

Abbess Johanna Bryggys (1462 – 1472)



Johanna Bryggys, created by
Awbridge Primary School

Johanna Bryggys (probably pronounced Bridges) succeeded Matilda Lovell in 1462; the proceedings connected with her election lasting from 26th April to 30th May. Joan Forde, the Sub-Prioress, Katharine Shyffeld, Katharine Stadham, and Thomasine Assheley, nuns, are mentioned, but the last three could not be found in the Convent at the time of the election; it is doubtful if Katharine Shyffeld was a member of the community at this time, whilst the two others appear in a list of twenty six nuns in 1478, some 16 years later:

9th September, 1478.

Johanna Skylling, Prioress.	Johanna Sutton. ²
Edburga More.	Johanna Serell.
Katerina Statham. ¹	*Agnes Welle.
Matildis Caswyk.	*Johanna Stoodo, <i>i.e.</i> , Strowde. ²
Anabella Dyngley. ²	[These expressly professed.]
Elizabeth Broke. ³	*Maria Tisted. ²
*Isabella Morgan. ²	*Christina More. ²
*Cecilia Rede. ²	*Helena Tawke. ²
*Johanna Skylling, jnr. ²	*Hawisa Haynowe. ²
*Johanna Paten. ²	*Agnes Skylling. ²
*Thomasina Asshley. ^{1,2}	*Agnes Harvy. ²
*Editha Holewey. ²	*Elizabeth Routhale. ²
*Anna Rowse. ²	[These tacitly professed.]
*Judoca Rowse. ²	Margaret Taylard [absent].

¹ Mentioned in 1462. ² Here in 1492 with Emma Conney and Alice Widenstall.
³ Resigned the office of Abbess, but re-elected.

At the time of Johanna Bryggys' abbacy, the parish church of the residents of Romsey occupied a small part of Romsey Abbey; the north aisle, the north transept and a lean-to extension from the west wall of the north transept (traces of which can still be seen today) and along the north aisle wall as far as the north door, where the "new" 1908 porch now stands. Both the north aisle wall and the west wall of the north transept were knocked through to access the extension and, to this day, evidence of inferior workmanship can be seen where these walls were filled in again, after the extension was demolished soon after the dissolution of the monastery in 1539.

During Johanna Bryggys abbacy, interest in the parish church is evident in the will of Thomas Shotter, 1464 – 67. After expressing his desire to be buried in the parish church of S. Laurence de Romsey, he bequeaths for the fabric of the new aisle, 6s 8d, for repairing the books a like sum, for a light, 6d, and to the vicar, 6s 8d.

In 1471, Abbess Johanna Bryggys, with two of the nuns and a fourth lady, together with a Prioress, are found dining and supping in the Hall of Winchester College on the last Monday in the last quarter of the year. This was in the time of Warden John Baker of Aldermaston, Berkshire.

Elizabeth Broke was elected Abbess on the death of Johanna (Joan) Bryggys, the congé d'élire (licence to elect a new abbess) was issued on the 27th May 1472, and after the sisters had elected their abbess, she appeared before the Bishop's Commissary in Romsey Church on the 16th June.

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