

**HISTORICAL NOTES
ON GRANTHAM, AND
GRANTHAM CHURCH**

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Historical Notes on Grantham, and Grantham Church by B. Street

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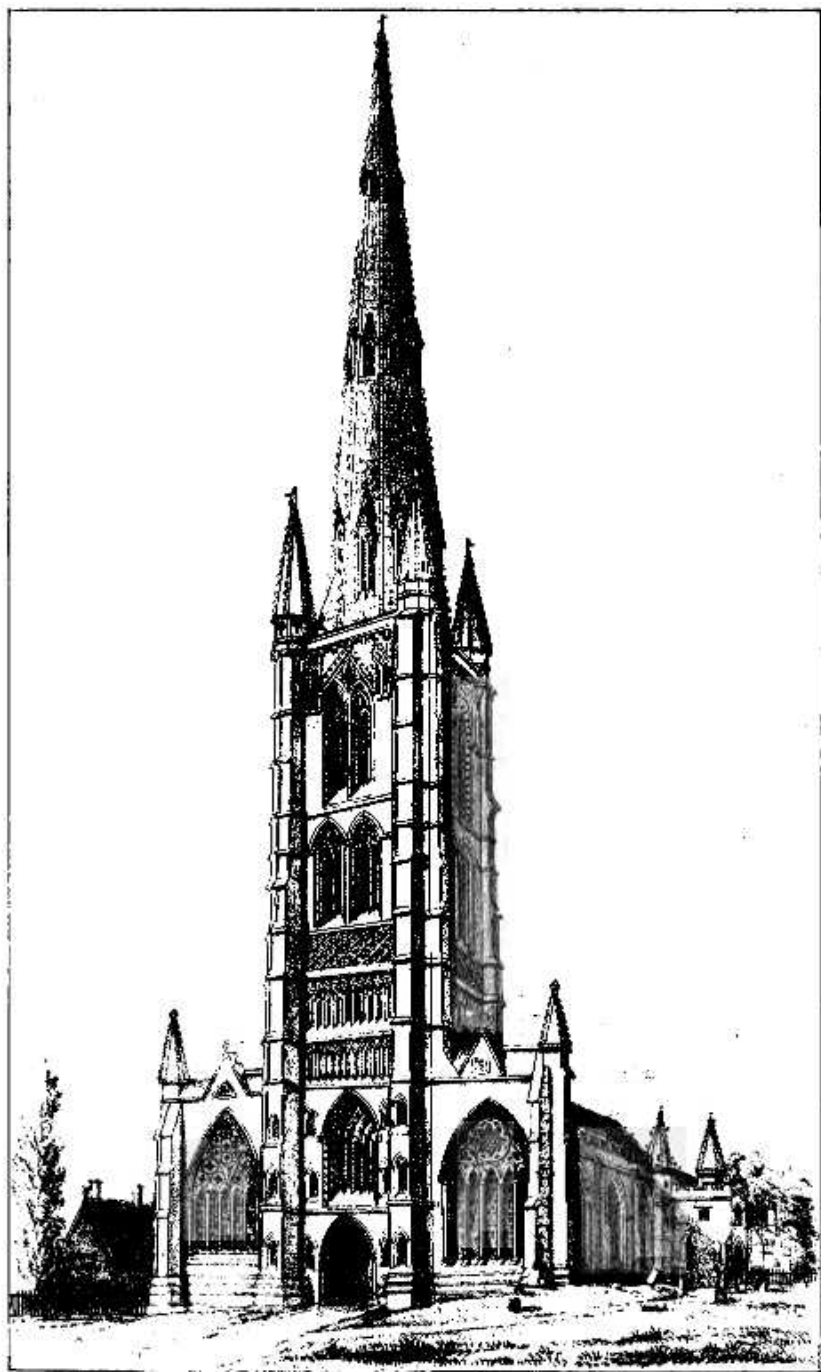
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B. STREET

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GRANTHAM CHURCH**



St. Wolstan's Church. Grantham.

HISTORICAL
NOTES ON GRANTHAM,

AND

Grantham Church,

BY

THE REV. B. STREET, B. A.,

CURATE OF GRANTHAM.

SPARTAM QUAM NACTUS ES ORNA.

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The reader is requested to correct the following Errata.

Page 7, last line, instead of 'it once included Colsterworth,' 'it once included Welby.'

Page 51, the date on the Conduit is 1597, not 1579; and Mr. Bury was Alderman in 1597.

Introduction.

As the information respecting Grantham contained in the present notes has been collected almost exclusively from the Public Records of the Kingdoms, it may be better to give a brief account of the principal Records at once, than to encumber the narrative with repeated references to them.

The earliest Record of Grantham is in Domesday, the result of a survey made by order of William the Conqueror, in the years from 1080 to 1086. Similar surveys had been made, it would appear, by Saxon Kings, whenever an interval of peace allowed it to be done; but none are preserved. Our Saxon Ancestors called the Commissioners who made the survey, Doomsters, and their report Doom, that is to say, judgment or verdict, and the Record itself Domesday.

Though the entries in Domesday are so abrupt, concise, and obscure as to repel the reader at first sight, a little reflection invests them with interest. They bring before us the agricultural Saxon man of Grantham, deposing that Grantham was the portion of Edward the Confessor's widow; speaking to his new masters of Saxon privileges, such as the Norman found it easier to annul than to understand; and exciting his cupidity by detailing the large estates of the Saxon Earl Colegrim, then the great proprietor in the neighbourhood. And there also we

find the parish Priest of Grantham offering to bring a hundred of his people to maintain his rights in some property against the grasping Bishop of Durham of those days.

The Records next in date are of Feudal Times, made about 200 years after Domesday, and present the country to us in a different condition. The difference may be understood by considering, that whereas the Anglo Saxons named the subdivisions of the land mostly from the requirements of agriculture, the Normans partitioned them according to the requirements of war. The Anglo Saxons reckoned the extent of arable land by oxgangs, as much as a team of oxen could plough in one season. But the Norman having divided the country among his fighting Barons and Bishops, divided it into Knight's fees, or sufficient land to maintain the dignity of a Knight; and the requirements of war dictated the law of the land.

Accordingly, the next most ancient Record, *Liber Feodorum*,¹ the Register of Fiefs and Knights' fees, gives us the names and the estates of the men who had fought in the Crusades and in Normandy, the men whose effigies in brass or marble still remain in many of our Churches.

A Record of about the same date is still more important than the *Liber Feodorum*. It is the *Rotuli Hundredorum*, a Report of Commissioners sent to enquire, throughout England, into the various abuses of powers, alienation of Crown manors, and all usurpations of rights which had been perpetrated during the absence of Edward the First on the Crusade, and during the troublous reigns of his predecessors. The King's Commissioners took their inquisition respecting Grantham, at Stamford, on the oaths of twelve honest and lawful men of Grantham, in the year 1275.

¹ Entitled *Testa de Neville*. A title which has not been satisfactorily explained. I apprehend it is an abbreviation of *Testatio de Neville*, the deposition of De Neville, for the actual *Testa de Neville* consists of only a few documents in the Book. And this book was not considered as a Record, but as Evidence, by the old Lawyers.

The rectification of the abuses presented to the above Commissioners, produced other valuable Records, known as the Quo Warranto Pleas, in 1281.

The Ecclesiastical assessment of King Edward the First, *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, made in 1291, gives the same information respecting the estates and revenues of the Church and Abbeys, as the Register of Fiefs does with respect to the property of the Laity.

This valuation of all Church property was made because the Pope who claimed and always took the tenth part of all the revenues of the Church of England, (in addition to what he extorted by other means,) granted those tenths for three years to King Edward the First, to encourage and enable him to lead another Crusade to the Holy Land, then almost entirely wrested from the Christians by the Saracens. The King, in order to obtain the full amount, had the Church property valued, and collected the tenths. But his wars with Wallace and the Bruce prevented the intended expedition against the Saracens, and Edward dying, could fulfil his vow no further than by desiring that his heart should be conveyed to the Holy Land and there interred.

The Charter Rolls, Patent and Close Rolls, and Exchequer Rolls, the earliest document in which is dated 3rd John, A. D. 1202, have also supplied many dates and facts.

Omitting some other Public Records in which the returns for Grantham are unfortunately missing, or exceedingly scanty, there remains to be noticed, the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, of Henry the Eighth, another valuation of all Church and Monastic property without exception, made in the year 1535. This is the Domesday Book of the Monastic orders: the King confiscated their property as William the Conqueror had confiscated that of the Saxons. In this notorious seizure of Abbey estates and others, it seems to me that the Church was not actually impoverished by the King. The parochial Church never was wealthy. The Monastic Orders had acquired all the livings and Church lands