

INACCESSIBLE YORK - KING'S MANOR

A fascinating look at this former Abbots Residence and Royal Residence, visited by many of the Tudor & Stuart Kings and Queens.

King's Manor was originally built as the Abbot's Residence of St Mary's Abbey by Simon de Warwick in c.1270 and rebuilt in brick-then the latest technology-by Abbot Sever in about 1490

ST. MARY'S ABBEY

King William Rufus founded the Abbey in 1088, to atone for the many bloody and terrible deeds he and his father had committed in York. It was rebuilt in 1270-1300. It was one of the 10 wealthiest and biggest abbeys of England and was once as big as Fountains or Westminster Abbey.

The last Abbot was accused of having a sinful relationship with his housekeeper at Overton, and was thus easily persuaded to surrender the Abbey to Henry VIII's commissioners in 1539. The Abbey was then pillaged for stone to extend King's Manor and by the citizens of York, until c.1830 when the Museum was built, the gardens created and destruction ceased.

ST MARY'S ABBEY WALLS

The Walls of St. Mary's Abbey were erected in 1266, as in 1262 citizens attacked Abbey and threatened to crucify Abbot, castrate the novices and murder the monks! This was over disputes about the Market in 'Bootham' - "the street of the Market stalls" - where the Abbot had a Market. In 1318 walls had battlements added due to threat of Scots invasion. 'Queen Margaret's Postern' nothing of sort - it was opened up c.1490 to give Abbot better access to city from Abbot's Residence.

MAIN DOOR OF KINGS MANOR

Point out little window, which was Abbot's Toilet, which used to empty into City moat! It was also probably used by Henry VIII-the Royal Flush?! The Royal Arms above the door include the motto 'Dieu et mon Droit' with 'N' in 'MON' back to front- a drunken carver?

SUMMARY

King's Manor was a Royal palace and headquarters of the Council of the North-a regional Royal Government-from the time of Henry VIII to the Civil War. Henry VIII stayed here with wife number 5, Catherine Howard in 1541; James VI of Scotland called on his way to become James I of England, and Charles I was here in 1642, immediately before Civil War broke out. It ceased to be a Royal Palace with the downfall of James II in 1688, and was then high-class apartments until the early 19th C. It then housed a Girls' boarding school, and the Manor School, but from 1833 until taken over by the Yorkshire School for the Blind, who occupied it until York University assumed control in 1962. It is owned by the City of York, but on a very long lease to the University.

The building has been variously luxury Abbot's residence, Royal Palace, high-class apartments, Girls boarding school, Blind children's' school, and Archaeology department of York University. All these uses have left their mark.

HIGHLIGHTS OF TOUR

- 'The Royal Flush', the garderobe probably used by Henry VIII and Catherine Howard
- The magnificent Huntingdon Rooms, the former state apartments of the Palace
- The cellars, allegedly built to house the food and drink for Henry VIII's visit, later used to soak willows for blind children to make into baskets; used in recent past for student discos, but now a computer room.
- Windows in the Huntingdon Rooms scratched with diamond rings with passionate messages by the genteel young ladies of the boarding school. Messages include "All of us say that Tom is going to run off with Lumley to Hull"; "I love Miss Violet, I love Miss Greenside" and "I love Wood & Collins the best in the school"; "S Carville loves Miss Nelson best in the house by far and Bell & Coulthurst the 2nd best by far in York2"; "With this diamond I cut this glass, With this face I kissed a lass" and finally 2 I love Miss Green better than Mi..."- here the writing stops-caught in the act? Evidence of early 19th C adolescent crushes!