

King Edward IV and his Queen, Elizabeth Woodville, at Reading Abbey (1464)

Painted by Ernest Board (1877-1934), 1923.

Object No. 1931.273.1

Location - Outside Victoria Hall, Town Hall



The painting depicts King Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville, on Michaelmas Day, 1464, at Reading Abbey. Edward is greeting his wife, before placing her in the chair of estate in the chancel of the Abbey Church.

Queen Elizabeth's trainbearers are her two sons, Richard and Thomas Grey, by a former marriage. Behind the Queen stands the Earl of Warwick, cousin to the King and on his left is the Duke of Clarence, the King's younger brother. In the right-hand corner is Richard Woodville, the Queen's father. To the extreme left stands the Abbot, John Thorne I.

The King was betrothed to Elizabeth in the royal forest of Wychwood and they married secretly at Grafton Regis on 1 May 1464. Most later sovereigns are descended from Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville through their daughter Elizabeth, wife of Henry VII.

Ever since Edward's coronation the question of the royal succession had been discussed. As time went on more and more pressure was put on the King to find a suitable bride. Matters came to a head in September 1464, when the King attended a meeting of the Royal Council, in Reading. The question of his marriage was discussed and this forced the king to inform the Council that he had already secretly married Elizabeth Woodville.

On St. Michael's day, 29 September 1464, Elizabeth was introduced to the Royal Council and acknowledged by all present as Queen of England. She was eventually crowned at Westminster Abbey on 26 May 1465.