

## Notes on the Lincolnshire Rising.

Henry VIII was a very well-established monarch and the second of the Tudor Period. He had been on the throne since 1509, following the death of his father King Henry VII. Henry 7th had secured the throne following the wars of the roses which had dominated the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. By 1536 Henry 8<sup>th</sup> was on his second marriage, he would have six, to Anne Boleyn. He had previously been married to Catherine of Aragon for 24 years who was a Spanish princess and so a staunch catholic. Henry had then wanted to divorce her and as dispensation was not granted from the pope, Henry decided to make his own church, the Church of England of which he would be the head. This was confirmed with the Act of Supremacy in 1534. Crucially, Anne Boleyn was a big supporter in this and was a keen theologian and reader of new ideas, particularly Martin Luther. This had an immense impact and influence on Henry who was known to desire her. The breaking with the catholic church and so Rome and the Pope, was met with huge back lash from all parts of society. Ultimately this is what the Lincolnshire rising is about - a culmination of the anger and dislike of the changes that had happened over the previous years. There was also a lot of unemployment over the previous few years.

Monasteries were a reminder of the power of the Catholic Church which, according to Henry, needed to be destroyed. They also contained over a quarter of all the land in England and so a huge amount of wealth then went straight to Henry. This not only came from the land and its revenue but the vast amounts of silver and gold that the church had owned for centuries. This was not liked by other landowners and the nobility as the crown already owned a lot of land. However, the closing of the monasteries also meant the loss of a large amount of charity which the poor people of society relied upon. This also left a lot of monastic servants without employment. This, therefore created unrest in all areas of society and was a perfect backdrop for rebellion. Particularly in the north of England where the Catholic Faith remained strongest. The dissolution was carried out in two part. The first one was the Act of Suppression in 1536 where small monasteries with an income of less than £200 a year were closed. The second followed in 1539, The Suppression Act, where all monasteries were to be closed regardless of size. Some of the land, following the second act, was sold off to families who had sympathised with Henry's break with Rome.

In 1536 the town of Louth was flourishing and rich in wealth and guilds. This can be seen in the church spire which at the time was the tallest building in England and had been funded by the guilds of Louth. The weathervane, made from a bowl from the Battle of Flodden, was a huge sign of loyalty towards Henry VIII. The Battle of Flodden had been England against Scotland in September 1513 as a retaliation against Henry VIII's invasion of France. England emerged victorious with between 10,000 and 17,000 people dying, including James IV of Scotland.

A guild is almost like a club for a trade. Each trade would have its own for example, weavers would all gather together into a guild. A guild looked after you and your family. Being part of one meant that you were skilled in your trade. If you were kicked out of a guild you could no longer trade in that town.

St James had been built in 1515 and was richly decorated with chantry chapels, paintings, plate and candles burning before images of saints.

Less than a month before the King's Commissioner's visited Louth, the Abbot of Louth Park Abbey had been pensioned off and the site given to Lord Burgh. Anything of value was taken for the King. Rumours also spread that the king intended to strip the parish churches of their treasures and close them down.

To add to this, the vicar of Louth, Thomas Kendall, preached a sermon against the changes to the church that the king was making and against the commissioners that were due to visit Louth. This, on top of the current rumours, led to shoemaker Nicholas Melton seizing the keys to the church and a watch being set up to ensure nothing was stolen from the church. He would go on to be known as Captain Cobbler.

On top of this, there was the abolition of the Ten Articles which meant the getting rid of church holidays. In-tern this meant less time off for the ordinary man which was not liked!

Prepared by the gentry, from the demands of the crowds. Several copies are created with the final one being sent to the King on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October.

Dr Hayne's, the bishop's chancellor, is removed from his sick bed at Old Bolingbroke and taken to Horncastle where he is beaten to death with staves after being urged on by the crowd and clergy.

The rising was put down by the Duke of Suffolk who came to Lincoln with 5000 men. He issued pardons to everyone and ordered all weapons to be left at Lincoln, except the 140 that have already been imprisoned. The Duke of Suffolk was the King's best friend and brother-in-law so this highlights the level of threat that the rising was seen to pose. However, unrest rumbled on throughout the year and into 1537.

Nicholas Melton 'captain cobbler' was surrendered by his own men when the Duke visits Louth. Thomas Kendall, the vicar of Louth, was hunted down at Coventry and taken to the tower of London where he was later hung, drawn and quartered at Tyburn.

There were 'batches' of hangings at Lincoln, Horncastle and Louth during March 1537, totalling 32 deaths. The fears of the men of Louth came true over the years following on from the Lincolnshire rising.