Speed’s map of Devon as a village in Bampton Hundred; it also appears on the first edition of the one-inch Ordnance Survey map of England. On the modern O.S. map, its name survives as that of a farm near the village of Westleigh, about five miles south-west of Wellington, along the Great Western Canal.


The abbess at this time was Margaret Acher or Aunger (1320-45). The use of the double dot in this way was the mediaeval equivalent of the modern use of ‘A.B.’ or ‘C.D.’ instead of real names or initials in examples of legal forms. It is improbable in the extreme that neither the bishop nor his clerks knew the name of the current abbess of Canonsleigh. Rather it appears to be the custom in this register to use double dots for most mandates directed to a person by virtue of his or her office rather than to copy that person’s name into the register.

Medieval English Nunneries (Cambridge, 1922), 353. The whole of this chapter (chapter ix, ‘Fish out of Water’) is a valuable discussion of the phenomenon of strict enclosure in women’s houses.


The full text of ‘Periculoso’ is given in Boniface’s Liber Sextus, lib. iii, tit. xvi (Corpus Iuris Canonici, 2, cols 1053-4). See Nunneries, p 344, for Power’s translation of the introduction (in which the language borrowed by de Grandisson comes).

See John M. Wasson (ed), Devon, Records of Early English Drama (Toronto, 1986), 6-14 (text); 319-27 (translation).

Wasson, Devon, xxx, 439.

Stapleton’s concerns are addressed in 1319 orders to the nuns at Polsloe and Canonsleigh; among other injunctions designed to make the nuns’ enclosure stricter, he ordered that they only go to Exeter or elsewhere for meals under supervision and that they return the same or the following day. Furthermore they are not to go again to Exeter and go from house to house wandering as they had done in the past. See F.C. Hingeston-Randolph (ed), The Register of Walter de Stapleton, Bishop of Exeter (A.D. 1307-1326) (London and Exeter, 1892), 95-6 and 316-18, and Power, Nunneries, 354-5. The site of Polsloe Abbey is in the modern city of Exeter, being about a mile from the University grounds.

News from the REED Office

Our most important news of the season is the publication of Mark C. Pilkinton’s edition of Bristolin in October, bringing the series total to 17 collections in 17 volumes. The custom-
ary launch party on 30 October gave us the opportunity for a double celebration of Mark’s book and his birthday the same week. The REED staff are already busy preparing the next volume for typesetting in 1998, when we expect to publish the combined collections of Dorset, edited by Rosalind Hays and Ted McGee, and Cornwall, edited by Sally Cross and Evelyn Newlyn. Dorset/Cornwall will complete REED’s survey of the south-western region, bringing to the spotlight many new entertainment records of travelling performers, local festive customs, and communities undergoing cultural and political change, not always placidly. After the south-west, we will move, logically enough, in the direction of the south-east where the enormous body of records for Kent: Diocese of Canterbury and Sussex beckons. These south-east coast volumes are being edited by James Gibson (Kent) and Cameron Louis (Sussex) and production work has been generously sponsored by our patron, Father Edward Jackman, o.p., and the Jackman Foundation.

REED continues its own sponsorship of interdisciplinary sessions at the annual Leeds International Medieval Congress. This year Barbara Palmer organized two stimulating sessions on culture and politics in the North, with four more planned by Bob Tittler and myself to come in 1998 on cultural expression and urban identity in late medieval and early modern urban centres. We also look forward to the recreation of the York Cycle on pageant wagons by PLS and many friends in Toronto in June, followed by a selection of cycle plays in the streets of York produced by Jane Oakshott in July.

We also have cause to celebrate individual achievements by our editors, led by Alexandra Johnston, REED’s Director, who was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada this year. Also on the honour roll is John McGavin, who was awarded a prestigious Modern Humanities Research Associateship to further his research on the dramatic records of provincial Scotland. Jim Stokes, now working on the Lincolnshire records, has been granted a fellowship at the Institute for Research in the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin Madison, while Peter Greenfield held a two-month fellowship from the Hampshire County Council this summer at the Hartley Institute, University of Southampton to pursue his work on the Hampshire collection.

This year also brought a new staff member to the ranks of REED after Sheena Levitt’s retirement. We welcomed Cissy Yun as our new administrative assistant in January and expect that many of our associates will benefit from her energetic attention to our accounts.

Finally, as 1997 draws to a close, we wish all our friends and supporters a happy and prosperous new year!

Sally-Beth MacLean
Executive Editor