Grace Dieu Priory

beneath your

eastern ridge the craggy bound rugged

and high

of Charnwood’s forest ground stand yet

but stranger hidden from thy view

the ivory ruins of fallon Grace Dieu

first a religious house which day and

night

with hymns resounded and the chanted

right

and when those rights had ceased the

spot

gave birth to honourable men of various

worth so wrote William Wordsworth while

staying at nearby Coleorton hall

in the early 1800s he visited this area

often as he really loved it

and why wouldn't he the priory was

founded between 1236

and 1242 as an order of Augustinian nuns

the founder was a rich widow Roesha de

Verdun

who took holy orders in her old age

rather than be forced into another

marriage

the priory has 16 nuns at any one time

it also had its own hospital where the

nuns would care for up to 12

sick and poor people

the priory's most precious possession

was the girdle of Saint Francis

it was believed that if a pregnant woman

touched the holy relic

it would ease her pains in childbirth

when the founder Roesha died she was

buried here in the chapter house

but she isn't here anymore the priory

surrendered to the crown in October 1538

as part of the dissolution of the

monasteries under the reign of henry

viii

shortly after Roesha’s body was taken

from here

and reinterred straight over those

fields

at Belton church over what is now

a busy a512

after the priory ceased to be a

religious establishment

it passed to the Beaumont family who

used it as a private residence for many

years

but by the 18th century it had fallen

into ruins

as for Roesha her exact whereabouts are

now a bit of a mystery

this splendid tomb where she was

reinterred is now known to be empty

in 1838 Ambrose Philips Delisle

who built Grace Dieu Manor and was a convert

to roman Catholicism

arranged for her to be returned to grace

Dieu

however the then vicar of Belton

reverend Eddos

was afraid that his church would lose

the revenue brought in by pilgrims who

came to touch her effigy

he secretly had her removed from the

tomb and buried elsewhere

probably within the church

to this day her final resting place is a

secret

but it is said that her spirit longs to

return to Grace Dieu

she's been seen many times people

traveling along this road

have had her pass through their car on one

occasion

two policemen were parked in a car in a

lay by just along the road

and they saw her going across the road i

think the most famous story

of Roesha trying to come back to

Grace Dieu though

is when a Barton bus approached from

that side

stopped at the bus stop that you see

behind me to pick up a woman

and when they got there no one actually

got on the bus

so the driver and the conductor both got

off

looked all around the area but their

passenger

had disappeared