

The First Vicar of Worle, Elias de Coleshull 1325 to 1335

Context: Ruling Monarch: EDWARD II 1307 - deposed 1327

Edward was a weak and incompetent king. He had many 'favourites', Piers Gaveston being the most notorious. He was beaten by the Scots at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. Edward was deposed and held captive in Berkeley Castle in Gloucestershire. His wife joined her lover, Mortimer, in deposing him: by their orders he was murdered in Berkeley Castle - as legend has it, with a red-hot poker. His beautiful tomb in Gloucester Cathedral was erected by his son, Edward III.¹

Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1325: John Drokenford, Roman Catholic, of course

Elias de Coleshull became the first recorded Vicar of Worle in 1325. This was some 200 years after the building of the original Church commenced and 175 years after its probable completion. It may be that there is simply no record, still in existence, of earlier Vicars of St. Martin's, but it is thought provoking that we know it had been standing on the hill in Worle through the reigns of Henry I, Stephen, Henry II, Richard I, John, Henry III and Edward I – all before Elias de Coleshull arrived.

The Church at Worle almost certainly had early connections with Woodspring Priory and its founder, William de Curtenai and may have been administered by the monks at the Priory, but St Martin's Church at Worle had probably been in existence for 60 years even before the Priory was built, so there remains a mystery to be solved.

We do have some information about the life of Elias de Coleshull before his connection with Worle. The evidence comes from the calendar of Bishop John Drokenford which was reproduced in 'Somerset Incumbents' by Frederic William Weaver, taken from the Hugo Manuscript in the British Museum [1889]

BRENT SOUTH* (V.) (S. Michel.)

DATE OF INSTITUTION.	INCUMBENT.	HOW VACATED.	PATRON.	REF. TO BISHOP'S REGISTER.
1310	Elias de Coleshull		Nich. de Longland	Drok., 34
1325	Will. de Lodelawe ¹	per cess. E. de O.		— 241
1332	Will. de Dudmartene			Rad., 55
1350	Nic. de Fladebury ²			
1350	Nic. Sowy		Thom. Fastolf. Arch. Well.	— 374
	Edw. Myldenhall			
1436. Sep. 11	Will. Stevenes		Thom. Bubbewith, Arch. Well.	Staff., 127
	Ludovicus ap Jean ap David		" "	— 130
1468. Feb. 12	Rob. Vobs (<i>in decret. bacc.</i>)	per res. L.	Andr. Holes, Arch. Well.	Still., 24
1471. Aug. 6	Ric. Holden	per res. R.V.	Thom. Bridlyngton "	— 32
1472. July 18	Walter Gould	per mort. R.H.	Ric. Wykke "	— 35

* Archidiaconus Wellensis patronus.

¹ Formerly R. of Sparkford.

² Resignavit et cessit ad East Brent.

¹ <http://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/KingsQueensofBritain/>

1310. Elias de Coleshull is first mentioned² as the incumbent at Brent South³ in 1310, at which time he had a patron – Nicholas de Longland⁴, a Somerset man of some substance. Longland seems to have been active in matters of the Church around this time. He also provided patronage in 1311 for Rog. de Longland to take up the incumbency at Hutton. All very local and cosy. The reference to Bishop's Register in column 5 applies to the Calendar of John de Drokenford, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1309 to 1329.⁵

NB. An 'Elias' resigned from Locking in 1310 and there was an 'Elias' who was at Christon 1332. Are they all the same man?

So Coleshull had links for some 15 years in Somerset, down the road at Brent South, which was in the patronage of the Archdeacon of Wells at that time. It is therefore possible that Coleshull had some prior knowledge of Worle.

E. de Coleshull witnessed a Glastonbury Deed in 1316.

It is also worth noting that the subsequent entry in the Brent South extract gives '1325 Will de Lodelawe' taking over Brent South from Coleshull. The reason for the change is interesting. The latin term 'per cess E de C' translates as 'by [or as a result of] the fleeing of Elias de Coleshull. At a distance of 700 years we can only speculate on how this might be accurately interpreted.

1325. The same Bishop noted Coleshull's establishment as the first recorded Vicar of St. Martin's, Worle, and it is clear from later entries that Elias de Coleshull spent a decade as Vicar of Worle.

WORLE.*				
(S. Martini.)				
DATE OF INSTITUTION.	INCUMBENT.	HOW VACATED.	PATRON.	REF. TO BISHOP'S REGISTER.
1325	Elias de Coleshull			Drok., 528
1335	Ricardus			Rad., 111
1347. iiij. Non. Jan.	Joh. de Stodelegh			— 323
1348	Joh. le Hayward			— 329
Id. Jan.	Rob. Geffray			— 334
ij. Non. Feb.	Joh. Marques			— 336
	Will. Hareford			
1419. Oct. 17	Joh. Hoper	per mort. W.H.		Bub., 165
1458. Feb. 19	Ric. Wiche	per mort. J.H.		Beck., 234
1459. Sept. 4	Joh. Crosse	per res. R.W.		— 245

* Advocatio ad priorem et conventum de Worspring spectabat.

Raye Green

² Somerset Incumbents p34

³ In the patronage of the Archdeacon of Wells

⁴ Nicholas De Longland. Birthdate: circa 1260. Birthplace: Brent Burham, Somerset. Died August 4, 1312
Father of Hugh Longland, Sr., Sir Surname sometimes spelt Langlonde.

⁵ Calendar of the Register of John De Drokenford (Paperback) Church Of England. D. ISBN 10: 1177143445 ISBN 13: 9781177143448