William of Wykeham

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When I agreed to do this talk, I didn't know that much about William of Wykeham. But I thought he was interesting. I do now know a lot about him, and I will talk to you about him. First of all, it's worth noting the title, which might seem odd for a bishop: plutocrat, philanthropist, priest and politician.

The background: A deadly virus sweeping the country, bad relationships with continental Europe, excessive Government expenditure resulting in record levels of taxation, enquiries into politicians proliferating. Members of the Royal Family bickering self-destructively, secret agents carrying out assassinations of political refugees, and climate change to the level of two degrees of temperature.

That is not the United Kingdom in the early 21st century; it's England in the 14th century. And it was in this rather tumultuous environment that William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, both survived and thrived. He died in his own bed, which was not always the case, very often not the case at this time. In 1404, at the age of 84, well-respected, fabulously wealthy, and leaving a legacy that still has a beneficial impact on England to this very day.

And here is the man himself, in his frightfully modest monument in Winchester Cathedral, which we will look at in more detail later on.

William was born, as you might suspect from his name, albeit a different spelling, in the small market town, as it then was, of Wykeham in Hampshire, just ten miles away from here. His parents were not of the highest echelons of society, but nor were they of the lowest. His father, John Long, probably known as such because he was very tall (certainly, his son, William, was over six foot tall), was one of the

higher taxpayers of the parish. And his mother, Sybil, was, descended from a minor gentry family.

You'll often see references to William Wykeham coming from an extremely poor background and so on. That’s not entirely true. But nevertheless, he was not from a grand background.

Just an aside on surnames, because I've referred to his father as being John Long, and William was William of Wykeham or William Wykeham. This was a time before surnames had become settled. And this family is a very good case study from that point of view, because, of course, John Long was of Wykeham, so he could equally have been known as John of Wykeham, but then so could everybody else who lived in Wykeham, so it wouldn’t have really made sense to distinguish one person from another.

Whereas William spent his adult life away from Wykeham. Therefore, he was known as William of Wykeham. And his uncle, Henry, had a somewhat unusual surname, which was spelt Aas, which I presume would have been pronounced ass or arse. Now, we don't know quite what personal attributes were as a result of him being called that, but that's for us to wonder about.

William wasn't highly educated, but he must have received some education, probably from the parish priest of Wykeham, and then perhaps a stint at the grammar school in Winchester. The first public record we have of him is in 1349, at which point he had survived the Black Death, which had been sweeping across the country over the last 18 months and had killed an estimated 40 to 60% of the population.

So he did quite something by just surviving to that point. In 1349, he stood as surety for a wardship, which was granted by the Bishop of Winchester at the time, William Edington, to one Thomas of Curdiffe, who probably was of Cardiff. And surety, he was standing as guarantor, and wardships were a system whereby if an heir inherited an estate underage, it was not his family who had responsibility for him, it was the monarch's prerogative or, indeed, a great landowners’ prerogative to grant the guardianship, in essence, to the highest payer.

And this was a very useful way for the sovereign and, indeed, a great landowner like the Bishop of Winchester, to gain funds. So, William was acting, in essence, as the guarantor for that, which would suggest he was already doing pretty well. It also suggests that he was in the employ already of the Bishop of Winchester, one of the great landowners of the country. In 1350, he himself was granted a wardship. So he was on the rise financially already. He was, I should say, 25 in 1349 when he first appears.

And then in 1355 he's recorded as working as the attorney or agent, which doesn't mean he's a lawyer, as an agent for one John Foxley, who was the son of a major Hampshire landowner who was known to be a great dealer in exchequer tallies. These are the ways that accounts were kept in the Middle Ages. Very specific to England. It did happen elsewhere, but it was codified as very much the system in England. So, if money was owed, if tax was owed, if a loan was made, if there was the promise of money, then the way this was dealt with was by a simple hazel twig, and the twig was specified under the regulations to be the length of your index finger from the tip of the thumb. And it would be one twig which would then have notches put on it to indicate the amount of money that was involved. The larger piece was known as the stock and the lower piece as the foil. It would then be split, and the person to whom the money was owed kept the stock, something that, therefore, has value. And the debtor, in essence, kept the foil. Now, in essence, the stock had value because it was worth some money. In essence, money was re-claimable on it or claimable on it.

And as a result, if you wanted your money more quickly than perhaps the King was going to give it to you. If he'd offered you or given you a promise of money, then you'd trade it in, you'd deal in it at a lower level, to somebody such as John Foxley. And that's exactly what William of Wykeham was helping him to do. And there is actually a surviving example of a Hampshire foil, of a 13-to-14th century tally.

So he was therefore clearly a very astute administrator and financier at a comparatively young age. I should also point out that this system continued to be in operation until 1826. So we were tallying with sticks until 1826.

Obviously, it wasn't the entire system by then, but it still remained in operation. And when it was abolished, they had a huge number of tally sticks in the Exchequer in

the Houses of Parliament. And they decided in the 1830s that they would get rid of them, they didn’t need them anymore, and they burnt them. Unfortunately, the fire got out of control and the Houses of Parliament burnt down, as you can see here in this. So, never meddle with accounts. A lesson to be learned from that.

Clearly, Wykeham’s skills came to the attention of Edward III, as you can see here from the illuminated manuscript of slightly later than his own time. And probably through Bishop Edington, who was the Lord High Treasurer to Edward III, and indeed from Thomas Foxley, John the tally dealer's father, who was constable of Windsor Castle. In 1357, he was appointed to be the keeper and surveyor of Windsor and other castles and manors, which meant that he was responsible for all building work on those numerous residences of the King, primarily in southern England, the ones he was responsible for anyway.

And it came at a very opportune time in terms of getting him a great reputation, because Edward III had decided to transform Windsor Castle from a fortress, in essence, into a great Gothic palace of the height of fashion. And what was particularly revolutionary was this range here, that space is now all St George's Hall, but it was built as a chapel and hall in a line. That really hadn't happened before. He also had royal apartments and then lodgings for the court.

And if we go on, this is a reconstruction of the upper ward of Windsor Castle before Edward III’s works. And this is it now. And broadly, the buildings that you see are now the footprint of them is broadly as constructed for Edward III. There has been much cosmetic change in the meantime, particularly under George IV. In fact, so much cosmetic change that the only two places you can see clear 14th-century work are in the great Undercroft, now a café. And mostly you will note this architecture because you will see similar elements as we go through the tour.

And in the great kitchen, which still was producing the meals for Edward III when he was in residence in the 14th century and is still producing meals for the royal table of King Charles III in the 21st century, which is rather remarkable in that original space. So that all went frightfully well, and Edward III was very pleased with him. And after just two years, he appointed William to be his private secretary.

And one of the aspects that he dealt with as a private secretary were the huge ransom payments from France that were paid for John II, King of France, for several of the royal princes and numerous noblemen who were taken prisoner by the British at the Battle of Poitiers in 1356. And this was an absolute apogee of the age of chivalry. And it's really remarkable because John was taken prisoner, and yet he was given leave to return to France to help raise his own ransom payments.

And you'd think once he was in France, he would have done that and said, "You can't get me," but no, too much honour was involved in that. So when one of his sons who'd been left as guarantor for him in England himself fled, John, of his own volition, came back to England again to keep his honour, in essence. And then he stayed in England for, overall, eight years, and died in England in 1364, lived jolly well, and was entertained by the King and so forth. But nevertheless, that's how important chivalry was in the 14th century.

Now, Edward was clearly much appreciative of what Wykeham was doing for him. And when there was a vacancy in the bishopric, the King was able to make direct appointments to ecclesiastical positions, and you didn't necessarily have to be ordained to receive them, so long as you didn't have the care of people's souls. So, there were lots of posts that could be granted, and Wykeham was absolutely showered with them. He was made Archdeacon of Lincoln. He was a canon four times over, and he was made rector of numerous parishes.

In 1361, he actually decided, to open up more opportunities for himself, he would get ordained, and he was ordained, and received more posts. This holding of numerous ecclesiastical posts was known as pluralism, meaning, in essence, that you didn't just have one post and one focus. You were still not supposed to have, within that, any more than one post that was responsible for the care of people's soul, direct care of people's souls. Now, Wykeham got the King's permission to have two, so he could double up on that.

And then in 1366, Pope Urban V, who was rather worried about pluralism, asked for a survey to be done of the entire of Christianity, as it then was, or of Europe, in essence. And Wykeham came out top. He had an income of £873 a year which doesn't sound very much. Now, that's about £1 million a year that he was receiving

for doing nothing, in essence, because all the work would have been done by deputies, and he just received the money.

But that was small fry. Because the King decided that so much did he like Wykeham and so useful had he been, that he would make him both a royal councillor, then he gave him control of the Privy Seal, which was used for authorising, in essence, decisions made by the King and payments made by the King. And then on top of that, he had him elected as Bishop of Winchester. So this lad from Wykeham in Hampshire had risen to very great heights, the richest diocese in England.

To avoid any objection from the French, he gave a leave of absence to two other French princes who were also in captivity. One of them saying, “Go back to France to get married,” on condition that they lobby the Pope to allow Wykeham to be made Bishop of Winchester. And sure enough, the Pope ratified the decision, and in 1367, he was instituted as Bishop of Winchester, and he was consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury in London, and there was a great feast afterwards.

This is not it, but this is a contemporary feast with John of Gaunt, one of King Edward III’s sons. So it gives you an idea of feasting at this time. And there are a few bishops in it, so it’s a rather appropriate picture to show you. And I just thought it's rather wonderful because it's showing the service of a meal, and these are gentlemen's swords, so they're serving the dishes to the table. And you can see here the master of the kitchen is putting sauce on the dishes before they go out.

And rather wonderfully, they have these pointed shoes, which were the fashion at the time. This chap has got some problem with him. Now, the hazard they must have been when you were serving food. But clearly, Wykeham didn't approve of them because when he founded Winchester, in the regulations for the scholars, they were not allowed to have pointed shoes. Whether he'd seen some disaster happening, I don't know. So he had this great feast.

And then in July of 1368, he was enthroned at Winchester Cathedral, and rather wonderfully, an entire record survived of his enthronement, so we know what happened. He went in his everyday clothes, I suspect they weren’t that everyday, to the Church of St Lawrence at Winchester, which is just off the high street. I

wasn’t really aware of this church until doing this research, so I must go and have a look at it. And this still acts as the place that enthronements start from today. We’ve just had an enthronement. I don't know if anybody was at it.

So the Bishop clearly went there in the 14th century, and he still does now, and he went there in everyday clothes, and he took his cape and his hat and his boots and his gloves off, and then they became the perks or perquisites of the Archdeacon of Canterbury, whose privilege it was to do enthronement of bishops in the archdiocese. So there was no looking back, and he must have had to think carefully about which ones he wore on that day. And then he was robed and given the insignia of a bishop. These are silk stockings, which I hadn't illustrated.

And superbly embroidered silk, what are referred to as sandals, they’re really more like slippers. These are modern ones, but you get the idea. And embroidered silk gloves. And these are, in fact, this is a watercolour of one of a pair that survives in the college and is of a right date and possibly could have been Wykeham’s. And then a chasuble, which I found described as a sort of conical poncho. But this would go over, and would be of immensely rich fabric, this is a silk velvet, with superb embroidery, which could be directly onto it.

Britain, or England, sorry I should say, was leading the world in the finest embroidery at the time, called Opus Anglicanum. This is an example of that. So the embroidery could be directly onto the chasuble as here, or it could be in the form of strips, which are known as orfriz as in this example. And then with that, there would always be a cross on the back for when the celebrant of mass was facing the altar, because then there would be a cross facing the congregation. So he was bedecked with all of that. I just hope it wasn't raining with those silk slippers.

And of course, then the primary representations of his position as bishop, the mitre, which derives from a Byzantine cap that was worn by officials in the Byzantine Empire, studded with precious stones, as you can see here, and his crozier, the top of which is on the right-hand side, silver gilt with enamel. And the crozier representing his care of his flock. And these are William of Wykeham’s own mitre and crozier, which he left to New College in his will, and which survive to this day, which is rather remarkable.

Whether they're the ones he wore for his enthronement, we don't know. But certainly, the date of the crozier could well mean that they were the ones that he used. And his chasuble could have been part of the blue silk and cloth of gold vestments that were given to him, so he was looking pretty dapper by now. And just to show you, this crozier is wonderful because it has hundreds of depictions of musicians playing musical instruments on it. This veritable orchestra on the crozier. Academics have done studies of them, and they accurately portray instruments of the time.

Now, he then consulted Google Maps to find his way from the Church at St Lawrence to Winchester Cathedral, and he could either have taken the direct two-minute route or the roundabout 3-minute route. And this is actually an enthronement, it looks like he took the quick route as well, for Randall Davidson when he was enthroned in 1895. So they processed down to the west door. Now, I don't know, again, which side, because there are two doors, aren't there? So which one would he go through? We'll have to find out from him at some point. And then up to the choir, where he would be enthroned on the bishop's throne.

This is a 19th-century throne, but very much in the medieval style and similar to surviving medieval examples in other cathedrals. So it gives you an idea. And then once he'd been enthroned, then he would then celebrate mass for the first time in his cathedral, obviously present to God. And this is just to give you an idea. In fact, this painting shows the Cathedral of Saint-Denis in France, and St Giles officiating at mass, and you can see he's wearing a chasuble with a cross on the back, exactly as I was talking about earlier.

Also, note in relation to the East Meon altar, this is what's known as an English altar, it's actually a pre-reformation one which has curtains on the sides. Back here it's actually got an altarpiece and then this multicoloured fringe. And we have these on our altar at East Meon because Sir Ninian Couper was in fact reviving this sort of altar when he was doing the work to the church at East Meon in the early 1900s.

So he was now Bishop of Winchester, and that brought him four palaces, three castles, and numerous manor houses, including this one here at East Meon, an enormous estate with an income of £4,000 a year, which is £50 million today. And, of course, that was on top of what he already had. And he didn't stop his financial

dealings at this point either. So he still did property deals. He speculated on the wool market. He carried on his dealing with tallies. And he was very successful. So he was very, very rich indeed.

The Diocese of Winchester not only was the richest in England, but it also made him the richest person in England other than the King, the Prince of Wales and one nobleman. And in Europe, there was no other churchman who was as wealthy, other than the Archbishop of Milan. So, fabulously rich.

This is another depiction of Edward III, who had appointed him. To think about this seems shocking to us that a churchman should have been so completely involved in finance and indeed in affairs of state and government. But we're judging it by our own times, and I think it's important to think about how this was perceived at the time.

Interestingly, Wykeham's 19th-century biographer, George Moberly, wrote, “It's a very different thing to condemn the system than to condemn the men who made use of the system. The utmost that can be said in condemnation of Wykeham is that he was not ahead of the age in which he lived,” and went on, “It was then the universal custom to regard church benefices as convenient rewards for secular work, and the system of working by deputy was so firmly rooted in the English church that no man's conscience was shocked by it.”

Anyway, and I think that has something to be said for. We too easily jump to condemn the past, and I think that it’s worth us remembering that we're judging from today's standards and not from the standards at the time.

Edward III had another motive for making Wykeham a bishop. He wanted him to be his Lord Chancellor, which was, in essence, the official head of his government. He was already really running affairs. He was chief minister. And a chronicler from the time, Jean Froissart, wrote of Wykeham that, “Everything was done by him, and without him, nothing was done.” So he was very much in control. But Edward wanted him to be in his official position, and to be Lord Chancellor, he had to be eminent, and therefore making him Bishop allowed that to happen.

Very bad timing indeed, unfortunately, for him, because Edward III was becoming frail, and the war in France, which had been spectacularly successful and profitable

with all these ransoms, was taking a turn for the worst. The French were winning, and the cost was enormous. Taxation went up. And after just three years, in 1371, Wykeham was dismissed and replaced by the King's new favourite, Lord Latimer. Now, things didn't improve, and after five years, Lord Latimer was also dismissed.

This is the one point when Wykeham lost his cool and wasn't an astute politician because he must have thought he had an opportunity to get his vengeance on Latimer, and he accused him of corruption. Unfortunately for him, Latimer's chief ally was John of Gaunt, who was a son of Edward III. And John of Gaunt then led an attack on Wykeham, blaming him for corruption during his time in office, and that stuck. And he had the revenues of his diocese taken away from him and he was expelled from court.

He was very lucky indeed that he was a churchman. Had he been a nobleman, he almost certainly would have lost his head at that point. He didn't. And remarkably, his fellow bishops supported him. He also had the advantage that if he was reinstated, he could give substantial ‘loans’ to the King who needed them. And actually, three days before Edward died, he was restituted to his estate. That was quite a turbulent time and quite difficult. He had survived and then came to the throne Edward III’s young grandson, Richard II.

And had things seemed bad under Edward III’s later years, they were going to get a lot worse under Richard II. He was vain. He was extravagant. He was petulant. He bore deep grudges against anybody who he considered to have wronged him, and there were quite a lot of those. And Wykeham was at the centre of government throughout Richard II’s reign, including a second stint as Lord Chancellor in 1389-91. And in 1388, he had been one of the men who had been appointed by Parliament to try to control Richard's actions.

Richard was not happy about this. He considered it demeaning to his royal dignity, and he waited for his opportunity to get his own back. He waited quite a long time, 10 years. But in 1398, he felt that he was in a strong enough position to get his own back on those who’d tried to control him and demean him. This is another wonderful work of art depicting Richard II. These are two of the most extraordinary, very early portraits, relating to this country. This was from a devotional diptych showing Richard, in essence, being sanctioned by Christ in the Virgin Mary's arms.

So in 1398, when he felt that he was strong enough, the King decided that he would sort these people out. The Archbishop of Canterbury was expelled from his sea and sent into exile in France. The Earl of Arundel was tried and executed. And Richard's own uncle, Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, was first of all sent into exile as well at Calais. But that wasn't enough. And as you might be able to tell from this illustration, he was done in. And the suggestion from this image is that he was done in using towels, as he was about to wash his hands.

You have a urine basin behind him, and then these two evil-looking pages in this illustration who are throttling him with a towel. And there's another illustration, a contemporary illustration, which shows the same thing, although, in this one, the Duke of Gloucester seems rather unaware that they're around his throat. But you can see him washing his hands in the foreground. In fact, the duke's own servant, one of his servants recorded that he was smothered with a feather bed, but I suppose that wouldn't have made such a good illustration, so therefore, they stuck to this.

Now, Wykeham had been one of these people, so he must have felt very nervous indeed, as also had Edmund of Langley, Duke of York, another of the King's uncles. But Richard was nothing if not fickle, and he decided that he would deem both Wykeham and the Duke of York innocent. And it's recorded that they fell weeping at the King's feet, thanking him for his kindness. I mean, they must have just felt certain they were going to meet their ends, but they didn't.

And Richard, who had upset so many people by now, finally went one step too far and confiscated the estate of his cousin, Henry of Bolingbroke, who was John of Gaunt's son, who then invaded England, met little resistance, and captured Richard, who was imprisoned in Pontefract Castle and starved to death.

So now, Henry became King, as Henry IV. And yet again, Wykeham survived. He was in favour still with Henry IV. In 1403, Henry IV married for a second time in Winchester Cathedral, but the bishop was too infirm by that point to officiate, and he died a year later at Bishop's Waltham. And here is the rather wonderful tomb of Henry IV and Joan of Navarre in Canterbury Cathedral.

So now onto his building works. Wykeham was not, as I've said, a highly educated man, and he was clearly very interested in money. But he did prove to be a very capable and effective bishop. He ensured that many churches within his diocese were put into good repair. And he sorted out corruption, including at the Hospital of St Cross. But his main legacy to the diocese was the building of the nave of Winchester Cathedral. I'm sure many, perhaps all of you, will know the nave of Winchester Central.

It's one of the great works of Perpendicular Gothic, which we'll come on to in a minute, in the country. It's also, I think, the longest medieval Gothic nave in the world, and the cathedral is the longest in Europe. Certainly medieval-wise, anyway. So it's a very remarkable construction. And the Perpendicular Gothic was the last flowering of Gothic in England really from 1350 onwards. It started around about 1350.

This is quite an early example. It was always thought to be a bit later than it is now, but scholars now think that it started in the 1370s and then was completed at the end of the century, with further work going on into the 15th century, including with money left by Wykeham in his will. But you have these wonderful soaring structures, and fantastic vaults. But the way of identifying a perpendicular building is to look at the windows, and on the right, you have the really wonderful church in Wiltshire.

If you happen to be near this, it's well worth seeing, Bishop Edington's foundation at Edington in Wiltshire. And in this, if you follow the lines of the mullions, they go up, or the tracery, it goes up and then always slants off. You never get a point where one goes all the way up without diverting, as there. Whereas with the perpendicular straight up from bottom to top. So that's what to look out for. And Wykeham, actually… this west elevation was started by Bishop Edington, and completed, including that window, by William of Wykeham.

And in terms of how he transformed the nave, which was Norman before with these round arches rather than pointed which are Gothic. This illustration shows exactly what he did. And indeed, the craftsman who did it was the mason and indeed architect, in essence, William Wynford, who'd worked at Windsor Castle. And then

just within this wonderful architectural construction, Wykeham incorporated his own tomb and chapel around it. You can just see the edge of it there.

That's what's known as a chantry chapel. And there's his monument. So, in essence, the whole of the nave becomes a memorial to him. And this chantry chapel as it's known, is for chanting. And one has to remember that in the Catholic tradition, your soul does not go and die, your soul does not go straight to heaven, it has to go to purgatory first for purification. And depending on how bad you've been, then purification can take a greater or a lesser time. But it can be hastened by prayers.

And of course, if you're rich, you can pay people to say prayers. So Wykeham made good use of his money by endowing both the chantry chapel at Southwark Priory where his parents were buried, and this chantry chapel in Winchester Cathedral. And there were to be three monks who would say three masses a day, including prayers for the bishop. And in the evening, boys from the priory next door would sing. And he specified what they would sing. One of the pieces was the Ave Regina caelorum, which hails the Queen of Heaven, in other words, the Virgin Mary.

I just think the idea… and here it is, you see the full integration as well of this chapel within the architecture. Most unusual, there's virtually no other example of it being integrated because usually, they're built afterwards and fitted in, but this one is absolutely part of it. And it's, I think, spine-tingling to think of the sound of those choristers within that extraordinary stone cage and the sound that will have come out.

So, Wykeham was clearly genuinely devout and, indeed, because he included the chantry element within his two great educational foundations, Winchester College and New College, Oxford. The intent was to educate those… intended for the clergy to improve the quality, in essence, of the clergy.

And in both cases, he used William Wynford again or the mason together with a carpenter, who would also be a designer, Hugh Herland, and remarkably their portraits survive in the stained glass of Winchester Cathedral. Here they are.

Herland had been responsible for the great roof of Westminster Hall, which is obviously still there and was commissioned by Richard II in 1393.

So, New College, and the full title of it is the College of St Mary of Winchester in Oxford. New College because it was new at the time, and it carried on being called New College thereafter. It is very remarkable because there had never been a case before where a college had been built in totality to one plan and all its buildings constructed to the same scheme, and on such a scale. It doesn't sound like much to us now, but it had provision for 70 scholars. That was more than all the existing Oxford colleges put together. So, very remarkable.

And, as I said, Wynford and Herland were working on it, as they had at Windsor Castle. And as had happened at Windsor Castle, the hall and chapel were put in one range together. This had never happened before either. The result is a very magnificent piece of Gothic architecture, and it's often considered to be the finest piece of Gothic architecture in Oxford.

And then around, you then have a muniment tower, and that's, essentially, a strong space for the keeping of deeds and gold and silver, and then the accommodation for the scholars, and then the master's lodgings by the gate to keep an eye on things, a cloister, and a bell tower. There is an image of it, as you can see how very wonderful it is as a building. And these are largely as constructed for Wykeham by Wynford and Herland.

And then, at Winchester, which essentially was the feeder college for New College, it's very, very similar. Once again, you can see you have a hall and chapel in one range here. Kitchens are actually there. And then a muniment tower, a strong tower there, and the accommodation of the fellows there, and the master's lodgings there. It had a cloister behind here, and, for a brief period, it had a bell tower which fell down. So you can see it's a similar arrangement.

And many of you will know that in honour of the founder, those who've been educated at Winchester, are known as Wykehamists. And there is a view of that range with the chapel and hall. And under the hall, is the beer cellar, which is very similar in detail to that Undercroft that I showed you earlier at Windsor Castle.

Now, I've mentioned at both that there is a strong tower, and it's known as a Muniment Tower. That was really very important, both for the holding of gold and silver, of which there was plenty. And also for the deeds, the documents, the evidence of ownership, because Wykeham took advantage of the Brexit Bonus of the 14th century.

So, the 100 Years War with France was on, and Edward III decided that priories that owed an allegiance to a motherhouse of France would be confiscated, and Wykeham saw this as an opportunity and he acquired lots of them, for their lands to provide the income for his two colleges. But in 1403, Henry IV started thinking, “Hmm, I quite fancy those lands for myself,” and challenged Wykeham’s foundations over it.

But because Wykeham was so meticulous and followed the law precisely and had everything documented, Henry did not get hold of those lands, and, indeed, those colleges have survived because of their wealth, as well as other matters, to this very day. And Wykeham was undoubtedly very conscious of the vagaries of monarchs and of politics, which is why he set them up in the way he did, and they were very successful and have survived.

As well as obviously buildings, there are carvings, but particularly the stained glass. And here you have some of the surviving stained glass at Winchester. Now, both New College and Winchester, much of the original glass has been lost, perhaps because of deterioration, certainly much of it has. At Winchester, all of it was taken out and copied in the 19th century. Not nearly as good as the original, but at least we know what it was supposed to look like.

But some of it was not destroyed and was bought back by Winchester subsequently. And this is part of the original east window that was bought back, including portraits on the right of William of Wykeham and Richard II. And this glass was done by Thomas of Oxford. Well, at Winchester it was done by Thomas of Oxford. In Oxford, it was done by Thomas Glazier. So it's another example of surnames.

And once again, we have a portrait of him, so you can see, this is some of the 19th century glass replicated at the top with the portraits in, and underneath are these

fellows, Hugh Herland, the carpenter, William Wynford, the mason, Simon de Membury, the clerk of works, and Thomas of Oxford, the glazier. I cannot stress enough how remarkable it is to have portraits from the 14th century of craftsmen. You might expect to have kings and bishops and nobles, but to have depictions of those who were responsible for building the place is extraordinary. And that's what we have at Winchester.

We now move on to Wykeham's own residences, his houses. And he had a lot of them. This doesn't actually include every single one, but it gives you an idea. And you'll also see they're not just within his diocese. The diocese is shown by the dotted line, and much bigger than it is now, it went right up to Southwark in London. But one of his principal estates was at Taunton in Somerset. In fact, Taunton and East Meon were his biggest estates, East Meon being about 19,000 acres.

Wykeham did works to a lot of these houses during his time. He was fond of building, and he was there a long time. Particularly, he transformed Bishop's Waltham Palace. And this is a depiction of it after his works. He had the great hall rebuilt. I'll just point out where things are. So the great hall here. Then here were the principal apartments, those he built as well. And here were his private apartments for him to retreat into. So that's all William of Wykeham's. And here's a reconstruction of the Great Hall, as it may have been, after it was completed for him in 1381.

Now, of course, most of these buildings don't survive. So these are the ruins of Bishop's Waltham, and there you can see that's the windows of the Great Hall, and two of his other great palaces, at Southwark and Wolvesey, Wolvesey is next to the Cathedral in Winchester, are also in ruins. So it makes it very remarkable indeed. A building that most of you should be able to recognise, the courthouse in East Meon, because what he built here is intact, and that is absolutely extraordinary.

We're very fortunate to have it surviving to this day. And really, it's a sort of, miniature version of Wolvesey, or was when it was built. And you have a hall, and this is the service end, which is a pantry and buttery, originally, with a division, which isn't there now, off it. And this is probably a strongroom, I'm sure you may correct me on that, I suspect that is what it was intended for. And just in terms of a

word on a buttery and pantry, a buttery was not for butler, it was for drink, it was for the bottles, Bouteille as in the French for bottle.

And interestingly, the word butter comes from a completely different root source, but you end up with it being called a buttery, which causes great confusion, and pantry is pan as in bread, and it was for bread and other provisions. And there would have been a screen across here as well. And then above this service end is a chamber, a great chamber, which has got a magnificent fireplace.

Clearly, it's prestigious, it would have been intended to be used by somebody of high status, perhaps when they weren't entertaining significant people, it would have been a warmer end of the house, probably. But the principal apartments were at this end. Wykeham didn't rebuild these. So they were probably fairly recent. He didn't feel the need to. And, in fact, they were rebuilt later and have gone now. But everything, the principal works that Wykeham did, are still surviving there.

William Wynford and Hugh Herland worked here again, and their signs are very clear. Wynford was known for relatively simple but very carefully considered stonework, and you have beautiful examples in what's now the library, a fireplace, and in the various doors and windows in the building. And you can see that there’s somebody desperate to get through. (Laughter) And in the carved heads of bishops and kings in the Great Hall as well.

Now, our perception of portraits is different to theirs. You know, there's often much discussion about, “Are these supposed to be William of Wykeham and Richard III?” But they're just, I think, meant to represent bishops and kings, and bishops and kings were particularly used to represent the diocese of Winchester, because Winchester having been an ancient royal seat. So I suspect it's more about, I think, articulating Winchester and the Bishop of Winchester rather than trying to be portraits in themselves, but I'm happy to be challenged on that.

And then, of course, the Great Hall. And here you have this fabulous roof by Hugh Herland. And once again, this is of remarkable significance because no other of Hugh Herland’s roofs for William of Wykeham in a Great Hall survives because they're ruined at Bishop’s Waltham and Wolvesey and so on. So this is an

extraordinary survival. Originally, would have been a central fireplace, open to the roof, and there are still charring of the timbers to show that.

And then upstairs in the great chamber, which is now the library. Once again, we have another miracle that these roofs have survived as they have. A roof. And here you can see, in a way, the hallmark of Herland's work, because look at another roof at New College where a very similar… and I'm grateful to George for pointing this out to me, a very similar form was employed. And I think don't be put off by the simplicity of these structures.

I should also say, in terms of the great halls, the great halls of both Winchester and New College are 19th-century replacements, and what had been there before was probably much, much simpler than is there now.

Just going back to plans, you can always tell where you are in a medieval building because the basic layout follows the same patterns because they need all the same components. So this is Penshurst Place, which is a contemporary building. And you can see it there, it has its buttery and pantry, with a route through to the kitchen. The kitchen at East Meon was, we think, detached towards the church. A great hall with a central fireplace, and then at this end, a great chamber, so, as there would have been at this end here, as well as a chapel for the bishop.

I just want to end on something that brings me enormous joy. William Wynford was an immensely considered designer, and every doorway and the fireplace, it would have been very easy to carry on that cut down to the ground and that moulding straight down to the ground. But in each case, there is what's referred to as a stop in stone that's put on there. This one protrudes, and this one is inverted. I just think that's the most gorgeous detail in the world. And it's so sophisticated. Also, I imagine it would mean that it stops it from being a dust trap as well. So, a practical purpose too.

So, just those details show you what a remarkably sophisticated building the courthouse is, and hint at the great cultural riches that there were in the medieval period, and how extraordinarily lucky we are to have this reminder of the extraordinary career of William of Wykeham in our very midst here today. Thank you very much.

James Rothwell: I'm very happy to take questions.

Female: You mentioned early on his will, and he obviously left some things to New College Oxford. What happened to the rest of his money?

James Rothwell: Well, most of it went to New College and Winchester. Plus, he made sure that his sister Agnes's children were well set up. And you might know the name Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes. That's at Broughton Castle. Well, he bought Broughton Castle, and his nephew took the name Wykeham, and hence the Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes is still at Broughton Castle. So what's quite remarkable about Wykeham is that so much of what he did, the imprint is still going today, whether it's his family, the cathedrals, the educational establishments, his houses, it's absolutely extraordinary.

Male: But presumably, a lot of his wealth was for the institution. I mean, his successor as Bishop of Winchester presumably got all the revenue.

James Rothwell: Yeah, the income and the estates. But he built up huge quantities of his own money as well.

Male: And his own buildings too?

James Rothwell: Yes.

Female: I was going to ask whether or not he actually had any family of his own. I realise he was a bishop, but that doesn't necessarily mean he didn't have a family.

James Rothwell: No, it certainly doesn't. It definitely didn't preclude it. Not that we know of. I think we would know as well because I think he would have set such a person up financially, and there's no evidence of that. I think his focus was so much on his episcopal and governmental and financial responsibilities that he doesn't appear to have had any illicit family as far as we're aware.

Male: Would the deputies have been paid out of the money that he received?

James Rothwell: Yes. Good point. Probably not very much, but yes, you're right, they would have done.

Male: What's the hierarchy? You've got a mason who's doing more than just joining stone. What is the hierarchy above the mason that explains these great designs? I mean, was he that hands-on? How do we know that?

James Rothwell: The mason is the equivalent to the architect. And, indeed, the carpenter as well. They didn't exist, we didn't have architects then, that's the closest you got to it. And obviously, there was a huge range of masons, so you'd have those who were just chipping away at the stones, and at the top of the three were the ones who did the design, and I'm sure that William Wynford didn't do any of the chipping away on the stonework, he kept an eye on the quality of it and he produced the design.

Female: James, what were the financial benefits of taking on a wardship?

James Rothwell: Because you… oh, sorry, I beg your pardon. I have written that down and I forgot to say it. As the Guardian, you were entitled to the state income during your guardianship. So long as you provided for the heir, and you didn't have to spend that much on it, it was hugely profitable. And then also, you had the power to marry them off as well, and the other party, if it was a rich estate, could well bung you quite a substantial amount for that too. So it was very, very profitable to get. And, you know, there are terrible examples of awful treatment of heirs in those sorts of circumstances, but that was how it worked.

Male: Have we got any more questions?

Female: Do we know much about why he was so successful, in terms of his qualities? Because he's the ultimate survivor, isn't he, in middle age and medieval history?

James Rothwell: I think there are two things. He clearly was immensely skilled. He was a brilliant administrator and financier. He was also loyal. So, although he was involved, and implicated in elements with Richard II, I think the reason he wasn't executed by Richard II was that in the end, he would never have challenged Richard's ultimate authority. And I think that was appreciated.

And therefore, in each case, they realised that he was going to be loyal to the authority, as he'd probably been throughout his life with the old Bishop of

Winchester and so forth. And I think that undoubtedly saved him, and I'm sure he had a very long life as well.

Male: James, this tally stick business. I mean, the temptation… you've got the superior bit, which shows someone owes you money, and, I mean, with the inferior bit, wouldn't you just, sort of, chuck it on the floor? Presumably, it was all recorded in writing, so I couldn't work out why they bothered with the sticks.

James Rothwell: Yes. It would have been, but actually, that system was considered to be, in essence, avoid fraud, so you couldn't come along and say, "Actually, you owe me this money," you have to have those two bits that come together for that ultimate settlement. And absolutely, there must have been lots of occasions when it didn't work out, and that's why they had loads of them left in the Houses of Parliament, which burnt it down. So, yeah, but it was considered to be one of the most sophisticated systems in Europe in the Middle Ages.

Male: Do we know anything about what William used the courthouse for, why he invested in building it where he did?

James Rothwell: Well, he built it because he liked building. Clearly. And because East Meon was one of his principal estates with 19,000 acres. He would only have used it on occasion, if he used it, we don't have evidence of how much… it's not recorded, if or how much he used it. But he would have only ever used it for occasional visits because it wouldn't have been big enough for his entire household. So, it would have been stopping on the way somewhere, to show his face on one of his greatest estates.

Now, Wykeham isn't known to have hunted, but plenty of bishops did. And of course, there was a deer park, known as Park Hill, here, so it could have been for hunting. And indeed, for the use of others who were travelling. So a number of his residences were used by the King and other members of the Royal Family when they were travelling. Bishop Sutton was another very nearby manor house that was used by Richard II in the, I think, 1380s or 1390s. And King John, in fact, stayed at East Meon earlier on.

So, it would just be used on occasion. Not very much, in essence, you know, but nevertheless, if he was going to come here, it had to be somewhere suitable that

he could come to and use, and you'd have to have those key requisites of spaces. So that's it, but there is not a record of his use of it, and indeed, it's sometimes said, "Did he ever come here?" I think it's very improbable that he didn't come to East Meon. It wasn't very far, after all, from his principal residence at Bishop's Waltham, where he spent a lot of time.