

# The Monastic Estate

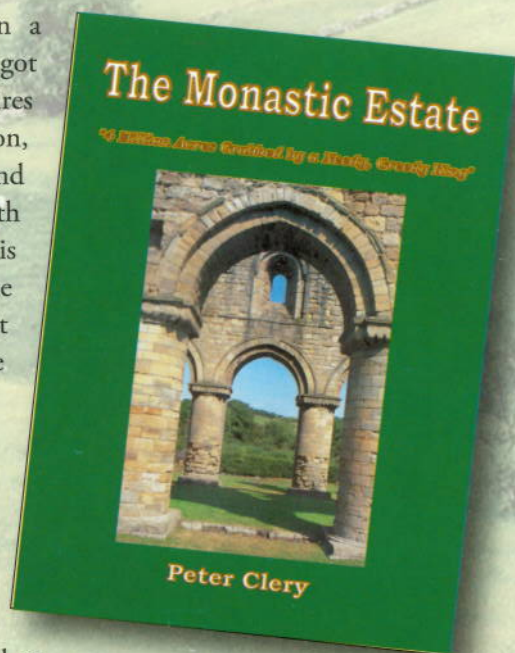
*"4 Million Acres Grabbed by a Needy, Greedy King"*

By  
**Peter Clery**

An authoritative new book describes in a readable way how the monks and nuns got hold of an area equal to the total of the shires of Bedford, Derby, Leicester, Northampton, Nottingham, Rutland, Stafford and Warwick put together. What they did with this land, how they lost it and who got it is succinctly described. The dissolution of the monasteries in 1536-40 was the biggest land transaction in England apart from the Norman conquest.

Also described are the Orders of monks and nuns, their charity, chastity and business acumen or lack of all these attributes. There is also a full county list of every monastery recorded at the dissolution in England, the income of each and an estimate of the land held. Benedictine Glastonbury was top with 130,000 acres. Once Thomas Cromwell and Henry VIII found out the massive wealth of the monastic estate from the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* in 1535, they wanted these assets and were not too scrupulous as to how they got them. Hanging and dismembering a few abbots encouraged the rest to take pensions and go quietly.

The Monastic Estate has been produced to a high standard, with 85 pages and 22 colour illustrations, by Phillimore Book Publishing.



PHILLIMORE BOOK PUBLISHING

Peter Clery's career has been in farming, agricultural banking and institutional land ownership. He set up the agricultural office of NatWest bank and then became managing director of Lands Improvement plc, a major owner of rural land. He was chairman of British Field Products Ltd and The British Association for Biofuels and Oils. Other books by the same author: *Green Gold - 1000 years of English Land* and *The Wealth and Estates of Glastonbury Abbey*. Certain material in the former also appears in *The Monastic Estate*.

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