

## Salacious Slander in 1572

Ewelme News, July-Aug 2022

Deposition 1572 Jane Sparrowhawk versus Joyce Curtys

The media is often rife with sensational defamation and deposition cases concerning the rich and famous. Ewelme had its own defamation case on 9th February 1572 with a deposition brought before the Oxford Church Courts. (Church Courts established in 1076, abolished in 1641, would try morality matters).

*“Substance: Jane Sparrowhawk had cited Joyce Curtys, one of the Queen’s tenants in Ewelme, for saying in the presence of many others, both men and women, that she had invited her into her house to earn a half share in a French crown from two gentlemen who wanted to have to do carnally with a woman. Jane would keep the other half. If Joyce refused Jane would go to that old fool Agnes Heron to see if she would do it. Joyce had told Agnes this when she came to fetch water from the brook at the Queen’s pond by the side of the Manor where Agnes was doing her washing.”*



Ewelme ‘Queen’s Pond’ in 20218

To clear her good name of Joyce’s salacious slander, Jane Sparrowhawk provided witnesses. Sixty years old Agnes Heron! Robert Banister 80, and Anne and Thomas Wyllys 60. Hopefully, Joyce was formally admonished. In 1572 Ewelme belonged to the Crown, and Queen Elizabeth I sometimes stayed in the Palace. It is interesting to note that the pool was called ‘the Queen’s pond’ – challenging the implausible fable of Kings Pool being named after her father Henry VIII for bathing his ulcerous legs in it! Thus, when James I succeeded Elizabeth in 1603 the pond became King Pond again.

*Ewelme Village Archive*

