

## The break with the Catholic Church

Henry VIII became King in 1509. By this time Tupholme Abbey had been in existence for around 350 years. Although Tupholme itself remained relatively poor, many other monasteries had become extremely rich by this time, and there was sometimes a suspicion that the monks were not as dedicated to monastic life as they claimed. The extent to which this was true is not known for certain, but some people were beginning to question the amount of power that the Pope and the Church had. This was happening in other European countries as well as in Britain.

When Henry first came to the throne he was a good Roman Catholic. His personal argument with the Catholic Church started when he wanted to divorce his first wife Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn. The Catholic Church does not allow divorce, and when the Pope refused his request, Henry decided to break away from Rome and establish the new Church of England with himself at its head. This happened in 1534 and is known as the **Reformation**.

## The dissolution of the monasteries

Between 1536 and 1539 Henry VIII closed all the monasteries and nunneries. He was advised to do this by his main minister Thomas Cromwell. He justified his actions by hastily organising for all religious houses to be inspected. The inspectors were all chosen by Cromwell and they knew what Cromwell and the King wanted to hear. Unsurprisingly they reported back that the monasteries and nunneries were not doing a good job. These reports were often very different to the ones that visiting Bishops were making.



Henry VIII

The smaller monasteries were the first to be closed, and Tupholme Abbey was included in these. It closed in 1536. Not everybody was prepared to go along with the changes that Henry was bringing in and many people came together to protest against them. This group of rebels was called the **Pilgrimage of Grace**, and the protest in Lincolnshire was called the **Lincolnshire Rising**. Some of the those involved were executed for daring to challenge the King's actions.

The closure of the rest of the monasteries followed quickly, with all their lands and wealth passing to the King. This was very useful to Henry because he was short of money at this time. Many of the monastic properties passed to the gentry and aristocracy. This was what happened to Tupholme Abbey when it was granted to Sir Thomas Heneage of Hainton in 1538.

