

Historic Towns & Villages

Grafton Regis

A Royal Village



The Church

The story begins with the Wydville (Woodville) family replacing the Norman Abbey of Grestain as owners in the 13th century. The most famous of the Woodvilles was Elizabeth, who became Edward IV's Queen on their secret marriage in Grafton in 1464. She was the mother of the Princes in the Tower.

Henry VIII loved hunting in Grafton Regis, as he renamed it. He expanded Grafton House, visiting in 1529 with Anne Boleyn when his fateful meeting with Cardinal Wolsey resulted in the Cardinal's downfall and the establishment of the Church of England.

Elizabeth I and James I also visited Grafton with their courts, and Elizabeth leased the house to her most powerful nobles, including her favourites, the Earls of Leicester and Essex. The Grafton Portrait is locally believed to be of Shakespeare.

Other notable people with village connections are Lady Crane who was tenant of the house when it was destroyed by parliamentary forces during the Civil War in 1643; Isabella Sams, the rector's daughter who painted the rural quietness of 19th century Grafton; and Robert FitzRoy, captain of the Beagle and pioneering weather forecaster, who is commemorated in the Church.



Elizabeth Woodville



The Grafton portrait

www.grafton-regis.co.uk