



God's House at Ewelme: Life, Devotion and Architecture in a Fifteenth-Century Almshouse

By John Goodall

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This title was first published in 2001. God's House, at Ewelme, is an extraordinary survival from England's late medieval past: a well documented and superbly preserved chantry foundation established in 1437 by William and Alice de la Pole, then Earl and Countess of Suffolk. As originally constituted, it supported a school, a community of thirteen almsmen and two priests. Their prayers and activities were to be offered for the praise of God and benefit of their founders' souls. Chantry foundations, such as God's House, were perhaps the single most important objects of devotional and artistic patronage in the Late Middle Ages, and England's wealthiest men and women lavished care and money on them. Few of these institutions survived the Reformation. Despite the richness of their surviving physical remains and the light they shed on the social and devotional history of the period, the great chantry foundations of the period remain little discussed and improperly understood. God's House at Ewelme presents a fascinating account of the values and forces which shaped chantry devotion as well as the physical arrangements of a medieval religious foundation.

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