

= William Edington =

William Edington ( died 6 or 7 October 1366 ) was an English bishop and administrator . He served as bishop of Winchester from 1346 until his death , Keeper of the wardrobe from 1341 to 1344 , treasurer from 1344 to 1356 , and finally as chancellor from 1356 until he retired from royal administration in 1363 . Edington ' s reforms of the administration ? in particular of royal finances ? had wide @-@ ranging consequences , and contributed to the English military efficiency in the early stages of the Hundred Years ' War . As bishop of Winchester he was responsible for starting an extensive rebuilding of Winchester Cathedral , and for founding Edington Priory , the church of which still stands today .

= = Royal service = =

Edington ' s parents were Roger and Amice of Edington near Westbury , Wiltshire . Though it has been claimed that he was educated at Oxford , there seems to be no support for this . His first patron , however , was the Oxford chancellor Gilbert Middleton , who was also a royal counsellor . When Middleton died in 1331 , Edington entered the service of Middleton ' s friend , Adam Orleton , bishop of Winchester . Through Orleton , Edington ' s abilities were brought to the attention of King Edward III , and in 1341 the king named him keeper of the wardrobe . The position was an important one ; the wardrobe functioned as the treasury while the king was on campaign , and Edward strongly resisted any attempts to limit this royal prerogative .

The king must have been impressed by Edington ' s performance , because in 1344 he made him treasurer of the realm , a position he held for the exceptionally long period of twelve years . This was a job fraught with problems , as the nation was in serious financial difficulties by the mid @-@ 1340s . The treasury was in great debt from the heavy demands of the early stages of the Hundred Years ' War . By then reneging on his debts , the king had lost public confidence , and struggled to obtain new loans . Edington saw the need to bring all royal expenditure under the oversight of the exchequer . This did not entail controlling the king ' s use of his resources ? a move Edward would have resented greatly ? but simply attempting to budget all revenues and expenses . By the early 1360s this was largely achieved ; a testimony to the capabilities and energy of Edington as an administrator . In 1356 he was named chancellor , a post he held until his retirement from the national scene in 1363 , possibly for health reasons .

= = Ecclesiastical career = =

Edington also held ecclesiastical benefices . After his education at Oxford he held a succession of rectorates in Northamptonshire : first at Cottingham , then at Dallington , and finally from 1322 at Middleton Cheney .

In 1335 Orleton collated Edington to the rectory of Cheriton , Hampshire , and from 1335 to 1346 he was master of the Hospital of St Cross in Winchester . Also the king was eager to reward his capable servant ; in 1341 he was given the prebend of Leighton Manor ( Lincoln ) , by 1344 he also held that of Netheravon ( Salisbury ) , and by 1345 that of Putston ( Hereford ) . This level of pluralism was not unusual at the time . His greatest preferment , however , came with his papal appointment ? on the king ' s request ? to the see of Winchester in 1345 . This was the richest see in England , considered second only to the archbishopric of Milan .

The monks of Winchester had already elected one of their own number , but this was over @-@ ruled , and Edington was consecrated in 1346 . As a bishop he was necessarily much absent , even with the relatively short distance between Westminster and Winchester . He was not entirely detached from his episcopal duties , however : he used the see as a source for extensive nepotism , yet he also initiated wide @-@ ranging building works on the nave of the cathedral . Meanwhile , in 1351 , he founded an Augustinian priory at his birthplace of Edington , in order to have prayers said for himself , his parents and his brother . Although most of the priory has been demolished , the church still stands , as a good example of the transition between the decorated and perpendicular

style of church @-@ building .

In May 1366 , as a final sign of royal gratitude , King Edward had Edington elected archbishop of Canterbury . Edington , however , declined on the grounds of failing health . Five months later , on 6 or 7 October 1366 , he died at Bishop 's Waltham . He is buried in Winchester Cathedral , where his effigy can be seen in the chantry chapel he himself had built in the nave .