

BISHAM ABBEY

NEAR MARLOW



A prison fit for two Queens.

The manor house at Bisham was built around 1260 as a community house for two Knights Templar and since the dissolution of the monasteries, this building has been known as Bisham Abbey.

Bisham Priory stood alongside the manor house and must have dominated the estate in its day. The foundation stone of the Priory was laid in 1337 by King Edward II. The brass plaque once affixed to the foundation stone has been moved to , near Wantage.

When the Templars were suppressed in 1307, King Edward II took over the manorial rights, granting them to various relatives.

In 1310 Edward II used the manor house as a luxurious place of confinement for Queen Elizabeth of the Scots, (the wife of King Robert the Bruce), along with her stepdaughter Princess Marjorie and her sister-in-law, Lady Christine of Carrick. They had been captured on the Isle of Rathlin during the Scottish wars of Succession and remained at Bisham for two years before being moved to Windsor.



Elizabeth DeBurgh
(Queen of Scotland)

In July 1536, Bisham Priory was surrendered to King Henry VIII who went on to re-establish it as a grand Benedictine Abbey. However, the Abbey lasted for

less than a year before finally being dissolved in June 1537. As he was dragged from the building, the Abbot of Bisham, John Cordery declared, "As God is my witness, this property shall never be inherited by two direct successors, for its sons will be hounded by misfortune". Nothing now remains of the Abbey church or associated buildings.

Following the final dissolution of the Abbey, Henry VIII subsequently granted the Manor house to his fourth wife



Bisham Manor : Anthony McCallum

Anne of Cleves as part of her divorce settlement from him (having only been married for 6 months). It is said she later swapped it with Sir Philip Hoby for Westhorpe in Suffolk. The Hoby family continued living there until 1768.

Princess Elizabeth (later Queen Elizabeth I) was held prisoner in the Manor House for several years around 1555 - 1558 by her sister, Queen Mary, and later as Queen, Elizabeth returned several times to visit Lady Hoby. An ancient holy well nearby is named after Elizabeth.



Elizabeth I in coronation robes, 1558

Further information

Bisham Abbey:

www.bishamabbeynsc.co.uk/bishamabbey