

# Tudor Life

THE  
TUDOR  
SOCIETY

The Tudor Society Magazine

Members Only  
No 40  
December 2017

## CHRISTMAS

YULE TIDE AT LITTLE  
MORETON HALL

ENJOY A TUDOR  
CHRISTMAS

also

BLESSED MARGARET  
POLE

MARGARET  
CLITHEROW

TUDOR HARPS

TUDOR CHILDBIRTH

FANTASTICAL  
BEASTS

+ MORE



***JOIN THE TUDOR SOCIETY FOR  
SOME CHRISTMAS FUN!***

# CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS MONTH'S MAGAZINE

**Claire Ridgway** is the author of 8 history books and runs the TS!



**Heather Swaine** works at Little Moreton Hall.



**Dmitry Yakhovsky** is a talented young artist and novelist.



**Debra Bayani** is a historian and is the author of *Jasper Tudor*



**Kyra C. Kramer** is an author and historical medical anthropologist.



**Lauren Browne** is studying for a PhD in history.



**Jane Moulder** is a music historian and medieval music performer.



**Conor Byrne** is a historian and author of books including *Queenship in England*.



**Emma Taylor** works for costumes for television in her native Northern Ireland.



**Charlie Fenton** is our book reviewer and is also the author of *1066 in a nutshell*.



**Toni Mount** is a fiction and non-fiction writer, live speaker and historian.



**Riognach O'Geraghty** is our medieval food and cooking expert.





## CHRISTMAS

**T**HE CHRISTIAN FAITH was born and sustained in martyrdom. An ancient legend told of how the Blessed Virgin Mary, whilst pregnant with Christ, would weep and laugh, seeing in her mind's eye men of sorrow and of joy. Tudor Christianity continued to stress this holy dichotomy of pain and rejoicing, not least in its Christmas celebrations. They marked the birth of their Saviour, yet throughout its decorations the Tudors reminded themselves of the martyrdom of Christ - holly, with its red berries, was supposed to remind the faithful of the Crown of Thorns, which had been twisted into Christ's sacred head at Eastertide. In this issue, we look at both martyrdom and merrymaking. Some of our regular columnists discuss how martyrdom changed and intensified thanks to the Reformation, while others look at the festivities surrounding a typical Tudor Christmas. It's a topical division that I'm sure the Tudors would have understood!

**GARETH RUSSELL**

# Tudor Life

**2** ENJOY A TUDOR STYLE CHRISTMAS  
*by Claire Ridgway*

**8** YULE TIDE AT LITTLE MORETON HALL  
*by Heather Swaine*

**18** SOME CHRISTMAS FUN  
*by Dmitry Yakhovsky*

**22** BLESSED MARGARET POLE  
*by Debra Bayani*

**30** WHY WERE HERETICS IMPRISONED IN  
THE LOLLARDS' TOWER?  
*by Kyra C Kramer*

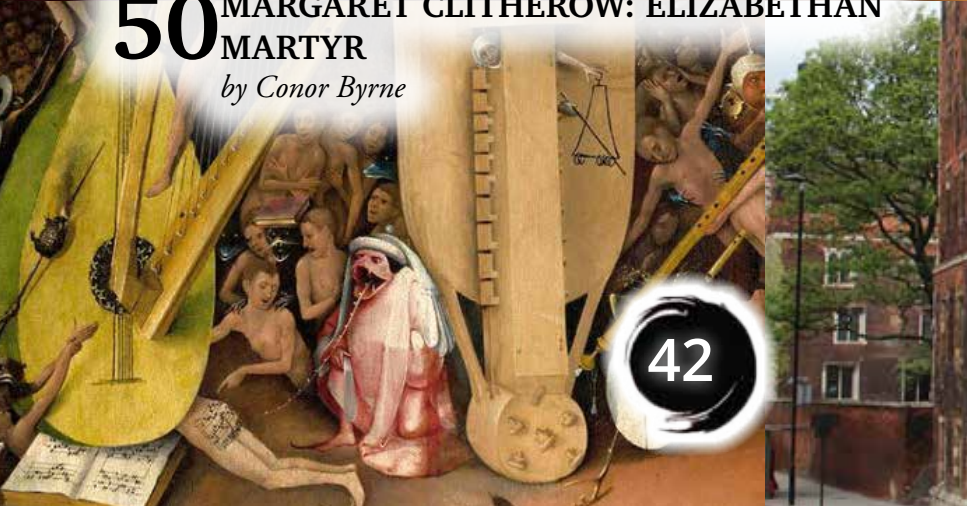
**34** THE UNMAKING OF A MARTYR: THE CASE  
OF SAINT THOMAS BECKET DURING THE  
EARLY REFORMATION  
*by Lauren Brown*

**42** HARPING ON ... A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE  
RENAISSANCE HARP  
*by Jane Moulder*

**50** MARGARET CLITHEROW: ELIZABETHAN  
MARTYR  
*by Conor Byrne*



54



42

# DECEMBER

**53** TUDOR SOCIETY BULLETIN  
*by Tim Ridgway*

**54** THE CINEMATIC CREATION OF MARTYRS  
IN "ELIZABETH"  
*by Emma Elizabeth Taylor*

**59** DECEMBER'S GUEST EXPERTS ARE  
SANDRA VASOLI AND JAMES PEACOCK

**60** REVIEWED: THE LIVES OF TUDOR  
WOMEN (NORTON) AND ANNE BOLEYN  
IN LONDON (CHAPMAN)  
*by Charlie Fenton*

**63** CRIME AND PUNISHMENT CROSSWORD  
*by Catherine Brooks*

**64** THE TUDOR HOUSEWIFE: CHILDBIRTH  
*by Toni Mount*

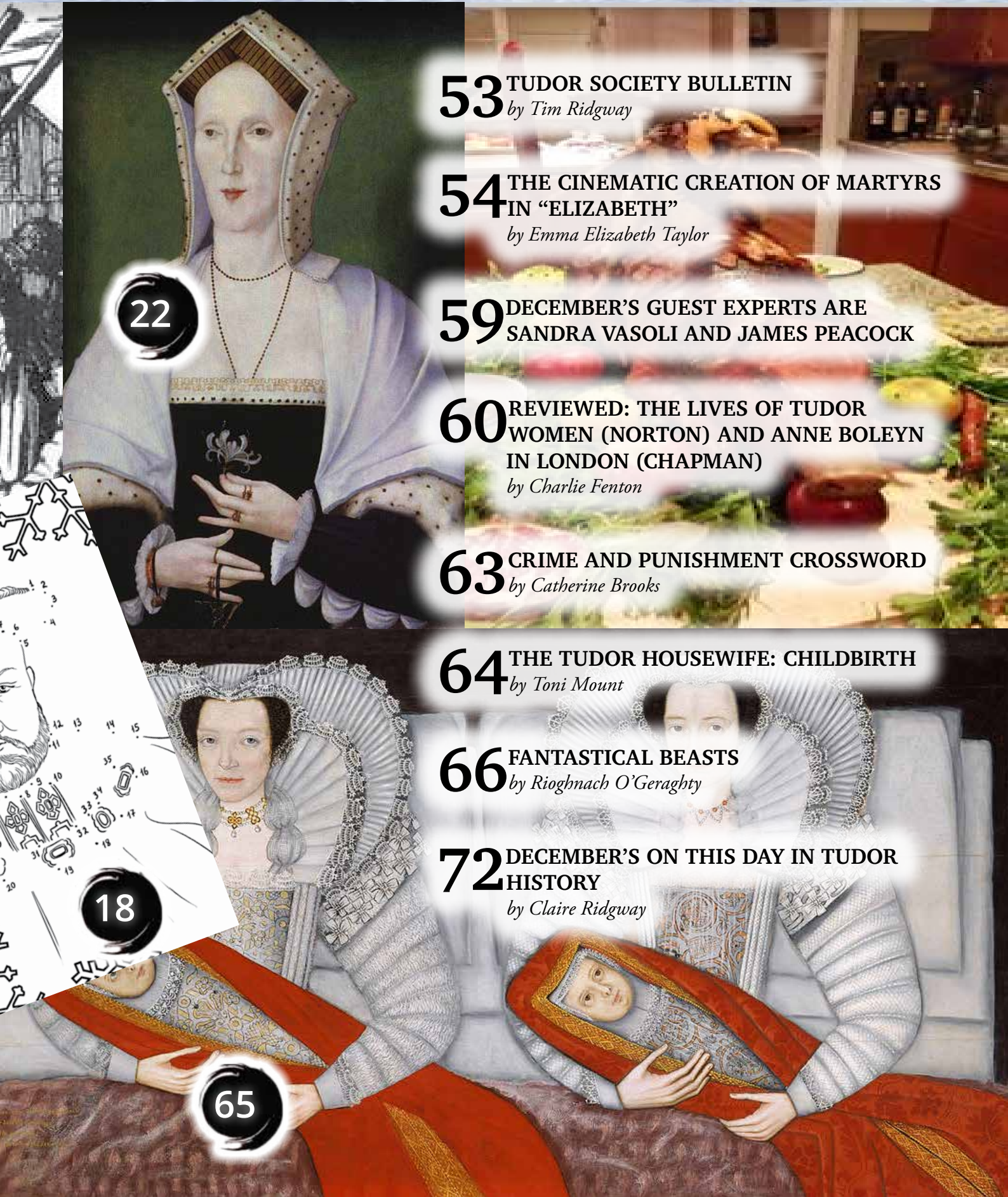
**66** FANTASTICAL BEASTS  
*by Rioghnach O'Geraghty*

**72** DECEMBER'S ON THIS DAY IN TUDOR  
HISTORY  
*by Claire Ridgway*

22

18

65





# ENJOY A TUDOR-STYLE CHRISTMAS

---

Nobody really wants to have a completely Tudor-style Christmas, we like our modern comforts and traditions too much! Author and historian **Claire Ridgway** shows that Tudor history lovers can incorporate some Tudor elements without too much trouble...

---

## THE CHRISTMAS DINNER

How about roasting a goose instead of the traditional turkey for Christmas dinner? It makes a change. Turkey was enjoyed in England after it was introduced in the 1520s, but it took some time to take over from goose as the traditional Christmas roast. Gordon Ramsay, on the BBC Good Food website, advises scoring the breast and leg skin of the goose with

a sharp knife in a criss-cross pattern to help render down the fat and then rubbing lemon and lime zest, sea salt, five-spice powder and pepper into the skin and sprinkling some into the cavity. You can brown the bird slightly in a frying pan with a little oil before roasting. As for cooking times, the BBC site says:

*“Cook for 10 mins at 240C/fan 220C/gas 9, then reduce to 190C/fan 170C/gas 5 and cook for 20 mins per kg for medium-rare, 32 mins per kg for more well-done, plus 30 mins resting.” Basting, with the fat produced, should be done every 30 minutes.*

You could also take inspiration from the Tudor Christmas pie - a coffin shaped pie crust containing a turkey stuffed with a goose, stuffed with a chicken, stuffed with a partridge, stuffed with a pigeon and do a three- or four-bird roast. In the UK, several supermarkets offer a four-bird roast (chicken, turkey, goose and duck usually) and you can google “three-bird roast” to find recipes like the BBC Good Food one which uses chicken, pheasant and duck. It makes a nice change from stuffed turkey.

With your roast meat, serve traditional bread sauce (milk and butter simmered with cloves and onion, and then thickened with breadcrumbs), which does have its origins in the bread-thickened sauce of the medieval era, or how about frumenty instead? Frumenty is a sort of porridge made from cracked wheat soaked in ale, boiled with spices like cinnamon, nutmeg and ginger, and then mixed

with currants, beaten egg and cream, and reheated.



## THE MINCED PYE

If you're in the UK, then you will have not trouble finding mince pies to enjoy. In Tudor times, the “minced pye” was a bit different. It was one large pie and was rectangular, or ‘crib’ shaped, to represent the manger the Christ child was laid in. It traditionally contained thirteen ingredients, to symbolise Jesus and his apostles, and it also contained minced meat, rather than just dried fruit and suet. The meat was mutton, which symbolised the shepherds to whom the Angel Gabriel appeared.

Today, mince pies are usually made small, for one person to enjoy.

They are made with shortcrust pastry and filled with “mincemeat” which does not contain meat, only suet. You can make your own mincemeat from raisins, currants, shredded suet, lemon zest, apple, mixed peel, brown sugar, brandy and nutmeg, or in the UK you can buy it ready-made in jars.

If you want to be more Tudor, then you can make your mincemeat filling using mutton. A recipe from the National Trust uses lean minced beef or mutton, suet, ground cloves, ground mace, black pepper, saffron, raisins, currants and prunes – see <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/recipes/real-mince-pie>.



## DRINKS

You do, of course, need something to wash those mince pies down with, and to warm you through if you've been out to drag in the yule log or out carol singing (see later in the article). Mulled wine – red wine heated and infused with sugar and spices – is still popular today, but you could go even more Tudor-y with the following drinks, and you'll find out how to make them on the "Tudor Cooking with Claire" playlist of the Anne Boleyn Files YouTube channel or by searching on the Tudor Society website:

Buttered beere – Ale heated with spices like ginger, cloves and nutmeg. Egg yolks and brown sugar are then whipped into it, followed by butter. It is served warm and whisked to froth it up.

Lambswool wassail – Bake apples in the skin, heat brown sugar and ale, mix in nutmeg and ginger, add apple pulp, whisk to give it a frothy head. Wassail!

Hippocras – Mix wine (or grape juice) with bruised peppercorns and cloves, ground cinnamon and ginger, and some sugar, and let sit for 1-4 days before straining through a filter or cloth.

Syllabub – This can be drunk or served as a dessert. Cream, white wine, sugar, sherry, nutmeg and lemon zest are whipped together. Chill to serve as a dessert.

## BANQUETING COURSE

The banqueting or sweet meat course was an important part of Tudor feasts, for the wealthy anyway. This was an opportunity to the host to flaunt their wealth and impress their guests. If adding this course to your Christmas dinner would be too much, why not have a banquet table to display sweet treats at a Christmas party? Tudor people would display marchpane (like marzipan), which could be shaped into all kind of things (buildings, animals, fruit... you name it!) and iced or gilded; leech, which was a sweet made from milk, sugar and rose-water, and which could be cut into cubes and displayed as a chequerboard with some plain white cubes and others coloured or gilded; gilded fruit, and sugar-plated (made from sugar, egg white and gelatin) moulded into different shapes or to look like food and nuts. You could use marzipan and sugar plate or fondant to mould into different shapes and figures.

There are YouTube videos on how to make marzipan fruit and fondant flowers.

Gingerbread was also served in Tudor times, although it was quite different. If you've seen my Tudor Ginger Bread video, you'll know that it was made with breadcrumbs, honey and spices. You could serve traditional Tudor gingerbread, it is very tasty, but you could just take inspiration from it and add a gingerbread model, like a gingerbread house to your banquet table. Marzipan fruit, fondant flowers and a gingerbread house – perfect! Or make a gingerbread man with a difference – a gingerbread Henry VIII!







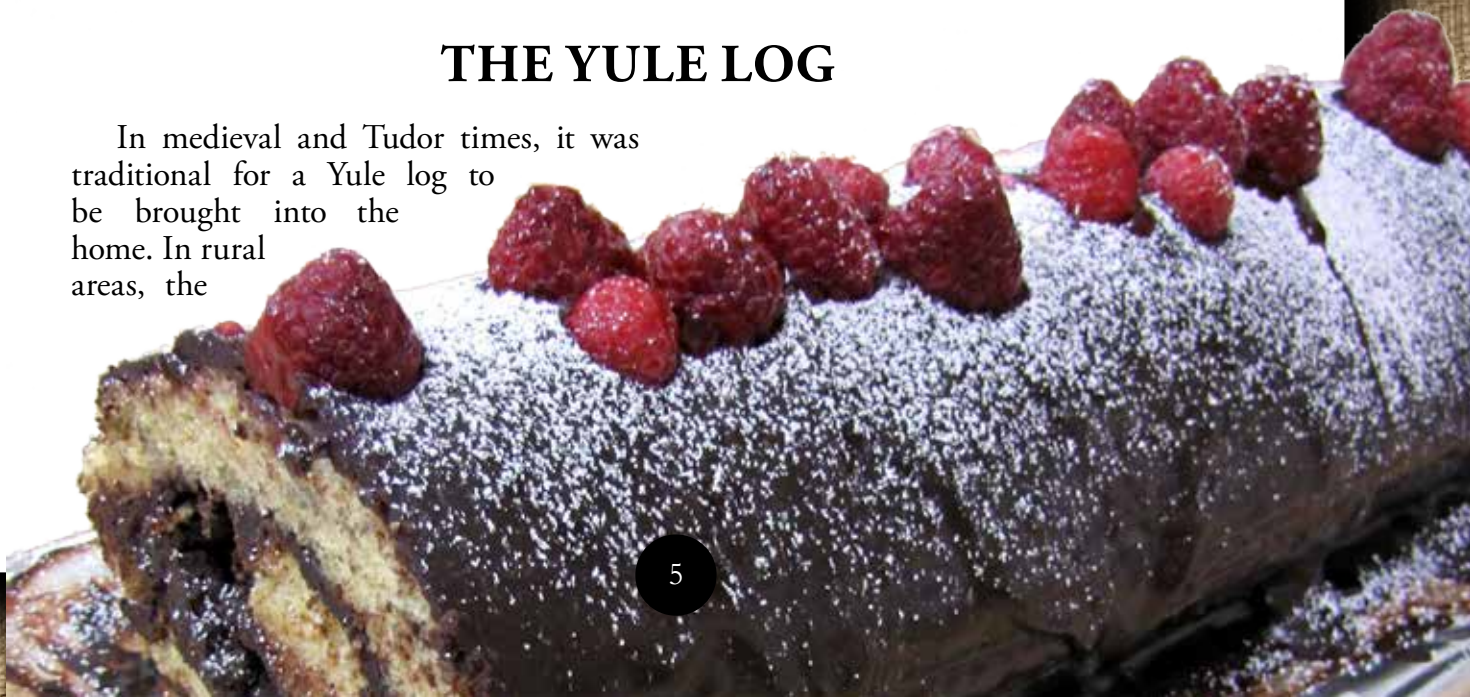
## DECORATIONS

Some of us tend to get a little carried away with Christmas decorations – multi-coloured flashing lights that also play Christmas music, huge Christmas trees decorated with tinsel, Santas on ladders.... but by going Tudor, and a bit more minimalist, your house could look quite classy. Tudor people would collect winter greenery, such as holly and ivy, to decorate their homes. Holly, of course, has the red berries so with that you have

the traditional Christmas colours of red and green. The Druids regarded holly as a sacred plant, and then Christians used it as a reminder of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, with the berries symbolising his blood that was shed and the pointed leaves symbolising the thorns on his crown of thorns. You could make a Christmas wreath from holly and ivy, or a garland to decorate your mantelpiece or windowsills, and don't forget to hang the mistletoe!

## THE YULE LOG

In medieval and Tudor times, it was traditional for a Yule log to be brought into the home. In rural areas, the





men of the family would go out into the local forest on Christmas Eve and bring back a huge log which they would decorate with ribbons and drag back home. They would be welcomed home by the women of the family with hot spiced ale. The log would then be burnt

throughout the Twelve Days of Christmas. The charred remains would be kept until the next Christmas and then used to start the fire when the next Yule log was set alight. This was thought to bring luck.

If you have an open fire or a log burner then you could easily do that, or you could just cheat and enjoy a chocolate Yule log, or “Bûche de Noël”, washed down with lambswool wassail or mulled wine. A chocolate yule log is a chocolate swiss roll decorated with chocolate buttercream to look like a log. There are lots of recipes online.

## CAROL SINGING

Carol singing is often seen as a Victorian tradition, but Christmas carols were sung in Tudor times, and there are books of carols that were printed in Tudor times. The Coventry Carol dates back to 1534, the

Boar’s Head Carol dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, “Lullay, myn lykyng” to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and the Gloucester Wassail dates back to the Middle Ages. Find these on YouTube along with the lyrics and have a sing-along – Tudor karaoke!

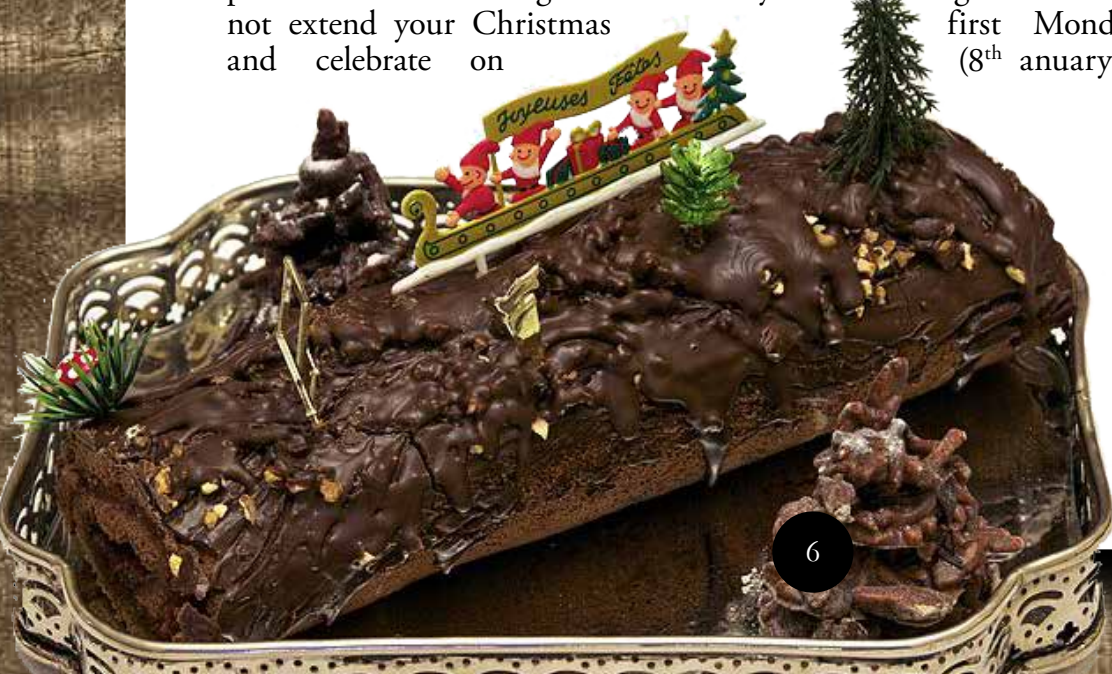
## DON’T FORGET EPIPHANY!

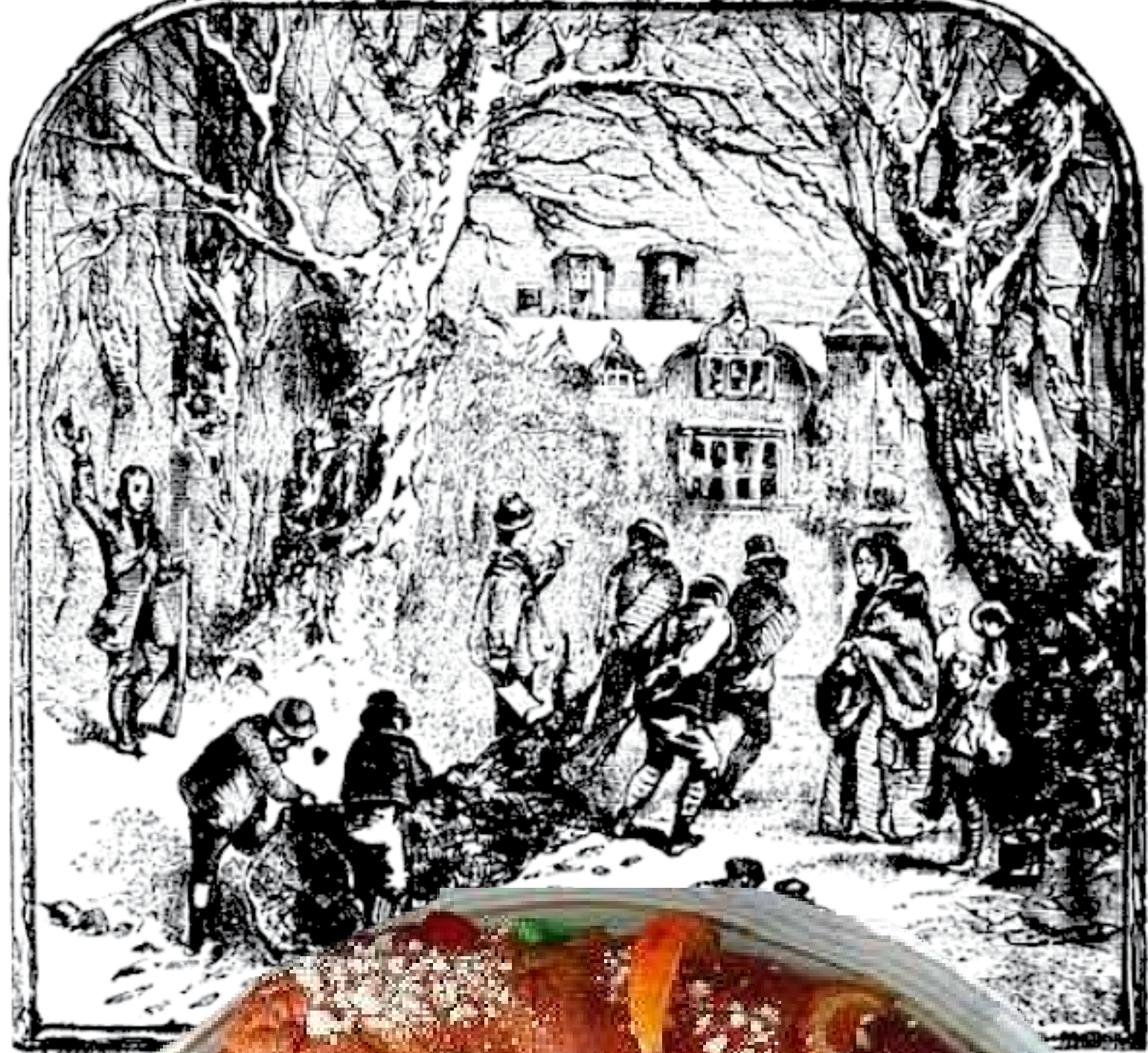
In many countries, Christmas gets forgotten after Boxing Day (26<sup>th</sup> December) or, at the latest, New Year, but in Tudor times Christmas lasted until Epiphany or Twelfth Night. Where I live in Spain, Christmas Eve and Epiphany are the most important days of the Christmas period, and I love that the Christmas period lasts a bit longer here. Why not extend your Christmas and celebrate on

Epiphany Eve and Epiphany (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> January)? Have a special supper or put your slippers out for the Kings and their camels to leave you presents! Or bake a Twelfth Night cake – there are recipes online from around the world. Let the Tudors give you an excuse to celebrate for longer and tell your boss that you can’t start work again until Plough Monday, the first Monday after Epiphany (8<sup>th</sup> January 2018).

HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS ALL!

**CLAIRE  
RIDGWAY**







A photograph of a table covered with a white tablecloth, displaying a variety of Christmas cookies and pastries. The items include round cookies with nuts, chocolate-covered cookies, and small pastries. There are also some greenery and small black labels with white text. The text 'YULE TIDE AT LITTLE MORETON HALL' is overlaid in large, bold, white letters. Below the main title, the author's name 'by Heather Swaine' is written in a smaller, italicized font.

# YULE TIDE AT LITTLE MORETON HALL

*by Heather Swaine*



---

## Heather Swaine has the privilege of working as a costumed interpreter at Little Moreton Hall...

---

**O**CTOBER'S addition of 'Tudor Life' magazine has already introduced readers to Little Moreton Hall, Congleton, Cheshire. UK. As regular readers will already know, The Hall is a striking timbered building sitting on its own little island surrounded by a moat. As visitors walk up the drive to the house for the first time they often comment, 'How does it stay up!'. Children often dub it, 'The Wonky House'! It is an unbelievably quirky building that is full of history. It is more or less unaltered since the beginning of the seventeenth century. It is an idyllic spot which is well worth a visit at any time of the year. However, at Yule Tide, The Hall (as we fondly call it) becomes particularly magical! Dedicated and very hard-working volunteers and staff who love this remarkable place work every year to recreate Yule Tide as it would have been in Tudor times. I would like to share with you some of the history of Yule Tide that has informed our presentation of Christmas festivities at The Hall. I do hope it will inspire you to come and visit us this year or in future years.

### **A TUDOR YULE TIDE AT THE HALL**

The Twelve Days of Christmas or Yule Tide was a very important event for families like the Moreton's. The main feast Days were Christmas Day, New Year's Day and Epiphany or Twelfth Night.

A fast was kept for four weeks from Advent Sunday to Christmas Day with no meat, eggs or dairy produce eaten. Christmas Eve was kept as a most solemn fast. Prior to the Reformation Christmas Day would start with three Masses, after which it was traditional to eat a mince pie. These pies included ingredients familiar to us like sultanas and spices (expensive treats at the time). These pies, however, also contained lamb, were rectangular, like a manger, and had a pastry

infant Jesus on top. You were expected to eat these slowly whilst considering your Salvation, and probably with relief that your long fast was over.

Christmas Day was the beginning of lavish festivities. Throughout the Twelve Days of Christmas open and generous hospitality was expected not just for your family, friends and those with whom you had fortuitous family or business connections (referred to as clientage). Your tenants and even the poor would also be welcomed. Feasting would take place in the Great Hall.

Early in the sixteenth century the Great Hall would have a central fire and an open Minstrels Gallery. Later the Great Hall became much more



Trotit pasties



sumptuous with a fire-place and chimney a bay window and a carved screen across the passage leading from the entrance and the kitchens. This beautiful space would be decorated with

greenery, including rosemary, bay and holly. The Boards (tables) would be set for feasting and entertainment from Christmas Day to Twelfth Night.

## GUESTS 'ABOVE THE SALT'

*'Where Comus, god of revelry... fills the open Hall with mirth and cheer.'  
'The jolly wassail walks the often round, and their cups their cares were drowned'.*

The poem above describes Yule Tide feasting in Sir Robert Wroth's hall at Durants, Enfield, Middlesex. UK. As the Moreton family's wealth increased during the sixteenth century they would have wanted to celebrate Yule Tide taking their example from the aristocracy or even the Royals!

There were possibly three Boards in The Great Hall. The remaining Board or table is a trestle with two accompanying benches. The Board has a finely carved trestle and a beautifully patinated top. The Board for the best diners would be set up at the far end of the Great Hall, away from the kitchens and close to the fire.

The family and their honoured guests processed with great ceremony in to the Great Hall where they would be seated above the

Salt. Salt was a precious commodity kept in an elaborate vessel called the Salt. It was an honour to sit 'Above the Salt' where you granted free access to the condiment. These guests would be eating and drinking at the Board covered with the household's best linen cloths and napkins, using pewter plates (some remnants of later pewter- ware are on display in our Great Hall), pottery and your own pewter or perhaps silver spoon (Tudor people considered using a spoon using someone else's spoon most unhygienic!)

These guests would also receive the best food, from manchet bread made from fine, white flour to pottages made with luxurious ingredients such as mace, ginger and almonds. Meat including game, fish, poultry and, the centre of the feast the boars head.



The preparations for Yule Tide must have taken months. Food harvested in autumn needed to be preserved by salting, pickling, laying up in store in the buttery, attic or cellar. Of course, such stores had to see the household through to the early harvest as well as through Yule Tide,

The Moreton family had developed good connections through marriage in the Cheshire. Seating of guests at your feasts would have to be most carefully worked out to consider their social status in the area. Not getting this right would cause great offence!

The boys and young men of a family like the Moretons would be well schooled in manners which would include not only how to eat at such feasts, but how to serve at them too. Children could learn these skills either at other households where the family had connections or clientage or through instruction books on manners. Some of the most widely read books of the sixteenth

century included books on how to act at all social occasions. I can imagine the Moretons, with an eye to advancing their wealth and social status, would have been owners of at least one such book.

After a sumptuous feast those 'Above the Salt' would leave the Great Hall and be served the Banquet in the Great Parlour. Luxurious marchpane (marzipan), marmalade, wafers and other delicacies would be laid out on the finest plates on the best table so the honoured guests could help themselves. Of course, the chief ingredient of such fare would be sugar. The Ladies of the House would be busy in their Still Room making sweets for Banquets, and for medicinal purposes, such as an aid to a good night's sleep. Sugar was very expensive, meant to impress, but obviously caused tooth decay. Since only wealthier households could afford sugar, rotten teeth were seen as almost a status symbol.



The tooth pick became a sign of wealth and a metaphor for a swaggering gentleman!

Of course, there would be plenty of ale, beer, hippocras or wine to 'drown your cares in your cups!'

## THOSE 'BELOW THE SALT'

*At Christmas we banquet, the rich with the poor,  
Who then but the miser, but openeth his door?*

*At Christmas, be merry and thankful withall.*

*And feast thy poor neighbour, the great with the small,*

*Good bread and good drink, a good fire in the hall,*

*Brawn, pudding and souse, and good mustard withall....*

The opening of Thomas Tusser's poem suggests some magnanimity and equality for all guests over Yule tide. However, social rules kept all year round continued over Christmas.

The lesser guests would be receiving their Yule Tide feast 'Below the Salt' would not have free access to the Salt and be sat at a board dressed with a simpler cloth and ate from a carved wooden trencher. They brought their own horn or wooden spoon. Cheat bread would be more like our whole-meal bread. Their pottage would

be made of simpler ingredients. Head cheese (brawn), sops of onions, pease pudding and bacon were poor man's food. But for some, the warmth of The Great Hall and the food to fill their bellies would have been most welcome.

There was an emphasis on your Christian duty to provide for the poor and needy. Ladies like Lady Margaret Hoby took this duty very seriously giving at least some nourishment and medicine to needy families who lived on her Yorkshire estate.





## **ENTERTAINMENT!**

With the communal Wassail cup, music, Lords of Misrule, musicians and dancing Yule Tide would have been a lively season! When I walk in to our Great Hall I can imagine travelling

musicians up in the Minstrels Gallery. There are local accounts in the later sixteenth century of groups of players coming to Congleton, so perhaps they came to The Hall too.

## **2017 YULE TIDE**

I do hope I have inspired you to come and visit us in this very special Tudor place. You would be most welcome. Our festivities start on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November. Come along to taste some Tudor food, see The Hall decorated for Yule Tide and the Boards groaning under the weight of sixteenth century food for rich and poor alike!

At the weekends we have a jester, a fantastic story teller, choirs and musicians including

Hautbois, a recorder group and the excellent Piva. (Please go to [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/little-moreton-hall](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/little-moreton-hall) for full information).

Come warmly dressed, we will greet you with an individual Wassail cup and please don't forget to come and say hello to us Tudor Ladies as we Costumed Interpreters like to call ourselves.

A Merry Tudor Yule Tide to you all!

**HEATHER SWAINE**

## **FURTHER READING AND INFORMATION**

Brears, Peter, Prospect Books 2015, *Cooking and Dining in Tudor and Early Stuart England*.

Goodman, Ruth, BBC books, *Tudor Monastery Farm*.

Moody, Joanne, *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady, Diary of Mary Hoby, 1599-1605*.

Sim, Alison, The History Press, 2009, *Pleasures and Pastimes in Tudor England*.

Sim, Alison, The History Press Ltd., 2005 *Food and Feast in Tudor England*.

Sim, Alison, on Kindle, 2011 *Life in Tudor Palaces and Houses*.

[www.historiesofsleep.com](http://www.historiesofsleep.com) includes my Costumed Interpreter colleague Anna Fielding's blog. which includes Tudor food.



Heather Swaine Photo © Alan Ingham



*Join us!*

TUDOR SOCIETY  
CHRISTMAS PARTY

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> Dec  
11pm UK time

*All full members  
Welcome!*

*In the chatroom*





Can YOU spot  
EIGHT  
DIFFERENCES?



Queen Elizabeth I's "Ditchley Portrait" was painted by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger around 1592. It shows Elizabeth standing on Oxfordshire, amongst other symbols. Some changes have been made in the second image!







*Art B*  
26.10.17



# BLESSED

# MARGARET POLE

*by Debra Bayani*

**F**rom her birth, Margaret Plantagenet's life had alternately been a fluctuation of unrest, wealth, executions and poverty. She was born on 14 August 1473 at Farleigh Hungerford Castle, Somerset, as the oldest and only surviving daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Clarence, George Plantagenet and Isabel Neville. Her father George stood third in line to the throne of England, and her mother was the eldest of two daughters of the powerful Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, known as "The Kingmaker" and was also co-heiress to one of the greatest landed estates in the country.

Margaret's uncle, Edward IV, had seized the throne from Henry VI twelve years before her birth during the dynastic struggle known as the Wars of the Roses. Having overthrown the Lancastrian king, Edward ruled from 1461 to 1470 when a rebellion, led by Jasper Tudor and Margaret's father and grandfather, placed his mentally weak opponent Henry VI back on the throne. Both Margaret's father and grandfather had felt their ambitions had been neglected by Edward, and it had encouraged them to join forces with the Lancastrians. In 1470 Warwick and Clarence sailed to the Lancastrian queen, Margaret of Anjou, who was in exile in France. Tragedy struck when Clarence took his heavily pregnant wife Isabel with him, and they were caught up in a storm during their voyage near Calais. Isabel gave birth to a daughter, but the child was dead.

Politics continued, and to ensure their loyalty to Lancaster, Richard Neville had his youngest daughter Anne marry Lancastrian heir Prince Edward. Once they had placed the puppet King back on the throne, Margaret's father soon changed his coat again, probably realizing that being the brother of a deposed sovereign was less worthy than being the brother of the King. His decision was influential in restoring Edward to power in 1471. Edward ensured he would never be opposed again and at the Battle of Barnet in April 1471 Edward had Margaret's grandfather killed, whereupon, ironically, her father received the title of Earl of Warwick. Two weeks later, at the Battle of Tewkesbury, Edward killed the son and only heir to Henry VI, leaving Margaret's aunt, Anne, a widow at the age of fifteen. Henry himself was quietly put to death on Edward's orders at the Tower of London.

Twelve years later, upon Edward IV's sudden death in 1483, his younger brother and another uncle of Margaret, Richard Duke of Gloucester, who by now had also married her widowed aunt Anne, usurped the throne from his two nephews, Edward IV's heirs, known as the Princes in the Tower. He became King Richard III. But just two years later, Richard's throne was taken from him at the Battle of Bosworth by a son of Lancaster, Henry Tudor.

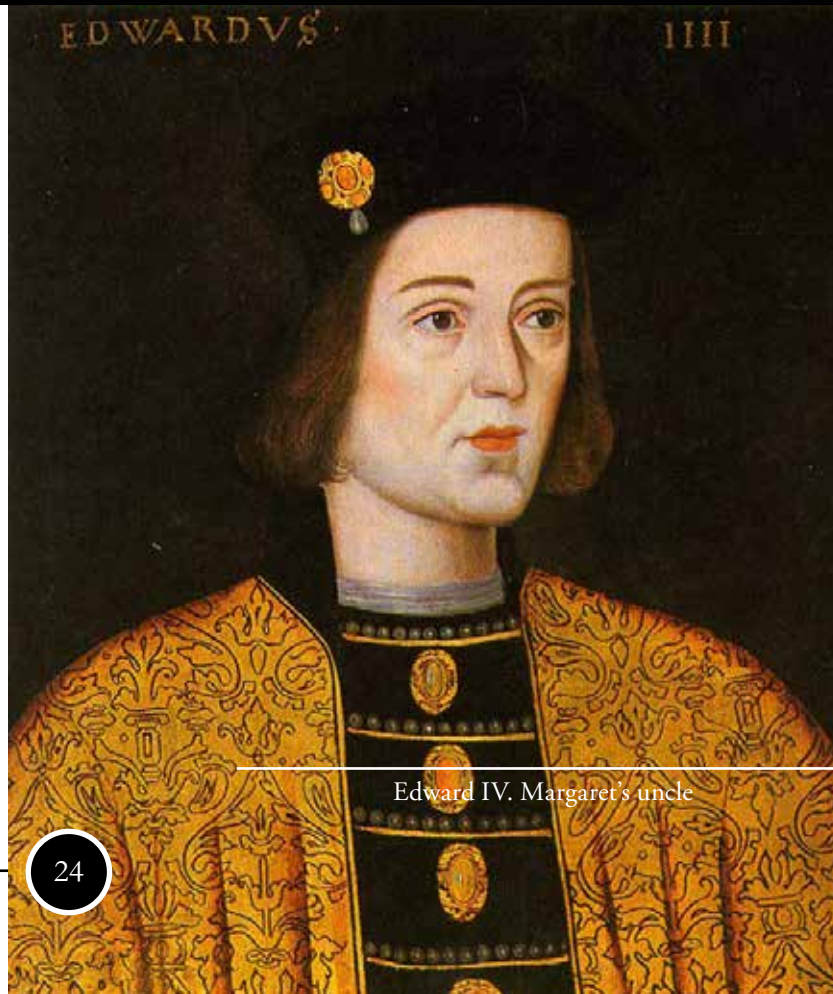


Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury



Stained glass depiction of Margaret's parents George and Isabel, Cardiff Castle © Debra Bayani

Going back to the time of her birth in 1473, such events could not have been imagined. Margaret's future had looked most promising, being her father's sole heir. During that time, her parents maintained an immense size of household staff, and poverty seemed far beyond her doorstep. But matters were soon to change. Less than two years after Margaret's birth, her family was extended by a son, Edward, named after the King. Margaret's mother Isabel gave birth to another son, Richard, in 1476, only to die less than three months after her son's birth. It is now widely believed that Isabel died of consumption or childbed fever, but George seemed to have been convinced that his wife had been poisoned by one of her servants,



Edward IV. Margaret's uncle

Ankarette Twynyho. As a result, George had her judicially hanged in 1477. His state of mind had never been stable, but from this point it worsened even further, leading him to rebel again against his brother. He was found guilty of 'loathly treasons', which eventually led to his execution in 1478, leaving Margaret and her brother as orphans.

But as a niece and nephew to the King of England, Margaret and her brother Edward became royal wards of Edward IV who took full responsibility for them. Margaret's brother was now heir to the earldom of Warwick, and in 1480 the custody and marriage of Edward and Margaret were granted for a large sum of money to the Queen's son by her first marriage, Thomas Grey, Marquess of Dorset. Upon Richard's usurpation, Margaret's brother was conveyed to London and placed in the household of the new Queen, their aunt, Anne Neville. Richard III had Edward IV's children bastardized due to his supposed contracted marriage to Eleanor Butler. This act removed Edward's children from the succession and augmented Margaret and Edward's positions.

In fact, Margaret's  
brother  
was



Margaret's father George Plantagenet, Duke of Clarence

now the rightful heir to the throne after Richard, who in 1484 lost his only son, and Margaret herself would be able to pass on a very strong claim to any male child she might deliver. During Richard III's short reign Margaret and young Warwick were sent to Sheriff Hutton Castle and guarded by their cousin John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln. Lincoln was the son of Elizabeth of York, Duchess of Suffolk, who was a sister of Margaret's father George, and he also had a strong claim to the throne.

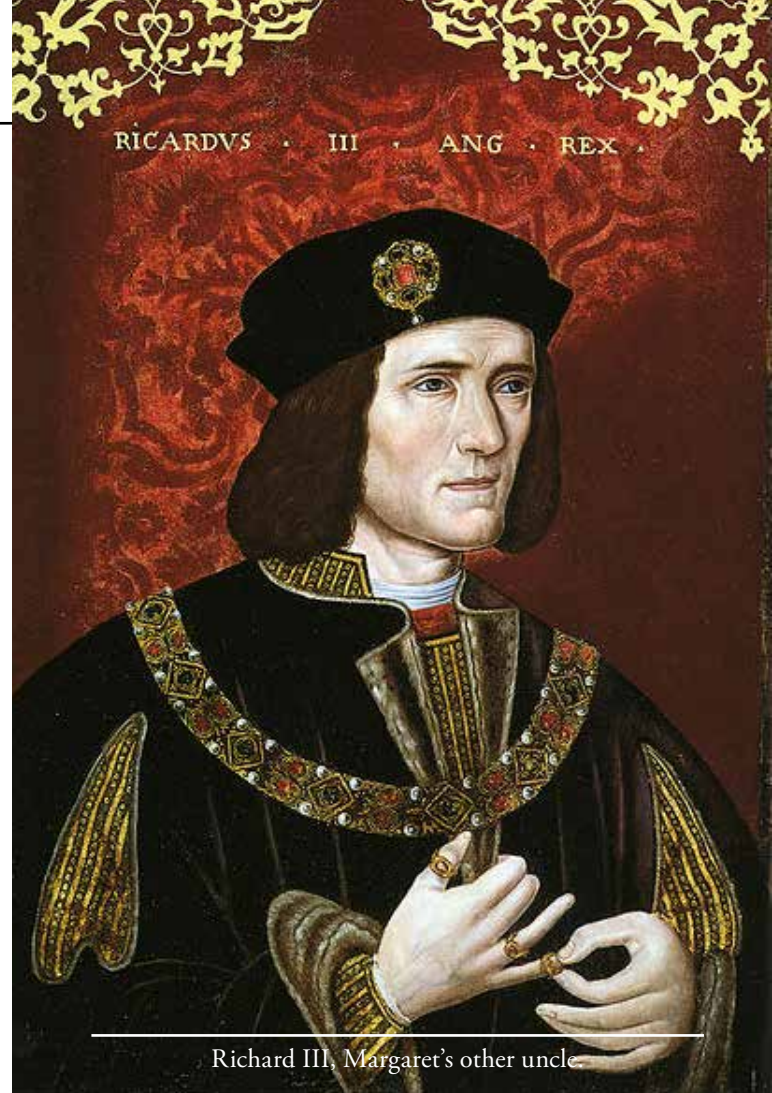
By the time Margaret came of age, Henry VII had her married to Sir Richard Pole, a Welsh knight who had fought for him at Bosworth and who had continued to fight for him in the years following. More significant is that Sir Richard was the son of Edith St. John, half-sister to the King's mother, Margaret Beaufort, making him and the king first cousins (half-cousins). Margaret was about fourteen at the time of her wedding, and her husband was about twice her age. Despite Sir



Henry VII

Richard's low birth, their marriage appears to have been a happy one. During the years of Richard's career in royal service, Margaret seems to have preferred a more ordinary existence away from court, living at Stourton and Bockmer Castles. She and Richard had six children - four sons: Henry, Arthur, Reginald and Geoffrey, and two daughters: Ursula and another who likely died during infancy. In the following years, Margaret's husband was granted more and more titles and became one of the principal officers of North-Wales, replacing the King's step-uncle William Stanley after his execution. Sir Richard raised an army against the rebellion of the pretender Perkin Warbeck, and he served the King in the wars of Scotland. Henry made him Gentleman of the Privy Chamber of Prince Arthur and invested him as a Knight of the Garter. Richard accompanied the Prince and his new wife Catherine of Aragon to Ludlow Castle.

By the end of 1499, Margaret's peaceful life away from court matters came to a sudden end. In the first years of his reign, Henry VII was well aware that his position as king was rather shaky and knew that the by-now 10-year old Earl Warwick would remain a threat to his throne. Henry, therefore, immediately took possession Warwick right after Bosworth and placed him in the Tower of London, where he was kept imprisoned from 1485 until 1499. The young Earl eventually became entangled in a plot to escape the Tower along with Perkin Warbeck, who claimed to be Margaret's disappeared cousin Prince Richard, the youngest of the 'Princes in the Tower'. The Earl's role in this plot is not clear, but at his trial in November 1499, Warwick was found guilty of treason and was beheaded on Tower Hill. It is generally accepted that Edward, a young man who should have been one of England's greatest magnates of his time, had been nothing but a victim of his dynastic inheritance, politics and his naivety due to his long imprisonment from his early teens until his death at the age of twenty-four.



Richard III, Margaret's other uncle

Upon his death, the house of York became extinct in the male line, though the surviving sons of Elizabeth of York continued to claim the throne for York.

It must have been a hard time for Margaret, who was now pregnant with her son Reginald, and tragedy would soon strike again. Sir Richard served Prince Arthur until the latter's premature death in 1502. For the next few years, Margaret's husband continued to serve the King but sadly, late in 1504, Richard died of unknown cause, leaving his thirty-one-year-old pregnant wife a widow. Apart from grief for losing her husband, she must have also felt fear for what would become of her children if something would happen to her. Above that, her financial condition was now in a perilous state. Her husband's modest income from his estates was not enough to cover her expenses, and the considerable salary as the King's royal servant now ended with his death. According to several sources, Margaret was financially supported by others

to meet her day-to-day expenses. During this period Margaret and Catherine of Aragon, both widows in financial crisis, became close friends. After five years of living in disregard and poverty, Margaret must have been pleasantly surprised that upon the death of Henry VII, the new king, Henry VIII, chose a completely different way of ruling. This Henry was not opposed to receiving family members at court. He married his late brother's widow Catherine and made Margaret one of her ladies, while her 17-year-old son Henry was made one of the King's servants. Margaret's sudden rise in status and wealth was nothing but impressive and increased further when she was restored to her brother's inheritance. She was to retain many of her brother's lands as well as the Salisbury lands and earldom plus the Montagu lands of her great-grandmother Alice. As a result of her re-establishment, Margaret now possessed dozens of manors,

and by 1538 she was one of the wealthiest nobles of her time and, as she never remarried, it was all in her own right.

Margaret was chosen as a godmother to Princess Mary, which marked the beginning of a long relationship between the two. Throughout this period she remained in Catherine's household and the following year received the ultimate proof of the high regard King Henry and Catherine had for her when she was appointed as the Princess's governess. Margaret's standing after the restoration was, of course, the same for her children. Her eldest son Henry was knighted following his first military experience and was soon granted the title of Baron Montagu. Margaret's second son Arthur made his first jousting debut as one of the fourteen challengers of King Henry and both her sons continued to be involved in court matters throughout the next years. For



Clarence Vault in Tewkesbury Abbey, one of the skulls is believed to be that of Margaret's father © Debra Bayani



Farleigh Hungerford Castle, birthplace of Margaret

Arthur, this ended when he died in around 1530.

But with her son Reginald, Margaret's life was to change dramatically for one last time. Reginald was taught at Oxford at the expense of the King and graduated with a BA. The King granted him several offices in the church. Reginald went to the University of Padua where he met leading Renaissance figures, such as the future Pope Paul IV. By this time, the King started to wish for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine but faced resistance from the Pope. Reginald examined the political difficulties of a divorce, particularly the dangers to the succession and advised the King to renounce his decision. It was a decision that would bring Henry to discard papal authority and set off the English Reformation. Henry offered Reginald high offices in the church in return for his support of the annulment before the Pope, but Reginald found himself unable to support the King. He sent him a long dissertation in which he strongly criticised the King's claim of royal supremacy over the English church

and defended the pope's authority. The King, ignoring all this, married Anne Boleyn but the Pope announced that Henry's second marriage was invalid. Henry reacted by declaring that the Pope no longer had authority in England. Reginald completely broke with the King and was then made a cardinal. The Pope put Reginald in charge of organising assistance in the famous Pilgrimage of Grace rebellion in 1536.

With Reginald out of reach, the furious King took his revenge on his family instead. He ordered the arrest of Reginald's brother Geoffrey, who revealed all that he knew of the activities of his family. As a consequence, Margaret's other son Henry, Baron Montagu, his Neville family-in-laws, and Henry Courtenay, Marquess of Exeter, a first cousin of the King and second cousin of the Poles, were arrested for their correspondence with Reginald and imprisoned in the Tower. Soon after, Margaret, Montagu and Exeter were attainted, just like Margaret's father had been, losing all their titles and lands. Montagu's brother-in-law was the first to be executed,



followed by Exeter and Montagu. Soon after her son's execution, an alleged discovery in Margaret's house of a tunic symbolising Margaret's support for Roman Catholicism and the rule of her son Reginald gave the King enough so-called proof to justify her arrest. Margaret was imprisoned along with her teenaged fatherless grandson, Henry, and the young son of Exeter, Edward Courtenay. Both young men were seen as a threat to the House of Tudor. Courtenay was confined in the Tower for the next fifteen years and only released well after Henry VIII's death, at the accession of his daughter Mary I in 1553, to live just three more years and die under suspicious circumstances while in exile in Venice. Margaret's grandson Henry spent the remainder of his life imprisoned until his early death in 1542, probably from starvation. Margaret herself was sentenced to death and could be executed at any time at the King's will. Two and a half years later, on the morning of 27 May 1541, Margaret is said to have been woken up early to be told she was to die within the hour. In complete



Reginald Pole, son of Margaret

disbelief, Margaret is alleged to have written the following poem on the wall of her prison chamber:

*For traitors on the block should die;  
I am no traitor, no, not I!  
My faithfulness stands fast and so,  
Towards the block I shall not go!  
Nor make one step, as you shall see;  
Christ in Thy Mercy, save Thou me!*

Margaret, now a 67-year-old woman, was led to the block. Much has been written about her execution, but one thing is certain, it was one of the most staggeringly grievous executions ever performed on a noble person.

In 1886 Margaret was canonised by Pope Leo XIII and her feast day is on 28<sup>th</sup> May.

**DEBRA BAYANI**



EDWARD PLANTAGENET.

SON TO GEORGE DUKE OF CLARENCE.

*from a drawing in the British Museum.  
London. The block at top by the drawing below.*



# WHY WERE HERETICS IMPRISONED IN THE LOLLARDS' TOWER?

BY KYRA C. KRAMER

**M**ANY OF THE victims of religious persecution talked about in John Foxe's history, commonly called *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, were initially taken to the Lollards' Tower, part of present-day Lambeth Palace, for questioning, and sometimes torture, and often imprisonment. But why were they taken there, and why did Lambeth Palace have a de facto prison called Lollards' Tower?

Lambeth Palace, which was still being called the Manor of Lambeth or Lambeth House in the Tudor era, has been the London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the foremost archbishop of England, since the 13th century. Lambeth House was therefore the natural place to deal with heresy, since anything not actually requiring a Cardinal or the Pope could be dealt with by the resident Archbishop. However, prior to the Lollards, there weren't a lot of people in England practicing or preaching things the Church considered heretical. Thus, when the Lollards began to be persecuted, the Church had nowhere to store all these new heretics. Chichele's Tower, which had been built between 1414 and 1443 and used as an audience chamber by Archbishop Chichele, was conscripted into use as a prison. Over

time, it became known as Lollards' Tower, named for its heretical captives.

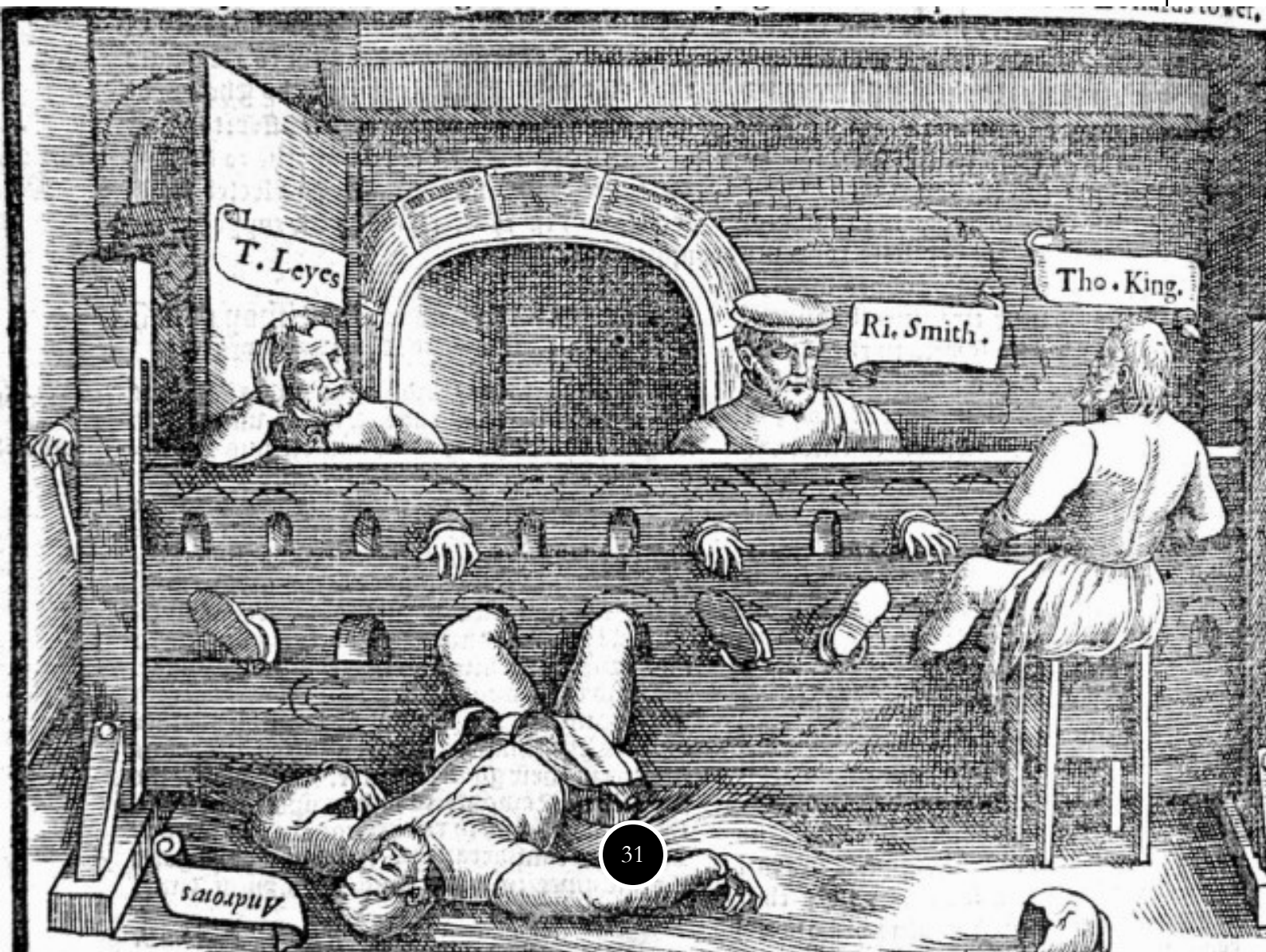
The Lollards were members of a pre-Protestant religious movement from the latter half of the 14th century that rose up around charismatic theologian John Wycliffe. The name "Lollard" was intended to be an insult, signifying the semi-educated men who were unlearned in Latin and who must therefore write and argue in English. Although the Church found the movement heretical from the very start, the Lollards were initially protected by anti-clerical nobility, particularly King Edward III's son John of Gaunt, as well as the University of Oxford, which wanted to defend academic freedom of thought. The Lollards, their defenders argued, were not so radically different in theology that they

were endangering anyone's immortal soul or preventing mass.

Wycliffe's followers stole the march on Martin Luther by nailing the *Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards* to the doors of Westminster Hall in February of 1395. In these they decried the connection of the Church with temporal -- and thus governmental -- matters; a man of the cloth should not accept an office outside of the Church, lest worldly matters corrupt his focus on the spiritual good. They argued that priests should be moved by the Holy Spirit, instead of ordained by the church, and that celibacy should not be a requirement to be a priest. They disputed the practice of exorcism, prayers for the dead, pilgrimages, the veneration of relics or icons, and confession. The Lollards also claimed that during Communion the Host experienced consubstantiation rather than transubstantiation, so that the bread and

wine did not *literally* change into the flesh and blood of Christ -- rather it remained the same kind of matter now imbued with his spiritual essence. They also declared that all warfare, especially so-called Holy Wars and Crusades, were against the teaching of Christ and were blasphemies that needed to cease forthwith.

Nor did the Lollards approve of when they considered to the 'trappings' of religion -- bells, candles, organs, vestments, and grand churches. Those things were thought of as vanity and style over substance, rather than aids to spiritual growth. They also insisted that salvation could be achieved by earnest belief, with no baptism required. Moreover, John Foxe reported that the Lollards were opposed to the veneration of saints, which came a bit too close to worship, and demanded an English-language Bible so that everyone could read holy scripture for themselves.





Lambeth Palace © 2013 Tim Ridgway

The movement proved to be a popular one. Although no one can say for sure how many Lollards there were in England, a contemporary account complains that “if you met two persons walking upon the road, you might be sure that one was a Lollard.” (Blanchard, p. 489)

One can see why the Church was unhappy with the Lollards. The group would have essentially stripped the Church of most of its power. But why did the movement find succor among the nobility? One would think the call against warfare alone would fail to endear the Lollards to the peerage.

Doubtlessly some nobles either agreed with the Lollards, or were sympathetic to alternative (but devout) theology. Others, however, may have wanted to use the religious reforms that the Lollards desired as a means of lessening the power of the Church -- especially the power of high-ranking Church officials who often held important positions in government as well. Lollard reforms may have opened the door to squeezing revenue from church properties and holdings as well.

The thin veneer of protection the Lollards enjoyed came to an end after the Peasant's Revolt of 1381 and the death of John of Gaunt. Lollards were seen as a potential

source of disruption in the already changing state of English class systems and government.

One of the most fierce opponents to Lollardy was Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, who assisted Henry Bolingbroke in deposing King Richard II. Once Bolingbroke was crowned as King Henry IV, he repaid his debt to Arundel by passing the *De heretico comburendo* in 1401. While the *De heretico comburendo* did not explicitly name the Lollards, it prohibited translating the Scriptures into any other language and forbade ‘heretical’ versions of the Bible. Furthermore, it made being burned to death the punishment for heresy.

The Church, assisted by the government, began an active campaign to root out and destroy Lollardy. At first the Church focused on priests who embraced Lollardy, such as William Sawtre, who was burned to death shortly after the *De heretico comburendo* passed, but in 1410 a craftsman from the west-midlands named John Badby became the first layman to be burnt at the stake for heresy after refusing to recant his unorthodox beliefs. Alas, he was far from the last person to die that way. It is in this time period of active persecution that the Lollards' Tower was added on to Lambeth House. The Church's zeal was

such that even Wycliffe's body was exhumed to be burned, and his ashes scattered.

The Lollards sensibly went underground for the next century, until Protestantism began to sweep through Britain, and reformers became too numerous to hide. Catholic adherents considered the reformation ideologies to be built on the bedrock of Lollardy, and it was assumed that Wycliffe's spiritual heirs provided a refuge for the incoming continental heresies. The devoutly Catholic Thomas More associated Reformers and Protestants with Lollards, and Bishop Cuthbert of London declared the modern evil of Lutheranism to be the "foster-child" of Lollardy.

Bishop Cuthbert was not wrong about Lutheranism and Lollardy. John Wycliffe's teachings were incredibly influential on Jan Hus, a Czech priest whose followers became known as Hussites, and in turn Hus influenced Martin Luther.

Lollards appear to have remained (at least during the third of the 16th century) a distinct group from Lutherans or other forms of protestantism, however. They were certainly persecuted as Lollards, rather than Lutherans. Between 1510 and 1532 approximately 310 Lollards were prosecuted or forced to abjure their beliefs within the Diocese of London alone. In 1511 seven Lollards were burned to death in Kent, and another five were

reportedly burned to death in Lincoln in 1521. Nine Lollards were also burnt at the stake in between 1512 and 1522 in Coventry, after being found guilty of teaching their children the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles' Creed in English rather than Latin.

The Lollards seemed to either blend in or agree with the new Anglican reformation under Henry VIII in the 1530s, because they were no longer targeted as they had been in the earlier part of the century. Regrettably, they were persecuted once more between 1554 and 1559, during the reign of Queen Mary I, due to the Revival of the Heresy Acts, which specifically named the Lollards as a heretical group. It is suggested that as many as 50 Lollards were burned to death at Lollards' Pit in Norwich during Queen Mary's reign, but that cannot be verified and may be a gross exaggeration to defame 'Bloody' Mary.

After the rise of Queen Elizabeth I and the formation of a Protestant kingdom, Lollardy seems to disappear as a distinct religious sect. It seems most likely that the Lollards were absorbed into the Anglican Church, with splinter groups joining -- or transforming into -- later English Protestant groups such as the Baptists, Anabaptists, Puritans, and Quakers.

The term Lollard now signifies landmarks rather than a creed.

## KYRA C KRAMER

Blanchard, Amos. 1846. *Book of Martyrs*. N. G. Ellis. Buffalo, NY.

Foxe, John. 1570. *Actes and Monuments of these Latter and Perillous Days, Touching Matters of the Church*. (AKA: *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*). John Day. London.

Rex, Richard. 2002. *The Lollards (Social History in Perspective)* Palgrave Macmillan.

### Kyra C Kramer

is the author of "Henry VIII's Health in a Nutshell", "Edward VI in a Nutshell", "Blood will Tell" and also a novel "Mansfield Parsonage". She is a regular contributor to the Tudor Life magazine with her fascinating and convincing view of history.





# THE UNMAKING OF A MARTYR: THE CASE OF SAINT THOMAS BECKET DURING THE EARLY REFORMATION

BY LAUREN BROWNE

---

*During the religious upheaval during throughout the Tudor period, many martyrs were made, and in some cases unmade. Perhaps the most notable was the treatment of Saint Thomas Becket, his cult, and his shrine at Canterbury. What was once the most visited shrine in England, and one of the most popular pilgrimage sites in Europe, was undermined and destroyed by the Henrician Reformation.*

---

**A** FAVOURITE OF King Henry II of England, Thomas Becket became Chancellor of England in 1154 and the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1162. After his appointment, however, the relationship between king and archbishop grew sour. Becket had been an avid supporter of Henry II, but following his consecration ‘the prelate’s devotion to God and the church became even more consuming than the chancellor’s devotion to the king and the State.’<sup>1</sup> Becket thus resigned from his role as chancellor to focus on his role in the church.

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Scully, ‘The Unmaking of a Saint: Thomas Becket and the English Reformation’, *The Catholic Historical Review*, lxxxvi, iv, (2000), p. 580

The tension between the former friends came to a head in 1164 when Henry issued The Constitutions of Clarendon, which stated the 'recognized customs and rights of the kingdom'.<sup>2</sup> It was felt by many clerics that Henry's Constitutions were in direct opposition to canon law, a point which Becket vehemently argued. Becket argued that The Constitutions of Clarendon made the king 'the real head and master of the English Church', rather than the Pope.<sup>3</sup> As their relationship further deteriorated, Becket fled England and spent six years in exile.

A partial reconciliation was reached between the former friends in 1170, but neither side refused to back down on their political and religious arguments. Becket further enraged Henry when he excommunicated several prelates who had remained loyal to the king during this period of tension. Henry was so outraged he, apparently, said something along the lines of, 'Who will rid me of the turbulent priest?' The king's sentiments were taken to heart by a group of four knights, who confronted the archbishop in Canterbury Cathedral on the evening of 29 December 1170. After calling Becket a traitor to the king and kingdom, they moved against the unarmed archbishop and struck him down. A witness to these events recorded that Becket, apparently, said 'For the name of Jesus and the protection of the church I am ready to embrace death.'<sup>4</sup> Whether he actually said that is irrelevant, the main point is that already his death was being represented as a type of martyrdom in an attempt to protect the independence of the Church.

This is even more evident when we discover that Becket's first recorded miracle happened on the very night he died. A man from Canterbury supposedly restored his paralyzed wife with the martyr's blood. The miracles attributed to Becket

grew rapidly throughout the course of the 1170s, in number and geographically. One contemporary recorded that miracles first occurred 'about his tomb, then through the whole crypt, then the whole church, the all of Canterbury, then England, then France, Normandy, Germany, [and the] whole world.'<sup>5</sup> Based on Becket's miracles and the nature of his death, Pope Alexander III declared that he was a saint on 21 February 1173, just two years after the archbishop's death. Becket's 'glorious passion' as well as 'the public fame of his miracles' were referenced in the bull of canonization, which also stated he was to be 'numbered in the roll of saintly martyrs.'<sup>6</sup>

The cult of Saint Thomas spread rapidly throughout the course of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, spurred on by several high profile visits to his tomb. In 1179 King Louis VII of France visited Canterbury Cathedral to pray for the health of his son, the future King Philippe II. This helped to ensure that Becket's tomb became 'the main pilgrimage centre in northwestern Christendom.'<sup>7</sup> The importance and popularity of the cult of St Thomas is evidenced in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, which is based around the stories told by pilgrims on their way to visit the archbishop's shrine. Chaucer wrote, 'from every shire's end/ In England, folks to Canterbury wend:/ To seek the blissful martyr is their will, / The one who gave such help when they were ill.'

It became customary for English kings to visit the tomb, a tradition that lasted right up to the shrine's destruction in 1538. King Henry III was present during the transfer of Becket's remains to a new, specifically built shrine in the Cathedral on the fiftieth anniversary of Becket's 'translation' on 7 July 1220. On the feast of the translation in 1285, King Edward I was accompanied by the royal family on pilgrimage to Canterbury, where the king made offerings to the shrine including several images of pure gold. Edward I also made substantial offerings

2 "The Constitutions of Clarendon", in Carl Stephenson and Frederick George Marcham (eds.), *Sources of English Constitutional History*, (New York, 1972), I, pp. 73-6

3 Frank Barlow, *Thomas Becket*, (Berkeley, 1986), p. 105

4 Quoted in Barlow, *Thomas Becket*, p. 245

5 Quoted in Scully, 'The Unmaking of a Saint', p. 582

6 Bull of Pope Alexander III (12 March 1173), in *English Historical Documents*, II, pp. 774-5

7 Scully, 'The Unmaking of a Saint', p. 583

SAINT  
THOMAS OF CANTERBURY  
MARTYRED



The Martyrdom of Saint Thomas Becket (Romanesque)



to the shrine in 1297 and again in 1300. In the later medieval period, the popularity of Becket's tomb fluctuated somewhat, but the jubilee years still attracted extraordinarily large crowds. The jubilee in 1420, for example, was attended by over 100,000 pilgrims. Edward III made annual visits to Canterbury Cathedral and Henry VI often made several visits a year. Henry VII also had a devotion to Saint Thomas, because in his will he 'stipulated that a silver gilt statue of himself in a kneeling position was to be placed at the shrine.'<sup>8</sup> Henry VIII even made regular offerings to the shrine, and on one occasion he was accompanied by Emperor Charles V.

Henry VIII's devotion to Saint Thomas of Canterbury, Becket's status as a saint, and the sumptuous shrine in Canterbury Cathedral, were not to survive the Reformation. Cromwell's Injunctions to the Clergy (1536) expressed concerns regarding 'images, relics, or miracles for any superstition or lucre,' and pilgrimages to saint's shrines were strongly discouraged.<sup>9</sup> Henry VIII's changing attitude to Becket's shrine can be seen when he went to Canterbury in 1533, but did not visit the shrine. It could be supposed that Henry was turning away from a saint whose martyrdom represented the antithesis of what he was attempting to do with the Church in England. Becket stood for the autonomy of the Church from state control, and so it seemed politically dangerous to have him venerated as a saint during the Reformation. To quote one historian, 'The centrepiece of Cromwell's program was the royal supremacy, and few figures in English history seemed to stand more against it than Thomas Becket.'<sup>10</sup> Becket had not only stood against royal authority, he also appealed to the foreign powers of France and the papacy. Therefore, at this stage of the Reformation, the dismantling of Becket's sainthood was not, as such, an attack on the cults surrounding saints themselves, but rather a politically motivated attack on this particular saint. Becket's reputation

had to be destroyed so that he could not be held up as a model for the clergy during the Reformation.

Henry attacked Becket's character, his cause and his canonization. Officially sanctioned iconoclasm had begun in 1535 with the destruction of relics, but it was not until September 1538 that Becket's shrine was destroyed. Henry was present in Canterbury from late summer, and it was there that he received Cromwell's draft for the second set of Royal Injunctions. Cromwell further elaborated on his mention of pilgrimages in the first of the Royal Injunctions, stating that they were linked with 'that most deplorable sin of idolatry' and ordered that they should be stopped.<sup>11</sup> He also discussed the curtailment of devotion to saints and explicitly mentioned Saint Thomas: 'the Commemoration of Thomas Becket, sometime Archbishop of Canterbury... shall be clean omitted.'<sup>12</sup> Having attacked the commemoration of Becket, the next step was to destroy his shrine at Canterbury Cathedral, which took place over several days in September 1538. One modern study of the destruction narrates, 'Thus this "holy of holies" was destroyed and its treasures of three and a half centuries were packed into so many chests that they filled twenty-six carts.'<sup>13</sup> One of these treasures, a ruby given by Louis VII of France during his visit with Henry II in 1179, was made into a thumb ring for Henry VIII. Cranmer ordered the removal of the iconography of Becket's martyrdom from the archdiocesan seals. Saint Thomas Becket was, sometimes quite literally, obliterated from history.

Now that his shrine had been destroyed, the final phase of attack against Becket's sainthood began. No longer the martyr saint, Becket was transformed into a symbol of what the Henrician Reformation had rejected. In the words of Bishop Stephen Gardiner of Winchester, Becket was now the symbol of 'the Babilonical bawdy Romysche church

8 *ibid.*, p. 585

9 *ibid.*, p. 589

10 *ibid.*, p. 589

11 'The Second Royal Injunctions of Henry VIII, 1538,' in *English Historical Documents*, V, pp. 811-14

12 *ibid.*, p. 814

13 Scully, 'The Unmaking of a Saint', p. 593



Canterbury Cathedral, the site of Thomas's martyrdom and shrine

and religion... vile painted lecherous whore, Rose of Rome.<sup>14</sup> A rather peculiar example of the assaults on Becket's character is an account of a fictitious 'trial' held against him, written towards the end of 1538. The account states that the trial was held in the April of 1538, and that Becket had been summoned to the court to answer for his alleged crimes of treason. Since Becket, obviously, didn't show up to provide a defence for himself, he was judged as a traitor in August of that year. Which just happened to be a month before his shrine was destroyed, and thus it provided a retroactive justification for its demolition.

On 17 December 1538, Henry VIII was excommunicated by Pope Paul III, and among the reasons given in the papal bull, were 'the unjustified executions and desecrations that had been ordered by the king, with special reference made to the destruction of the shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury and the callous treatment of his remains.'<sup>15</sup> It

was alleged by Pope Paul III that Henry 'had commanded the body of St Thomas of Canterbury to be burnt and the ashes scattered to the wind.'<sup>16</sup> Becket's biographer, John Butler, has extensively studied this assertion and states that there is no decisive evidence which suggests that Becket's bones were burnt or else buried somewhere else.<sup>17</sup>

Attacks against Becket increased following Henry VIII's excommunication from the Rome. Cromwell sent a circular letter to the bishops of England instructing that all veneration of the ex-saint Thomas of Canterbury should be immediately stopped. Many images of Becket were covered over or destroyed entirely, and his name was wiped from liturgical books. The eastern crypt of Canterbury Cathedral, which was once occupied by a newly

14 Quoted in Anne Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, (London, 2004), p. 239

15 Scully, 'The Unmaking of a Saint', p. 596

16 Quoted in John Butler, *The Quest for Becket's Bones: The Mystery of the Relics of St. Thomas Becket of Canterbury*, (New Haven, 1995) p. 119. The allegation was made on 25 October 1538, before the papal bull of excommunication.

17 *ibid.*, pp. 133, 160-1

deemed traitor, was walled off. Upwards of 80 parish churches which had been named after him were forced to change; for example in the early 1540s at Ashbourne, a chapel and guild simply changed from St. Thomas (Becket) to St. Thomas (the Apostle).

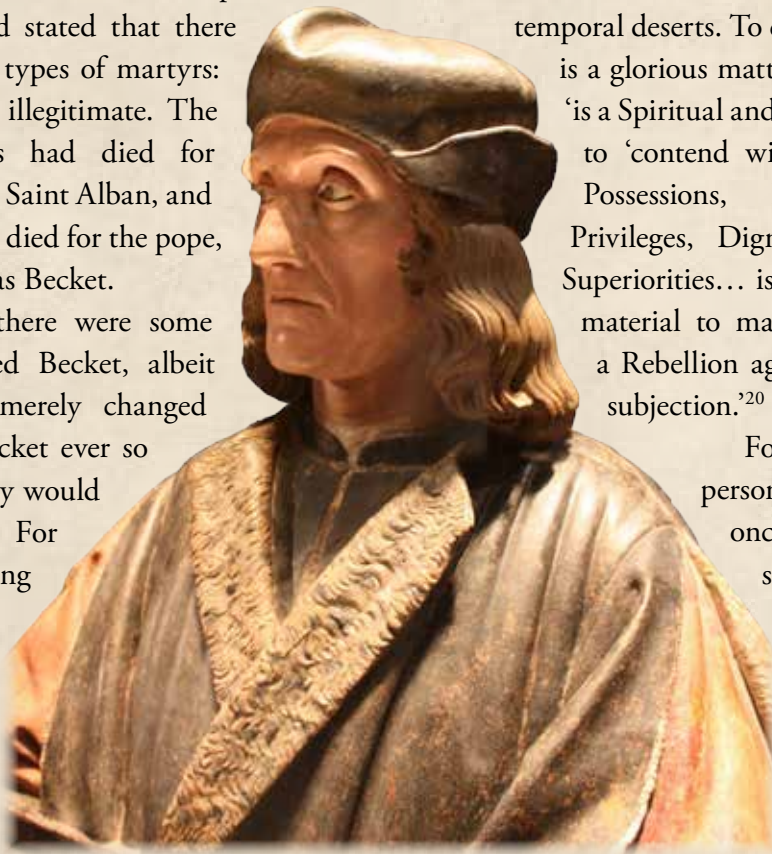
In the attacks against Becket, iconoclasm and royal decrees were not the only weapons, and writers began to join in on defaming the once venerated martyr. John Bale argued that the early and “pure” church of England had been corrupted by the papacy, and stated that there were two different types of martyrs: the legitimate and illegitimate. The legitimate martyrs had died for Christ, for example Saint Alban, and the illegitimate had died for the pope, for example Thomas Becket.

Of course, there were some who still supported Becket, albeit in secret. Some merely changed their images of Becket ever so slightly, so that they would avoid detection. For example, by replacing the archiepiscopal cross with a wool-comb an image of Saint Thomas of Canterbury, a parish in Ashford, transformed it

into Saint Blaise. When Mary Tudor succeeded the throne and restored Catholicism as the official religion, Becket’s liturgy and pageant at Canterbury were restored in 1555, but not his shrine.<sup>18</sup> During Elizabeth I’s reign, ‘the essentially Protestant religious settlement of 1559 and ...[her] long reign of almost half a century largely sealed Becket’s fate.’<sup>19</sup> In the tradition set forward by John Bale,

John Foxes’ *Acts and Monuments*, generally known as ‘Foxes Book of Martyrs’, went further than before:

‘This *Becket*...did not (as some affirm) dye a martyr, but a stubborn man against his King; who had preferred him from Archdeacon, to Lord Chancellor of *England*, and after to be Archbishop of *Canterbury*... If the cause make a martyr (as is said), I see not why we should esteem *Thomas Becket* to die a Martyr, more than any other whom the Princes Sword doth here temporally punish for their temporal deserts. To die for the Church I grant is a glorious matter’, but since the Church ‘is a Spiritual and not a Temporal Church’, to ‘contend with Princes for temporal Possessions, Liberties, Exemptions, Privileges, Dignities, Patrimonies, and Superiorities... is no matter (to my mind) material to make a Martyr, but rather a Rebellion against them to whom we subjection.’<sup>20</sup>



The first Tudor king, Henry VII, was particularly devoted to the veneration of Saint Thomas Becket

Foxe obliterated any personal merits Becket was once attributed with by stressing his allegiance with Rome, ‘so superstitious was he to the Obedience of the Pope, that he forgot his Obedience to his natural and most beneficial King.’ He also argued that his sainthood was based

on falsehood and forgery, an opinion which would dominate Protestant circles for a long time, ‘If throe, [the miracles are] not wrought by God, but by the contrary Spirit; or else feigned and forged of idle Monks, and religious bellies, for the exaltation of their Churches, and profit of their pouches.’<sup>21</sup> Although some remained, secretly, faithful to the once lauded saint, the archbishop’s reputation

18 Scully, ‘The Unmaking of a Saint’, p. 599  
19 *ibid.*, p. 599

20 John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*, quoted in Anne Duggan, *Thomas Becket*, pp. 239-40  
21 *ibid.*, p. 240



continued largely as a traitor. Thus, Becket can perhaps be counted as one of the victims of the English

Reformation, despite his death three and a half centuries before it began.

## LAUREN BROWNE

Barlow, Frank, *Thomas Becket*, (Berkeley, 1986)

Butler, John, *The Quest for Becket's Bones: The Mystery of the Relics of St. Thomas Becket of Canterbury*, (New Haven, 1995)

Douglas, David and George Greenway (eds.), *English Historical Documents*, (London, 1953)

Duggan, Anne, *Thomas Becket*, (London, 2004)

Scully, Robert E., 'The Unmaking of a Saint: Thomas Becket and the English Reformation', *The Catholic Historical Review*, lxxxvi, iv, (2000), pp. 579-602

Stephenson, Carl and Frederick George Marcham (eds.), *Sources of English Constitutional History*, (New York, 1972)



Paul III, the pope who excommunicated a king.



---

Usually associated with religious conservatism, Bishop Stephen Gardiner was nonetheless an outspoken critic of the Becket cult in the 1530s.

### LAUREN BROWNE

Lauren is currently studying at Queen's University, Belfast, for her Ph. D. in early modern attitudes to queenship. She previously completed her undergraduate with a dissertation on Elizabeth of York and her postgraduate on Eleanor of Aquitaine. Lauren is originally from Northern Ireland, where she discovered her love for History and the arts.



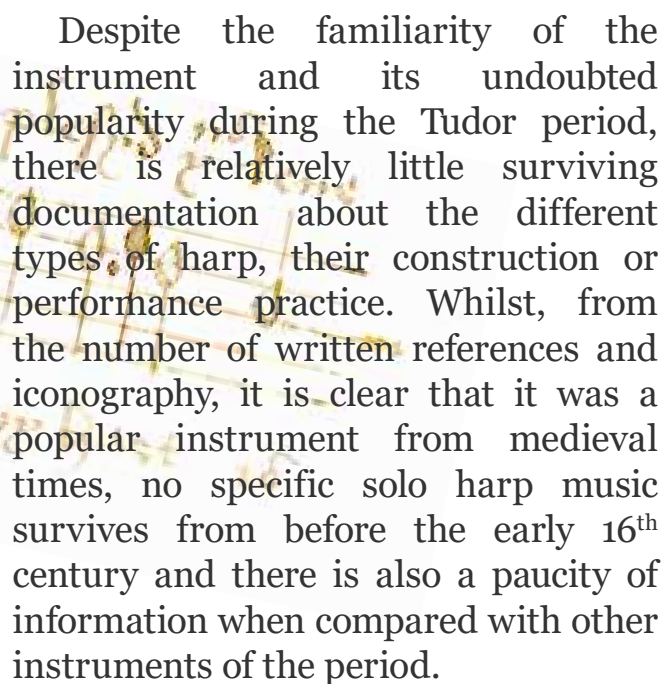


# HARPING ON... A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RENAISSANCE HARP

by Jane Moulder



*I am sure that the majority of readers of Tudor Life will be familiar of the painting of Henry VIII playing a harp; the portrait epitomises our image of Henry as musician, aesthete and lover of life. The harp must be one of the most instantly recognisable of musical instruments even if it is only from having seen it on a bottle of Guinness!*



Despite the familiarity of the instrument and its undoubted popularity during the Tudor period, there is relatively little surviving documentation about the different types of harp, their construction or performance practice. Whilst, from the number of written references and iconography, it is clear that it was a popular instrument from medieval times, no specific solo harp music survives from before the early 16<sup>th</sup> century and there is also a paucity of information when compared with other instruments of the period.

The harp has traditionally associated in iconography with King David and it was therefore viewed as a noble instrument and considered acceptable to be played by the noble classes. It was even considered to have supernatural powers which could “*destroy thy feynde’s myght*”. According to the 12<sup>th</sup> century ‘Laws of Wales’, the three things that every gentleman should possess were “*his harp, his cloak, and his chessboard*” and in his house he should have “*a virtuous wife, his cushion on his chair and his harp in tune*”. The harp was undoubtedly played at the royal court and Henry VIII, as well as playing the instrument himself, also employed two harpists, both of whom were blind ‘*blynde Dicke*’ and ‘*blynde Moore*’. Its popularity as a court instrument continued through into the later 16<sup>th</sup> century and a harper was also featured in the lavish entertainments staged for Elizabeth I at Kenilworth in 1575.

However, it wasn’t just for the preserve of the elite and the harp was an instrument that crossed

the social divide and it was played, amongst others, by minstrels who used it to accompany their singing and storytelling. One such person was Richard Sheale from Tamworth and he is, due to the fact that he wrote about his life and his adventures, virtually the only English minstrel whose whole life story is known to us in any detail. He described in a self-penned, long ballad about the occasion on which he was robbed of £60.00 (a huge sum in 1563) on a journey down to London. He recounted how he wrongly believed that by carrying his harp it would indicate to any potential robber that he was a minstrel and therefore would not be worth robbing as “*minstrels oft with money they be not much infected*”!

Frustratingly, the harps of these known players are not described in any detail so we don’t know which of the various types, styles and shapes of harp they were playing.

By the Tudor period, the harp was already an old and distinguished instrument and its ancestry can be traced back into ancient Classical civilisation and it belonged to a family of instruments which had unfretted strings stretched across a frame. Whilst some of the ancient Greek lyres look similar, the distinguishing feather of a harp is that the strings rise directly from the soundboard and do not pass over a bridge. The first surviving depiction of a European harp comes from the Pictish culture dating from the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> centuries and whilst the carvings are too worn to give us detailed information, they are very clearly of a harp rather than a lyre.

From the medieval period onwards there were two main forms of harp: the small lap harp, such as that played by Henry VIII, which was small enough to play on the knee or supported using a belt strapped to the waist, and the 'Gothic' style harp which was taller and had more strings.

The small medieval harp had about 19 strings, giving the player a range of about two and a half octaves. It was undoubtedly a very popular instrument and was mentioned in many early manuscripts and stories. Chaucer included the harp in several of his Canterbury Tales and he described how it was played to accompany songs as well as to entertain weary pilgrims in a tavern.

There are numerous references to it being the "merry" harp and calls for it to be "toggen with his nayles sharpe". This indicates that the strings would have been plucked with the fingernails rather than the finger tips. Whilst small harps were strung with gut, this same technique was used on the small wire strung harps of Scotland and Ireland.



An 8th century carving of a harp in Monifeith, Scotland

These Celtic harps were different from the medieval harps as, whilst still a physically small instrument, they had significantly more strings which gave them greater musical range. The different sounds and playing style of the Celtic harp is neatly portrayed in a commentary by a court chaplain



The early small harp depicted in the York Psalter dating from the 12th century



to Henry II. In 1183, he commented on the technical artistry of Irish harpers “*their style is not, as on the British instrument to which we are accustomed, deliberate and solemn but quick and lively. It is remarkable that, with such rapid finger work, the musical rhythm is maintained and that, by unfailingly disciplined art, the integrity of the tune is fully preserved throughout the ornate rhythms and the profusely intricate polyphony. They introduce and leave rhythmic motifs so subtly, they play the tinkling sounds on the thinner strings above the sustained sound of the thicker string so freely, they take such secret delight and caress the strings so sensuously that the greatest paid of their art seems to lie in veiling it*”. The Irish harp was known throughout Europe and writing in Italy in 1581, Vincenzo Galilei remarks that “*this most ancient instrument was brought to us from Ireland, where it is excellently made and in great quantities. The people of that island play it a great deal and have done so for many centuries, also it is the*



A wire strung Celtic harp in the Museum of Scotland. This particular harp was reputedly owned by Mary, Queen of Scots. Apparently Beatrix Gardyn presented the instrument to her in 1563 whilst they were on a hunting trip together although there is no evidence to confirm the legend.

*special emblem of the realm, where it is depicted and sculptured on public building and on coins”.*

Michael Praetorius, a German composer who wrote several musical



treatises at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, described the Irish harp as having “rather thick brass strings and a particularly lovely tone”. This tone was also commented on by Francis Bacon “No harp hath the sound so melting and prolonged as the Irish harp”. He also noted that the sound of the harp blended well with the bass viol, indicating that it wasn’t only a solo instrument and would have been played in a consort.

Despite the proliferation of the Celtic harp in Ireland and Scotland, it was the larger, gut strung, ‘Gothic’ harp that seems to have predominated in Europe throughout the late medieval and Tudor period. These were larger than other harps and could be over three feet tall and have 24 or 26 strings. Although they were made in a variety of sizes and styles, overall the Gothic harp had a distinctive and very elegant shape.



From a woodcut by Albrecht Durer

By studying the pictures of the gothic harps from the period, it is clear that the majority of them have ‘brays’, a type of angled peg, fitted to the soundboard and this feature is clearly shown in the drawing made by Glareanus in 1547 (next page, top right).

The brays’ purpose is to not only hold the strings in the soundbox but also to lightly touch the string. This point of contact causes the string to “buzz” and vibrate when it is plucked and the effect was said at the time to sound like a donkey’s bray. The buzz from the brays helped to amplify the sound which was important as the soundbox on this type of harp was often small and narrow, and therefore quieter. More importantly, the buzz helped to accent the beat which was especially important when playing dance music. The sound of the bray harp is reminiscent of the Indian sitar and it is not what people associate with

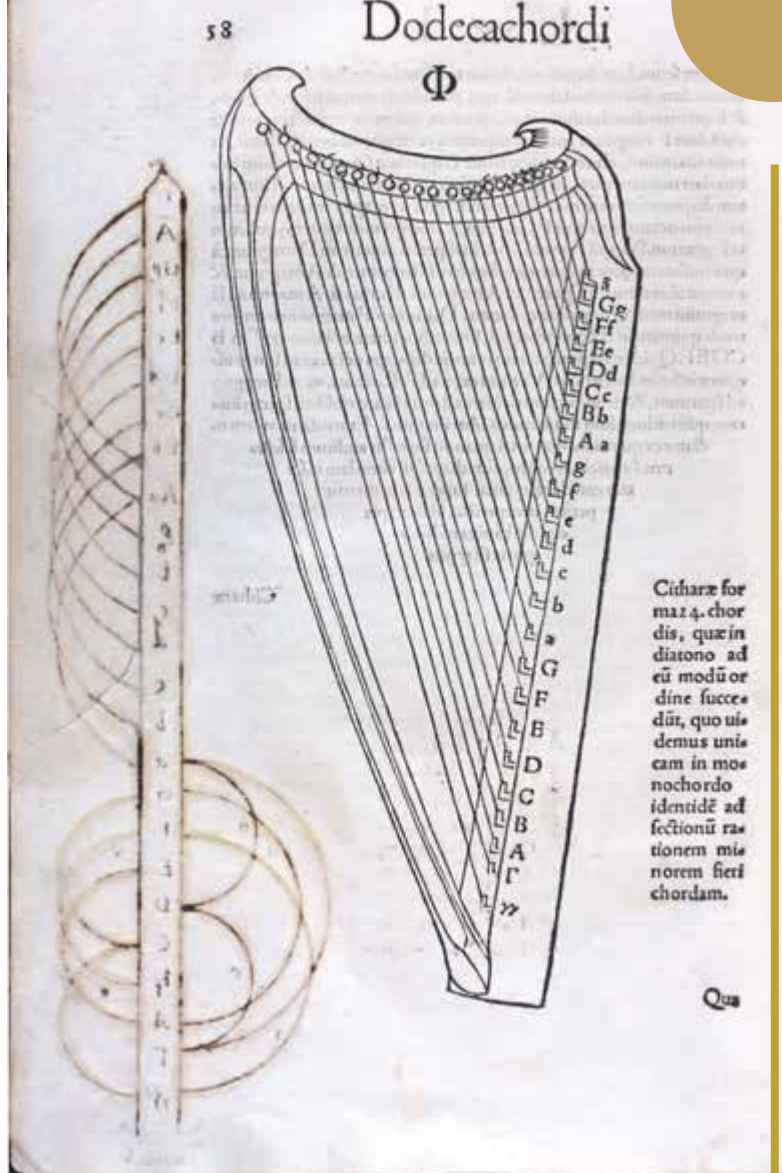


From Hieronymus Bosch’s “A Garden of Earthly Delights” – Prado, Madrid

the harp but it would certainly have been familiar to the Tudors! There are relatively few players of this type of harp today so it is not heard very often but if you would like to know what it sounds like, then do watch this video by an excellent player, Leah Stuttard <http://bit.ly/2xGPwOt>

For a player of the medieval and Renaissance harp, one of the biggest challenges was being able to play accidentals – or sharp and flats. Today modern harps have levers and pedals which allow the musician to quickly change key or play an accidental. This limitation was a problem and it restricted the musical capabilities of the instrument as the player had to decide which key to play in and tune the strings accordingly before commencing playing. This approach differed from other plucked instruments, such as the lute, which were fully chromatic and so the problem did not arise. A technique to overcome the problem could be used on the gothic harp whereby the player physically pushed the string with their thumb against the cross bar in order to shorten it and thus raise the pitch of the note. But this was not always satisfactory or possible and this approach could not be achieved on wire strung or small harps as the strings were either too tight or too short.

To overcome this problem of changing key, the Arpa Doppia, or double harp, was developed in Italy sometime in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century. Another parallel row of strings was added to the other side of the string



arm and the strings were also crossed over so that the player could access both sides of the harp. This way one row could be tuned to the accidentals and accessed by either hand. This sort of harp was much larger than the gothic model and had up to 58 strings and its popularity soon spread. By the end of the century a more successful model had been developed, this time with three sets of strings – the two outside ranks being tuned to the diatonic scale and the middle rank having the accidental notes. This type sometimes referred to as a triple harp but it still kept its name as Arpa Doppia, which referred more to its large size rather than to the ranks of strings. It is this instrument which became the national instrument

of Wales and is a symbol of the country. Marin Mersenne described this harp in his book, *Harmonie Universelle*, in 1636 saying that it had been invented 30 or 40 years previously by Mr Luc Anthonie Eustache, a Neopolitan officer who was in the service of Pope Paul V. This larger, versatile instrument became a continuo instrument and was widely used in grand court entertainments and in the new early baroque style of performance.

As well as there being relatively little detailed information about these early harps, likewise there is little surviving music for the instrument from the Tudor period. This could well be that the players learnt and developed their repertoire aurally, following in the minstrel tradition. However, another reason could be the lack of a standardised tablature system for writing down the music. Normal staff notation shows the notes and the rhythm, leaving to the player to determine the way to produce the correct pitch. But tablature is linked to a specific instrument and shows the performer the rhythm and the exact placement of hands and fingers for all of the notes. Standardised tablature was in place for other string instruments such as the lute, cittern and viola da gamba. Whilst hardly any tablature survives from the British Isles, one remarkable document has. It is known as the Robert ap Huw Manuscript and is dated to around 1623 although all of the music it contains comes from a much earlier period, 1340 – 1500. Robert came from Anglesey but was a harpist employed by the court of James I. It is



The triple harp depicted by Marin Mersenne in *Harmonie Universelle*, 1636

intriguing as to why he was notating music from such a long time before: perhaps, by writing it down, he was hoping to preserve an old, purely aural, repertoire for the future. The music is in itself intriguing and it is clear that the player must have created their own improvisations around the basic chord structure. The tablature style is unique as it contains elements of lute, harp and keyboard tablatures from Germany, Spain and Italy and Robert ap Huw may well have developed it because there wasn't an existing system locally that could be used. Consequently, having been discovered in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was many years before it was finally decoded. The leading researcher



A page of harp tablature from the Robert ap Huw manuscript.

and performer on the Robert ap Huw manuscript is Bill Taylor and you can hear some of this beguiling music on this video <http://bit.ly/2wTnYRY>

Another rare survivor which gives us an indication of early harp repertoire is the set of documents which once belonged to George Cely in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. George was a wool merchant and he spent a lot of time in Calais carrying out business. In the papers he described how, to while away his

time after trade was completed, he took dancing lessons and tuition on the bray harp from a Thomas Rede. It is a fascinating account and he even described that he had a lesson on how to set the brays. Whilst there is no actual music tablature in the papers he wrote down the titles of the tunes and songs that he was working on thus giving us an insight into the repertoire for the instrument. He was playing predominantly English music, both popular dance and song tunes as well as the new art music by composers such as John Dunstaple.

These two rare documents give us a glimpse of what the early harp sounded like and whilst it is a pity that more have not survived, we must be grateful to performers like Bill Taylor and Leah Stuttard who are pioneering and promoting such a wonderful instrument.

I have to confess that I love the harp and its repertoire and find that the sound can easily help smooth away the day's stresses. I was so fascinated by the bray harp that I commissioned one to be made for me. However, I am sad to admit that, after several months of trying to grasp the technique, I have decided that I will stick to playing woodwind instruments! Thankfully, the harp now has a new home with a good player.

**JANE MOULDER**

Baines, Anthony, *European & American Musical Instruments* (Chancellor Press) 1983  
 Baines, Anthony, *The Oxford Companion to Musical Instruments* (Oxford University Press) 1992  
 Montagu, Jeremy, *The World of Medieval & Renaissance Musical Instruments* (David & Charles) 1976  
 Morrow, Michael, *The Renaissance Harp, the Instrument and its Music* (Early Music, October 1979 p499-510)  
 Munrow, David, *Instruments of the Middle Ages and Renaissance.*(Oxford University Press) 1976  
 Taylor, Andrew, *The Songs and Travels of a Tudor Minstrel, Richard Sheale of Tamworth* (Boydell Press) 2012



# MARGARET CLITHEROW: ELIZABETHAN MARTYR

---

**Conor Byrne** uncovers the story of a well known martyr...

---

**M**argaret Clitherow is one of the most famous martyrs in English history. Born in 1556 in York, Margaret was the daughter of the wax-chandler and sheriff Thomas Middleton. At the age of fifteen, she married John

Clitherow and converted to Catholicism three years later, apparently inspired by tales of the suffering of both priests and lay people for their faith. Four years prior to her conversion, in 1570, Pope Pius V issued the bull *Regnans in Excelsis*, which excommunicated 'the pretended Queen of England' Elizabeth I and released her subjects from obedience to her. Those who continued to obey her would also be excommunicated.

In this highly confessionalised age, to be excommunicated by the Church was a heinous matter, a matter literally of life and death. Although Elizabeth's Church had enacted a Protestant religious settlement that was grounded in a belief that the pope was the embodiment of idolatry and corruption, not all of her subjects were attracted to the terms of the settlement. To be a Catholic in Elizabethan England became an increasingly dangerous position, as the reign progressed. While most English Catholics appear to have supported the queen and her religious settlement, or at least gave the appearance of doing so, a vocal minority were engaged in acts of opposition that were intended to effect Elizabeth's deposition and the restoration of the Roman Catholic faith, as had been revealed the year before the bull was issued when rebellion in the



**A modern marker for the shrine of Saint Margaret Clitherow (Photo: Conor Byrne)**



north broke out. The desire to restore Catholicism was closely associated by Elizabeth's regime with the establishment of her cousin and rival, Mary Queen of Scots, as England's queen.

Margaret's opposition to the religious settlement began with her refusal to attend church; fortunately for Margaret, her husband paid the fines that were imposed on those who did not attend church services. She was imprisoned in 1577 and later incarcerated at York Castle for her acts of disobedience. Such punishment, however, did not prevent Margaret from harbouring fugitive priests and providing her neighbours with facilities to access the sacraments. In 1585, harbouring priests became a capital offence. The following year, the Clitherow residence was searched and the priests' secret room was revealed, in which were located items of Catholic worship. Fortunately the resident priest was hidden next door, avoiding exposure. In March 1586, Margaret was charged with harbouring priests. She was encouraged to plead but to no avail: by refusing trial by jury, Margaret incurred the penalty of *peine forte et dure*. Both preachers and relatives visited her in prison and beseeched her to plead to avoid the penalty; some even suggested that she should reveal

### The horrible martyrdom of Saint Margaret

that she was pregnant and therefore avoid execution.

These suggestions went unheeded. On 25 March, Margaret was escorted to the tollbooth on Ouse Bridge and was pressed to death under seven or eight hundredweight. She was later buried in secret with Catholic rites.

Susannah Brietz Monta has asserted that 'for early modern martyrologists a martyr's religion, not his/her gender, was the foundational analytical category', but it is also evident that a female martyr's gender could prove useful to male martyrologists in emphasising the cruelty of the persecutors. The priest John Mush, who served as confessor to Margaret Clitherow, wrote an account of Margaret's martyrdom that supports Monta's contention that the discourse of femininity could be applied to martyrdom narratives as a means of stressing the cruelty of heretic persecutors. In Mush's narrative, it is striking how closely Margaret conformed to contemporary gender ideals. Characterising the victim as a 'virtuous and holy martyr', Mush stressed that Margaret was 'a spectacle for others' on account of her 'virtue and strictness of life', and praised her humble and charitable nature. Rejecting pleas that she attend church in order to save her life, Margaret

was an ‘innocent lamb delivered up into the butcher’s hands.’ There is some evidence that she was desirous of martyrdom, in the belief that it would secure her salvation; it was noted that she displayed a joyous or peaceful countenance at her execution. Margaret’s children emulated their mother’s recusant activities: Anne became a nun at St. Ursula’s in Louvain, having briefly been imprisoned at Lancaster for her faith, while Henry studied at the colleges in Rheims and Rome before joining the Capuchins and later the Dominicans. Margaret’s stepson William became a

seminary priest, while Thomas was imprisoned as a recusant.

Margaret Clitherow’s shrine can still be visited in York today. It is part of the parish of St Wilfrid’s Catholic Church, and Mass is celebrated there every Saturday morning. The saint’s hand is said to be housed at the Bar Convent. Visitors to the shrine are able to reflect on the courage and piety exhibited by Margaret Clitherow in an age when refusal to conform to the religion of the state could have deadly consequences.

**CONOR BYRNE**

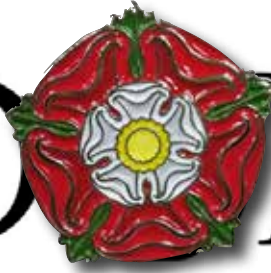


Elizabeth I's later years were marked by increased persecution of Catholics.



# THE TUDOR SOCIETY

*MEMBERS' BULLETIN*



## **Merry Christmas to all our members!**

It only seems like yesterday that I was writing a similar message, yet here we are again, a whole 12 months on in the Tudor Society. That means that since I last wrote my Christmas message we have produced 12 amazing magazines, had 12 incredible expert talks for full members, enjoyed an amazing 52 additional weekly Tudor video discussions, had 52 “this week in history” posts, plus many more articles from our contributors and experts. It is only because of YOU that we’re able to bring so much Tudor history and research out into the world, so thank you for your continued support.

Make sure you come to our informal Christmas Party on Friday 15th December. We’ll be in the chatroom with a glass of our favourite tippie to discuss and chat and generally have fun. I hope you will join us all!

---

Please get involved with the Tudor Society  
WE RELY ON YOUR ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP  
TO MAKE THE SOCIETY THE BEST IT  
CAN BE!





# THE CINEMATIC CREATION OF MARTYRS IN 'ELIZABETH'

*By Emma Elizabeth Taylor*



A martyr is defined as someone who dies for their personal or political beliefs and, unfortunately, martyrs were a relatively common sight in Tudor England. Due to continuous political and religious turmoil, countless men and women lost their lives over the course of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and beyond; many of them during the reign of the Catholic Queen Mary, who earned the moniker 'Bloody Mary' for the executions of Protestant dissenters. While there were a range of execution tactics used to dispatch religious and political enemies, the preferred execution method for Protestant dissenters during Mary's reign was burning at the stake – a chilling reminder of the fires of hell, where many considered these perceived sinners were destined to dwell in for eternity. Around 300 people were burnt at the stake during Mary's five-year reign and these executions impacted the public consciousness of the time. Many of the executed Protestants were considered martyrs to the Protestant cause, and these executions did little to calm the murmurs of dissent that were beginning to spread throughout Mary's kingdom.



---

Kathy Bates as Queen Mary I in  
"Elizabeth" (CinemaDe)

While these executions were, without a doubt, horrific, they remain one of the most notable series of events in a post-Henry VIII Tudor society. The 1998 film *Elizabeth*, starring Cate Blanchett in the title role, opens with a heart-wrenching execution scene of three Protestant dissenters, who we see experiencing completely inhumane torture prior to the execution. The film opens with a short introduction to the times; detailing that Henry VIII is dead and his daughter Mary sits on the throne. This is accompanied by images of Mary saturated with a deep, dark, blood red, meant to indicate the blood being spilt during her reign. Elizabeth is referred to as the 'Catholics' fear' before the opening titles appear, accompanied by a lush choral symphony.

The choral symphony and opening titles quickly fade to black, and are replaced by a female voice screeching what seems to be a prayer, all while the camera pans over a letter being stamped. It is a quick flash, but we can clearly see the words 'By the Queen' while a royal seal is pressed onto the letter by a bejewelled hand. The woman's prayer continues while the cam-

era pans over chains, rudimentary handcuffs and instruments of torture. This is all shot from above, looking down on the prisoners, in what's often referred to as a 'gods-eye view', a camera shot that makes the audience feel omniscient, yet uncomfortable. The faces of the prisoners are partially obscured, their necks bent at strange angles; it is not a camera shot that encourages the audience to feel comfortable. We see this torture in snippets, an omniscient yet helpless force, and this helps to heighten the experience for the viewer. The face of our torturer, however, is obscured by a heavy metal helmet; he remains an anonymous, threatening force to us as well as the torture victims.

We see two men and a woman being subjected to a forced haircut by the prison guards. Haircuts are used in cinema in a variety of different ways; usually marking a change in a character's identity, or a turning point in their life. The forced haircut, however, has somewhat different implications. While it is a portent of worse things to come, it is also a very visceral invasion of personhood, effectively robbing

**For many, Queen Mary's burning of Protestant heretics remains the most recognisable horror from the 16th century.**





---

Kate Blanchett as the young Elizabeth I (Paste)

the prisoner of their identity and making them anonymous and unrecognisable. Hair is symbolic of life and strength, hearkening back to the biblical myths of Samson. This removal of bodily autonomy from the prisoners is symbolic of the lack of control that they now have over their lives and destinies. It is also clearly a traumatic and painful process; we see the guards wash the razors used to cut their hair, and the water turns a deep, blood red. We can see the prisoners bloodied scalps and are witness to the razor cutting across the head, leaving a trail of blood. At this stage, a casual audience member will likely not realise that these prisoners are subject to this because of religion, and once this is revealed, the audience has already felt sympathy for the prisoners. This identifies these prisoners as heroic and martyr-like from the start of the story, and by starting the film in this way, the filmmakers seek to establish the importance of these executions from the outset.

We then see the three prisoners being led to their deaths by guards, who open a heavy gate to allow the prisoners through. They are clothed in long, filthy shifts in an off-white colour; they have clearly been living in these clothes for a while. They all wear the same garment, regardless of gender, and with their shaved heads, they are virtually indistinguishable from each other. The shift was a garment worn by men and women alike; it was the Tudor equivalent of underwear, and would never be worn by itself in public. This, alongside the shaved head, add to the humiliation already experienced by the prisoners. The gates, robes and the trinity of prisoners have an eerily religious aspect to it; they could almost be angels, walking through the gates of heaven, which is especially emphasised by the gods-eye camera view. The number three is also representative of the Holy Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Many of these religious references are perhaps not oblique on first viewing,

but come into play when one examines the scene in relation to the creation of martyrs.

The prisoners are led to the scaffold through a crowd that seems decidedly muted for an execution; they are not a baying mob calling for blood. There is movement, but none of the shouting or violence we have come to expect from execution audiences in film. The crowd jostles, but most members look concerned and worried, rather than assured in this decision of execution; it truly feels like a crowd who has not passed judgement on these prisoners. The most striking contrast in this scene, however, is the contrast between the men of the Catholic Church and the prisoners. The camera lingers over the wealthy clothing and accoutrements of the Church; we see a gloved hand resting on an elaborate bible, deep purple and red silk costumes, golden chains, golden crosses; all symbolic of a wealthy yet distant organisation. The people in the crowd are simply dressed, in browns, greys and off whites, having much more in common with the prisoners than with the elaborately robed men of the Church. Once again, we do not see much of their faces; they are obscured by hats, crosses, and chains. This scene is not about the individual actions of these men; but rather representative of the wider situation of the time. A speech is made regarding the sinners, making it clear that they are being executed by order of Queen Mary, and that, for their sins, they are doomed to burn in the fiery pits of hell for all eternity.

The three martyrs are tied in place atop a pile of wooden sticks, held in place with rough rope around their neck. If they struggle at all, one, or all of them, will be strangled of air; adding yet another gruesome, inhumane detail to this execution. The scene is still shot primarily from a gods-eye view, placing the martyrs in the centre of the frame. We cannot identify who is who, due to their shaved heads and identical cos-

tumes. We see the flames being lit at their feet, and the prisoner's screech prayers over the noise of the crackling fire. Here, the camera cuts to close-up shots of the crowd's face, intercut with shots of the prisoners faces. The crowd looks upset and concerned, many watching with hands covering their mouths, representative of them physically holding back their thoughts or objections. Close-up shots of the prisoner's faces show them contorted with agony while the flames grow higher; these flames are bright and horrible, standing out against the saturated colours of the crowd and surroundings. However, the action that makes the prisoners into martyrs is the action of the crowd. Shortly after the fire is lit, one of the prisoners calls out seeking help, crying out 'Help me! I burn too slowly!' The crowd begins to murmur loudly and push towards the prisoners, despite the protests of the guards. We hear someone in the crowd cry 'Help them! For God's sake, help them!', as we see the crowd pass bundles of wood over their heads to add to the fire. The guards attempt to hold them back, but the wood is added, and the fire burns even brighter, before engulfing the prisoners entirely. The guards react with anger, breaking up the crowd, faces still hidden by heavy metal helmets.

For a scene that lasts little more than five minutes, *Elizabeth* remains one of the most brutal, yet honest, representations of religious persecution during Mary's reign. We do not even learn the names of these prisoners, and barely have time to remember their faces, but the film establishes them as martyrs for the Protestant cause, and highlights the hugely problematic religious intolerance of Mary's reign. While we do not get the chance to know these characters, they are in our mind throughout the film, and this act of martyrdom shapes the lens with which we view Mary's and Elizabeth's reigns, and certainly stands as one of the most memorable examples of religious persecution in modern cinema.

**EMMA ELIZABETH TAYLOR**

DECEMBER'S EXPERT TALK



Thornbury Castle

by  
Sandra Vasoli  
&  
James Peacock



# Charlie

## THE LIVES OF TUDOR WOMEN

by  
Elizabeth Norton

# Book



Elizabeth Norton has written many books on individual Tudor women, each insightful and adding something new to the field, and so is a well-known name to members of *The Tudor Society*. *The Lives of Tudor Women* is her latest work and combines many of the features that made her previous works so popular, but, instead, focuses on the everyday lives of these women. She starts off by defining the book as a biography, but one of a woman who was 'a princess, a queen, a noblewoman, a merchant's wife, a servant, a rebel, a Protestant and a Catholic'. She aims to explore the lives of all of these Tudor women and, in this, she largely succeeds.

Norton has divided the book into seven sections or 'ages', mirroring the 'Seven Ages of Man'. She begins with Elizabeth of York's fourth pregnancy and the birth of the young Elizabeth Tudor and ends with Jane Dormer and the death of Elizabeth I. The author's accounts of these women often have little facts about life in general instead, such as the 'pleading the belly' section inserted halfway through Elizabeth of York's account. This was about women saying they were pregnant or, in some cases, trying to get pregnant in prisons in order to delay their execution. If successful, women would sometimes be granted a royal pardon and escape death.

*The Lives of Tudor Women* is an odd mix of social history and mini-biographies on Tudor women. The author looks at pregnancy, nurseries,

education for young girls etc. but all focusing on specific examples such as the young Elizabeth Tudor, Elizabeth Barton and Anne Askew. It cannot be called purely a social history book or a biography, but luckily the two work well together.

Elizabeth Norton's meticulous research is evident throughout, with extensive references and footnotes (which is often unfortunately left out of many new history books). She also includes many women that the reader wouldn't have heard of, such as Katherine Fenkyll and Cecily Burbage. She doesn't just focus on the royal family and nobility, which would have made her job much easier. Due to covering several women in one book, she can't dwell on these people, which is probably a blessing in disguise as there would not be enough to say on many of these women to fill a whole book.

I would recommend *The Lives of Tudor Women* to anyone wanting to learn more about the lives of both ordinary women and those of higher status living in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. I would also recommend it to those wanting to learn more about women who, due to lack of evidence, do not warrant or have a full biography. This includes the likes of Elizabeth Boleyn, Elizabeth Barton and Joan Bocher. Once again, Elizabeth Norton does not disappoint with her latest offering and it is a book that will be of use to both academics and casual readers alike.



# ANNE BOLEYN IN LONDON

by Lissa Chapman

Another new book that cannot easily be placed in just one genre is Lissa Chapman's *Anne Boleyn in London*. There have been many biographies on Anne Boleyn, but this isn't strictly a biography, it explores Anne's connections with London. It covers how the people of London felt about her, how it changed because of her etc. These two subjects don't mix quite as well, with the London connection sometimes feeling a little forced, yet Chapman has still produced an interesting book that is worth considering.

The author discusses what London would have been like for Anne Boleyn, impressively describing the sights and sounds in great detail. Chapman's writing style, for a first-time author, is readable and engaging, making the book seem more like a novel than non-fiction. She makes several interesting points, such as the Boleyn family probably not having as many allies in London as they might have wished. She deduces this from the fact that Anne's family didn't have a house in London, which is remarkable considering the ambition Thomas Boleyn had for himself and his family. Chapman then takes it a step further and explains:

*'From the sources available - and in this, as in so much else, the evidence is sketchy - the Boleyn faction was stronger at court than it was in London. As we have seen, the Boleyn family was relatively small, and the nature of Thomas Boleyn's international career meant that his contacts were largely either at court or overseas.'*

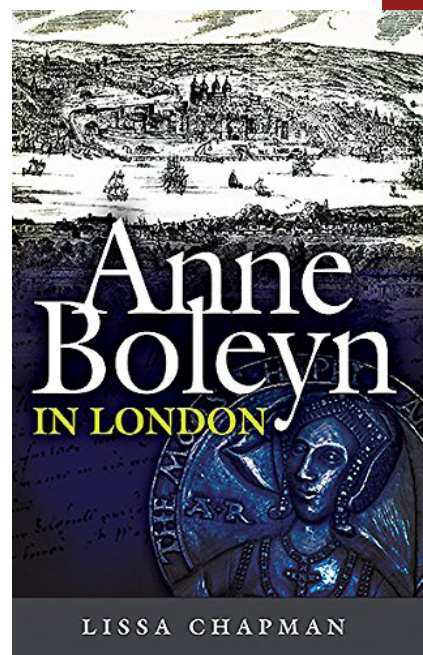
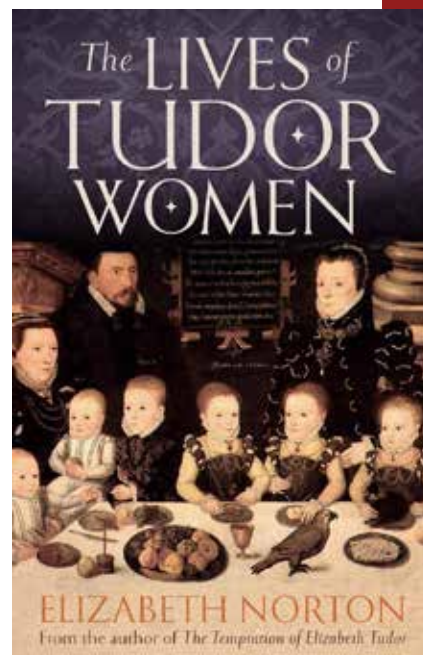
Unfortunately, Chapman repeats old myths that have long been discredited; such as Jane Parker (Anne Boleyn's sister-in-law) being a witness against her and that Jane's marriage to George had been unhappy. The author even mentions Julia Fox's biography on Jane, yet Chapman ignores the overwhelming evidence Fox provides against Jane's role in Anne's fall and mentions no contemporary sources to the contrary. She

also repeats and supports the sixth fingernail story, lowering the author's credibility, as that has been thoroughly disproved by now.

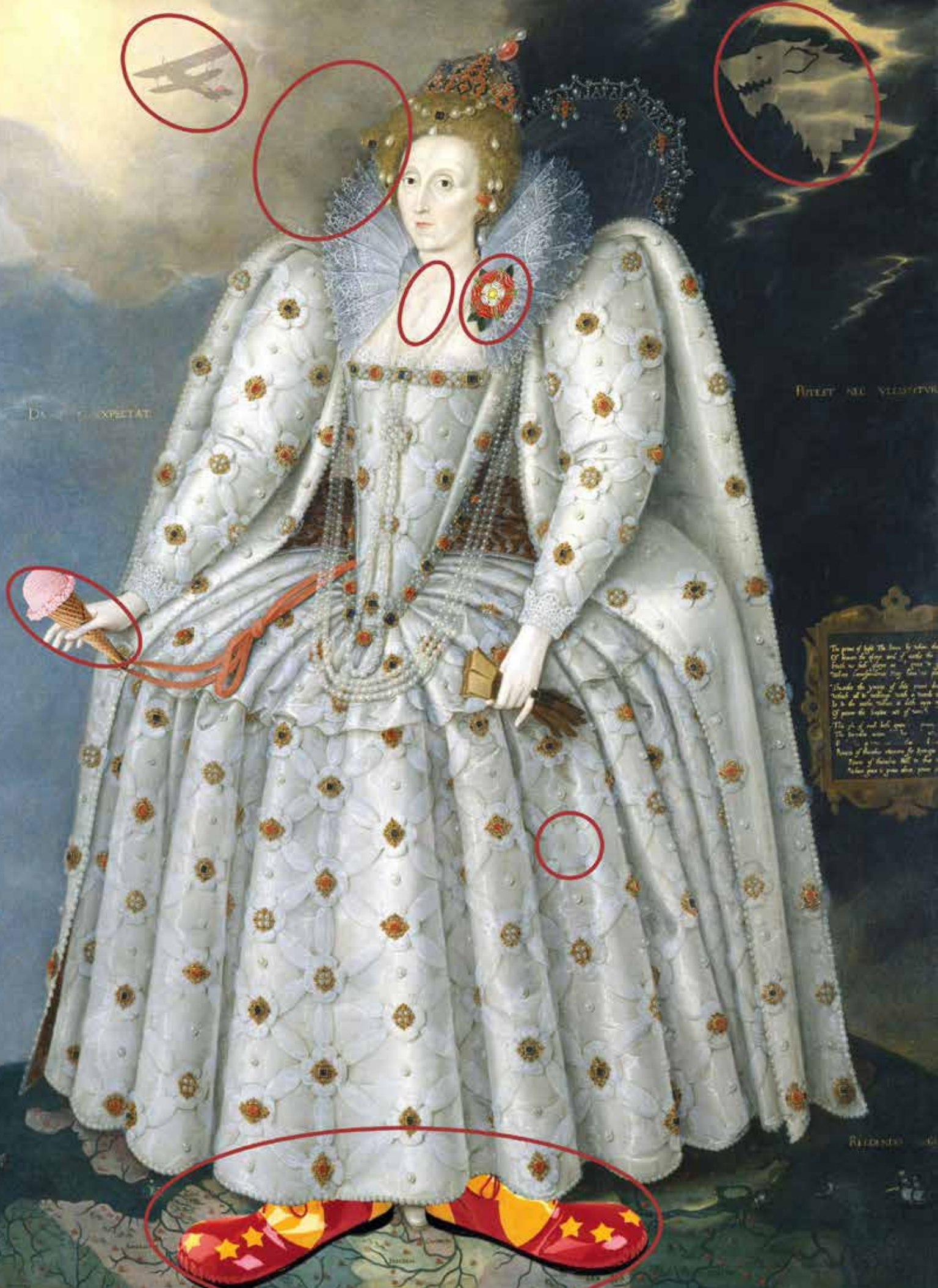
One of the most interesting chapters is about Anne's reputation after death and how slowly people are able to speak about her, mainly with Elizabeth I's accession. John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* is a good example of this. The author then explores her changing reputation throughout the centuries, including her many depictions in novels, movies and TV shows.

Unfortunately, the book, on the whole, seems more like another biography on Anne Boleyn, with just a few sections on London that seem forced. I think

Chapman wanted to write a book on Anne but had to make it different somehow, making the London part just an afterthought. It is still a good and readable biography on Anne, but readers shouldn't expect it to be anything new, despite the title. It has some interesting insights into the Boleyn faction at court and in London, but not enough for those who already know about her life to go out and buy a copy. I would only recommend this as a readable biography on Anne Boleyn.

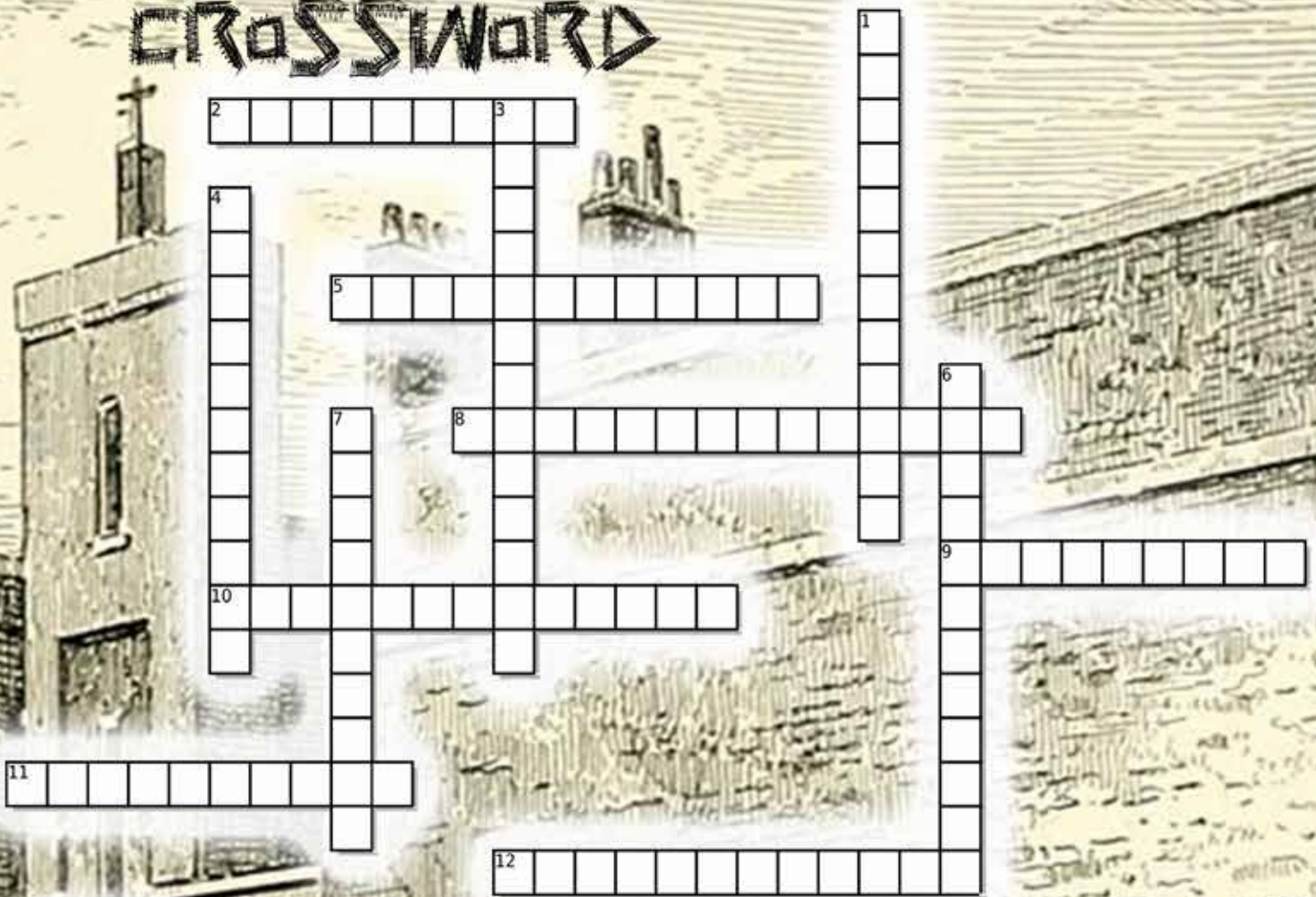


# SPOT THE DIFFERENCE ANSWERS



# CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

## CROSSWORD



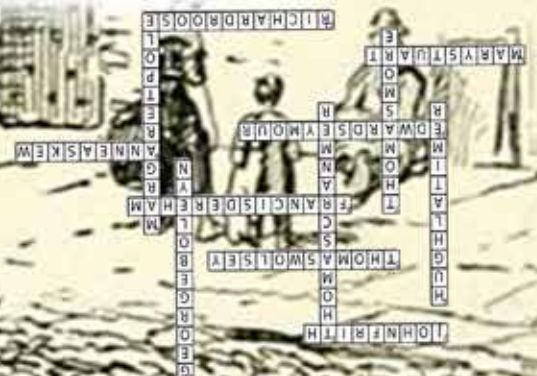
### ACROSS

- 2 Reformer and theologian martyr burnt at the stake for heresy in 1533.
- 5 This churchman and statesman died in Leicester on his way to face charges of praemunire in London.
- 8 Hanged, drawn and quartered for treason in 1541 for his previous sexual relationship with the queen.
- 9 This Protestant martyr had to be carried to the stake after being illegally racked at the Tower of London in 1546.
- 10 Lord Protector of the Realm during the reign of Edward VI who was executed for treason in 1552 for plotting to overthrow the leader of the king's council, John Dudley.
- 11 Beheaded under a charge of treason at Fotheringhay in 1587, to the later dismay of Elizabeth I.

- 12 The cook of Bishop John Fisher's household who was boiled to death in 1531 after being found guilty of poisoning the pottage served to Fisher and his guests.

### DOWN

- 1 Beheaded in 1536 after being charged with treason and committing incest with the queen.
- 3 This Archbishop of Canterbury was burnt at the stake for heresy in 1555.
- 4 A former chaplain of the royal household and one of the Oxford Martyrs burnt at the stake in 1555.
- 6 Daughter of the Duke of Clarence. She was beheaded for treason in 1541.
- 7 This former Lord Chancellor was beheaded in 1535 for refusing to sign the Oath of Succession.





# THE TUDOR HOUSEWIFE

## CHILDBIRTH

As the time of her delivery approached, the pregnant woman of the Tudor era had much to do to prepare for the big event. Some felt trepidation and fear for we know that, during the reign of King James I, Elizabeth Joceline not only stitched the swaddling bands for the coming baby but sewed a shroud for herself as well – sadly, this was required nine days after the birth of a daughter in October 1622. It is certain that Elizabeth was not alone in feeling so pessimistic; perhaps she was even continuing a Tudor tradition.

Today, childbirth is seen as a case of medical intervention but in Tudor times, male physicians and surgeons avoided the female-only occasion that centred on supporting the mother-to-be through her labour, as well as the days before and after the birth. This time in a woman's life was called a 'confinement' for good reason as she kept to her chamber, away from society; a virtual prisoner of her condition. Royal and noble women 'took to their chambers' as early as four to six weeks before the baby was due for a period of rest and quiet, to build up their strength for the coming ordeal and to prepare their souls in case the worse should happen. This lengthy time of retirement was a means of demonstrating the families' wealth and status as it meant the women no longer carried out any domestic duties, but it was also a precautionary measure because – as we saw in my earlier articles – it was difficult to determine the date of conception. Even if that was known, the precise term of a pregnancy wasn't understood and thought to be variable, so it was impossible to know the due date.

Anne Boleyn's childbed chamber at Greenwich was redecorated, almost rebuilt

with a false ceiling installed, tapestries hung and a special cupboard made on which to display her gold and silver plate to impress any (female) visitors. Those who attended her as steward, butler, carver, etc. were all women appointed for the duration, taking on these male roles. King Henry VIII is mentioned as her only male visitor during her tedious wait but whether any priests were allowed to attend her, I haven't been able to discover. We know midwives were permitted to baptise the baby, if it was thought unlikely to live until the christening proper. *The Ordinances and Regulations for the Royal Household\**, drawn up in the previous reign by Henry VII, seem to have still been current by the time of Anne's lying-in and they say the queen should attend divine service before retiring but make no mention of any provision for religious observance after that until her 'churching' when she returned to society.

Of course, women of lesser status and affluence could not afford to withdraw in this way and probably worked until the labour pains began, if they were well enough and able to do so. Once it was certain labour had begun, men were banned from entering the chamber where the women took charge. I imagine that in the case of those who lived in single-room cottages, this meant the husband went off to the tavern to eat and drink with his friends. Labour might last up to two or three days and the longer it went on, the less likely a successful outcome for both mother and child became.

After the birth, the new mother remained in bed for three days with the room kept in darkness because they believed labour made her eyes weak. On the third day, 'upsitting' was allowed. This was again a female only

# TONI MOUNT



occasion but meant the woman could get out of bed but was still confined to her chamber. A special meal was served and the baby shown off in its christening robe. The famous painting of the *Cholmondeley Ladies* [pro. Chumlee] commissioned from an anonymous artist c.1600-1610, probably shows this event. The Cholmondeley sisters, Lettice and Mary, were twins who married on the same day and gave birth on the same day. The painting shows them in all their Elizabethan finery, holding their swaddled babies swathed in crimson christening robes.

The next stage of the confinement, about a week later, allowed the woman to leave the chamber but she still couldn't go outside the house nor have male visitors other than her husband. After a month or so, her face veiled, she would finally be escorted to church by her women friends to be 'churched'. This was a brief service in which Psalm 121 would be read, the Lord's Prayer recited and the woman gave an offering to the church in thanks for her safe delivery. The Church regarded this as a simple thanksgiving ceremony but many thought of it as a woman's purification after the 'unclean' act

of childbirth – a fact which upset some Protestants as being a papist idea. Later, the Puritans were even more scathing, seeing childbirth as a natural event in a woman's life for which she required no purification, while the greedy Church took money from women who perhaps couldn't afford it, at a time when they most needed every penny.

As with the withdrawal before the birth, many poorer women with husbands and older children to care for couldn't wait a month or more before returning to normal life. Church records show that for ordinary parishioners the time between a baby's baptism and its mother's churching varied from eight days to nearly fifty days, with the usual gap being just under two weeks. The longest gaps may have been due to the woman being ill after the birth and taking weeks to recover. Whatever the case, her confinement over, it was back to work as usual for the Tudor housewife but, if things had gone well, there was now a new baby to add to her tasks and another mouth to feed so, as Thomas Tusser pointed out when I began writing this series of articles: 'a housewife's affairs have never an end'.

TONI MOUNT

*Medieval*  
COURSES

<https://medievalcourses.com/overview/roles-medieval-tudor-women-mc10/>

*Toni Mount's*  
THE ROLES OF  
MEDIEVAL AND  
TUDOR WOMEN





# FROM THE SPICERY

WITH  
RIGNACH



ON  
FANTASTICAL BEASTS

**THERE'S A SCENE** from Peter Webber's *Girl With A Pearl Earring*, of which I'm particularly fond. It's the birthday scene and depicts a beautifully displayed roast swan being carried into the dining room of Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer. As this is the Christmas edition of *Tudor Life*, I thought it would be fun to dedicate this month's *Spicery* article to foods festive and incredible. Welcome to the wonderful world of *entremets*, illusory foods and *solteties*. Where everything that's on the table may not really be all that it appears.



Typically, these foods were not your average daily fare and were reserved for times of celebration, or for when the reigning monarch really wanted to impress his or her guests. In the case of royal feasts, the courses (known as removes) were broken up by smaller courses called *entremets*, from the French *entre* 'between' and *mets* 'dish'. *Entremets* featured fantastical and incredible foods called illusory (or illusion) foods and *solteties*.

So what do I mean by illusory foods and *solteties*? To put it really simply, an illusory food is something that appears to be something it isn't. An example of a popular modern medieval illusory food is a fanciful dish called *Dragonstail*. It is basically a sausage roll and not the appendage of an endangered mythological beast. If you'd like to try your hand at making your own *Dragonstail*, I've included the recipe at the end of this article.

However, authentic medieval illusory foods are far more interesting. Unlike their *soltetie* cousins, illusion foods were more practical than extravagant and were nearly always far more palatable. Illusory foods also provided a varied diet

and could be put on the menu during Fast days, while providing the household with a little dinnertime humour and amusement. They could be as simple as a 'butter' made from almonds (*Butiro Contrafata*)<sup>1</sup>, or *Nowmyls of Muskyls*, (Offal of Mussels) made from small cockles and similar shellfish cooked in saffron and almond milk, and served as a thick *pottage* or soup.<sup>2</sup> Another example of an illusory food is *Ricotta Contrafatta*, or Fake Ricotta, made from blanched and steeped almonds and sugar, rose water and candied aniseed, and fish stock (of all things!).<sup>3</sup> *Le Viandier de Taillevent* also provides some interesting examples of traditional medieval illusory foods.

*Solteties* on the other hand, were the pinnacle of culinary entertainment, represented the dizzying heights of which the not-so-every-day medieval cook and chef could dream of reaching. Being able

1 Scully, T. *Cuoco Napoletano*. The University of Michigan Press, 2000.

2 Hieatt, Constance B. *The Middle English Culinary Recipes in MS Harley 5401*, in *Medium Ævum*, 65:1 (1996).

3 Scully. *op cit*



to bring to the table a breathtakingly beautiful Peacock fully displayed in its plumage, or a majestic Roast Swan (a la *Girl with a Pearl Earring*) also reflected favourably on the Lord or Lady of the household, for having such a talented cook in their household.

Perhaps the very peak of perfection of the *soltetie* was a beastie known as the *Coqz Heaumez* or *helmeted cock*. The *Coqz Heaumez*, was a fantastic amalgamation of a roast capon (usually dressed as a knight), astride his trusty roast pig steed<sup>4</sup>, and was frequently served alongside a *cockentrice*. This *soltetie* made use of laying hens and old roosters that might have otherwise been considered too old and tough to eat. Both types of meat were roasted whole and assembled with the chook riding the pig, wearing a helm of *glued leaf* and carrying a chicken-sized lance.

4 Prescott, J. *Le Viandier de Taillevent*, recipe 179. <http://www.telusplanet.net/public/prescotj/data/viandier/viandier1.html>

*Le Viandier de Taillevent* recommends further decorating the dish with “gold or silver leaf for the lords, or with white, red or green tin leaf for the others”.<sup>5</sup> As you can see in the photo, it is possible to create your very own *Coqz Heaumez* at home to grace your next dinner party.

Another *soltetie* mentioned in *Le Viandier de Taillevent* is made in the following manner:

*“Make terraces of brown bread, with a damsel sitting on the terrace, and with the terrace covered with green tin leaf strewn with herbs in a likeness of green grass. You need a lion who has his 2 forefeet and head in the damsel’s lap. For him you can make a brass mouth and a thin brass tongue, with paper teeth glued to the mouth. Add some camphor and a little cotton, and when you would like to present it before the lords, touch the fire to it..”*<sup>6</sup>

5 Prescott, *op cit*

6 Prescott, *ibid*, recipe 206





The idea of creating fire-breathing *solteties* is not restricted to only lions as there are commentaries that mention both fire-breathing peacocks and swans too!

Contrary to modern belief, swan frequently appeared on the medieval Bill of Fare and can be found in the UK around the time of the annual Thames “Swan Upping” event in late summer. By the way, I’m not advocating raiding

the village pond for a swan for the table. The bird’s flesh is purportedly very tough and oily and would probably not sit well with the modern diner’s constitution. If you feel like engaging in a little modern medievalism, I’d recommend going for something like a free range goose, and treating it in the same way as you’d treat a swan. By the way, the term “to blow” means to blow down the neck of bird to inflate it prior to drawing out the innards,

and is a practice that can still be found in various parts of the world. However, it's not my idea of fun in the kitchen, and I'd be inclined to leave this bit out. Yuck.

*Le Viandier de Taillevent* suggests the following method.

*“Blow them, scald them, slit them along the belly, skin them, and remove the carcasses. Roast the carcasses on a spit and glaze them (while turning) with batter of beaten egg white and egg yolk. Remove them from the spit, let them cool, and (if you wish) clothe them in their skin. Have little wooden skewers put in the neck to hold it upright as if it were alive. At a feast [serve] in the second course.”*

Swans were also served with a sauce known as *chawdron*. This slightly off putting sauce was made from the blood of the swan mixed with the bird's innards that had been cut into a fine dice and boiled with vinegar and spices.<sup>8</sup> The end product was presented as if sitting upright on its nest, wearing a small gold crown and festooned with garlands of flowers.

Whilst researching for this article, I came across a particularly unexpected recipe for an animal that I had not even

considered; unicorn. Yep, I actually found a manuscript detailing how to cook (barbeque or broil) a unicorn! Without a doubt this would be the ultimate fantastic animal *soltetie*. It might just be that our medieval forebears found unicorn to be so utterly delicious that they hunted the beast to extinction. Admittedly the manuscript in question was 'rediscovered' in the British Library on April Fool's Day in 2012, but it does rather seem to be the real deal. Whether the manuscript is culinary satire, I don't know, but what an absolute showstopper a barbecued unicorn would be! The *Coqz Heaumez* or fire-breathing swan would simply pale into utter insignificance.

The manuscript in question appears to date from the reign of Philippa of Hainault and is believed to have been penned by one Geoffrey Fule.<sup>9</sup> The title of the recipe is "Taketh one unicorn" and details how to prepare the beast for the barbeque by marinating it in various herbs and spices. I've included a couple of the illustrations from the manuscript, and my favourite has to be the bucket of left over "bits", including the horn. Surely they could have found a use for the horn?



Maybe distributing it, the tail and the hooves to the clergy or the poor ..?

And as promised, here is the modern medieval recipe for *Dragon Tail* (from Master Huen's Boke of Gode Cookery).<sup>10</sup>

Special thanks to Brandon Crisler (the Gode Cookery Discussion Group on Facebook) for allowing me to use the photo of his *Cogz Heaumez*.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.godecookery.com/godeboke/godeboke.htm>

## RIOGHNACH O'GERAGHTY

### *Dragon Tail*

1 tablespoon dried yeast  
1/4 cup warm milk  
1 teaspoon sugar  
2 cups flour  
1/2 cup butter, cut  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 eggs  
flour

1 cooked sausage, 6-7 inches long

Preheat oven to 400F / 200C. Yield: 1 loaf  
Oil a bowl and a bread loaf pan; set aside.

Combine yeast, milk, sugar, and 2 tsp. flour in a small bowl and let proof until foamy (about 10 min.).  
Combine the 2 cups flour and salt, & cut in butter with fork or pastry knife. Add eggs & yeast mixture and continue combining until dough forms ball.

Knead until smooth and elastic and dough cleans itself from board.



Transfer to the oiled bowl and let rise until doubled in size. Punch dough down onto lightly floured board. Pat out to form a rectangle slightly larger than the loaf pan.

Slice ends from sausage, place sausage in centre of dough, and fold dough over, tucking in ends to seal completely.

Transfer to loaf pan, seam side down, and allow to rise again.

Bake until golden brown and loaf sounds hollow when thumped with finger, about 35 minutes.

# DECEMBER'S ON THIS

<p><b>1 Dec</b> 1581</p> <p>St <b>Alexander Briant</b>, the Roman Catholic priest, who was hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn.</p>	<p><b>2 Dec</b> 1546</p> <p><b>Henry Howard</b>, Earl of Surrey, Tudor poet, was arrested after <b>Richard Southwell</b> gave evidence against him.</p>	<p><b>3 Dec</b> 1536</p> <p>A proclamation was made to the rebels of the Pilgrimage of Grace offering them a pardon.</p>	<p><b>4 Dec</b> 1531</p> <p>Execution of Rhys ap Gruffudd for treason. He was beheaded after being accused of plotting against the King, although his biographer, R.A. Griffiths, points out that his trial was a “show trial” consisting of contrived testimonies and coached witnesses.</p>	
<p><b>9 Dec</b> 1538</p> <p>Sir <b>Edward Neville</b>, courtier and son of <b>George Neville</b>, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Bergavenny, was beheaded on Tower Hill.</p>	<p><b>10 Dec</b> 1591</p> <p>Executions of <b>Edmund Gennings</b>, Roman Catholic priest, and <b>Swithin Wells</b>, Roman Catholic, on a scaffold set up outside Wells’ house at Holborn. They were hanged, drawn and quartered for treason due to their Catholic faith and for celebrating the mass.</p>	<p><b>11 Dec</b> 1589</p> <p>Death of <b>Patrick Lindsay</b>, 6<sup>th</sup> Lord Lindsay of the Byres, a supporter of the Protestant Reformation.</p>	<p><b>12 Dec</b> 1574</p> <p><b>Henry Howard</b>, Earl of Surrey was led from Ely Place, where he had been held since the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, to the Tower of London.</p>	
		<p><b>18 Dec</b> 1555</p> <p>Burning of <b>John Philpott</b>, former Archdeacon of Winchester and Protestant martyr, at Smithfield.</p>	<p><b>19 Dec</b> 1562</p> <p>The <i>Battle of Dreux</i> between Catholics, led by <b>Anne de Montmorency</b>, and Huguenots, led by <b>Louis I</b>, Prince of Condé, during the first war of the <i>French Wars of Religion</i>. The Catholics were victorious, but both commanders were taken prisoner.</p>	
		<p><b>23 Dec</b> 1588</p> <p>The assassination of <b>Henri de Lorraine</b>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Guise at the Château de Blois.</p>	<p><b>24 Dec</b> 1545</p> <p>King <b>Henry VIII</b> made his final speech to Parliament.</p>	<p><b>25 Dec</b> c1520</p> <p><b>Henry VIII</b> was one of the first to have turkey as part of his feast, after the bird was introduced into Britain.</p>
<p><b>28 Dec</b> 1582</p> <p>Burial of goldsmith <b>John Mabb</b> at St Matthew Church, Friday Street, off Cheapside in London.</p>	<p><b>29 Dec</b> 1484</p> <p>Death of <b>William Selling</b> (Celling), Prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, diplomat and humanist scholar.</p>	<p><b>30 Dec</b> 1546</p> <p><b>Henry VIII</b> signed his last will and testament, authorising the changes which he had ordered to be made.</p>	<p><b>31 Dec</b> 1559</p> <p>Death of <b>Owen Oglethorpe</b>, Bishop of Carlisle, while under house arrest in London. He was buried at St Dunstan-in-the-West. He had been deprived of his bishopric due to his Catholic faith, and had angered <b>Elizabeth I</b> by elevating the host on Christmas Day 1558.</p>	

Background image: Hampton Court Palace in the snow (HRP Events)

# DAY IN TUDOR HISTORY

<p><b>5<sup>Dec</sup></b> <b>1560</b> Death of King <b>Francis II</b> of France and King Consort of Scotland as husband of <b>Mary, Queen of Scots</b>.</p>	<p><b>6<sup>Dec</sup></b> Tudor people would often celebrate the Boy Bishop, a tradition which had been going on since the 10<sup>th</sup> century.</p>	<p><b>7<sup>Dec</sup></b> <b>1549</b> Hanging of <b>Robert Kett</b>, leader of <i>Kett's Rebellion</i> in Norfolk.</p>	<p><b>8<sup>Dec</sup></b> <b>1542</b> <b>Mary Stewart</b> (Stuart), or Mary, Queen of Scots, was born at Linlithgow Palace in Scotland. Mary, Queen of Scots was the daughter of <b>James V</b> of Scotland and his second wife, <b>Mary of Guise</b>.</p>	
<p><b>13<sup>Dec</sup></b> <b>1577</b> Sir Francis Drake finally left Plymouth with his fleet of five ships after storm damage had delayed him before.</p>	<p><b>14<sup>Dec</sup></b> <b>1558</b> Burial of Queen <b>Mary I</b> at Westminster Abbey in the Henry VII chapel with only stones marking her grave.</p>	<p><b>15<sup>Dec</sup></b> <b>1558</b> Funeral of <b>Reginald Pole</b>, Cardinal Pole, at Canterbury Cathedral.</p>	<p><b>16<sup>Dec</sup></b> <b>1485</b> Birth of <b>Catherine of Aragon</b> at Alcalá de Henares, near to Madrid.</p>	<p><b>17<sup>Dec</sup></b> <b>1538</b> <b>Pope Paul III</b> announced the excommunication of <b>Henry VIII</b>.</p>
<p><b>20<sup>Dec</sup></b> <b>1583</b> Death of <b>Richard Butler</b>, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Mountgarret and son of Piers Butler, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Ossory and 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Ormond.</p>	<p><b>21<sup>Dec</sup></b> <b>1495</b> Death of <b>Jasper Tudor</b>, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Bedford and 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Pembroke, at Thornbury.</p>	 <p>Reginald Pole</p>		<p><b>22<sup>Dec</sup></b> <b>1557</b> Burnings of <b>John Rough</b> and <b>Margaret Mearing</b>, Protestant martyrs, at Smithfield for heresy.</p>
<p><b>26<sup>Dec</sup></b> <b>1546</b> <b>Henry VIII</b> made some changes to his will to ensure successful transfer to his son, the future <b>Edward VI</b>.</p>	<p><b>27<sup>Dec</sup></b> <b>1539</b> <b>Anne of Cleves</b> landed at Deal in Kent. She was met by Sir <b>Thomas Cheyne</b> and taken to Deal Castle.</p>			

## TUDOR FEAST DAYS

- 6 December – Feast of St Nicholas
- 8 December – Feast of the Immaculate Conception
- 21 December – St Thomas's Day
- 24 December – Christmas Eve
- 25 December – Christmas Day
- 26 December – Feast of St Stephen
- 28 December – Childermas

TudorLife

NEXT MONTH IN YOUR REGULAR

# TudorLife

## REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS

Charlie Fenton  
Conor Byrne  
Emma Taylor  
Kyra Kramer  
Riognarch O'Geraghty  
Lauren Browne  
Jane Moulder  
Toni Mount  
Debra Bayani

LAYOUT Tim Ridgway

VIDEOGRAPHER Tim Ridgway

## MAGAZINE EDITOR

Gareth Russell  
[info@tudorsociety.com](mailto:info@tudorsociety.com)

## CONTACT

[info@tudorsociety.com](mailto:info@tudorsociety.com)  
Calle Sargento Galera, 3  
Lucar 04887  
Almeria  
Spain

## ONLINE

[www.TudorSociety.com](http://www.TudorSociety.com)

Copyright © 2017  
All Rights Reserved

## HENRY VIII

**PETER MACINNIS**  
Poison in the Tudor Period

**ALAN WYBROW**  
Children's corner

**CONOR BYRNE**  
The last days of Henry VIII

**RIOHNACH  
O'GERAGHTY**  
Almond Milk

**EMMA TAYLOR**  
Henry VIII in film

**KYRA KRAMER**  
Henry VIII's brain injury

**+ MUCH MORE**

We have an EXPERT  
VIDEO every month for  
FULL MEMBERS. Do  
you watch them?

Tudor Life Magazine takes constant care to make sure that content is accurate on the date of publication. The views expressed in the articles reflect the author(s) opinions and are not necessarily the views of the publisher and editor. The published material, adverts, editorials and all other content is published in a good faith. Tudor Life Magazine cannot guarantee, and accepts no liability for, any loss or damage of any kind, caused by this publication or errors herein, nor for the accuracy of claims made by any contributors. Photos are open source, unless specifically mentioned. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine can be partially, or in whole, reprinted or reproduced without written consent.