

## Geoffrey of Barton

Geoffrey was elected in 1242, following the death of Richard de Morins, who must have been a hard act to follow. Geoffrey was confirmed in his post, by the bishop of Lincoln, on the Thursday after Ascension day, was presented to Henry III the next day and was installed the following Thursday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, by the archdeacon of Bedford. In the following years, there were several crop failures and hundreds of the priory's sheep died in the Peak District. The priory got into debt because it was committed to tending the poor, the sick and the pilgrims, even though its main source of income was so badly hit.

In 1247 Henry III, Queen Eleanor, Prince Edward and Princess Margaret visited the priory. The king and queen were each given a gilded cup and their children a gold buckle each. These gifts cost twenty two marks. In return, the priory received eight measures of silk and money for altar vessels.

In May 1253 Geoffrey was commanded by Henry III prohibit the holding of a tournament, planned to take place in Dunstable. He received similar instructions in June 1257 and November 1255. In November 1258 the tournament was cancelled because the king needed his knights to be ready to counter a rebellion led by Llewellyn, son of Griffin, who proposed to break his truce with the crown.

In April 1259 Henry III confirmed his support for the Dominican friary in Dunstable, ordering that the canons would not impede them. The following year, the king wrote to Geoffrey and thanked him for making the friars welcome and begs the canons to continue their kindness. He wants to know if the friars do anything to jeopardise the peace between the two houses.

Geoffrey, who was probably dispirited by the troubles of his priory, resigned his office into the hands of Richard, bishop of Lincoln, in 1262.