



SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL

A PLACE FOR ALL PEOPLE

The Story of the Shrewsburys in Sheffield

Hello, my name is Talbot and I am a Talbot hunting dog! Never heard of the Talbot dogs? We used to be around in Tudor times - and there are plenty of us Talbots for you to find here in this cathedral, I can tell you.

But first let me tell you about my Master, George Talbot, the 6th Earl of Shrewsbury and a very important nobleman in the court of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth I. Many years ago the Earl and I used to live in the Manor Lodge and at Sheffield Castle, not very far from here. The Earl wasn't very imaginative when he named me, but the Talbot family have kept Talbot dogs for generations. It makes me proud to have the same name as my Master.

Now, my Master, the Earl, had an impressive life. Queen Elizabeth trusted him so much that she gave him the important task of guarding Mary Queen of Scots for the fourteen years she spent as a prisoner here in Sheffield. This was while the Earl was married to the famous Bess of Hardwick - his second marriage, and Bess's FOURTH! Sadly the strain of looking after the Captive Queen became too much for them both and I don't think the Earl ever really recovered from having to be present at Queen Mary's execution. Mary loved her dogs too and I heard that when she went to her execution she hid her little

dog in her skirts – when the axe fell it ran away squealing and my poor Master wept at the sight of it all.

My master was about as grand it gets - Privy Councillor, High Steward of the Realm, Earl Marshal of all England - but he still had time for me, to give me a pat on the head and to take me out hunting with him and for walks around the deer park at the Manor. Towards the end, he liked me to sit by him and sleep at his feet.

These days you can find me sleeping at my Master's feet in the Shrewsbury Chapel – it's almost diagonally across the church from where you are standing now. Funnily enough, those are my two favourite things: being close to my Master and sleeping.

Do go and have a closer look and see how many of us Talbots you can spot in the Shrewsbury Chapel! There are plenty of us tucked away in there. And if you look carefully, you might find another dog carved on the ancient oak seat, the 'sedilia', in St. Katharine's Chapel. I wonder if he's a Talbot too, he's even older than me! You can almost see it from here if you look straight down the church.

So, the Talbot family was quite famous when you think about it, and I'm proud to be part of it. They say that dogs are a man's best friend: George Talbot had an important life and made me feel important too. And now we slumber together in the Shrewsbury Chapel. Come and pay us a visit before you go...