

## Henry VIII at Ampt Hill

The area which is now Ampt Hill Park can be traced back to 1086, when it was part of the manor of Ampt Hill held by the d'Albini family. In the 15th century Ampt Hill Manor was owned by John Cornwall, who built 'Ampt Hill Castle', a splendid manor house at the top of the Greensand Ridge.

*"... Standing Stately on a hille, with four or five faire towers of stone in the inner ward"*

The house and its gardens were set in a landscape of trees and grassland ideal for hunting, which was undoubtedly one of the reasons Henry VIII so enjoyed the 'grett park of Ampt Hill' in the 16th century.



*"I and my people are well ever since we came to Ampt Hill on Saturday last, in marvellous good health and clearness of air"*

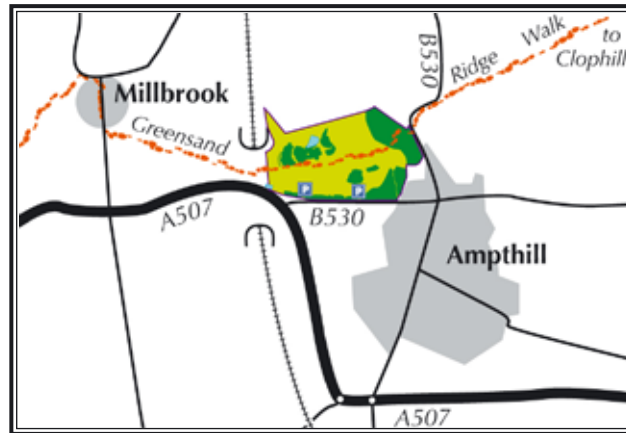
In 1532 Henry sent his first wife, Katherine of Aragon, to live at Ampt Hill for a year while their marriage was annulled. Katherine was then moved to Buckden and Henry returned to Ampt Hill with his new wife, Anne Boleyn, to expand the park. His new 'lodge' was probably built where Ampt Hill Park House stands today, and 'Ampt Hill Castle' slowly fell to ruins on the ridge. Katherine's Cross marks the site where today you can enjoy a view fit for royalty.



Henry VIII (top)  
Katherine of Aragon (middle)  
and Anne Boleyn (below)



## How to get to Ampt Hill Park



**By Car:** There are two car parks off the B530 (Woburn Street) at OS Grid TL024382 and TL028382

**Using Public Transport:** The nearest railway station is Flitwick, on the London-Bedford line. Buses run from Flitwick to Ampt Hill. Several Stagecoach services stop in Ampt Hill town, the closest stopping on Bedford Street, less than 10 minutes walk from Ampt Hill Park. For further details please contact the Public Transport Travel-line on 0870 6082608, or Beds County Council Bus & Coach Service on 01234 228337

**On Foot:** The park lies on the route of several public rights-of-way and the *Greensand Ridge Walk*. For more information about the walk contact Beds County Council on 01234 363222

Ampt Hill Park is owned and managed by Ampt Hill Town Council, assisted by the Greensand Trust. If you have any queries about the management of the Park, or would like to organise an event or activity here, please contact

Ampt Hill Town Council, 66 Dunstable Street,  
Ampt Hill, MK45 2JS. Tel: 01525 404355  
[www.ampthilltowncouncil.org.uk](http://www.ampthilltowncouncil.org.uk)



This leaflet was funded by Grantscape and Mid Beds District Council.

welcome to *Great*  
*Ampt Hill Park*  
your historic landscape



## it's a Great Park...

Amphill Park is much more than a pleasant place to visit, it's a nationally important historic site. Henry VIII hunted here almost 500 years ago, and the parkland landscape we enjoy today was created by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown in the 18th century.

### Geology

Amphill Park owes its existence to a shallow sea that flooded this part of Bedfordshire in the Cretaceous period, about 115 million years ago. Over time the sandy sea floor became sandstone that resisted erosion to stand high above the clays that lie to either side of the Greensand Ridge. The infertile, free-draining soils of the Ridge make poor farmland; in the Middle Ages the area was enclosed as a deer park, a landscape of trees and grassland managed for the pleasure of the hunt. **The sandy soils of the Greensand are easily damaged by heavy use; please try to avoid eroded areas.**

### Wildlife

The Park is home to a variety of interesting and important wildlife. Its veteran trees, many planted by Capability Brown, some even older, are a valuable part of its heritage and support many other organisms including fungi, insects and bats. Distinctive dry grassland communities cover the acidic sandy soils on the top of the Ridge, while at the bottom of the slopes 'wet flushes' are found where water seeps from the base of the Ridge. These rushy areas support unusual species such as ivy-leaved water-crowfoot.

### Management

The landscape of Amphill Park was created over many centuries by people and their animals. Livestock grazing prevents trees growing in grassland; when grazing ceased here, scrub and trees invaded the grassland, obscuring the beautiful vistas for which Capability Brown was famous. To maintain the balance between trees and grassland we must re-instate grazing where possible and clear trees and scrub from certain areas.

