

## MARGARET POLE

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In 1514 the Manor of Warblington passed into the hands of Margaret Pole who had been granted the title of Countess of Salisbury and permitted to succeed to her brother, Edward, Earl of Warwick's estates in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Essex.



Margaret Pole was the last of the surviving members of the Royal House of Plantagenet and, as such, dangerously close to the throne of England. Her father, the Duke of Clarence, had been murdered by his brother Edward IV and her brother had been put to death by Henry VII, probably because King Ferdinand of Spain had refused his daughter, Catherine of Aragon, to marry the Prince of Wales while this Plantagenet Prince lived to challenge the Tudor claim to the throne.

Catherine of Aragon afterwards believed that her own unhappiness in failing to bear a living son had come as a judgement because her marriage had been made in blood. She behaved with great compassion towards the murdered man's sister, an affection which Margaret Pole repaid with love and staunch support.

Men like Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher publicly refused to admit the King's right to such a title and died for their stubbornness. Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, was firm in her opposition to this new regime. Her lack of loyalty soon made her an enemy of the King and his new Queen. The Royal Commissioners took the Princess Mary from the Countess's care, and Margaret retired to Warblington. Margaret possibly thought that, in this quiet part of Hampshire, she would be far from the Royal displeasure and be allowed to practise her Catholic faith in peace. However, such thoughts were soon cut short due to the activities of her youngest son, Reginald Pole. Reginald wrote some material denouncing the King's break with Rome. He called him 'wanton, a lecher, an adulterer and a heretic....'. This provoked Henry to an intense hatred which embraced the whole Pole family. King Henry tried to have Reginald assassinated but he was in Italy and evaded the King's reach. Matters were made worse when Reginald was made a Cardinal. Reginald's brother, Lord Montagu, was executed for seeking absolution from Rome and his son Henry, still a child, was imprisoned in the Tower, as was Edward Courtney, son of Lord Exeter. (The purge had begun).

Margaret was arrested at Warblington on 12th November, 1538. She was taken to Cowdray Park and cross-examined by Fitzwilliam, Earl of Southampton and Goodrich, Bishop of Ely. No treason was proved against her. The Castle at Warblington was searched, and some Bulls granted by the Bishop of Rome were found. Also, some vestments, depicting the Five Wounds of Christ, were found. Henry declared that this connected Margaret Pole with the 'Pilgrimage of Grace'. It was also stated that she refused to allow her tenants to have the New Testament in English and corresponded with her son the Cardinal. Parliament passed an Act of Attainder on June 28th, 1539 and Margaret was removed to the Tower, where she was imprisoned until her death two years later.