

Knights Templar at Selborne & East Meon.

I am truly puzzled by this matter for none of the "authorities" on the Templars mention land at either place. In fact, the only mention they give of property in Hampshire is Wainford Hill, given to the Order by the De Port family before 1177, with the original lease being in the name of Robert of Wainford & this being changed to clerical tenants, the first of whom was the priest Edmund who was almoner to Geoffrey Ridel, Bishop of Ely, at an annual rent of 20/-.

The only ^{possible} ~~other~~ places in Hants. are ~~that~~ ^{these} at Selborne & at North Baddesley, near Winchester, & at Gosfield, Alresford.

So either the authorities are wrong, or Gilbert White & tradition are wrong. (There appears to be no ^{major donor} connection between Sir Adam Guider, ~~at~~ Selborne Priory & the Templars.) I enclose my list of source documents that I waded through at the Bodleian last September & I don't think I can find any other book or article to study. There was one mention in the Sandford Cartulary of Templar holdings in "Hampshire" but I think they could easily be those in the Isle of Wight, although this source gave no name.

So looking at the possibility that Gilbert White was mistaken & was only following tradition, how to account for the mistake?

As White makes clear on p. 314/5, 'commanderies' & 'preceptories' became interchangeable in common parlance — & even Sir Nicholas Ponsness in his "Building of Britain: Hampshire", speaks of the manor house at North Baddesley as being the "successor to the medieval Preceptory of the Knights Hospitaliers, originally a cell of that at Gosfield." This does not indicate of necessity that it was once a preceptory of the Templars & not just a Commandery of the Hospitaliers — the two names being interchangeable & virtually synonymous.

So could the Selborne lands, plus those at Baddesley & Gosfield have all been Hospitalier lands from the beginning & the Selborne 'preceptory' being really a Hospitalier Commandery? This seems unlikely in view of the name of 'Temple' in Selborne. But, to me at least, it seems very unlikely that the Selborne site was more than a Grange, providing funds for the Holy War — otherwise it would be mentioned in at least one of my sources. (F.W. Shore, in his "History of Hampshire", published, I think in late 19 century, mentions a preceptory at Warblington & at South Baddesley — this land I have checked out via the church guide there, which says the Templar connection was simply a confusion with North Baddesley, & there is no evidence of a Preceptory ever having been at South Baddesley, although tradition holds there was. It also mentions an estate at Selborne.)

called Temple" & says that he has looked for the arms of the Templars in the roof in vain (why would they mark roof timbers?).

What I do find significant, though, is that the Priory was founded by Bishop Peter des Roches of Winchester in 1232. (Foundation charter of 1233) was priory for Augustinian Black Canons. By White's day, the living of the church was held by Magdalen College, Oxford (p. 291); still appeared to have links with bishops in time of Thomas Cooper (p. 292) even after extra lands granted to bishop for Priory (p. 299) & in "Antiquities" of 1788 (page 309) Magdalen College still had one "tenement" in addition to a "little estate" it college bought in 1785 (p. 309).

So we have two important names, ^{Waynflete} the bishops of Winchester & Magdalen College, Oxford. It was Bishop ~~John de Beaufort~~ who founded the college in 1458 & he would, of necessity, have had to donate income from certain of his estates ~~to~~ as endowments, as was almost certainly the case with our Hilhampton lands. (~~Both~~ The Templars were suppressed 1308-13 & the Hospitallers at the Reformation.) Selborne was always in the diocese of Winchester. ~~the bishops of Winchester~~ See page 359 for Selborne Priory lands passing to Magdalen College, who also held the living.

As far as I can tell (going back to the Templars) there is no record of Selborne lands being transferred from the Templars to the Hospitallers in 1308 & after. Why not? There was 150 years between the Templar suppression & the passing of Priory lands to Oxford in 1484, & if the Hospitallers didn't take over those lands (or there appears to be no record of them passing to Oxford earlier than 1484) then who took them over? Surely the Bishop of Winchester (founder of Magdalen & earlier, founder of the Priory).

If, as I suspect, ^{he} set aside lands of his own to fund the Templars as well as founding the Priory (both belonged to the Augustinian Order), then he probably just took them back into his own care & kept quiet. (There's plenty of evidence in my "sources" for this happening — even the King did it instead of passing them on to the Hospitallers.)

So my belief is that the Selborne Preceptory was no more than a cell, possibly belonging to the Templars of Inglewood in Kintbury Berkshire (as did Wainford Hill) which, according to the Sandford Cartulary (translated by Agnes M. Lee), looked after the Templar lands in Hampshire.

This still leaves the problems a) the name 'Temple', & b) how did Gilbert White make a mistake by suggesting the Selborne land were more important than they were.

a) Country names do linger. After all, Temple Cowley in Oxford would have been shut down in 1308 or just after, ~~yet~~ the name

Largest & most important Templar lands were in Yorkshire & Lincolnshire — both rich sheep lands — so those in the south & south-east were smaller & of less importance. If some of the lands of the bishops of Winchester were set aside to provide funds for the Templars (Bishop Peter des Roches was Bishop during King John's reign who also gave generously) then those lands would surely have been known locally as "Templar lands" & the building in which the man in charge lived would have been known as the Preceptory or "The Temple". I don't think there is a greater significance. (The Temple seems to have been the Manor House of Selborne which was owned by the Priory, pages 301 & 66)

b) On page 308, White explains in a note that Bishop Tanner (date? made grave error ^{over} the Selborne Market, which didn't exist! This, he thought, was due to an error in another document. So White isn't infallible. Likewise, I feel the stress on the Templars actually being in Selborne may be wrong — they probably only had *habitués* under a Templar-appointed steward (preceptor).

In the same way I think our Templar connections are equally slight. There's no suggestion that I can find that any of the Knights were from this locality &, in any case, at their dissolution ^{in 1312} there were only 135 English ~~Knights~~ Templars, of whom 11 were priests & only 6 were Knights.

So I don't think we can claim any actual "Templars" as such for either Selborne or East Meon. Only bits of land, donated mostly by the bishops of Winchester.

What do you think?

Note: Have tried to prove (?) that the Templar treasure which was loaded into 18 galleys came to England and to Portsmouth and then on to East Meon in 1307. The Grand Master of the Templars at the time

① was Guillaume de Bior — also Lord of the Manor of Titchfield and vassal of King of England

② Leonard de Bar Grandson of Edward 1st. Nephew Ed II.

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