

Tudor Life

THE
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LADIES IN WAITING

CATHERINE GORDON

BESSIE BLOUNT

DAMASCIN
STRADLING

BESS OF HARDWICK

MARÍA DE SALINAS

JANE BOLEYN

plus

WINDSOR CASTLE

PREGNANCY

CHEESE!



EXCLUSIVE:
LEANDA DE LISLE. THE LAST BOLEYN

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Ladies-in-waiting

EDITORS, LIKE PARENTS, are not supposed to have their favourites. It is with a slight twinge of guilt that I admit that this issue of “Tudor Life” does actually mean just a tiny bit more to me, as an historian. During the years I spent researching my biography of Queen Catherine Howard, I spent a long time establishing who those ladies in waiting actually were and what their daily lives were like. I’m therefore geekishly thrilled to contribute an article to this issue about a day in the life of Queen Catherine’s maid of honour, the obscure Damascin Stradling. We have profiles of individual ladies - like Katherine of Aragon’s confidante, Maria de Salinas; Henry VIII’s mistress, Bessie Blount; Mary, Queen of Scots’ enemy, Bess of Hardwick; and Lauren Browne brings her expertise on the household of Elizabeth of York to write about the obscure Lady Catherine Gordon, who nearly became the white-rose queen in Elizabeth’s place. We also have Conor Byrne and Debra Bayani’s pieces on what exactly ladies in waiting were; and, Emma Taylor’s fantastically whimsical article “Maids of No Honour”, on how the silver screen presents the Tudor court’s beautiful people.

A small disclaimer, with no false modesty - our regular book reviewer, Charlie Fenton, is, by sheer genuine coincidence, reviewing my book on Catherine Howard and her ladies in this month’s edition. Charlie works with spectacular industry to her own schedule, so I had no role in the timing!

Lastly I am excited beyond words to host a special advance exclusive extract from the new biography by celebrated Tudor historian, Leanda de Lisle. Leanda has turned her attention to Charles I, the Stuart king who lost his head, in her new book “The White King”. The extract she is sharing with “Tudor Life” readers is from this book and it examines the descendants of Tudor ladies in waiting, and how they continued to matter at the Stuart court. The exclusive extract, sub-titled “Henrietta Maria and the Last Boleyn Girl” is riotous look at Charles’s glamorous French wife and her ladies in waiting.

Happy reading!

GARETH RUSSELL

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THE
WHIT
KING

— CHARLES I, —
TRAITOR, MURDERER, MARTYR

LEANDA DE LISLE

*A Novel of
Jane Boleyn*



BESSIE BLOUNT LADY-IN- WAITING

We've all heard about Henry VIII's mistress and how she bore him an illegitimate son, but, here, historical writer, *Susan Abernethy*, talks about her life as a lady-in-waiting...

ELIZABETH "BESSIE" BLOUNT serves as a typical example of how a young Tudor woman gained a career at court as a lady-in-waiting or maid of honor. Bessie was a member of the gentry but as in most of these cases, it's not what you know but who you know that determines if you obtain a placement in the household of the Queen. Personal attributes also played a large role in who was admitted.

Bessie was born circa 1500, the daughter of a landed gentleman and a woman whose father had fought for King Henry VII at the Battle of Bosworth. Bessie lived her early years at the family home in Shropshire and was given a good

education. She most likely learned to read and write, singing, dancing, sewing and the skills needed to run a household. She would grow up to be beautiful with a fair complexion, blue eyes and blond hair all of which would be considered the epitome of Tudor beauty. Lord Edward Herbert of Cherbury, in his book "The Life and Reign of King Henry the Eighth" (1649) wrote that Bessie was "thought for her rare ornaments of nature and education to be the beauty and mistress-piece of her time".

Elizabeth's family was related to William Blount, 4th Lord Mountjoy, an important member of King Henry VIII's court. She was also related to Sir John Croft who was the steward of Prince



Henry VIII's love affairs have fascinated writers since his lifetime.

Arthur Tudor's household in Ludlow. Either one of these men, or possibly both of them were instrumental in securing a place for Elizabeth at court where she could hopefully find a husband.

Bessie was given a position in the household of Queen Katherine of Aragon and records confirm she made her debut at court on March 12, 1512 when she was probably twelve years old. This was considered the minimum age for a young lady to join the court. She received a payment from the king of £100, half the wages of a full lady-in-waiting. This

indicates she had a minor role in the Queen's household at first. Six months later, she had joined the ranks of the maids-of-honor to the queen at full wages.

As a maid-of-honor, she would have attended the queen in her visits with foreign dignitaries, at her devotions and accompanied her to mass, waited on her at meals and joined her while embroidering and sewing the king's shirts. Occasionally, the King would join the Queen and her ladies in entertainments and games and Bessie would have come into contact with him. It soon became clear Bessie excelled

at singing and dancing and she was asked to participate in court masques and other pastimes.

As Bessie became older, her participation in court entertainments increased. At Christmas 1514 at Greenwich, she took part in a major role in a masked pageant. Bessie, Elizabeth Carew, Lady Margaret Guildford and the wife of the Spanish Ambassador appeared dressed as ladies from Savoy. The gowns were made of blue velvet and they wore caps of gold and masks.

The dancing ladies fell into danger and were in need of rescue by four “Portuguese” knights. The knights were played by the King, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, Nicholas Carew, and the Spanish ambassador. It was all very chivalrous and full of the symbolism of courtly love. The Queen was delighted with the women’s costumes and their performance and requested they perform the pageant again in the privacy of her bedchamber. In a preview of what was to come in the future, King Henry’s partner was Bessie.

One of the hazards or benefits of the job, depending on how you look at it, was



A Victorian painting of Bessie’s employer, the regal Queen Katherine of Aragon

for a woman to come to the attention of the King and become his mistress. King Henry had a pattern of taking mistresses when Queen Catherine was pregnant. It is most likely Henry became involved with



Ruta Gedmintas plays a beautiful Bessie in “The Tudors” (Showtime)

Bessie sometime in April of 1518 when the Queen became pregnant for the last time. Henry and Bessie's relationship seems to have been of short duration. Because her son was born in the summer of 1519, she probably became pregnant by the king between April and November of 1518.

On October 3, Henry and his chief minister Thomas Wolsey welcomed an embassy from France. There was a feast in Wolsey's palace at York Place. After the dinner, twenty-four dancers entered led by the King and his sister, the Duchess of Suffolk. Bessie participated in the revels at York Place and this would be her last public appearance at court. Bessie and the King were likely having sexual relations at the time and she may have been pregnant during that performance.

The arrangements for Bessie's confinement were made by Wolsey. She delivered a healthy baby boy at the priory of St. Lawrence, Blackmore near Ingatestone, Essex with little fanfare or public notice. He was named Henry after his father and was given the royal patronymic Fitzroy (meaning "son of a king"). Henry was delighted and openly acknowledged the boy as his son. Wolsey was given responsibility for the child's care but the infant most likely spent his early years with his mother. Bessie's career as a maid-of-honor was over as she never returned to court. Most importantly, her affair with the King was not renewed.

Wolsey almost immediately arranged a marriage for Bessie with one of his wards, Gilbert Tailbois. Estates that were held in trust by the crown for Tailbois (his father was still alive but mentally ill) including land in Lincolnshire and Somerset, were released to Gilbert. Bessie was granted property by Parliament out of the Tailbois lands that amounted to £200 per annum. The couple were married in September 1519.

Gilbert Tailbois was knighted in 1525 and he would become a Member of Parliament and sheriff for Lincoln. Bessie had three children by him: Elizabeth, George, and Robert. After Gilbert died in 1530, Bessie chose to marry another royal ward, Edward Fiennes de Clinton, ninth Baron Clinton and Saye who was fourteen years younger than her. This was a very respectable marriage and she had three daughters with him: Bridget, Katherine and Margaret.

Overall, Bessie's career as a maid-of-honor was highly successful on several levels. Ultimately, she fulfilled the goal of every Tudor woman in attaining a good marriage and living a comfortable life. She had the added bonus of giving King Henry VIII a healthy son. Because of this she remained on good terms with the King. He continued to favor her, giving her expensive gifts and a succession of grants between June of 1522 and January of 1539, making her a very lucky woman indeed.

SUSAN ABERNETHY



Susan Abernethy is a historical writer, based in Denver, Colorado, who studied History at the University of North Carolina. You can see more of Susan's work on her blog, "The Freelance History Writer."

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF DAMASCIN STRADLING

by Gareth Russell



This article is based on research about the identities of Catherine Howard's ladies in waiting and their daily life, which was published in 2016 in chapters 6 and 9 of "Young and Damned and Fair", by the author of this article. This piece re-imagines an average day in the life of Catherine's maid of honour, Damascin Stradling, at Hampton Court. Queen Catherine's household was in residence at Hampton Court on three occasions during her time as queen – from 8th – 17th August 1540; 18th December 1540 – 8th March 1541; and 28th October – 13th November 1541.



Historian *Gareth Russell* tells about one of Catherine Howard's ladies-in-waiting, a fascinating woman called Damascin Stradling...

WHEN Elizabeth I traded her tenuous title of princess for the Divinely-ordained rank of queen, the change did not suit everybody. One of Queen Mary I's former ladies, Jane Dormer, married to a Spanish nobleman, detested the new monarch and, as a devout Catholic, preferred life in her husband's homeland than a bending of the knee to Elizabeth. Several other well-born women accompanied Jane to Spain, including the thirty-four-year-old Damascin Stradling, who never returned to England and died as a subject of Philip II in 1567.

Nearly two decades before she became an émigré, Damascin's career had begun like that of many well-born girls, when her family's connections secured her a place as maid of honour in the Queen of England's household. Her father, Sir Thomas Stradling, was a wealthy member of the gentry with ties to the court when Damascin arrived there. When she opened her eyes in the maids' dormitory in the splendour of Hampton Court, usually at about six or seven o'clock in the morning, Damascin was surrounded by other young ladies from a similar background. Their gentle birth, however, did not save them from onerous tasks like rising at dawn to supervise the servants as they cleared away mattresses and stoked the fireplaces. (Lesser servants generally slept on mattresses, rather than in a dormitory or their own chamber.)

Like most girls who had made their début into high Society as a royal maid of honour, Mistress Stradling was about sixteen years-old at the time. All the debutantes of 1539-1541, to use a more modern word for an eternal feature of upper-class English society, were born around 1522 or 1524. The Queen's household was, in

many ways, Tudor England's ultimate equivalent of a finishing school. Here, these daughters of the landed classes would be "perfected". They would become wives and then mothers, as well as ornaments to a world set apart by birth and privilege. That was part of the rationale of tasking the maids of honour with supervision of the servants in the early hours of the day. After all, when they married they would have household staffs of their own and managing one's servants efficiently was considered a mark of a great lady.

Damascin can have been under no illusions about the Queen's household's role in getting her to the altar. There was a limit on the number of maids allowed to Queen Catherine, as there had been for her predecessors. The vacancies that had enabled Damascin's début were created by marriages of three previous maidens – Katherine Carey, Mary Norris and, of course, the Queen herself, who had achieved a near-unheard of trajectory in going from debutante to queen consort in the space of six months thanks to her marriage with King Henry in July 1540. One of Damascin's companions, Margaret Garneys, was

soon betrothed to Lord Hereford and replaced in the maids' dormitory by the flirtatious but well-read Dorothy Bray.

Queen Catherine, beautiful, elegant, and only a year or two older than Damascin herself, emerged from her most private rooms after the ladies of the Privy Chamber had dressed her and the detritus of the previous night's slumber had been cleared away beneath Damascin's watchful eye. The Queen's household had a strict hierarchy and although the six Great Ladies were by far and away of the highest rank, in practical terms it was the eight ladies and gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber who had the most intimate contact with the Queen. On rota, they attended her as she slept, unless the King visited for the most intimate contact of all. They also dressed her, before she glided towards morning prayers.

Those prayers were the maids' chance to shine in their Queen's presence, because it was their job to hand over her prayer books and accompany her to the small, private alcove where she could listen to morning Devotions from behind a grille. These prayers were a staple of Queen Catherine's morning, and thus of Damascin's too, except on high Holy Days, when the Queen would progress through the crowds who thronged her outer chambers to publicly attend Mass in the Chapel Royal, accompanied by some of her women. One such day of Obligation occurred at Hampton Court early in Catherine's career – the Feast of the Assumption, the commemoration of the Virgin Mary's entry into Heaven – during which Catherine was publicly included in prayers for the Royal Family for the first time.

As Queen Catherine's "reign" progressed, there was no denying that one of her Privy Chamber women was rising to particular prominence. Like modern high schools or offices, royal households were often personal affairs, in which shifts in popularity and influence were defined by personal preference. Queen Catherine's elder sister, Lady Isabella Baynton, was part of the Privy Chamber staff and her husband, Sir Edward, was the young Queen's vice-chamberlain, but by Easter of 1541,



Damascin's elegant employer,
Queen Catherine Howard.

Queen Catherine's favour was clearly fixed on a more distant kinswoman – her cousin's widow Jane Boleyn, Dowager Viscountess Rochford. Although she was usually kind, Queen Catherine had a temper and at one point she threatened to dismiss a maid who had failed to recognise her orders, or the new pecking order. It made sense for Damascin to keep abreast of who was in and who was out of her employer's good books. Chamber staff like Margaret Morton were soon gossiping about Lady Rochford's prominence and Lady Isabella's corresponding slip in the invisible yet tangible ranks of royally-blessed popularity.

A queen's moods and whims were a vital ingredient in the experience of a royal courtier. Queen Catherine adored to dance and she was a superb dresser, with a wardrobe and jewellery collection to match. Within her household, there was a set of intellectual ladies in waiting, devoted to theological debates and scholarly patronage. That clique centred on the figures of the Queen's beautiful cousin, the Dowager Duchess of Richmond, and the forthright and passionate Katherine Brandon, Duchess of Suffolk. Queen Catherine apparently did not censure these

women's interests, but equally she did not share them. It was a dazzling, extravagant world which orbited around a vivacious Queen who was, in one courtier's words, a "blazing beauty".

The Queen did, of course, have duties, including audiences with visiting dignitaries. For instance, Catherine hosted the Emperor's ambassador, Eustace Chapuys, on his return to England at Christmas 1540. With her immaculate manners and exalted position, Queen Catherine conversed with this seasoned diplomat, most likely through an interpreter, until his appointed meeting with the King and the Earl of Hertford to discuss an on-going trade dispute between England and the Hapsburg Empire.

Damascin might be in attendance at such events or she could be one of the maids tasked with being on duty in the Queen's gallery, where several of the maids held cloths and ewers for Catherine's guests or higher-ranking ladies to wash their hands. This, of course, meant that there was also a fair amount of free time – the Queen would not need all her ladies, all the time. During this "downtime", a maid might mingle with young gentlemen in the King's service. After all, that was ultimately what they were there for. Girls from good families could and often did make spectacular matches that grew from personal affection that developed through friendships established at court. Although their betrothal had eventually been overruled, a young Anne Boleyn had, around the time of Damascin's birth, loved and been loved by the future Earl of Northumberland. One of Queen Catherine's women, Anne Parr, had married William Herbert, who was in pursuit of his right to inherit the earldom of Pembroke.

Yet, there were lethally-potential pitfalls to this lifestyle. Love and lust are not always so easily distinguished in the first rush of attraction. Likewise, truth and lies can be blended by the malice of rumour. When curfew for the Queen's staff fell at nine o'clock in the evening and Damascin brought the lovely Queen her bed-time snack, did she wonder if Queen Catherine knew about Dorothy Bray's dalliance



Jessica Raine in "Wolf Hall" as Lady Rochford, who became Queen Catherine's confidante (BBC)

with the unhappily-married Lord Parr? And, if she did know, why had she done nothing to stop something that could annihilate a young woman's marriage prospects? Was it true that the Queen's brother, Charles, was making eyes at the King's gorgeous niece, Lady Margaret Douglas, so soon after Margaret had been brought back from her banishment for her love affair with Charles Howard's late uncle, Lord Thomas?¹ Why had Lady Rochford become so indispensable to the Queen? Why had the Countess of Sussex quarrelled with Damascin's fellow maid, Anne Bassett?

As she climbed into bed, Damascin and all the maids of honour were familiar with the rule book that encouraged them to report tardiness in their colleagues or inferiors. Breaches of etiquette were noted and punished, often with dismissal. But the other rumours, those with

¹ This was not the Howards' patriarch Thomas, 3rd Duke of Norfolk, but his younger brother with the same Christian name – a confusing but sustained habit among the Tudor nobility.



A copy of Afonso Coella's portrait of the Duchess of Feria, who took Damascin with her to live in Spain.

the potential to end lives or invite the spectre of interrogation back into the Queen's household, were often buried or deliberately ignored until it was too late. Who wanted to be the first over the parapet into a bloodbath? In a world full of sumptuous displays of wealth and power, it was often easy to forget that these young ladies had been pitched into a place that had equal power to offer them the futures they and their families desired, and to destroy them completely. Sleeping near Damascin in the dormitory was the one-time *belle* of the court, Anne Bassett, now two or three years older than most of her fellow maids. Her prospects had been dented, perhaps ruined, when her stepfather was accused of treason in 1540, imprisoned in the Tower, and her mother, caught stuffing incriminating documents into the toilet, subsequently suffered a nervous breakdown. It was either to Damascin's credit, blessings or sheer luck that she survived to join Jane Dormer in Spain when she felt the time was right to leave England forever.

GARETH RUSSELL



CATHERINE GORDON 'DUCHESS OF YORK', WOULD-BE QUEEN, AND LADY-IN-WAITING

BY LAUREN BROWNE

In 1497, a new Lady arrived at the court of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York. She had been entrusted to the care of the queen-consort, was established in her household, and would become a favourite of Elizabeth's. The arrival of Lady Catherine Gordon, referred to as Lady Kateryn Huntleye in the privy purse accounts, was, as we will see, directly related to the political manoeuvrings of the early Tudor period.

CATHERINE GORDON WAS a Scottish noblewoman born to George Gordon, 2nd Earl of Huntly, and his third wife Lady Elizabeth Hay. She was born probably around 1474, although very little is known about her early life. Catherine was the great-granddaughter of James I of Scotland and so given her position it can be supposed that she experienced a comfortable childhood. Catherine enters the historical record around 1495, when a young man who called himself Richard, Duke of York arrived in Scotland in November. Of course we know this man by the name given to him by Henry VII – Perkin Warbeck. Without Catherine's connection to him, she would never have become one of Elizabeth of York's favourite ladies-in-waiting; indeed, she may never have substantially entered the historical record at all.

Warbeck appears to have been born at Tournai, in France, if we are to believe the confession he made in 1494. He had arrived in Cork in December 1491, worked with Yorkists, led by John Atwater and John Taylor, to impersonate Richard, Duke of York, who we now know as the younger of the 'Princes in

the Tower.' Warbeck received international support from Charles VIII of France, Margaret of York, Dowager Duchess of Burgundy (who welcomed him as her nephew), the Hapsburg Emperor Maximilian, and James IV of Scotland, as well as some senior figures of Henry VII's court, if trial evidence is



Catherine's royal ancestors, King James I of Scots, and his English bride, Queen Joan Beaufort.

to be believed – John, Lord Fitzwalter, Sir Robert Clifford, William Worsley, Dean of St Paul's, and Sir William Stanley, the King's step-uncle and the chamberlain of his household.

The international supporter most pertinent to Catherine Gordon's story is James IV of Scotland, her kinsman and the man who forever changed the course of her future. The Scottish monarch's belief in the pretender's identity is often debated by academics. Did he really think Warbeck was Richard, Duke of York, or was he using the pretender as a pawn in his foreign policy? Historian David Dunlop states, "all the contemporary rulers who supported Warbeck had sufficient motivation for their conduct without

necessarily believing the imposture, and James IV was no exception. Nonetheless, the fact that James never publically admitted his error, and Warbeck's marriage to the king's kinswoman... have been cited as conclusive proof of his credulity."¹ Whether James IV really believed Warbeck is not important, the fact that he gave Catherine to him in marriage is. Although, I can't help but wonder how she felt about the situation, did she believe she was marrying the rightful Duke of York? (In England, in order

1 David Dunlop, "The Masked Comedian": Perkin Warbeck's Adventures in Scotland and England from 1495 to 1497; *The Scottish Historical Review*, lxx, cxc, (1991), p. 100



Francis Brundage

The Princesses in the Tower.

to underline his belief that the real Prince Richard was dead, Henry had invested the dukedom on his younger son, the future Henry VIII.) It appears he had courted her from his arrival in Scotland, and a love letter written by him to Catherine is preserved in the Spanish State Letters.

Warbeck and Catherine were married in either December 1495 or January 1496. James IV had gifted Warbeck a white damask 'spousing gown' for the ceremony, which took place in Edinburgh. The celebrations included a tournament where the bride-groom wore amour covered in purple brocade, a nod to his supposed position. After her marriage, Catherine was styled in Scotland and by Yorkists as the Duchess of York, and James IV provided Falkland Palace as a base for Warbeck's 1,400 adherents. Not much is known about this period of Catherine's life, but it seems likely that she stayed relatively close to her husband.

James IV was becoming increasingly weary at having to foot the bill for his new ally, and struggled to keep him in the manner he was accustomed to. It appears that the Scottish monarch could ill-afford to send a large army into England on the pretender's behalf. According to the Tudor historian Polydore Vergil, despite Warbeck's promises of "great reinforcements" from his English adherents, the Scottish were preparing for border raids rather than all-out invasion. It appears that James IV expected Warbeck to gather English forces and start a rebellion in England once the Scottish had launched him onto the path of success. However, the plan failed. Warbeck almost immediately withdrew when his 'great reinforcements' failed to materialise. The support of the Scottish undermined any support for Warbeck, to borrow Francis Bacon's phrase, the pretender was not "welcome for the company he came in." Sensing this, Warbeck desperately pleaded with the Scottish raiders not to plunder his would-be kingdom, a plea which James IV dismissed outright. Following the failed rebellion, James IV became increasingly frustrated with Warbeck. He eventually provided a ship (ironically called the *Cuckoo*) to take Warbeck to Waterford in 1497. Throughout this episode, we are unsure what Catherine was doing,

but it appears likely that she travelled with her husband to Waterford and then later to Cornwall.

Catherine next appears in the historical record during her husband's subsequent attempt at rebellion. By May 1497, Henry VII's heavy taxation had sparked an uprising in Cornwall with disaffection soon spreading to Somerset and beyond. The rebels were seeking to mobilise and march on London, apparently calling for Warbeck to lead them. However, the crown's victory on 17th June at Blackheath forced the rebels back into Cornwall. Warbeck landed at Whitesand Bay on 7 September 1497, hoping to capitalise on the disturbances. He was declared King Richard IV by his supporters, and his small band of 300 reportedly rose to around 8,000 by the time they reached Exeter on 17th of September.

Henry VII's "vastly superior forces" were no match for pretender's band of rebels.² Just outside Taunton Warbeck's army scattered and he escaped to sanctuary at Beaulieu Abbey in Hampshire. There, he was recognised and coaxed into surrender under assurances of pardon. Warbeck was presented to Henry VII, who was staying at Taunton with Prince Arthur, then aged 11, and a number of nobles. The King sent for Catherine, who had been in sanctuary at St Buryan, a Cornish village between Land's End and Penzance. Henry ordered a satin dress with ribbons for Catherine's journey, as well as a riding cloak, a hat, gloves, a kirtle, hose and shoes for her journey.³ According to the Great Chronicle of London, Henry was pleased with "this woman of good personage and beauty". Edward Hall describes Henry wondering "at her beautie and coutenance", and several chronicles refer to her as the "white rose", in reference to her husband's claims. The *Letters and Papers* show that Henry VII paid £20 for her diet, and his servant Thomas English was entrusted to deliver Catherine "unto our dearest wife the Queen wheresoever she be."

2 Thomas Penn, *The Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England*, (London, 2012), p. 31

3 Arlene Naylor Okerlund, *Elizabeth of York*, (New York, 2009), p. 130

Elizabeth of York had just returned from pilgrimage to Walsingham Priory, she spent two days in London at the Great Wardrobe, before travelling on to Sheen. On 21 October 1497, Queen Elizabeth met the woman who claimed to be her sister-in-law. What they spoke about, or how they initially felt about one another, is not known. We are left wondering what questions Elizabeth may have asked Catherine. Did she ask her would-be sister-in-law, and replacement if Warbeck had succeeded, to describe her husband? Was Elizabeth reluctant to welcome the woman who had attempted to usurp her as the “white rose”? What we do know is that Catherine became one of Elizabeth’s highest ranking ladies-in-waiting, and it appears that the two women were extremely close.

The privy purse expenses show that Catherine was well taken care of and was frequently given gifts by the crown. In 1501 she was given clothes of cloth-of-gold furred with ermine, a purple velvet gown, and a black hood in the French style. In April 1502, she was given black and crimson velvet for a gown and black kersey for stockings, and in November 1502, black satin, and other black cloth, to be trimmed with mink (from her own stock) and miniver, with a crimson bonnet.

Her husband’s fate was much less comfortable. Warbeck was brought to court by Henry VII in

1497. Although he was essentially under house arrest, he was treated more like a courtier. A dispatch from the Venetian ambassador sheds light on the couple’s time at court;

He is a well favoured young man, 23 years old, and his wife a very handsome woman; the King treats them well, but did not allow them to sleep together.

Warbeck existed in this state until 9 June 1498, when he attempted to escape the court. He fled Westminster to the Charterhouse at Sheen, but was recaptured after just four days. Instead of being returned to court, Warbeck was sent to the Tower. For a year Warbeck languished there, until he was accused of being part of plot involving the Earl of Warwick in planning an escape from the Tower. Both men were tried, found guilty, and were executed within five days of one another. Warbeck was hanged on 23 November 1499, and Warwick was beheaded, due to his rank, on 28 November.

After her husband’s death, Catherine stayed on at court. We know that she was in attendance at the wedding between James IV, whose proxy representative was Patrick Hepburn, 1st Earl of Bothwell, and Margaret Tudor in January 1503. Catherine was also present at Elizabeth of York’s funeral in 1503; she rode alone in a chariot behind the eight Ladies of Honour and in front of the

Scottish actress Elizabeth MacLennan as Catherine Gordon in the TV series “The Shadow of the Tower” (BBC)



citizens of London, the King's servants, and the rest of the procession. It is sometimes said that she was the chief mourner at Elizabeth's funeral. However this position was given to the Countess of Devon, the late Queen's younger sister.

In 1510, Catherine was granted the right to hold lands in England, through the process of denization, and on 8th August she was granted the manors of Philberts at Bray, and Eaton at Appleton. In 1512, Catherine married James Strangeways, a gentleman usher of the King's chamber. This marriage did not seem to last long, most probably James died soon after, because Catherine married again in 1517. This time it was to Matthew Craddock of Swansea, who was the Steward of Gower and Seneschal of Kenfig. Catherine's third marriage lasted until Matthew's death in 1531. Historian David Loades states that Catherine was a member of Princess Mary's Privy Chamber until 1530.

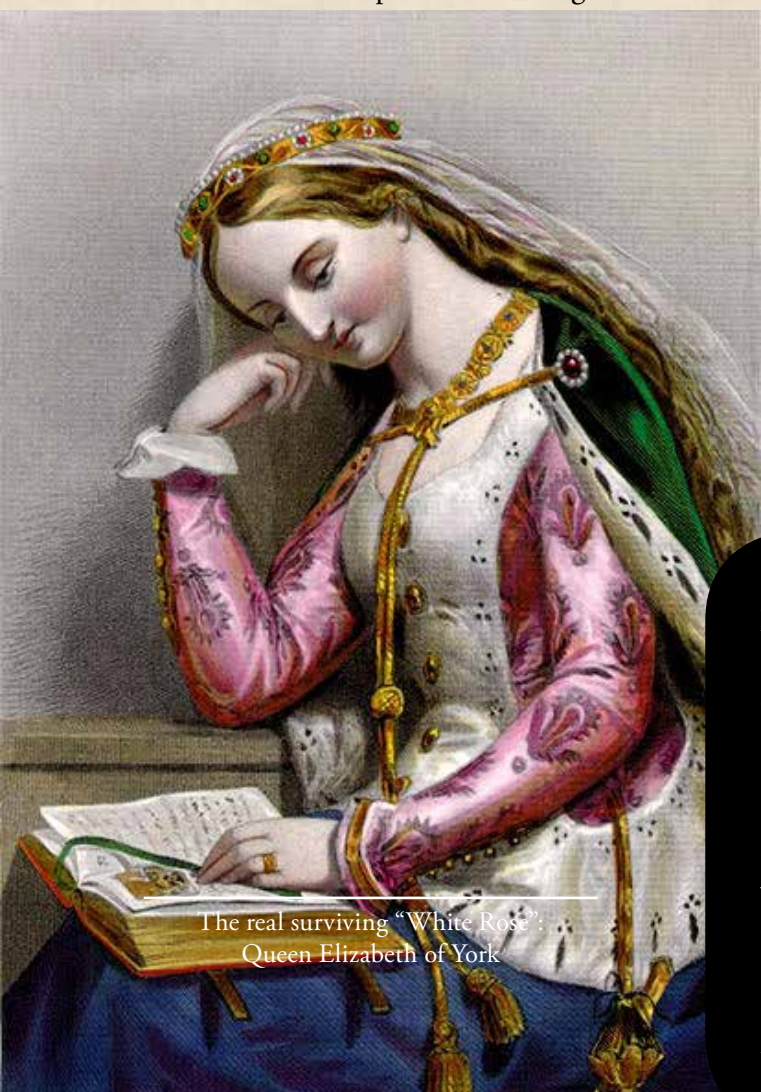
Following Matthew's death, Catherine was married a final time to Christopher Aston, who had two children from a previous marriage. There is no



Henry VII's reception of Catherine Gordon

record that Catherine had any surviving children herself. Catherine died in late 1537 and was buried in the church of St Nicholas at Fyfield, apparently with her fourth husband. Their monument, including brass effigies are now lost, and the church has been extensively rebuilt after severe damage during World War Two.

LAUREN BROWNE



The real surviving "White Rose":
Queen Elizabeth of York

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.





ENGLAND'S LADIES-IN-WAITING DURING THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

by Debra Bayani

Ladies-in-waiting were not seen as servants and were treated as companions of their mistress. It was seen as a great privilege to serve in a queen's household. Ladies-in-waiting were divided into several ranks; the highest rank being First Mistress of the Robes, followed by First Lady of the Bedchamber, Lady of the Bedchamber, Woman of the Bedchamber. The lowest level was called Maid of Honour. These tasks were traditionally given to aristocratic ladies of noble birth, those coming from a good family. With the lady being so close to the Queen, only the highest in the land were suitable.

The duties of a lady-in-waiting varied from helping her mistress to dress and undress, playing music and reading to her, and even went as far as assisting her during childbirth.

The highest ranking lady-in-waiting, First Mistress of the Robes, had the daily tasks of reading and writing letters for her mistress. These women needed good skills to be even taken into consideration for the position of lady-in-waiting – they needed to be able

to sew and embroider, to have an attractive countenance, to be of noble birth, to have the ability to dance and to play some instruments, and to be able to amuse their mistress with games such as playing cards.

In return for serving the queen, a lady-in-waiting received fine clothing, free room and board, and, depending on the rank of her mistress, she was sometimes even granted servants of her own. The biggest benefit for being a lady to a member of the royal family, however, was being close to power. This gave a lady high status in society, and, with that, she might get royal favours for herself and her family members.

Leading up to the Tudor period, queens in the earlier middle ages had a considerably smaller retinue of ladies. Not much about them or their lives are documented, although some details are known. As we approach the Tudor period, more about these ladies is documented and this gives us an insight into their lives.

ALICE CHAUCER

King Henry VI's queen, Margaret of Anjou, had Alice Chaucer, Duchess of Suffolk, amongst her ladies-in-waiting. Alice was well-respected, along with her husband, William de la Pole, who made his wife the sole executrix of his will because 'above all the earth my singular trust is most in her'.

As her husband had negotiated Henry VI's marriage to Margaret, Alice had been close to Margaret from the moment the English entourage went to France to escort her to England for her marriage. Margaret was reported to have fallen ill on her way to England and Alice was there to help and support her. The 40-year-old Alice was probably something like a mother to the

young Margaret, who was only fifteen at the time of her arrival in England in 1445.

It is interesting to note that many historians assert Edward IV's queen, Elizabeth Woodville, was also one of Margaret's ladies-in-waiting, but there are no records proving this suggestion. Amongst Elizabeth Woodville's own ladies were her sister, Anne Woodville, Lady Bourchier (c. 1438-1489) and her sister-in-law, Elizabeth Scales, wife of Elizabeth's brother Anthony and daughter of Thomas, Lord Scales, who had been killed fighting for Lancaster in 1460. It is recorded that these two ladies received double the wage of Elizabeth's other ladies. Lady Scales' mother, Emma Whaleborough, had been a lady-in-waiting to Margaret of Anjou.

ELIZABETH HASTINGS

Elizabeth Hastings was the wife of John Dwnn (or Dunne), a staunch supporter of Edward IV's father, Richard Duke of York. He was involved in England's claim of Calais on behalf of Edward IV, and accompanied Edward's sister to Burgundy upon her marriage to Charles the Bold. He was also one of the English ambassadors at the Burgundian court. Lady Dwnn was a sister to Edward IV's best friend, Lord William Hastings. Not much

is known about the status of Lady Dwnn in Elizabeth's household but there is a rare painting that still exists of Elizabeth Hastings, John Dwnn and their daughter, showing them wearing Yorkist gold collar chains with suns and roses, along with the personal livery of Edward. The "Donne Tryptich" was painted in the 1470s by the Flemish Primitive artist Hans Memling and can be seen at the National Gallery in London.



The Donne Tryptich, c1478, Hans Memling
© The National Gallery

ELIZABETH GREY

Elizabeth had been one of Margaret of Anjou's daily attendants throughout the 1440s and possibly into the next decade. Elizabeth did not flee with the Queen during the time

Edward IV took the throne from Margaret's husband, and in fact, Elizabeth changed sides, becoming a lady to Cecily Neville, Duchess of York, Edward IV's mother.

ELEANOR BEAUCHAMP

By inviting ladies of powerful families into their household, queens hoped to encourage lasting loyalty from their lady's family members, but this was not always what happened.

Eleanor Beauchamp was retained in Cecily Neville's household as her lady-in-waiting, despite being the widow of Edmund Beaufort, 2nd Duke of Somerset (slain at the 1st Battle of St. Albans in 1455) and the mother of

Henry Beaufort (who was killed at the Battle of Hexham in 1464). Both were fighting for Lancaster and could be counted amongst their most loyal and reliable supporters. Naturally, Cecily's household also included women from families who were supporters of the House of York, including Joan Malpas, whose husband was killed while fighting for Edward IV. Joan remarried, also to a dedicated Yorkist supporter, John Peasmarch.

KATHERINE AND JANE VAUX

Katherine was born in France as Katherine Peniston, daughter of Gregory Peniston of Piedmont. Her father was said to have been an English exile and it is very likely she accompanied Margaret of Anjou when she came to England in 1445 to marry Henry VI as she had been one of Margaret's favourite ladies.

By 1456, Katherine had married William Vaux, a loyal Lancastrian supporter who owned manors in Northampton, Buckingham and Berkshire. Following his attainder in 1461, he shared his exile abroad with Margaret before returning to England and eventually meeting his death, along with Margaret and Henry VI's sole heir Prince Edward, at the Battle of Tewkesbury in 1471. Katherine was a loyal lady-in-waiting and refused to leave her Queen's side, even during her five-year imprisonment. After the imprisonment, Katherine followed Margaret when she was sent back to France in 1476 as part of a treaty. Margaret of Anjou died in 1482 and Katherine was one of the witnesses to Margaret's will.

Katherine returned to England, where Richard III granted her an annuity. Richard's queen, Anne, was probably the reason for

this gift, as she would have known Katherine during her exile in France, prior to the Battle of Tewkesbury.

In spite of this favour, it was when Richard III was defeated at Bosworth that a new life began for Katherine and the two children she'd had with her late husband: Nicolas and Jane. Henry VII's 1485 Parliament annulled the attainder of William, which permitted Katherine's son Nicholas to inherit his father's lands. For Nicholas, it was the start of an extensive career at the Tudor court.

Katherine was present at Prince Arthur's christening in 1486, and Nicholas fought for Henry VII at the Battle of Stoke Field. It was for this battle that he was rewarded with a knighthood. Katherine also attended Elizabeth of York's coronation ceremony in 1487, along with her son and daughter. Nicholas was one of the men who bore a canopy over the queen's train as she progressed to Westminster. In 1487, King Henry VII and his Queen consort attended Katherine's daughter Jane's wedding to Richard Guildford. Guildford had taken part in the October 1483 rebellion against Richard III and had fled abroad to join Henry Tudor in exile. He became Henry's Comptroller and Jane was appointed as

governess of the King and Queen's daughters.
Not bad for a lady-in-waiting!

MARGARET WHEATHILL

Another unlikely lady-in-waiting was Margaret Wheathill. Margaret was the wife of John Radcliffe and amazingly remained in the household of Queen Elizabeth of York,

even after her husband had been executed for treason against the King due to Perkin Warbeck's rebellion in 1496!

ELIZABETH TILNEY

Elizabeth Tilney (c. 1445-1497) was lady-in-waiting to both Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter Elizabeth of York (and possibly also to Richard III's Queen, Anne Neville). Elizabeth served Edward's queen as early as her coronation in 1465, where she was one of the ladies who carried the Queen's train to Westminster. She also accompanied the Queen and her children into sanctuary at Westminster abbey when Edward IV had been overthrown by the Lancastrians. While there, she was present at the birth of the Queen's eldest son, Prince Edward. Elizabeth Tilney's first husband, Humphrey Bourchier, was killed fighting for York at the Battle of

Barnet in 1471. The following year, the King arranged her second marriage to Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey. Surrey was a close friend of Edward's younger brother, the future Richard III and when he usurped the throne from his nephew, Prince Edward, Elizabeth became one of Anne Neville attendants during her and Richard's coronation in 1483.

During Henry VII's reign, Elizabeth was appointed as the Queen's Lady of the Bedchamber. Interestingly, Elizabeth Tilney is probably even better known for being the grandmother of two of Henry VIII's wives; Anne Boleyn and Katherine Howard, as well as three of his mistresses!

CONCLUSION

The network of these ladies, especially if they were their mistress's kin, enabled queens and wealthy noble ladies to spread their influence beyond their castles and palaces, right into the families of her ladies. In this way, the queen could receive information or even start the spread of gossip. Sadly, we cannot look into this communication as it seems none has survived or been written down, but as we see from these glimpses into the lives of these women, many of these ladies showed great affection and loyalty towards their mistresses, and the loyalty and affection was reciprocated

too. The mistress clearly became very fond of her ladies and was grateful for company and support - being a queen was not always a fairytale.

I hope it has become evident that these ladies were not just there to assist their queen in dressing or simply accompanying her during her daily routines. These ladies had a great responsibility to keep their mistress informed, to be a go-in-between when it came to the monarchy and their own family, who were often of great importance in their support of the royal family.

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BESS OF HARDWICK

BY KYRA C. KRAMER

BESS OF HARDWICK is one of the most remarkable women of the Tudor period, which quite an achievement is considering how many other amazing women flourished in this era. She rocketed up the sociocultural ladder of early modern Britain to become one of the richest women in the land, and eventually married George Talbot, 6th Earl of Shrewsbury, scion of one of the oldest and wealthiest peerages in the kingdom. But how?

Bess was born barely genteel, the daughter of John Hardwick and Elizabeth Leake (or Leeke), members of the yeomanry in Derbyshire. Her exact date of birth isn't recorded, but it is assumed, based on the date of her father's death and her age at her first marriage, that she was born in the latter half of 1527. She was the next-to-youngest sibling, having two older sisters and a brother who survived childhood, and a younger sister that was born after John Hardwick's death. While little Bess was well situated in comparison to the poor and laboring classes, there is nothing in her lineage that would indicate she would in a position to rapidly marry her way up the ladder of Tudor court. Her sisters married respectably, within their own social strata, as did her brother. Why was Bess different?

At first, it seemed she would be following in her sister's footsteps, regarding a good -- but not spectacular -- union. The 15 year old Bess wed 13-year-old Robert Barlow (or Barley), the son and heir of a neighboring yeoman family who were distantly related to the Hardwick family, in the spring of 1543. Robert's father, who knew he was dying, was attempting to safeguard his son's future, and Bess's connections to local gentry and her

modest dowry were both hopeful signs of prospective security. Alas, Robert passed away 18 months after his father did, leaving young Bess a 16 year old widow, and most likely still a virgin.

Bess and her mother were now in penurious straits. Bess's stepfather was in prison for debt, and Bess was being denied her dower portion of the Barlow estate by the greedy man keeping her young brother-in-law as his ward.

Luckily, Bess seems to have obtained a place as a lady in waiting to Anne Gainsford, Lady Zouche, the wife of Sir George Zouche and close friend of Queen Anne Boleyn. This assertion is based on an oral history that has no documentation, but the Zouch family's main residence was the nearby Codnor Castle in Derbyshire, so it is certainly plausible. The Hardwick family was distantly related to many upper-class families, including the Zouches, and it would have been an ordinary occurrence at the time for the Zouches to have brought a young kinswoman into their home to both train in her in social conduct and to benefit from her services.

There is also a theory, unsubstantiated but made very creditable by circumstantial

COUNTESS OF
SHROESBURY



evidence, that Bess became a lady in waiting in the home of Henry and Frances Grey, the Duke and Duchess of Suffolk and the parents of future queen, Lady Jane Grey. Support for this belief rests on the fact that Frances Grey gifted Bess with a piece of jewelry, most likely a ring, which Bess held dear for the rest of her life, and that Bess's second wedding occurred in the Grey home of Bradgate Park in Leicestershire on 20 August 1547, when she became the wife of Sir



William Cavendish.

Her second marriage was much more fortuitous than her last. Cavendish had been the Treasurer of the King's Chamber for Henry VIII, and had retained that post under the new king, Edward VI. Although he was twice her age, twice-divorced, portly, and had two daughters nearly as old as she was, he was an excellent catch, having become exceedingly wealthy in the dissolution of the monasteries. Bess was now Lady Cavendish, and prominent in court circles. Not bad for a teen girl of unrenowned parentage and no impressive dowry.

So what was Bess doing in so illustrious a home as the Duke of Suffolk's and marrying a man so far above her station? She was distantly related to the Greys, but many young



women of closer connection were not able to serve at Bradgate Park. She was an energetic, witty, and intelligent woman, but not such a great beauty that a great match would seem her destiny. How did Bess manage to become a favorite of Frances Grey and marry one of the leading 'new men' at court?

Could it have something to do with Henry VIII? Was he, not John Hardwick, Bess of Hardwick's real father?

Bess was most likely conceived sometime between September of 1525 and February of 1526. Henry may have already been in love with Anne Boleyn at this point by the autumn of 1525, but he didn't ask her to be his mistress until the early part of 1526 and he probably hadn't yet decided to make her his wife. Even when he was engaged to Anne, and 'faithful' to her, he was faithful within the context of the Tudor times; he 'needed' sexual release for his health but he only slept with women from the lower classes so they didn't count as cheating.

Amy License, in her magnificently researched book *The Six Wives & Many Mistresses of Henry VIII*, points out that 'gifts' were made to women during his engagement to Anne and that at least two of children were reportedly sired by the king on married women of lesser rank in the late 1520s.



Bess's brilliant Queen and rival, Elizabeth I

Elizabeth Leake Harwick, as the pretty wife of a yeomen, would have been exactly the kind of woman Henry would have wooed in pursuit of 'medical release'. Since Elizabeth was married, her husband would have been the one credited with paternity (as with other

babies suspected of being Henry VIII's by-blows). In fact, Elizabeth might not have even known the baby was Henry's until the little one popped out with the king's ginger hair, and a very similar face to his grace's, especially in the shape of the eyes, mouth, and chin.

It's a stretch, but on the off chance Bess was Henry's offspring – or that her mother hoped to at least pass her off as such – did Elizabeth Hardwick write to the king and beg him for help after Bess was widowed in 1543? Was it Henry that asked his niece, Frances Grey, to take Bess in? Does Tudor blood explain why Sir William Cavendish would want to marry a woman with average looks, of supposedly low birth, and no dowry? Is a shared parent why she became such a trusted companion to Queen Elizabeth I? Was it never spoken aloud between the two women, but nevertheless understood when Queen Elizabeth and Bess stood side by side, looking into a mirror?

Regardless of why Sir William married her, as Lady Cavendish the formerly impoverished Bess was now sitting in the catbird's seat. They were friends with some of the most powerful people in the kingdom, including former Queen Jane Seymour's brothers. Bess also proved fertile, giving birth to eight children, six of whom survived to adulthood. Princess Elizabeth, the future monarch, was the godmother of Bess's eldest son, and Queen Mary I was godmother to Bess's youngest son. During Mary's reign Bess and William bought property in Derbyshire, the now famous Chatsworth estates, and moved north so that Bess could be near her mother and extended kin network ... and away from the dangers of Marian London. The Cavendishes were doing very well for themselves.

Disaster struck in 1557. An ailing Sir William was advised by, Sir William Paulett, Queen Mary's Treasurer of the Chamber, that there were discrepancies in the books from Cavendish's time in the same office from 1546 to 1553, and these discrepancies – to the tune of roughly **£6000** -- that would have to be accounted for. Paulett was both a family friend and a godfather to one of the Cavendish sons, so he was sympathetic and more the willing to give William time to explain the unaccounted for expenditures.

Whether or not William embezzled funds from the royals must remain a mystery, because his death on 25 October of the same closed the investigation.

Bess was now rich in assets, but cash poor, and a widow with six small children. Nor was she a court favorite in Mary's regime, being suspected of indulging in Protestant heresy and known to be a former friend of murdered Queen Jane Grey and a current friend of the Princess Elizabeth. Thus, Bess wisely laid low in Derbyshire.

Everything changed for Bess on 17 November 1558, when Queen Mary died and Queen Elizabeth succeeded her to the throne.

The new queen was determined to reward everyone who had been her loyal friend during the perils of her sister's reign, and she made Bess a Lady of the Bedchamber, which was a plumb court position and meant time spent daily with the queen. She also facilitated Bess's marriage to Sir William St Loe on 14 January 1559, a man whom Elizabeth trusted like few others in her realm.

St Loe had been knighted and put in charge of Elizabeth's security when he returned home from fighting in Ireland in 1549, and – as a staunch Protestant -- he had made it evident that he would be willing to die to keep the princess safe. He had been accused of taking part in the plans to make Lady Jane Grey queen and the subsequent Wyatt's rebellion in 1553, for which he was thrown into the Tower of London on 28 Feb. 1554 subjected to questioning. St Loe was implacable in his silence, and gave his captors nothing they could use to implicate the Princess Elizabeth in the plot. He was eventually fined £2,200 and then released in January 1555. As soon as she was queen, Elizabeth made him Captain of her Personal Guard and Chief Butler of England.

It was clear that Elizabeth meant to bestow her favor on Bess with a marriage to St Loe. Not only was he a powerful courtier and a skilled soldier, he was rich as Croesus, with huge tracts of land in the West Country,

as well as Chew Magna in Somerset and his principal residence of Sutton Court in Stowey. By marrying St Loe Bess was able to shore up her wealth again and secure a protector for her children all in one swoop.

Moreover, St Loe and Bess seem to have fallen sincerely in love. He wrote to Bess, calling her his “own dear wife Chatsworth”, and expressing his sorrow they were so often apart due to his work. The only fly in their ointment was the intense avarice of Edward, St Loe’s younger brother. Edward St Loe had expected to inherit his brother’s estates one day, since St Loe’s had only one daughter, Margaret, by his first marriage who had lived to adulthood, and St Loe’s marriage to Bess created the jeopardy of potential male heirs. When Bess was poisoned in 1561, even Edward and William St Loe’s own mother thought Edward was the culprit behind it. To protect his wife (and punish his brother), St Loe wrote a will leaving every single brass farthing he owned to his “most entirely beloved wife”, due to the “natural affection, mature love and assured good will” he felt for her. This wasn’t as hard on his daughter as it might seem, since he had already amply dowered her when she married Thomas Norton and moved to Bristol.

It is often incorrectly assumed that Bess was sent to the Tower in the summer of 1561 for the crime of knowing about the marriage of Lady Katherine Grey (Queen Jane Grey’s sister) and Edward Seymour, the son of Queen Jane Seymour’s eldest brother, and withholding this information from Queen Elizabeth. This confusion stems from the fact that another Elizabeth St Loe (sometimes recorded as Mistress Sentlowe or Sentloo) was at court and serving the queen in her privy chamber – William and Edward St Loe’s sister, Elizabeth. It was William’s sister, not his wife, who was imprisoned from 20 August 1561 until 25 March 1562 and then sent from court in disgrace.

Edward St Loe appears to have succeeded in poisoning his brother in February

1565 during a supposed reconciliation, and he was livid when he discovered the terms of William St Loe’s will. He and Margaret St Loe Norton contested the will, but it was air-tight and Bess had the full backing of the queen on her side as well. Bess was now the happy possession of an annual income of approximately £60,000. The queen was the only woman in Great Britain with more money than Bess.

As a healthy woman in her 30s, with a queen’s friendship to rely on and a king’s ransom in the bank, Bess was the center of a maelstrom of courtship. Bess had enough children and enough money that the only thing left for her to achieve was rank. She eventually bestowed her hand in early 1568 on a suitor with blood so blue it was nearly indigo – George Talbot, 6th Earl of Shrewsbury.

Shrewsbury’s parents were distant cousins, and both descended from Edward III’s granddaughter, Lady Joan Beaufort, who was Henry VII’s aunt, so Shrewsbury was a convoluted cousin of Queen Elizabeth on her grandfather’s side. He was also related to the queen’s grandmother, and mother. (Very interbred, were royal courts.) Bess of Harwick, once a penniless daughter of minimal gentry, was now the immensely wealthy Countess of Shrewsbury.

Bess was determined to secure her children’s fortunes as well as her own. Money she could give them, but nobility could come from her new husband and his connections. Her eldest daughter, had done well enough in marrying Sir Henry Pierrepont, but Bess was determined to raise her other children as high as possible. On the same day that she married Shrewsbury, two of his seven children were married to two of her six children in a double ceremony: Bess’s youngest daughter, 12 year old Mary Cavendish, wed Shrewsbury’s 16 year old second-born son Gilbert, and Bess’s eldest son, 18 year old Sir Henry Cavendish married Shrewsbury’s youngest daughter, 8 year old Lady Grace Talbot.

Although Bess's second son, William, married Anne Kighley, a woman of no particular family or fortune, in 1580, Bess had more say in the unions of her last two unwed children, Charles and Elizabeth. Charles Cavendish secured the hand of a vastly landed heiress, Catherine Ogle, 8th Baroness Ogle, while Bess actually managed to arrange the marriage of her daughter Elizabeth to Charles Stuart, 1st Earl of Lennox, the grandson of Margaret Tudor and the paternal uncle of the infant King James VI of Scotland. The marriage produced on child, Lady Arbella Stuart, 2nd Countess of Lennox, in 1575 before Stuart died of tuberculosis.

When Queen Elizabeth found out that Bess had managed to produce a grandchild who was a potential heir to both the thrones of Scotland and England, the queen was livid. She threw Charles Stuart's mother, Margaret Douglas, into the Tower of London for plotting the match and demanded Bess come to London to face the court's wrath.

This was all made more complex by the fact that Bess and Shrewsbury were keeping Mary, Queen of Scots, as their "guest". The 26 year old Scottish queen had come into their custody in 1569 and would remain in

the care of the Shrewsbury's for the next 15 years. In this manner, Queen Elizabeth had wisely shifted the cost of providing Mary with goods and services commensurate to her status over to the Earl and Bess, rather than having to pay for Mary's upkeep from the royal treasury.



Bess was detested by her reluctant guest Mary, Queen of Scots

B e s s , knowing that Queen Elizabeth needed her to keep tabs on Queen Mary, stayed put in Derbyshire until the monarch was no longer in a vengeful mood. There must have been a deep well of friendship (or kinship?) between them, because not only did Queen Elizabeth forgive Bess, she continued to bestow favors on her afterwards.

Queen Mary, however, seems to have hated Bess for being her de facto jailor.

While she and Bess worked companionably together on the Oxburgh Hangings, Mary appears to have whispered poisoned nothings into Bess's ear regarding Shrewsbury. Bess became convinced that Shrewsbury was having an affair with the Queen of Scots.

The Talbot marriage was irredeemably broken by 1580, and Bess began to spend most of her time in any of the Cavendish-Shrewsbury properties not being occupied by

her husband or Queen Mary. In 1581 Bess's brother James, the last legitimate male in the Hardwick line, died in debt and Hardwick Hall was seized by the crown. Bess swooped in to buy it, improved it, and by 1584 had made it her primary residence.

In January 1585 the Shrewsbury's were finally relieved of responsibility for Queen Mary, who transferred to the custody of Sir Amias Paulet. The Earl tried to woo his wife back, even enlisting Queen Elizabeth to try to broker a reconciliation with Bess, but the countess was having none of it. Bess remained ensconced in Hardwick Hall, making her orphaned granddaughter, Arabella Stuart, her main focus. She was so concerned about Arabella being kidnapped or eloping into an unsuitable marriage that she even had her granddaughter sleep in the same bed chamber with her.

Shrewsbury died on 18 November 1590, leaving Bess a widow once more. This time, however, she had no inclination or need to remarry. Instead she started work on a second Hardwick Hall, a modern mansion house designed for maximum livability and maximum awe. The building was modeled on those being constructed in southern Italy, and had several new, Renaissance-style improvements, such as interior chimneys and a frontage composed almost entirely of windows. This was so novel

and impressive that it inspired the rhyme, "Hardwick Hall, more glass than wall."

Bess moved into Hardwick Hall in 1597, designating her former home Old Hardwick Hall to distinguish them. Although she had decorated and arranged the guest suite on the top floor in the expectation of a royal visit, the court's summer progress never made it that far north before Queen Elizabeth died on 24 March 1603. Bess mourned the loss of her beloved friend, and King James I (James VI of Scotland), the son of Bess's one-time prisoner, Mary Queen of Scots, came to the throne.

The dowager countess of Shrewsbury was now in her 70s, an unbelievably ancient age for the time period, but she remained as vital as ever. Five of her children were still living, and she had more than a dozen thriving grandchildren. Moreover, she had Hardwick Hall, which she enjoyed decorating and continually improving in her final years.

Bess of Hardwick, Countess of Shrewsbury, former Lady of Bedchamber (and possible half-sister) to Queen Elizabeth I, died as the sun set on 13 February 1608, at the age of 81. She had witnessed the entirety of the Elizabethan Era, and become famous for her intelligence and her architectural achievements. Three hundred and forty-four years after her death, on 6 February 1952, her namesake and descendant would become the second Queen Elizabeth to reign over Great Britain.

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KYRA C. KRAMER

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MAIDS OF NO HONOUR: LADIES-IN-WAITING OF TUDOR TV AND FILM

By Emma Elizabeth Taylor





Ana Torrent as Katherine of Aragon with her uniformed ladies in "The Other Boleyn Girl" (Hotflick)

In the famous poem, *Ode to a Nightingale*, by John Keats, he makes mention of the 'starry Fays', clustered around the 'Queen-Moon'. It's a gorgeous image; the beautiful Queen surrounded by her courtiers – but just who exactly *were* these 'starry Feys'? The ladies in waiting and the maids of honour of the Tudor court were an essential part of the Royal Household. These terms are familiar to many of us, but remains an oft-overlooked part of any court, European or otherwise. The idea of a lady in waiting certainly isn't specific to European aristocracy, with many instances of ladies in waiting appearing beside women of rank from all over the world. Sometimes these ladies in waiting were not of noble birth, with some cultures referring to slaves or servants as the Queen's ladies. Some ladies in waiting even rise to the lofty heights of a King's Mistress, or even to the position of Queen – certainly the case with Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, and Catherine Howard, three of Henry VIII's queens. In this article, I will be looking at some contemporary presentations of ladies in waiting, and examine how the role of these women is presented through visual means, primarily costume, and explore the modern understanding of this essential part of the Tudor Court.

In Tudor popular fiction, there is a recurring trope. It is one that is present in Tudor television, film, even historical fiction, and it is that the

ladies of the court are not to be trusted. When we look at history, it's easy to see the pattern amongst Henry VII's wives; after all, at least three of the six queens acted as ladies-in-waiting

to the previous Queen. Anne Boleyn waited on Katherine of Aragon, who she then replaced on the throne. Jane Seymour then replaced Anne Boleyn, acting as one of Anne's ladies in waiting. Catherine Howard replaced the German queen, Anne of Cleves. With the above straight from the pages of history books, it is easy to see how rivalries and relationships within the court makes for compelling television.

Many films and television shows display this visually, usually by utilising different styles of Tudor dress to differentiate which 'team' the ladies in waiting are on. For example, in the 2008 film *The Other Boleyn Girl*, Katherine of Aragon's ladies wear a matching uniform. While this may be easily missed on first viewing, Katherine's ladies in waiting all wear the same dress, made in the same fabric with the same brocade detailing. They wear this in different colours; various shades of dark, jewel tones such as ruby, emerald green, and deep sapphire blue. They also all wear matching black partlets, which was a piece of fabric worn over the décolletage for modesty, as well as matching 'gable' hoods, which are commonly associated with the media's image of Katherine of Aragon. They wear these dresses throughout the course of the movie, and six of her ladies in waiting are present when she is led into the courtroom to discuss the annulment of her marriage. In contrast to this, Anne and her ladies are always shown in French hoods, the half-moon hood that's commonly associated with Anne, and often preferred by costumers due to its more delicate nature. Anne's retinue, including Mary Boleyn, are often costumed in lighter tones, with delicate white partlets, and a decidedly lighter, brighter colour palette. Their hairs are unbound, and their jewels more decadent. This visual contrast between the courts of the two queens allows casual viewers to subconsciously divide these two groups in their minds, and stands as a visual display of the conflict between Katherine and Anne – old fashioned vs modern, young vs old. However, this overt rival-



Scarlett Johansson as the "milk and honey" Mary Boleyn (BBC)

ry and visual conflict between the queens does tend to simplify this tumultuous period of history – reducing it to a jealous wife and an unfaithful husband, as opposed to the political and religious upheaval that this period truly represented.

While there are rivalries between queens and ladies in waiting, this rivalry also extends to the Boleyn sisters in *The Other Boleyn Girl*. Mary and Anne change their roles many times throughout the course of the movie, but both begin as maids of honour to Queen Katherine. Here, they are clothed similarly, but once Anne begins on her trajectory towards the throne, there is a clear visual distinction made between the sisters. Anne calls Mary, 'My milk and honey sister', and this is clearly reflected in Mary's colour palette; she stays within the realm of warmer, softer colours, such as soft golds, rosy pinks, and pale oranges, whereas Anne cuts a



Joanne King as a villainous Lady Rochford
in "The Tudors" (Showtime)

more intimidating and brighter palette, featuring Tudor green, sapphire blue and even royal purple. Anne casts off the colours she wore as maid of honour to Queen Katherine in favour of her own, new colour palette, that remains with her until her downfall.

Returning to my earlier point on rivalries, the role of the lady in waiting in Tudor fiction is easily reduced to that of a spy or a narrative device, rather than a rounded character. One historical character who has fallen victim to this curse on multiple occasions is Lady Rochford, also known as Jane Boleyn, the wife of Anne Boleyn's brother, George. Despite a lack of evidence regarding her relationship with Anne and George, Jane is frequently portrayed as one of the great villains of the Tudor era, a woman who is power-hungry, obsessive and willing to lead her own husband and sister-in-law to the execu-

tioner's block. In *The Other Boleyn Girl*, Jane is played by Juno Temple, and we are introduced to Jane as one of Katherine's uniformed ladies in waiting; our first real introduction is when George tells Anne that Jane is a 'snake'. By placing Jane in the uniform of Katherine's ladies in waiting, the viewer senses that Jane is not on the side of the Boleyns; and even when she's out of her uniform, she couldn't be more visually different to Anne. Jane is always costumed in drab, dull colours – sickly greens and yellows, and always in a gable hood, never showing her hair in the way Mary and Anne do. This distinct visual discord between Jane and the Boleyns makes her spying and eventual betrayal of the Boleyns far from shocking; she's been an outsider from the beginning, and in this retelling, is never accepted into the Boleyn family.

In Showtime television series *The Tudors*, Jane is once again shown in the livery of a queen; this time, the golden livery of the teenaged Queen Catherine Howard. Played by Joanne King, this Jane is once again presented in the poorest of ways. Taking an instant dislike to the new Queen Catherine, Jane begins a sexual relationship with Thomas Culpepper, before arranging liaisons between the Queen and Culpepper. She talks to Catherine's ladies in waiting, gathering evidence regarding Catherine's previous lovers and affairs, and seems entirely eager to bring Katherine down. In this case, however, Jane blends into Catherine's court, wearing the golden uniform of her ladies in waiting, and becoming her most trusted advisor. She's beautifully dressed in an ornate golden dress, complete with a golden hood laden with pearls; but this presentation of Jane is a wolf in sheep's clothing. Once again, she is not to be trusted; another lady in waiting turned against her Queen, and Jane's nervous breakdown and subsequent execution do not solicit sympathy from the viewer. Instead, we are happy to see her meet her end, and in the context of the show, this does feel deserved. However, as with all historical fic-



Gorgeous plot devices (Showtime)

tion, it's important to remember that film and television narratives must have their villains, and this characterisation of Lady Rochford perhaps merits a certain degree of suspension of disbelief from the historically aware viewer.

One of the great tragedies of the Tudor lady in waiting is the ability of writers to turn these women into beautiful narrative devices. It seems that, if there is a hole in historical knowledge, that in many cases, the writers of Tudor film and television simply use ladies in waiting and maids of honour to fulfil this role; whether it's spying, an affair, or court intrigue, these ladies are easily inserted into the story, and their proximity within the story provides narrative tension and drama. This is, of course, in disregard of historical accuracy; we rarely, if ever, see these ladies

undertake the duties that would have been expected of them as ladies in waiting or maids of honour. However, here, we must allow the writers of Tudor fiction some liberties with the roles of ladies in waiting; while they're rarely pictured practicing their needlework, as they would have been, this hardly makes for compelling television or film. This, however, is not to debase the role of the lady in waiting. They were, and still remain, a part of courtly life, and many a lady in waiting has risen above her station and become Queen, as the Tudor era is testament to. However, it would be fantastic, in the future, to see a series or film focused on these fascinating members of the Tudor Court, and allow these background figures to come alive once again, to take their place in history's spotlight.

EMMA ELIZABETH TAYLOR

**NOVEMBER'S EXPERT
SPEAKER IS
JULIAN HUMPHRIES
FROM...**





THE QUEENS AND THEIR LADIES

Conor Byrne looks at what the queens and their attendants did for each other ...

The 'traditionally' (arguably, stereotypically) masculine ventures of politics and diplomacy were conducted at the Tudor court, but it would be inaccurate to surmise that women at court lacked a political 'voice' or were excluded from the political arena. This was especially true during the later sixteenth-century, which witnessed the accessions of two successive queens regnant: Mary I and Elizabeth I. The circumstances of their accessions meant that women occupied influential roles in the queen's household. However, during the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII, the role of female courtiers could be viewed as less public and, perhaps, less formalised. As attendants to the queen consort, women at court could enjoy influence on behalf of their families

and friends, especially when they were personally favoured by the queen.

Those who served in the queen's household, including ladies-in-waiting and maids of honour, were required to attend their mistress hourly. They assisted her with her wardrobe, helped her to get dressed, attended her at chapel, provided company when the queen wished to embroider, read or listen to music, and appeared alongside the queen at court functions. Given her proximity to her female attendants, it is unsurprising that the queen developed close relationships with certain members of her household. Katherine Parr, for example, was close to other ladies of the household that shared her evangelical interests, including her sister Anne, as well as the Duchess of Suffolk. The queen was



Queen Katherine Parr, whose household was under investigation in 1546.

also required to observe that her attendants were behaving as early modern women were expected to do. Piety, humility and chastity were highly valued qualities in members of the queen's household. When Anne Boleyn learned that her cousin Mary Shelton had written poetry in her prayer book, she admonished Mary for her flightiness. Jane Seymour also favoured a household in which her ladies were expected to be sober and modest.

The queen's attendants provided comfort and solace to their mistress in times of hardship, loss and suffering. The long friendship of Katherine of Aragon and Maria de Salinas, Baroness Willoughby, is well known. During Katherine's final illness, the baroness rode with haste to Kimbolton Castle in Cambridgeshire to visit and comfort her exiled friend. Katherine's friendship with Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury, may have been one reason why the Countess was appointed governess to Katherine's daughter, Mary. When Mary's household was broken up in 1533, Margaret offered to serve Mary at her own cost. It has already been noted that Katherine Parr's reformist sympathies were shared by several ladies of her household, including her sister Anne and Katherine Brandon, Duchess of Suffolk. According to John Foxe's narrative, when conservatives at court conspired against the queen and encouraged Henry VIII's suspicions of his wife, several of Katherine's ladies attended her in her submission to the king.

In climates of treason and fear, female attendants could turn on their mistress. The surviving records are often frustratingly vague, with little insights into the rivalries, tensions and cliques that must have characterised the queen's household on a daily basis. The motivations in testifying against one's mistress are for the most

part unknown. Some of the accusations brought against Anne Boleyn in 1536 were apparently directly made by women who had served in her household, including Elizabeth Somerset, Countess of Worcester. When admonished by her brother for her promiscuity, the Countess allegedly retorted that her private life was nothing compared to that of Anne. Nan Cobham was another alleged accuser of the queen; while the recorded remarks of, and correspondence related to, Bridget Wingfield, who had died in 1534, were used as evidence against Anne. Other members of the household, including the queen's sister-in-law Jane, Viscountess Rochford, may have provided further evidence against their mistress. When Katherine Howard was accused of treason in 1541, several of her female attendants testified against her, including her childhood acquaintance Katherine Tylney. The previous year, the testimony of several of Anne of Cleves' ladies-in-waiting – including Lady Rochford, Lady Rutland and Lady Edgecombe – was used as evidence to enable the dissolution of Anne's marriage.

Elizabeth of York and four of her son Henry VIII's wives were Englishwomen, which meant that their

families were in a position to enjoy greater influence at court as relatives of the queen. The degree of influence they could wield depended in part on the queen's relationship with the king, as well as her relationship with individual members of her family. Jane Seymour's brothers, Edward and Thomas, benefited considerably when Jane gave birth to a prince, Edward, in 1537; the former was made earl of Hertford and later acted as Edward VI's Lord Protector during that king's minority. There is little evidence to suggest that Jane was close to her younger sister Elizabeth, who sought the assistance of the king's master secretary



Queen Anne Boleyn's sister, Mary Stafford (Boleyn), who was banished for her secret wedding.

Thomas Cromwell when she was widowed. It may be significant that she wrote to Cromwell rather than to her sister the queen. In August 1537, Elizabeth married Thomas's son Gregory. Similarly, there is little to suggest a close relationship between Anne Boleyn and her sister Mary, and unlike her father and brother, Mary did not benefit from Anne's marriage to Henry VIII. In 1534, when she was found to have secretly married William Stafford and subsequently fallen pregnant by him, Mary was banished from court and was, like Elizabeth Seymour, compelled to seek the intercession of Cromwell. Her extant letter to Cromwell refers explicitly to Anne's displeasure. Anne's maternal family, the Howards, enjoyed some influence in Anne's household given that its members included Mary Fitzroy (née Howard), Duchess of Richmond. In contrast, as noted earlier, Katherine Parr's close relationship with her sister Anne continued after the former's marriage to the king, and Anne attended Katherine's wedding at Hampton Court Palace.

The circumstances facing Elizabeth of York's female relatives was quite different to that concerning the female kin of Henry VIII's English-born queens. Although he had been victorious at Bosworth in 1485, a victory that permitted him to take the throne, Henry VII remained suspicious of his wife's Yorkist relatives and demonstrated a concern to manage their political activities. These activities included marriages and matchmaking. Elizabeth's sister Cecily married John Welles, a maternal half-brother of the king's mother, Margaret Beaufort. The queen was close to Cecily, who lent Elizabeth money on at least one occasion and participated in a range of ceremonies at court including the christening of Henry VII's son Arthur, at which Cecily carried the prince. Her clandestine marriage to Thomas Kyme after the death of Welles, however, earned Cecily the disfavour of Henry VII, who banished her from court and confiscated her estates. Some of these were eventually restored to her after the king's mother interceded for her. Elizabeth's sister, Anne of York, also featured prominently in court

ceremonies, including the christening of Princess Margaret, and married Thomas Howard (the future 3rd duke of Norfolk) in 1495, while Katherine of York married William Courtenay, earl of Devon. These marriages, although respectable, may not have been those envisaged by the princesses in the years of their father's reign.

Henry VIII's reign was remarkable in the sense that a lady-in-waiting could supplant her royal mistress and become queen in her place. Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour and Katherine Howard all served in the queen's household prior to their royal marriages. Katherine Parr's sister Anne, moreover, served in the queen's household before her sister's arrival at court. Contemporary evidence provides insights into the tensions that arose when an attendant threatened the marriage of her mistress. The rivalry between Katherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn is well known, while a somewhat unreliable tradition credits Anne with physically attacking Jane Seymour when the king's interest in Jane became public knowledge. Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour and Katherine Howard all spent time away from court during the attempts to annul the royal marriage. While Anne was required to wait six years for the annulment of Henry's marriage to Katherine of Aragon, Jane and Katherine Howard spent only a few weeks away from court. The king was also linked romantically with members of the queen's household including Bessie Blount, Mary Shelton and Anne Basset.

The queen's female attendants featured in the court ceremonies and entertainments, but it would be misleading to conclude that their role was essentially, or merely, decorative. Political influence could be achieved and exercised, especially if an attendant was close to the queen. As Lady of the Bedchamber, Jane Rochford assisted Katherine Howard's nocturnal meetings with Thomas Culpeper in 1541. Moreover, five of the seven consorts between 1485 and 1547 were English-born, which meant that their families – most of whom were long established at court – could enjoy influence, especially in relation to female kin in the queen's household.

CONOR BYRNE

THE TUDOR SOCIETY

MEMBERS' BULLETIN

Good day to you!

Thank you to everyone who sent in a photo of them wearing the Tudor Society Pin Badge. The competition is now closed and we have a winner ... JEAN! Congratulations, Jean, you've won a signed copy of Leanda de Lisle's book.



All of the photos sent in are later in this magazine... are you there?

Please get involved with the Tudor Society
WE RELY ON YOUR ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP and you
can WIN PRIZES!

Historical book

IMAGINING MARÍA DE SALINAS

by Wendy J. Dunn

María de Salinas: I cannot remember the first time she became a Tudor person of interest to me, but I remember well the story from history that made me decide to give her voice in *Falling Pomegranate Seeds* – the overarching title for my planned fiction trilogy on the life of Katherine of Aragon. *Falling Pomegranate Seeds: The Duty of Daughters* was published late last year – and I am now working on books two and three.

I vividly remember the story about María de Salinas that originally aroused my admiration. Who could not admire a woman – a woman of about fifty – who, without any permission from Henry VIII to do so, disobeys her king and rides

from her London home, in an English winter, to be with a dying friend?

María continued her defiance against Henry VIII at the end of her journey. By this stage, no one was allowed to see Katherine of Aragon without first gaining a written permit from the king. Hurt by a fall from her mount in the last stage of her long ride, Maria stood outside Kimbolton Castle, Katherine's final dwelling place, and demanded to be let in, claiming the laws of hospitality due to her injuries. But once inside the castle, she quickly located the apartments of Katherine, her lifelong friend, and stayed with her until Katherine drew her last breath. I have even started imagining these scenes for my final book in my trilogy about Katherine of Aragon:

SPECIAL feature

Strong winds swept more rain across the dales and lashed the already drenched riders with another heavy downpour. On the ground, earth turned and churned into rivulets of mud, the horses' hoofs slid, struggling to move any further up the steep hill. One horse stumbled and slipped, almost going down on its side, tumbling its rider to the muddy ground.

The ousted rider sat upon the soaked earth, cowl falling from her head. In an oval, white face, no longer young but not yet old, large, dark and intelligent eyes gazed all about, peering into the dimming light. Wiping away a streak of mud from her high cheekbones, the rider gingerly up righted herself, seizing the horse's reins, then straightened her lopsided matron's gable; the mare now stood, its body shaking, with head lowered as if defeated.

The woman bent her head to the beast, stoking its nose, murmuring encouragement. The horse snorted, pawing and limping a little way towards her, but then stopped and neighed, shaking its head.

Edging his horse through the mud, rain bowing him low in the saddle, the woman's companion returned to her side. "My lady – are you hurt?"

So who was María de Salinas – are no known paintings or drawings of and why is she an important figure in her. I assume she was attractive because Tudor history? A number of histories of Henry VII told Isabel of Castile to send, Katherine of Aragon recount the as attendants for her daughter, girls same story. Believed to be kin of 'gentle birth and beautiful to Katherine of Aragon, or, at the least, by no means ugly' (Tremlett María de Salinas was the daughter of 2010, pg. 63) because Martín de Salinas they were more likely and his wife Josefa to find husbands. This Gonzales de Salas assumption becomes (Earenfight 2016). even stronger

When I started writing *Falling Pomegranate Seeds: The Duty of Daughters*, my attempts to put flesh upon the bones of María's story proved frustrating to say the least. Like so many women in this period, her birth year is unknown. There



Several historians have her coming out with Katherine of Aragon in 1501; others have coming to replace María de Rojas, another woman who was very close to Katherine of Aragon, when

Image: Catherine Willoughby

Historical book

she returned to Castile to marry in 1503. This is when I remind myself I am a fiction writer. While it would be wonderful to be absolutely certain of my facts before I allow my imagination full rein, when history is debated I must come down on one side or the other.

There is also no biography of María de Salinas. I am reliant on what I discover about her through the biographies of other more well known figures of Tudor history. There have been enough times when María's personality flashes out from the pages of history and gives me more than just a side note

in the stories of others. Like when Weir tells us of María's desire to stay with Katherine of Aragon after her marriage to Henry VIII. 'The girl desires of all things to remain with me' (Weir, page 98), Katherine told her new husband in 1509. María de Salinas, by then, was well and truly part of Katherine's life. In these earlier and happier years of his

first marriage, Henry liked María, too, and did not mind her influence on his wife, or that she was so close to her.

Weir, while frustrating not citing the sources for her information most of the time, provides me with the most

important bones of María's story. According to Weir, in 1505, María had hoped to marry a noble Fleming, but Katherine – forced again to write a begging letter to her father, was provided for no money for María's dowry so the arrangement came to nothing.

María did not marry until 1516. If she was a similar age to Katherine of Aragon, which I

believe, that means she was then at least thirty by the time of her marriage – an intriguingly, and fiction inspiring, mature age for a first marriage for a woman of her time and station. Her husband was William Willoughby, the 11th Baron of Willoughby de Eresby – a man of great wealth, long noble lineage and the largest landowner



Image: Susan Bertie, Countess of Kent, daughter of Catherine Willoughby Brandon

SPECIAL feature

in Lincolnshire. Henry VIII clearly approved the marriage because he gifted Willoughby additional wealth and properties to celebrate the match.

Ten years later María was a widow. Like Katherine of Aragon, María also grieved during her marriage over the death of all her children bar for one daughter, named for her lifelong friend. Her daughter was only about seven when María was widowed. It must have terrible for María when she lost her husband. Her brother-in-law, Sir Christopher Willoughby, who inherited the Willoughby properties that could only come down to the male heir, caused a lot of trouble by trying to grab whatever he could of his brother's wealth, and María had to fight for her daughter's rights. But the child Katherine Willoughby was the primary heiress, and a very wealthy heiress at that. Less than three years after her father's death, Katherine's wardship was sold to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, for a great deal of money (Read 1963).

María never married again. After her husband's death, she continued in her service to Katherine of Aragon until 1532, when Henry VIII ordered her to leave Katherine's household. By that stage, Henry had annulled, what he claimed, his no true marriage to Katherine of Aragon. María was far too loyal to Katherine for Henry to risk leaving her in her service.

One of my most favourite quotes about writing historical fiction comes from William Styron. He tells us, "While it may be satisfying and advantageous for historians to feast on rich archival material, the writer of historical fiction is better off when past events have left him with short rations". It is those short rations which ignites a writer's imagination. That does not mean what I know about this period can be described as 'short rations'. Not at all. All the research I have done over the years is now, well and truly, part of my writerly compost. As Ursula Le Guin tells us: "The stuff has to be transformed into oneself, it has to be composted before it can grow a story" (1989, p. 194).

My writing philosophy is the same as Margaret Atwood, who says, 'when there was a solid fact, I could not alter it ... but in the parts left unexplained – the gaps left unfilled – I was free to invent' (Atwood 1998, p.1515). I create characters – the historical real and the historical imagined – through my research, but when I am provided with short rations – like what happened with María de Salinas – my imagination fires up and begins filling in the gaps. This is when I become immersed in the real magic of writing: I am dreaming my story onto the page. There are times when I wake from this dream agonized as to where my dream has taken me. But historical fiction is first and foremost a

Historical book

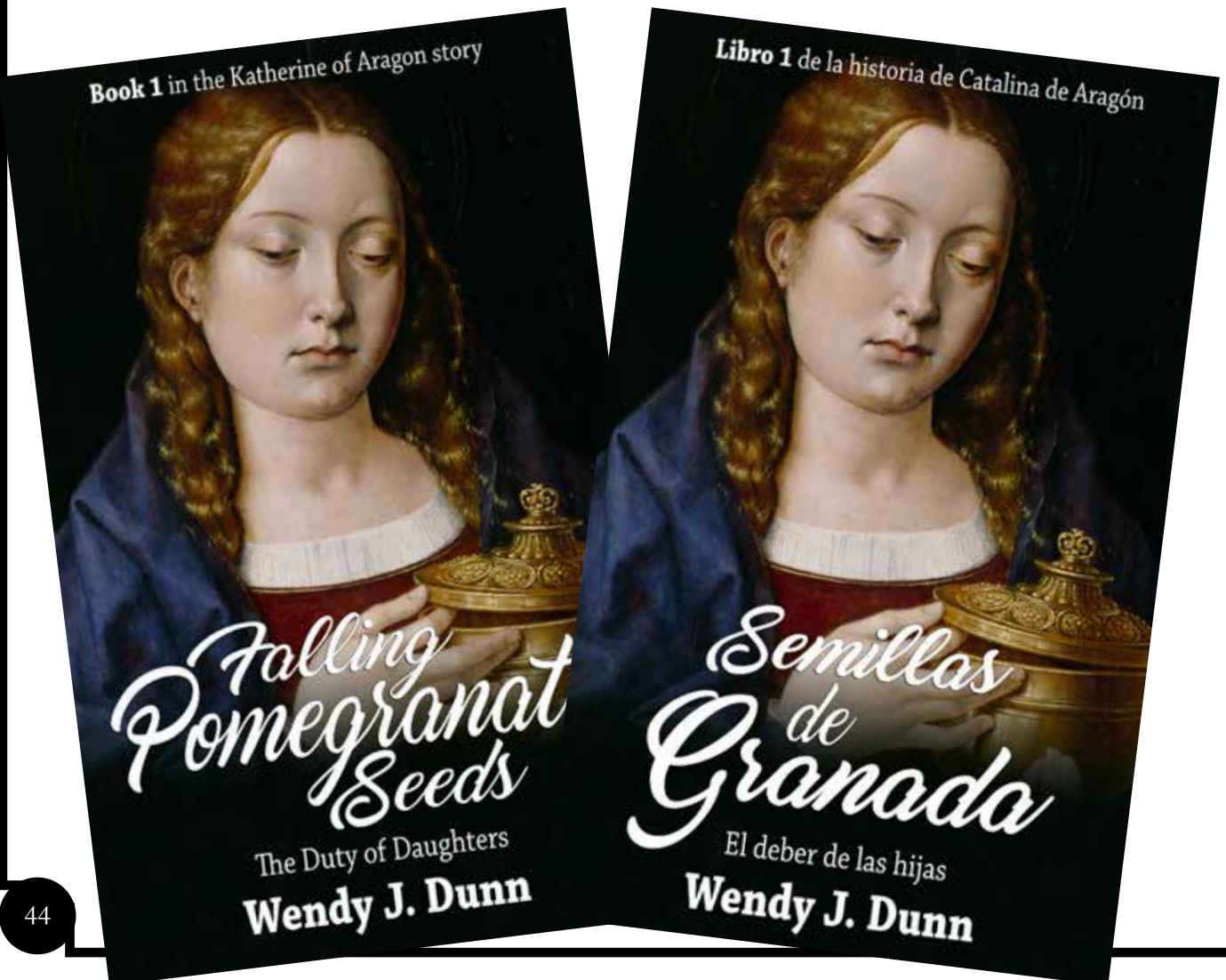
work of imagination – and story is what beats its heart on the page.

The paradox of fiction is all fiction is make believe, a lie. No matter how much I research the period and its people, I can only hope to interpret, recreate the past and construct my make-believe through the prism of a writer who belongs to

and is constructed by the present. I use my imagination to fill in the gaps of historical record. As a writer of historical fiction, I have to take a stand, trust my research and my instincts about human psychology, but my goal is to always find the beating heart of a good story that is also informed by history.

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SPECIAL feature

AN EXTRACT FROM THE RAVEN'S WIDOW

by Adrienne Dillard

"MY LADY," the whispered words seemed to float before me. When I reached out to capture them, another set of hands pulled me back. "Please wake up, my lady." I bobbed a moment longer in the sea of dreams before Lucy's frantic tugging dragged me to the surface.

"God's blood, Lucy," I gasped. "You've scared me nearly to death."

My maid waited for my breathing to calm before responding. "Mistress Horseman is here for you. She carries a message from the queen."

I looked over at George's sleeping form and considered whether I should wake him. He looked so peaceful; I hesitated to disturb his sleep if the matter turned out to be inconsequential. I quickly decided against it and directed Lucy to bring my robe.

Margery Horseman stood quietly in the shadows of my presence chamber. Her face appeared deathly pale in the light of the flames dancing upon the candles. "What is it, Mistress Horseman?" I hissed in a low voice.

"The queen's labour has begun," Margery replied, her eyes wide with fear. "The pain causes her to cry out for her brother. You must bring George to her."


"That cannot be; it is far too early for that." I tried to calculate the months of Anne's pregnancy in my head, but I hadn't yet cleared the fog of sleep from my mind. Regardless of how many months had passed, I knew that too many remained for the baby to survive the birth.

"Please, Lady Rochford," Margery pleaded. "We're wasting precious time."

The desperation in her voice suddenly spurred me to action. "Go Margery!" I called out as I turned back to my bedchamber. "I'll get George."

George groaned at my prodding, but the mention of his sister's name caused him to fly up in alarm. "Tarry not wife, let's go!" he cried as he struggled into his hose.

Historical book



The cheerful illumination of Anne's presence chamber belied the terrible moans coming from the rooms beyond it. A brace of maids had gathered there at the first sign of trouble; by the time of our arrival, they had taken to the corners to gossip in hushed tones about the queen's distress. I trailed George as he followed the desperate cries to Anne's inner rooms. A lone yeoman guard barred the door to her bedchamber. I saw him noticeably relax when he caught sight of George.

"I've kept all visitors out, my lord. I have orders that none but you shall pass."

George nodded at the guard, then took a step towards the door.

"You can't go in there, George," I reached out to stop him.


My husband wore a mask of confusion when he turned to face me. "Why can't I?" he demanded.

"You are not allowed in if Anne is in labour. The rules are firm."

"But you heard Margery, she asked for me."

"George," I soothed as I took his hand. "Anne is in terrible pain; she is not thinking clearly. She will be very upset if we do not maintain her dignity at the birth of her prince. You wait out here, and I will tell you everything that happens."

George measured my words carefully. Brotherly instinct urged him to run to his sister's aid, but I knew he was cautious enough to heed my advice. After a moment's consideration, he relented. "Report back straight away and leave nothing out."



A ghastly sight awaited me inside Anne's bedchamber. The satin counterpane gracing the great tester bed had been tossed aside to expose the linen underneath. Brilliant red streaks marred the snowy white fabric that had been pristine only hours ago. I followed the sound of Anne's sobs and found her curled into a ball on the pallet next to her bed; blood soaked the bottom half of her nightshirt.

"Anne?" I asked tentatively as I knelt down beside her. I placed my hand on her back; it was moist with sweat.

Her response was muffled, but there was no mistaking what she said. "He's dead, Jane. My prince is dead."

I brushed the tangle of dark hair from her face, wiping the tears from her swollen eyes. "Let me help you up, Your Grace," I urged. Anne resisted my prodding, and when she finally rolled over, I realised why. Her arms were tightly wound around a tiny, blood-stained bundle containing the remains of her child.

"Please don't take him from me, Jane. Please just give me a moment longer."

She sounded so desperate, there was nothing else I could do but comply. "Of course, Your Grace," I soothed. "Hold him for as long as you like."

I wrapped my arm around her limp body and lifted her from the floor. After I had managed to settle her onto the bed, I tiptoed to the door to deliver the news to George. "Your sister needs a midwife, George. The child is no longer." George swallowed hard. He planted a kiss on my cheek before he hurried off to find help. I closed the door, then ambled back to the bed.

SPECIAL feature

"The king is going to be very angry with me isn't he Jane?" Anne whimpered. "He might even send me away."

"Try not to worry, Your Grace. The king loves you; he would never send you away." My encouragement felt vacant. We were both thinking of the last woman who had miscarried His Grace's son. She had been laid to rest mere hours ago.

The king showed no emotion when Anne revealed her miscarriage to him the next morning. He merely stared at her in cold silence, impervious to her tears. Before he left the room, he fired a parting salvo, "I see now that God will not grant me male children. I will speak to you when you are up."

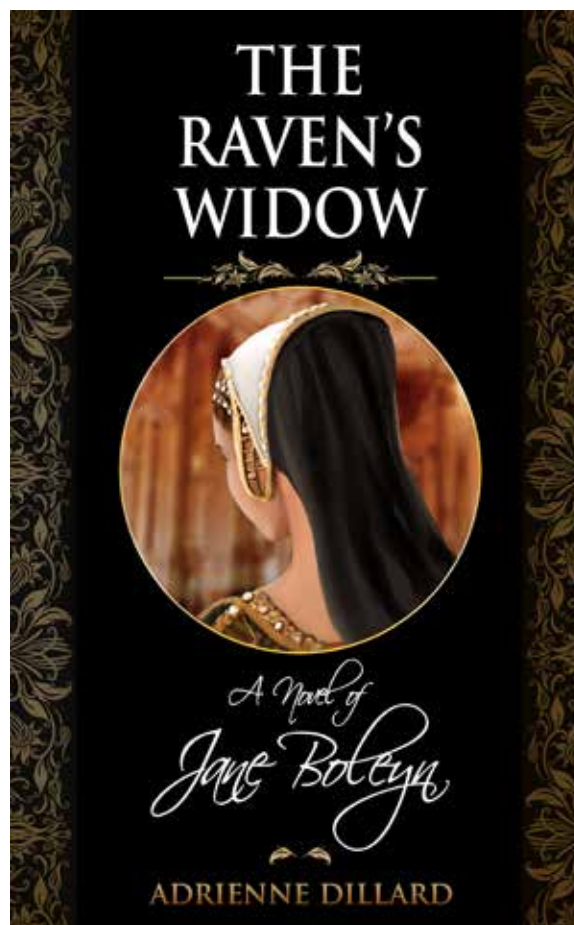
In the days that followed, His Grace removed himself to York Place for Shrovetide

and the remaining session of Parliament. George was obliged to follow the court, but I stayed behind with Anne while she recovered.

"Once my sister is up and about, she will waste no time joining us. Don't look so sad; we will be together soon," he cajoled as he shoved a stack of books into his cedar trunk. "I'm certain you will be far too busy planning the May Day festivities to miss me."

I slipped behind him and wrapped my arms around his chest. I laid my head on his back, the heat from his body warming my cheek. "I miss you every time you leave."

George brought my hand to his lips for a kiss. "Take care of Anne. She is our greatest concern now."



Historical book

THE QUEEN AND THE LAST BOLEYN

by Leanda de Lisle

Tudor Life Magazine has an exclusive extract from *The White King*, a new, ground-breaking biography of Charles I, by best-selling historian Leanda de Lisle.

Henrietta Maria and the Countess of Carlisle

In June 1626, a year after Henrietta Maria's arrival in England as Charles's bride, he decided it was time to exchange her French servants for English ones. This was usual practice and many English families, anxious to see their relatives in the queen's household, had been busy ensuring their daughters had been practicing their French. Charles's favorite and leading minister, the Duke of Buckingham, had, however, persuaded Charles that his friends and relations should predominate. Not only had he already proved an enemy to the queen, the names of the women included that of his lover the twenty-six year old Lucy Hay, Countess of Carlisle, who, it

as said, he was lining up to now plant as Charles's mistress. If so, this posed a formidable threat to the sixteen-year old queen.

Like that other royal mistress, Anne Boleyn, from whose sister she was descended, Lucy Carlisle's 'bright... conquering eyes' held many men in their power. The poet John Suckling confessed to voyeuristic fantasies, describing how watching her walking in Hampton Court's gardens 'I was undoing all she wore/ And had she walked but one turn more/Eve in her first state had not been/ More naked or more plainly seen'. Yet Lucy was more than merely the 'killing beauty' of the age. Powerful

SPECIAL feature



The tenacious French princess who became Queen Henrietta-Maria (The 1640s' Pic Book)

men stood 'in awe of her wit' and some were even a little afraid of her cruel put downs. One victim described her as 'the most charming of all things that are not good, and the most delightful poison ever nature produced'.

Henrietta Maria's warned Charles 'she would never have confidence' in any of Buckingham's choices and had 'a great aversion' for Lucy Carlisle in

particular. Over the following weeks her French servants helped block the new English members of her household from attending on her. In August Charles lost patience. Buckingham was told to 'send all the French' back across the channel, 'like so many wild beasts'. Henrietta Maria was allowed to keep several favoured priests, which meant her religious rights would be upheld. But

Historical book



Henrietta-Maria's ladies, including Lucy, Countess of Carlisle.

the ill-tempered manner in which she had lost servants whom she considered 'family', had left her distraught. Charles's 'wild beasts' had included a Mme St George, who had been like a surrogate mother to her since she was in the nursery.

In the closed private archives of Belvoir castle lies one of the greatest collections of civil war manuscripts in the world. Many of these documents are unknown to historians and among them are many royal letters. One was now written by Henrietta Maria to the banished head of her ecclesiastical retinue, the Bishop of Mende. She had been forbidden from communicating with anyone unless in the presence of her English servants. She complained in her letter to Mende that she had to hide away to write to him, 'like a prisoner

who cannot talk to anyone, neither to describe my misfortunes, nor to call upon God to pity a poor, tyrannized princess and to do something to alleviate her suffering'. Miserably, she announced 'I am the most afflicted person on earth. Talk to your Queen [Marie de Medici] my mother about me and reveal to her my woes. I say Adieu to you, and to all my poor servants, and to my friend St George, to the Countess of Tillieres, and all the women and girls who [I know] have not forgotten me. I have not forgotten them either'. With all the drama that a teenager can summon she concludes, 'Is there any remedy for my suffering, which is killing me? Goodbye bitterness. Goodbye to those from whose actions I will die if God does not have pity on me. To the wise Father who

SPECIAL feature

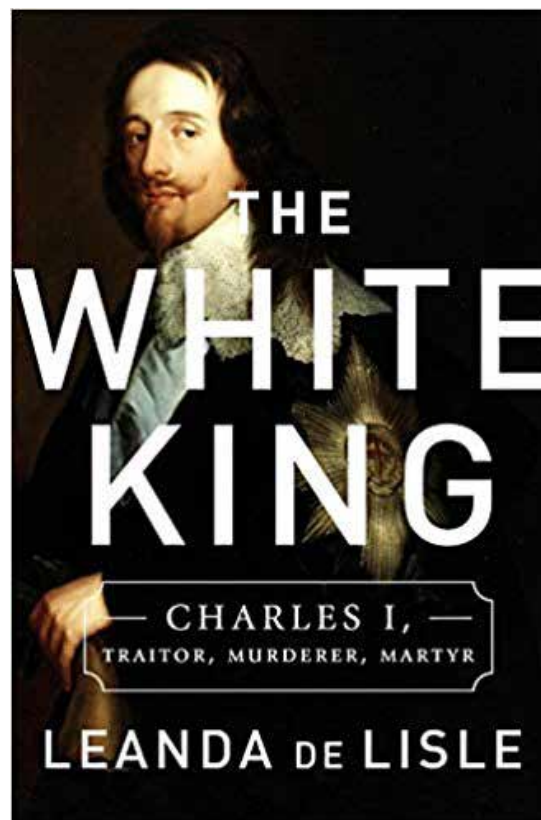
prays for me and the Friends I hold to me always'

Henrietta Maria continued, for some time, to assure Charles she would, 'find it very difficult to accommodate herself to the humours of the Countess of Carlisle'. Yet, within a few months, it seemed Lucy had become the queen's great favourite.

Henrietta Maria was bored by the formality of Buckingham's female relations. Unlike Charles, she was uninterested in the strict observation of hierarchy and had been used to a relaxed atmosphere with her French friends. Now

they had gone, she found she enjoyed the intimate supper parties Lucy threw for her. In a court filled with cautious 'frenemies' Lucy was outrageously frank in her opinions. She joked and gossiped, her eyebrows plucked high, as if caught in mock surprise at her own words. Henrietta Maria also had a teasing wit and she ended up relishing Lucy's company. But Henrietta Maria also had something more important in common with Lucy – she was a political animal and both women were using each other for political ends.

The White King by Leanda de Lisle was released this month in the United States and will have its British publication date on 11th January 2018.



Charlie

John

Books

YOUNG AND DAMNED AND FAIR

by Gareth Russell



Gareth Russell is a well-known name to members of The Tudor Society, with him having done several talks for us and written the likes of *An Illustrated Introduction to the Tudors* and *A History of the English Monarchy*. In his most recent work, he tackles the difficult subject of the life of Catherine Howard, one of Henry VIII's wives whose personality has eluded historians for decades. Russell uncovers what seems to be the real Catherine Howard in this groundbreaking study, which has quickly become one of the definitive works on her life.

The author starts by discussing Thomas Cromwell's death, which was on the same day as Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine Howard, before going back in time and covering her life up until that point. He makes several comparisons between the two, stating that: *'It was, like an execution, a formal occasion governed by established precedent; there was a proper way of doing things'*. In the next chapter, he explores Catherine's family history in great detail before moving on to her birth and christening. The date of Catherine's birth has always been a mystery to historians, with no concrete evidence to tell us one way or the other, yet Russell provides a sound argument towards it being in the early 1520s:

'When combined with the evidence of John and Isabel Leigh's wills, Charles de Marillac's indirect guess of about 1521 rules out a date as late as 1525, and the biographical details of the other half-dozen or so maids of honour similarly discredit one as early as 1518. None of this is definitive, but when set alongside other circumstantial evidence from Catherine's life, it suggests 1522 or 1523 as the most probable years of her birth.'

Russell does have to speculate occasionally, mainly because we do not know that much about Catherine's early life, but when he does it is believable. He uses what we know about young girls being educated in large households in general to give us an idea as to what her life would have been like. He makes things easier for the reader by putting some of the information into modern terms so we can better understand them, such as this description of Catherine Howard's liaison with Francis Dereham while she was under the care of the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk:

'In much the same way as life in university halls can erode a sense of propriety, years in the maidens' chamber left the girls feeling extremely comfortable in one another's presences. When the bed hangings were pulled shut, the noises the couple made left no doubt about what they were doing. The pair were drunk on one another, kissing and cuddling like 'two sparrows', and the memories of the people who

saw them in 1538, written down in 1541, prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that their relationship was consensual.'

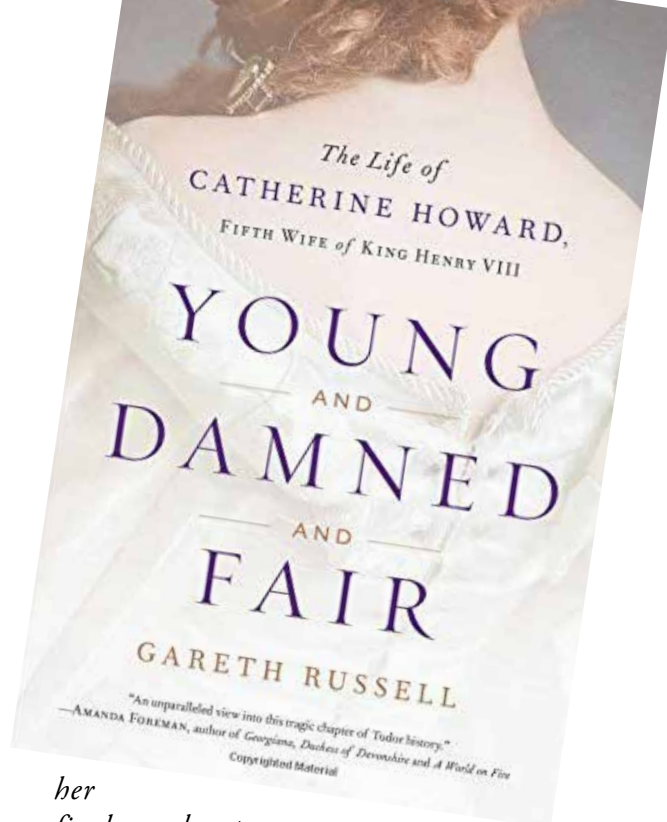
This book shows that finally historians are accepting the fact that Jane Parker/Boleyn (George Boleyn's wife) was not the jealous and 'evil' woman she has been made out to be in fiction. There is no evidence that she accused George and Anne Boleyn of committing incest, if anything there is evidence that she wrote to her husband in the Tower and that he trusted her. Anne had a close relationship with her sister-in-law, as Russell explains:

'Anne turned to Jane for help when they concocted a plan that would force Henry's latest mistress to leave the court... Queen Anne's decision to reach out to Jane discredits the historical tradition that the two women despised each other and that Jane was pathologically jealous of her.'

It is a nice change to see a biography on Catherine Howard that does not make Jane out to be the cause of all her problems. Jane has often been seen as encouraging her affair with Culpepper in both fiction and non-fiction alike, with the myths surrounding her involvement with Anne's execution influencing historians and authors. Thankfully, Russell doesn't let this negative stereotype cloud his judgement of her actions and manages to stay as unbiased as possible.

One great thing about *Young and Damned and Fair* is that it includes some hard to find sources in full. This includes letters by Joan Bulmer to Catherine Howard, an old friend from her days in the household of the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk, and so Russell allows the reader to form their own opinions. A good example of this is Catherine Howard's confessions, especially her second one, which is often ignored in favour of her final one:

'Catherine's first confession does not survive, but the second one, apparently confirming more or less what she had said previously to Cranmer, perhaps during one of his initial visits, does. This confession is cited far less frequently than



her final heart-rending one, which is in large part responsible for the popularity of the theory over the last decade that she was a survivor of childhood abuse... It is worth quoting in full, not simply as an object of historical curiosity, but also because so much of it contradicts Catherine's subsequent, less precise, and more frequently referenced version of events'

Due to it being overlooked in other works, readers may not know this confession existed and so having it in full is of great value. This is a very detailed confession and so the fact it has been cited in full in this book is another reason why it is worth buying. Russell then also includes her later confession for the reader to compare, which is where Catherine changes her story and claims Dereham raped her.

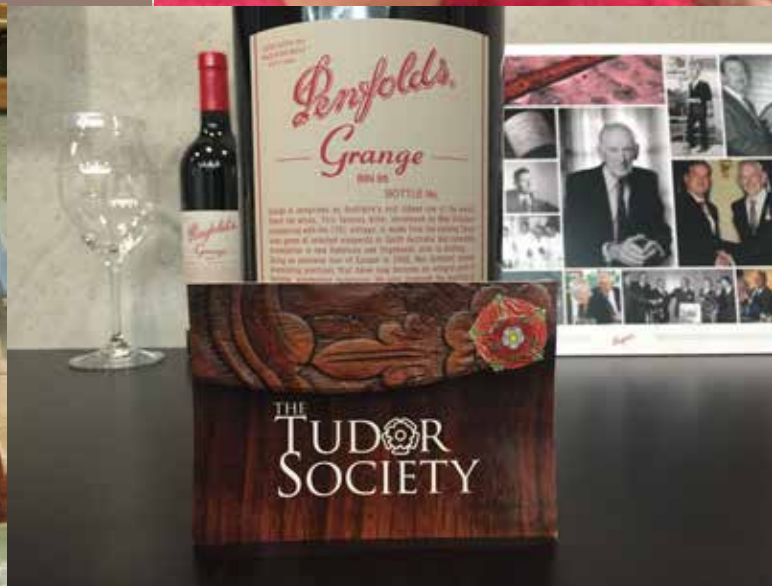
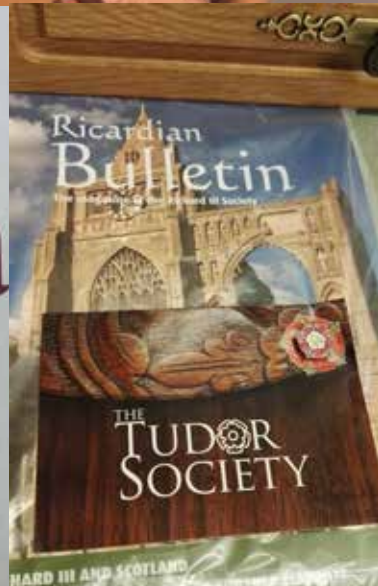
Gareth Russell has written an emotional and original account of the life of Henry VIII's fifth queen. He makes the reader feel for Catherine as a person and even grieve for a life cut tragically short. He also has managed to portray but Catherine and Jane Boleyn in a sympathetic light, something previous historians have struggled to do. This is now my favourite biography on Catherine Howard and I would recommend it to anyone wanting to know more about her life, whether new to the subject or having had some experience of it already.

CHARLIE FENTON









WINDSOR CASTLE

HOME OF THE ROYALS FOR OVER 900 YEARS















15 Questions about Ladies in Waiting

1. Which LIW were taken from the highest levels of mobility, and rather than giving daily service, just served their queen on State Occasions?
2. Which LIW were the daily companions of the queen, married ladies from prestigious families?
3. Which LIW were unmarried, generally daughters of the nobility, and in the queen's service in order to finish their education and make a good marriage?
4. What was generally considered the minimum age required to serve a queen?
5. Name of the LIW who bore Henry VIII his only recognised illegitimate child, Henry Fitzroy.
6. Which Catherine did Anne Boleyn Serve?
7. Which queen of Henry VIII served both Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn?
8. Which queen was served by Catherine Howard?
9. Which Great Lady, with royal blood, served Catherine of Aragon?
10. Whose daughter, Catherine, has been considered by many to be the illegitimate daughter of Henry VIII?
11. Which queen was served by her cousin, Lady Knollys?
12. Which LIW was beheaded alongside the queen she served, for assisting her with her alleged affair whilst married to Henry VIII?
13. Which Lady, later queen, was required to serve her sister upon being made illegitimate?
14. Wife of William Kingston, Constable of the Tower of London while Anne Boleyn was imprisoned there, sent to serve Anne and spy on her for Thomas Cromwell.

9 Margaret Pole
10 Mary Boleyn
11 Elizabeth I
12 Jane Parker
13 Lady Mary
14 Mary Scrope

1 Great Ladies
2 Ladies of the Privy Chamber
3 Maids of Honour
4 Twelve
5 Bessie Blount
6 Catherine of Aragon
7 Jane Seymour
8 Anne of Cleves



THE TUDOR HOUSEWIFE

PREGNANCY

For women of the medieval and early Tudor periods who had survived childhood and were not destined to enter the cloister, childbirth was likely to be one of the greatest hazards they would face. Statistics show that if a woman survived her child-bearing years, she had a good chance of living her biblical span of three-score-years-and-ten, i.e. into her seventies. One problem, particularly for women higher up the social scale, was the possibility of having children long before the mother herself was mature, either mentally or physically. Legally, a girl could be married at the age of twelve and the union consummated. That sounds bad enough – and would be illegal in Western society today – but in medieval and Tudor times girls were probably rather later in reaching menarche, when they would begin to menstruate, than modern girls, due to poorer diet. Fortunately, by the mid-fifteenth century, it was more unusual, but not unknown, for marriages to be consummated before the bride was fourteen because the health and well-being of the girl were considered to be at risk. But one young girl was not so lucky.

Margaret Beaufort was chosen by King Henry VI as a bride for his half-brother, Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond, in 1455. She was only twelve and he was about eleven years older than his new bride, who was small and slight for her age but Edmund consummated the marriage immediately. There may have been a number of reasons for his haste. Firstly, the political situation was critical with the opening gambits of the Wars of the Roses conflict underway and,

already, noblemen had lost their lives because of this. Secondly, Margaret was a considerable heiress and if she died during her husband's lifetime and they had children, he would have a life interest in her lands and the income from them. Whereas, if they had no children, the lands would pass to her heirs. Since Edmund had little property of his own, the sooner Margaret gave him a child, the better. Thirdly, there is a possibility that Edmund's own health wasn't good, a fact suggested by his rare attendance at the royal court and in Parliament, and he believed the conception of an heir was a rather urgent matter. Or, perhaps he was simply a lusty and over-eager young bridegroom. We shall never know but Margaret seems to have remembered him with fondness so we can hope he was considerate in his love-making. What we do know for certain in that young Margaret was pregnant within about six months of the wedding, if not before that.

In September 1456, the Yorkists captured Pembroke Castle in South Wales and imprisoned Edmund there. Although he was soon released and allowed to go home to Margaret, he was ill and died on 1st November – the couple's first wedding anniversary. The bride was now a thirteen-year-old widow and six or seven months pregnant. Her baby was born on 28th January 1457 at Pembroke Castle and she named him Henry, after the king. The child was strong and healthy but Margaret was convinced that childbirth at so young an age damaged her permanently and, despite having two further husbands, Henry remained her only

TONI MOUNT

child. Fifty years later, when her grand-daughter and namesake, Margaret Tudor, sister to the future Henry VIII, was to marry the King of Scots, she objected to the match being agreed before the girl was fourteen, for fear that her husband might not 'wait' and *would thereby injure her and endanger her health*.

So let us take a closer look at conception and pregnancy from a medieval and Tudor perspective. The Church had always taken up the moral issues concerning sex, condemning prostitution – officially, at least – and fornication outside marriage but it even interfered with sex between a husband and wife. Intercourse was prohibited during the forty days of Lent, during Advent, the eve of many feast days, on Saturdays – supposedly a day of contemplation before mass next morning – on Sundays, it being the Lord's Day, or any weekday before attending mass. Also, sex – and only the 'missionary' position was acceptable – was solely for the purpose of begetting children, so it was not allowed if the woman was already pregnant or past the menopause. Definitely forbidden was intercourse during a woman's 'unclean' time of her period and, if she should conceive then – which was thought possible – she would bear the devil's child, recognisable by its red hair. No wonder the population of Europe had hardly recovered since its numbers were so drastically reduced by the plague in the fourteenth century.

On the plus side for women was the contemporary belief that conception could only occur if she enjoyed



An unknown woman who is clearly pregnant.
Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger
(Tate)

sex and reached orgasm in order to 'release her seed', just like her partner. The down side of this was if a woman became pregnant, as a result of rape – it couldn't have been rape since she must have enjoyed it.

Confirming pregnancy was not straight forward either. Aristotle's Greek medical works were still the standard texts and listed symptoms including morning sickness and fuller breasts, which we recognise, to peculiar ones such as: 'if under the lower eye-lid the veins be swelled, and appear clearly, and the eye be something discoloured, it is a certain sign she is with child'. For the women themselves, the stopping of periods was probably the best indication but even that could

be misleading because, if they were malnourished or ill or even if they suffered trauma, such as bereavement, menstruation might cease for any of those reasons too.

Once pregnancy was all but certain, some of the advice intended for the mother-to-be was best ignored, as we now know. Fish, salads and milk were considered 'too cold and moist' to benefit a woman with child, particularly if it was a boy since 'hot, dry conditions' favoured both the conception and growth of a male foetus. It was also believed that a boy grew on the right hand side of the womb and a girl on the left. Therefore, the medical books of the time would have advised Anne Boleyn to lie on her right side after intercourse with the king to ensure their combined seed should sink down to the right side of the womb and become a boy child.

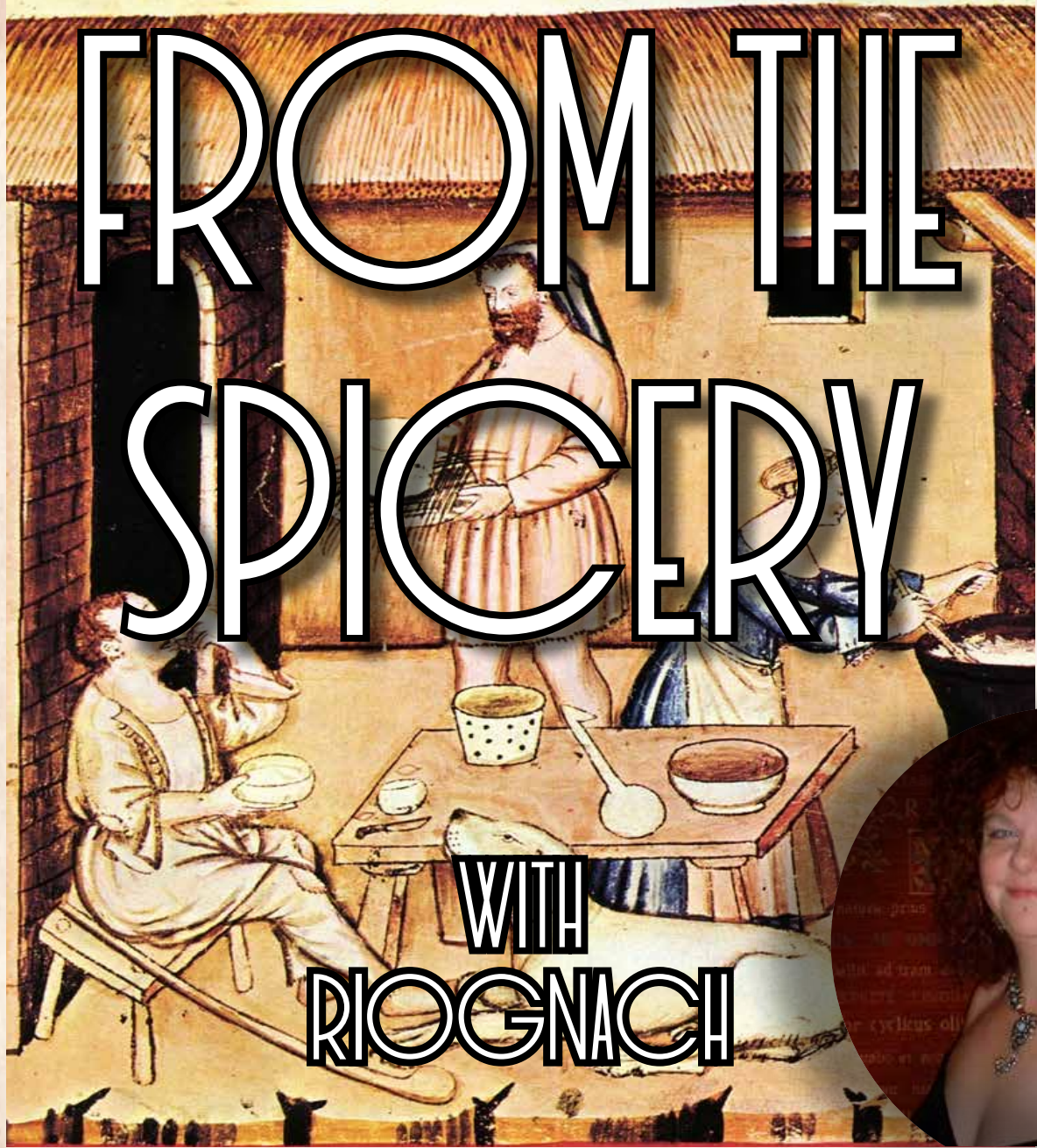
TONI MOUNT

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Toni Mount's
THE ROLES OF
MEDIEVAL AND
TUDOR WOMEN





FROM THE

SPICERY

WITH
RIGNACI



ON CHEESE

“... IN THE AREA CALLED ZHIVI-LAKOMO, WHERE THE VINES ARE TIED WITH SAUSAGES, THE GOOSE GOES FOR A PENNY, AND EVEN WITH THE GOSLING INTO THE BARGAIN; THERE IS A MOUNTAIN ALL OF GRATED PARMESAN, ON WHICH PEOPLE LIVE AND DO NOT DO ANYTHING ELSE, AS SOON AS THEY COOK PASTA AND DUMPLINGS, COOK THEM IN A DECOCTION FROM THE CAPONS AND THROW THEM DOWN; WHOEVER CATCHES MORE, THE MORE HE DOES.”¹

¹ G. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, Florence, 1353, (originally published in Florentine Italian).

Let's face it, cheese has been around since Adam was a boy. But no one really knows how the tradition of cheese making all began. Its history goes back into the fog of unknown historical roots, and I suspect that it was discovered more by accident than design. The story goes that a travelling merchant named Kanana paused in his travels in the Arabian Desert to have a drink of milk from his skin. The skin was made from a young calf's stomach and he found to his delight that instead of milk, curds and whey had appeared as if by magic. Another story tells of a busy farm wife who placed fresh raw milk in a covered earthenware pot near the hearth whilst she went about her other daily chores. Lactic acid in the milk caused it to begin to curdle, and in an attempt to salvage the milk, she strained

the milk through a cloth. The rest they say is history.

To understand why milk turns into cheese, we need to understand what milk is made of. Not much, really. Milk is really just a combination of fats, milk sugars (lactose) and milk proteins (casein), which eventually lump together to form the curds. They are all suspended in a thin liquid, called “whey”, the very same as Miss Muffet was dining on when she had the run in with the spider. Whey is a very nutritious thing to eat too, and



our medieval ancestors frequently dined on it. Incidentally, I've heard tell that the arachnophobic Miss Muffet was a nod to Mary Queen of Scots, and the spider was John Knox. I don't know if this is true, but it helps keep things in a medieval and Tudor vein.

Contrary to popular belief, cheese making in the medieval and Tudor periods was not restricted to simple soft cheeses, such as cottage cheese, curds and whey. For instance, Cheshire is amongst the UK's oldest 'hard' cheeses, dating from Roman Britain, and even rates a mention in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* of 1125.² Two particular favourite cheeses of mine, Gorgonzola and Roquefort, date from 879 and 1070 respectively.³ Emperor

Charlemagne was also reputed to have been very fond of Roquefort, and often ordered wheels of it at a time, whilst he was off fighting battles.⁴ Grana, Cheddar and Parmesan cheeses range in date between 1200 and 1579.⁵ Pliny's story of Zoroaster tells of a man who dined from a single cheese for some 20-odd years.

Obviously, this story has to be taken with a pinch of salt, but

scientists and archaeologists now believe that the cheese was an early form of Parmesan⁶

From the perspective of a modern medievalist, the easiest cheeses to make in an encampment or a feast are of the soft drained variety as the requirements are few, and the process is pretty simple. If you don't happen to have a fresh cow stomach on hand, fresh milk (preferably raw) is simply heated to just below boiling point, held there and a coagulant such as lemon juice or bruised nettles is added. When the milk separates into curds and whey, it is tipped into a colander lined with cheesecloth or cotton and allowed to briefly drain.

You then gather up the cloth containing the curds and suspend it over another basin and allow it to drain for several hours. But whatever you do, don't throw out the whey! Grains such as bulgar wheat and barley can be slowly cooked in the whey with honey, spices and soft fruits (like raspberries – yum!) to produce one of my all time favourite Dark Ages foods, *frumenty*. Another popular way of draining the curds was to pour them into a cloth lined wicker basket. Linguistically speaking, these baskets referred by the ancient Greeks as *formos*, which translates to the Latin word *forma* and then to the



2 Cheke, V., *The Story of Cheese-making in Britain*, London, 1959

3 Naso, I., *Formaggi del Medioevo*, Torino Publishing, 1990.

4 Naso, *ibid*

5 de Confluentia, P., *Summa Lacticiniorum*, Turin, 1477.

6 Brown, B., *The Complete Book of Cheese*, 2004, ebook, Project Gutenberg. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14293/14293-h/14293-h.htm>

Italian *formaggio*,
and the Old French
fromage. Sound
familiar?

The drained curds form a soft cheese like a ricotta and can then be eaten as is, or perhaps with the addition of little honey or herbs. Or, if you happen to be feeling really enthusiastic, the drained curds can then be put into an earthenware or ceramic cheese mould and pressed to create a firmer cheese, not too dissimilar to Indian *paneer*. Archaeological digs frequently turn up a variety of moulds. Typically they are round and have lots of holes in them to allow the whey to escape. The “lid” of a mould was called a *follower*, and it was placed on top of the cheese.

Lots of different things were then put on top of the *follower* to apply pressure to the cheese. Perhaps not too surprisingly the humble house brick or stone was used, and it is from the use of a brick that *brick cheese* got its name. I use an upturned bread and butter plate in a ceramic mould, and weight it down with a tin full of lead. It’s not strictly medieval, but it does the job really well.

I have a huge library of cheese making recipes from lots of different primary resources including *Le Viandier de Tallievent* (French, 1350), *Forme of Curye* (English, 1390), and *The Good Huswifes Handmaide for the Kitchin* (English, 1594). I thought that I’d give you a couple of easy recipes for soft cheeses, and my favourite recipe for *frumenty*.

RIOHNACH O’GERAGHTY

A True Gentlewomans Delight, England, 1653.

A weighted cheese with rennet.

“To make a slipcoat Cheese take five quarts of new Milk from the Cow, and one quart of Water, and one spoonful of Runnet, and stirre it together, and let it stand till it doth come, then lay your Cheese cloth into the Vate, and let the Whey soak out of it self; when you have taken it all up, lay a cloth on the top of it, and one pound weight for one hour, then lay two pound for one hour more, then turn him when he hath stood two houres, lay three pound on him for an hour more, then take him out of the Vate, and let him lie two or three houres, and then salt him on both sides, when he is salt enough, take a clean cloth and wipe him dry, then let him lie on a day or a night, then put Nettles under and upon him, and change them once a day, if you find any Mouse turd wipe it off, the Cheese will come to his eating in eight or nine dayes.”

*Platina - De Honesta
Voluptatae L de Aguila,
Venice, 1475*

Ricotta

“We heat the whey which was left from the cheese in a cauldron over a slow fire until all the fat rises to the top; this is what the country-folk call recocta, because it is made from leftover milk which is heated up. It is very white and mild. It is less healthful than new or medium-aged cheese, but it is considered better than that which is aged or too salty. Whether one is pleased to call it cocta or recocta, cooks use it in many pottages, especially in those made of herbs.”

Frumenty

Half fill an earthenware jar with bulgar wheat, wash them and cover them well with fresh milk or whey and set them in a warm oven or by the fire for 12 hours until the grains swell and burst. Add sugar, beaten egg yolks, spices and cream

*The good Huswifes Handmaide
for the Kitchin, England, 1594*


Quark

“To make clowted Cream after Mistres
Horsmans way.

When you haue taken the milke from the
Kine, straight set it on the fire, but see that
your fyre be without smoake, and soft fire,
and so keepe it on from morning till it be
night, or nigh thereabout, and ye muste be
sure that it doeth not seeth all that while,
and ye muste let your milke be set on the
fyre, in as broad a vessell as you can. Then
take it from the fire, and set it vpon a board,
and let it stande al night: then in the
morning take off the cream, and put
it in a dish or where ye wil.”



NOVEMBER'S ON THIS

<p>1 Nov 1530</p> <p>Henry VIII sent Sir Walter Walsh (some say William Walsh) with Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, to Cawood Castle to arrest Cardinal Thomas Wolsey for high treason.</p>	<p>2 Nov 1470</p> <p>Birth of Edward V, son of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville, in Westminster Abbey sanctuary.</p>		<p>3 Nov 1592</p> <p>Sir John Perrot, Privy Councillor and former Lord Deputy of Ireland, died at the Tower of London.</p>	<p>4 Nov 1501</p> <p>Catherine of Aragon met Arthur, Prince of Wales, for the first time at Dogmersfield in Hampshire.</p>
<p>9 Nov 1518</p> <p>Queen Catherine of Aragon gave birth to a daughter, but she did not survive.</p>	<p>10 Nov 1565</p> <p>Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, was born on this day at Netherwood,</p>	<p>11 Nov 1541</p> <p>Catherine Howard was moved from Hampton Court Palace to Syon House where she was “examined touching Culpeper”</p>	<p>12 Nov 1555</p> <p>Mary I's Parliament re-established Catholicism in England.</p>	<p>13 Nov 1537</p> <p>Burial of Jane Seymour, Henry VIII's third wife, at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle.</p>
<p>17 Nov 1558</p> <p>Henry VIII's eldest child, Queen Mary I, died. She was just forty-two years-old. Her twenty-five year-old half-sister, Elizabeth, became Queen. According to tradition, Elizabeth was sitting under an old oak tree at Hatfield, reading a book.</p>		<p>18 Nov 1531</p> <p>Birth of Roberto di Ridolfi, merchant, banker and conspirator, in Florence, Italy.</p>	<p>19 Nov 1563</p> <p>Robert Sidney, 1st Earl of Leicester, courtier, patron of the arts and poet, was born at Penshurst in Kent.</p>	<p>20 Nov 1612</p> <p>Death of Sir John Harington, courtier, author and inventor of the flush toilet.</p>
 <p>John Knox</p>		<p>24 Nov 1572</p> <p>The Scottish clergyman, famous Reformer and founder of Presbyterianism, John Knox, died at his home in Edinburgh as his wife read aloud from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. He was buried in the cemetery of St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, where he had served as minister. Knox is known for bringing the Protestant reformation to the church in Scotland.</p>		
		<p>28 Nov 1489</p> <p>Birth of Margaret Tudor, Queen of Scotland and consort of James IV, at Westminster Palace.</p>	<p>29 Nov 1530</p> <p>Cardinal Thomas Wolsey died at Leicester Abbey at around 8am. He had “cheated his master of the final reckoning”.</p>	<p>30 Nov 1529</p> <p>Catherine of Aragon confronted her husband, Henry VIII, about his treatment of her.</p>

DAY IN TUDOR HISTORY

<p>5^{Nov} 1514  Mary Tudor, sister of Henry VIII, was crowned Queen of France.</p>	<p>6^{Nov} 1541 Henry VIII abandoned Catherine Howard, his fifth wife, at Hampton Court Palace.</p>	<p>7^{Nov} 1541 Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and the Duke of Norfolk went to Hampton Court Palace to interrogate Queen Catherine Howard, and to arrange that she should be confined to her chambers there.</p>	<p>8^{Nov} 1543 Birth of Lettice Knollys, daughter of Sir Francis Knollys and Catherine Carey.</p>
<p>14^{Nov} 1532 On this day in 1532, according to the chronicler Edward Hall, Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn secretly married.</p>	<p>15^{Nov} 1597 Death of Robert Bowes, member of Parliament and Elizabeth I's English Ambassador in Scotland, at Berwick.</p>	<p>16^{Nov} 1596 Death of Sir Francis Willoughby, industrialist and coalowner, in London.</p>	 <p>William Shakespeare</p>
<p>21^{Nov} 1559 Frances Brandon, Duchess of Suffolk, died at Richmond. She was buried in St Edmund's Chapel, Westminster Abbey</p>	<p>22^{Nov} 1545 Henry VIII's physician, Sir William Butts, died at Fulham Manor after suffering from a "dooble febre".</p>	<p>23^{Nov} 1499 The hanging of the pretender Perkin Warbeck at Tyburn.</p>	
<p>25^{Nov} 1626 Death of Edward Alleyn, Elizabethan actor and founder of Dulwich College and Alleyn's School.</p>	<p>26^{Nov} 1533 Henry Fitzroy, the Duke of Richmond and Somerset, married Lady Mary Howard at Hampton Court.</p>	<p>27^{Nov} 1582 The eighteen year-old William Shakespeare married the twenty-six year-old Anne (also known as Agnes) Hathaway, who was pregnant at the time of the ceremony at Temple Grafton near Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire. Vicar John Frith officiated at the ceremony.</p>	

TUDOR FEAST DAYS

1 November – The Feast of All Saints

2 November – The Feast of All Souls

11 November – Martinmas

17 November – Accession Day

30 November – The Feast of St Andrew

TudorLife

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TudorLife

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CHRISTMAS!

CONOR BYRNE

The martyrdom of Saint
Margaret Clitherow

EMMA TAYLOR

Martyrdom in "Elizabeth"

HEATHER SWAYNE

Yule Tide at Little
Moreton Hall

RIOGHNACH O'GERAGHTY

Fantastic Beasts and
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