

The Death and Burial of Joan de Brewes wife of Peter de Brewes

Rev. William Hudson, in his article "*Rolls of the Manor of Wiston*" in *Sussex Archaeological Collections* Volume 53 on page 156 stated that:

"At the time of her death she was at le Boys. In the accounts of the Bailiff'swhich ended at Michaelmas, 1370 we find:- In wages of the bailiff for 2 weeks at the time when the lord was about the burial of the lady 2s."

Hudson also refers to the following item in these rolls listed sometime between December 1369 and February 1370:

"For expenses of men going with 1 cart carrying 4 pigs and 25 lambs of stock for the sepulture of the lady" with a note in the Stock Account on dorse "Lambs Delivered at Missyngden on day of septulture of lady, 25" "Pigs. Delivered at Boys, 4."

Unfortunately, no mention is made in the Wiston rolls of the first name of the lady of the manor and the actual dates of her death and burial.

However, J.M. Murray in his article "*The Annals of Missenden Abbey*"¹ refers to a medieval manuscript "*Speculum humanae salvationis*" and makes the following comments:

"The remaining local entries illustrate the abbey's relationship with Peter de Brewes, a local landowner and patron. For the year 1371 (o.s.) the annals record the death of Johanna, wife of Peter de Brewes, on 3 January. She was subsequently interred in the conventual church of the abbey on 18th February in what would be 1372 [n.s.]. This Peter de Brewes was listed as the holder of the half hide of Little Missenden in 1371²³. He must have been on friendly terms with the abbey since he received a commission from the king in 1374 to protect the abbey²⁴. Testimony to the relationship between Missenden Abbey and this patron is found in the abbey cartulary: "Grant by Abbot Ralf to Lord Peter de Brewes of the fraternity of their house and their prayers for his health during life and for his soul after death and that of Johanna his wife. 26 April 1378²⁵. This 1378 daye given for the document in the printed edition of the cartulary is erroneous, for Ralf Marshall died in 1374 and Peter de Brewes' death is recorded in the annals in 1378²⁶. A more likely dating is the period between 1372 and 1374, that is after the death of Johanna and before the death of Ralf."

23. *V.C.H. Buckinghamshire* 1.371 Peter de Brewes was apparently an influential man in the kingdom. He was knighted by the king after the battle of Crecy (CPR 12.474 [20 Edward III], received an annual pension from Edward of 100 pounds (CPR 12.651 [31 Edward III]), and often served as a commissioner.

24. CPR 12.52-53 (48 Edward III). This commission called upon Peter de Brewes, John Cheynee and the sheriff of Buckinghamshire to protect the property and the monks of the abbey, to secure any property lost and to proclaim throughout the country that no one could go armed into the abbey on penalty of imprisonment. This

document escaped the notice of both Sister Elspeth and Jenkins and marks the end of a long period of warfare between Abbot Ralf and his cannons. The strife caused the bishop of Lincoln to send commissions of inquiry in 1370 and 1372 (V.C.H. Buckinghamshire 1.372). The year 1374 brought an armed uprising against Ralf that forced him to flee to London, there to die in September 1374. Ralf had already fled the abbey in August 1374, for the commission to Peter de Brewes states that the administration of the abbey had been entrusted to William Thenford, prior, who became the next abbot after Ralf's death.

25. *Jenkins, Cartulary of Missenden Abbey 3.228.*

26. *The date of Peter's death is confirmed by an order, dated 4 October 1378, directing the escheators of Sussex and Buckinghamshire to take into the king's hand the lands of Peter de Brewes (CFR 9.153 [2 Richard II]).*

Murray then lists in chronological order the annalistic entries themselves, with the date calculated on the basis of information contained in the Easter table. Murray notes that there are frequent errors in the dating of these entries, and he identifies these where possible. The entries of relevance are

"1371 – 3 non. Januarii obiit Johanna uxor domini Petri de Brewes, et 12 kal. Marcii sepulta est in ecclesia conventuali de Mussenden.

1378 –Edwardus tercius obiit, et secundo die Iunie coronacio regis Richardi secundi filii Edward principis Wallie, et ..illegible antipapa surrexit et Petrus de Brewes obiit."

There is a discrepancy between the Wiston Rolls and Easter Table Annals of Missenden Abbey concerning the year of her death. The former suggesting she died and was interred sometime in early 1370, whilst the latter stating she died on 3rd January 1371 [o.s.]¹ and was interred on the 18th February 1372 [n.s.].

In view of the many inconsistencies in the dating in the annalistic entries, it seems more appropriate to take the year of her death and burial from the Wiston Rolls. I thus conclude that Joan de Brewes the wife of Peter de Brewes died on the 3rd January 1370 [n.s.] probably at Chesham Bois, Bucks and was buried on the 18th February 1370 [n.s.] at the Conventual Church of Missenden Abbey, Bucks.

Notes & References

[1] "The Easter Table Annals of Missenden Abbey: An Annotated Text" *Journal Medieval Studies Publisher Brepols Publishers ISSN 0076-5872 Issue Volume 46, Volume 46 / 1984 DOI 10.1484/J.MS.2.306671 Pages 476-486 Online Date Tuesday, December 29, 2009*

[2] The change of style of dating in England occurred in 1752, when it was determined by an Act of Parliament, first, that the year should commence on the 1st January instead of the 25th March as theretofore. Thus according to the annals she died on the 3rd January 1372 [n.s.] and was interred on the 18th February 1372 [n.s.].

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