

HAVERING-ATTE-BOWER



The first royal palace

Established early in the seventh century by Sigeberht the Little (King of Essex 617-53). It was a barn-like building of wood: no indication of its location remains.

The second royal palace

The first Pyrgo was built around 946 about one and a half miles east of Havering village, originally as a hunting lodge. Over the following 800 years or so it became the home of a great number of dowager queens of England and other royal persons.

The third royal palace

Built by Edward the Confessor in 1060 (and where he died in January 1066). It was used by many monarchs, notably John, Henry III, Henry VI, Elizabeth and James I, many of whom made significant additions to it. The last sovereign to use it was Charles I on 15th November 1631, after which it fell into decay. Plans of the ground and first floors were drawn up in 1534 by Lord Burghley.

Built mainly of Kentish ragstone it was quarried by neighbouring owners after it ceased being used and notably in 1729 by...

The fourth royal palace

Bower House was built for John Baynes, using stone from the Royal Palace, including an angel bust corbel stone bearing the arms of Edward III. The only royal personage recorded as using Bower House was Mary, consort of George V.

The other building in Havering of special note is the Round House, built in 1792 in the shape of a massive tea caddy (complete with a nob 'handle' on the roof) for William Sheldon.

Some people in the Havering story

Joan, Princess of North Wales, an illegitimate daughter of King John, married Llewelyn the Great in 1206. After her widowhood she retired to Pyrgo, where she had been largely brought up, until her death in 1237.

Isabella of France married Edward II in 1308. In 1318 the royal couple gave feasts at Havering Palace to celebrate the birth of a princess. By 1330 Edward III wanted his pushy mother out of the way and she spent many of her declining years at Pyrgo in 'honourable confinement', where she took the habit of Santa Clara, until her death in 1358.

Isabella of Valois, the second queen of Richard II (whom she married in 1396 when aged 7), was widowed at 10. She was imprisoned at Pyrgo until being repatriated in 1406 and marrying Charles of Angoleme. She died in childbirth in 1409.

Joanna of Navarre, the queen of Henry IV, was accused of witchcraft and died, disgraced, at Pyrgo in 1437. Her ghost was said to haunt the palace.

Elizabeth Widville (Woodville) married Sir John Grey, owner of Pyrgo, who was killed at the Battle of St Albans in 1461. She then married Edward IV, whom she petitioned to restore her first husband's forfeited land in Havering.

Elizabeth of York, queen of Henry VII, died at Pyrgo in 1503, attributed to grief on the death of her eldest son, Prince Arthur.

Richard Cox, Bishop of Ely 1559, and Anthony Cooke of Gidea Hall were tutors to Prince Edward (VI), the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth and Lady Jane Grey (daughter of the house) at Pyrgo between 1544 to 1550.

Edward VI's mother, Jane Seymour, died 10 days after his birth and the baby was taken to the Royal Palace to be wet-nursed. He spent most of his childhood there. He was a finished Greek, Latin and French scholar, a lutenist and amateur astronomer. He became king aged 10. He approved the Book of Common Prayer while in residence at Havering in 1552, but contracted tuberculosis and died the following year.

Elizabeth I, having been brought up largely in Havering, was a frequent visitor. She is reputed to have stayed in the Royal Palace the night before she delivered the 'I have but the body of a weak and feeble woman' speech at Tilbury. Had the Armada reached the English Channel, the Royal Palace had been prepared as a major Command Post.

Dame Anne Tipping (nee Cooke) founded the School in 1724. Rebuilt in 1837 and again in 1891.

Havering Museum is open Wednesday to Friday, 12noon to 5pm and Saturday 11am to 5pm.

Admission charge applies

Havering Museum, The Brewery Gate, 19 – 21 High Street, Romford, RM1 1JU

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