Tudor Life

The Tudor Society Magazine

THE TUDOR SOCIETY

Members Only
№ 64
December 2019

IT'S CHRISMAS!

THE LION IN WINTER

THE LORD OF MISRULE

CHRISTMAS AT CHESWORTH

CHRISTMAS RECIPES

plus

CULINARY CURIOSITIES

AND MUCH MORE

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It's Christmas!

CHRISTMAS WAS a time of merrymaking and celebration in the sixteenth century. Much as today, there were those who complained that the "true meaning of Christmas" had been lost amid the round of parties and presents. In fact, Tudor Christmases were often even more raucous than those celebrated today, with Lords of Misrule, drinking competitions, kissing beneath the bough, and mummers' shows. Whether you celebrate as a Lord of Misrule or as Saint Bernard of Clairvaux might have liked, from all of us here at "Tudor Life" a very happy, safe, and merry Christmas and holidays to you all.

GARETH RUSSELL
EDITOR

ABOVE: The Holy Family receiving the Adoration of the Shepherds. The story of Christ's Nativity inspired many Tudor Christian Christmas traditions

Tudor Life

DECEMBER

THE LION IN WINTER: CHRISTMAS WITH THE PLANTAGENETS

BY ROLAND HUI

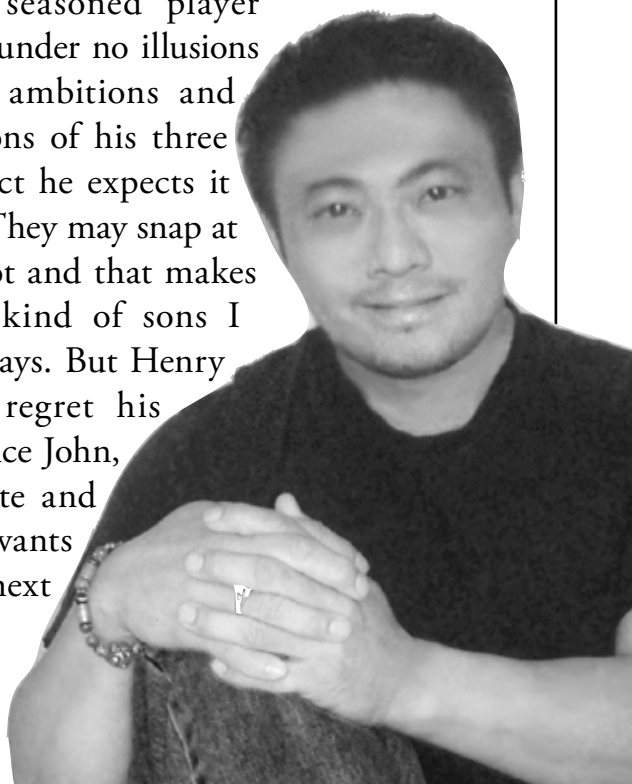
"Ah Christmas, warm and rosy time. The hot wine steams, the Yule log roars, and we're the fat that's in the fire."[1]

(Prince Geoffrey to his brothers Richard and John)

Traditionally, Christmas is a time when families get together in good cheer and love for one another. But as the American playwright James Goldman imagined it, such reunions for England's 12th century royals the Plantagenets were anything but. Their gatherings were to dictate the fate of kingdoms; history to be decided by pacts, ploys, and plots, with husband against wife, and brother against brother, and sons against their father. It is not the normal or ideal Christmas, but as Goldman wrote, "Well, what family doesn't have its ups and downs?"

The setting for this holiday squabble as presented in the play *The Lion in Winter* (1966) and the subsequent film version (1968) was the year 1183 at a Christmas court held at Chinon in France by King Henry II. Though considered 'the greatest power in a thousand years', at age 50, the English King is feeling the weight of his years. He has summoned his three sons Richard, Geoffrey, and John to join him for the Yuletide festivities at which he plans to settle the royal succession. But in whose favour? Each of the princes wants to be king, and will stop at nothing to be the designated heir. Joining them is their estranged mother Eleanor of Aquitaine. 'A truly handsome woman of great temperament, authority and presence', as Goldman describes her. 'She has been a queen of international importance for 46 years and you know it'.[2] Though Queen of England, Eleanor has been imprisoned by her husband for the last ten years for leading a rebellion against him. Every now and then, she is allowed out for family gatherings. Eleanor relishes her releases as they allow her to see and to spar with Henry, a man she equally loves and hates. To complicate matters, Henry has also invited the young Philip King of France, the brother of his mistress Princess Alais.

Over the course of the play and film, each of the characters tries to outwit and outmanoeuvre one another. Henry, a seasoned player himself, is under no illusions about the ambitions and machinations of his three boys, in fact he expects it of them. "They may snap at me and plot and that makes them the kind of sons I want", he says. But Henry comes to regret his words. Prince John, his favourite and whom he wants to be the next



LEFT: Katharine Hepburn and Peter O'Toole

king, proves to be a terrible disappointment. Feeling nothing but hatred for his children, Henry plans to annul his marriage to Eleanor and to start over with Alais. Eleanor who still loves him, conspires to stop him. In the denouement, Henry is unwilling to kill his treacherous sons and he comes to an understanding with Eleanor. Fight as they do - it is in their nature to be 'tusk to tusk through all eternity', they still have great affection for one another and always will. As Eleanor heads back to captivity - she and Henry look forward to seeing each other next time to fight and to love all over again.

First staged in 1966 on Broadway in New York, *The Lion in Winter* starred Robert Preston (best known for the play and film version of *The Music Man*, and for the movie *Victor/Victoria*) and Rosemary Harris (the esteemed actress of stage and screen, familiar to many audiences today as Aunt May in three popular *Spider-Man* movies). Though the play received mixed reviews and was not financially successful, Harris won a Tony Award for her Eleanor of Aquitaine.

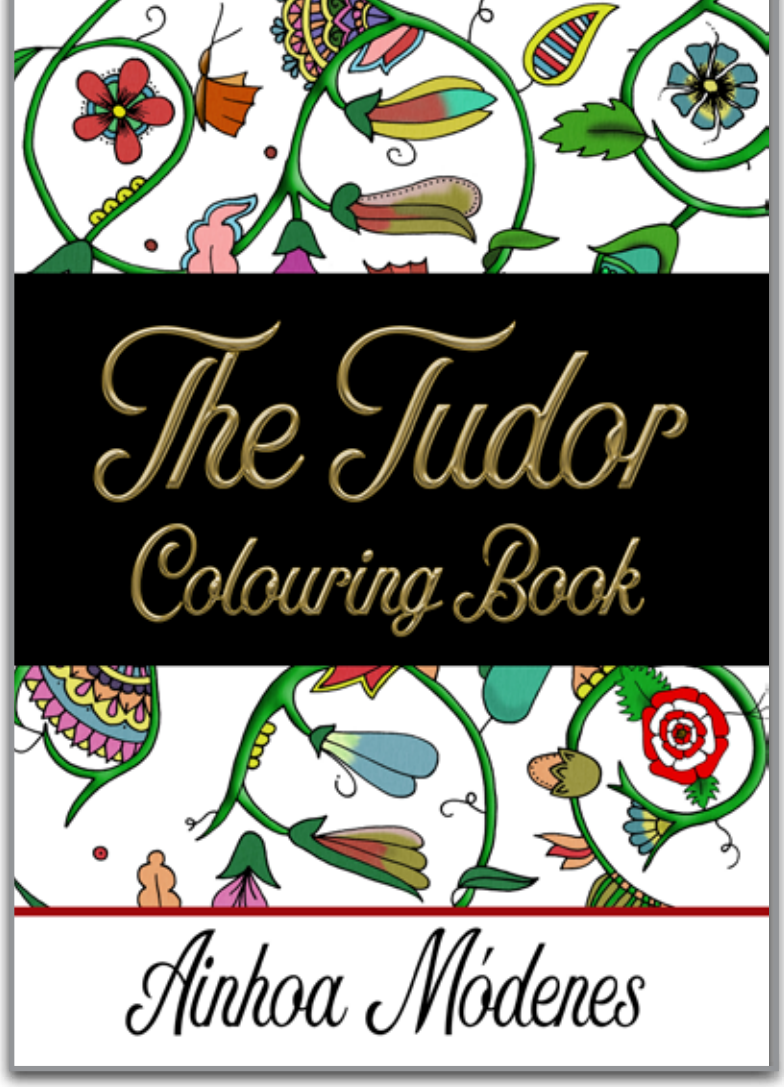
According to actor Peter O'Toole, it was he who was largely responsible for the movie version of *The Lion in Winter* and for the casting. As he remembered it, he had gotten a hold of the play when it was still titled *A Day in the Life of Henry II*. He immediately saw its potential as a great film.[3] Thanks to his successes in *Lawrence of Arabia* and in *Becket* (in which he played King Henry II), O'Toole, he said, had the clout to have a say in the casting. A charismatic and beautiful actress of the right age, in his opinion, was essential to make it work. O'Toole had considered Vivien Leigh, a two time Academy Award winner for *Gone with the Wind* and for *A Streetcar Named Desire*, but ultimately decided upon Katharine Hepburn. He had known the veteran

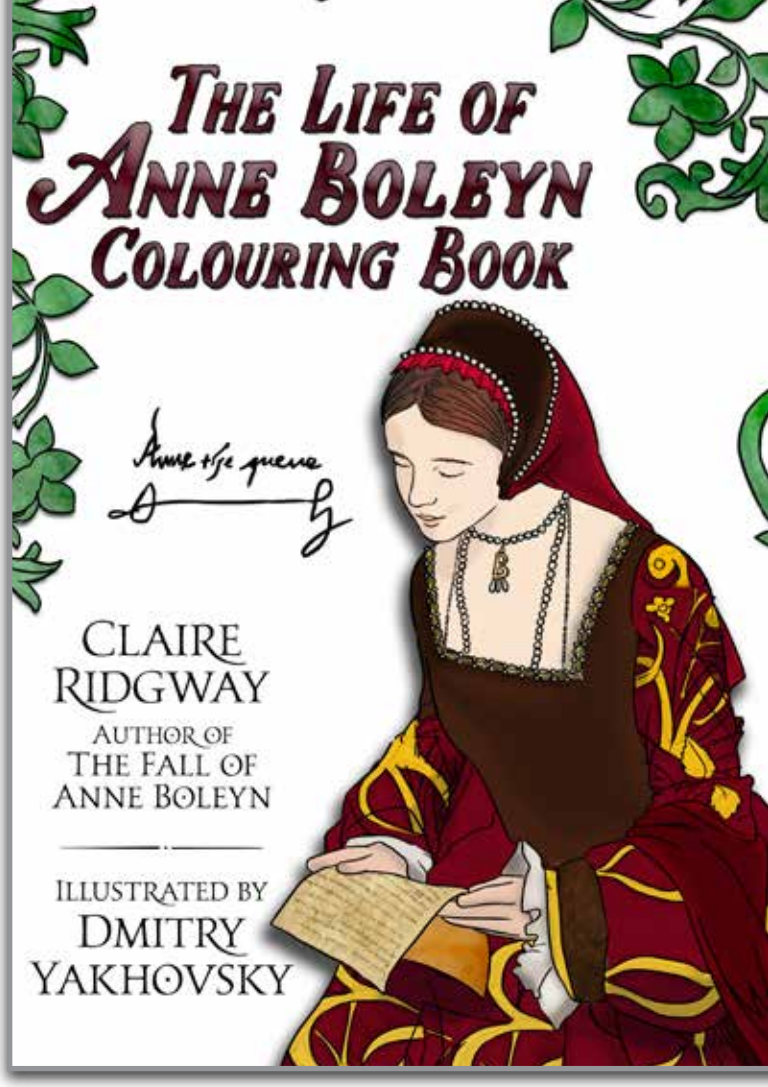
Hollywood actress for several years, and had the greatest admiration for her as an artist; 'one of the great jewels of the U.S.', as he put it. However, Hepburn was in mourning for the recent death of her frequent co-star Spencer Tracy, with whom she had a clandestine long loving relationship with. A copy of the film script (adapted by James Goldman from his own play) was sent to Hepburn, along with a letter from O'Toole saying it would be therapeutic for her to get back to work.[4] Hepburn adored the screenplay with its larger than life characters, its twists and turns of plot, and its literate and witty dialogue. Looking forward to such a prestigious project and to working with O'Toole, she signed on. "What was fascinating about the play", Hepburn later said, "was its moderness. This wasn't about pomp and circumstance, but about a family, a wife trying to protect her dignity, and a mother protecting her children".[5] As well, she was particularly drawn to the character of Queen Eleanor. "She must have been tough as nails to have lived to be 82 years old and full of beans", Hepburn thought. "Both she and Henry II were big-time operators who played for whole countries. I like big-time operators".[6] Rounding off the cast were Anthony Hopkins (as Richard)[7], John Castle (as Geoffrey), Nigel

Terry (as John), Jane Merrow (as Alais), and Timothy Dalton (as King Philip).

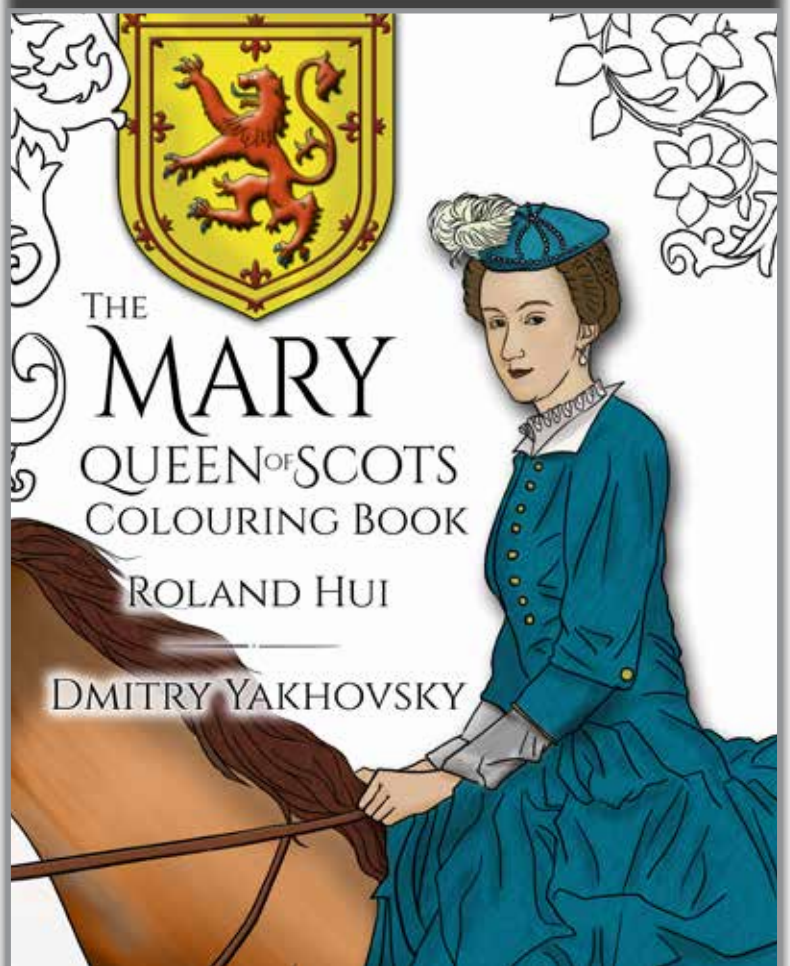
Directed by Englishman Anthony Harvey, *The Lion in Winter* was filmed in Ireland with some exterior shots done in France. Although it was a picture about royalty, it was not full of the expected colour and pageantry. Rather, Harvey and his design team chose to create medieval settings that were sparse, drab, and often filthy. The castle at Chinon, as James Goldman described it in the introduction to his screenplay, was 'strikingly different from what we're used to seeing in King Arthur movies. A crowded, teeming, dirty place with much more wood than stone', and with living conditions that were 'crude and rough'. Good sanitation, with hoards of people, pets, and livestock all about, was nonexistent.[8]

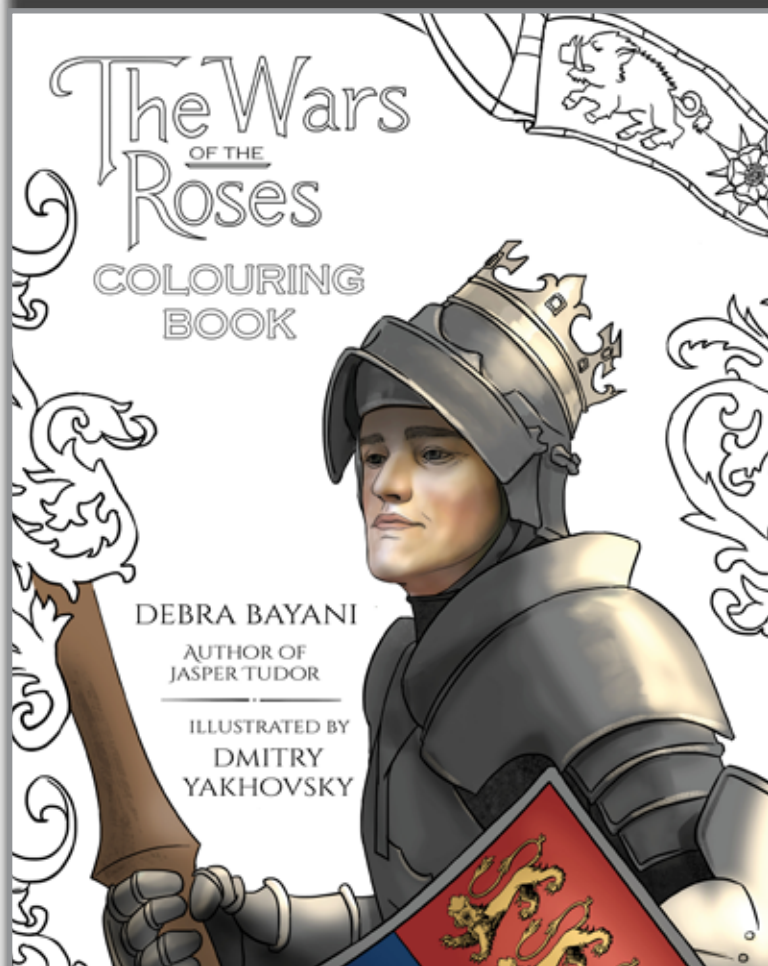
This overall look of bleakness was reflected in the movie's costume design as well. Even though rich ceremonial garments were used when necessary at the royal court, 'clothing was generally dirty', as Goldman noted.[9] Henry, except when he is crowned and robed to greet the French King, preferred to dress unassumingly like a peasant in dull shades of brown. On the other hand, Eleanor's gowns, though somewhat simple in construction, did have colour to them emphasizing her royal status. She also often wore a small golden crown beneath her wimple. According to one of Hepburn's biographers, it was the actress herself who contributed to Eleanor's sense of style. Hepburn, who had read voraciously on the subject in preparation for her role, reminded costume designer Margaret Furse that the





PERFECT PRESENTS FOR CHRISTMAS
FOR YOURSELF OR A FRIEND





historical Eleanor had once gone on Crusade. There in the East, she would have been made aware of the exotic and opulent fabrics found there, and adopted them for herself.[10]

The musical score of the film was composed by John Barry. At the time, best known for the musical soundtracks for the popular James Bond movies, Barry was ideal for *The Lion in Winter*.[11] As a child, he had grown up with a love for cinema as his father operated a chain of movie theatres in northern England. Also, Barry was raised as a Roman Catholic, giving him an appreciation for the polyphonic plainchant of the Middle Ages. Reflecting on his work on the film, Barry recalled how important sacred music was to *The Lion in Winter*. "The Church's influence was a dominant factor at the time, and the music said that subliminally", he explained. "The Gregorian chants, Latin texts, and Church music are all things Henry had to deal with. Using them then was a very simple thought, but it proved very powerful because it permeated just about everything in the film". There are several excellent pieces by John Barry, particularly the film's rousing main title, and a score written for Eleanor's arrival at the family Christmas. In one of *The Lion in Winter's* most memorable scenes, she is shown enthroned on a barge as it sails towards Chinon. Her face is aglow with excitement as a choir of voices greets her in sung Latin: "Eleanore, Reginae Anglorum, Salus et vita" ("To Eleanor, Queen of the English, Health and life").

As *The Lion in Winter* was made in the more open-minded era of the late 1960s, it was able to tackle situations and themes formerly frowned upon by censors. For example, there was Henry's adultery. He openly lives with his mistress, the much younger Princess Alais whom he flaunts before his wife Eleanor. There was also the subject of homosexuality, still widely regarded as taboo - the Stonewall Riots were still a year away, and *The American Psychiatric Association* still regarded it as a mental disorder until 1973 - that was left intact from the play. One of the subplots of *The Lion in Winter* deals with Richard's relationship with Philip. Publicly, Richard is the famed warrior 'the Lion Heart', but privately, he is a closeted gay man longing after the King of France. Lastly, incest was addressed in the play/film as well. To get back at Henry during one of their vicious verbal battles, Eleanor claims - with great relish - that she had once bedded his father.

Released in October 1968, *The Lion in Winter* was a resounding success. Despite worries that the film might be considered too high brow, it was a hit with audiences and critics. Perhaps it was its 'moderness' as Katharine Hepburn noted that gave it its appeal. *Life Magazine* hailed it as 'a medieval *Virginia Woolf* ', while *The London Observer* called it 'a medieval variant on The *Little Foxes*'.[12] While praise was given to Anthony Harvey's direction, James Goldman's script, and to Peter O'Toole's King Henry, there was especial tribute for Katharine Hepburn. She received some of the best reviews of her career.[13] 'Miss Hepburn's performance is amazing,' wrote *Variety*. 'Whether coldly scheming some political coup, sincerely or insincerely... she is terrific. Her lightning-bolt flashes of irony show the Queen as a woman totally aware'. *The Village* was as effusive, saying 'Miss Hepburn's Eleanor is virtually flawless, with an irrepressible elegance and charm making her thoroughly believable both as a queen and a woman'.

The Lion in Winter won several prizes, among them Best Motion Picture and Best Actor (for Peter O'Toole) at the Golden Globe

Awards. While Katharine Hepburn too was nominated for a Golden Globe, she did not win, but she did get the Oscar instead (her third, tying with Barbra Streisand). At the Academy Awards, the film also won for Best Adapted Screenplay and for Best Music Score.

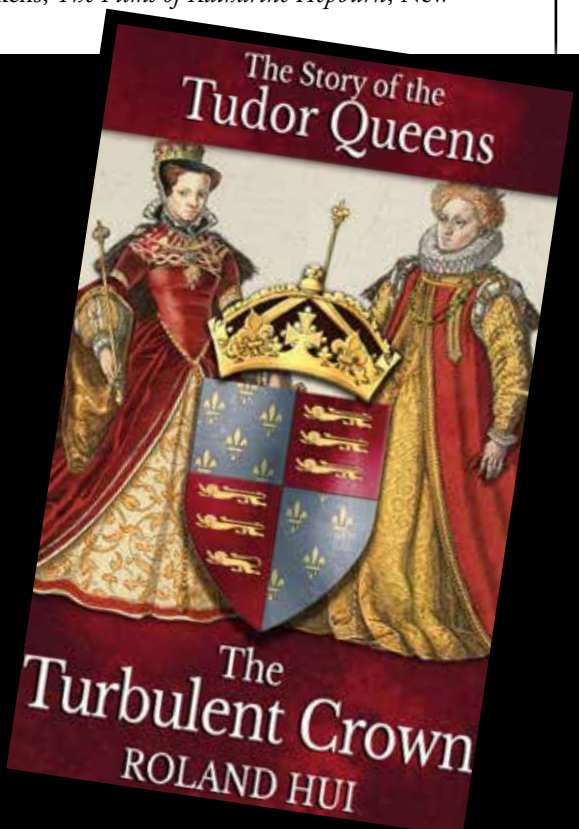
The Lion in Winter remains popular today. It is recognized as one of Hollywood's great motion pictures, and as a play, it is still regularly performed by amateur and professional companies. In 2003, it was made into a television movie with Patrick Stewart as Henry II and Glenn Close as Eleanor of Aquitaine. For her take on the great medieval Queen, Close received a Golden Globe Award and a Screen Actors Guild Award.

ROLAND HUI

1. Quotations from the film's screenplay are from: James Goldman, *The Lion in Winter*, New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1968.
2. Eleanor was also once Queen of France, having been married to King Louis VII, father of King Philip.
3. O'Toole interview with Charlie Rose: https://.youtube.com/watch?v=VlcA88jvA2c and an O'Toole interview with Robert Osborne: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufrGpXYpa9U
4. Another source has Katharine Hepburn herself saying that the script of *The Lion in Winter* and the part of Eleanor was offered to her by producer Martin Poll, rather than by her co-star Peter O'Toole. However, she did confirm O'Toole writing to her asking her to accept the part. See: Charles Higham, *Kate: The Life of Katharine Hepburn*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1975, pp. 205-206.
5. A. Scott Berg, *Kate Remembered*, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2003, p. 284.
6. Anne Edwards, *A Remarkable Woman - A Biography of Katharine Hepburn*, New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1985, p. 351.
7. Interestingly, for his famous role as Doctor Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence of the Lambs* and the associated films, Anthony Hopkins based Lecter's sound of voice in part on that of Katharine Hepburn's. Mark McGowan, 'How Anthony Hopkins Created And Became The Character Of Hannibal Lecter': https://www.ladbible.com/entertainment/celebrity-film-and-tv-awesome-how-anthony-hopkins-created-and-became-the-character-hannibal-lecter-20161230
8. James Goldman, *The Lion in Winter,* 'A Word About Castles' (introduction).
9. ibid.
10. Charles Higham, *Kate: The Life of Katharine Hepburn*, p. 209.
11. John Barry went on to compose musical scores for films including *Mary Queen of Scots*, *Out of Africa*, and *Dances with Wolves*.
12. These were in reference to Edward Albee's celebrated play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and to Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes*. Both plays dealt with dysfunctional/selfish people at odds with one another.
13. Reviews are from James Goldman, *The Lion in Winter,* and from Homer Dickens, *The Films of Katharine Hepburn*, New York: The Citadel Press, 1971, pp. 192-194.

Roland Hui received his degree in Art History from Concordia University in Canada. After completing his studies, he went on to work in Interpretive Media for California State Parks, The U.S. Forest Service, and The National Park Service

Roland has written for 'Renaissance Magazine' and regularly writes for 'Tudor Life Magazine'. He is the author of *The Turbulent Crown: The Story of the Tudor Queens* and blogs about 16th century English art and personalities at 'Tudor Faces' (tudorfaces.blogspot.com).



CATHERINE BROOKS CONSIDERS...

HOW SHOULD WE SUPPORT HISTORICAL LOCATIONS?

Take a moment to consider all the places you think of when you think about the Tudors. If you could plan a once in a lifetime Tudor trip for you or a friend, where would you send them?

THE CHANCES are the big names sprang straight to mind, such as Hampton Court Palace and the Tower of London. There are so many places in London also associated with royalty in general, but

which also have a huge significance to Tudor history fans; Westminster Abbey, St James' Palace, Windsor Castle, and St Paul's Cathedral to name a few. But apart from their Tudor connections, what do all these places have in common? Aside from being very well known, they are either in, or very accessible from central London.

The cost of keeping these valuable locations alive and working must be eye-watering. Then add in the cost of restoration work and balancing the books could seem a terrifying prospect. But when you are an internationally famous landmark in one of the most visited cities in the world, commanding the attention of paying customers isn't much of an issue. But what if you're not either of those things?

There are hundreds of places in the U.K. that have Tudor connections. These go from the universally renowned, down to those whose architecture retains a small number of original, period features, or were perhaps graced with a royal visit. So, if we return to our 'Tudor Dream Tour', where, or even would these places feature?

Of course, many places with scant Tudor connections (and many with none whatsoever) are in beautiful locations set well away from the capital, bursting with history from the centuries that have elapsed. As Tudor fans we think immediately of Hever Castle, peacefully adding to the tranquillity of the Kent countryside around it, or the wistful Sudeley Castle, final home to the survivor, Katherine Parr, in the picturesque Cotswolds. Such places draw huge attention, but for some, being safe and snug in the countryside presents a disadvantage – they are off the beaten track and that may make them less accessible, especially for tourists relying on public transport or having short stays.

Still, as larger well-known sites, such places can command a good entrance fee. They can also stock large gift shops and run restaurants or coffee shops – some locations offer more than one of both of these. They have the budgets to pay more staff to run tours and interact with visitors. They are attractive places for historical events, school trips, tourist buses, weddings and corporate occasions. The more you have, the more you can get.

Now imagine a small location. And then imagine a small location tucked away in a rural area, or in the back streets of a seldom visited town or village. How much can it charge per visitor? In reality, much less than the other attractions we've mentioned, as a smaller setting often has less to explore and less to see. The lower price does not reflect the importance or interest of those places – it's simply the reality of how pricing works. True, smaller sites will have lower costs overall, but relatively they will not be able to command the same income from ticket sales and extras such as luxury souvenirs and afternoon teas. Combine this with potential location constraints, you can begin to see the problem faced

by many places.

I became mindful of this issue during recent Tudor trips and discussions with staff, friends and associates. There is a feeling on the ground that visitor attendance has been in decline. I'm sure this is not universal, but a downturn in spending is one result of a reduction in disposable income. A family ticket for a given attraction varies in price, and generally represents good value. However, adding transport and other costs can make even a day trip prohibitive to many people.

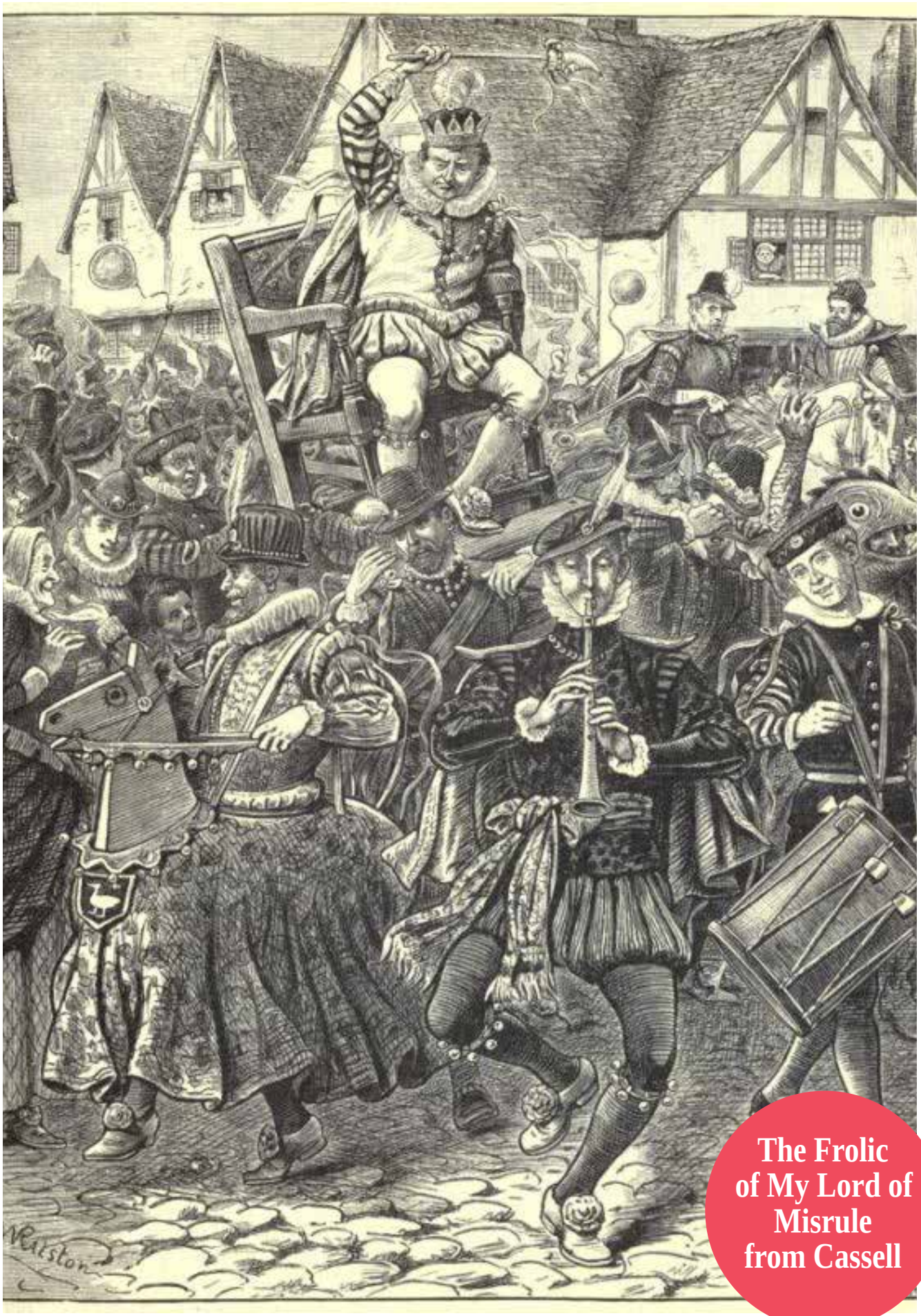
I recently came across 'Heritage Days'. These are where historical locations open up their doors to the public for free on given dates. This may seem counterproductive as you are giving entry to those who might else pay to visit. But then they might not visit at all. Heritage Days exist, I was told, to encourage people to visit who may not otherwise have done so, but also to give some access to people unable to afford to come. Who knows then what passion could be ignited in both groups? And don't forget the potential income from retail and consumables spent from customers that would not have been there otherwise. Even the sale of the smallest item is welcomed.

English Heritage looks after over 400 historical buildings, monuments and sites. The National Trust do the same for over 500. They both offer extremely good value annual memberships, which include entry to all sites and benefits such as shop discounts and free parking. Whilst each location does 'lose' the individual entrance fee, they are given money from their organisation for each visitor, and the same applies on Heritage Days. Again, less on the door, but maybe more visitors spending overall – they wouldn't keep offering memberships if they weren't viable.

So how can we help? This is a tough question to answer but an important one, particularly if budget in an issue. Certainly, do take the time to research an area you may be visiting to see if you can discover something new. There are plenty of fantastic Tudor communities online – including us! – where people will be happy to give you advice. Make donations either at the location or online if possible. With Christmas coming up, perhaps consider tickets, passes or something from an online giftshop? Remember too that many places now hold additional events, such as talks, jousting tournaments, encampment weekends, open air cinema and fireworks displays – these can be great fun. Subscribe to email lists – I get some great information on activities and events from these.

Ultimately, funding historical sites is always going to be an uphill struggle. Anything you do to support venues is always hugely appreciated. If you have any suggestions for what the Tudor Society can do, please contact me at catherine@tudorsociety.com

CATHERINE BROOKS



The Frolic of My Lord of Misrule from Cassell

SARAH-BETH WATKINS

LORD OF MISRULE

Christmas is a time for celebrating - often to excess! In Tudor times, a Lord of Misrule or Master of Merry Disports was appointed to oversee the Christmas celebrations and make sure that the festivities were rowdy and riotous, often devolving into drunkenness and bad behaviour.

The Lord was generally chosen from the lower classes and the idea was that he turned the court on its head by becoming king for the season. This role reversal meant he could order nobles about, mock the king and cause chaos with drinking games, bawdy masques, excessive feasting and scandalous songs.

He could set up a mock court and preside over it giving out his orders and insisting on being obeyed. But he also had a serious role of making sure that the court, the king and its nobles were all entertained with a round of devises, plays, masques and diversions.

The role of the Lord of Misrule has its roots in Roman times and the celebration of Saturnalia from 17th to the 23rd December. As well as preceding over the celebrations Misrule urged people to mock the authorities and saw that slaves became masters for a time without fear of consequence. Some historians believe though that the Lord suffered the ultimate consequence and was then sacrificed at the end of his reign.

John Stow in his *Survey of London*, published in 1603, wrote:

HENRY VII

APPOINTED A LORD OF MISRULE

EVERY CHRISTMAS

IN HIS REIGN

[I]n the feaste of Christmas, there was in the kinges house, wheresoeuer hee was lodged, a Lord of Misrule, or Maister of merry disports, and the like had yee in the house of euery noble man, of honor, or good worshippe, were he spirituall or temporall.

Not only did a Lord of Misrule preside over the king's court for the twelve days of Christmas (and sometimes longer) but he was also present in the houses of nobles, at the Inns of Court law schools, and in the universities at Oxford and Cambridge.

Henry VII appointed a Lord of Misrule every Christmas in his reign and also an Abbot of Unreason, more typically found in Scotland. Henry VIII, also followed the tradition. But after the restoration Henry VIII was no longer happy having his court turned upside down and being mocked and Christmas festivities were toned down.

However when Edward VI came to power in 1547 he revived the tradition, most spectacularly between 1551 - 1553. In December 1551, the Duke of Northumberland appointed George Ferrers, a courtier, as Lord of Misrule a role which he took to with great enthusiasm. The aim of such an emphasis on the Christmas festivities was to take Edward VI's mind off his former Lord Protector, Edward Seymour, who had been sent to the Tower for treason.

AFTER
EDWARD'S
DEATH THE ACTIVITIES OF THE LORD OF MISRULE
ENDED

On 4 January 1552 the Lord of Misrule dressed in a fur-trimmed cloth of gold gown made his official entry into the City of London. The procession was led by trumpeters and bagpipe players, flutists, musicians and morris dancers followed by the Lord of Misrule accompanied by fifty guards pulling a cart carrying a pillory, gibbet and stocks. At Cheapside justice was dispensed and a symbolic beheading took place – that of a hogshead of wine for the gathered crowd to drink.

Twelfth Night was celebrated with a joust and a play performed by the King's Players following which there was a mock battle between Youth and Riches, with them arguing over which of them was better. The evening ended with a sumptuous banquet of 120 dishes.

The festivities went so well that by the next year Ferrers was writing to Sir Thomas Cawarden, Master of the Revels, to plan an even bigger spectacle. He wanted his advice on whether to come to court under a canopy as before or a triumphal chair or even on some strange beast. He was also planning devices such as the joust of the hobby horses and productions including 'a dragons head and a dragons mowthe of plate with stoppes to burne like fier'.

He planned on a large procession in January 1553 to enter the city including six councillors, fools, jugglers, tumblers, a divine, a philosopher, an astronomer, a poet, a physician, an apothecary, a master of requests, a civilian, friars, two gentleman ushers and others. Twelfth night's spectacular at Greenwich to signify the end of the season was *The Triumph of Cupid, Venus and Mars*, a masque written by Sir George Howard and produced by Ferrers. Edward VI was so delighted with Ferrers' work he was granted an estate at Flamstead in Hertfordshire.

After Edward's death and Mary's succession, the activities of the Lord of Misrule were discontinued. As a princess, Mary had enjoyed the tradition from an

early age. In 1520, she gave her father's Lord of Misrule a 20s. tip after they shared Christmas together at Greenwich. The following year she had her own household at Ditton and her valet John Thorogoode, took the role providing a play on a naval theme, a skit with a friar, dancers with staves, a disguising that involved twelve men playing animate haystacks, and an unknown entertainment featuring gunners and gunpowder. Henry VIII received a letter from her advisor John Vosey in 1525 to ask about that year's festivities

> *We humbly beseche the same to let vs knowe youre gracious pleasure concerñyg aswell a ship of silver for the almes dysshe requysite for her high estate/ and spice plate/ as also for trumpettes and a rebek to be sent/ and whither we shall appoynte any lord of mysrule for the said honorable household/ previde for enterludes disgysynges or pleyes in the said fest/ or for banket on twelf nyght. . .*

Her father duly paid for her own Lord of Misrule that Christmas by which time she had her own household in Wales but as a queen Mary would deem the tradition as too pagan and refuse to continue Edward's splendid festivities.

The appointment of a Lord of Misrule began to die out but some like Richard Evelyn, father of the diarist John Evelyn, continued the tradition setting out instructions for his Lord of Misrule in 1634:

> *'… I give free leave to Owen Flood my trumpeter to be Lord of Misrule of all good Orders during the twelve days…to command all and every person … to be at his command whensoever he shall sound his trumpet or music … his Lordship commands every person … to appear at the Hall at seven of the clock … to be at prayers, and afterwards to be at his Lordship's commands, upon pain of punishment … I give full power and authority to his lordship to break up all locks, bolts, bars, doors and latches, and to fling up all doors out of hinges …'*

When you pull a cracker this year remember the paper crown is a nod to the Lord of Misrule and enjoy your own festivities!

SARAH-BETH WATKINS

A CHES
CHRIS

BY
GARETH RUSSELL

We know so very little about Catherine Howard's youth, but we do know that her father, Lord Edmund Howard, spent the last few years of his life bedevilled by mounting debts. At one stage, he even had to go in to hiding to evade his creditors and then send his wife, Catherine's mother Lady Joyce, to petition Cardinal Wolsey for financial assistance. Her mother died when Catherine was still a child. Dating Joyce's death is difficult, made possible only by wading through the wills of Edmund's subsequent wives, but the most likely year for her passing was 1528, making Catherine about five or six when she lost her mother. To be clear, that is not suspect mathematics on my part – an entirely fair possibility, I should add – it's rather that, after writing a biography of Catherine, I'm as close to certain as one can be that she was not born as late as 1525, the current popular date for her birth, but in 1522 or, at a stretch, 1523.

Agnes, Dowager Duchess of Norfolk, as played by Catherine Lacey in "The Six Wives of Henry VIII" (BBC)

Edmund's monetary and social woes were finally alleviated by the most brilliant of his many nieces, Anne Boleyn, who got him out of dodge by getting him across the Channel to the English Pale in Calais to serve as the colony's comptroller. This provided the seemingly perfect point for Edmund to follow in the footsteps of his contemporaries by sending his children to live with friends and relatives as wards. Catherine, by then about eight years-old, was at a good age by contemporary standards to be sent to dwell in the vast household of her fabulously wealthy step-grandmother Agnes, Dowager Duchess of Norfolk. At some point, maybe concurrently, Catherine's brother Henry also joined the establishment where later they welcomed the arrival of their little cousin Agnes, daughter of their uncle William, making them the three grandchildren of a duke dwelling under the one roof.

The Dowager Duchess ran an impressive household, with hundreds of staff and servants. Aristocratic consumption helped sustain the economy, as well as uphold the class system that was felt to be integral to social stability and morality, by mirroring the hierarchy established

WORTH

STMAS

by God in the Heavens. Faith shaped, too, the rhythm of the year and festivals like Saint George's Day in April, Easter during Spring, Whitsun at the start of summer, the Assumption of the Blessèd Virgin Mary in August, and, of course, the Twelve Days of Christmas from Christmas Day to the Feast of the Epiphany on 6thJanuary provided ample opportunity for celebrations in the Duchess's residences.

The prettiest of those homes was Chesworth, parts of which survive today as a private residence, including the hall where Catherine, her brother, cousins, and grandmother would have kept their Christmases in the 1530s. After the breakdown of her marriage, their glamorous aunt, the Countess of Bridgewater, moved back in with her mother, bringing her three children with her – Thomas, Gruffydd, and Anne.

Moated Chesworth played host to many typical features of a Tudor aristocratic Christmas – the troupes of travelling players invited in to enjoy the Duchess's hospitality, whilst performing comedies and religious plays for the household. The kissing bough, with new candles lit each night, was the ancestor of our mistletoe-based shenanigans. Some English households liked to pick logs from the ash tree to burn in their grates, in homage to a lovely legend that ash had been used by the Holy Family to heat the stable where Christ had been born in Bethlehem. An ash log emits a rather festive green-tinged flame when burned, which added to the Christmas feel when they crackled in the great halls and fireplaces of the Tudor faithful.

Music, plays, ample food, ale, mead, and wine played a big part in the household's

Chesworth House, as it stands today (Savills)

Christmas. But so too did the celebration of the central religious glory of Christmas – the commemoration of the Miracle of the Incarnation, the provision of the New Covenant between God and man, through the Birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. Throughout Catherine's childhood, statues of the Madonna and Child, Our Lady and Our Lord, still gazed out in gentle magnificence from the niches and altars of Tudor homes and chapels.

But they all stood on the precipice of a new world, a ruptured and altered generation, as the intoxicating vigour of the multiplying new Protestant denominations gathered momentum until, within ten years, they had swept most of it away, ushering much into history and memory, creating their own traditions in lieu – some based on those that had come before, others in defiant contravention.

GARETH RUSSELL

Catherine Howard (Tamzin Merchant), celebrating Christmas as queen, as imagined in "The Tudors" (Showtime)

TUDOR ADVENT QUIZ

December 1st: First name of queen associated with Francis Dereham and Thomas Culpeper, who faced their trial under accusations of treason, this day in 1541

December 2nd: Death of Charles _____, French resident ambassador at Henry VIII's court between 1538-1543

December 3rd: In 1536, a proclamation was made, offering a pardon to the rebels of the Pilgrimage of _____.

December 4th: In 1555, Papal sentence was passed on Thomas Cranmer, removing his archbishopric and all other 'ecclesiastical dignities'. How many times did Cranmer recant his Protestant faith in order to try and receive absolution?

December 5th: What was the nationality of King Francis II, husband to Mary Queen of Scots, who died on this day in 1560?

December 6th: This date saw the celebration of which Saint, banned by Henry VIII in 1541?

December 7th: This leader of Kett's Rebellion was hanged in 1549 from the walls of Norwich Castle in Norfolk.

December 8th: 1538 saw the death of Sir William _____, courtier and also Master of the Horse to both Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour

December 9th: Death in 1522 of Hugh Ashton, who was Archdeacon of York and the former Comptroller of which Lady Margaret?

December 10th: Execution in 1541 of Thomas _____, claimed to have had a sexual relationship with Queen Catherine Howard

December 11th: Burial in 1608 of Lady _____ Sheffield, who had an affair with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, resulting in a son of the same name

December 12th: In 1546, the Earl of Surrey and Duke of Norfolk were led separately to the Tower of London. What was their family name?

December 13th: In 1577, Sir Francis Drake left Plymouth to sail into the Pacific. Only one of his ships arrived safely. Originally called the 'Pelican', what was it renamed as?

December 14th: In 1558, Mary I was buried at this abbey

December 15th: 1558 saw the Funeral of Mary I's Archbishop of Canterbury. What was the Cardinal's first name?

December 16th: 1485 saw the birth of which Queen Catherine?

December 17th: In 1538, Henry VIII was excommunicated by this Pope.

December 18th: Death in 1575 of Nicholas _____, former Archdeacon of Canterbury and author of 'The life and death of Sir Thomas Moore, knight, and sometymes Lord high Chancellor of England'

December 19th: Death in 1587 of lawyer and administrator _____ Seckford, who had served Mary I as Deputy Chief Steward of the Duchy of Lancaster

December 20th: Execution of Edward _____ in 1583, having been convicted of treason for plotting with John Somerville to kill Elizabeth I

December 21st: Birth of Thomas _____, 1st Earl of Southampton, Lord Privy Seal and Lord Chancellor to Henry VIII

December 22nd: In 1534, the Bishop of Rochester, John _____, wrote from his prison to Thomas Cromwell, to beg him for food, books, and a priest to hear his confession

December 23rd: In 1558, Queen Elizabeth moved to this palace, making it her principal residence

December 24th: Year of the final speech to Parliament of which infamous Tudor monarch?

"Quiz Answers" on page 49

A VERY BRITISH CHRISTMAS

BY

CLAIRE RIDGWAY

You might not want to go to the effort of doing a full-blown Tudor Christmas by preparing a boar's head or a Tudor Christmas pie (a pastry case containing a turkey stuffed with a goose, stuffed with a chicken, stuffed with a partridge, stuffed with a pigeon), but why not incorporate some typical British Christmas foods into your festivities this year?

Obviously you can google British Christmas foods and recipes, and find some wonderful recipes and tips online, but I thought I'd share with you some of my very favourite Christmas treats.

MINCE PIES (MAKES 18)

225g butter, from the fridge
350g plain flour
100g caster sugar
A pinch of salt
280 mincemeat (shop bought or homemade - see below)
1 egg, small, beaten
icing sugar, for dusting

Method

Preheat the oven to 200ºC/Gas Mark 6/Fan 180ºC
Dice the butter and rub together with the flour in a bowl
Stir in the caster sugar and salt
Combine the mixture into a ball of dough and knead briefly, you shouldn't need any water
Roll out (and cut circles to match your tin) or take walnut-sized balls of dough and press into 18 holes of your tin.
Spoon the mincemeat into each one
Cut smaller rounds or take smaller balls of dough and flatten with your

hands to a size which will cover your pies
Cover the pies with the pastry lids, seal the edges
Brush the pie tops with the beaten egg
Bake in the oven for about 20 minutes and then leave to cool slightly

Decorate with a dusting of icing sugar
You can also cut star shapes in the pastry to use as lids.

HOMEMADE MINCEMEAT (MAKES 2KG)

250g raisins
375g currants
100ml brandy
1 lemon (you need the zest of 1 lemon and the juice of half of it)
300g shredded suet (you can buy vegetarian suet)
250g dark brown sugar
85g chopped mixed peel
½ small nutmeg, grated
1 large Bramley apple (peeled and grated)

Method

Sterilise jars to store the mincemeat for two weeks before use
Mix together the lemon juice and brandy
Soak the dried fruit in the lemon and brandy mixture for 1 hour
Drain the fruit, but keep the liquid
Mix the suet, sugar, peel, nutmeg and apple into the dried fruit.
Pour in lemon/brandy liquid
Spoon into your sterilised jars and press down to get rid of any air
Cover and keep for at least two weeks

CLAIRE'S CHRISTMAS TRIFLE

Christmas pudding is the typical dessert for Christmas Day and is very heavy and filling, so it's nice to have another type of dessert on offer for the evening meal or Boxing Day. Trifle is a family favourite and here's my own recipe for a simple Christmas trifle.

Method

Line the bottom of a large glass serving bowl with trifle sponges or pieces of sponge cake. It doesn't matter if the sponge cake is slightly stale and this is a good way of using up a left-over sponge cake, muffins, Madeira cake or magdalenas
Optional: Pour a little sherry over the sponges and allow to soak in
Make jelly (jello) from cubes or crystals
Optional: Scatter sponges with fruit – you could use sliced bananas, tinned fruit cocktail, tinned peaches, raspberries, strawberries… whatever you like
Pour the jelly over the sponges (and fruit)
Leave to cool and then refrigerate until set
Make custard however you usually make it – from a packet, from custard powder, or using milk/cream, egg yolks, sugar, cornflour and vanilla. Google "custard recipe" if you need to. Allow to cool. You can cover the custard with cling-film while it cools. This is supposed to prevent a skin from forming but if a skin forms then you just whip it back into the custard (ED: or eat it! Yum)
Pour cooled custard over set jelly
Whip up some double cream – You can whip in a little icing sugar to sweeten it if you like. Whip it until it holds its shape (soft peaks)
Spoon the cream over the custard layer
Decorate with multi-coloured sprinkles, crushed biscuits, candied fruit, anything you like – this was my job as a child, I used lots of sprinkles!
Chill until use

This basic recipe can be adapted in so many ways. You could soak the sponges in a coffee liqueur and then miss the fruit and jelly out and just top with a chocolate mousse or custard and then cream. You could do an orange trifle and soak the sponges in Cointreau and use orange/mandarin segments and orange jelly…. All sorts!

BRANDY SNAPS (MAKES 18)

These sweet treats were very popular with my family when I was growing up.

Makes 18
50g butter
50g caster sugar
2 tbsp golden syrup
50g plain flour
1 tsp ground ginger
zest of half a lemon
1 tsp brandy

Method

Preheat oven to 180ºC/Gas Mark 4/Fan 160ªC
Heat the butter, sugar and syrup in a pan over a low heat until the sugar has dissolved
Sift the flour and mix in the ginger
Pour the flour and ginger mixture into the pan
Stir in lemon zest and brandy
Drop teaspoons of mixture onto a baking sheet (leave plenty of room between them as they spread)
Bake for 7-8 minutes, until golden
Remove from the oven and cool for a minute or so
Lift each snap with a palette knife and shape into a tube by wrapping around the handle of a wooden spoon. Leave to set for a minute or so before removing
Store in an airtight container

Serve with squirty cream, simply squirt into the tube. You can also make brandy snap baskets by putting the warm snap into a patty tin or muffin tin hole while still warm and pressing down slightly to create a “basket” shape. You can then fill with fruit and cream.

ROAST TURKEY AND ALL THE TRIMMINGS

The traditional Christmas meat is turkey and you'll find lots of hints for cooking the perfect roast turkey online (google Jamie Oliver's fail-safe roast turkey for a good starting point), but how about the trimmings? Well, in our house, we always had stuffing, Brussel sprouts, carrots, roasted parsnips, roast potatoes, cranberry sauce, pigs in blankets (sausagemeat wrapped in bacon), chipolata sausages, and gravy. I also enjoy English mustard and bread sauce on the side, oooh and sometimes a Yorkshire pudding too!

ROASTIES

Roast potatoes are my very favourite part of the Christmas Day meal, so here's how to make perfect roasties:

Method

Preheat oven to 200ºC/Gas Mark 6/Fan 180ºC
Peel as many potatoes as you need for your family, and chop in half if needed (smaller ones can stay whole)
Bring to the boil in salted water and cook for 15-20 mins
Drain well and then put the lid on the pan and give a good shake, just so the faces of the potatoes go a bit "floury" or rough
Arrange in a roasting pan, season and drizzle with sunflower oil (I use olive oil as I like the taste)
Roast for about an hour until crisp and golden

YORKSHIRE PUDDINGS (FOR 8 LARGE OR 24 SMALL)

Traditionally served with roast beef, but somehow they make it into our Christmas dinner with turkey!

140g plain flour
4 eggs
200ml milk
sunflower oil

Method

Preheat oven to 230ºC/Gas Mark 8/Fan 210ºC
For large Yorkshire puddings, drizzle a little sunflower oil into 2x four-hole non-stick Yorkshire pudding pans. For small Yorkshire puddings, drizzle a little sunflower oil into 2x twelve-hole non-stick muffin tins. Place tins in oven.
Put flour into a mixing bowl and beat in the 4 eggs until the mixture is smooth. I use an electric whisk.
While beating, gradually pour in milk making sure that you beat away any lumps
Season
Either pour the batter into a jug or have a ladle ready
Take tins out of oven (oil should be sizzling hot) and pour batter into the holes evenly
Bake in the oven, undisturbed, for 20-25 minutes until risen and browned
Serve immediately or cool and freeze

PEPPERMINT CREAMS

As a family, we love making sweet treats to give away as gifts at Christmas, so here are a few simple and tasty recipes.

450g icing sugar
Peppermint essence
4 tbsp condensed milk
Method

Sift the icing sugar into a bowl and stir in the condensed milk to make a thick paste.
Add a few drops of peppermint essence (be careful!)
Combine
You can then either roll out the mixture and cut into shapes, or form into small balls and flatten slightly with the back of a spoon
Set aside to harden
Variations: You can dip the set creams into melted chocolate or dip half a cream into chocolate; you can colour half the mixture green by adding a little green food colouring.

CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

300g dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids), chopped finely
300ml double cream
50g unsalted butter, chopped
Coatings: crushed nuts, cocoa powder, shredded coconut, chocolate

Method

Heat the cream and butter over a gentle heat until the butter has melted and the cream starts to simmer
Remove from heat
Pour over the chocolate and mix together until it's a smooth mixture
Cool, then chill for 4 hours

Shape into balls using your hands or a melon baller
Roll in cocoa powder, crushed nuts or coconut, or dip into melted chocolate
Put in foil or paper cases

EASY FUDGE

397g can condensed milk
150ml milk
450g demerara sugar
115g unsalted butter

Method

Melt all ingredients together in a pan over a low heat, stirring regularly
Bring to the boil and simmer for 10-15 minutes, stirring all the time
It is ready when a soft ball forms if you drop a little of the mixture into ice-cold water, or when it reaches 115-118ºC on a sugar thermometer
Remove from heat and cool slightly
Beat for 10 minutes or so, until it becomes thick and loses its shine
Press the mixture into a lined 20cm square tin
Leave to cool properly and then cut into squares

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL THE TUDOR SOCIETY MEMBERS!

CLAIRE RIDGWAY

Henry VII's Great Seal Chocolate Replica

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THE HOUSES OF LANCASTER AND YORK AND THE WARS OF THE ROSES

BY SUSAN ABERNETHY

Ian Mortimer's biography of King Edward III is called "The Perfect King: The Life of Edward III, Father of the English Nation". Well, he certainly was a father. And spare a thought for his lovely Queen, Philippa of Hainault. She gave birth to at least thirteen children. The consequences of having this many royal children would reverberate down through the history of England and therein lies the root of the conflict that came to be known as the Wars of the Roses.

FOR THE purposes of our story, we will concentrate on the first five sons born to Philippa and Edward. Edward of Woodstock was the first child. He would become the second Prince of Wales, the first being his grandfather, King Edward II. Edward III followed the custom of France (his mother was Isabella of France, daughter of Philip IV) and create a dukedom for his new son. His title was Duke of Cornwall.

The second son died before had could be given a ducal position but the third son, Lionel of Antwerp became Duke of Clarence in 1362 and on the same day, the fourth son, John of Gaunt, became Duke of Lancaster by right of his wife Blanche, daughter of Henry Grosmont, 1st Duke of Lancaster. Edward may have decided it was not desirable to multiply the number of dukes in the realm as he elevated no other sons for the duration

An illuminated manuscript miniature,c.1430-40, of Edward III of England

of his lifetime.

During the reign of Edward III's grandson, Richard II, his uncles Edmund of Langley and Thomas of Woodstock were named the Duke of York and Duke of Gloucester respectively. Although there were five new royal dukedoms in England, there were never more than three in existence at one time and by 1399, only two had survived – Lancaster and York. Edward, Prince of Wales died leaving his son to succeed him as Richard II. Lionel of Antwerp died leaving only a daughter named Philippa (presumably after her grandmother) and the first Duke of Gloucester was put to death at Calais at the instigation of his nephew the king.

John of Gaunt would survive and become regent for Richard II and Edmund, Duke of York would live to be sixty. The children of these two men, along with Lionel's daughter Philippa, would give rise to the famous 'Houses' of Lancaster and York.

John of Gaunt married three times. His first wife Blanche gave birth to a son Henry who was initially known as the earl of Derby. When Blanche died of the plague, Gaunt married Constance of Castile with whom he had a daughter Catherine. During his first two marriages, Gaunt carried on an affair with a woman from Hainault (now Belgium) who served in the household of Queen Philippa. Her name was Katherine Swynford and she would bear four children during the affair. These children were called Beaufort after a castle owned by John of Gaunt in France.

Gaunt would marry Katherine Swynford in 1396. The Beaufort children were John, Henry, Thomas and Joan. Although initially illegitimate by birth, Gaunt was anxious to have them made legitimate so they could inherit titles, lands, income, church offices, etc. To retrospectively legitimize these children, Gaunt had to appeal to Parliament and the church to fulfill the requirements of church and common law. The duke sent an embassy to the pope in Rome and to Parliament in Westminster to obtain charters of legitimacy.

The Pope was accommodating and issued a letter in his own hand giving his consent to Gaunt's request. When Parliament met in January 1397, the Lord Chancellor declared on behalf of King Richard II that the Pope had legitimized the Beauforts and then read out a royal charter verifying the king's assent to the Pope's pronouncement. The second section of the royal charter clearly recognized that the Beauforts were entitled to acquire any estate, attain any office, or inherit any title as though they had been born in lawful matrimony.

As established by ecclesiastical and civil law, the Beauforts were now unquestionably legitimate. In the meantime, in 1399, Gaunt's first son Henry, earl of Derby, had deposed his cousin Richard II and was now ruling as King Henry IV, the first king of the House of Lancaster. In 1407, John

Beaufort, earl of Somerset and one of the leading nobles in England, asked Parliament to reconfirm the legitimacy of the Beauforts. Henry IV agreed to this but added a caveat to the original act. The words *excepta dignitate regali* or 'except for the royal dignity' were inserted in the original text.

It is unclear why Henry IV was determined to alter the text and its legality is highly questionable. The original petition had clearly been ratified by Parliament and was legally binding. Any alterations to the act could only be made if Parliament repealed the original bill or lawfully endorsed the changes. Parliament never exercised either option so the change made by Henry IV was never lawfully sanctioned.

Therefore, the original act of Beaufort legitimization was legal and they were a legitimate dynasty capable of inheriting the throne of England. The male Beaufort line was terminated in 1471 with the death of Edmund Beaufort, 4th Duke of Somerset. From that date, the rights to the throne passed through the female line to Margaret Beaufort who was the grand-daughter of John Beaufort, earl of Somerset. And Margaret was the mother of Henry Tudor.

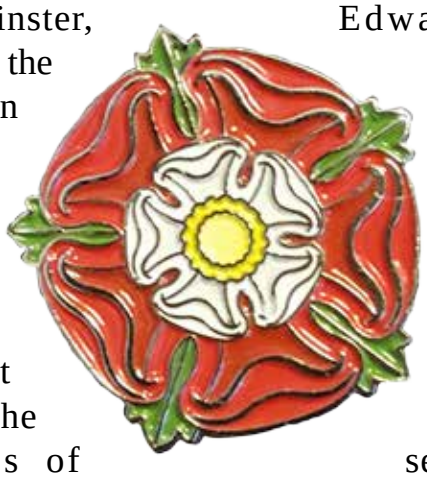
Henry IV had four legitimate sons, and it is probably safe to assume he never considered the Beauforts would have a chance to claim their rights to the throne of England. But that is exactly what happened. Three of his sons had no issue. Henry IV's eldest son ascended the throne as King Henry V. He would be a brilliant military commander and the hero and victor of the Battle of Agincourt during the Hundred Years War. His son by the French princess Catherine of Valois would become the only crowned king of England and France. Henry VI was a weak king due to mental instability and a peace-loving nature. His reign would see the beginning of the Wars of the Roses.

Now let's follow the Yorkist side of the story. As we have seen, Edward III's son Edmund of Langley was elevated to the title of Duke of York. His eldest son Edward died with no issue. The second son, Richard, earl of Cambridge married Anne Mortimer. Anne Mortimer was the great-grand-daughter of Lionel of Antwerp, second son of Edward III. Richard, earl of Cambridge was involved in a plot against King Henry V, resulting in his execution. He was survived by a young son, also named Richard, who would become the 3rd Duke of York.

Now here's where it gets even trickier. Remember the Beaufort daughter named Joan? Joan Beaufort married Ralph Neville, earl of Westmoreland, as his second wife and together they would have ten children, the last of which was Cecily Neville. Cecily Neville married Richard, 3rd Duke of York so there was descent from Edward III in the ancestry of both of them. Together they had four sons: Edward, earl of March, Edmund, earl of Rutland, George, Duke of Clarence

and Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

When the government of the Lancastrian King Henry VI was falling apart, Richard of York decided he would be a better alternative as ruler and pressed his claim. This very rightly angered Henry VI's wife and queen, Margaret of Anjou. Their son, Edward of Westminster, Prince of Wales was the rightful Lancastrian heir to the anointed king, Henry VI. The showdown between Richard, Duke of York and Queen Margaret was the basis of the subsequent series of military encounters and political manoeuvring that lasted from the Battle of St. Albans in 1455 to the Battle of Bosworth in 1485.



There was a total of seventeen battles during the conflict with periods of relative stability in between. Henry VI was deposed by Edward, Duke of York who became King Edward IV. Then, Edward IV was deposed and the redemption of Henry VI lasted from October 1470 to May 1471. At the Battle of Tewkesbury, Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou's son Edward, Prince of Wales was killed. Henry VI was captured and presumably murdered in the Tower of London. Edward IV would rule until his untimely death in April 1483.

Edward's brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, would declare Edward IV's children illegitimate and have himself declared king as Richard III. Edward's sons, King Edward V and Richard, Duke of York, disappeared in the Tower of London. Through a series of missteps, the nobility became disenchanted with Richard's government and there was a movement to bring Henry Tudor from exile in France to marry Edward IV's eldest daughter, Elizabeth of York, which he promised to do on Christmas Day, 1483. Henry Tudor became King of England after the death of Richard III during the Battle of Bosworth. With his marriage to Elizabeth, the Houses of Lancaster and York were united and the Tudor dynasty of kings made its debut.

SUSAN ABERNETHY

Further reading: "Lancastrians, Yorkists and Henry VII" by S.B. Chrimes
"The House of Beaufort: The Bastard Line That Captured the Crown" by Nathen Amin
"The Wars of the Roses" by Alison Weir
"The Perfect King: The Life of Edward III, Father of the English Nation" by Ian Mortimer

December's Guest Speaker is **Matthew Lewis**

"1483 The Year of Three Kings"

Tudor Life

EDITOR'S PICKS

For a great, rollicking, detailed read on how Tudors lived and celebrated Christmas, I recommend "How to be a Tudor" by Ruth Goodman, while Alison Weir's biography of Elizabeth I gives a lovely description on how Gloriana marked the glorious season. Suzannah Lipscomb's "The King is Dead" and Robert Hutchinson's "The Last Days of Henry VIII" look at the politics unfolding during Henry VIII's last, miserable, dangerous Yuletide.

For those looking for fictional takes on a Tudor Christmas, I can heartily recommend Margaret George's epic novel "The Autobiography of Henry VIII," which has scenes of Christmases early and late in Henry's long reign.

THE TUDOR SOCIETY

MEMBERS' BULLETIN

Happy Christmas to all members, both old and new!

I'd like to write a huge thank you to all the team involved in creating the Tudor Life magazine and contributing to our talks, web posts and videos. By the time you are reading this bulletin, we'll have had all twelve of this year's guest expert speakers on the site. We have learned so much from them all, from subjects like Mary, Queen of Scots, Mary I, Anne of Brittany, The Beauforts, Lady Jane Grey, The Six Wives of Henry VIII, Charles Brandon, William Shakespeare, and even Henry VI. What an amazing selection of history we've been able to bring out.

I'm also especially thankful, as I'm sure you are too, that we've been able to bring photos and historical backgrounds of so many buildings to you, including Hampton Court, Tutbury Castle, Sudeley Castle, The Weald & Downland Museum, Raglan Castle, Caldey Island, and Scadbury Manor. What a Society!

Tudor history is so fascinating, don't you agree? We're all set for 2020 with another wide selection of places, people and historical facts to bring to you in video and writing. I do hope that you keep on enjoying what we do. Here's to an amazing 2020!

Tim Ridgway

TONI MOUNT

The Mystery of Old Thomas Parr

When I was researching the life of a physician, William Harvey, at the courts of King James I and Charles I, for a project on 17th century medicine and science, quite incidentally, I discovered a fellow named Thomas Parr. He came into Harvey's story because the doctor not only discovered how the heart worked, circulating blood around the body – for which he is most famous – but was intrigued by anatomy. Harvey was keen to dissect anything that had once lived, from the king's deer and his wife's pet parrot to departed family members, including both his parents.

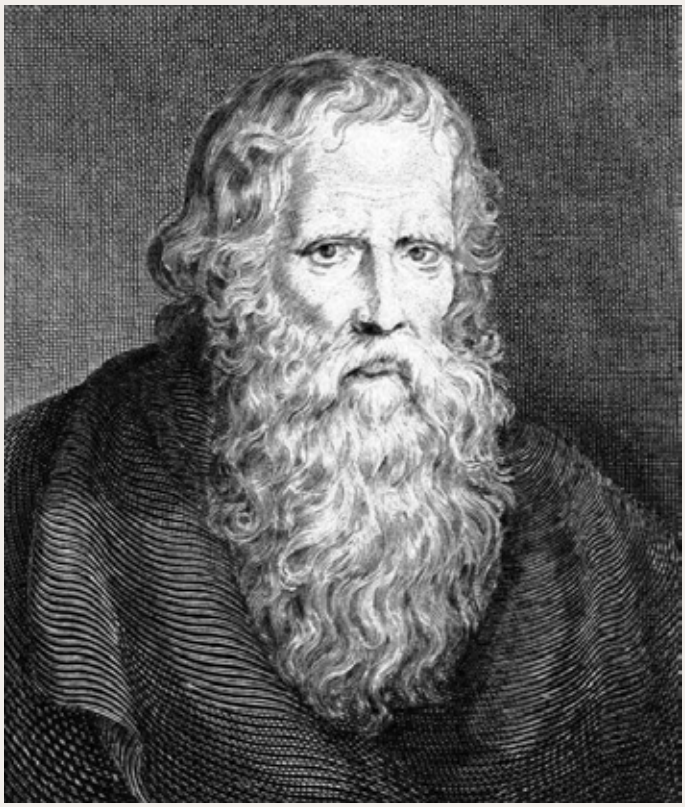
King Charles approved of Harvey's quest for anatomical knowledge and when an old man, Thomas Parr, died in London in 1635, the king commanded the physician to carry out a post mortem and Harvey was eager to comply.

So why was Parr of particular interest to royalty and the medical profession and why am I writing an article on him for a Tudor magazine? The answer is incredible, if anything like true: Parr was reckoned to be 152 years old!

But the question has to be asked: was he really that ancient?

In 1635, Old Tom Parr's story was published in a pamphlet entitled *The Old, Old, Very Old Man,* written by a minor poet, John Taylor, but Taylor doesn't say how he uncovered the details of the man's life. It was claimed that Parr was born in 1483, the year Richard III became king, but this was fifty years before the keeping of parish records was made a legal requirement by Henry VIII, so there was no note of his date of baptism in the local church. The story was built upon traditions held by the villagers of Winnington where he was born, in the parish of Alberbury, Shropshire, backed up by the testimonies of the local gentry – unfortunately not named. Tom himself wasn't much help, able to recall very little of some of the major events of his lifetime. Of most interest to him were the prices of livestock, fodder and grain. Perhaps the

Thomas Parr, anonymous artist, 1635



An engraving of Thomas Parr
Copyright © Westminster Abbey

religious upheavals of the Reformation in the sixteenth century had slipped his mind long ago but I wonder just how much notice a man, farming his few acres on the Welsh border, actually took of politics, regime changes or even enforced changes of belief system.

The story goes that Tom was the son of John Parr, a husbandman of Winnington – a husbandman worked a small farm as a tenant, rather than owning his land as a more prosperous yeoman farmer. Aged seventeen, Tom entered the household of the local gentry as a servant. The gentry may have been the Porter family from whom the tenancy of his father's farm was held. Tom worked as a servant for eighteen years before taking over his father's farm. He would have been thirty-five. Successive members of the Porter family then granted Tom three twenty-one year renewals of the lease on his land – that's sixty-three years worth of leases, making Tom ninety-eight when the third lease ran out. A fourth lease, granted in 1588 (the year of the Spanish Armada), when Tom would have been 105, was discovered in the Shropshire Records and Research Centre in Shrewsbury[1], granting him a lease on his land for the rest of his days. Quite what happened in the seven-year gap between the expiry of the third lease and the granting of the fourth, we don't know. It is more than possible that the timeline of Tom's whole life has been stretched but there's little doubt that he must have lived to a considerable age. And his life had its highlights.

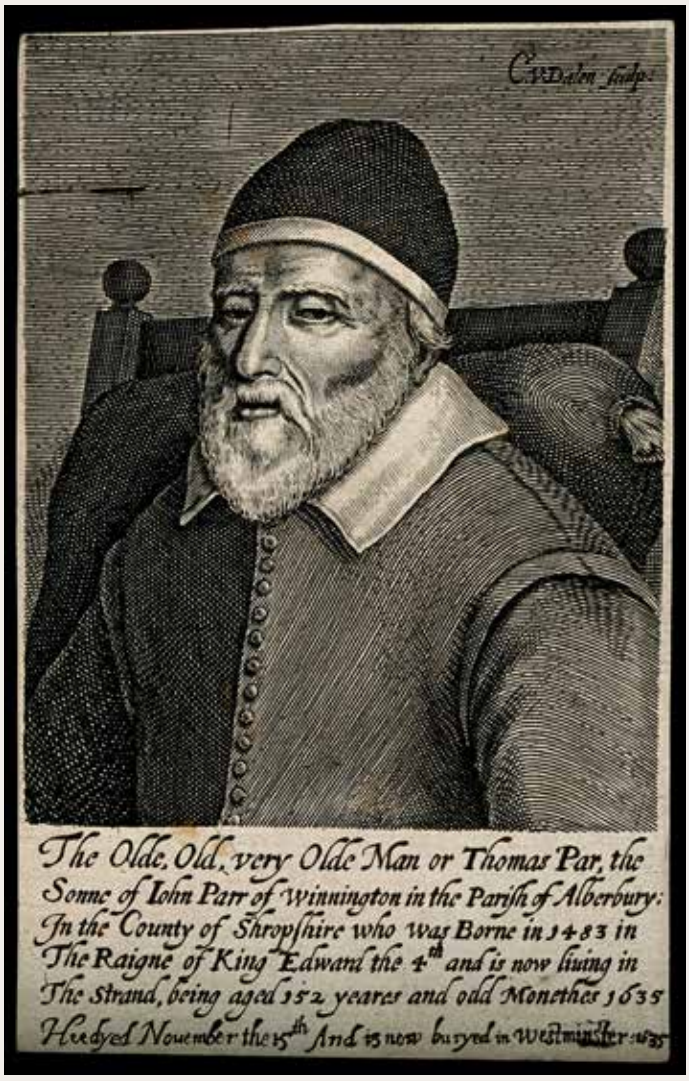
At the age of eighty, he married for the first time. His wife was Jane Taylor (not known to be any relation to the poet, above) and they had two children, John and Jane, though neither inherited their father's incredible constitution since both died as infants. Tom and Jane were wed for thirty-two years, until she died, but Tom was not a faithful husband. Caught out in his adultery with Katherine Milton, by whom he had an illegitimate child, at 100 years of age[2], he was made to perform the humiliating penance, standing in his parish church of Alberbury, wearing nothing but a sheet.

Widowed at 112, Tom took a decade to decide he was in need of a new wife, marrying a Welsh widow, Jane Adda, née Lloyd, when he was 122. According to her, the couple continued to have sex regularly until her husband was 140. Presumably, after that, his stamina was not what it had been but she doesn't say such encounters ended all together.

In the summer of 1635, Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, visited his estates in Shropshire and heard about the county's eldest resident. Arundel was an avid collector of 'curiosities' and Old Tom certainly qualified as an intriguing addition to the earl's collection. Arundel arranged for the old man to be brought to London in a litter, determined to show him off as a rare 'specimen' to anyone who wanted to view a 'remarkable piece of antiquity', as the earl advertised his latest acquisition.

By this time, Tom had been blind for two decades and had only a single tooth remaining but claimed he had good hearing, his digestion was excellent and he slept well. The long journey of over 160 miles, from Shropshire to London, was made at a slow pace, giving crowds time to gather along the route to admire the spectacle. Arundel provided a fool, 'antique-faced Jacke', to entertain both Tom and the crowds and the old man brought along his daughter-in-law[3], Lucy, as a companion.

Having arrived in London, given a house in the Strand and enjoying his celebrity status, Old Tom was presented to the king himself. Charles, like the earl, had an interest in curiosities and asked the old man what was the secret of his longevity. Tom replied, 'Keep your head cool by temperance and your feet warm by exercise. Rise early, go soon to bed, and if you want to grow fat [prosperous] keep your eyes open and your mouth shut'. Wise words but Tom was about to break his own rule on temperance. His host treated him with kindness, giving him rich food and fine wines and even



A wood cut showing the Olde, Old, very Olde Man

arranging for the old man to have his portrait painted and an etching done of him by Cornelis van Dalen.

Sadly, the lavish new foods and drink didn't agree with a constitution previous living on 'a diet of green cheese [freshly made and not matured], onions, coarse bread, buttermilk or mild ale and, on special occasions, cider. Tom had never smoked tobacco either, unlike so many of his fellows. Perhaps it isn't surprising that the old man died within six weeks of arriving in the capital. On 15 November[4], he passed away suddenly, aged, by his reckoning, 152 years and nine months. But the king's interest in the old man

The marble memorial to Thomas Parr in Westminster Abbey

didn't end with his death. Charles ordered the royal physician, William Harvey, to dissect the body, hoping to discover its secret of long life. Harvey was keen to oblige, being particularly interested in the structure of the 'organs of generation', as he politely described them, having heard that Tom could still make use of them.

The post mortem conclusion was that London's atmosphere, polluted by the sulphurous smoke of coal fires, with too many people and animals crowded together, had poisoned the lungs of a man used to the healthy air of his home county. The sudden introduction to an over-rich diet had contributed to his demise. However, his sexual organs looked very healthy.

King Charles must have been impressed by Old Tom because he ordered him to be buried in Westminster Abbey, in the south transept, where his memorial stone can still be seen today.

The inscription on Tom Parr's white marble gravestone in the abbey's south transept tells of his incredible life. It reads:

THO: PARR OF YE COUNTY OF SALLOP. BORNE IN AD: 1483. HE LIVED IN YE REIGNES OF TEN PRINCES VIZ: K.EDW.4. K.ED.5. K.RICH.3. K.HEN.7. K.HEN.8. K.EDW.6. Q.MA. Q.ELIZ. K.JA. & K.CHARLES. AGED 152 YEARES. & WAS BURYED HERE NOVEMB. 15. 1635.

Old Thomas Parr had been born in the closing months of the reign of Edward IV. He had outlived the Plantagenet dynasty, seen both the advent and the passing of all the Tudor monarchs and witnessed the accession of the Stuarts – totalling 'ten princes' in all, as the inscription tells us. He had lived through the closing years of the Wars of the Roses, the battles of Bosworth, East Stoke and Flodden, the Reformation, the burning of both Catholic and Protestant martyrs, the Spanish Armada and the arrival of Scots kings on the throne of England. What stories he might have told, if he wasn't so absorbed in matters of agriculture; if he could remember so far back, but it seems history had passed him by.

One or two points of interest arise: was Old Tom unique in his longevity? Perhaps he wasn't. Katherine Fitzgerald, known as the old Countess of Desmond, died

in 1604 at the age of around 140 years, so she said. She had a better memory for historical events, claiming she had been at the court of Edward IV, where she danced with Richard, Duke of Gloucester [later Richard III], the king's youngest brother, the best dancer and the handsomest man at court – adding judiciously, 'except for the king'. It is possible – she would have been born c.1464 – but my research suggests it was more likely her aunt by marriage, also known as Katherine Fitzgerald and an exact contemporary of Richard of Gloucester, to whom this family tradition rightly belongs.

There was also a fellow named Henry Jenkins who claimed to have been born in 1501. He died in 1670, making him 169 years old, if that was true, although all these long lives were overshadowed, as noted by a Frenchman, commenting on Tom Parr's death, by a Persian gentleman, accounted to be no less than 400 years old!

In his pamphlet of 1635, John Taylor gives Old Tom's longevity a moral slant, saying that a simple diet and a simple life of physical labour were the secrets of long life. The corruption, filth and decadence of urban life was the reason people no longer lived to the great ages of the biblical patriarchs, like Methuselah [supposedly 969 years old when he died]. Tom's rapid demise on coming to London was proof of that.

But could there be a far more prosaic explanation? In the days before strict record keeping, in an age when it was common practise to name a son after his father, might there have been two – or even three – Thomas Parrs? Son, father and, possibly, grandfather? The most definite evidence for Tom's great age is the renewal, four times, of the tenancy agreement which simply state his name. His only known legitimate son, John, died as a child but could Tom's adultery with Katherine Milton not have been the only such liaison in the Parr family's history? The white-whiskered Tom Parr of the portrait could well be in his seventies; a good age for the time but not uncommon. We shall probably never know the truth.

However, let Old Tom Parr keep his celebrity status as the man who had witnessed the coming and going of the entire Tudor dynasty. From Henry VII to Queen Elizabeth, he had outlived them all.

TONI MOUNT

1 Document 6000/2809

2 The Dictionary of National Biography says Parr was 105 when he did his penance but the Westminster Abbey website https://www.westminster-abbey.org/abbey-commemorations/commemorations/thomas-parr#i13742 quotes Parr himself as stating that this occurred when he was 100.

3 The DNB is 'puzzled' that Old Tom should have a daughter-in-law but there are two quite simple possible explanations. One is that Tom's second wife – a widow – brought a son by her first husband to her subsequent marriage. The other is that Tom's illegitimate child by Katherine Milton – not mentioned at all in the DNB – was a son. In either case, Lucy was the wife, or perhaps the widow, of one or the other.

4 There seems to be some confusion about this date as it is given as both the date of death and burial. Since a post mortem was carried out and arrangements made for interment in Westminster Abbey, I think there must have been a few days at least between his death and burial.

Charlie on Books

FORGOTTEN ROYAL WOMEN: THE KING AND I

Erin Lawless

There have been numerous biographies written on royal women, mainly queens regnant and consort, but little written on the other women, such as the sisters, aunts and daughters of the ruler. Once such book attempts to remedy that by focusing solely on those women. *Forgotten Royal Women* by Erin Lawless is a book of short biographies, a couple of pages each, on royal women that have often been overlooked, not all Tudor but the Tudor ones include Penelope Rich, Mary Fitzroy (wife of Henry Fitzroy) and Mary Grey.

The author makes it clear from the start that this book is about the *'sisters, aunts, daughters and cousins'* of royals, the *'women we only hear about when their lives intersect with those of their menfolk'*. It is an interesting choice of subject, especially as there is generally so little on most of the women explored in this book.

One of my favourite sections is on Mary Grey, the sister of Lady Jane Grey, who was punished for marrying without permission:

'Thomas Keyes was a bit of a bizarre choice, so much so in fact that some postulate that the timid Mary married him purely to rule herself out of the succession entirely - to remove herself from the game board, if you will. Keyes was a widower with a load of children, only a member of the minor gentry, as well as being twice Mary's age and height - apparently 6'8 tall! Sir William Cecil wrote that 'The Sergeant Porter, being the biggest gentleman of this court, has married secretly the Lady Mary Grey, the least of all the court... The offence is very great'.'

Mary Grey has been mentioned in a few books, but she is still often neglected in favour of her elder sisters, so it is refreshing to have a section on her in this book.

It is an okay book but not brilliant, there are no footnotes or bibliography, and I do not think all of the 'forgotten' women are forgotten, like Margaret Pole and Margaret Tudor. They have been the focus of several books, both fiction and non-fiction, in recent years, and so could hardly be labelled as 'forgotten'.

Forgotten Royal Women is an easy book to read, something that could be picked up and read in an afternoon for fun. I would only recommend it as a starting point for those who want an introduction or just want the basic facts about each woman. It is not for more serious readers and is certainly not an academic book, as it is lacking in both references and even a bibliography, which is disappointing.

ANNA, DUCHESS OF CLEVES

Heather R. Darsie

Anne of Cleves is probably one of the most neglected wives of Henry VIII, most likely due to her marriage to the King being the shortest and her keeping relatively quiet after they separated. Of the few books that have been written on the fourth wife, none have seemed to really get into Anne's mind and explain her actions and feelings, until now that is. *Anna, Duchess of Cleves: The King's Beloved Sister* by Heather R. Darsie is a new biography on the life of Anne and is one of the best biographies on her so far.

The author includes quite a lot of genealogy and history of Cleves at the beginning of the book, the amount of detail feels a little unnecessary and like the author is trying to pad out the book, but the book itself is worth persevering with.

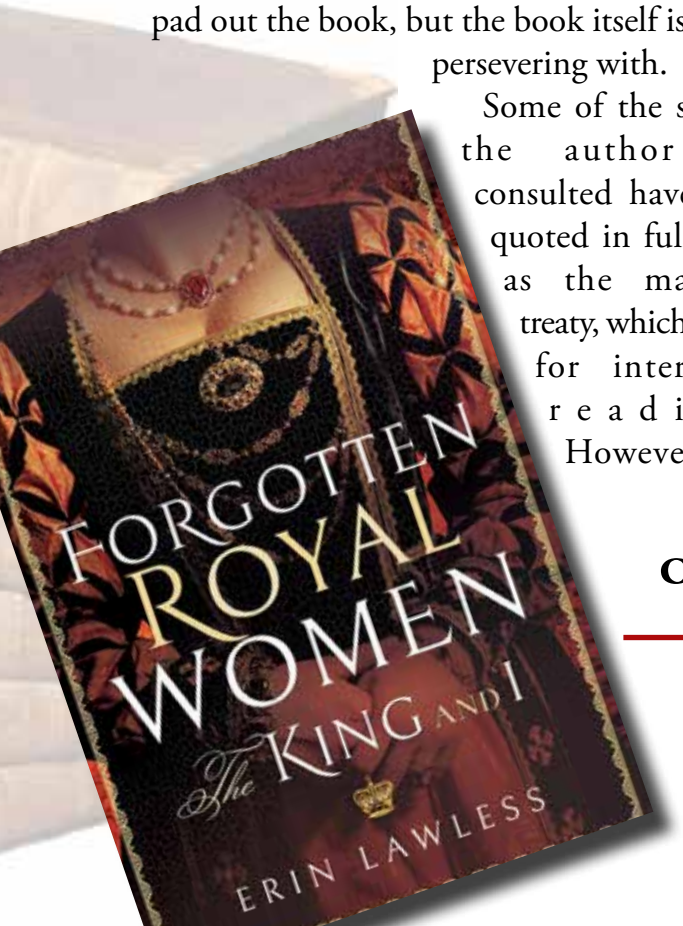
Some of the sources the author has consulted have been quoted in full, such as the marriage treaty, which makes for interesting reading. However, the lack of footnotes is annoying, so it is sadly not that useful for those wanting to check the sources and research Anne's life.

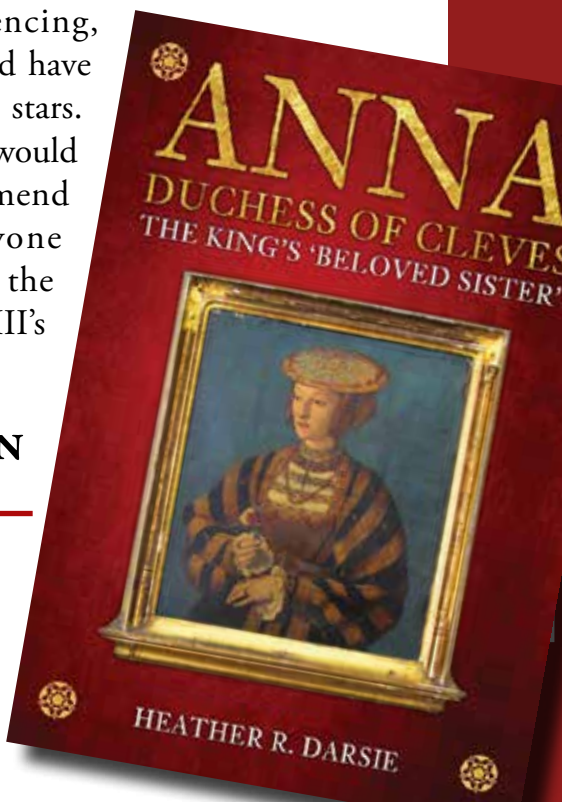
Darsie includes details of all the depositions for the annulment and then explores how the different testimonies vastly differed, with almost a forensic and academic approach. It also includes a different account of Henry and Anne's first meeting than the one traditionally given, making for interesting reading and giving pause for thought. The author presents a different Anne to the reader and, without spoiling it, even convincingly argues that there were different reasons than the usually cited ones for the break-up of the marriage.

This is not so much a biography of Anne as a look at the political and diplomatic ins-and-outs of her marriage agreement, annulment etc. It makes for an interesting read and a different perspective on things. It is good to look at the marriage agreement in the context of what was going on in Europe at the time and not focus solely on England. When it does focus back on Anne, Darsie tries to see it from her point-of-view, ignoring Henry's complaints for the most part, which is also unique approach.

Anna, Duchess of Cleves is a fantastic book and offers a different view to the traditional narrative of events. It is obvious that the author has done a lot of research for this and, if it weren't for the lack of proper referencing, this book would have been given five stars. Nevertheless, I would highly recommend this to anyone interested in the life of Henry VIII's fourth wife.

CHARLIE FENTON





WENDY J. DUNN ON WRITING

So – what exactly is historical fiction?

Dear Writer/Reader,

Disclaimer: I am absolutely hopeless about making assumptions, but I suspect that if you are a follower of this regular column (thank you!), then it also follows you are a writer (or aspiring to write) of historical fiction. So – I thought it might be a good idea to discuss what we actually mean when we speak of historical fiction. Once upon a time, I adopted this definition from the Historical Novel Society as my guiding light:

> *To be deemed historical (in our sense), a novel must have been written at least fifty years after the events described, or have been written by someone who was not alive at the time of those events (who therefore approaches them only by research) (Lee 2006).*

According to this definition, historical fiction writers construct stories from history that derive from a context unknown to their own lives. They do this by use of research to ignite imagination. There is far a simpler definition set forward by David Cowart. He describes historical fiction 'as fiction where the past figures with some prominence' (1989, p. 6).

Nowadays, I am no longer bound to the Historical Novel Society definition. The passing of time has changed me – and likely my role as the Managing Editor of Backstory (http://www.backstoryjournal.com.au), a writing journal belonging to Swinburne University. When we thought about the content we wanted to publish in this journal, we decided to adopt a more fluid approach to history. It helped I believed that as soon as I write words onto a page I am writing history. For me, writing history is all about telling stories – stories from the past. Stories looking back on times long gone so we can face and surmount the future.

I also agree with Georg Lukacs (1983) when he says he sees no distinction between the novel and the historical novel because all novels are fundamentally historical. In his important work *The Historical Novel*, Lukacs explains how historical fiction obtained its place in the literary canon in 1814. That year, in a time of upheaval influenced by the Enlightenment, saw the publication of Scott's Waverley novels, which engaged in 'the invention of the historic sense' (Lukacs 1983, p. 20). This was a period when history, once more, was being written in blood. The battles of Napoleon, the recent French revolution, the planting of new ideological seeds now beginning to grow and flourish into a rewriting of the status quo. So, it was not surprising that writers looked back to the past to make sense of the present.

This is not to say historical fiction had not existed in other times. Lukacs makes it clear

that we can consider medieval treatment of classical history and myths as examples of historical fiction. There are even earlier examples of historical fiction in China and India. But the form we recognize today first came about in Europe, in the early 19th century.

Simply said, a work of historical fiction is one that uses history for its story-telling. It is a demanding and multifaceted genre. It is also one which involves us with a journey of ethics with every work we write. I have had many restless nights when I have struggled with the fact that I am giving voice to the dead. I can only do this by knowing I have respected my historical people by all the research I have done to tell my imagined story well.

Jonathan Nield (1902, p. 41) speaks of the difficulty in writing Historical fiction:

> *The spirit of a period is like the selfhood of a human being—something that cannot be handed on; try as we may, it is impossible for us to breathe the atmosphere of a bygone time, since all those thousand-and-one details which went to the building up of both individual and general experience, can never be reproduced.*

Like all forms of writing, historical fiction adapts to the demands of market. By 2010, historical novels had broken away from constructing simply fictionalized autobiographies or personal accounts of histories. Novels started to tap into themes covering social movements, nonconformity, character conflicts and the creation of empathy (De Groot 2010). The grand narratives of history and imperial models were abandoned to see works exploring 'regional, local histories, subaltern studies and histories of resistance' (Nelson 2007).

I completed my PhD in Writing in 2014. During my studies, I discovered works such as my novels could be described as historiographic metafiction, that is, a work that is self-conscious and plays upon the truth and lies of the historical record (Hutcheon 1988). Linda Hutcheon (1988, p. 195) also identified how historiographic metafiction provides feminism with a valuable space to engage with the history of women, history which is 'oral, provisional and personal'.

One of the great powers of historical fiction is that the novel can be used as 'experiments and crucial inventions in important cultural debates' (De Groot 2010, p. 2) and give voice to the past with the purpose to speak the truths about our

own time. By using both imagination and authenticity, historical fiction writers can also add to our knowledge of real historical personages (Ruys cited in Sutherland, 2007).

The historical fiction novel is also seen as having an hybrid and flexible nature (De Groot 2010) – one that can also be framed as a work of romance, horror, crime, fantasy, literary, et cetera. Larissa MacFarquhar (2012) writes about the hybrid possibilities of historical fiction. She also describes historical fiction as as a hybrid genre, 'halfway between fiction and non-fiction'. As someone who writes historical fiction, I wondered whether her explanation resulted from being a non-practitioner or dabbler in the craft. For me, historical fiction will be always a work of fiction – one informed by history but also comes from the writer's imagination, and must beat the heart of story. 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. As a writer of historical fiction, my goal is to find the beating heart of a good story that is also informed by history

The historical fiction authors I respect and value pride themselves on their research. But research is always for the purpose of fiction writing – and to inspire imagination. Kundera (2003, p. 44) writes, '…fidelity to history is a secondary matter as regards the value of the novel. The novelist is neither historian nor prophet: he is an explorer of existence'. In other words, research is the means to write fiction that sets out to create the past and its people. Research is what makes it abundantly clear that 'The past is another country; they do things differently there' (Hartley 2004, p.5).

Writers of historical fiction craft their work in various forms of this genre – whether historical and historicized fiction, fictionalized biography or historiographic metafiction. Historian Perry Anderson (2011) reminds us that '[w]ithin the huge multiverse of prose fiction, the historical novel has, almost by definition, been the most consistently political'. This is true of all my novels. I write through what is called a feminist standpoint theory. It is my hope young adult women (and young men too) will read my work reflect about the possibilities for their own lives through entering the world of Tudor women.

WENDY J. DUNN

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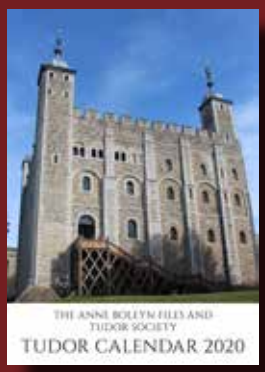

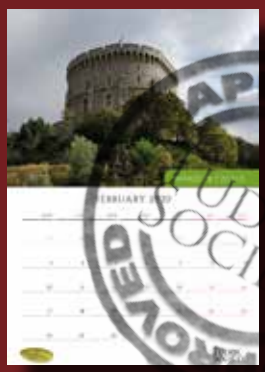

TUDOR CALENDAR 2020

Available now from the Tudor Society website
https://www.tudorsociety.com/our-2020-calendar/

QUIZ ANSWERS

This was a particularly difficult quiz - we hope you did well!

1) Catherine, 2) de Marillac, 3) Grace, 4) Five, 5) French, 6) St Nicholas, 7) Robert Aske, 8) Coffin, 9) Beaufort, 10) Culpeper, 11) Douglas, 12) Howard, 13) Golden Hind, 14) Westminster, 15) Reginald, 16) Aragon, 17) Paul III, 18) Harpsfield, 19) Thomas, 20) Arden, 21) Wriothesley, 22) Fisher, 23) Whitehall, 24) Henry VIII

FROM THE SPICERY

WITH RIOGNACH

CULINARY CURIOSITIES

DECEMBER IS THE time when special foodie treats grace our tables. The same is also true for the Middle Ages. However, this month's From the Spicery isn't about the Yuletide festive treats that might have graced the high table at Hampton Court or Westminster. This month, Tudor history lovers, we'll be looking at the culinary oddities of the Middle Ages.

A hedgehog from Medieval Bestiary, Thérouanne, France, circa 1270

Before we begin, I think it would be a good idea to clarify what I mean by and culinary curiosities. Basically, a culinary curiosity can be a foodstuff or recipe that no person in the 21st century would ever, in their right mind consider eating. There are lots of examples of these sorts of things; the one that springs to my mind is sugar. We've all seen medieval recipes that include lots of sugar, even in meat and other savoury dishes. To our modern palate, putting sugar in a chicken dish along with rosewater might seem really bizarre. However, it may well have been de rigueur to Lord and Lady So-and-so dining in 1586.

The fourteenth-century book, Le Menagier de Paris (known in my household as the medieval Ms Beeton's), is packed full or authentic culinary curiosities.[1] One that I particularly like refers to the diet of birds, and how it influences the taste of their flesh.

And note that there are three sorts of birds, which other cooks roast without cutting open; these are larks, turtle-doves and plovers, because their guts are sweet and without dung, for larks eat only pebbles and sand: turtle-doves, juniper seeds and sweet-smelling herbs: and plovers the wind.[2]

I've included this 'how-to' guide for birds, as larks, turtledoves, and plovers aren't easy to find, and if they were to be placed on a modern dinner menu, the looks from the diners would be memorable.

Another culinary curiosity is the humble hedgepig, or hedgehog. Both Le Menagier de Paris and Das Kockbuch des Meisters Eberhard recommend it for its health benefits. For example; the flesh of a hedgehog was considered as a good cure for quinsy, aka or a sore throat.[3]

With regards to hedgepigs, Le Menagier recommends that it be eaten with a cameline sauce, or served in pastry with a wild duck sauce.[4] For the uninitiated, a cameline sauce is a popular sauce that could be bought from street vendors. It is a sauce based on white bread, and flavoured wine and several expensive spices, and was definitely one for the upper classes![5] As an aside, cameline sauce is also recommended for roasted squirrels and ermines.[6] As for what a wild duck sauce might be, I'm not sure, but I'd be willing to bet that it was a spiced blood-based sauce.

The authors of Das Kockbuch des Meisters Eberhard have a vastly different way of serving hedgepig. Meisters Eberhard believes that the flesh of the humble hedgehog is something that would benefit those suffering from leprosy.[7] Apparently if one were to dry the intestines of a hedgehog, and then eat some, the ability to pee would be restored.[8] I've heard stories of the

1 Hinson, J. Le Menagier de Paris, 1393, http://www.daviddfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Menagier/Menagier_Contents.html.
2 Hinson, ibid
3 https://www.interesly.com/top-12-weirdest-medieval-food/
4 Hinson, op cit
5 Meyers, D. Cameline Sauce. http://medievalcookery.com/recipes/cameline.html
6 Hinson, op cit
7 Stephan's Florilegium, Das Kockbuch des Meisters Eberhard, http://www.florilegium.org/files/FOOD-MANUSCRIPTS/Eberhard-art.html
8 Stephan's Florilegium, ibid

gipsy method of cooking hedgehogs by wrapping them in thick mud and straw and then roasting them. I believe the clay helps to remove the quills and keeps the flesh tender. I'm rather fond of hedgehogs (Mrs Tiggywinkle was my childhood favourite), but not fond enough to want to eat one.

A fittingly Tudor dinnertime oddity comes to us from the pages of Elinor Fettiplace, and involves sweet potatoes. Contrary to what many people believe, sweet potatoes (Ipomoea batatas) were a known food during the later Tudor era. Confusingly, sweet potatoes were referred to as potatoes, despite real potatoes (Solanum tuberosum) not being used for cookery at that time.

Sweet Potato[9]

Mistress Fettiplace's recipe for sweet potatoes makes me wonder if she had no real idea of how to cook them, or if she was ahead of her time. I say this because sweet potatoes are very versatile and can be used in either sweet or savoury dishes. Elinor recommends that they be boiled until tender, and then served in a sweet syrup flavoured with rosewater and rose petals, orange and musk, and ambergris.[10] Out of curiosity, I looked up the current price of ambergris. The website Ambergris NZ gave me the figure of USD 35.00 per gram.[11] In comparison, Tasmanian black truffles sell for AUD 2.50 per gram with a minimum order of 20 gm.[12] The use of ambergris in Mistress Fettiplace's recipe would put the dish well out of the reach of lesser mortals.

Porpoise[13]

Reputed to be a particular favourite of Katherine of Aragon, porpoise was a culinary oddity few could afford. Porpoise was a designated a royal fish, meaning only people like Katherine A could afford it. It was also considered a fish, meaning its flesh was permitted during Lent. Initially, I had thought that the best way of cooking a porpoise would as a roast. However, The Forme of Cury makes me a liar as it provides

9 Sweet Potato from John Gerard's Herball or Generall Historie of Plantes (1597) https://blogs.loc.gov/inside_adams/2010/11/a-sweet-potato-history

10 Spurling, H (ed). Elinor Fettiplace's Receipt Book: Elizabethan Country House Cooking. 1986, Viking Press

11 https://www.ambergris.co.nz/buy-ambergris

12 https://www.perigord.com.au/products/tasmanian-black-truffles-first-grade

13 https://clipart-library.com/line-drawing-of-a-porpoise.html

the recipe for porpoise frumenty (of all things!).[14]

As a frumenty, this one begins innocently enough; cracked wheat is cooked with almond milk until it becomes soft and tender. Porpoise flesh is then added[15], but there is no mention of whether the meat should be raw, or cooked, or on the bone, or off. Similarly, there is no mention of spices being added to this dish, but I'd be surprised if the usual suspects of ginger, grains of paradise and sugar weren't used. Somehow, I can't see this dish becoming modern Lenten fare anytime soon.

The next culinary curiosity I'd like to introduce you to is Garbage. This recipe comes to us from the pages of Harleian Manuscript 279, in the aptly-titled section Potage Dyvers.[16] Mainly a thick broth or stew, Garbage is made from the bits and pieces of slaughterhouse animals that we'd seldom contemplate using.

Take fayre garbagys of chykonys, as the hed, the fete, the lyuerys, an the gysowrys; washe hem clene, an caste hem in a fayre potte, an caste ther-to freysshe brothe of Beef or ellys of moton, an let it boyle; an a-lye it wyth brede, an ley on Pepir an Safroun, Maces, Clowys, an a lytil verious an salt, an serue forth in the maner as a Sewe.[17]

While the thought of eating chicken gizzards, heads and feet may sound really gross to us, remember that in the Middle Ages, the complete nose-to-tail approach to food was the norm. Unlike most of the dishes I use in my articles, I've never sampled Garbage, but apparently, it's actually quite good.[18] Oh well, each to their own.

Finally, I'd like to leave you with a recipe 'for a good dish, which people like to eat'. Intrigued?

A good dish, which people like to eat. Take a lazybones' sweat, which makes the stomach very hot. And take pebble's fat which is good for abstinence. Those who do are impotent. And take blackberries and garden strawberries, which is the very best thing, until you don't brood over sexual desires. So take green grapevine foliage. You should take rushes, lovage and mint. These are good spices for the large farts. Take goldfinch's heels and sows' feet, which makes the fine meal all sweet. That is good and may well be a good delicious dish. Oh! and only do not oversalt, when it is a good dish.

This satirical recipe come from Ein Buch von Guter Spise,and is meant to stop us taking ourselves too seriously. Unfortunately for me, when I went to access the link location, I was greeted with the dreaded and highly annoying error 404 - page not found. :-(. So on that note, I bid you all a safe and festive New Year.

RIOGHNACH O'GERAGHTY

14 http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/8102/pg8102.html
15 Ibid
16 http://www.archive.org/stream/twofifteenthcent00aust/twofifteenthcent00aust_djvu.txt
17 Ibid
18 https://medievalcookery.blogspot.ie/2010/03/feast-complete-with-garbage.html

DECEMBER'S "ON THIS

1 Dec 1530
Death of Margaret of Austria at Mechelen. She was buried alongside her second husband, Philibert II, Duke of Savoy

2 Dec 1586
Parliament met following their request for Elizabeth I to sanction the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots.

3 Dec 1577
Death or burial of William Downham, Bishop of Chester and former Chaplain of Elizabeth I before her accession.

4 Dec 1531
Execution of Rhys ap Gruffudd for treason. His trial had been a "show trial" of contrived testimonies and coached witnesses.

5 Dec 1556
Birth of Anne de Vere (née Cecil), Countess of Oxford.

11 Dec 1577
Burial of Benjamin Gonson, Treasurer of the Navy.

12 Dec 1574
Birth of Anne of Denmark, Queen of England, Scotland, and Ireland as consort of James I, in Jutland, Denmark.

Effigy of Anne Cecil and her mother, Mildred Cooke, Lady Burghley.

17 Dec 1559
Matthew Parker was consecrated as Elizabeth I's Archbishop of Canterbury. According to "The Correspondence of Matthew Parker", Anne Boleyn charged him with the care of Elizabeth when she saw him in April 1536, "not six days before her apprehension".

22 Dec 1541
Members of the Howard and Tilney family, plus their staff, were indicted for misprision of treason for covering up the "unlawful, carnal, voluptuous, and licentious life" of Queen Catherine Howard while she lived with the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk at Lambeth.

23 Dec 1558
Queen Elizabeth I moved from Somerset House to Whitehall Palace, which became her principal residence.

24 Dec 1545
King Henry VIII made his final speech to Parliament. Historian Robert Hutchinson describes it as "both measured and compelling", and writes of how Henry wanted "to impart a stern message" to all of his subjects.

27 Dec 1539
Anne of Cleves landed at Deal in Kent to be Henry VIII's fourth wife. Henry had never seen her.

28 Dec 1572
Death of John Hales, member of Parliament, writer and administrator.

29 Dec 1606
Death of John Davis (Davys), navigator and explorer, near Bintang, off the coast of Borneo.

30 Dec 1546
Henry VIII signed his last will and testament, authorising the changes which he had ordered.

31 Dec 1600
The East India Company was given royal approval, by Queen Elizabeth I.

Background image: Kenilworth Castle in the Snow, © DeFacto

DAY IN TUDOR HISTORY"

6 Dec 1549
Death of John Wakeman (born Wiche), Abbot of Tewkesbury and Bishop of Gloucester.

7 Dec 1573
Death of John Thorne, Master of the Choristers and Organist of York Minster, composer and poet.

8 Dec 1538
Death of Sir William Coffin, courtier and Master of the Horse to Queens Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour.

9 Dec 1591
Death of Robert Balthrop, Sergeant-Surgeon to Elizabeth I.

10 Dec 1541
Thomas Culpeper and Francis Dereham, secretary to Catherine Howard, were executed.

13 Dec 1558
Death of William Clyffe, civil lawyer and one of the authors of the 1537 "Bishops' Book".

14 Dec 1542
James V died at Falkland Palace in Falkland, Fife, Scotland, after being taken ill following the Scots' defeat at the Battle of Solway Moss on 24th November. It is not known what killed him – some argue that it was a nervous collapse, and others that it was a virus.

15 Dec 1558
Funeral of Reginald Pole, Cardinal Pole and Mary I's Archbishop of Canterbury, at Canterbury Cathedral.

16 Dec 1558
Death of Sir Thomas Cheyne, administrator and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, from the "new ague".

18 Dec 1575
Death of Nicholas Harpsfield. In Mary I's reign, he had been involved in the persecutions of Protestants.

19 Dec 1583
John Somerville, convicted conspirator, was found dead in his cell at Newgate Prison. Death was by strangulation, and it was said that his death was suicide. His body was buried in Moorfields, and his head was put on display on London Bridge.

20 Dec 1558
Death of John Holyman, Bishop of Bristol and Rector of Hanborough in Oxfordshire.

21 Dec 1495
Death of Jasper Tudor, 1st Duke of Bedford and 1st Earl of Pembroke, at Thornbury.

25 Dec
Henry VIII was one of the first people to have turkey as part of his Christmas feast, after the bird was introduced into Britain in the 1520s. It soon became a popular meat, but such feasting was only enjoyed by those of high society, and not by the masses.

26 Dec 1546
Henry VIII made some changes to his will, a document which had been prepared two years earlier. These changes were made to ensure successful transfer of royal authority to his son, the future Edward VI, and to prepare for Edward reigning during his minority.

TUDOR FEAST DAYS

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

Tudor Life

NEXT MONTH IN YOUR REGULAR

Tudor Life

THE GREYS

TIM RIDGWAY
Bradgate Park in Photos

SUSAN ABERNETHY
Mary Grey

TAMISE HILLS
All about the Greys

SARAH-BETH WATKINS
Catherine Grey

PLUS

RIOGHNACH O'GERAGHTY
Cakes of Cheese

and much much more...

THIS MAGAZINE comes out every month for **ALL** MEMBERS.
We hope you enjoy it!

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