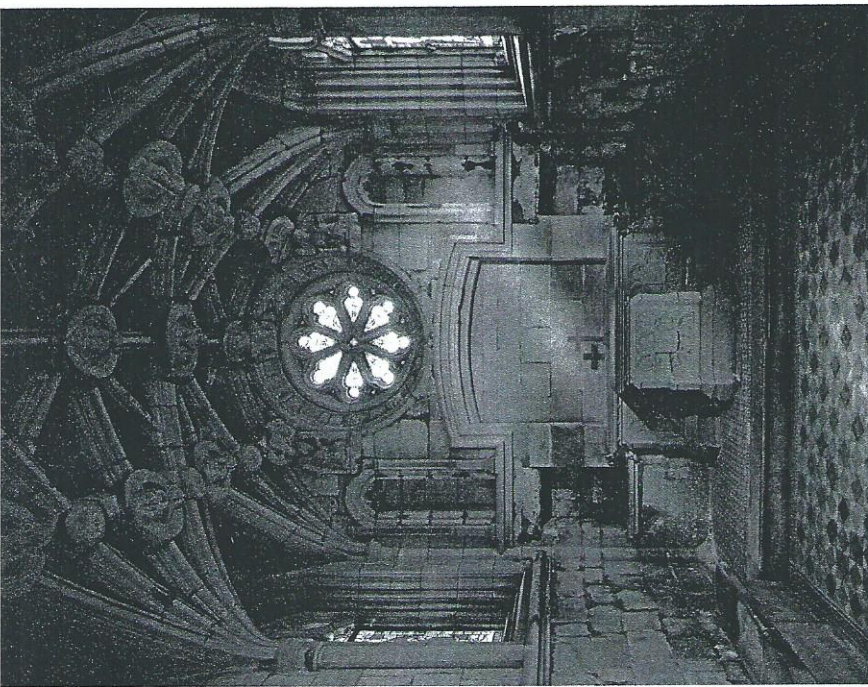


*swift = quick
legacy = gift after death*

Medieval England prays for the souls of the dead: the Percy chantry at Tynemouth Priory



Their money, their strength, their time

that their means allowed. Elaborate chapels and chantries – indeed, in Oxford a whole magnificent college, All Souls – were built to house these ceremonies of intercession, which were designed to speed the souls of the departed through the pains of purgatory, and to secure for them, as ^{graciously} swiftly as possible, the prize of salvation and a place in heaven. Vast legacies were left by the wealthy so that their souls, and those of their family, might be prayed for in perpetuity. The necessary rituals required the labour of enormous numbers of people – not least the priests needed to celebrate the masses. In England 500 years ago, the dead were major employers.

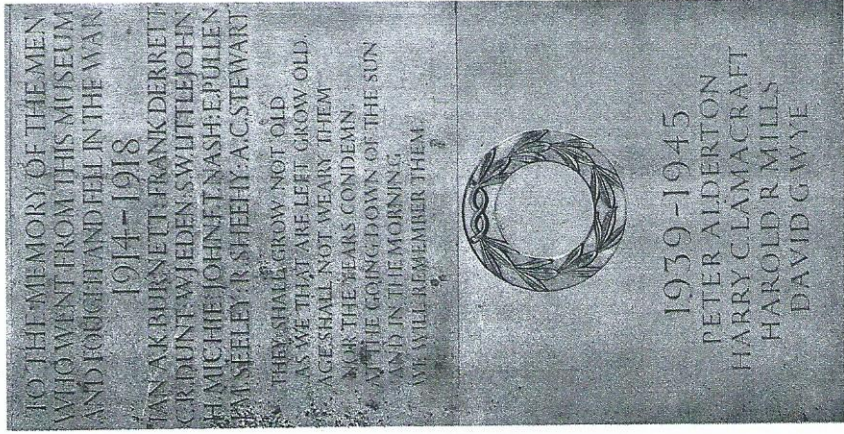
It was a pattern abruptly and brutally broken at the

X resühen haben nicht mehr in Winterbach!

Reformation. Most Protestant theologians rejected the very idea of purgatory, where sins were to be expiated by long suffering, and so necessarily abandoned the notion that rapid release from it could be procured by prayer or by payment. Masses for the souls of the dead were abolished. The endowments that funded them were liquidated or confiscated. In Protestant Europe the living could, by the middle of the sixteenth century, do little to help the dead, from whom they were now separated by a seemingly unbridgeable gulf. The change in doctrine transformed the duties of the clergy and the economics of the church, and hugely enriched rulers and their favoured leading subjects. No less important, it reordered the relationship between present and past.

*

*aufgelöst
Stiftung
nummer
un-brück-
bar
(Kluft)*



'They Shall Grow Not Old' – the memorial at the entrance to the British Museum remembering staff who died in two world wars