

Abbess Felicia Aas (1405 – 1417?)



Felicia Aas, created by Lockerley Primary School

When Bishop William of Wykeham died, he left Felicia Aas, a Romsey nun but soon to become abbess, £5, to each of the other nuns one mark¹ (13s 4d), and to Abbess Lucy Everard, five marks (£3 6s 8d). He also cancelled a debt of £40 due to him from the Abbey, which was to be applied to the church and cloister repairs. Felicia Aas is said to have been second cousin to the Bishop; if she can be identified with the daughter of Ralph Aas, mentioned in the De Banco Rolls² of 1363-1364.

We know next to nothing about Felicia Aas during her term. She must have been of mature age at the time of the Bishop's death on 27th September 1404. She was appointed abbess of Romsey Abbey soon after this event. There is no entry in Bishop Beaufort's Register of her appointment, but the Patent Roll [6 Henry IV, pt. 2] shows that the election took place between 30th July and 27th August 1405.

On 10th Mary 1403, during Lucy Everard's abbacy, a faculty had been granted to build an extension against the north wall of the abbey and to then pull down the outside wall of the north aisle to accommodate the growing congregation of the Parish Church of St. Lawrence who had previously worshipped in the north aisle. This work was completed during the early years of Felicia's abbacy, during which time this part of Romsey Abbey must have been a building site.

At the time of Felicia Aas's abbacy, a note in the Reeve's account roll of Edingdon, 1413 - 14, is interesting. It says "Two geese as a gift to the chaplain celebrating mass in the chapel of S. Ethelfleda on S. Ethelfleda's day." Another account roll, dated 1412 - 13, apparently that of the steward or receiver shows the income and expenses of the Convent. The revenues were drawn from rents, from the Abbey farms, from the sale of works (*operum*), wool, corn, and malt, and from the perquisites of the manor courts; all these were collected from Steeple Ashton, Edyndon, Romeseye, Moure Malewayn near Romsey, Sydemanton, and Ichenstoke. They totalled a sum of £404 6s ½d.

Matilda (Maud) Lovell succeeded on the death of Abbess Felicia Aas in October 1417, but again the Episcopal Register fails to help in fixing the date of election, the second Register book of Bishop Henry Beaufort, for the years 1416 - 1447, having been lost. This Register, says a note in the Bishop's first book, was lent to the King, who it may therefore be supposed omitted to return it!

The Patent Rolls, however, show that Abbess Maud's election took place in 1417, and that the proceedings lasted from 25th October to 18th November.

¹ According to Wikipedia, in England the "mark" never appeared as a coin but was only a unit of account. It was apparently introduced in the 10th century by the Danes. According to 19th century sources, it was initially equivalent to 100 pence, but after the Norman Conquest (1066), it was worth 160 pence (13 shillings and 4 pence), two-thirds of a pound sterling.

² The plea rolls (known as the *de banco rolls*), record proceedings in the Court of Common Pleas (earlier known as the Bench).