

## Abbess Lucy Everard (1396 – 1405)



Lucy Everard, created by  
Cupernham Junior School

Lucy Everard succeeded Isabel de Camoys as Abbess and the proceedings took about a month, beginning the 7<sup>th</sup> April and ending 16<sup>th</sup> May 1396.

Before the end of the year Bishop William of Wykeham issued a commission to Nicholas Wykeham, Archdeacon of Wiltshire, and John Elmere, his official, to visit the Abbey on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 1396. This was done, and the Injunctions which followed the Visitation are to be found, not as usual in the Bishop's Registers, but in a small folio preserved at New College, Oxford. These Injunctions are said to be especially interesting. Amongst other matters, the sisters are strictly charged not to be prevailed upon to take upon themselves the office of godmother, it entailing various inconvenient results, whatever they might be!

Abbess Lucy Everard, like several of her predecessors, seems to have become infirm, for the Bishop, on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1402, gave her permission to hear Divine service in her oratory, for one year, with one of the sisters and her servants present.

At this time, the north aisle of Romsey Abbey was used as the parish church for the townspeople of Romsey but, as the population grew, this was becoming too small. However, on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1403, on the application of the Vicar, John Umfray, and the parishioners, a faculty was granted to pull down the north aisle, from the transept to the porch, and to rebuild it on a larger scale. The Bishop, when issuing his licence, speaks of the church as too confined and mean to hold the parishioners when they come together on the Lord's Day, or on Festivals, to hear divine service. He commends their desire to make their church larger and more beautiful.

We don't know exactly when Abbess Lucy Everard died but when Bishop William of Wykeham died, on 27<sup>th</sup> September

1404, he left Felicia Aas, a Romsey nun but soon to become abbess, £5, and to each of the other nuns 13s 4d (one mark<sup>1</sup>), and to Abbess Lucy Everard, five marks; he also cancelled a debt of £40 due to him from the Abbey, which was to be applied to the church and cloister repairs.

Henry G D Liveing, in his 1906 publication *Records of Romsey Abbey*, states that Lucy Everard died soon after she became infirm, in 1402, but if she was left 5 marks in the will of Bishop Wykeham, perhaps she lasted a little longer, particularly judging by the fact that the election of her successor, Felicia Aas, took place between 30<sup>th</sup> July and 27<sup>th</sup> August 1405. Therefore, I think we can be confident that Lucy Everard departed this life in 1405.

<sup>1</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> century by the Danes. According to 19<sup>th</sup> 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.