

Could Henry VIII have been conceived here?

Ewelme has had strong royal associations since Henry VII took over Ewelme Manor and converted it to a royal palace. According to Dr David Starkey, in the early autumn of 1490 Henry VII and his Queen, Elizabeth of York, spent a month at Ewelme. He believes Henry VIII, born nine months later, was conceived at Ewelme Manor.



Ewelme



Elizabeth of York and Henry II

In 1540, Henry VIII claimed Ewelme Manor as a royal residence for himself. He enlarged the old hunting park to cover 895 acres stretching from Ewelme to Park Corner and built a hunting Lodge where Ewelme Park now stands, which commanded wide views over the valley below. There is an area to the east of Ewelme still known as Huntinglands.

Henry VIII may have visited Ewelme several times. Records show that he held a Privy Council in Ewelme on 25th and 26th August 1540 whilst on honeymoon with his new Queen, Katherine Howard. The village pond is known as Kings Pool to this day, as legend has it that

Katherine playfully pushed him in. Another version is that he bathed his ulcerous legs in the pure water.

Edward VI granted Ewelme Manor to his sister, Princess Elizabeth, for her life.



Kings Pool : Christina Burford

It is believed that during the dangerous days of her sister Mary's reign, Princess Elizabeth stayed in Ewelme in the care of her stepmother, Anne of Cleves. After becoming Queen, Elizabeth visited Ewelme with her favourite, Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester, and there is an authenticated account of 1570 of Elizabeth riding pillion behind Dudley to visit tombs including the stone effigies of the De la Beche family in the church at Aldworth, near Streatley. (One of the effigies, remarkable for its immense size, is thought to be Sir Philip De la Beche who was valet to King Edward II. Another is Lord Nicholas De la Beche, who was Constable of the Tower and custodian of the King's first son, Edward Prince of Wales, later the Black Prince). An early 20th century local history by Mrs Prister Cruttwell speculates that a nearby bridleway, was named 'Love Lane' because of the amourous liaisons that took place between the Queen and Dudley there. There are also accounts of a young Elizabeth swinging on a walnut tree, near the gates of the palace. The tree blew down in a gale in 1971.

In more recent times, Queen Elizabeth II attended St Mary's Church, Ewelme on 15th April 1962 for the christening of her god-daughter Edwina Hicks.

Further information

www.friendsofewelmechurch.co.uk

www.fordsfarm.co.uk/History-of-Ewelme