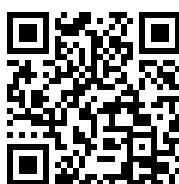


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51  
Private by W<sup>m</sup> Dickson  
the Author / Alnwick Northam

NOTICES

OF

A CHANTRY

IN THE

Parochial Chapelry of Alnwick,

DEDICATED TO

*The Virgin Mary.*

BY

WILLIAM DICKSON

OF ALNWICK AND OF WHITECROSS IN BERWICKSHIRE.

LONDON:

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THE CHANTRY  
OF  
THE BLESSED MARY OF ALNWICK.

“ For though in feudal strife, a foe  
Hath laid our Lady’s Chapel low,  
Yet still, beneath the hallow’d soil,  
The peasant rests him from his toil,  
And dying, bids his bones be laid  
Where erst his simple fathers pray’d.”—*Marmion*.

**A**S one of the objects of our Club is to investigate the antiquities of Berwickshire and its vicinage, I presume to place upon the records a few notices of this Chantry, which have never appeared before the public in print. It is interesting to show the mode in which our ancestors lived and worshiped God; besides, it forms a link in the history of a county, and, aided by similar inquiries, becomes of great service to the future topographer.

By way of explanation I may observe, that a Chantry or Chauntry (Cantaria) is a small chapel or church, or private altar, in a cathedral or other public place of worship, with an endowment for one or more priests, on condition that they should *sing mass* and perform other divine services for the soul of the founder, and of such also of his descendants, or other relations, as he may have provided for by the grant.

A man might make a Chantry by licence of the King, without the Ordinary, for the Ordinary hath nothing to do therewith—as was the case with this Chantry. The main use and intent of these Chantries was, for prayers for souls departed, on a supposition of purgatory, and of being released from thence by masses satisfactory\*.

These endowments were however effectually abolished by statutes, which not only rendered the holding of such property unlawful, but conferred the same upon the Crown (37 Hen. VIII. c. 4; 1 Ed. VI. c. 14; and 1 Eliz. c. 29).

The reason for the dissolution of Chantries is best shown by the preamble of the statute of Edward the Sixth, which is as follows:—

“The King’s most loving subjects, the Lords spiritual and temporal, and the Commons in this Parliament assembled, considering that a great part

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\* That they were used for other purposes, may be learned from an interesting passage in Shakspeare’s Twelfth Night:—

*Act 4. SCENE 3.—Sebastian, Olivia, and the Priest.*

*Olivia to Sebastian.* If you mean well,  
Now go with me, and with this holy man,  
Into the *Chantry* by: there, before him  
And underneath that consecrated roof,  
Plight me the full assurance of your faith;  
That my most jealous and too doubtful soul  
May live at peace.

*Act 5. SCENE 1.*

*Olivia.* Father, I charge thee by thy reverence,  
Here to unfold, what thou dost know,  
Hath newly past between this youth and me.

*Priest.* A contract of eternal bond of love,  
Confirm’d by mutual joinder of your hands,  
Attested by the holy close of lips,  
Strengthen’d by interchangement of your rings,  
And all the ceremony of this compact,  
Seal’d in my function, by my testimony.

of superstition and error in Christian religion hath been brought into the minds and estimation of men, by reason of their ignorance of their very true and perfect salvation, through the death of Jesus Christ, and by devising and phantasing vaine opinions of purgatory, and masses satisfactory to be done for them which be departed ; the which doctrine and vaine opinion by nothing more is maintained and upholder than by the abuse of Trentalls, Chauntries, and other provisions made for the continuance of the said blindness and ignorance : and further considering and understanding, that the alteration, change and amendment of the same, and converting to good and godly uses, as in erecting of Grammar Schools to the education of youth in virtue and godliness, and further augmenting the Universities, and better provision for the poor and needy, cannot in this present Parliament be provided and conveniently done, nor cannot nor ought to any other manner of person be committed, than to the King's Highness, whose Majestie with and by the advice of his Highness' most prudent Counsel, can and will, most wisely and beneficially, both for the honor of God and the weale of this His Majesty's Realm, order, alter, convert, and dispose of the same."

This was a Chantry in the Chapel of St. Michael in the parochial Chapelry of Alnwick, in the parish of Lesbury, in Northumberland, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. It was founded by Henry Earl of Northumberland, in the reign of Henry the Sixth, and the following translation of a Licence from the Crown will best show the reason and origin of its foundation.

Among the records in the custody of the Master of the Rolls pursuant to Statute 1 and 2 Vict. c. 94, and preserved in the Tower of London, (to wit) Patent Rolls, 26 Henry VI. part 2. Memb. 18, it is thus contained :—

*"L. Cantar. fundan&.*

*Percy et Aliiis.*

"The King.—To all to whom, &c.—Greeting.—Know, that, of our special grace, we have granted and given licence, for us and our heirs, as much as in us is, to our dear Cousin Henry Earl of Northumberland, to the Rev. Father in Christ William Bishop of Lincoln, to our wellbeloved Henry Percy, Knight, Lord of Poynings, and John Lematon skilled in the Law, the three or two longest livers of them, to make, found and establish to the praise and glory of God, a certain Chauntry for ever, for two Chaplains, in Divine honor of the most Blessed and Glorious and Pure Virgin Mary, at the altar of the same Virgin, within the Chapel of St. Michael of Alnewicke, within the Diocese of Durham, to sing praises daily, unles a reasonable

cause of excuse shall intervene, for our good condition whilst we live, and of the said Earl, Bishop, Henry and John and all others who, lands, tenements, rents or other possessions for the sustenance of the aforesaid Chantry, or of the Chaplain of the same, shall give or contribute, or otherwise who by any means shall lend a helping hand to the sustentation of the Chantry and Chaplains whilst they live, and for our soul and their souls when from this Light we shall have departed and they shall have departed, and for the souls of all the faithful. And for one of the said Chaplains to instruct poor boys in the art of Grammar gratis, and without occasion of money whatsoever, and to fulfil other works of piety, according to the orders of the said Earl, Bishop, Henry and John, the three or two longest livers of them in this behalf to be observed for ever.

“ And that this Chantry, when it shall be so made, founded and established, shall be the Chantry of the Blessed Mary of Alnewicke, and all Chaplains of the same Chantry for the time being shall be called perpetual Chaplains of the same perpetual Chantry.

“ And that the Chaplains of that Chantry, when it shall have been so made, founded and established, and their successors Chaplains of the same Chantry, by the name of the Chaplains of the Chantry of the Blessed Mary of Alnewicke, be persons competent in Law to prosecute and defend all actions personal, real and mixed, suits, complaints and demands in whatsoever Court and before whatsoever Justices and Judges spiritual and temporal, and that they may in the same answer and be answered, and be likewise persons capable and competent in Law to acquire lands, tenements, rents, reversions, services, and other possessions whatsoever.

“ And that the Chaplains of the Chantry aforesaid who are to sing praises in the aforesaid Holy Chapel for the condition of the souls aforesaid, in the form aforesaid, to be named and deputed by the Burgesses of Alnewicke for the time being, immediately after the foundation of the aforesaid Chantry, to, shall be appointed by the aforesaid Earl of Northumberland and his heirs, and by him the Earl and his heirs whatsoever shall be presented to the Ordinary of that place, and that the said Chaplains coming in after such ceremony, by what fashion soever, and all and singular other the Chaplains of the Chantry aforesaid, shall be nominated to all and singular the premises on their parts in the same manner as it is permitted to be done and exercised by the aforesaid Burgesses for the time being and from time to time, and shall be presented by the aforesaid Earl and his heirs in the form aforesaid.

“ And that the aforesaid Earl, Bishop, Henry and John, the three or two longest livers of them, may make and appoint lawful statutes and ordinances, for the perpetual establishment and good government of the aforesaid Chantry, according to the exigence of necessity lawfully and with im-

punity, without impediment, occasion, perturbation, or molestation of us or our heirs or any others whatsoever.

“ And lastly, of our abundant grace, we have granted for us and our heirs, that when the said Chantry shall have been so made, founded and established, the Chaplains in that Chantry for the time being may acquire and enjoy, lands, tenements and rents to the value of forty pounds per annum which shall not be held of us immediately in capite, or otherwise by military service, from any other person or persons, willing to give, grant or assign the same to them, to be had and held by them and their successors, Chaplains of the aforesaid Chantry, as well for the Exhibition in grammar of poor boys there as aforesaid, as for the maintenance of the said Chantry and support of the burdens necessarily belonging to the same Chantry, according to the ordinances of the Earl, Bishop, Henry and John, the three or two longest livers of them, as it is permitted to be done for ever.

“ And likewise by the tenor of these presents we have given special licence, for any person or persons that he or they may give, grant, or assign in form aforesaid such lands, tenements and rents of the said annual value to the aforesaid Chaplains for the time being of the aforesaid Chantry as is aforesaid, so long as it be found by Inquisition duly taken and returned into the Chancery of us and of our heirs, that it may be done without hurt or prejudice of us or our heirs or others whatsoever, notwithstanding the Statute of Mortmain, except in those cases where express mention is made of other gifts and grants by us or any of our ancestors to the aforesaid Earl, Bishop, Henry and John or any of them in matters of small amount existing before the date of this Licence.

“ In Testimony whereof we have caused these our letters to be made patent. Witness ourself, at Westminster, the 6th day of July, in the 26th year of our reign. [A.D. 1448.]

“ By writ of Privy Seal and of the date aforesaid.”

This Henry Earl of Northumberland was the son of the valiant Hotspur; he held many high offices under the Crown, and was in great favour with King Henry VI.; he was killed at the battle of St. Albans, 23rd May, 33 Hen. VI. (1455), fighting in the army of that king. He was succeeded by his eldest son Henry, one of the parties named in the above Charter; he was summoned to Parliament in his father's lifetime as Lord de Poynings; his wife was Baroness Poynings Fitzpayne and Bryan in her own right, titles which have descended from her to His Grace the present Duke of Northumberland.

The Bishop named in the above Licence was William Alnewicke, formerly Archdeacon of Salisbury; he was made Bishop of Norwich 27th Feb. 1426—was Keeper of the Privy Seal—translated to Lincoln 19th Sept. 1436, and died 5th Dec. 1449. From his name being Alnewicke he was probably a native of that town, and so instrumental in the endowment of this Chantry.

This religious foundation seems to have been augmented from time to time by grants from pious individuals, and to have risen rapidly, as it only existed for about 100 years.

At the dissolution of Chantries in 1547 this Society possessed 44 burgages in various parts of the town of Alnwick, containing in all nearly 11 acres.

This is proved by the following extracts from an ancient Survey of the Borough Town of Alnwick, made in the time of King James I. (1624), and preserved in Alnwick Castle:—

*Narrowgate Street.*

A. R. P.

Matt <sup>”</sup> Jones holdeth a Burgage and Garth, late Anth <sup>”</sup> Hobwins, and before W <sup>m</sup> Grays, and before him Thomas Grays, late parcel of the possessions of the Chauntry of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Alnwick, by Fealty and suit of Court and other services ..	0	0	10
Hugh Arrowsmith holdeth a Burgage, late the Heirs of John Harrison, and sometime Roger Harrison, late belonging to the Chauntry of the Blessed Virgin of Alnwick .....	0	0	30
Robert Grey holdeth a Burgage, late W <sup>m</sup> Grey, his father before him, Sir Arthur Grey before Geo. Grey and before him W <sup>m</sup> Grey father to the said George, late belonging to the Chauntry of Alnwick.....	0	2	35

*Bondgate.*

John Clay holdeth a Burgage, Toft and Garth, late parcel of the Chauntry of Alnwick .....	0	0	15
---	---	---	----

*Common Lane and Town Wall.*

Edward Fargus holdeth a Burgage, late belonging to the Chauntry of Alnwick .....	0	1	4
--	---	---	---

A. R. P.

*Market-place.*

Widdow Lidhouse holdeth there a Burgage late belonging to the Chauntry aforesaid .....	0 1 2
John Clarkson holdeth there a Burgage, late Rich <sup>d</sup> Clarkson, before Tho <sup>h</sup> Clarkson, and four Lands in the Alnwick way Quarter in Bondgate Field, parcel of the possessions of the Chauntry of Alnwick .....	1 1 32

*Pakes Hoole.*

Five Burgages late belonging to the said Chauntry .....	0 0 17
---	--------

*Clayport Extra.*

Three Burgages late belonging to the same Chauntry .....	0 2 31
--	--------

*Clayport Infra.*

Nicholas Farnham holdeth there one Burgage late belonging to the said Chauntry .....	0 0 27
--	--------

*Finkle Street.*

Two Burgages late belonging to the said Chauntry .....	0 0 2
--	-------

*Common Lane.*

Rob <sup>t</sup> Clarke holdeth two Burgages late belonging to the said Chauntry .....	0 2 28
--	--------

*Pottergate.*

Alex. Clarke and others hold there eleven Burgages late belonging to the said Chauntry .....	1 3 9
--	-------

*Walkergate.*

George Pawterson holdeth a Burgage late W <sup>m</sup> Greys, and before Ralph Grey, before James Phelps, parcel of the Chauntry of Alnwick .....	0 1 10
Uswan Wood and others held there nine Burgages, also late parcel of the said Chauntry .....	2 0 26

*Bayleygate.*

Four Burgages late belonging to the said Chauntry .....	1 3 39
In all forty-four Burgages and Lands, containing..... Acres	<u>10 3 37</u>

Amongst the Records of the late Court of Augmentations in the custody of the Master of the Rolls, under the Head of "Cer-

*tificates of Colleges and Chantries,"* we find the following entry relating to this Chantry :—

Anewyke.	<p>Lands and possessions belonging to the use and stypend of two Priests; the one Master of a Grammer Scoole, and the other Master of a Syng Scoole w<sup>th</sup>in Anewyke aforeseyd.</p>	<p>Willm Hudson and Thomas Thompson, bothe of 64 yeres of age, well learned, of honest conversation and qualities. The said W<sup>m</sup> Hudson having one pencon of 100 shillings by the year, besyde his said stypend, the other having noo ther lyving but only the same stypend. And they keep two schooles, the one for grammer and the other for syng, to bring up Children in learning according to their Foundation, and there is no lande sold syth the 23rd of Nov., 38th Hen. VIII.</p> <p>There is of Houseing people 1500 within the same parische.</p>	<p>The yerely value of the said stypendarys as shall appear by the particular of the same. £12 13 4</p> <p>Whereof in decay yerely of the same .... £4 9 0</p> <p>And so remayneth clere.. £8 4 4</p>	<p>Good none.</p>
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We learn from this that the population of the parish was 1500 in 1547, or thereabouts; the population is now (1851) about 7000, being an average annual increase of 18.

As the 44 Burgages only produced a rental of £12 13s. 4d. in 1547, they must have been chiefly cottages and small properties, the average annual rental of each being under six shillings. After the dissolution these Burgages were granted away by the Crown by sale or otherwise, and now belong to various individuals.

The house where the two Chaplains lived was in Walkergate Street; it came into the hands of the Percy family, and it is sometimes called "Lady House" or "Chantry House"; it is now a ruin, but the side walls are standing as well as the gable (Plate No. VII.), from which the style of architecture is shown. The rooms for living and sleeping may be conjectured, and are in some degree shown in the sketches No. VI. and No. VII.



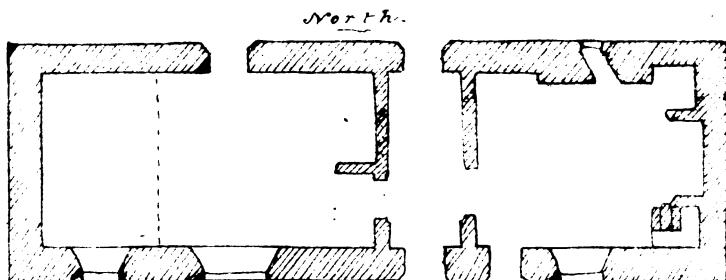
Seal of the Borough of Alnwick.



This drawing is copied from one in the Local Historian's Table Book for Northumberland Vol. IV, p 266, and represents the Chantry House or Lady House in Wallergate Street in Alnwick, as it was in the year 1826.



No. VII.



Ground Plan of the Chantry

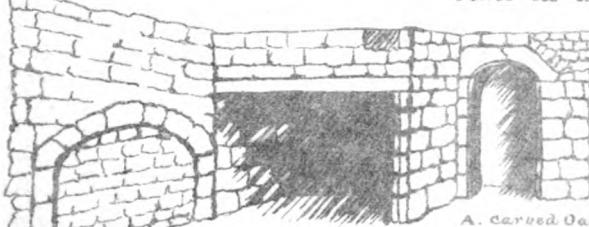
House, Walkergate, Alnwick -

Scale  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch to a foot.



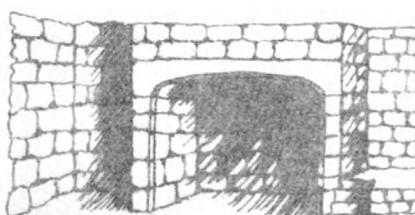
Front View.

Scale as above.



Fire place in West room - Ground Floor

Scale  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch to a foot.



Fire place in East Room

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The House consisted of two ends, each containing a kitchen below and a sleeping room above for each Chaplain to dwell in ; and at the west end there seems to have been two separate rooms, one above the other ; the one probably used as a school-room for instructing poor boys in the Art of Grammar gratis, as is mentioned in the endowment, and the other for a Singing School.

The fire-places are large, as in the case of old houses where wood was used for firing (Plate No. VII.).

The architecture has been of a collegiate and ornamental character, and the roof and joists of oak ; some of the beams carved and beaded still remain.

The outside stairs, which existed in 1826 (Plate No. VI.) and for some years afterwards, have been removed ; they were old, but were not considered originally to have formed part of the building.

From this House there was a footway leading direct to St. Michael's Chapel through the churchyard, which was legally closed a few years ago as unnecessary.

His Grace Algernon the present Duke of Northumberland, not willing that the building should be entirely swept away, means to preserve it, as far as is practicable, and to convert it to some useful purpose.

Thus I have traced this religious Institution from its foundation, through its palmy days, unto its present ruinous condition ; and taking into consideration former events,—the founding and dissolution of these and similar religious establishments—how our kings took possession of them from time to time, and retained the revenues in their own hands—how all alien priories were seized by the Crown in the time of King Edward the First—how they

were again suppressed in the time of King Henry the Fifth—how the endowments of the Knights of St. John were seized in very early times—how the monasteries were taken possession of by King Henry the Eighth, and all Chantries, Colleges, free Chapels, Fraternities and Guilds founded for superstitious purposes were suppressed ;—it is impossible not to come to the conclusion, that if ever England should witness the establishment of such societies again and the amassing of property for such purposes, it will only afford another opportunity of doing that for which so many precedents already exist.

It may be noted here, in conclusion, that the old church of Alnwick is sometimes said to be dedicated to “*St. Mary and St. Michael*,” and of late it has been called “*St. Mary’s Church*.” But this is erroneous : nothing proves the name of the Patron Saint more clearly than the time of celebrating the annual feast, which is held yearly on the first Sunday after the feast of St. Michael (old style). It is curious to trace the connexion of the old parish feasts with the patron saint’s day. These annual entertainments are held on the same day in every year from generation to generation. By this rule the patron saint of Alnwick is made out to be Saint Michael : in addition we find the effigies of that saint on the public buildings ; one on St. Michael’s Pant and another on the church well. We also find on the ancient seal of the old Saxon corporation of Alnwick the figure of St. Michael (Plate No. VI.). In the preceding Licence of King Henry the Sixth, the old church is expressly called “the Chapel of St. Michael.” The confusion that Alnwick church is dedicated to “*St. Mary*,” or “*St. Mary and St. Michael*,” arises from the circumstance, that this Chantry, founded in the ancient chapel of St. Michael, was erected in honour of the Blessed Virgin.

6. 2. 1.

W. D.

