90

These manuscripts were previously owned by Sir Robert Cotton who died in 1631. This source contains documents relating to Fineshade Priory. Additional research has determined there is a Codex contain the Fineshade Manuscript in this archival source.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hannah Kilpatrick, *The Untouchable Past and the Incomprehensible Present: Temporal Detachment and the Shaping of History in the Fineshade Manuscript* (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Ottawa, 2011)

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London

The British Library

Add Ch 21532 : 1216-1441

Add Ch 21545 : 1216-1441

Add Ch 22081 : 1216-1441

These are part of a collection of charters relating to monastic and other lands in England. These sections contain references to Fineshade Abbey.

Northamptonshire

Northamptonshire Archives

NRA 23058 Monckton

This source contains the title deeds, estate papers and legal papers of the Monckton family dating from 1500 – 1900. The early records may be of value in understanding what happened to Fineshade Priory at the time of the Dissolution.

Vatican City

The Vatican Library

Regesta, Vol. XII : 7 Honorius III

The Papal Regesta consists of over two thousand volumes.<sup>5</sup> During the nineteenth century a Calendar of entries was produced relating to Great Britain and Ireland. These were translated and published in book form. A digitised version of the 'Calendar of Papal Registers Relating To Great Britain and Ireland' is available at British History Online. There are two entries for Fineshade Abbey:

6 Non. May. Lateran. (f. 40d.)

Grant of protection and confirmation of their possessions to the prior and canons of St. Mary's, Castle Hymel (Fineshead), and their brethren, present and future; namely, their possessions in the town of Blararic, rents in Northlufeam, lands in the towns of Laxton, Henewic, and Dudington, with various privileges and immunities.<sup>6</sup>

1223. 11 Kal. June. Lateran. (f. 48d.)

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5 British History Online, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-papal-registers/brit-ie/vol1/i-v> [Accessed 01 November 2020]

6 British History Online, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-papal-registers/brit-ie/vol1> [Accessed 01 November 2020]

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Confirmation to the prior and canons of Castle Hymel of an ordinance made by Richard Engain, their patron and founder, that the election of prior should be made without the consent of himself or his successors.<sup>7</sup>

### **Future directions for archival research**

Several other references were located on The National Archive website, which need to be explored further. The Vatican Library website is difficult to navigate but has the potential for more archival sources. More work is needed on locating ecclesiastical sources that may have a bearing on Fineshade Priory but this will likely involve a visit to the appropriate local record offices.

### **References**

British History Online, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk> [Accessed 01 November 2020]

Kilpatrick, Hannah, *The Untouchable Past and the Incomprehensible Present: Temporal Detachment and the Shaping of History in the Fineshade Manuscript*. (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Ottawa, 2011)

Lambeth Palace Library, <https://www.lambethpalacelibrary.org/> [Accessed 01 November 2020]

The British Library, <https://www.bl.uk/> [Accessed 01 November 2020]

The National Archives, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/> [Accessed 01 November 2020]

The Vatican Library, <https://www.vaticanlibrary.va/en/> [Accessed 01 November 2020]

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<sup>7</sup> British History Online, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-papal-registers/brit-ie/vol1> [Accessed 01 November 2020]