

## John de Winchester – Bishop of Moray

John de Winchester (died 1460) was a 15th-century English cleric who distinguished himself as an administrator and bishop in Scotland. Winchester was a student of canon law from 1418, graduating with a bachelorate in 1421.[1]

He appears to have entered Scotland in 1424 after King James I of Scotland returned from his eighteen-year period as a hostage in England; it is notable and certainly relevant that James' queen, Joan Beaufort, was the niece of Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester.[2]

After entering Scotland, James was chaplain and secretary to the king, who bestowed on Winchester Alyth in Angus and helped him become Chancellor of Dunkeld.[3] Winchester was out of Scotland in 1432, attending the Council of Basel on behalf of King James; he was also Clerk of the Register in this year.[2]

He was Dean of Aberdeen in 1431,[4] and was provided as Treasurer of the diocese of Glasgow sometime in 1431, but was not able to take up this position.[5] However, he did become Provost of the Collegiate Church of Lincluden between 1434 and 1436.[6]

Winchester's services to the king were rewarded further in November 1435 when, after the death of Columba de Dunbar, he was elected as Bishop of Moray.[7] He was not, however, consecrated until 9 May 1437, a few months after the death of King James; his consecration took place at Cambuskenneth Abbey.[8]

After becoming bishop, Winchester continued in the service of Queen Joan through the minority of James II of Scotland. James II later rewarded Winchester by creating Spynie as a burgh of Barony on 24 July 1451; after James II murdered the ex-regent William Douglas, 8th Earl of Douglas in 1452, Spynie's status was raised to that of burgh of regality.[9]

Bishop Winchester died April, 1460, probably at Spynie Castle[10] and was buried in St Mary's Aisle within Elgin Cathedral.[11]

**NOTES:** *McGladdery, "Winchester, John (died 1460)"; Dowden says civil law (decrees), Dowden, Bishops of Scotland, p. 159.*

**2** *McGladdery, "Winchester, John (d. 1460)."*

3. *McGladdery, "Winchester, John (d. 1460)"; Watt, Fasti Ecclesiae, p. 111.*
4. *Watt, Fasti Ecclesiae, p. 8.*
5. *Watt, Fasti Ecclesiae, p. 165.*
6. *Watt, Fasti Ecclesiae, p. 364.*
7. *Watt, Fasti Ecclesiae, p. 215.*
  
8. *Dowden, Bishops of Scotland, pp. 160-1; McGladdery, "Winchester, John (d. 1460)"; Watt, Fasti Ecclesiae, p. 215.*
9. *Dowden, Bishops of Scotland, p. 160; McGladdery, "Winchester, John (d. 1460)".*
10. *McGladdery gives 1 April; Watt gives 22 April; the conflicting sources are discussed by Dowden: see Dowden, Bishops of Scotland, p. 160, McGladdery, "Winchester, John (d. 1460)", and Watt, Fasti Ecclesiae, pp. 215-6.*
11. *Young, Robert: Annals of the Parish and Burgh of Elgin, Elgin, 1879, p. 428*

## **SOURCES:**

*Cowan, Ian B., The Parishes of Medieval Scotland, Scottish Record Society, Vol. 93, (Edinburgh, 1967)*

*Dowden, John, The Bishops of Scotland, ed. J. Maitland Thomson, (Glasgow, 1912)*

*Keith, Robert, An Historical Catalogue of the Scottish Bishops: Down to the Year 1688, (London, 1924)*

*McGladdery, C. A., "Winchester, John (d. 1460)", in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 , accessed 25 Feb 2007*

*Watt, D.E.R., Fasti Ecclesiae Scotinanae Medii Aevi ad annum 1638, 2nd Draft, (St Andrews, 1969)*

## **ADDITIONAL NOTES** by Barbara Lee Rowe:

*John Winchester, Bishop of Moray from 1435 – 1460. Died 1 April 1460 at Spynie Castle in where he had also served in 1431 as the Dean of Aberdeen, Scotland. Served the Diocese of Moray (Roman Catholic) and served as cleric to King James I of Scotland and confidante' to Queen, Joan Beaufort, niece of Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester. His successor as Bishop of Moray was James Stewart.*

*The Winchesters originated in Hampshire, Winchester, England, and though some stayed put, some followed Winchester to Scotland and remained there. My direct line of Winchesters descend from the family of John de Winchester and had gone also to Aberdeen, from whence Thomas Wynchester came to America in 1740, first to Virginia then on to North Carolina.*

*King James II murdered William Douglas, the ex-regent of Scotland, and it was for William Douglas my ancestor was named. Thomas had two sons who came to America with him, and all served in the French & Indian Wars and in the American Revolution. They were William Douglas Winchester, my 5<sup>th</sup> ggrandfather, and his brother, Daniel Winchester.*

*ALL the lines of Winchesters are related and there have been several John Winchesters who made their way to America. This is just one branch.*



**The tomb of John de Winchester, Bishop of Moray, St. Mary's Aisle in Elgin Cathedral.**