THE CHRONICLES OF THE DISSOLUTION
Piety, Plunder and Protest

A GRAPHIC ARTS PROJECT
In partnership with The National Archives
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Introduction

2017 marks the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. In 1517, Martin Luther famously nailed his 95 Theses to a church door in Wittenberg, Germany. This act of defiance can be seen to herald the process of change in religious practice across Europe.

Henry VIII’s dissolution of the monasteries took place as part of the Reformation in England. It resulted in the plunder of church wealth and the destruction of monasteries and their communities.

‘Chronicles of the Dissolution – Piety, Plunder and Protest’ is a graphic arts project illustrated by eight students who spent a week at The National Archives in Kew illustrating their interpretations of Early Modern records from the State Papers of Henry VIII. The tales, written by Carol Adlam, are told through the eyes of individual characters, from the lowliest carpenter to the ruthless commissioner.

Together they give us a unique insight into the consequences which followed dissolution as a result of Henry VIII’s determination to reform the English Church.

Ela Kaczmarska
Education Officer
The National Archives
Summertime. Mid-late 1530's, in an average town in England.
No more taxes! Get rid of the sponging, thieving monks!
Evil sorcerer scum! Posing as holy men with their sick superstitions,
superfluous ceremonies, slanderous juggling and counterfeit miracles!
Fleecing you, the people, for a glimpse of an old cow bone!

Telling you it's St Mary's Girdle, or St Bridget's elbow!
The coals that St Lawrence was toasted with!
The parings of St Edmund's nails! St Thomas of Canterbury's penknife!
A bell to wear upon the head to dispel a headache!

Liars! Hypocrites!

Truth to tell, the nuns are all sultry sex slaves,
salivating lasciviously -
Ah, the truth, the truth! Tell us, troll, what's Cromwell paying you and all your mates to lurk in every village square?

I am the agent of the Vicar General! I speak the truth.

It's great to be back here in

Nottingham
- Nottingham! So vibey! So what'll it be today, Nottingham? A couple of our good King's tunes?

Pastime with good company
I love and shall 'till I die

No? A spot of Green Groweth the Holly? ... It Is to Me a Right Great Joy? ... O My Hart?

Noooooo!

You're right, those tunes of Henry's are, what - at least ten years out of date. But wait! I have the very thing -
Crim, Cram, and Rich!

With the three L's and their like

Layton, Leigh, London!

Canny chorus! We'll come back to that!

resist

As some men teach
God them amend
And that Aske may
Without a delay
Here make a stay
And well to end
But wait, wait! I have it now - the last few lines of that smash hit by our very own King Henry:

Company with honesty
Is virtue, vice to flee.
Company is good and ill,
But every man has his free will.
a soldier knocks him unconscious
THE MAID'S TALE
ILLUSTRATED BY SHANNON BOWIE-MANGAN
December 1532, Windsor Palace

Elizabeth Bacon (The Maid of Kent) - a young woman who is famous for her religious visions - is with her mentor Dr. Bevry. They are outside Henry VIII's bedchamber.

Go in, go in, the door's ajar!

But -

You must I am your father in God, and I know best.
You bore me, Cromwell, with your ifs and buts.
I must marry Anne, or -

My King! My King! I am compelled!
The heavenly voices speak in me!

Well, well, if it isn't the Maid of Kent! St Sepulchre's nun!
Let her be, Cromwell. I saw her twice before.
Let's hear what she has to say now.
Heaven's door lies open, Prince, its windows all ablaze.

You witch...go...

NO

Cromwell

Listen hard, poor Prince. Your ears will hear the call, the cries of Virgin Mary, mother of us all.

but you - you crawl in darkness, tormented by your lust. Passion drives you onwards, but all too soon to dust your body falls.

ARCH!

How is it possible, Cromwell, that her voice seems to come from her stomach so? Look, her lips are barely moving.
Your sight is short, your senses dim.
You throw away your soul upon a whim.
Marry Boleyn, and in but half a year
You'll be six feet down, with all of hell to fear.
Enough! Get rid of this versifying witch!
Most lying and false nun! Confess!

I confess that when I said the devil did spit in my face, and it was black as soot and stinking as carrion, it was a fabrication!

Confess, devil's bastard!

I confess that I did encourage the Maid of Kent to say such things! It was not her doing.

No, no - it is I who am the cause of all this mischief. I fooled Wolsey then, and now Thomas More.

And you, treacherous doublehoods? Did you not follow the Maid and her ghostly father you see here?
If any of us heard or believed the said false revelations, we be right pensive and inwardly sorry.

London Bridge, 13 April 1534. Thomas More is going to Parliament.

So, puss, off to Parliament today, to swear allegiance to The Act of Succession! All for his new Queen, more like. Queen Anne - hah!

The Maid of Kent... I saw her with my own eyes when she was just a serving girl. She was right, so many times. I wasn't the only one who believed her, you know. Warham, Fisher of Rochester, the brothers of Syon, Wolsey, and even Henry himself!
When she spoke her visions, her voice was so unlike hers.
Like a puppet, you know.

No heavenly voice will ventriloquize you today, dear lady.

But wait! Of course! You have a message for me still.
Qui tacet consentire videtur!

I shall not say a word! They cannot know my mind
if I do not speak it - and silence means consent, in law!

Oh, Maid! So silent, now when we need you most?
Tell me, what will become of me?

You speak true, as ever, my dear!

On 1 July 1535 Thomas More was charged with high treason
for refusing to acknowledge the Act of Supremacy. His defence
was to remain silent. He was executed 5 days later.
London, The Rolls (The office of Thomas Cromwell)

But I must see him, I tell you! He knows me!

Oy, there's a queue here you know!

The Rolls

Cheeky, innit.

Well, I hear that many of my brothers get pensions, or openings as chaplains, or clerks. And at the very least, four shillings and a priest's robe!

Sister, we also need to see Master Cromwell. So many of us have been turfed out, left with nothing!

Ah, but the women? Have you considered that nuns get nothing at all? Tell me, brother, why should that be?

These rags? And not every man—

The Lord moves in mysterious ways.

Tell Master Cromwell Margot Vernon is here. I am Priress of Little Marlow nunnery, and was his son's teacher.

Yes, and I'm the Maid of Kent!
Inside the shop of Bestyan the Jeweller.

I hear, sir, that you do accept ... certain goods. They say that you're the best.

I have no time, sir - just look.

Well, you're better off with me than the goldsmith, that's for sure. Last week he pulled the wool over the eyes of the Abbot of Fountains - the goldsmith told him his rubies were garnets. A very fool and miserable idiot! But I see you are different, more intelligent, as well as beautiful.

I'm always happy to take a look for a sister in God.

Hmm and where did you come by this, you say?

Oh I ... found it. Near Little Marlow. Just lying in the road.

Sadly, sister, these are just zircons, not emeralds. Practically worthless! And as for this old belt -

A Holy relic - Saint Mary's Girdle!
I've seen ten of these this week.

But don't despair, sister - I'm sure we can come to a deal.

Thanks be to God!

Little Marlow Abbey. The Cell of MARGARET VERNON, Prioress.

Are you writing to Master Cromwell, mother?

It's not my fault I'm here! It's so unfair. Just because I turned 25 last month I can't leave with all the others! They can do what they like! They can get married -

I would be, foolish girl, if only you didn't keep interrupting!

They cannot! The vow of chastity is broken only on the King's death! And don't think that the others aren't struggling.

And that Commissioner was so horrible, mother! What malice and grudge he bore against us, calling us spoilers and wasters! And what a lech! He was, like, totally obsessed! He kept asking me how many monks I'd - you know - done it with. None, I said, and then -

Layton and the others are gone, now. Try not to dwell.

I'm sure Master Cromwell will see us right. I gave him my word that I would embezzle nothing, but leave the house as wealthy as I could, and so I will! After all, we have the Emerald plate and the Girdle of St Mary. In fact, I shall check on them now -
No! — no need, mother. I dusted them only yesterday.

So the Abbot of Fountains gets one hundred pounds a year.
Dartford Prioress — Joan Vane, 100 marks. Re: Sian — the Abbess
Agnes Jordan is to get 200 pounds. Oh, and I have a letter here
from one Margaret Vernon, my lord, Prioress of Little Marlow nunnery.

Vernon, you say?

I have tried to see you, but am kept back by your men, she says.

She seeks your help to some respectable living for herself.
Could she be transferred to Malling in Kent, she says.

yours faithfully,
M. Vernon.

Vernon! Of course! My boy Gregory's teacher!
Yes, yes, transfer her somewhere else! Is it just for herself she asks?
She refers in passing to a 'poor maiden' who is with her, but makes no case for her.

Give Vernon Mallings Abbey, and a pension of £40 a year.

Nuns under the age of 24 were permitted to abandon religious life. For those older than 24, however, there were few opportunities to earn a living, and they were unable to marry since their vow of celibacy was still in force. While monks may have had opportunities to work as private tutors, chaplains, clerks, and the like, little is known of what became of nuns that were released, although some records of pensions for both monks and nuns do exist. It is estimated that a minimum of 1,800 clergy were left with no visible means of support after the Dissolution of the Monasteries.
28 September 1536. Hexham Abbey, Northumberland.

Think of the many who resist! All men of peace. The Swaleford nuns, the Aylesford Friar! so meek, yet they defend our Queen against the King, - a herd of wild beasts, the King's men say.

I can't! I am a man of faith, not -

The King's men -

- sent out to spy, repress, redress, reform, extirp, correct, restrain, amend as Layton says - that pestilent pug - it's all for increased virtue in the church!
We've heard the tales – what Layton and his friends do write in that compendium of theirs, that book so full of spite, and sin, and hate – where all monks are per volunt, poll. sodomites –

You what?

Load of rubbish - mate - to you and me

- we sleep with anything that moves, you know the nuns as well, all peperit ex saluto

That's ridiculous

Like rabbits breeding every chance we get – and all is true, 'cos Layton says it's so. And now he's taken it to parliament. Our shame so public, so clear for all to see –
The bells! They're here! Make haste, make haste!

Keep still, and let me do you up like so—and there, we're done! You stand in harness, brother.

I never thought this day would come to pass.
On the tower of Hexham Abbey. The Abbot and his men watch as Cromwell’s commissioners Thomas Legh and Richard Layton approach.

You’ve heard the talk: while many houses fall yet some lie low. In Louth the vicar there holds out.

I know. While Aske, the lawyer, stirs it up. But look, this crowd does not seem pleased at all.

It’s like a town at war.
You shall not have this house of God!

Yield! You must do so.

The King says not.

The King decrees –


Here is the confirmation of our house
With the royal Seal –

- King Henry’s seal?

The same.
He gave it but a year ago. The house is ours, he said.
And now he contradicts his own decree.

We shall all die before you take our lands,
our goods, or house.

Is this how you respond?

It is, in full. And now we march, for God.
A month later. Somewhere in the woods of Northumberland.

My cousin has come from Tyburn Tree today. Weber, she says, was brave. Reynolds of Syon Abbey too, and Lawrence of Bevall. Cromwell asked them one more time - are you content, says he, to take the King as Supreme Head on Earth of the Church of England?

They all said no.

The King’s men chocked them half the way to death, and then relieved them from the noose, let fall their kicking, anguish’d flesh to God’s sweet ground, attached their limbs to ropes, and then, the ropes to horses, one of whom faced North, the others - South, and East, and West.

Their body parts now hang around the city.
THE REBEL’S TALE
ILLUSTRATED BY MATTHEW LEE
I can’t stand this any longer! Haven’t you heard there’s another uprising in the North? 40,000 men have gathered. Just days after all that trouble in Louth!

40,000?

At least, blast it!

But, your majesty, your brave men dealt with Louth; surely they will do the same here.
This is different! This one's not some peasant rabble led by a vicar and a shoemaker, Captain Cobbler! This time it's the lords and nobles - all sworn to me, the traitors - and at their head a lawyer, one Robert Ask, Esquire. But I've sent Norfolk to deal with it - he'll not spare them.

Aske? Robert Ask? The lawyer? But...
Speak up, sweet! But, what?

He is my cousin. An honourable man, and honest -

Your cousin, you say?
Yes, and on my bended knee, I plead, my Lord. Robert is a good, good man. Could not these rebellions be God’s punishment, my Lord, for overstepping the mark? If Robert leads them, it is a true cause!

A true cause? Silence! Think on what happened to your predecessor, wretch! Never mention his name again!

Holbein! Are my eyes really that close together... and what do you think you’re doing, pointing me so... fat?

You see far, my lord. You are grand. Mighty.
Doncaster, 6 December 1536. The Duke of Norfolk and Richard Layton are meeting with the leader of the rebellion, Robert Aske.

The King has asked me here to treat with you, Mister Aske. This uprising must stop.

We wish no bloodshed, merely to present our Articles.
One, the suppressions must cease.
Two, Cromwell must be expelled.
Three, the monasteries must be re-established.
Four, the King must yield to the Pope’s authority.
The King is Supreme Head of the Church of England, you whelp. You dare.

We have 40,000 men - more than your soldiers combined. We've taken York, Hull, Pontefract and Doncaster.

You insolent!
Of course, of course. By the way, the King’s new wife, the Queen Consort – your cousin, I believe – asks after you.

Joan? I have not seen her for so long. Is she well?
Come to London, my friend, and see her yourself.

The King offers all concerned an unconditional pardon.
I will come.
Poore commons walke
For the Church sake.
Alack, alack!

Do tongue can tell
To the poor shall make.
For clear it is,
The decay of this.

At time of need,
Both ale and bread.
And succor great.
In all distress,

Where that we were
In trouble and care.
And well entreat
Of our substance.
Aske met with Henry in London and negotiated a deal. However, fighting then broke out again in Yorkshire, and Aske was arrested and charged with high treason. Aske was hung in chains from the battlements of York Castle. The ringleaders of the Pilgrimage of Grace were arrested and executed.

After this, in the Spring of 1537, the great monasteries surrendered one by one, starting with Furness Abbey.
Can’t believe they’re taking this old beauty down. It’s stood here five hundred years - what a waste. All that Quarri limestone. Those tiles! Such craftsmanship, such artistry! But since Furness Abbey caved last year it’s just been a matter of time.

Mmm, I know how you feel, mate.

It’s no easy job. The church is larger than we thought - look.
It's beyond you, then? And yet you have brought down so many houses already -

I never said I couldn't do it. You see, the scaffolds are in place already. But I will more men, and the means to pay them -

There is no shortage of men, nor means.

And not locals— I need practiced hands! Experts. Men from London. Seventeen at least. Two more carpenters, two smiths, two plumbers, one furnace — man to melt the lead, and nine labourers. And we'll need straw — lots of it — to cushion the stones when they fall. Horses and carts to take the stone away.

It shall be so. And quickly — we cannot have this constant looting. There is stealing nightly. Comers and goers daily -

I heard they stole glass out of the windows last night.

Next they will bear away doors, and pluck down ceilings!
Very well, we start on Friday. We shall cut the wall behind the high altar, and then the foundations of the four great pillars. We shall put in props and then we will bring the whole thing down by burning the props with fire or powder.

But it's well paid, there's no denying that. And those monks are all corrupt, aren't they. Who appointed them to lord it over us?

- oops!

- Watch out!

- What?!

An omen from above, master engineer!
Morning. RICHARD LAYTON's lodgings in LEWES.
He is with a clerk, and his servant, BARTELOT.

Dictation: We have visited Battle, Bath and Lewes. At Battle the abbot is the arrantest church that ever I see - a beetle and buzzard - a black sort of monk, past amendment, I am sorry to say.

At Bath we found the monks more corrupt than any others in vices -

- with both sexes.

The place is a very stews, and unnatural crimes are present both there and at Lewes -
- where I found corruption of both kinds - and what is worse, treason. The subprior confessed treason to me. I made him put his name to it, and confess that the prior knew of it too! That done, I then accused him of the further crime of concealing treason. I called him heinous traitor in all the worst names I could devise -

- he all the time kneeling and begging me not to tell you of this. But I regarded his words -

- but small.
'but smally. Lewes Abbey is now being brought down. Partinari the engineer is overseeing. I send you the goods I have taken from there. Enclosed — vincula S. Petri, which women put about them at the time of their delivery.

I send you also a great comb called Mary Magdalene’s comb —

The prior of Bath sends you these Irish hawks. No hardier hawks can be.'
Get down and cover your ears!

BOOM!
Come on, Father. Let's get you home. I'll take you on my cart.
The Abbot’s house, now occupied by Gregory Cromwell (Thomas Cromwell’s son), and Elizabeth Seymour (Jane Seymour’s sister). They are recently married.

Your father was so generous in agreeing to divide Sussex between himself and the Duke of Norfolk and in giving us this wonderful house! Oh, Greg, I love it here!

No idea - hang on.

I know - and everyone's moving here! The Dacres, Gage, Gainsforth, Shelley, and Bellingham - all our friends -

So much merrymaking to be had!

Can I help you, my good man?

I - no. We’re just passing through.

Two months later GREGORY CROMWELL and Elizabeth SEYMOUR fled Lewes after an outbreak of plague nearby. They moved to a former convent called the Motte, four miles out of Lewes.
THE CARPENTER'S TALE
ILLUSTRATED BY SAM CUNNINGHAM
AND ISOBEL HARTNETT
Boxley Abbey, 7 February 1538.

What do you mean, old fool, that you know nothing of these engines and old wire at the back here? These old, rotten sticks?

The Roade of Grace has not been moved for many years. Not since it was delivered to us, a miracle, on the back of a horse –

- a whore, you say?

A horse, my lord, a riderless horse, that ran up to the door and thence to this pillar – A miracle, I tell you! The divine hand working! The King himself came here some thirty years ago, when he was but a youth, and gave us six shillings to see it! And you dare lay hands on it –
and yet I am not the first, buzzard. Some cunning carpenter has been here before me!

'Ooo, bishop, I am sore thirsty! Get me a gottle o' gear!'

'Blasphemer! Such impiety!'

No! It is you who blaspheme! Peddling this false, crafty and subtle handling, to the dishonour of God, and illusion of the people!

And why these blasted flowers everywhere?

Here at Boxley the people pay their rent in flowers.
You know, I made the Roode of Grace!
Oh yes, back in the day. The French took me as a Prisoner-of-War. I was crammed in with thirty others into a stinking hole. The guards laughed at us, and said, pay us a ransom and you're free!

Well, I said I'll make you something the like of which you've never seen before. A living, breathing, thing, an automaton to match the finest in Europe –

What did you do?

A what?
Like a big puppet. With wires and wood and all. So they let me out, and gave me wood, and I whistled and fettled away. And when they saw it, they were so amazed they let me go, with it -

So I tied it to the back of a cart and off we go. I got to somewhere near Rochester when I was all of a sudden terrible thirsty. The horse was plodding along on its own in the right direction, so I thought, I'll just pop in here to grab a quick half -

A likely story!

- and when I came out, blow me down if the horse hadn't disappeared, with the Roode and all!

People of London, behold this abomination, the Roode of Grace! We bring it here so that you may be disabused of idolatry, and to show you how the monks of Boxley did get great riches! How the monks did fatten their purses and lighten yours!
But do its eyes roll, granddad?

Hush -

Observe the artifice!

The great blasphemy in the name of God!

Behold the foaming pestilence that comes from the false idol!
Let it be known that he who made this false idol was a great sinner!

My granddad’s not a sinner! He’s a carpenter!

No! Be quiet!
Look, dear, Reginald says here that the Abbot of Glastonbury has not been spreading rumours about the King after all.


Now, would that be the same Reginald Pole, son of the Countess of Salisbury, my dear? The same who took himself off to France, unable to support the King's divorce? Your second cousin once removed – if we overlook your unfortunate illegitimacy?

The King himself overlooks it, and calls me uncle.

The tangled webs of these Plantagenets! So confusing!

As if we're ever allowed to forget it! Lord, the tangled webs of these Plantagenets!

But listen! Reggie says 'I have examined him to the utterest, and can find no fault in him at all'. After all, the Abbot's just an old man, dear, and not in the best of health –

Reggie says! Reggie – Cardinal Reginald Pole no less – is not to be trusted! He assisted the Pilgrimage of Grace, for goodness' sake! This will not do. The abbot is a slanderous old goat. He says you are untrue to Henry – you cannot let this stand.

I shall speak to Henry, dear.
GLASTONBURY, 19 September 1539.

The House of the Abbot of Glastonbury, Richard Whiting.
Well, old man, we’ve been surveying your estate today. Truly it is the godliest house in all the land. Four parks! Four manor houses! A great lake filled with great pike, bream, and perch.

And now we come to taste your hospitality.

Hmm, what have we here? Books? What sort of books can they be, old man??

Not your kind of books.

Let’s see! Aha! Some pardons, and some papal bulls!

What filth is this—a treatise against the King’s Divorce from Queen Katharine!

They are holy books. Not your new fangylies!
The counterfeit life of Thomas Beckett!

How full you are of envy, malice and strife, Priest Layton.
So I heard all about it from my cousin. The Crafty Cardinal Whiting - Glastonbury himself - plotted with the Abbot of Reading - and was it the Prior of Colchester? - with John Onyon, Bachelor Gyles, the Blynde Harper of Grey Friars, that Savoy priest Master Manchester, Dr Holyman, Roger London, John Rugg.

- truly, what a ragman's roll of old rotten monks, rusty friars, and pockeyed priests!

Anyway it was all a huge conspiracy! Glastonbury gave pestilent and cankered counsel to overthrow the prince.

- a prince most puissant!
They say they found gold and plate the old Abbot had hid in the walls, vaults, and other secret places!

What a beggarly, monkish merchant Whining was! Even though the King had given him 7,000 marks a year!
We drew him through the town upon a hurdle and executed him on the Tor Hill. He took his death patiently, asking pardon of God and the King for his offenses.

What they were, he did not say.

And now his body is divided. One quarter stands at Wells, another at Bath, at Ilchester and Bridgewater the rest - and here's his head upon the Abbey gate.

Lord Lisle was arrested on charges of conspiracy in 1540, as part of charges laid against a number of Plantagenets in France, who were accused of plotting Henry’s downfall. Lisle was kept in the Tower of London for two years and then released. He died on his journey home.

In 1534 Glastonbury Abbey signed the Act of Supremacy, and the Abbot was told that the Abbey was safe from dissolution. But by 1539 it was a notable exception. Glastonbury Abbey was dissolved as part of the 1539 Act for the Dissolution of the Greater Monasteries.
THE COMMISSIONER’S TALE

ILLUSTRATED BY CAROL ADLAM, SEAN CUNNINGHAM, ROSIE MORRIS AND MARIANNE WILSON
I know I should be there, Bartelot, at the King's marriage to Catherine Howard. But I told him I was ill.
28 July 1540. Rectory of Harrow-on-the-Hill, the home of Richard Layton.

Are you ill, my lord?

We've had some good times, though, haven't we?

Ah, how you have served me, Bartelott! In truth, I have a heavy heart today.
Remember that time we went to Langdon? When I bashed down the abbot's door in the middle of the night with a pole-axe?

Very clearly, my lord.

Hoh! I dashed it to pieces! And that little dog of his, that would not stop barking. So in I go, Bartelot, pole-axe raised, for I know the abbot is a desperate knave, and it is the middle of the night, you see - when all of a sudden out rushes his whore, alias his gentlewoman, and the tender damsel rushes straight into your arms out the back!

Eight days for her in a cage in Dover, if I remember right. Happy days, Bartelot.

Happy days, my lord.
Oh, and the worst of them!
Those canons at Newark...

I don't recall, sir. What they did...

Well, truth be told, nothing much, so I accused them of sodomy and adultery, and from then went on to smaller things to see what I could find. They were the most obstinate canons that ever I knew!

But some of them really were up to no good!
Remember Syon? The Bishop fixing up his cell for his wenches to pass to and fro at night!
Remember the locksmith as he confessed to making keys... Taking out bars in the window...

Oh yes! Those letters from a nun to him — he told her that if she submitted her body to him during confession it would not count.
What untruth and dissimulation we found!
What falsehood, what bribery, spoil and ravine with crafty colours of bargains!
And do you recall that time in '35 at Canterbury
when I almost burnt to death in my bed?

Oh yes, sir, like it was yesterday.

Some fool servant must have placed a candle too near the rushes. Whoosh!
That was nearly the end of me. Imagine!

Imagine that, my lord.
Brrr! I feel someone stepping on my grave. So much death.
I feel Cromwell's spirit here. He loved hawks so. I always made sure to make him feel at home. You shall have twenty beds in the town, I would write, and a dozen more besides in the parsonage. I sent him partridges, freshly killed.
I was always his most assured poor priest—Cromwell’s alter ego. Now, my lord? Now.
And now Cromwell himself is in the Tower. Mercy, mercy, mercy! He cries.

Thomas Cromwell was executed at the Tower of London on 28 July 1540. By some accounts, this was also the day of Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine Howard.

Richard Layton continued to have a successful career in Henry's administration. In 1543 he was appointed Ambassador to Paris. In June of 1544 he died of unknown causes in Brussels.
## Key dates of the dissolution

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<td>April 1533</td>
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<td>Thomas More is executed</td>
<td>July 1535</td>
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<td>Cromwell appointed as the king's vicegerent</td>
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<td>Valor Ecclesiasticus and start of the visitation of the monasteries</td>
<td>1535</td>
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<td>Act to dissolve the lesser monasteries</td>
<td>Feb 1536</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louth Rebellion and the Pilgrimage of Grace</td>
<td>Oct 1536</td>
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<td>Execution of Anne Boleyn</td>
<td>May 1536</td>
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<td>Henry marries Jane Seymour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Act for the Dissolution of the greater monasteries</td>
<td>1539</td>
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<tr>
<td>Execution of Thomas Cromwell</td>
<td>July 1540</td>
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References

All of the stories within this book were inspired by documents held by The National Archives. The documents are open to the public and can be found through The National Archives catalogue using the following document references:

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Key:

SP = State Paper
KB = King’s Bench
C = Chancery
E = Exchequer
MP = Maps and Plans
Script: Carol Adlam
Illustrators: Saffiya Abdul-Mujib
            Shannon Bowie-Mangan
            Agna Chunbang
            Sam Cunningham
            Isobel Hartnett
            Robyn King
            Matthew Lee
            Hema Rajput
Producer: Ela Kaczmarska
Design: Rosie Morris

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Marianne Wilson
"I WAS ALWAYS HIS MOST ASSURED POOR PRIEST – Cromwell’s alter ego, I"

In the summer of 2017, eight students arrived at the National Archives to embark upon a project which would become this book. Each a talented artist, aged between 17-20, they were given stories of the Dissolution of the Monasteries to illustrate, based on historical records held within the archives.

Written by Carol Adlam, each story tells the tale of a real event from the Dissolution, through the experiences of the people who would have been there. From the lowliest builder to the Abbot of Lewes Abbey, the tales show the wide ranging effects of Henry VIII’s determination to dismantle the existing Catholic church in the formation of the Church of England.

Each student could illustrate their tale in their own style, using any medium they desired. These tales are now presented in this graphic novel to bring you the story of The Chronicles of the Dissolution.