

HISTORY OF THE WARWICK PRIORY OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

Entrusted to Augustinian Canons of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, the first Priory outside the Holy City of Jerusalem was established at Warwick in 1109 by Henry de Newburgh, a Knight Crusader and first Earl of Warwick. The monastic buildings were completed in about 1119. The Prior became Superior of the Order in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

The Priory was confiscated at the start of the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536. At that time it had a Prior, three Canons, eight dependents and servants and three "corrody-holders" ("holders of charitable allowance of provisions"). Over the centuries the Priory passed through the hands of different owners. The first was Thomas Hawkins, who acquired the buildings and the land in the reign of Edward VI (1547-1553). Hawkins dismantled most of the monastic buildings and, from the materials, built a house which he completed in 1556. Subsequent owners were Henry Wise, Royal Gardener to Queen Anne (1702-1714) and the Lloyd banking family (c. 1850)

In 1925, the shell of the house on the Priory site was bought by the Weddell family of the United States. Alexander Weddell was then US Consul-General to Mexico City (1924) and later, US Ambassador to Argentina (1933) and Spain (1939). The shell was dismantled and shipped to Richmond, Virginia and rebuilt there. It is now owned and occupied by the Virginia Historical Society. The original site in Warwick is now covered by The Warwickshire County Records Office.

*(extract from "A Short History of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem" by Philip L Daniel KSG KC*HS 1995)*



above A photograph of Warwick Priory in 1900

left Virginia House in Richmond, Virginia USA. Constructed from the materials of the sixteenth century Warwick Priory