



# Row with Rome

Henry desperately wanted a son to rule after him. Without one, he thought other nobles might try to take the crown once he died.

## Divorce trouble

Catherine and Henry had one surviving child, a daughter called Mary. After nearly 20 years of marriage, Henry decided to divorce Catherine because she was getting too old to have a son, and because he had fallen in love with another woman, Anne Boleyn.

## Pope says no

Henry wanted the Pope to “annul” his marriage to Catherine, which meant to declare it had never existed in the first place. Henry now said that because he



### Did you know?

Henry VIII did have a son, called Henry Fitzroy, when he was young. But the baby's mother was not the Queen, so he could not become King.

*A portrait of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, Henry's chief minister.*



### Key fact

During this time a German monk called Martin Luther set up a new branch of Christianity called “Protestantism”. The spread of the new religion is called the Reformation.



had married his brother's widow, the marriage didn't count in law. Henry's minister Wolsey could not persuade the Pope to agree, so Henry had Wolsey arrested.

## **Taking charge**

Henry appointed two new ministers, Thomas Cromwell and Sir Thomas More. Thomas Cromwell persuaded Henry to make the Church in England break ties with Rome. Once that was arranged, Henry no longer needed the Pope's permission to divorce.

## **Agree or die**

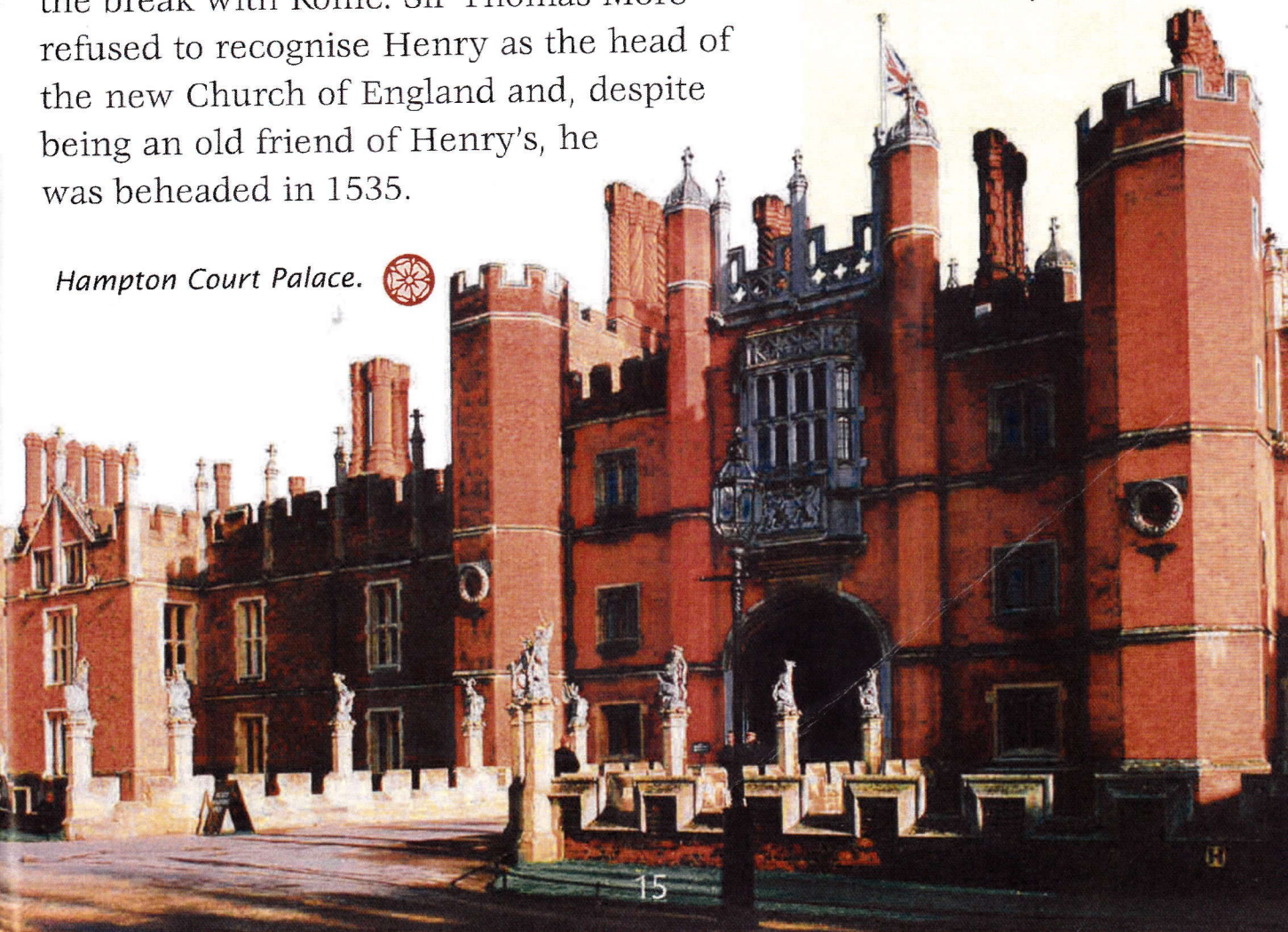
Many English Catholics were very upset by the break with Rome. Sir Thomas More refused to recognise Henry as the head of the new Church of England and, despite being an old friend of Henry's, he was beheaded in 1535.

*Hampton Court Palace.*



## **Go and visit**

Hampton Court, near London, is a fine palace first built by Wolsey. Henry liked it so much that he made Wolsey give it to him as a present.





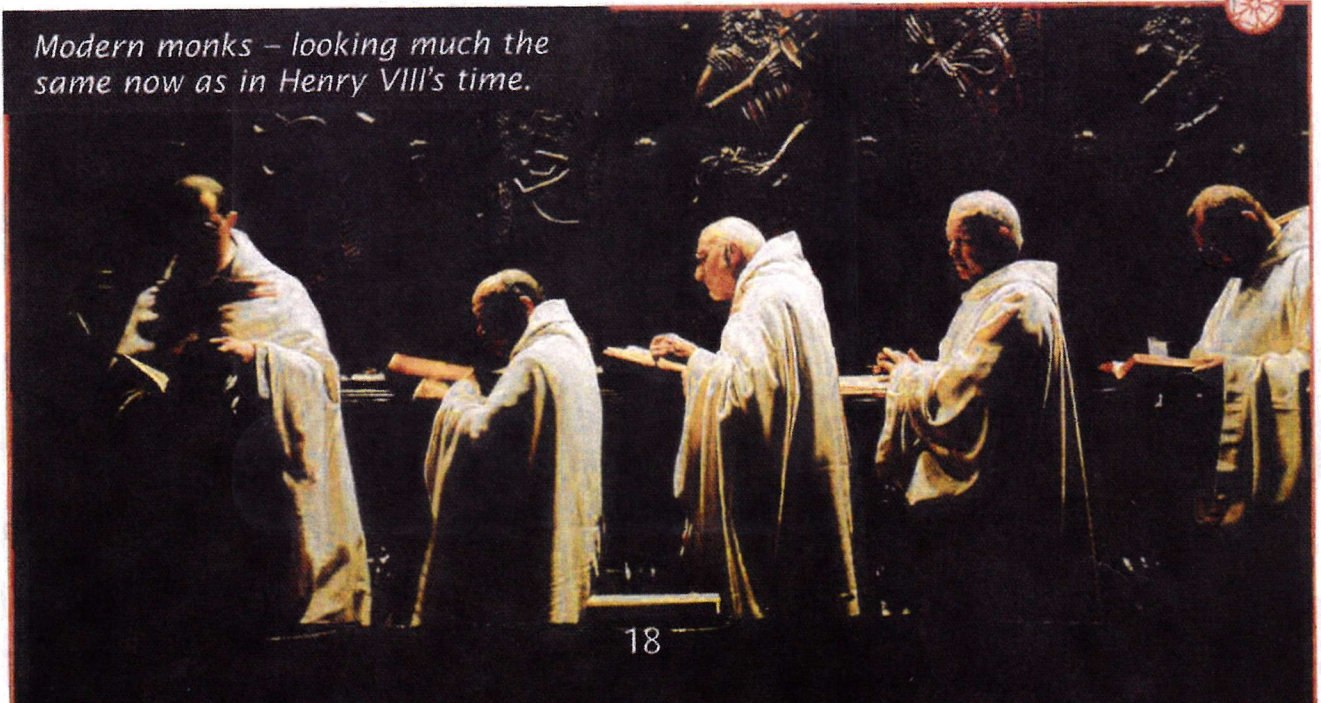
# The end of the monasteries

Henry had all the Roman Catholic monasteries and convents closed down in England and Wales.

## The Dissolution

About 9,000 monks and nuns lived in the monasteries and convents. They followed the orders of the Pope, a link which Henry wanted to destroy. The monasteries also owned valuable farmland, buildings and treasure, which Henry wanted for himself. Henry's minister Thomas Cromwell sent troops to shut the monasteries, and anyone who resisted was imprisoned and sometimes tortured or even executed. The destruction of the monasteries is called the Dissolution.

*Modern monks – looking much the same now as in Henry VIII's time.*







### Did you know?

The Abbot (head monk) of Glastonbury Abbey in Somerset resisted the King's men, so he was hanged. Then his head was displayed over the Abbey gates.



### Go and visit

You can visit the ruins of many monasteries that were closed during the Dissolution, for example, Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire and the ruins at Glastonbury Abbey in Somerset (above).

*A painting of Glastonbury Abbey ruins.*

### Monastery recycling

Most of the old monasteries were sold off. Some were converted into houses. Others were stripped of their treasures and left to crumble. Stones from the buildings were sometimes taken to build new houses nearby. All the monks and nuns were turned out and given pensions (payments) to live on.

### Unpopular people

At the time, monasteries were unpopular with many people and monks were seen as dishonest and badly-behaved. This made it easier for Henry to destroy them.



### Key fact

There were about 850 monasteries in England and Wales before the Dissolution. They were all destroyed during the years 1536–40.