

MARTON AND MOXBY PRIORIES

The sites of the priory of Marton and its sister nunnery at Moxby lie on the River Foss 2.8km apart in the Parish of Marton cum Moxby.

MARTON

The site of Marton Priory (centered SE 5845 6952) was founded in the mid 12c. as a double monastery of Augustinian canons and nuns, but by 1167 the nuns had been moved to Moxby. The priory was dissolved in 1536. The surviving contemporary documentation of both is very sparse, being primarily concerned with persistent disciplinary problems, disputes over grazing rights, and emergency measures following their devastation in Scottish raid in c. 1322. The report of a visitation of Marton Priory by the Dean and Chapter of York in 1531, shortly before the Dissolution mentions the infirmary and its garden, one or more mills and that the monks kept sheep and oxen. Only the Minister's Accounts of 1535/36, and the Enrolment of Leases of 1536, which record the existence of houses, buildings, dovecotes, orchards, gardens, meadows, pasture, and arable closes, woodland and a watermill and five fishponds (stanks), give some written indication as to what once surrounded the priory buildings.

Sculptured stone probably from Marton Abbey was incorporated in the mid 16th c. rebuild of Marton village church.

Harryfield Lane forms a direct continuation of the main road from the now shrunken medieval village of Marton held by the priory from an early date, which appears to head straight for the monastery.

MOXBY

The priory of St. John the Apostle was established at Moxby (or Molesby as it was then called) by nuns from Marton Priory, perhaps in c. 1158 and certainly before 1167 - the date when their right to land previously granted to them was confirmed by Henry 11. Although Marton was an Augustinian house, the Moxby nuns were recorded as belonging to the order of St. Benedict in 1310 and 1322 but appear to have become Augustinian by 1326. Documentary sources suggest that Moxby was always a small establishment, with probably never more than about 10 nuns. It also was suppressed in 1536.

As was said above the surviving contemporary documentation of the Priory is sparse, but in 1327/8 the nuns were ordered to repair the ruinous bakehouse, brewhouse and malthouse and to keep corn in a granary and not in barns. In 1535/6 at the time of the suppression there was listed barns, houses, dovecotes, orchards, gardens, closes, pastures, meadow and a watermill with a house.

Following the dissolution, the priory itself was converted into a family mansion, Moxby Hall. The Hall apparently continued in use until the mid 1850's when it was almost entirely demolished to build the present farm cottage and farm buildings and became superseded by the house now called Moxby Priory, 250m to the south - west. Of the old priory little remains, although a low wall of dressed stone blocks form the base of the west end of the present cow - shed and most of the brickwork of the cottage stands on a rendered plinth. It would thus appear that the extant structures still retain the orientation of and incorporate fragments of the layout of the conventional buildings.

The mill (SE5969 6678) was an "undershott water Come mill"

In the backyard of Moxby Priory Farm is the base of a large stone coffin that had previously been used as a horse trough

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