

The Pattern of the Tithes in the Isle of Wight

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EVERYONE knows to what an extent the collection of tithes was a cause of continuous friction throughout the Middle Ages as between priest and parishioner, secular and regular. References to tithes in the ecclesiastical records are often so abundant as to be tiresome if we have to take note of them, and may be embarrassing if we merely skate over them. We have tried in these few pages to put into some shape every reference to tithes in the Isle of Wight known to us; only towards the end of the task did the pattern at last become clear. We do not deny that a region so compact as an island affords an easier approach to the problem, for however unpredictable the course of the parish boundary, the sea offers a limit that is final. It will be seen that we have tried to trace the history of those tithes which did not reach the parish priest, from the time of their donation until, through assimilation to money rents, they cease to have more than a historical link with their original purpose.

It is important to remember that the Domesday record only mentions those churches which were required for the special purposes of the survey and is not concerned with tithes. We read there that at Bowcombe, Calbourne and Shalfleet there were churches, and at the same time that the abbey of Lire had six churches, but these are unspecified. However, from the later evidence of the Carisbrooke cartulary, we can identify them as Arreton, Freshwater, Godshill, Newchurch, Niton and Whippingham. Side by side with these, which seem to form the primitive parochial organisation, we may group together the parishes of the ports of Yarmouth, Brading and St Helens. When we recall that Binstead and Brighstone were created out of the parish of Calbourne, while Shorwell and Northwood were formed out of Carisbrooke, and Shanklin out of Brading,¹ then the rest of the Island medieval parochial system seems to have developed out of what we may conveniently call 'estate oratories', the seigniorial chapels of the families holding the Island manors: Chale (de Vernon), Brook (Mascarel), Wootton (de Insula), Motteston (de Clamorgan), Yaverland (de Aula), Kingston (de Kingston), Gatcombe (de Stur).

The building of churches and the founding of parishes was aided by the new kind of property the Church established in the 8th century: the obligatory tithe, as opposed to the voluntary. 'In England tithes do not appear ever to have belonged to the incumbent by right, but only by some express grant'.² Churches were normally endowed by their founders with glebe and with tithe; the latter was destined for an important role in parochial life, for not only did the tithe increase in value with the increase of land brought under cultivation, but the parish itself came into being to some extent as the totality of land paying tithe to a particular church. Hence it is that certain parishes appear in the first Ordnance Survey maps of the Isle of Wight with detached portions: e.g. Chillerton attached to Wootton parish, the manor of Swainston to Shalfleet and the twelve portions, less than 1,000 acres in all, yet making up the 'parish' of St Nicholas in Carisbrooke Castle. The 5·98 acres of Monkton-field, now Monkton Street, Ryde, in the same maps styled 'extra-parochial', was Quarr Abbey land and tithe free.

1. Worsley, *History of the Isle of Wight*, London, 1781, pp. 187-191.

2. Reichel, O. J., art. in *Archeologia*, 2nd ser., Vol. X, 1897, p. 410.

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But when a lord was allowed to build an 'estate oratory', he could keep for his own chapel one-third of the tithe, paying the other two-thirds to the mother church; if he had no chapel, he paid tithe where he heard divine service. Under the feudal system the lord came more and more to organise his manor and its church as one unit and could divide the endowment as he wished. So it came about that tithe did not always reach the incumbent of the parish church. Indeed, provided he sufficiently supported his estate chapel and the mother church, he could give the tithe on his lands to any church or monastery, transferring his rights by sale or by gift or bequest, even fractions of a 'church'. 'Laylords could not have given tithes to a monastery, unless they had themselves possessed them at the time.'³ After Gregory IX (1227-41) had condemned the practice of lay ownership of tithe, it became more and more customary to bestow it as part of the endowment of a cathedral or a monastery—this is what is known as the appropriation of a church to another religious foundation. The religious body, becoming the rector, would appoint a vicar, who might receive a portion of the tithe, the vicarial tithe, but not the rectorial. It is an interesting survival that such 'free' chapels as Briddlesford chapel, now in Wootton parish, and the Maudlins chapel in Godshill, which did not develop into parish churches, retained their tithes long after the buildings had vanished.

It will be clear at once that with the passage of the centuries the whole tithe system was destined to become one of increasing complexity. The income, for one thing, would vary with the season. Grants of fractions of tithes are frequent. The very collection of a tenth of agricultural produce was a clumsy business. Humanly speaking it was impossible to keep any check as to honesty without causing irritation. Paying tithe was never popular, and many a medieval will contained such a clause as that of Thomas Haynowe who left 'to the parisshe church of Godeshill for my tithes and offeringes negligentley withholden or forgotten in discharge of my soule and conscience ii s.'⁴ The animals born in the year would not always be divisible by ten. It was never easy to prevent wilful damage to barns, or loss by thieves or vermin. Collecting the hay tithe seems to have been more fraught with disputes than the separation of every tenth sheaf: it is no doubt for this reason that we find the parsons of Arreton and Whippingham holding a portion of meadow in lieu of tithe. For the tithe of hay on the manor of Budbridge in Arreton the abbey had accepted 'two daies mowe of grasse yerely' from a meadow called South Reddemeade. From an enquiry about this same meadow in 1551, we learn how one witness John Knight of Arreton had worked on this mowing and felt that this was 'very moche for the tithe, bycause the hole was but viii daies mowe that belonged to the mannour of Budbridge'. He went on to tell how 'therefore he enterprised of his own mynde to cutte down the grasse of the said ii daies mowe'. When the abbot heard of this, he threatened to 'endite' the tenant, Richard Coke, the first captain of Sandown Castle. However, his mother, Mrs Jane Coke, went to see the abbot, when an amicable solution was reached.⁵

As regards the corn harvest, the collectors of tithe would have to be on the spot as soon as carrying had begun. Even then trouble could arise. At Staplers in 1283 both the abbot of Quarr and the prior of Carisbrooke claimed the tithe. And when the prior's men went into the field to collect the sheaves, they noticed about fifty armed men in ambush. In the fray one man received an arrow from a crossbow under the breast, so that his life was despaired of, and another through the middle of his hip. Only when a great body of men came up from

3. *Ibid.*, p. 405.

4. Somerset House, Canterbury Wills: Adeane 13.

5. Public Record Office (P.R.O.) E 315-123-181.

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Newport did the armed men take refuge in the barn. . . . It is all a complicated story, and as it was argued that the fifty men had just landed to aid in the defence of the Island, it being the beginning of the Welsh war, it is not at all clear to what extent the affair was after all a tithe dispute.⁶

The Island lists of titheable produce do not vary much from such lists elsewhere. It is difficult to say how much in such lists is mere formula and how much does give a picture of local produce. There is very rarely mention of cut wood, which elsewhere was a cause of much dispute. At Brading tithes were paid on fishing boats and nets. The Carisbrooke tithes include that on 'craspesius'—said to mean whale, or great fish coming to shore! The main division, as elsewhere, is into the greater or garb tithes on major crops (wheat, oats, etc.) and the lesser on minor produce (hay, wool, cheese, rabbits, etc.). For the Isle of Wight it will be seen at once that the tithe on lambs and wool might be of greater value than the greater tithes on corn. A close watch seems to have been kept on the tithe of rabbits. The lambs on the Island were titheable on St Mark's day (25 April).

In the Isle of Wight the whole system of the tithes is pivoted upon the donation of the six churches to the monastery of Lire by William Fitz Osbern. He had been the most faithful follower and counsellor of the Conqueror, and when he was granted the Island, he decided, either in order to be divested of the responsibility, or to enrich his own monastic foundation of Lire (f. 1046), or both, to endow this otherwise rather unimportant monastery with the six churches already named. Later there was to be founded from Lire the priory of Carisbrooke, mainly to supervise the collection of the revenue arising out of this new endowment. We know from Domesday that the abbey had the tithes of Arreton and of Carisbrooke (Bowcombe). Besides the patronage of the other four churches, which later paid regular pensions, Lire received important grants of tithes. What had originally been a tithe of the total revenue of Fitz Osbern was continued as a tithe of the royal revenue after 1078, and later commuted for 50s. annually by Baldwin de Redvers. Then there were tithe grants on the Fitz Osbern estates and on the lands of his military tenants, all later to be confirmed by the de Redvers family, with other lesser grants by others. The detail of all this is found in the Carisbrooke cartulary:⁷

Tithes of churches of Carisbrooke with its chapels (Northwood, Shorwell, Lepers', Newport), of Arreton and half the tithes of Chale.

Tithes of lands of Wm. Fitz Osbern: Wellow, 'Bowecombe', Billingham, Wroxall, Holeway i.e. Ventnor, Underwade i.e. St Lawrence—with the tithe later made over to Quarr, i.e. Arreton, Heaseley, Luccombe, Tidelingham, Shalcombe.

Tithes of military and free tenants, by gift of Fitz Osbern, on lands in Freshwater, Afton, Compton, Brook, Ningwood, two parts of Shalfleet and Chessel.

Tithes of other lords on their lands in Shorwell, Wolverton, Niton, Stenbury, Week, Appuldurcombe (and all other I.W. lands of the abbey of Montebourg), Apse, Yaverland, Nunwell, Knighton, Whippingham, Chillerton, Shide, Alvington.

Of the de Redvers family, William de Vernon granted a tithe on his salt pans on the Island, and Margery, daughter of Richard de Vernon, gave the tithe of her mills, sheep, fodder and hens in her manor of Freshwater. Of the de Afton family, Robert gave the tithe of all his hay and hens, William that of his fish, whether from his ponds or from elsewhere, and Richard the tithe of all wreck along the shores of his land.

6. Selden Society, Vol. LV (1936): Select Cases in Court of King's Bench.

7. British Museum: Egerton 3667, unpublished, fo. 17.

8. P.R.O. E 40-14236.

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Substantially, then, all the Lire tithe income was by gift of their founder Fitz Osbern and so dates from before the time of Domesday. Later centuries added little to this. We may point out here that it is possible to reconstruct what lands belonged to Fitz Osbern from those on which he was in a position to grant away the tithes; and hence, what lands were so soon to revert to the Crown, by 1078.

When Quarr was founded in 1132 there is no mention of any endowment by tithes in its charter. However, a very early confirmation⁸ indicates that tithes were included in the gift of the chapel of St Nicholas; the founder, Baldwin de Redvers, gave the tithe on his salt at Lymington; Robert de Witvillia also the tithe of his salt pans, perhaps on the Island. But, as is well known, the richest part of the founder's endowment grant was the land comprising the adjoining manors of Arreton and Heaseley in the central valley, sheltered from the north by downs. The tithe on this land, however, belonged to Lire, as we have seen, so that it is not surprising to find that before 1147 the first abbot, Gervase, had come to an agreement⁹ with the abbey of Lire. Rather than pay these tithes in kind, Quarr would retain the tithes on Arreton, Heaseley, Luccombe, Tidelingham and Shalcombe and pay Lire annually the sum of 40s. This pension was to have a long history.

In September, 1147, Quarr, which had been a foundation of Savigny in Normandy, became affiliated, together with Furness and the other English Savigny houses, to the flourishing and expanding Order of Cîteaux. It was the age of St Bernard, when 'the whole world was becoming Cistercian'. According to their early principles the white monks were to receive 'no churches, no tithes, villages, land rents, oven or mill fees',¹⁰ but at the time of their affiliation, the English houses were allowed to retain their former endowments. Now the early Cistercians, because they lived mainly by their own agricultural work, had been granted exemption from tithe on land brought under cultivation by their own efforts or at their expense. Naturally this privilege became a source of much dispute and widespread disapproval, until the situation was clarified by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). It was then laid down that tithe was due on most land newly acquired by the Order, whether cultivated by themselves or leased to others; the only exception would be for land brought into cultivation from the wild, whether acquired before or after the Council, and for land acquired before the Council but still cultivated by the monks. There are three papal bulls extant, protecting Quarr on the subject of exemption, explaining the privilege, and adding also exemption from tithe on the fodder of animals.¹¹

In Archbishop Pecham's Visitation report,¹² 1 February, 1284, Quarr was found to be withholding tithes which rightly belonged to Lire: the archbishop threatened the abbey with major excommunication. By July 7 a concord¹³ had been reached between the two abbeys as to the tithe under dispute. Lire claimed as its own, by special right, the tithes on Arreton, Heaseley, Luccombe, Tidelingham and Shalcombe and laid claim to those on Cosham (within the Newport of today), on land around the Castle, on Rowborough and Rowridge as being of St Nicholas. As to the first group, the 40s. pension would be maintained; as to the second, Cosham and the land had been acquired *before* the Lateran Council, so Quarr would retain the tithes; but as for Rowborough and Rowridge, which were acquired *after* the Council of 1215, Quarr renounced all claims to these tithes and Lire would receive them in

9. Madox, *Form. Anglic.*, No. 497.

10. Canivez I. 14-15 (1134, I), no. 9.

11. P.R.O. Sc. 7-64-63; Rymer, *Foedera* I, 1, p. 188; British Museum : Add. Chart. 15775.

12. Reg. John Pecham: unpublished part, f. 204v.

13. P.R.O. E 326-8885.

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perpetuity. But in five years time this agreement was discarded: the tithe on land in Carisbrooke parish acquired *after* the Council was found to belong to Lire by right and, by a new arrangement,¹⁴ Quarr consented to pay the greater tithes on Rowborough and Rowridge whether under cultivation before or since the Council, while Lire conceded to Quarr the retention of the lesser tithes, whether the land were cultivated or fallow. By this arrangement Lire would not suffer whether land was being cultivated or not before 1215. Quarr also agreed to increase its pension by 10s.

Exemption from paying tithe naturally did not help the relations of the abbey with the local parish clergy and we find on the Island as elsewhere, efforts being made to arrive at 'compositions', and pensions being granted to them from quite early times. Stephen, rector of Whippingham, reached a composition¹⁵ with Quarr in 1266 because of loss of tithe in his parish, mainly on Claybrook (now Binfield). He agreed to accept four acres of land, enclosed, in lieu of tithes, though insisting that this need not bind his successors. Nor did it, for William of Kingston, the rector in 1305, disliked the earlier scheme and secured an annual pension of 5s., allowing the four acres to revert to the abbey.¹⁶ Very soon after the Dissolution the rector of Whippingham, John Glazier, 'of his averous and gredye mynde would not take the said v s., but would have all maner of tythes as they did rise and growe of the premisses, where none of his predecessors had ever any more than v s. in redy money'. When the Court of Augmentations required him to be content to take the said 5s., he 'refused to take the said moneye . . . and said further that he would have his old tythes as they did rise and growe . . .'.¹⁷ However, the reactionary efforts of Glazier cannot have succeeded, for in the Tithe Award of the 19th century, this same 5s. was still being regularly paid to the incumbent. Similarly at some unknown date Quarr had agreed to pay an annual pension to the vicar of Shalfleet, for Shalcombe 2s. 4d. and for Hamstead 4s.

This all formed part of a growing tendency to commute tithe in kind, which was irregular and uncertain, for fixed annual payments. In the impossibility of fixing this tendency to dates, we may note that Bishop Stratford (1333-46) licensed the Prior of Carisbrooke, in the name of the abbey of Lire, to sell separately the tithes in certain Island parishes.¹⁸ But trouble was never far away. At Godshill in 1266 there was a dispute over the tithe of lambs, cheese and wool in Rew. In settlement Quarr and the vicar of St Nicholas agreed¹⁹ to grant the incumbent of Godshill, Thomas de Winton, half the tithe of cheese every year in exchange for a renunciation on the part of the rector of all claim to the tithes on Rew. We may note that this same Thomas had helped in negotiating the earlier settlement at Whippingham. But relations between Godshill and the abbey do not seem to have grown cordial concerning the tithes on Rew, for as late as 1493, when granting a lease of these tithes at farm to Thomas Lawson, the normal concluding formula 'we will defend his rights against all mankind' becomes 'against the vicar of Godshill and all mankind'.²⁰

But litigation concerning tithes occupies a considerable place in the history of most religious houses of the medieval period. The Carisbrooke cartulary²¹ records a certain number of

14. P.R.O. E 326-8889.

15. P.R.O. E 326-8884.

16. P.R.O. E 329-170.

17. P.R.O. E 321-28-48.

18. British Museum: Egerton 2032, f. 81v.

19. Madox, *Form. Anglic.*, No. 54.

20. P.R.O. E 315-32-171.

21. *Op. cit.* fo. 70.

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these not without interest. In 1205 an agreement was reached with Walter de Insula concerning the tithes on Withyway in Chillerton, a detached portion of Wootton: the chapel of Wootton was to retain these and pay a pension of 40*d.* to Carisbrooke. A more complicated solution of partition was found at Shorwell in the same year: all tithe on the demesne lands of Robert of Shorwell, with the tithe of corn in Wolverton and half the lesser tithes of Atherfield, were to go to Carisbrooke, while the tithe of the villeins was to be paid to the chapel of Shorwell. What was to be done about tithes when a man drove his flocks periodically to pasture in the next parish? Roger of Lilebon had sheepfolds in Thorness in Carisbrooke parish and at 'Bagwihe' in Shalfleet parish and moved his flocks between the two pastures: one-third of the tithe was to be paid to Shalfleet and two-thirds to Carisbrooke, wherever the sheep might be at any particular date. Again Ningwood and 'Prestetone' were both Christchurch lands, but the flocks of the canons occasionally broke out and pastured on the land of the villeins, hence Peter of Northampton, rector of Shalfleet, felt he could claim some portion of tithe. This was not allowed; all the tithe was to be paid to Carisbrooke.

We said earlier that when a church was appropriated to a monastery, a vicar was appointed to take the rector's place in the parish—the rectorial rights being vested in the monastery or the cathedral. The Lateran Council of 1215 had decreed that appropriated churches were not to be served by one of the same religious family but by a perpetual vicar, i.e. one not removable at pleasure, who should have a fixed and sufficient portion of the revenue (the 'congrua portio'). Such an agreement was called the 'ordination' of a vicarage; most of those mentioned in the Carisbrooke cartulary were set up by Aylmer, bishop of Winchester (1260-62), but there do not seem to be many complete 'ordination' documents for the Island. When Geoffrey le Toyer became vicar of St Nicholas in 1315, it was agreed²² he should receive 40*s.* a year from Quarr Abbey (the rector), together with the lesser tithes of those S. Nicholas lands on which Quarr was accustomed to receive the tithes of corn and hay. Now, this was not new, for his predecessor Walter of Horsintone (1307) had enjoyed the same 'ordination'. When Lire set up the vicarage of Northwood, both greater and lesser tithes were granted to the vicar. When Brading was appropriated to Breamore priory in 1312²³ by way of compensation for the exactions of its patroness, Isabella de Fortibus, the vicar was granted as his portion of the parish tithe that on lambs, calves, etc., i.e. the lesser tithes, but also that on boats, nets and mills, together with the hay in the meadow of Black Pan. Each case was clearly to be treated according to local needs.

The appropriation of Island churches to religious houses belongs to the 13th and 14th centuries, which is somewhat later than elsewhere. The plea was usually poverty and the maintenance of hospitality, but here in the Isle of Wight we have the additional detail of distress due to repeated enemy attacks when Quarr was granted the appropriation of Arreton church in 1405.²⁴ Besides Brading and Arreton, Godshill was granted to Lire in 1312, Arreton to Lire in 1315 before being regranted to Quarr in 1405, Newchurch to Beaulieu in 1409 and Shalfleet to Bisham, or Buttlesham (Berks.) in 1414. It will be noted that none of these churches was an 'estate oratory'; there was no local family defending them. Those who now held the rectorial rights were free to dispose of the rectorial tithes. It was the responsibility of the bishop of the diocese to see that the vicar's portion was sufficient and fitting.

22. P.R.O. E 326-8879.

23. Reg. John Pontissera, p. 173.

24. P.R.O. E 326-8904.

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Quarr was no doubt relieved to have appropriated the church of Arreton. There had been trouble there some ten years earlier, when Nicholas Bodeway, like one or two of his predecessors, had been summoning abbey tenants before the bishop of Winchester for tithes not paid. The case²⁵ was finally heard at St Margaret's, Westminster, before the abbot of Westminster, as protector of the rights of the Cistercian Order; the immunity of the abbey from paying tithe was upheld and perpetual silence was imposed on the incumbent of Arreton. Bodeway had to pay the expenses of the case and promise to do or say nothing likely to do harm to Quarr. This was in May, 1396. By the May of the next year he had exchanged livings with Robert Wantynge of Bridestowe on the northern edge of Dartmoor.

A fresh agreement for the vicarage of Arreton was drawn up in the Chapterhouse at Quarr on 1 May, 1431.²⁶ The abbot and community are now styled the rectors and Thomas Craas is the perpetual vicar. The concord was to bring to an end, so it runs, a long period of disputes and litigation. In addition to the rectory, with a certain close nearby and the usual buildings, together with 13s. 4d. annual rent on East Parson's Close, the vicar is to receive the minor tithes of Arreton with the usual offerings at the church, also the tithe of the young and the produce of animals (calves, foals, geese, pigs, eggs, cheese, milk, hemp, flax, song-birds, doves, rabbits) then the tithe of all the wool in the parish, the tithe of honey, wax and mills, and lastly the tithe on four tenements near the Moor. The abbey reserved for itself the tithes of corn, hay and lambs, and was not to pay tithe on its own young animals and rabbits.

Things did not go on smoothly for ever in Arreton. In 1527 the vicar, Henry Pemerton, was cited to appear at the Court of Arches in a case of subtracting tithes from the abbey, but we do not know the sequel. The neighbouring parish of Wootton was a rectory, but tithe on a portion of the Lisle lands was included in the Arreton rectorial tithe. The abbey also had a 'seamill', a tide-mill, at Wootton and claimed exemption. One of its rectors, James atte Oki, provoked trouble by claiming tithe on this mill. The abbey appealed to Canterbury and the rector was cited²⁸ to appear at the same court in London; this was in 1364. But again we do not know the sequel, for the records of the Court of Arches are lost. Another dispute in 1488 between Quarr and the vicar of Arreton, Thomas Yonge on the one hand, and Thomas Carpenter, parson of Wootton on the other, over tithes on Godscroft, Smithsclose and Fatingpark, received an unusually simple solution:²⁹ the rector of Wootton is to gather the tithe on the N.W. side of the road from the manor pound towards Packsfield, paying in return 10s. per annum, i.e. 5s. to Quarr and 5s. to the vicar of Arreton.

Meantime the alien priory of Carisbrooke had been suppressed in 1415, and Henry V gave almost the entire possessions of Lire in his kingdom to his own Carthusian foundation at Sheen. Carisbrooke was to remain until the end by far the principal source of income for Sheen. Shortly before this major event, Lire had granted to Quarr the advowson of Arreton church, agreeing to receive an additional 40s. annually for certain tithes in the parish, with 6s. 8d. for the advowson. It was clearly becoming more and more difficult for the procurator of Lire to transfer his funds to the mother-house in an age of alternating peace and war. The suppression of the alien priories ended the difficulties. Instead of paying a pension to Lire, Quarr now paid it to the Charterhouse of Sheen, i.e. £4 16s. 8d.

25. P.R.O. E 135-16-1.

26. P.R.O. E 135-16-2.

27. P.R.O. E 315-50-182.

28. P.R.O. E 315-38-250.

29. P.R.O. E 326-108.

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annually. This, with the remainder of the Isle of Wight income, seems to have been directed through Southampton.³⁰ Little is known of the relations between Sheen and its Island properties except through a cartulary of indices.³¹ An agreement was reached between Bisham and Sheen concerning the greater and lesser tithes of Shalfleet for 8 marks per annum. At Niton, Sheen accused the rector and two other men of unjustly taking the tithes of Lire; this was later settled by accepting 46s. 8d. for the Niton tithes. No dates are given.

It is only from the time of the appropriation of Arreton church that Quarr abbey appears as a considerable receiver of tithe income, farming most of it out to local gentlemen. All the rectorial tithes of Arreton were farmed³² out to John Garston, the founder of the Newport chantry, for 12 years for the annual sum of £34 6s. 8d.—though this is not entirely for tithe. The details and portioning of the tithe, as well as the varying sums received, seem to indicate that it was not easy to farm out the Arreton tithe in whole or in part. Indeed the abbey was bound to be on the losing side. It was naturally difficult to increase the income from tithe so as to keep pace with rising prices. To avoid litigation it was perhaps the wiser policy to lease them out to lay farmers—but this could only be done at the rents they were willing to pay, and so at low rents. But, as tithe was commuted into money rents, it ceased to have any relation to the tenth of agricultural income.

There is little to note of other monasteries who were land-holders in the Isle of Wight. Appuldurcombe had been an alien priory of Montebourg, but the tithe of all its Island property went to Lire. Lire again shared the tithe of Shalfleet and Brading, appropriated to Bisham and Breamore. Christchurch priory, which owned Thorley church and Ningwood manor, had received from Isabella de Fortibus the tithe on rabbits, but apparently nothing more. At one time, at any rate, it would seem that Christchurch had been granted the tithe on Chillerton³³ by the de Lisle family, later to be commuted for a payment of 3s. 4d. The same priory also owned certain tithes in Yarmouth, concerning which there had been disputes; the rector cited Beaulieu and Quarr for trying to bring pressure on the side of Christchurch. This was only ended in 1341 when the rector accepted all the tithe in exchange for a pension of 6s. to Christchurch. The major tithes on the Shorwell lands, i.e. Northcourt, of the abbess of Lacock (Wilts) went to Lire, while the abbess of Wherwell (Hants) was exempt from all payment of tithes on her manor of Ashey from very early times. The lands of the Tiron priory of St Cross, i.e. North St Cross and Hill Cross, can be shown by the Tithe Maps to have been exempt. So, too, were the properties of the Hospitallers.

We must not overlook the complication which must have arisen from the fractioning of tithes. Of the tithes of Standen, the chapel only received one half, the other going to Arreton rectory. At Shorwell on the de Lisle lands, i.e. Westcourt, Quarr received the greater tithes and the vicar of St Nicholas at the Castle two-thirds of the lesser. The Carisbrooke cartulary has, as a kind of appendix, a long demarcation of the sharing of the tithes on certain manors of Whippingham, Brading, Ningwood, Wellow, Shalfleet and Chessell, indicating the share of Lire with minute topographical details for the partitioning of the titheable land in 1327.

In 1536 Quarr abbey was dissolved and at once all its lands and revenues became Crown property. Sheen was to suffer the same fate in 1539. The Crown continued to farm out the tithes, renewing the leases as they fell due, while maintaining the pensions to the parish clergy in lieu of tithe. Later, as the former monastic lands were gradually disposed of, the

30. Southampton Rec. Off.: Port Books, Petty Customs, attached docs. 5 and 6.

31. British Museum: Otho B XIV.

32. P.R.O. B 315-39-136.

33. British Museum: Christchurch Cartulary: Cott. Tib. D VI, fo. 91v. 92.

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tithes were reserved to the Crown—at least, it was thus in the Isle of Wight. At all events they were not restored to the Church. Mary attempted to restore what remained; for example the tithes of Carisbrooke were given to the bishop of Winchester, but it was an early task of her successor to win back this revenue for the Crown. The chance of augmenting the salaries of the parish clergy was thus lost and most of the tithes found their way into lay ownership. At the Dissolution the main sources of Quarr tithe were thus listed:

as of Arreton Rectory: Merston, Weststanden, Rookley, Perryton's Close, Northdown, Wootton, Budbridge, Arreton Street, with other fragments;

as of St Nicholas: Shanklin, Cosham, Shorwell, Roud, Rew, Middleton;

as of Lire: Combley, Heaseley, Arreton, Tidelingham, Shalcombe;

but even the contemporary accountants did not always manage to keep these groups clearly separated. In their later history these tithes continue to reappear in their ancient grouping, though we do not propose to follow them up at length.

In an inventory of royal revenue³⁴ drawn up for the Isle of Wight in 1583, we find payments for these farms of tithes still continuing: for Shanklin 20s., for Cosham 20s., for Shorwell (West Court) 26s. 8d., for Roud and Rew in Godshill 40s., for Middleton in Bembridge and portions in Adgestone 2s. 6d., for Shalcombe and Hamstead 22s., while for Newnham, Combley, Heaseley and Rowborough, Dowzabelle Mill was paying £5 16s. For the Christchurch manor of Ningwood Thomas Hobson was paying £4 15s. 1d., for the Shorwell lands of the abbey of Lacock (North Court) Thomas Temmes, the brother of the last abbess, was paying 32s. and for Asheymoor Richard Worsley was paying 52s. for the second part of the reserved tithe, and Antony Dillington 26s. 6d. for the third part. In all, the Crown was then receiving £22 13s. 6d. for tithes on the Island. The Shanklin tithes had been leased in 1503 for 20s., Shorwell in 1498 for 26s. 8d., Roud and Rew in 1529 for 40s., Middleton in 1536 for 2s. 6d.—so that for all these portions of tithe, just as for rents, the Crown was cautiously making no attempt to increase the farm. The same list of royal revenue also indicates that the income from Shalfleet parsonage with all the tithes, great and small, i.e. £14. 14s. 4d. per annum was now no longer part of the possessions of the Lady Anne of Cleves, but had reverted to the Crown. Here again this is the same figure as that given at the Dissolution as the value of Shalfleet to Bisham.³⁵ One would have thought that these remnants of monastic income on the Isle of Wight would have been disposed of when the lands and house property in Newport were sold to London merchants to aid Charles I in his financial straits, but they are not listed in the document of grant³⁶ and sale.

Of the glebe terriers ordered to be drawn up in 1610 by Archbishop Bancroft to protect Church land from exploitation by laymen, only one seems extant for the Isle of Wight. This is an Arreton terrier for 1631,³⁷ showing that the vicar was receiving the lesser tithes of the parish and the tithe of hay on four tenements now turned into Redway. He does not receive the tithe of corn, hay or lambs, but only the said tithe of hay on Redway. This will be seen to be still exactly on the pattern of the 'ordination' of 1431 mentioned above.

Certain decisions, made at the time when the monastic estates were taken over by the Crown, had consequences which have reached as far as our own century. Those who bought rectorial tithes in succession to monasteries became the patrons of vicarages. By Act of Parliament, land which had once been exempt from tithe when in monastic ownership, was to

34. Cambridge University Library: Kk. v. 5 (n. 2047).

35. Dugdale, *Monasticon*, VI, p. 534.

36. P.R.O. C 66-2486 and E 318—Chas. I-112, nos. 112 and 172.

37. Hants Record Office.

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remain exempt in lay ownership. Besides enforcing an illogical loss of income to the Church, the enactment sowed the seed of endless litigation as to what was titheable and what was not, only growing as the monastic estates were broken up and sold. Further, from 1540, the payment of tithes could be enforced in the civil courts. An extra complication was afforded by the distinction between land owned and land leased by a monastery, for on the former no tithes were due on the young of animals though they were due on the latter.

From this period tithe dispute cases multiply rapidly. The case of the tithes of Luccombe is the best known example for the Isle of Wight.³⁸ When William Downes arrived as incumbent of Bonchurch in 1719, he found that Marian Rolf was not paying him any tithe on her land at Luccombe; she argued it had belonged to a religious house—which the rector said was 'a mere pretence'. The matter was raised in Parliament in an Exchequer Bill and after a learned enquiry the farm was declared to be discharged from any payment to the rector. Much earlier, in 1620, soon after Lord Chief Justice Fleming had purchased the farms of Arreton, Combley, Heaseley, Redway and Staplers, as well as the rectorial tithes of Arreton, an enquiry was held in Newport as to whether these lands were free from the payment of tithe. The Tithe Award declares the Fleming Estate to be 1,957 acres, all tithe free. Whether paid or not, tithes were regarded as a form of rent received by the owner, who did not even have the obligation of providing hospitality, though he might be responsible for maintaining a chancel. But it was possible to throw off even this responsibility. Some time after 1570 Sir Francis Walsingham, then the leaseholder of Carisbrooke priory, succeeded in pulling down the church chancel. Since an earlier commission, set up by the Court of Augmentations in 1540 to enquire into the state of Carisbrooke church,³⁹ reported that the chancel roof needed repairs and that the expense would amount to about 6s. 8d., it is difficult to be convinced that thirty years later the building was beyond repair.

All this matter may appear completely dead. By the Tithe Act of 1936 tithes were 'extinguished' in England. There is, however, one respect in which the data which we have tried to put together should still be of service. The Tithe Redemption maps have been and can be put to numerous uses. Now, since they indicate only those fields which did pay tithe and leave blank those which were exempt, we have seen what may be the reason for this. On the Isle of Wight maps we can see those portions of Cistercian and other lands which did not pay tithe. Though this is not an infallible guide as to boundaries, it is still a most valuable contribution. It is, however, equally true that Tithe Maps do at the same time raise unexpected problems. We may conclude with one example. According to the map, Newnham farm, the nearest property to Quarr, paid tithe to Binstead church, indeed forming almost its only tithe income. It stands isolated as a considerable enclave in a vast area of exempt land. This does seem to reinforce the suggestion advanced on different grounds (*V.C.H. Hants, V*) that it had been a separate manor, though part of the Quarr endowment—but of this there is no known documentary evidence of any kind, unless perhaps the Quarr cartulary can be recovered.

38. In detail in Whitehead, *The Undercliff of the Isle of Wight*, London, 1911.

39. P.R.O. E 315-108, fo. 97.

For tithes in general, see Hill, *Economic Problems of the Church*, Oxford, 1956.

THE SOLENT



Parish of St. Nicholas.
The names underlined denote the thirteen detached parts of this parish. The parts and their approximate areas are:

	Acres		Acres
Carlisle Castle	23	Cheverton	4
Renham Down	27	Shalcombe	292
Great Park	336	Monkham	83
Rowborough	59	Dodnor	53
Castlehold	2	Cosham	18
Shide	19	Thorncroft	49
Newclose	1		