Tudor Life

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THE TUDOR SOCIETY

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Welcome!

April 2015

Hello!

What an amazing response we had last month to our Richard III special magazine. This edition has a slightly wider focus, but it's just as feature-packed! Welcome to you if you are a new member or have been with us from the start.

You may know that I recently went to the Alhambra in southern Spain (if you haven't seen my video then you should definitely go and watch it). I'm always struck by how well-connected the world was, even 500 years ago. The Tudors were continually making alliances with the Empire and the French, and then breaking them again. Men were busy exploring the New World and spices even made their way over from the Orient. It makes me think about how connected our "Tudor world" is today. We have members from all across the globe, all tied together by a love for history.

Thank you, on behalf of all our magazine contributors, for the opportunity to share our passion for a fascinating period of history.

Claire Ridgway.

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PASSION AND DESPAIR 1507-9 CATHERINE OF ARAGON AND FRAY DIEGO

by Amy Licence

WHEN Catherine of Aragon first set foot on English soil in October 1501, it was in the full intention of becoming her adopted nation's Queen. She was already the wife of the Prince of Wales, having gone through two proxy ceremonies in 1499, with the Spanish Ambassador De Puebla standing in as the blushing bride beside the teenaged Arthur, the future hope of the Tudor dynasty. Catherine's first six months in England were glorious. She was cheered in Portsmouth, fêted in the streets of London, praised by Thomas More for her red-gold beauty, paraded in great ceremony and pomp on a scarlet platform in St Paul's Cathedral, danced, feasted and enjoyed the charms of the new fairy-tale palace by the Thames at Richmond. Even Henry VII had been persuaded to part with £14,000 to furnish his family with jewels. It was everything that a future Queen might expect.

But then everything changed. The symbol of the wheel of fortune, so popular in medieval poetry and manuscripts, proved especially relevant to Catherine's early life. Just six years after her triumphant arrival, her marital and material situation had changed completely, unrecognisably, since the radiant days of her sixteenth birthday. Catherine and Arthur's marriage, which should have developed into a similar international powerhouse as that of her parents, Ferdinand and Isabella, was cruelly cut short. After a few months in residence at Ludlow Castle, husband and wife were taken ill. While Catherine survived, young Arthur languished and died, perhaps of an outbreak of the sweating sickness, perhaps as the result of an underlying condition which might have been some form of tuberculosis, or another wasting disease. He was fifteen. Brought back to London in Elizabeth of York's black velvet litter, Catherine was established in Durham House, a large house on the Strand, accessible to court but not up to the standard of a Princess of Wales. It was suitable for a dowager Princess, but not a future Queen. All were aware that Catherine's future path would be determined by whatever second marriage she made.

The intervening years were not kind to Catherine. Having possibly been considered as a bride by Henry VII following the death of Elizabeth of York in February 1503, Catherine settled into a waiting game, as she anticipated being betrothed, then ultimately married to Arthur's younger brother Prince Henry. It was an on-off union, repudiated by the King in 1505, just as it should have been finalised, then left dangling without resolution. By April 1507, Catherine felt she was deliberately being kept apart from the Prince, complaining that she had not been allowed to see Henry for four whole months. Gradually, the King closed down Catherine's household, moving her from her own establishment at Durham House to cramped lodgings on the edge of the vast court complex of Westminster. Although this brought her closer to the centre of court life, it reduced her importance and the size of her staff, making her more of an appendage, a dependent, instead of an independent figure. By now, she claimed in letters to her father, that her staff were living in penury, "ready to ask for alms" and were "all but naked" for lack of funds

to buy clothes.[1] She had been forced to sell some bracelets in order to buy a dress of black velvet and claimed that, since her arrival in England, she had only purchased two new dresses. By April 1507, she was defying express orders not to sell off her gold and silver plate, as she and her household were "obliged to live in rags" and described her life as "martyrdom."[2]

Catherine's health was a constant concern, as she swung between "cold and heat" with her body racked with fever. Her physicians bled her and even the Pope was moved to intervene in 1505, writing that the King must curb Catherine's excessive devotion; her religious fasting and long bouts of prayer, which might affect her health. Yet she continued to suffer and in December 1505, feared that she had "lost her health"[3] entirely, suffering from various "agues," stomach complaints, loss of appetite and the constant sweats and fevers she had experienced before. Even though she tried to console herself with the reminder that she was a daughter of royal blood, Catherine's situation was increasingly desperate. She lost faith in her doctors, believing in any case, that the "moral afflictions" of her position were "beyond the reach of the physician."[4] Hindsight reassures us that her marriage would soon take place, and her position would be restored, albeit as the lull before a devastating storm, but through her most fertile years, Catherine had no such guarantees. Kept apart from Prince Henry, living in penury which made a mockery of her birth and struggling with ill-health, her situation was desperate. It was no surprise that amid such uncertainty, she turned to the one constant in her life that could transcend her suffering: her Catholic faith. And it was at this point, that a certain individual entered her life, to whom she clung for comfort. Yet the "comfort" that Fray (Friar) Diego Fernandez offered plunged her into what threatened to become a scandal.

At some point in 1507, Fray Diego was taken into Catherine's household. He was a university educated man from Castile, so the likelihood is that he was recommended by Ferdinand, in response to Catherine's requests for a sympathetic confessor who spoke her native language. Often lonely, in need of guidance and lacking a close parental figure, it is no surprise that Catherine soon developed an attachment to this man, to whom she unburdened her secrets in the dark of the confessional. Much of what we know about him comes from the hostile letters of the new Spanish Ambassador De Fuensalida, who arrived in England in 1508. By that time, Diego had already become indispensable to Catherine and appears to have exerted an almost Rasputin-like power over her that saw her using her scant funds on purchasing him books and describing him as "the best that ever (a) woman of my position had."[5] By contrast, Fuensalida found the Friar to be lacking in humility, learning, appearance, manners, competency and credit. He was "light, haughty and licentious" and had succeeded in gaining the "confidence and affection" of the Princess.[6] From the start, Fuensalida considered him morally suspect, capable of doing damage to Catherine's position and was soon meeting in secret with one of Catherine's Spanish waiting women, Francesca de Carceres, to discuss the problem.

What Diego offered Catherine was an authority that was higher than any King of England or Spain. Abandoned by her father, who had remarried and did not always put her needs before those of international politics, as well as her father-in-law who had promised to support her, Catherine's faith in paternal figures was shaken. She turned to God for guidance and Diego's role was as her direct conduit, her interpreter of the divine word, in a way that sometimes contradicted the demands and duties of court life. On one occasion, Catherine refused a summons from Henry VII to attend court after Diego advised her that it would be a "mortal sin" to go. This led to some embarrassment, as Princess Mary was kept waiting and Catherine was forced to lie and say that she was indisposed after having been observed earlier that day in good health. It led to a breach between her and the King that lasted several weeks. Once she had prioritised the word of Diego over that of her father-in-law, her potential alienation from court and damage to her future alliance with Prince Henry could no longer be overlooked.

It is the letters that Catherine sent to her father, now held in a Supplement to the Calendar of State Papers of Spain, that give a real insight into the depth of the young widow's feelings for her friar. Fuensalida wrote to Ferdinand, complaining that "the most effectual weapon in the hands of a priest is the belief of others that he is the dispenser of rewards and punishments in the future life. Of

this, Fray Diego made a most unscrupulous use, declaring everything to be a mortal sin which displeased him, however innocent it might be."[7] In response, Catherine was quick to jump to Diego's defence and praise him and nothing was done. The following March, Fuensalida felt the situation had reached an intolerable situation. He explained to Ferdinand that his daughter was "so submissive to a friar… that he makes her do a great many things which it would be better not to do." [8] Diego's activities were bringing the Princess and her household into disrepute, being "injurious to her reputation" and leading her to behave "imprudently, "so there was a "very great need to remedy these things of this friar, and to remove him from here as a pestiferous person, for that he certainly is."[9] Fuensalida described the confessor as "infamar," a Spanish word that translates as "something more infamous than slander."[10] The scandal had spread to court, where tongues were wagging about the nature of their relationship.

There is no question that Catherine and her confessor had any sort of sexual affair. While he would later be dismissed from her service on the grounds of immorality, he would not have exploited his position in a way that would have jeopardised it. Catherine understood that her future marriage depended upon her virtue and chastity. She was clearly under his power to an extent that she accepted his word over Henry's and pooled her resources to provide for him, at the expense of her waiting women; she needed him, she may even have been dependent on him, but she was not in love. It is likely that she did not fully see the damage that her closenesss to Diego was doing, seeing Fuensalida as overly critical, an enemy to her friend, a threat to the only security she had known. She stressed in a letter that he had served her loyally and that her father should not listen to any criticism of him. In response to this criticism of "evil tongues"[11] Diego decided to exercise his power in a way that exposed just how much Catherine needed him. He threatened to leave her service.

This seemed to trigger a well of emotions in Catherine. Her letters in the spring of 1509 became increasingly dramatic. "I would rather die than see what I have suffered and suffer every day from this ambassador and all my servants," she wrote in March. "I shall not believe that your Highness looks upon me as your daughter if you do not punish it, and order the ambassador to confine himself to the affairs of his embassy, and to abstain from meddling in the affairs of my household. May your Highness give me satisfaction before I die, for I fear my life will be short, owing to my troubles."[12] Her words speak less of a romantic attachment, than of a woman at the end of her tether. Diego was her "only consolation" and she would "perish" without him. She wrote in code to her father, hoping he would see her letter "before her life is sacrificed, as she fears it will be soon, owing to the trials she has to endure." Finally, she threatened "to do something in her despair that neither the King of England nor her father would be able to prevent." [13]

The implication of potential suicide here is inescapable. While Catherine would always be dramatic in her emotions, later stating her willingness to embrace martyrdom rather than accept her marriage to Henry VIII was invalid, her threats in 1509 spring from a place of emotional desperation. Self-slaughter would go against all her cherished Catholic beliefs, yet here, to all appearances, the widowed Princess of Wales, the daughter of a King and Queen, was threatening to end her life over the removal of a servant from her employment. No wonder she wrote in code. If the strength of her feeling became public knowledge, its implications and, no doubt, the interpretations that would be placed upon it, would have been enough to ruin her reputation. What exactly was she thinking? It would seem that she was not thinking at all, reacting on an emotional level that sprung from the fear of further abandonment. At her lowest point, Catherine had given way to a desperation that could have been her downfall. Exactly how the situation might have played out is unclear. Because, suddenly, the intensity of her despair was lifted. The death of Henry VII at Richmond that April meant that her future was on the discussion table again.

Catherine did not expect the seventeen-year-old Henry VIII to marry her. Fuensalida went so far as to recommend that she pack her bags to return to Spain, and began making arrangements for the transportation of her belongings. But, in a surprise move motivated by political alliance, chivalry, honour or genuine feeling, Henry did in fact make Catherine his wife, in a private ceremony at Greenwich in June 1509. Two weeks later they

were crowned, side by side. Eight years after her arrival in England, to her great relief, Catherine had attained the throne to which she had long aspired. Suddenly she was at the centre of court life, in a glorious household of her own, with an attentive husband at her side. Fray Diego had had his day. The emotional vacuum he had exploited during Catherine's misery had been amply filled and her relief must have been immense as she readjusted to her position and remembered what was expected of her. Diego remained in her service until his dismissal in 1513, after being caught in flagrante with a serving woman. Where he went after that, and what he did, is lost to history. He came from nothing and disappeared into it again. His brief blaze of glory was being the emotional support of a desperate princess and a twist of fate meant that his power was eclipsed sooner rather than later.

Catherine was lucky. The death of Henry VII removed her from a potentially explosive situation. Another twelve months and the tarnish to her reputation might have led the new King's councillors to advise him against marrying her: we will never know. If nothing else, the incident exposes the depths of Catherine's despair during those years of waiting and the extent of her passion. She was prepared to make emotional declarations, even threats, when she felt herself backed into a corner. Even more tellingly, for herself and her new husband, she had been prepared to place the word of God above that of the King of England. Those long years of uncertainty and suffering, those very depths of despair, left a mark that made her cling to her entitlement as queen through thick and thin. The implications of this, in the years to come, cannot be underestimated.

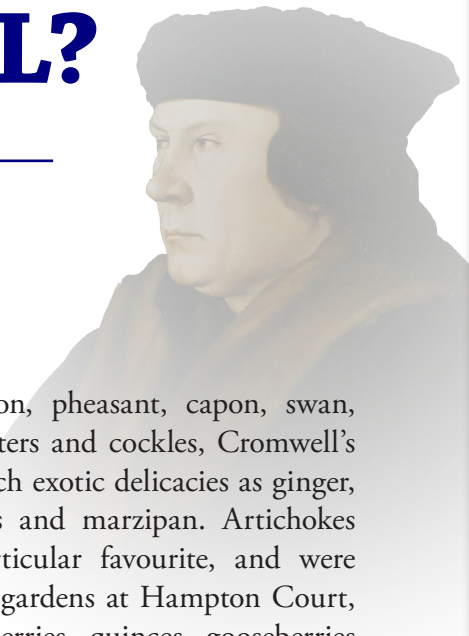
All references taken from Calendar of State Papers, Spain, ed G.A. Bergenroth, HMSO, London, 1862

[1] CSP Spain Volume 1 1485-1509, April 1506 p385-386
[2] Ibid April 1507 p406-414
[3] Ibid Dec 1505 p376-379
[4] Ibid April 1507 p406-414
[5] Ibid March 1509 p469-474
[6] CSPS Spain, Volume 1, Supplement to Volumes 1 and 2, "Queen Katharine."
[7] Ibid
[8] Ibid
[9] Ibid
[10] Ibid
[11] Ibid
[12] CSP Spain Volume 1 1485-9, March 1509 p469-472
[13] CSP Spain, Volume 1, Supplement to Volumes 1 and 2, "Queen Katharine."

Amy Licence is a journalist, author, historian and teacher. Her particular interest lies in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, in gender relations, queenship and identity, rites of passage, pilgrimage, female orthodoxy and rebellion, superstition, magic, fertility and childbirth.

Amy has written for The Guardian, The TLS, The New Statesman, BBC History, The English Review, The London Magazine, Huffington Post and other places. She has been interviewed regularly for BBC radio and made her TV debut in 2013, in BBC2's "The Real White Queen and her Rivals" documentary. She has been shortlisted twice for the Asham Award for short fiction and for the H G Wells short story prize.

THOMAS CROMWELL: POLITICAL SCHEMER OR PARTY ANIMAL?



by Tracy Borman

UNTIL the onset of the *Wolf Hall* phenomenon in 2009, Thomas Cromwell was the man we all loved to hate. He destroyed the monasteries, brought down Anne Boleyn and lined his own pockets in the process. He was a political schemer from the pages of Machiavelli: calculating, cynical and ruthless. And, thanks largely to that dour looking portrait by Holbein, he was also severely lacking in humour.

This was the version of Cromwell that was foisted upon me at school, and the remnants of that skewed portrayal never quite went away until Hilary Mantel offered such a compelling alternative – albeit from the pages of a novel. But I had to set both portrayals aside when beginning the research for my non-fiction biography of Henry VIII's much reviled henchman. In so doing, I wanted to uncover Cromwell the man, not just Cromwell the politician, as most historical accounts had done. It was the beginning of a fascinating journey.

I experienced so many revelations about Cromwell's character along the way that it is difficult to answer the oft-asked question: 'What surprised you most about him?' But I think I must plump for the rather unlikely fact that, far from being a 'humourless bureaucrat', as one historian described him, he was something of a party animal.

Cromwell was forever throwing lavish supper parties at Austin Friars, Stepney or one of his other London houses. Those who were lucky enough to receive an invitation would be guaranteed a sumptuous feast. As well as the bewildering array of different meats and fish favoured by the Tudor court, such as venison, pheasant, capon, swan, rabbit, oxen, cod, oysters and cockles, Cromwell's cook also prepared such exotic delicacies as ginger, nutmeg, figs, oranges and marzipan. Artichokes were evidently a particular favourite, and were supplied by the royal gardens at Hampton Court, along with beans, cherries, quinces, gooseberries and apples. Guests with a sweet tooth were treated to tarts from the royal kitchens or puddings from 'Mrs Bigges'. All of this was washed down with lavish quantities of wine from the royal cellars. In June 1537, Cromwell paid Mr Hill, 'serjeant' of the King's cellar, £400 (more than £120,000) for his supplies.

Although born of humble stock, Cromwell knew how to keep a good household. His stables housed nearly a hundred horses, although he preferred to ride to court on a mule – as had his old patron, Wolsey. He was evidently fond of birds because he later invested in 'a cage of canary birds' for his house, and he also kept greyhounds. Other, more exotic, animals are also listed in his accounts. He received an elk from Lubecker, four live beavers from Danzig, and in July 1539 paid nineteen shillings for a velvet collar for an unidentified 'strange beast' which he gave to the King as a present.

Cromwell's accounts also reveal that he liked to gamble, particularly at dice, and regularly lost substantial sums. Between 1537 and 1539, for example, his losses amounted to almost £50,000 in modern money. He also gambled on card games, and his companions on such occasions included Sir William Paulet, Sir Richard Riche and the Lord Mayor of London. Cromwell also regularly played

Thomas Cromwell

with his royal master, who was addicted to such pastimes. The minister was wise enough to suffer a series of expensive (and probably tactical) defeats.

Keen to provide every entertainment expected of a courtier host, Cromwell also employed a jester at his household. He may have been inspired by a visit from the King's favourite fool, Will Somers, who received a payment for his services. Cromwell went to some considerable trouble to find a jester of the same ability as Somers. In November 1538, he dispatched one of his servants to Calais to collect 'Anthony the fool'. The following month, he spent thirty four shillings and six pence on 'bells for Anthony's coat', and a few months after that, a hosier was commissioned to make some stockings, presumably in suitably garish colours.

Cromwell evidently had a flair for entertaining because he was sometimes tasked with arranging the lavish court masques that his royal master so loved. This was always at his own expense, but he did not stint on any of the details. For one particularly lavish performance, the Italian engineer Giovanni Portinari was commissioned to build the set at a cost of more than £25 (equivalent to £8,000), and a millioner was paid just shy of £11 (£3,600) 'for the stuff of the masque of King Arthur's knights'.

Cromwell himself took part in at least one of these masques. In January 1537, a tailor was paid £4,000 to make the costume for 'my Lord's part of the masque'. Regrettably, the accounts provide no further details about the costume, or the part that Cromwell played. But the fact that he entered into such frivolities contradicts the commonly held view that Cromwell was about politics, not pleasure.

In piecing together seemingly trivial details such as this that the real Cromwell began to emerge. And he was altogether more fascinating – and compelling – than the villain of historical legend. The sort of man you would have wanted to sit next to at a dinner party, if not in your place of work.

Tracy Borman studied and taught history at the University of Hull and was awarded a PHD in 1997. She has gone on to a successful career in heritage and has worked for a range of historic properties and national heritage organisations, including the Heritage Lottery Fund, The National Archives and English Heritage.

Tracy is now Chief Executive of the Heritage Education Trust, a charity that encourages children to visit and learn from historic properties. She is also joint Chief Curator for Historic Royal Palaces, the charity that manages Hampton Court Palace, the Tower of London, Kensington Palace, Kew Palace, the Banqueting House, Whitehall and Hillsborough Castle.

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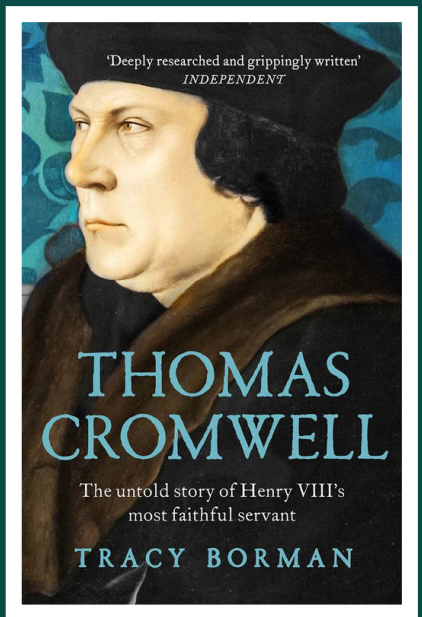

Tracy Borman's *Thomas Cromwell: the untold story of Henry VIII"s most faithful servant* (Hodder & Stoughton) is now available in paperback.

THOMAS CROMWELL THE TUDOR ERA'S ADVOCATE OF THE POOR

by Beth von Staats

Thomas Cromwell, 1st Earl of Essex, Vicegerent and Chief Minister of King Henry VIII, suddenly is a very popular man in contemporary British culture. With the huge literary award winning acclaim for Hilary Mantel's brilliant novels, *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*, King Henry VIII's Chief Minister made an amazing resurgence, not only in recognition as an important historical figure, but also in a greatly enhanced respect of Cromwell's legacy.

The sinister antagonist in Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons* is now lead heroic figure himself in two positively reviewed plays based on Mantel's novels performed by none other than the Royal Shakespeare Company and a highly touted BBC2 mini-series. Even the internet is abuzz, so much so that Thomas Cromwell, previously known as "That Other Cromwell" or "Henry's Henchman", has literally gone viral, history lovers debating Hilary Mantel's fiction and the life of her protagonist in minute detail. If you want to see "the internet fur fly", head into any Tudor Era themed Facebook group and ask if Thomas More or any Boleyn family member in *Wolf Hall* or *Bring Up The Bodies* is portrayed accurately. Then ask if it really matters. "Spirited debate" just doesn't begin to describe it.

With all this endless hype and attention focused on King Henry VIII's Chief Minister, you may think you know everything there is to know about the man. After all, Thomas Cromwell has been covered exhaustively, right down to Cardinal tWolsey's cat, the pins used in Tudor gowns, Gregory Cromwell's scholastic achievements (or lack thereof), period accurate coffin making, Cromwell's turquoise ring, and even the accurate size of the Tudor cod piece. I have a hunch you didn't know this though. Thomas Cromwell – yes Thomas Cromwell, 1st Earl of Essex – was 16th century England's most staunch advocate on behalf of the poor. No one even came close, not even the woman who allegedly chastised his lack of charity, Queen Anne Boleyn.

Although many historians and history lovers view Thomas Cromwell as the bloodthirsty enforcer of the king, historian Simon Schama recently going so far as to compare him to World War II Germany's architect of the Holocaust, Heinrich Himmler, Cromwell was actually England's first statesman to hold a vision of the realm becoming what can be best described as an "emerging commonwealth", one that held responsibility for the welfare of all subjects through the growth of the nation's

economy, strengthening of its infrastructure, increased centralization of its governance, increased prominence and influence of a representative Parliament – and, most applicable to our discussion of Cromwell's advocacy for the poor – acceptance of social responsibility towards the realm's most downtrodden. The evidence is nothing short of indisputable.

Even before Thomas Cromwell held power second only to King Henry VIII, he showed strong support for the common man. He had obvious reason. Cromwell was born and raised "base born" himself, the son of the Putney town drunk. Our earliest known evidence of Cromwell's compassion towards those less fortunate is taught to us by George Cavendish in his 16th century biography of Thomas Cardinal Wolsey. According to Cavendish, Thomas Cromwell was concerned for the plight of Wolsey's servants who were to abruptly lose their wages and board due to the Cardinal's startling fall.

On the last day Cromwell spent in Wolsey's service, he indignantly shamed the clergy to pony up some of their lavish wealth to provide each servant a month's wages. Thomas Cromwell dug into his purse and tossed five pounds in gold of his own money on the table, chiding, *"Now let us see what you chaplains will do."* The men, embarrassed by this assessment of their lack of charity, contributed substantial funds dispersed to those displaced by Wolsey's misfortune. That same day, Thomas Cromwell head out to make a new life, famously telling George Cavendish, then Wolsey's most faithful servant, *"And thus much I will say to you, that I intend, God willing, this afternoon, when my lord hath dined, to ride to London, and so to the court, where I will either make or mar or I come again."*

In the earliest days of Thomas Cromwell's influence at court, the first Poor Law legislation of the Tudor Era was passed in 1531. For the first time in English history it was recognized that there was a stark difference between those who chose not to work and those unable to so. Although Draconian when compared to our modern era, people deemed unable to work were allowed to obtain a license permitting the individuals "to legally beg" from others, while "idle rogues and vagabonds" were to be set in stocks for three days and then expelled from town. In this first attempt to help the legitimately poor, no other assistance was offered beyond consent to solicit alms. This admitted, at least it was recognition that the realm included people with legitimate reasons to not gainfully earn a living.

When Thomas Cromwell gained power and wealth, did his commitment to the most vulnerable in the realm remain intact? Or did power and prestige change him? In 1535, many historians teach us that Queen Anne Boleyn chastised Thomas Cromwell, stating the Vicegerent's motivations were far from religious and lacking all charity. To her way of thinking, Cromwell's goals during the early monastery dissolutions were to fill the King Henry's treasuries, reward and buy off allies and courtiers through the sale of properties at bargain prices – and most damning to him, to line his own pockets through kickbacks and land acquisitions of his own. As made famous in the television series *The Tudors,* Queen Anne Boleyn supposedly threatened to have Cromwell's head smitten. Whether the queen's observations and rage were truth or apocryphal, what else was Thomas Cromwell up to? Did he have some other plan for all these accumulating riches?

As Thomas Cromwell's power and influence grew exponentially in his service to the crown, he eventually gained enough leverage to begin thinking far more profoundly as to how to create an "emerging commonwealth" that accepted social responsibility for all subjects inclusive of those most vulnerable. Historian John Schofield teaches us that Cromwell actually agreed with the queen that there was concern with the vast growth of King Henry VIII's treasury. Evidently, Cromwell told Eustace Chapuys that King Henry VIII was "fond of hoarding", adding "I and other Privy Counselors are now looking for the means of checking this king's avarice and making him spend his money for the benefit of the nation." Towards this end, Cromwell embarked upon a year-long study into the causes of poverty and began conceptualizing solutions that were nothing short of revolutionary.

In a stunning draft for a poor relief act, Thomas Cromwell documents some of the causes of poverty identified in his comprehensive study, some quite naive by modern standards, but others identifiable even today. They include: idleness, sickness, invalidity, over-indulgence, cruel treatment by employers, and poor upbringing. What did Thomas Cromwell conceptualize as potential remedies? Well his ideas were quite striking, harking forward

at least four centuries to U.S President Franklin D. Roosevelt and socialist governmental theorists. Cromwell's idea focused on a revolutionary plan of public works, a "win-win scenario" for the poor and the strengthening of the realm's infrastructure, including construction of new buildings; harbor, highway and fortress repairs; and "scouring and cleansing watercourses". In the true spirit of governmental bureaucracy, all would be managed by officials answerable to a governing council. In exchange for work, the eligible "unemployed" would be paid fair wages. Cromwell, a self-made workaholic himself, had no compassion for laziness, however. If a subject was able to work and refused to do so, branding was the proposed consequence.

That all takes care of the able-bodied, but did Thomas Cromwell give any thought to the most vulnerable in the realm, those who were physically or cognitively unable to work? Well, how about socialized medicine for an answer? In Cromwell's initial poor relief act, he advocated for free medical care for all subjects unable to work, along with funded provisions made for the elderly, physically or cognitively challenged and terminally ill. To insure implementation of the proposed poor relief, assigned officials would seek out not only those who were "idle" or abusing the system, but also to seek out those in need of assistance including all adults and children of legitimate need and arrange care for them, whether that was through work apprenticeships for children, needed medical care, and even the provision of public funds if truly needed. Thus, Thomas Cromwell – yes Thomas Cromwell, 1st Earl of Essex – invented the concept of government funded social services.

Like any reasonable person, you are likely thinking, "Just how would these sweeping poor relief initiatives be paid for?" In short, as in many cultures today, the cost would be shared by those with resources, which in 16th century England meant the crown at the king's pleasure; the taxation of those with significant income including the merchant class, nobility, and clergy; and direct donations organized at local parishes. The problem became this. No one wanted to pony up, not the king, not the merchant class, not the nobility, and certainly not the clergy, already amounting significant losses through reformation activities. Consequently, Thomas Cromwell and his supporters could gain no support for his sweeping poor relief initiatives. Instead he settled for what would actually be approved. Thus, the actual Poor Law Act of 1536 was a far more moderate approach than his original drafts proposed, one deferring care to local authorities.

Through the research of not only Thomas Cromwell's noteworthy accomplishments, but also his unsuccessful initiatives, we discover that this was a man who through religious reform wanted to dismantle the wealth of the Roman Catholic Church to not only generate wealth for the crown, the nobility and yes, himself, but also to generate the necessary income to benefit the common good through strengthening the realm's infrastructure, economy, and work force, along with acknowledging governmental social responsibility to the most vulnerable among the realm's subjects. Thus we are left with the intrinsic complexities of this man, a man who lived with the thought that the means always justified the end, so long as that end benefited King Henry VIII – and more importantly, the nation as a whole.

BETH VON STAATS

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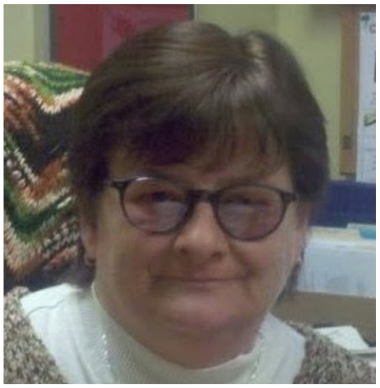
Beth von Staats runs the website **QueenAnneBoleyn.com**, a website which hosts biographical and historical fiction writers, bloggers and poets. Beth is an author in her own right and will shortly be publishing **"Thomas Cranmer in A Nutshell"** as part of MadeGlobal's "Nutshell" series of short books about historical topics and people.



KATHERINE WILLOUGHBY, DUCHESS OF SUFFOLK (1519-1580).

A SEVENTH WIFE FOR KING HENRY VIII?

by David Baldwin

ONE day in the summer of 1546 Sir Thomas Wriothesley, the Chancellor of England, came to Whitehall Palace accompanied by forty soldiers. He intended to arrest Queen Catherine Parr on charges of heresy and treason, but instead of making her prisoner he was unceremoniously sent packing by King Henry. Wriothesley would not have dared to do this unless he believed he was acting with Henry's full approval: and the overwhelming impression is that the King was toying with his Catholic and Protestant courtiers, denying the Catholics the pleasure of toppling the reformist Queen Catherine while firing a warning shot across the Protestants' bows. One of the Protestants closest to Catherine Parr was Katherine Willoughby, the dowager Duchess of Suffolk, and if Henry had decided on yet another divorce – and the thought may well have entered his calculations – then it is distinctly possible that Katherine Willoughby would have become his seventh, and presumably last, queen.

So who was Katherine Willoughby? Well, according to Muriel St Clare Byrne, the editor of *The Lisle Letters* she was 'one of the most interesting women of the Tudor period'. She was born at Parham Old Hall, near Framlingham, in 1519, the only surviving child of William, eleventh baron Willoughby and his wife, Maria de Salinas, a Spanish lady-in-waiting to Queen Catherine of Aragon. Her father's death in 1526 made her an heiress, and she became the ward of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, King Henry's closest friend. It was assumed that Brandon would marry her to his son, the young Earl of Lincoln; but in 1533, when he was about fifty and she just fourteen, he wed her himself. Brandon had a chequered marital history – he had had three previous wives, two of whom had borne him children – but his relationship with Katherine seems to have been conventionally happy and she presented him with two sons, Henry born in 1534 and Charles a year later. At first they lived at Westhorpe in Suffolk, but Brandon was given special responsibility for Lincolnshire in the aftermath of the Pilgrimage of Grace and Grimsthorpe Castle became their principal home.

Brandon died in 1545 leaving Katherine an eligible young widow of twenty-six. He had always been careful to defer to King Henry in matters of religion – so much so that his true opinions cannot now be determined – but he entertained a number of Protestant preachers at Grimsthorpe, most notably Hugh Latimer. These men had a profound influence on Katherine, and by the 1540s she had become as committed a Protestant as her Spanish mother had been a devout Roman Catholic. It was no doubt partly for this reason that she was admitted to Catherine Parr's circle, and her regular attendance at Court brought her into closer contact with King Henry. In February 1546 the Imperial Ambassador François Van der Delft, wrote a most interesting letter to Charles V. 'Sire', he began apologetically:

Watercolour miniature of Catherine Willoughby by Hans Holbein, circa 1541

'I am confused and apprehensive to inform your majesty that there are rumours here of a new Queen, although I do not know why, or how true it may be. Some people attribute it to the sterility of the present Queen, whilst others say that there will be no change whilst the present war [with France] lasts. Madame Suffolk [Katherine] is much talked about, and is in great favour; but the King shows no alteration in his demeanour towards the Queen, though the latter, as I am informed, is somewhat annoyed at the rumours'.

Rumours are sometimes without foundation, but there are strong indications that King Henry found Katherine Willoughby attractive. They had been exchanging New Year gifts since 1534, and Van der Delft's predecessor had noted that he had been 'masking and visiting' with her in March 1538, only months after Jane Seymour's death. 'The King' he wrote, 'has been in much better humour than ever he was, making musicians play on their instruments all day along. He went to dine at a splendid house of his, where he had collected all his

musicians, and, after giving orders for the erection of certain sumptuous buildings therein, returned home by water, surrounded by musicians, and went straight to visit the Duchess of Suffolk . . . and ever since cannot be one single moment without masks'. Henry might have wed her then had she been single, and the disappointments of his later marriages can only have enhanced his feelings towards her. It is possible that by 1546 he had grown impatient with Queen Catherine's failure to give him a second son, and more than ever saw this younger, perhaps more attractive, woman who was now a widow and the mother of two healthy boys as the solution to his problem. He would not have been the first man to think that a new, perhaps more exciting, relationship would restore his lost youth.

But it was not to be. Henry, for reasons known only to himself, allowed Catherine Parr to make a most abject apology for her 'crime' of challenging his religious thinking, and Katherine Willoughby never became his seventh wife. She may have been relieved or alternatively disappointed, but if the marriage had taken place would she have been any more successful than most of her predecessors? She herself admitted that her temper was often short and her tongue sharp, and that she was not always the most tolerant of companions. Richard Morrison, the English ambassador to the Court of Charles V, remarked on what he termed her 'heats', regretting that 'so goodly a wit waiteth on so froward a will', and she had to apologise to her friend and confidant William Cecil for what she herself described as her 'foolish choler' and 'brawling', begging his 'forgiveness on my knees'. Hugh Latimer said pointedly that some women 'should keep their tongues in better order' in one of the sermons he preached before her at Grimsthorpe, and if he was not immune from her rages then neither presumably, were others. There were actually times when she went out of her way to cause ill-feeling. John Foxe tells of an occasion in Charles Brandon's lifetime when they hosted a dinner at which the conservative Bishop Stephen Gardiner of Winchester was one of the guests. Brandon suggested that each lady present should invite the gentleman she 'loved best' to take her into dinner, whereupon Katherine took Gardiner by the hand saying that 'forasmuch as she could not sit down with my lord whom she loved best (Brandon had apparently ruled himself out of contention), she had chosen him whom she loved worst'. This was a direct, personal insult inflicted in the presence of other members of aristocratic society, and must be seen as part of an unfortunate, and growing, tendency to be contemptuous of those who did not share her Protestant convictions. Unfortunately, Foxe does not tell us what her husband thought of her behaviour, or what he said to her after their guests had gone home!

It is often difficult – some might say impossible – to write the biography of a Tudor lady because only rarely is the detailed, personal information needed to ascertain the subject's feelings available. In Katherine's case however, the information is reasonably plentiful, even if it is not always as plentiful as we would wish. Foxe's account of her sufferings for the Protestant cause and the adulatory opinions of her expressed by some of her co-religionists all need to be used with caution: but there is much of interest in the Ancaster family papers and in the twenty letters she wrote to William Cecil in Edward VI's reign followed by a similar number in Queen Elizabeth's. The Ancaster documents are more formal – inventories, household accounts and the like – but her letters to William Cecil give us an insight into the real Katherine – outspoken, often complaining, seeking favours, sometimes having to apologise for being slow to answer, and with a tendency to speak in riddles and metaphors. Cecil presumably knew her well enough to know what she was alluding to, even if we are less certain now.

King Henry died in January 1547, but this was not quite the end of Katherine's royal assignations. It is said that when the Polish ambassador failed to obtain the hand of the Princess Mary for his master King Sigismund, he paid court to Katherine; and Van der Delft thought that she was about to wed the Duke of Somerset's brother Thomas Seymour at the beginning of May 1547. The Polish ambassador's interest is feasible – he may well have considered other ladies after being denied Princess Mary – but Van der Delft was probably confusing his Catherines. It can hardly be coincidence that Thomas Seymour married the then widowed Catherine Parr – with Katherine Willoughby's blessing – towards the end of the same month.

When Katherine finally did re-marry – in 1552 or 1553 – her choice was her gentleman-usher,

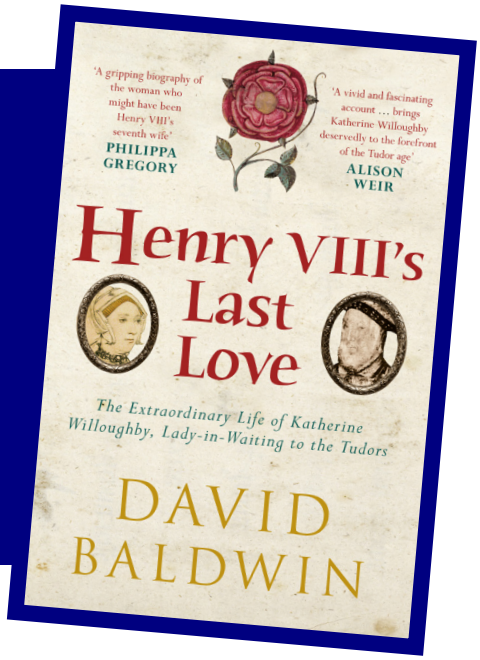
Richard Bertie. These were difficult times for her. Her two sons by Brandon had died of the 'sweating sickness' on the same day in 1551, and although she avoided involvement in the Lady Jane Grey conspiracy she was still obliged to spend four years in Europe pursued by Queen Mary's agents. It was King Sigismund who, finally, gave the Berties sanctuary in Polish territory, and they did not return to England until after Mary died.

Katherine's own second marriage to a servant was unconventional if not without precedent, and still more unusual was her insistence that her children should not be compelled to wed the partner their parents chose for them. 'No unadvised bonds between a boy and girl', she wrote, 'can give such assurance of good will as hath been tried already. And now they, marrying by our orders and without their consents, as they be yet without judgement to give such consent as ought to be given in matrimony, I cannot tell what more unkindness one of us might show another, or wherein we might work more wickedly than to bring our children into so miserable a state not to choose by their own liking. . .'. This was remarkably enlightened by the standards of the time.

Katherine was devoted to her own children, but not always as kind to those of others. In the late 1440s she complained bitterly when she learned that Thomas Seymour's 'legacy' to her was the care of Mary, his infant daughter by Catherine Parr; and nearly two decades later she raised similar objections when she was asked to board the disgraced Mary Grey, the executed Lady Jane's sister. She felt that she was being 'put-upon' by others who ought to have shared the burden, and made her feelings abundantly plain to them. Whatever her failings she was nobody's fool.

Katherine spent the last twenty years of her life in England raising her son and daughter by Richard Bertie and seeking to advance the cause of Protestantism in Lincolnshire. She did not always see eye to eye with Queen Elizabeth who favoured an inclusive English Church rather than one wedded to strict puritanism, and in March 1580 wrote a dramatic letter to the Earl of Leicester expressing the fear that she was about to be arrested and executed. She could not assume that her age and status would protect her – the elderly Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, had been sent to the block on trumped-up charges only forty years earlier – but Leicester presumably smoothed matters over. Unlike many of her religious persuasion she died in her bed six months later; but this daughter of a Spanish Roman Catholic mother who became the staunchest of Protestants and who found a place in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs' was more than just a survivor. She might have married not one but two kings, and Lady Jane, her step-granddaughter, had almost become queen.

David Baldwin's books include *Richard III* and *Elizabeth Woodville. Mother of the Princes in the Tower*. His biography of Katherine Willoughby, *Henry VIII's Last Love,* was published by Amberley in March.



April is the *Cruelest* Month

We think of May 1536 as the worst month for Anne Boleyn because of her execution, but *Janet Wertman* shows how April may have actually been the cruelest month

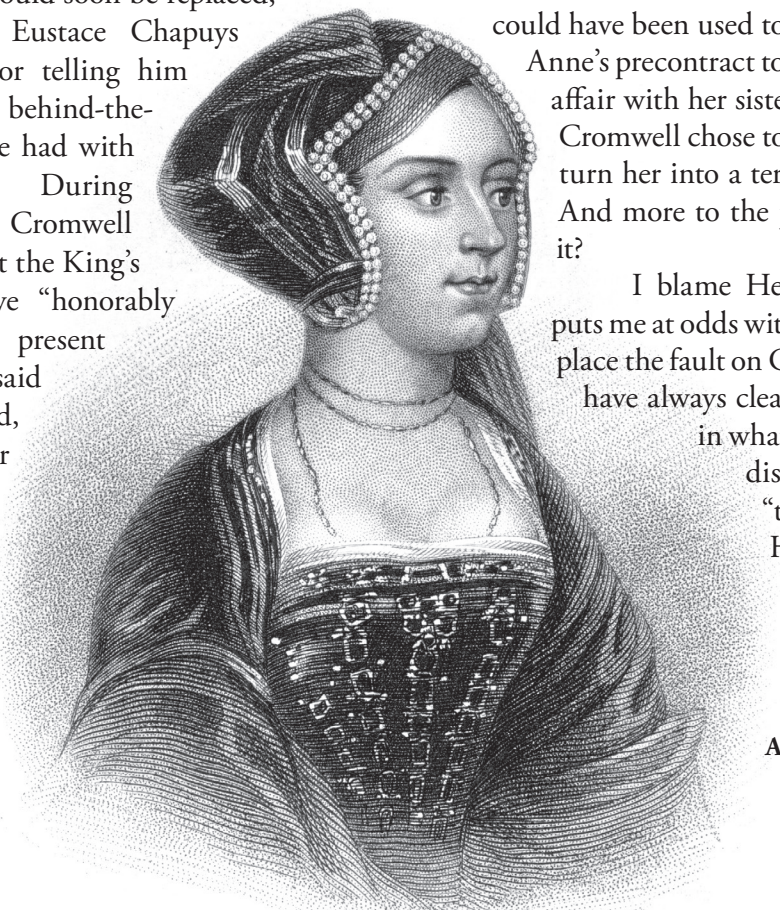
IN 1536, an English queen was executed, the first ever. May is the month that has historically been the key focus of Anne Boleyn's tragic story, since that was when she was arrested, tried and killed; however, the more pivotal events happened during April, when the macabre plans were put into place to seal her fate. It was April that was the real "cruelest month" for Anne Boleyn, the one that "show[ed] her fear in a handful of dust" – though T.S. Eliot did not coin these phrases until some 400 years later. This article will explore and explain the April events.

But before we get to that point, we have to consider the context. We know that by April, it was expected that Anne would soon be replaced, thanks to a letter Eustace Chapuys wrote to the Emperor telling him about a fascinating behind-the-scenes conversation he had with Thomas Cromwell. During this conversation, Cromwell declared his belief that the King's would henceforth live "honorably and chastely in his present marriage" – but said it in "in such a cold, indifferent manner that [Chapuys] had a strong suspicion that he meant just the contrary." The story goes that Cromwell leaned against the window and put his hand to his mouth, either to stop himself smiling or to conceal the fact that he was doing so – before adding, "[a]t any rate, if the King did take another wife, it would certainly not be a French princess."

Indeed, there were a number of key factors that had come together in a singular way to set the stage for a new queen (though still without any implication as to "how" that would be accomplished):

So why wasn't Anne simply allowed to retire to a nunnery, an option that had been offered to Catherine? A quick response would be that the Church of England was in the process of closing its abbeys, therefore this would not be a permanent solution. Still, there were other, easy arguments that could have been used to annul her marriage – Anne's precontract to Henry Percy, Henry's affair with her sister. Instead, Henry and Cromwell chose to create a spectacle and turn her into a terrible scapegoat. Why? And more to the point, whose idea was it?

I blame Henry. Admittedly, this puts me at odds with some historians who place the fault on Cromwell's shoulders. I have always clearly seen Henry's hand in what happened. I just can't discount the enormous "tell" that came from Henry himself, early on, when he bandied about the accusation that he had been



Anne Boleyn

1

The global politics begged for a new queen. The Spanish hated Anne Boleyn; this forced England into seeking an alliance with France. But Francis was no true friend, he was in no way fulfilling his role as the ally that England needed. England was more than ready for a *rapprochement* with the Emperor, who controlled the wool outlets in the Netherlands. The English people depended upon this trade and they desperately wanted their King to end the enmity with Spain.

2

Anne had miscarried in January. Her first big miscarriage occurred in June 1534, when she was only about a month away from taking to her chamber. People disagree as to how many others she had – there are rumors of "miscounting" and also of her losing a second child around June of 1535. But there is no doubt that the January 1536 miscarriage was a turning point, enough to cause Henry to declare, "[y]ou will have no more sons by me" to his devastated wife.

3

The First Act of Suppression had passed Parliament in February. This was part of Cromwell's plan for a creeping dissolution of the religious houses in England: they would begin by closing only the smallest abbeys, the ones they argued were the most corrupt (the larger ones were more observant, this structure was thought to keep the monk and nuns more honest). As the plans to implement the closures started to take shape, people were starting to realize that the money was going to the King and his friends and not to establish educational institutions or help the poor. Anne Boleyn was an outspoken critic of this policy, she blamed Cromwell for it and sought to have it changed. Politically, this put her directly at odds with her husband, who coveted the money to replenish his empty treasury. Not a good place to be.

4

In March, Jane Seymour made it clear to the enamored King that the price of her submission was marriage. Henry sent her a present, a purse full of gold sovereigns. She kissed the seal of the accompanying letter without opening it and handed the package back to the messenger. She threw herself on her knees, asking him to tell the King "that she was a gentlewoman of good and honorable parents, without reproach, and that she had no greater riches in the world than her honor, which she would not injure for a thousand deaths." Then she delivered the most masterful element of her response: "If the King wishes to make me some present in money, I beg that it might be when God enables me to make some honorable match." The King's reaction said it all. He declared that he liked her modesty, and announced that he loved her honorably – which he would prove by henceforth speaking to her only in the presence of her relatives. This was a clear implication that he would be the one to offer her the "honorable match" she craved.

5

Finally, Catherine of Aragon was dead, making the King free to remarry under any religious authority. Although the English people had already signed the Oath of Succession, many of them had done so reluctantly. They still loved their former queen, and still questioned the validity of the King's marriage to Anne Boleyn – though not enough to rebel for it. With Catherine dead, the King could quell all religious objections by remarrying Anne in a new ceremony – but that would weaken the authority of the Church of England. Marriage to a new wife would tie things together nicely.

"bewitched" into the marriage with Anne Boleyn. Henry was not a fool, witchcraft was a capital crime. To me, he was intentionally sending a clear signal that he wanted Anne dead and not merely divorced. Cromwell would just have been carrying out his real wishes…

I must say, I do have a stake in this version which colors my impartiality. I am in the middle of a major re-write of my novel, *Jane the Quene*, the story of Jane Seymour, bringing the number of viewpoint characters to two, Jane and Cromwell (Jane sees Henry as noble, Cromwell sees him as base). My Cromwell is right in there inventing facts against Anne – I agree with Claire on all those points. But my Henry is right in there too, carefully hiding his involvement. I see this series of events as the catalyst for his transformation from idealistic and naïve youth to cynical (some would say quasi-schizophrenic) old man. To me, this is the point where Henry's demons started to take over his psyche. Though clearly they had always been there.

After all, the move against Anne was not unprecedented in Henry's political playbook. Three days after he acceded to the throne, the not-even-yet-crowned, not-quite-yet-eighteen-year-old Henry VIII called for the arrests of Sir Richard Empson and Mr. Edmund Dudley, two trusted members of his father's Privy Council. These two men were widely hated by the English people. Henry VII had imposed heavy taxes and Empson and Dudley, in charge of collecting those taxes, had become lightning rods for public resentment. They were executed for "constructive treason," that is, conduct that was treated as treason even if it didn't rise to that level – and the conduct in question was widely believed to have been made up. The move cemented Henry's popularity among his people, securing his throne. Sound familiar? It should. And remember that this was Henry before his fight with Rome, before he got into the habit of executing those who disagreed with his policies – like Sir Thomas More, Bishop John Fisher, and two thousand Carthusian monks.

I know it seems unlike Henry to continue to interact with Anne knowing he was planning her death. Yes, he typically was vigilant about making sure that his victims-to-be were prevented from coming near him, but this time he had no choice. He also made other notable exceptions, such as dining with Katherine Parr even after he had signed the warrant for her arrest. Henry knew how to dissemble, he was proud of his ability to hide his real thoughts from everyone. I believe he did so here.

Too, I can't help contrasting how Henry acted following Anne's arrest with how he acted after Catherine Howard's "issues" came to light. With Catherine, he didn't write a play about his betrayal, he didn't blithely tell people that she had "more than a hundred lovers." With Catherine, he was miserable, he cried before his Council, he begged for a sword so that he could slay her himself. It was a huge departure from his offhand reaction to Anne's crimes. As Chapuys put it, "[n]o man ever paraded with such regularity that his wife had cuckolded him, and with so little sign that he minded."

So what happened in April? This is one of those times that the chronology tells so much. Here goes a brief version:

- Early in April, Edward Seymour was given apartments at Greenwich (hastily vacated by Thomas Cromwell). These apartments were such, as Chapuys explained to the Emperor, that Henry could, "when he likes, have access through certain galleries without being seen." It was of course understood that Jane would share the lodgings, allowing Henry's visits to be conducted in private, with no one the wiser as to their frequency or length.
- On April 18, Chapuys was invited to Mass for Easter celebrations (the first public appearance of the King and Queen since Anne's miscarriage) and thanks to careful choreography found himself face-to-face with Anne for the first time since she had become Queen. He bowed as protocol required, though he did refuse the invitation to dine later in her apartments with Henry and his court (let's face it, he did still view her as the 'Great Whore'). Still, he had publicly recognized Anne as Queen on his own and Spain's behalf – and therefore had technically acknowledged Henry's right to rule England as he saw fit. Anne saw this as a triumph for her, but I don't. I see the bow as the necessary step before Henry could replace her. Indeed, right after this, things got very intense very quickly.
- On April 23rd, St. George's Day, Sir Nicholas Carew (Jane's mentor) was inducted into the Order of the Garter instead of George Boleyn

(Anne's candidate). To me, this is not only a snubbing of Anne, it is also the first indication of danger to George.

- The very next day, April 24th, Henry signed documents appointing Lord Chancellor Audley and some judges and nobles (including the Duke of Norfolk and Sir Thomas Boleyn) to investigate certain unspecified activities which might result in charges of treason.
- At some point during the following week, Thomas Boleyn must have let his daughter know what was going on because she started to fight against the possibilities. On April 28, Anne had a conversation with her chaplain, Matthew Parker, who believed until his dying day that she had in some way commended her daughter Elizabeth to his spiritual care. On April 29, Anne had Norris swear to her almoner that she was a good woman. That same day, she confronted Henry, Elizabeth in her arms. The King is said to have "hid his anger wondrously well" at her entreaty.
- The mousetrap snapped on April 30, with the arrest of musician Mark Smeaton. Smeaton was the only one of Anne's alleged paramours to confess. Some say the confession arose from torture while others believe he was just promised an easier sentence than the horrible hanging-drawing-quartering that awaited him. Either way, that confession sealed Anne's fate. The planned royal trip to Dover was cancelled that day, though the May Day celebrations were allowed to continue (if only so that the King could dramatically storm out partway through them).

With all that accomplished in April, May was really just about tying up the loose ends. At this point in the story, Cromwell was running the show. It was all about the legal case he could make, which is why it was so ironic that Anne herself provided much of the evidence that was used against her. She became hysterical when she was first arrested, babbling and speculating as to all the gossip that might have wrongly put her into the position she was in. It seems that she didn't quite believe that Henry would have her killed. Once she realized he was serious, she calmed down and steadied herself for a fight. But it was too late. Cromwell had already taken advantage of the situation to remove people who might present a threat – and then some.

Which gets us back to the premise of this article. April is indeed the cruelest month.

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Janet Wertman is a freelance grantwriter by day and a writer of historical fiction by night. She is currently working on a novel of Jane Seymour, which is expected to be released in 2015 – the first in a trilogy called *The Seymour Dynasty*. She regularly blogs about the Tudors and what it's like to write about them. It's all on her website: **www.janetwertman.com.**

ARBELLA STUART AND HARDWICK HALL

by Sarah Gristwood

IN the cafe at Hardwick Hall, over their coffee and cakes, the visitors are asking the same question. It's not 'who was Arbella Stuart' – the displays in the famous house, marking the 400th anniversary of her death, will have told them that.

But the the more you know about the girl I one dubbed England's 'lost queen', the greater grows the other puzzle. Arbella was once expected to inherit Elizabeth I's throne. She left amazing letters, has a story as dramatic as any other from history. So how can she have been forgotten so completely?

Imagine the cold early spring of March 1603, when in her warm winter palace of Richmond, Queen Elizabeth was at last dying. Dying childless, without any declared heir; and with her country haunted by fears her death would spark civil war. Rebels massing in the west country, a Spanish invasion force in the Channel – no tale was too frightening to be believed.

Robert Cecil had long committed himself to ensure that throne passed to King James of Scotland – but this was a secret known only to a tiny few. Almost two hundred miles to the north at Hardwick in Derbyshire waited another contender for the throne.

Lady Arbella Stuart had been born in 1575, the child of Elizabeth Cavendish (daughter to Bess 'of Hardwick') and of Charles Stuart – brother to Mary Queen of Scots' husband Lord Darnley. Charles Stuart was descended from Henry VIII's elder sister Margaret, which meant Arbella had a claim second only to that of her cousin, James – something her relations never allowed her to forget.

Both her parents died early, and Arbella had been raised by her maternal grandmother; the formidable, ambitious dynast Bess. While James of Scotland had grown up plagued by fear that he could be disqualified from the English crown because of his foreign nationality, Arbella had been reared in the dizzying hope that she would one day rule her country.

From her earliest childhood spies and statesmen had speculated on her chances. "It is Arbella they would proclaim queen, if her mistress were now to die", a Catholic exile had proclaimed, plotting to kidnap the young girl and carry her abroad. Even Elizabeth had deliberately added fuel to rumour's flames. "One day she will be even as I am", the queen told the wife of the French ambassador in 1587, when the eleven year old Arbella had first been presented at court.

But by 1603, that glittering heyday of Gloriana's rule had begun to seem a very long time ago. People murmured that England had had enough of queens. 'Bloody Mary' before Elizabeth, to say nothing of the nine day wonder Jane Grey . . . And far from being groomed for queenship, Arbella had spent much of the 1590's mewed up in Derbyshire. Effectively a prisoner in her grandmother's house, surrounded by her books and by the "ancient gentlewomen" who were her grandmother's cronies.

In the winter that ushered in 1603, Arbella Stuart was 27 but still unwed. There had always been a stream of suitors who sought Arbella's hand "and with it the crown", but Elizabeth had never permitted her young kinswoman to marry. Erudite but isolated, frustrated and angry, Arbella was desperate to escape from Hardwick. And as 1602 turned to 1603 she must have known, too, that her last chance of the throne was slipping away.

She was tired of living in "exile with expectation", as she called it bitterly. She knew she had to act. Just after Christmas 1602, Arbella dared

Close up of Arbella aged 13.5 credit Richard Aspinall

at last to open negotiations for her own marriage. 'Dared', because to do so without permission, in one of the ruler's kin, was nothing short of treason. And to the horrified authorities, her choice of bridegroom suggested that this was no simple love story. Arbella approached the guardians of young Edward Seymour – a boy a decade her junior and one she had never met. But Edward had himself a claim to the throne that followed hard on her own, since his grandmother was descended from Henry VIII's younger sister, Mary.

Was this a desperate girl's bid to escape familial authority – or the first stage in a political coup? The latter seemed all too likely. A government agent was sent galloping north to launch an enquiry. You can still trace his steps through Hardwick Hall today. Caged up with her furious grandmother in the great house on the hill, Arbella was subjected to weeks of interrogation and accusation. Her messages to supporters were intercepted "and feigned replies dictated", as the government reports noted coolly. She was threatened even with the headsman's axe; belaboured by her relations with "a volley of most bitter and injurious words".

As the pressure built, she found release only in disburdening her "weak body and travelling mind" through an extraordinary series of letters. She poured out her anger and humiliation; demanding to know whether "the running on of years be not discerned in me only"? Whether no-one else realised that to live with her grandmother – her nose still tweaked for punishment as if she were a toddler – was no life for a woman rising thirty.

On March 2 1603 she sat down to write for the queen's officers a missive so scrawled, so heavily blotched with tears, that agony still screams out of the pages. "I perceive daily more and more to my increasing grief I am and ever hereafter shall be more unfortunate than I lately thought I could possibly have been . . . my case cannot be made worse any manner of way. In her Majesty's hands it is to mend it . . . and in God's to end my sorrows with death which only can make me absolutely and eternally happy." She begged for her "dear and due liberty".

Her epistles were so long and rambling they made contemporaries doubt her sanity. "I think she hath some strange vapours to her brain", wrote Sir Robert Cecil on his copy – though today, we might be more inclined to think her outpourings preserved her mind's stability.

Arabella Stuart Infant

Arbella's release from Hardwick came only when on March 24 Elizabeth finally died. James (his path carefully smoothed by Robert Cecil) succeeded to the throne of England "without so many ripples as would shake a cockle boat", as Cecil's brother put it admiringly. If she really sought the throne, Arbella's first great adventure had ended in failure. But at least she was free of her grandmother's close care – what in those dark days she had come to call her grandmother's custody.

She was "my own woman", as she had written from Hardwick. Free at last to forge her own individual path. "I must shape my own coat according to my cloth but it shall not be after the fashion of this world but fit for me." As the country flushed green with the first spring of the new dynasty, she rode south, armed with James' assurance she would be welcomed at his court, first in consequence after his own family.

It was a dizzying, dazzling new world to which she came. New manners and new morals, "luxury and riot", consumption and controversy. The new king showered fortunes on his male

Arabella Stuart Infant
Artist Unknown
Title Lady Arbella Stuart
Date 1577

Lady Arabella Stuart
Artist Robert Peake the elder (1551–1619)

favourites, encouraged his nobles in banquets so extravagant more than one courtier was said literally to have pissed his estate down the privy. Sir John Harington, the old queen's "witty godson" and an admirer of Arbella's, described how even the court ladies "abandon their sobriety, and are seen to roll about in intoxication".

Arbella, fresh from her secluded life at Hardwick, was ill equipped to compete with the others who lay "sucking at the breasts of the state", in the disgusted words of one contemporary. This was not a world for which her studious girlhood had prepared her. She read Greek and Hebrew, embroider elegantly, could quote the classical authors and write Latin letters extempore. Now, instead, she found the household of James' wife Anna engaged on nursery games, "child's plays". ("When I came to court they were as highly in request as ever cracking of nuts was", she wrote to her aunt, bemusedly.)

Arbella spent five years at court, engaged in the courtiers' constant battle for place, and plagued by lack of money. But as the years ticked away – as she approached and then past her thirtieth birthday – she must have begun to ask herself whether she had fled Hardwick for anything more than a gilded cage, another kind of captivity. Begun to realise that James was no more likely than Elizabeth to let her marry. Her bloodline – her child – could still prove a threat to his dynasty. In 1609 she was still "without mate and without estate", in the biting but not unsympathetic words of the Venetian ambassador. Once again she decided to act – independently, dangerously.

Her choice lighted once again on a member of the Seymour family. William shared the royal bloodline of his brother Edward, for whom Arbella had negotiated back at Hardwick, but this time Arbella was drawn also by his personality. One only letter she wrote to him survives, but that breathes tenderness.

"We may by God's grace be happier than we look for in being suffered to enjoy ourselves with his Majesty's favour. But if we be not . . .I for my part shall think myself a pattern of misfortune in enjoying so great a blessing as you so little a while. No separation but that deprives me of the comfort of you, for wherever you be or in what state so ever you are, it sufficeth me you are mine." They were married secretly, at dead of night, in June 1610.

Retribution was swift. When news of the match leaked out. William was sent to the Tower, Arbella placed in private custody, later to be taken north to Durham; "clean out of this world", as she wrote despairingly. But by now, she and William had decided to escape abroad; and the halting journey north gave them their opportunity.

Arbella's illness – part real, part feigned – forced the party to stop in Barnet and there she lulled the suspicions of her captors with "a fair show of conformity". Friends had procured for her a set of man's clothes and one morning she pulled a pair of "great French-fashioned hose" over her petticoats, donned wig and rapier and slipped away to where her servants waited with horses. A swift ride to Blackwall – a frustratingly slow row boat downriver to the Thames estuary – the nervewracking hunt for the hired bark that finally carried them out to sea.

It was an adventure yarn – but not one with a happy ending. From now on, the story of Arbella Stuart makes chilling reading. Arrangements had been made for William, too, to escape from the Tower, following a delivery cart and in borrowed

Arbella aged 13.5 yrs credit National Trust

Portraits of Arbella Queen Elizabeth and Bess in High Great Chamber credit Richard Aspinall

servant's disguise. This was a journey he and Arbella should have taken together. But he never arrived at the Blackwall rendezvous, and instead she set sail alone.

Ironically, William had got safely away. His only problem was a little delay. But it was enough. In the teeth of a rising winds his boat took a different route from hers, and they missed each other on the stormy sea. Back in London, moreover, the flight had been discovered. An English warship captured Arbella within sight of Calais. Fatally, she had refused to land until she knew of William's safety.

While William's ship did carry him safe to France, to spend the next few years roaming the continent impoverished but at liberty. But Arbella was carried back to the Tower he had so lately vacated.

Her imprisonment brought plot and counterplot, and finally rumours

of insanity more certain than those of 1603. It was the tale of her Hardwick days all over again – but this time in an even darker key. When she died, the post mortem described the "extreme leanness" of her body. She may have starved herself to death; she may have been a victim of hereditary porphyria, the disease said to have caused the madness of George III. A tragic story, then – but do we set Arbella down as just another tragic story, another woman fallen prey to the harsh laws of history?

The commemoration at Hardwick Hall uses many devices to tell Arbella's story. Mirrors, to reflect the atmosphere of observation and suspicion – and then, cracked, to reflect the fracture of her own personality. The reports of courtiers and ambassadors embroidered on cushions – all those hours, with nothing else to do, Arbella herself spent at Hardwick on her embroidery!

Hardwick is posing the question of whether the house, for Arbella, was a palace or a prison; and one of the most telling exhibits is a large glistening key. It dangles temptingly in a glass case – 'unbreakable glass', as it is labelled. Underneath it, a notice says you must break the glass to be set free . . . 'Adults often ask one of the volunteers what it means', says curator Dr Nigel Wright. 'Children get it instantly.' Perhaps they're more open to the fact

that the story of Arbella Stuart is all about puzzles and queries.

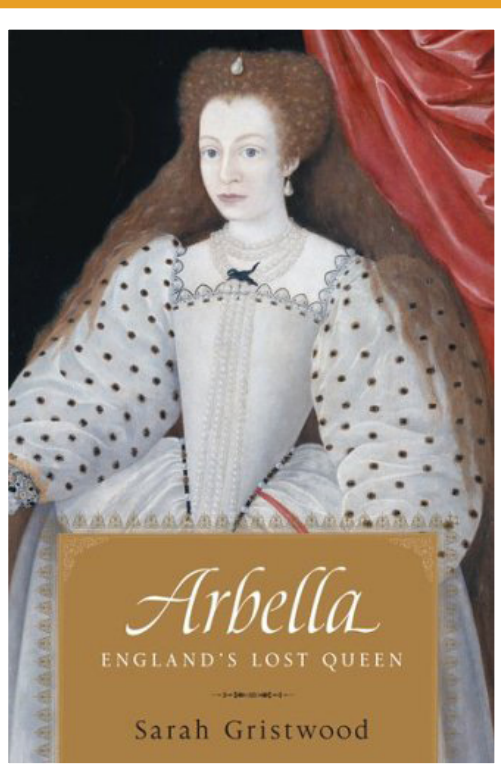
Was hers really a life that left no mark? – as historians used to say. Or do those amazing letters she left give her an important legacy? Was she an innocent caught up in others' plans, or was she herself bidding for the throne in 1603? And above all, do we have answer for those visitors in Hardwick's cafe?

I'm not sure we do, entirely. Yes, of course history is written by the winners. Arbella lost, and was written out of the story. But all the same, for so many years, how could she be forgotten so completely?

Sarah Gristwood is a regular media commentator on royal and historical affairs. She was one of the team providing Radio 4's live coverage of the royal wedding; and has since spoken on the Queen's Jubilee, the royal baby, and other royal stories for Sky News, Woman's Hour, Radio 5 Live, and CBC. Shortlisted for both the Marsh Biography Award and the Ben Pimlott Prize for Political Writing, she is a Fellow of the RSA, and an Honororary Patron of Historic Royal Palaces.

Sarah has written two best selling Tudor biographies, Arbella: England's Lost Queen and Elizabeth and Leicester; and also the eighteenth century story Perdita: Royal Mistress, Writer, Romantic which was selected as Radio 4 Book of the Week.

You can find out more about Sarah Gristwood from her website **www.sarahgristwood.com**



TUDOR PLACES: LITTLE MORETON HALL

Tudor Places

LITTLE MORETON HALL

Photos by FRANK BRASSINGTON

Little Moreton Hall is a beautiful Tudor property in Congleton, Cheshire, in the north-west of England. Work started on the building around 1504-1508 and the last building work was carried out in 1610. It was built for the Moreton family, who were wealthy landowners, and didn't leave the family's possession until 1938 when the National Trust took it over.

The moated, timber-framed manor house is such a quirky building and its very existence after all this time seems to defy logic. This crooked house really does look like it's going to fall down at any minute and always reminds me of the Weasley family's house, The Burrow, in the Harry Potter films, with its top-heavy appearance. Little Moreton Hall lacks foundations and the weight of its upper floor, with its long gallery and heavy gritstone slabbed roof, has caused the floors below to bow.

Features of Little Moreton Hall include:

- Its beautiful Tudor knot garden which is full of herbs and vegetables that were used for food and medicine in Tudor times.
- Its timbered façade with chevron, lozenge and herringbone patterns.
- The 16th century glazing.
- The 16th century carved wooden panelling and ceiling, and the bay window and stained glass in the Withdrawing Room.
- The Long Gallery
- The 16th century furniture which is on display in the Great Hall and the Parlour
- The tester bed in the first floor South chamber which is used to show exactly how Tudor people slept

Little Moreton Hall is open from April to December.

Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 4SD

Telephone: 01260 272018
See **http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/little-moreton-hall/visitor-information/**

TUDOR PLACES: LITTLE MORETON HALL

ALL THE LONG GONE QUEENS

by Ruth Stacey

Author and poet *Ruth Stacey* is becoming well known as a captivating creative. Here she shares her love of Tudor history with us...

THIS poetry collection began as a short sequence about royal mistresses. I wrote from the point of view of Rosamund Clifford, Alice Perrers, Eleanor Talbot, Madge Shelton, Nell Gwyn, Barbara Palmer and Mary Robinson. I really enjoyed writing them and began to think about writing a full length collection that would give a voice to all the queens of England and Britain. That collection is finished after four years of thinking, writing and editing and it will be published by Eyewear, summer 2015.

I have always loved history and read voraciously so I already had a fairly good knowledge of certain queens when I started, although I was always aware of how unreliable documented events were. Queens would be maligned or celebrated depending upon who was writing things down and what their political or religious agenda was. It was a pleasure to re-read favourite biographies and seek out new books with different points of view.

I was really keen to read about the Anglo-Saxon queens because this was the era I knew very little about. It was this earlier period that was most fascinating to research and evoke, just because they were new and I could project so much of my own imagination onto them. In contrast it was harder to write about Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon or Victoria in their imagined voices when so much of their own writing and personality was recorded. That is why Victoria's poem is lines from her own letters interspersed with my own invented ideas of her inner monologue.

My intention was always to capture a distinct personality and give the reader the experience of moving through different poetic styles as well as observing the changing role of a queen/consort. Some poems are instantly recognisable as they mimic a familiar form; others are free verse or epistle. For the earliest queens there was very little recorded about them; often only that they gave birth to a king or left their goods to the nunnery, so I wanted to deliberately write in a fragmented style so the reader would have to put the parts of the puzzle together and fill in the spaces. The later queens have a more formal, constrained style that reflects their lives stifled by etiquette and expectation.

I became very fond of each of the queens as I became immersed in their lives, trying to articulate their experiences into a few lines. Ælfthryth's fierce determination as she secured the succession for her own heir or Ealdgyth of Mercia's sorrowful longing

for her first husband. Creating Elizabeth Wydville's melancholy memories of her two dead sons or Alexandra of Denmark sadly trying to convince herself it was right not to offer sanctuary to Russian royal family.

The Tudor poems were some of the first ones I completed and include some of my favourites from the collection. The Anne Boleyn poem because I adore Sir Thomas Wyatt's poem *Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind* and I always liked the idea of Anne reading this poem. How would she feel? What would her response be? For Catharine Howard I used another Wyatt poem to base mine on, *And Wilt Thou Leave Me Thus?* The refrain, say nay, worked well as it became Catharine's passionate entreaty to Tom Culpepper not to leave her bedchamber.

With Elizabeth I there were so many different things I could choose to focus on. In poetry you only have a limited amount of lines to describe so much and it becomes an exercise in succinctness. With a woman who lived such a long, full life it was hard to choose which event to centre the poem on. I would write far too much and then edit it down; decide which part most excited me.

It begins with the crux of a sermon by John Knox: *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women 1558*. I liked the idea of Elizabeth running these ideas through her mind, trying to understand his audacity and also her own response to this: how to be a strong female leader in a patriarchal society. I wanted to include a line from her poem, *On Monsieur's Departure*, because I particularly like it (line 12) and I wanted use her authentic writing 'voice' to shape the rest of poem. The following two lines were about her mother and Catharine Howard. Witnessing Catharine's destruction must have painfully echoed her own mother's fate. Lines 15 and 16 are about her memory of Katherine Parr dying in childbirth. All of these experiences shaped her as an adult woman; intelligent, cautious and wily. It is a romantic poem; I can't resist the lure of her friendship with Robert Dudley. The poem ends with the translation of her Latin motto: Semper Eadem.

Elizabeth I

Woman was made to serve and obey man,
Man must obey God. Wife: man can command.

A natural order, God's ordained plan;
A woman must bow down to her husband.

England needs an heir so I must marry
But yet I prevaricate and tarry.

A Queen when she weds is suddenly less,
The elevated bridegroom now soars high.

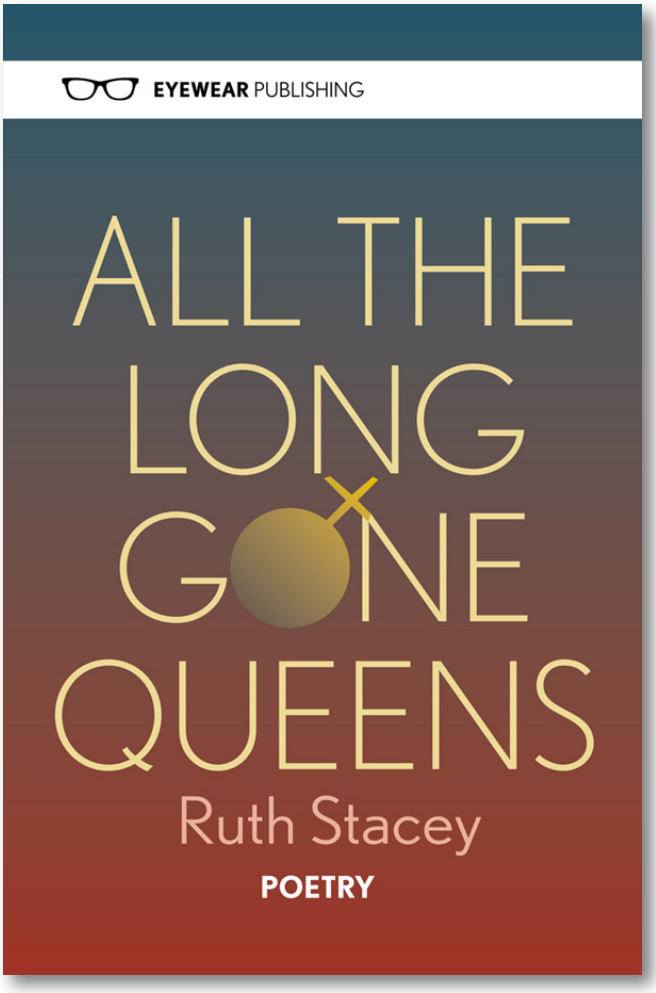
The prize: Kingship and a Queen to undress,
To win this all men would flatter and lie.

Robert Dudley calls me and I long to go,
For I am soft and made of melting snow.

Once wedded the Queen is precarious,
At the mercy and caprice of the King.

Childbirth deadly, bloody and dangerous,
The dire consequence of mortal loving.

A virgin Queen I am and will remain.
No man commands: I rule, ever the same.



Elizabeth Wydeville

I remember a beautiful white woman kneeling beneath a tree,
A handsome, eager man helping her to rise,
Love thick like sticky sap betwixt the two:
Their eyes glistening, beholding themselves in a mirror.

A cultured, elegant Queen anointed in holy oils and pageantry,
A merry King removing her crown and haughty expressions.
People cheering the celebrations of each new child,
Wine and ale soaking the murmurs of the enemy.

A frightened Queen with her children fleeing to Sanctuary,
A bloated, frivolous King dead: her heart in his stone fingers.
The wolves circling the Abbey- Gloucester betraying her,
Comforting frightened eyes, voices lost in cloisters.

A naïve Queen listening to the Archbishop swear on his soul,
The new King only needed his brother's cheerful fellowship.
In the star chamber the Queen believing the oath of surety,
Noticed how her youngest son's hair smelt of rosemary.

A mother, not a Queen, kissing her child all over his beloved face:
'Tell the King, your brother how I love thee both, how you look
Exactly like your Father and I will kiss you now for God knoweth
When we shall kiss again, farewell, farewell,' she swooned.

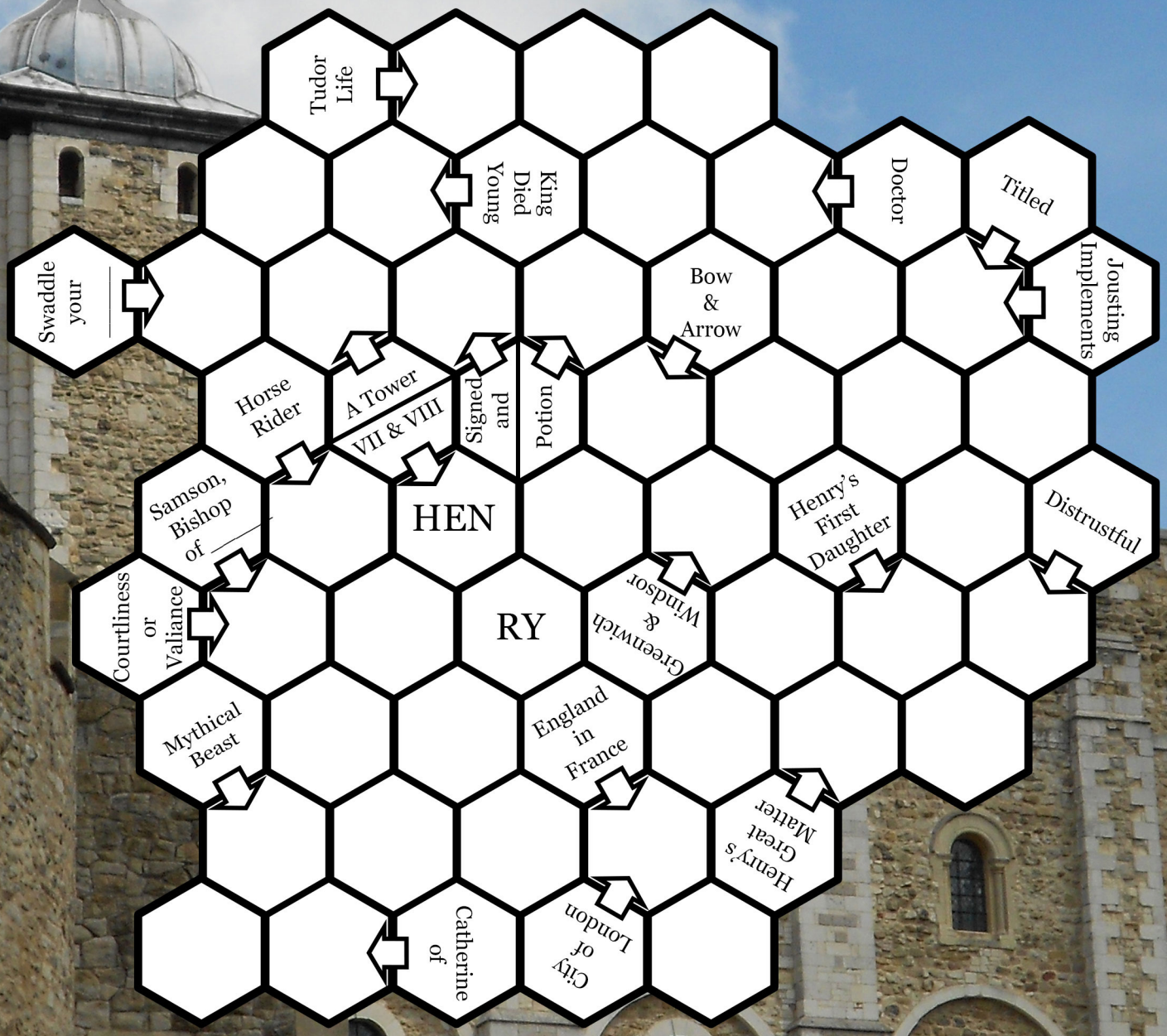
A pale Queen waiting, praying that her trust would no be in vain.
A dreaming King and his small brother snuffed out like lamps.
The news was wept into her ear, her soul stiffened like sealing wax.
What grief – a mother can only resurrect life by remembering it again:

I remember a beautiful white woman kneeling beneath a tree,
A handsome, eager man helping her to rise,
Love thick like sticky sap betwixt the two:
Their eyes glistening, beholding themselves in a mirror.

Poet and writer **Ruth Stacey** spends all her time thinking about words, writing poems, painting, drawing. She has written a poetry book "All the Long Gone Queens" which has a poem from the perspective of every Queen of England and Britain, from Anglo-Saxon times to the present day. Ruth says that the Anne Boleyn poem was definitely her favourite from the collection!

Her website is **www.ruthstacey.com.**

Tudor Hexagon Quiz



This is a different kind of quiz to those we've had in previous editions of Tudor Life. Each "hex" contains a ***syllable*** of the answer. We've got you started with HEN-RY in the middle of the grid. Words go in the direction of the arrow pointing the way.

GOOD LUCK!

ANSWERS ON PAGE 65

Tudor Society BOOK GIVEAWAY

As you probably know, we always give away an amazing bundle of books with every edition of Tudor Life magazine. In May the lucky winner was Amy Wayman who won our massive Richard III book give-away including:

John Ashdown-Hill - The Dublin King; Susan Fern - The man who killed Richard III; Josephine Wilkinson - The Princes in the Tower; Kristie Dean - The world of Richard III; David Baldwin - Richard III and D.K. Wilson - The Traitors Mark.

This month's magazine give-away includes the three books on the left:

- Henry VIII's Last Love by David Baldwin

- Thomas Cromwell by Tracy Borman AND

- Arbella: England's Lost Queen by Sarah Gristwood

AND What do you have to do to win?

NOTHING AT ALL!

All of our current members are added into a prize draw at the end of each month. So fingers crossed for you this time!

FOR ANOTHER CHANCE TO WIN A BOOK...

MAKE SURE YOU ARE ON THE APRIL "LIVE CHAT" EVENT WITH DEREK WILSON!

Date to be announced on the website...

ON THIS DAY DATES

1 April 1570
Death of William Alley, Bishop of Exeter. He was buried in Exeter Cathedral.

2 April 1502
Death of Arthur, Prince of Wales, son and heir of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, at Ludlow Castle in the Welsh Marches. He was just fifteen years old.

3 April 1559
The second session of Parliament, in Elizabeth I's reign, met after the *Easter* break. Its purpose was to obtain parliamentary sanction for royal supremacy and Protestant settlement.

7 April 1537
Robert Aske and Thomas Darcy, 1st Baron Darcy, were sent to the Tower of London. Aske was one of the rebel leaders in the 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace rebellion, and Darcy became involved with the rebels after yielding Pontefract Castle to them. Darcy was beheaded 30th June 1537, and Aske was hanged in chains on 12th July 1537.

8 April 1554
A cat dressed as a priest, a symbol of Catholicism, with a consecrated wafer between its tied feet was found hanged on the gallows in Cheapside.

12 April 1550
Birth of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, courtier and poet.

13 April 1534
Sir Thomas More was summoned to Lambeth to swear his allegiance to the Act of Succession.

14 April 1565
Birth of Edward Gresham, astrologer, astronomer and magician, in Stainsford, Yorkshire.

15 April 1599
Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, was sworn in as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

19 April 1558
Mary, Queen of Scots and Francis, the Dauphin, were formally betrothed at the Louvre.

20 April 1534
Hangings of Elizabeth Barton, the Nun of Kent; Father Edward Bocking, her spiritual adviser; Richard Risby, Warden of the Observant Friary at Canterbury; and Hugh Rich, Warden of the Observant Friary at Richmond. They were hanged at Tyburn.

21 April 1509
Death of Henry VII at Richmond Palace and the accession of Henry VIII.

22 April 1542
Death of Sir Henry Clifford, 1st Earl of Cumberland. He was buried at Skipton Parish Church.

25 April 1599
Birth of Oliver Cromwell, future Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland.

26 April 1564
Baptism of William Shakespeare at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon.

29 April 1594
Death of Thomas Cooper, Bishop of Winchester and theologian, at Winchester. He was buried in his cathedral, on the south side.

Tudor Life

Background Image:
Portrait of King Henry VII dated 1505,
Artist Unknown

FOR APRIL

4 April 1581
Francis Drake was awarded a knighthood by Elizabeth I. He was dubbed by Monsieur de Marchaumont on board the *Golden Hind* at Deptford.

5 April 1513
Treaty of Mechlin signed by Henry VIII, Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand II of Aragon and Pope Leo X against France.

6 April 1590
Death of Sir Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth I's principal secretary. He was about fifty-eight years old.

9 April 1483
Death of Edward IV at the Palace of Westminster. He was laid to rest in St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, on 20th April.

10 April 1512
Birth of James V of Scotland, fourth child of James IV and Margaret Tudor, at Linlithgow Palace.

11 April 1554
Sir Thomas Wyatt the younger was beheaded and then his body quartered for treason, for leading Wyatt's Rebellion against Queen Mary I.

16 April 1521
German Protestant reformer, Martin Luther, appeared in front of Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms. He had been summoned to the diet to either recant or reaffirm his religious views.

17 April 1534
Sir Thomas More, Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor, was sent to the Tower of London after refusing to swear the Oath of Succession.

18 April 1540
King Henry VIII made Thomas Cromwell Earl of Essex, just three months before he was executed after being found guilty of treason, heresy, corruption and more.

23 April 1564
Traditional date given for the birth of William Shakespeare, famous Elizabethan playwright and actor, at Stratford-upon-Avon.

24 April 1558
Mary, Queen of Scots married Francis, the Dauphin of France, at Notre Dame in Paris. Mary was fifteen, and Francis was fourteen.

27 April 1609
Death of Sir Edward Michelborne, member of Parliament, soldier and adventurer.

28 April 1603
Funeral of Elizabeth I. She was buried at Westminster Abbey in the vault of her grandfather Henry VII and then moved in 1606 to a tomb which she shares with her half-sister Mary I.

30 April 1532
James Bainham, lawyer and Protestant martyr, was burned at Smithfield. He had been condemned to death for heresy. He had been imprisoned and tortured on the orders of Sir Thomas More.

Background Image:
Portrait of king Henry VIII c. 1537
by Hans Holbein the Younger

Tudor Life

A BRIEF HISTORY OF … THE RENAISSANCE RECORDER

by Jane Moulder

FOR many people, the recorder summons up memories of listening to groups of schoolchildren producing a variety of out of tune squeaks and squawks whilst attempting to play *London's Burning* or *Frere Jacques*! Therefore, it has acquired something of a tarnished reputation as either a child's toy or as a "starter" instrument which is to be neglected as soon as the student can move on to a "proper" instrument. This is very sad because the recorder has a long and illustrious pedigree. In its heyday of the 16th and early 17th centuries it was considered an important and virtuosic instrument that was taken very seriously indeed.

The oldest surviving complete instrument, the Dordrecht Recorder dating from c1350, was excavated from a moat in the Dutch town that gave it its name.

I think the recorder deserves greater recognition today and it should be placed back on the pedestal where it deserves to be. As a contribution towards this, I present a brief history of the instrument focusing on its development during the Tudor period.

First of all we need to understand what makes a recorder a recorder – as opposed to a whistle or flute. There are certain characteristics of the recorder that separates it from its cousins. Like the flageolet or penny whistle, the recorder has a fixed wind-way which is formed by a wooden plug or block but it is the only instrument with a thumb hole and seven finger holes. This is what sets it apart and allows it to not only have a greater range of notes than its counterparts but also gives it the ability to play in more than one musical key.

"govern these ventages with your fingers and the thumb, give it breath with your mouth and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops".

These remarks made by Hamlet to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, which could be lifted from a modern guide to playing the recorder, illustrates one of its key characteristics – the thumbhole.

The recorder has its roots in prehistoric times as some of the earliest surviving musical instruments are flutes and whistles made from animal bone. But the recorder as we know it today dates back to the early medieval period. There are several surviving examples of medieval recorders with the majority of them having been excavated from waste pits or latrines. Maybe they were thrown away by their owner as they were broken in some way? Or maybe, they were lost inadvertently when their owner was using the local facilities and didn't dare try to retrieve them from the pit!

The earliest illustration of an instrument that can definitely be identified as a recorder is shown in a fresco in a church in Macedonia, and was painted in 1315. But there are also a number of other early illustrations such as this beautiful Spanish painting from late 14th century.

It is, however, in the Tudor period, that the instrument came to prominence and, uniquely among wind instruments, had its own published tutor. The *Opera Intitula Fontegara* by Sylvestro Ganassi was published in Venice in 1535 and quickly became a best seller and well known throughout Europe. Venice was a city famed for its musicians and instrument makers and it is clear from the manual that recorder playing had achieved a high degree of technical accomplishment by Ganassi's time. The book explains different methods of articulation, fingerings as well as the complex art of improvised ornamentation. It is still an essential manual for any recorder player today and I can personally vouch for

The centre panel of an alterpiece "Our Lady of the Angels", c1390. Originally in the Church of Santa Clara, Tortose and now in the Meueo Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona.

The frontispiece to Il Fontegara. It shows the method of playing from music in the 16th century (from a table rather than a music stand) and as well as recorders, the picture illustrates viols and a lute handing on the wall, two different types of cornet in the foreground and, interestingly, a recorder case (bottom left hand side).

the fact that some considerable skill is required in order to tackle some of the lessons!

Until the end of the 16th century composers did not normally specify which instruments their music should be played on so, other than this manual, we cannot say definitely which specific pieces were performed on recorder. However, with the instrument not being particularly loud, it is safe to assume that it was mainly played indoors and would probably have been an instrument for professional musicians or for very wealthy amateurs.

The renaissance recorder was made in a wide range of sizes from the very small, high pitched garklein to the large and low sounding great basses. These large instruments produce a gloriously sonorous sound that is as far removed from today's modern plastic soprano recorder as it's possible to get! Even Michael Praetorius, writing in 1619, recommend the larger instruments "*When a canzona or motet is to be played on recorders alone, without other instruments, it is very good and fitting to use the whole range of recorders, especially the five largest kinds, for the small ones are much too loud and piercing.*"!

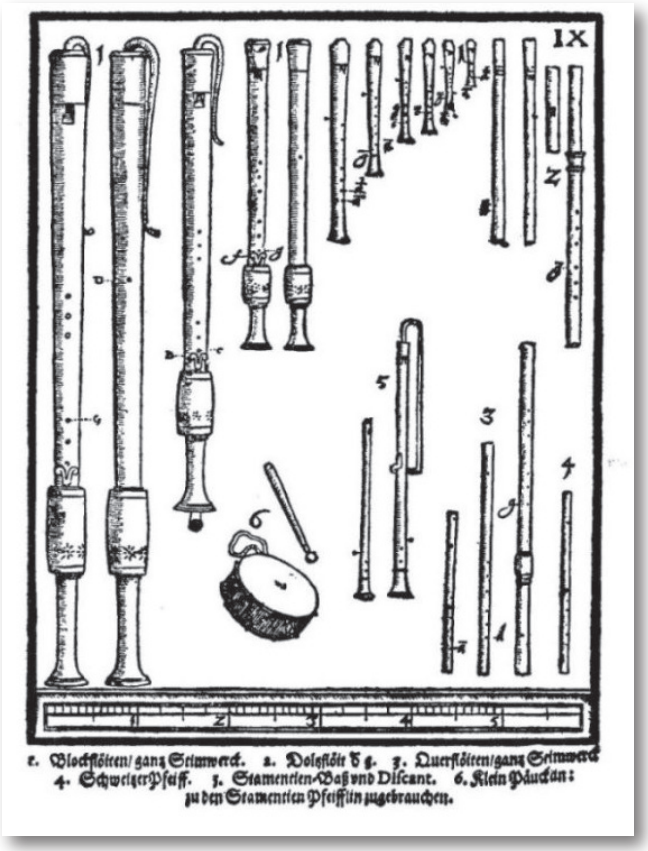
There are a number of surviving originals from the Renaissance period and they have a wider bore than today's modern recorder resulting in a fuller, richer tone. They were definitely designed to be played in consort with other recorders and they produce a sound similar to a quiet 'chuffy' organ. In fact, Mersenne, writing in 1635, says that the "*small consort and the great consort can be used together just*

as the small and large registers of the organ are". They were therefore ideally suited to the polyphonic music that was popular in the 15th to early 17th centuries.

This range of sizes led to them being owned in great quantities. The court band in Stuttgart in 1589 owned 299 recorders and a Count in another part of Germany owned 111! In Henry VIII's inventory 76 recorders are listed and it is known that Henry himself played the recorder (see my article on Henry's music book in March's edition of Tudor Life). In the Bate Museum, Oxford, there is a basset recorder and popular myth says that it was once part of Henry's personal collection. The reason for this association is that the instrument was made by one of the Bassano family. The Bassanos were brought to England from Venice by Henry in 1530's and they became known as "The King's Recorder Consort". The Bassanos were not only players but makers of the instruments and theirs were described as *"instruments so beautiful and good that they are suited for dignitaries and potentates"* and *"more beautiful than any jasper"*. Whilst it hasn't been conclusively proven that this bass recorder belonged to Henry, it is, however, a nice thought! A number of years ago I was privileged to have the opportunity of playing this recorder and it gave me a very tingly feeling to think that I could be playing an instrument that Henry himself knew and touched.

The root of the word "recorder" is quite fascinating and tracing early references to the instrument can be fraught with difficulty because there was no consistency in either the naming or the spelling of instruments until the 17th century. A recorder could be referred to as a pipe or a flute. In fact, outside of England the instrument's name uses the root of flute or flauto, leading people in the 20th century in the early music revival, to assume that music originally written for the recorder was actually for the transverse flute.

The English verb 'to record' means to learn by heart or commit to memory and the usage goes back as early 1225 and the words 'recorde', 'recourdour', 'recorderis', 'recorders', 'recordys' appear in English literature from about 1440 onwards. 'To record' was also used in the sense of practicing or singing a tune. In fact, in the late 17th century, there was actually an English fashion for teaching caged birds to sing various melodies using a recorder. One of the several surviving books, *The Bird Fancyer's Delight*



An illustration from Michael Praetorius's Syntagma Musicum (1619) showing the different sizes of recorders.

(1717), gives instructions in teaching a variety of birds, (such as the nightingale, bullfinch, woodlark and house sparrow), songs by placing them in a darkened cage and playing a given tune to them on a recorder over and over again until they mimicked it. It seems somewhat odd to think of the conceit of possibly improving on a nightingale's own song!

The earliest unequivocal reference to the recorder as a musical instrument appears in the household accounts of the Earl of Derby, Henry Bolingbroke (later King Henry IV) for 1388, which mentions:

"And for one flute by name of Recorder bought in London for my lord, three shillings and four pence."

With the recorder also being referred to as a 'lytyll pype" the use of different terms could cause cause confusion even in the 16th century. There is a wonderful passage in a collection of tales called "*Wits, Fits and Fancies*", registered with the Stationers' Company in 1595, which uses this puns on the word to great effect.

"A merrie recorder of London mistaking the name of one Pepper, call'd him Piper: wherunto the partie excepting, and saying: Sir, you mistake, my name is Pepper, not Piper; hee answered: why, what difference is there, I pray thee, between Piper in Latin and Pepper in English; is it not all one? No, Sir, reply'd the other, there is even as much difference betweene them, as is between a pipe and a recorder."

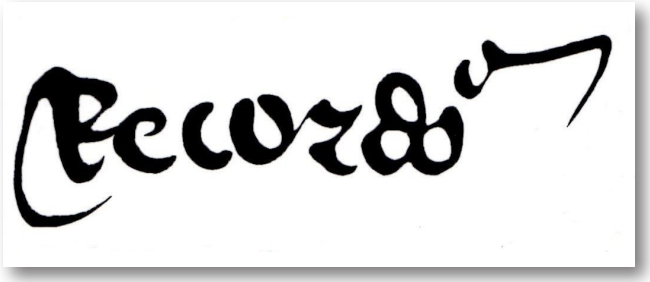
An Alto Recorder in the Kunsthistorishces Museum, Vienna. Instruments could be played either left or right handed as it was usual to have two lower holes, one of which would be waxed up. It is not a mistake!

Towards the end of the 17th century, the recorder was completely redesigned, along with other woodwind instruments such as the oboe, flute and bassoon. Where previously the instrument had been made in one or two pieces, it was now made in three which allowed for more accurate boring and voicing of the instrument. This "new" instrument had a larger range and stronger tone making it more suitable for solo work. This is the period of Handel, Bach and Vivaldi who all wrote prolifically for the instrument. The baroque recorder looks very similar to the instrument that we are more familiar with today.

There's lots more to tell about this underrated and much maligned instrument – but that's for another day. For me though, the Renaissance Recorder is one of my favourite instruments and when they are played in consort with my group, Piva, the reaction of the audience is always of amazement that the so called 'humble' recorder, can produce such beautiful and sonorous sounds.

To listen to Piva playing a "Great Consort" of recorders, visit Spotify **https://play.spotify.com/home** and search for Pavane Lesquercade. Alternatively you can download the track or the cd by going to CD Baby or iTunes. Incidentally, the Pavane Lesquercade is also known as '*The King's Pavan*' as it is associated with Henry VIII.

JANE MOULDER



Jane Moulder performs regularly with the rennaissance music group "PIVA" and has recently been asked by MadeGlobal Publishing to write a book about Tudor Music.

Showing that recorders were not always "lytyll pypes" The recorder maker, Adriana Bleunkink, shows off the largest known size of recorder. The original instrument is in the Vleehuis in Antwerp.

Piva's recorder consort – left to right: bass in C, basset in F, 2 tenors in C, Alto in F, Alto in G and Soprano in C. These instruments, made by the American maker, Tom Prescott, are based on the originals by Bassano in the Kunsthistorishces Museum, Vienna.

A detail of an angel playing a recorder in the Frari Triptych, 1488 by Giovanni Bellini.

T

Gareth on History

Bodlian Libraries
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

The Bodleian Library

"A library is the delivery room for the birth of ideas, a place where history comes to life."

– Norman Cousins

I HAVE recently been spending a lot more time at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, necessitating the rather sobering update of my reader card ID photograph, as a decade on the one I took upon matriculation shortly after my eighteenth birthday no longer quite convinces. It is a wonderful place, and while I've been there on the trail of Catherine Howard and her family, my mind has also wandered to the other royal names conjured by its sedate splendour.

It is easy to get distracted. The Upper Reading Room, where I prefer to work, is lined with portraits of the Stuart sovereigns. A sombre Queen Henrietta-Maria gazes down from the wall above the entrance door, while her husband and father-in-law are diagonally opposite shelves full of the state letters and papers of the Tudors. A floor below lies the entrance to Duke Humfrey's Library, the oldest part of the Bodleian, a softly-lit room of dark mahogany, intersected by fading but still magnificent coats of arms half-hidden in the recesses of the ceiling. I spent hours in there a couple of weeks ago, pouring over the wills of Catherine Howard's extended relatives, and I was struck again by how tight security is, yet how oddly joyful the room remains, despite its sepulchral quiet.

Duke Humfrey's Library was founded through a bequest made by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, a younger brother of King Henry V. Born in 1390, he was eight years-old when his father deposed Richard II to make himself Henry IV. The youngest of the King's four sons, he had his brothers' charisma and courage, even if he was prone to exaggerate his achievements. Handsome, like his father and the brothers he adored, Humphrey was a fully paid-up member of the cult of chivalry that had flourished in England ever since the reign of his great-grandfather, Edward III.

Like all good knights, Humphrey – who was made a duke shortly after his brother's accession, just before his admission to the Privy Council – struggled to live-up to the impossible goals set by chivalric idealism. He had a messy private life that included a marriage of contested legitimacy, to Jacqueline of Hainaut, and a subsequent marriage to his ex-mistress, Eleanor Cobham, who was eventually accused of witchcraft. However, he was also a generous patron of the arts and particularly interested in Oxford.

Humphrey's grandfather John of Gaunt had been the major patron of Geoffrey Chaucer; indeed, after 1396, he was his brother-in-law. Humphrey and his brothers all continued in the quest to popularise English as an acceptable subject for literature and correspondence, signalling a cultural shift from the French preferred by their Norman and Plantagenet

predecessors. When he died in February 1447, after serving as Lord Protector for his infant nephew Henry VI, Humphrey left 280 of his books to Oxford, and they formed the nucleus of Duke Humfrey's Library.

What a treasure trove they must have been – this extraordinary number of books from a literate and cultured prince in the age before printing – and for over a century they helped stimulate learning at Oxford. As of 2015, three of those books remain. In 1550, the royal commissioners swept down in a burst of Reformation-inspired zeal, removing and destroying many of the books, most of them classed as papist nonsense by Edward VI's government. The ransacked library was restored in the reign of Elizabeth I, by Sir Thomas Bodley, who gave the revamped library its name, and expansions were added early in the reign of James I and Charles I, with the completion of the Selden End in 1637 giving the library the area where desks now wait for students and scholars to complete their research.

GARETH RUSSELL

APRIL FEAST DAYS

by Claire Ridgway

MAUNDY THURSDAY (2 APRIL 2015)

Maundy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper, that final meal that Jesus Christ had with his disciples before his arrest.

In Tudor times, on Maundy Thursday, the church was prepared for Easter with water and wine being used to wash the altars and it was traditional for people to go to confession. It was also customary for the monarch to wash the feet of poor people and to give alms.

The three holy oils – the chrism oil, the oil of catechumens and the oil of the sick – were also blessed on this day.

GOOD FRIDAY (3 APRIL 2015)

On Good Friday in Tudor times, people attended the ceremony known as "Creeping to the Cross". Christ's suffering and crucifixion, and what it meant, were commemorated by the clergy creeping up to a crucifix held up before the altar on their hands and knees. When they got to the crucifix, they would kiss the feet of Christ. The crucifix was then taken down into the church for the congregation to do the same.

Good Friday was also the day for the preparation of the Easter Sepulchre. The sepulchre consisted of a stone or wooden niche, to represent Christ's sealed tomb, which was filled with the consecrated host and an image of Christ. Once this was "sealed" by covering it with a cloth, candles were lit around it, and members of the church would guard it just as the Roman soldiers had done when the body of Christ was sealed in the cave.

EASTER SUNDAY (5 APRIL 2015)

On Easter Sunday, the candles in the church and around the sepulchre were extinguished, and then the church lights were re-lit by the priest, from a fire. The sepulchre was opened, and Christ's resurrection was celebrated with a special mass.

The Last Supper, Leonardo da Vinci, 1495-1498

The Easter Sunday mass marked the end of Lent, a period where people's diets were restricted, so it was only natural to celebrate it with good food. Dairy products and meat were back on the menu, and people enjoyed roasted meats like chicken, lamb and veal.

23 April – St George's Day

The Feast of St George is celebrated on the anniversary of the tradition date given for his death in 303 AD. St George was a Roman soldier from a Christian background who was imprisoned, tortured and finally beheaded for his faith after he had protested against the persecution of Christians. There are many legends surrounding this military saint, including the story of St George and the Dragon.

George was canonised as a saint in the 5th century but did not become England's official patron saint until 1552, when he replaced Edward the Confessor. His feast day was however an important day in Tudor England. During the Crusades, the emblem of this warrior saint – a red cross on a white background – was adopted by the Crusaders and eventually became England's flag. It's funny how a man who never set foot in England became a hero to English soldiers and Crusaders.

The Order of the Garter, the highest order of chivalry, was established under St George's banner in 1348 by Edward III and an annual chapter meeting always took place on 23 April.

23 April is also the traditional date for the birth of William Shakespeare, the famous English playwright, based on the fact that he was baptised on 26 April 1564. He also died on 23 April, in 1616.

24 April – St Mark's Eve

According to Susanna O'Neill, in *Folklore of Lincolnshire*, St Mark's Eve "was said to be the night ladies could divine who they were to marry". Ladies in North Kelsey would visit the Maiden Well, "walking towards it backwards and then circling it three times, still backwards, whilst wishing to see their destined husbands. After the third circling, the girl would kneel and gaze into the spring, where she would supposedly see the face of her lover." Other superstitions included ladies setting their table for supper and leaving the door open – their future husband would be the man who came and joined them; men seeing the reflection of their future bride's face in the church window if he went to the church at midnight; and ladies throwing an unbroken apple peel over their shoulder for it to spell out the name of their future love when it landed.

Steve Roud, in *The English Year*, writes of other traditions/superstitions – dreaming of your future lover, the "wraith" of your future love being summoned to your side, girls hanging their washed chemises in front of the fire and waiting for their future bridegroom to visit and turn them, picking grass from a grave at midnight to put under their pillow so that they would then dream of their future lover, or sitting in a barn and waiting for the figure of their future lover to walk through at midnight.

Another St Mark's Eve divination tradition, according to **www.mostly-medieval.com**, was for a woman to "fast from sunset and then during the night make and bake a cake containing an eggshell full of salt, wheat meal, and barley meal. Then she should open the door of her home. Her future lover should come in and turn the cake."

Do let me know if you try any of these!

25 April – Feast of St Mark the Evangelist

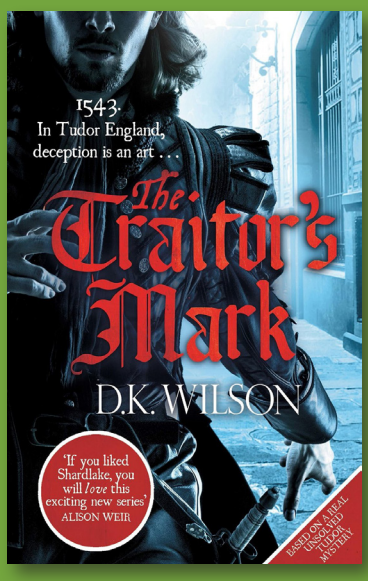
The Feast of St Mark the Evangelist was the traditional day for praying for fertile land and a good harvest. According to Keith Thomas, in *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, people would process across fields carrying the cross, banners and bells to bless the crops and drive away evil spirits. It derived from the Roman pagan tradition of asking the gods for a good harvest.

APRIL
GUEST SPEAKER
DEREK WILSON

This month's guest speaker is the wonderful Derek Wilson. We're so pleased that he could spend some time talking to us about a wide variety historical fiction. It's unlike any expert talk that we've had before and Derek sure to absorb you with his laid-back charismatic personality.

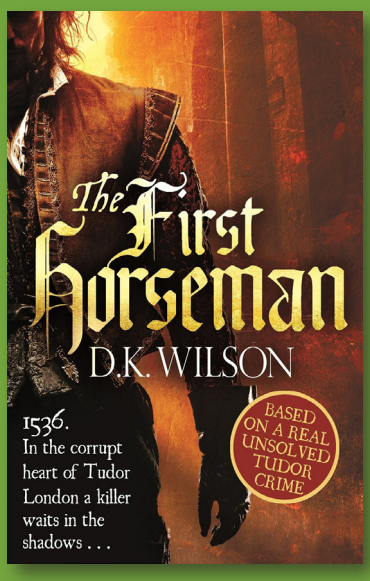
Derek is the author of many fiction and non-fiction historical books, many about the Tudor period. His works works include 'Henry VIII: Reformer and Tyrant', 'The English Reformation: How England was transformed by the Tudors', 'After the Storm: The Life and Legacy of Martin Luther', 'Uncrowned Kings of England: The Black Legend of the Dudleys' and biographies of Thomas Walsingham, the Earl of Leicester, Hans Holbein and Thomas More. He is currently working on 'Mrs Luther's Sisters: What Women did for the Reformation and the Reformation did for Women'.

His current fiction writing, under the name D.K. Wilson, is a series of mid-Tudor whodunits, 'The First Horseman' and 'The Traitor's Mark', featuring London goldsmith Thomas Treviot. They are both excellent works.

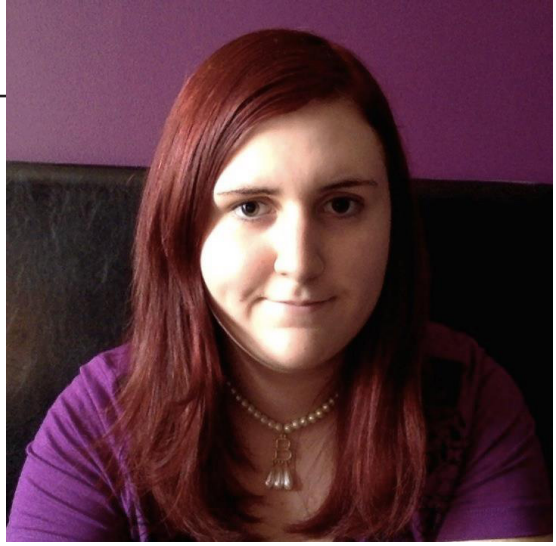


We'll be giving away a copy of both 'The First Horseman' and 'The Traitor's Mark' to one lucky participant in the live chat event

Date of live chat to be announced on the website



Charlie on Books



Inside the Tudor Court: Henry VIII and His Six Wives Through the Writings of the Spanish Ambassador, Eustace Chapuys

by Lauren Mackay

EUSTACE Chapuys, the imperial ambassador – as much as we hear from him through his many letters and accounts, we have not known much about the actual man himself. Now we do, thanks to Lauren Mackay's book on the Ambassador. It is a surprisingly engaging and interesting read that tells us not just about the man himself, but also about Henry VIII's court. Eustace Chapuys, despite commenting and reporting on many events in Henry VIII's court, has recently been seen as a critical man who hated Anne Boleyn and who called her the 'concubine'. Here, Lauren Mackay presents him in a new light, not just as a man who constantly wished for Anne's downfall.

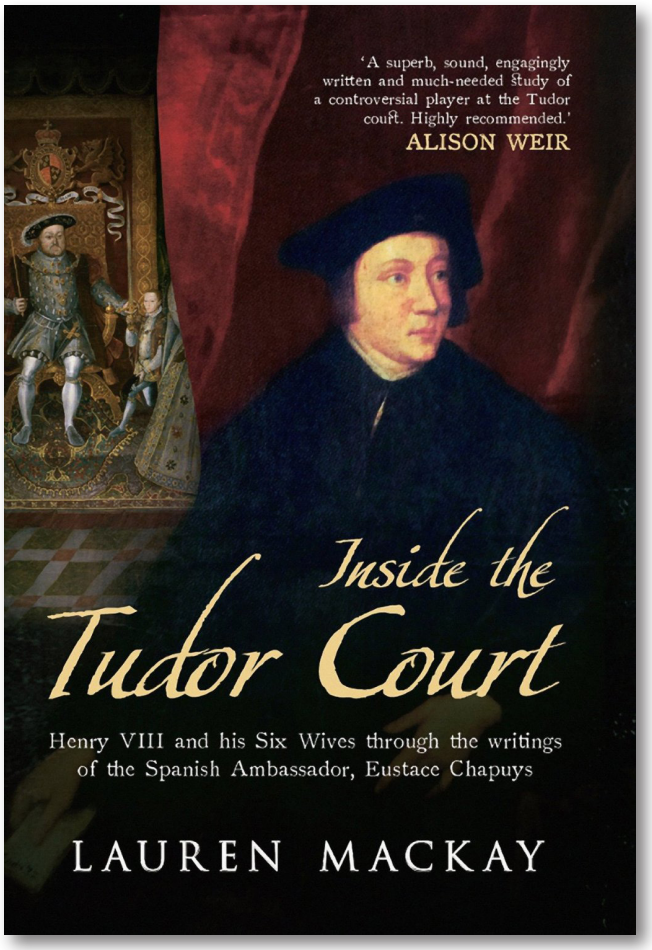
Mackay starts with talking about the man history has seen him as, saying that *'Although Eustace Chapuys occupied a position of almost unique important among sixteenth century diplomats, he is known to students of Tudor history chiefly as a name at the bottom of despatches of amazing freshness and penetration'*. But what was the man actually like? Mackay sets out to find this, banishing the rumours about his hatred for Anne Boleyn and his many labels: '*rabidly Catholic, misogynistic, blinded by personal hatred and driven by person agenda'*.

Despite there not being many sources about him, Mackay starts with trying to determine his possible date of birth and living conditions. She states with certainty that he was born in Annecy to Louis and Guigone Chapuys, but her obvious research into the subject shines through with his date of birth. She mentions the date 1499 being inscribed on his tomb, but then says that it is too late as Chapuys started university eight years later. Mackay then suggests a plausible theory that whoever copied the inscription before the tomb and chapel were demolished in 1807 included one 'X' too many, therefore the birth date should have been 1489. '*This makes Chapuys a more plausible eighteen years old on entering university';* it does seem more likely and, once again, shows Mackay's love and dedication for the subject. This is then followed by a vivid account of his hometown, still suggesting theories and possibilities as to what Chapuys did

there, as well as admitting that we do not know much about his early life.

Chapuys spent almost fifteen years in the English court as the imperial ambassador. His goals were originally those normally associated with an ambassador – he was sent to continue relations between Henry VIII and Charles V, seek alliances and support against the French, and report back to Charles on events of the English court. However, in addition to this he was also charged with attempting to seek a reconciliation between Henry VIII and his wife Katherine of Aragon. He had no idea how long and difficult the journey would be, his reports later becoming one of our major sources of information on the Great Matter.

Mackay's book is divided into several chapters showing Chapuys' different relationships with many of the major players of the court and his reaction to the different events that unfolded. Two particular relationships that I found interesting are Chapuys' relationships with Katherine of Aragon and Princess Mary. The Chapuys that people and history should remember is the man that cared, loved and fought tirelessly for those two women. Mackay, however, does not get carried away with the sentimental side of the man, she is realistic in the way she presents him and never makes him out to be something he was not. She analyses his thoughts well through his despatches and makes many well-argued conclusions. We will never know for certain what he was thinking or what the man was like, but we are one step closer with this book.



Lauren Mackay has gone a long way in rehabilitating Chapuys and presenting him as he really was, or at least as close to that as we are ever going to get. She opens up the life of Chapuys as not just the ambassador that hated Anne Boleyn, but the man as a friend, confidante and a human being. He was an incredible and intelligent man that gave us a lot of useful information. I would recommend this to anyone wanting to find out about the incredibly complex and interesting man, but also to those just interested in Tudor history. He presents a different view of the English court (even not detailing many of the court's entertainments because he didn't enjoy them and didn't want to bore the Emperor with the details) and instead just focuses on what he thought of as important. The pages are full of information on both subjects, the court and the man, and is a must have for any Tudor bookshelf.

CHARLIE FENTON

THE CRAMPE RING PRAYER BOOK

Melanie V. Taylor delves into some glorious medieval art history

In the Muniment Room of Westminster Abbey is a document called The Cramp Ring Prayer book containing the words for the Good Friday service where cramp rings were blessed and given to those suffering from the King's Evil.

What is a Crampe ring I hear you ask, what is the King's Evil and why would you give one of these rings to anyone suffering from it?

The concept of giving a gold ring to cure a disease dates from the time of Edward the Confessor. King Edward believed that a ring he had been given by a pilgrim who had returned from Jerusalem had the ability to cure the King's Evil. We see this ring immortalised in the left hand panel of the Wilton Diptych (National Gallery, London). King Edward is in the centre (between St John the Baptist holding the lamb, and another English saint, King Edmund the Martyr) and is holding a ring between the forefinger and thumb of his left hand. From that time onwards it was believed that Edward the Confessor's successors had the ability to cure various diseases such as the falling sickness (epilepsy) and the King's Evil, (scrofula which is a form of tuberculosis that affects the lymph nodes in the neck). The kings did this by the laying on of hands and the giving of a gold ring to be worn on a ribbon.

The blessing and giving of cramp rings on a Good Friday was performed in England up until the arrival of the Hanoverian kings. In the Gentleman's Magazine & Chronicle of January 1774 (page 274) and Dodsley's Annual Register (page 144) we are given a description of what happens during the service and also told that, after the break with Rome, Henry VIII decided to keep the tradition as being a 'laudable and edifying custom'.

Having established what a cramp ring was for, let us turn to the c1554 document kept in the Muniment Room at Westminster Abbey.

In 2006 I had the privilege of examining this document during my researches into trying to establish possible works by the artist, Levina Teerlinc. The book is not large and the pages are of the finest flawless vellum with watercolour illuminations. Mary's marriage to Philip II of Spain is acknowledged when you open the cover, providing us with the possible date of 1554. The combined coats of arms of England and Spain form the central part of the page. The emblematic rose of England and pomegranate of Spain are contained within the decorated margins. The shield with the red cross of St George on a black ground contained in the bottom margin would have once glittered silver as the black is silver leaf that has oxidised over the centuries.

Pomegranates also symbolised the Resurrection and the red rose was associated with the Virgin Mary, which adds another layer of meaning to this document that is associated with a ritual once performed only on Good Friday.

Inside are the Latin words for the service and the directions for the participants, in English, are written in red ink. The stylised Renaissance marginal decorations continue with grotesques, cherubs and lion masks holding gold rings in their mouths. In addition there are three full-page illuminations; two of Queen Mary at key moments during the service and an illumination of The Crucifixion.

At first glance you might think the lions are just decorative, but the lion forms part of the English coat of arms which suggests that the marginal decoration is a deliberate reference to England and the inclusion of the ring is another confirmation that the service is only performed by the English monarch. The marginal shield with the cross of St George and the fleur de Lys are other visual references to England and the English lands in France.

In the description of the service in the 18th century magazine we are told that after the monarch had arrived at the chapel and the cross had been laid on a cushion before the high altar, the king had to creep to the altar (luckily for his knees, on a carpet) where he knelt on a cushion before the cross. The Master of the Jewel House would be waiting with a silver basin(s) containing the cramp rings and the clerk of the closet had to be ready with the 'boke concerninge the halowinge of the crampe rings'. The rings would be blessed with holy water. In the first full page illumination we see Queen Mary praying on her knees behind what appears to be a low U shaped table and two basins containing rings are on either side of her. The book on the cushion before her contains the words of the service; on the altar we glimpse part of a crucifixion scene that echoes the image contained later in this prayer book.

The 1774 description continues telling how the king, with the aid of his greatest lords, performs this rite and goes on to describe how the queen and her ladies then come and they too creep to the cross on their knees, followed by other lords and noblemen.

At the bottom of this page there is another marginal reference to this being an exclusively English sacred rite by the inclusion of an image of the patron saint of England, St George killing the dragon, contained within a wreath of laurel leaves.

It is interesting that this particular rite was preserved during the time when Henry VIII was reforming the Church. In 1532 The Master of the Jewel House would have been Thomas Cromwell who, together with Sir John Williams who was joint master with Cromwell, would have taken part in this service and presented the silver basins with the rings for blessing with holy water.

The page that faces this illumination shows the prayer to be used by the queen for the consecration of the cramp rings. As a successor of Edward the Confessor only she can consecrate these and thus possibly provide a cure to certain ills for a few fortunate people.

The King's Evil was the name given to a specific form of tuberculosis that produces large nodules on the neck of the afflicted. In a modern age a cocktail of antibiotics is used to treat this unsightly and nasty disease, but in the 1500s disease was something cured by superstition, bleeding and purging. Poultices of various sorts may have been applied without much success and bleeding may well have worsened the condition, so perhaps

being one of the lucky ones chosen to be given a cramp ring, or to be touched by the king in the hope of affecting a cure was the better of all these 'medical' evils. This photograph is from Wikipedia (Bramwell, Byrom Edinburgh, Constable, 1893 Atlas of Clinical Medicine. Source: National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, USA.) and shows how the disease manifests itself as lumps on the neck.

In the second painting in the prayer book Mary is shown laying her hands on the neck of the scrofula victim who kneels before her. Mary too kneels on a cushion. Her hands are oversized as if emphasising the importance of her act.

A tonsured priest pulls the neckline of the sufferer, so Mary can touch the affected parts of this poor person's neck. After the laying on of hands, one of the blessed gold rings would be given to the victim to wear on a ribbon round their neck. Behind Mary kneels the priest taking the service . The placing of the pillar appears to define the spaces between the supplicant and Mary and the way her hand crosses this division suggests the transference of healing power.

The obeisance made by all those taking part was an essential part of reminding everyone that only by His divine right the monarch was able to affect a cure for this, and several other, diseases.

In the last of the three full-page illuminations we are reminded that this service took place on the most solemn day in the Church's calendar. The image of Christ's suffering is there to help mediation and a contemplation of faith. The skull is not only a reminder of His sacrifice, but of our own mortality. It is also telling us that this all took place at Golgotha, the place of skulls.

Jerusalem is seen in the distance and on the road is a tiny figure who, when I looked at this page with a lens, appears to be a Roman soldier carrying a long lance or spear and he is travelling in the direction of the city. Looking at the tragic figure on the cross we see the wound caused by the lance on Christ's chest confirming that the soldier had been and gone.

The margin to this page contains the symbols of The Passion, all included within another laurel wreath. Other symbols such as the pomegranate and the rose are also there – the rose in the margin under the Virgin as her symbol: the pomegranate a reminder that all is not lost and the Resurrection is to come.

During the 19th century a Henry Hayman (1853-1922) painted copies of the two images of

Mary in oil paint on panel and these are now in the Wellcome Library. The Hayman image of Mary I Blessing the Cramp Rings is much larger than the 1554 illumination, being 45 x 30cms. There are notable differences apart from their size and medium. Reproducing the image of the queen on her knees and away from the symbolism contained within the rest of the prayer book, the artist has taken a more subtle approach. The blessing appears to be taking place at night as the windows are dark. The crucifixion scene on the altar is more obvious and appears to be the only light source.

Other differences include Mary's attire, the carpet and the way the text in her book is laid out.

Hayman also painted a version of Mary performing the act of laying-on of hands.

Hayman has even copied the rather strange perspective in this image.

Does the lack of the decorative margin help or hinder our understanding, or appreciation, of these images?

I wondered why Hayman painted them when I came across them on the BBC Painting website. Having made a cursory exploration of various books on my bookshelves and trawling the web, I have been unable to discover who Hayman is. According to the BBC painting website, his dates are 1853 – 1922; so far I've come up with a cricketer and a headmaster of Rugby school, neither of whom seem to be painters!

Since this ritual had been established over centuries, it raises the question of why was this particular prayer book created in 1554? It is possible that Mary wanted to commemorate her succession as England's first queen regnant by commissioning this prayer book for a ritual that had only been performed previously by kings. There are references to Spain with pomegranates, which can also be read as a reference to the Resurrection; and the rose

representing the Tudors as well as being a symbol of the Virgin.

On other pages there are other marginal decorations representing Adam and Eve who are portrayed as classical caryatids.

On the left hand page with Adam, the instruction regarding the ring reads as follows: "the rynge lyinge in one Basin or mo[r]e, this prayer to be said over them'. A complicated ribbon coming from the basket on Adam's head weaves its way across the top and down the right hand side of the page where it ends in a bow tied to a ring. The ring is not very highlighted as if the blessing has not yet taken place so it is not imbued it with any power to heal. On the next page, we have Eve also with a basket containing interesting things, including the serpent, balanced on the top of her head. Another ribbon weaves its way across the top and down the left side of the page where the ring is shown defined in gold. This page also has the English coat of arms – this time on their own. The text in the upper part of the page concludes the blessing of the rings and the benediction begins with the words 'The God of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob. . .' The artist has been subtle in the way he, or she, has underlined just who is performing this particular ritual.

As David Loades observes in the chapter on Mary's marriage to Philip II of Spain in his brilliant book Mary Tudor, 'Throughout the proceedings, we are told, the queen kept to the right hand, and the king to the left – a reversal of the normal positions." Those observing this ceremony would have immediately understood that Philip's status was that of spouse. Looking at this with twenty first century eyes we have to remember that up until 1974 (in England) women were chattels of their husbands. In the marriage ceremony we are still positioned on the left hand side of the man, ostensibly so his sword arm is free to protect us. In the 16th century there was no precedent of how to treat a spouse of the first queen regnant of England. By making Philip stand in the place of the bride certainly hammered home the point that he was jure uxoris. It is as if the artist has taken notice of how Philip had been placed at the wedding and has carried through that concept as a way of continuing to underscore Mary's precedence over her husband.

As to how successful this healing ritual was, not surprisingly there are no recorded successes.

The level of execution of these images appears rushed, even crude in the way the marginalia has been painted, almost contradicting the sophisticated subtlety of the symbols used to portray both the queen and England. The paintings would have been completed before the script was done and at the back of the book we see pages empty of text, but with completed illuminated margins. If this book were ready for Mary's first Easter as queen then it would have been a tall order to finish all this artwork in time. The painting would have been done in the gloom of the English winter with only candlelight to help the artist so perhaps this is why these images do not have the finish seen in other work attributed to Teerlinc.

Whether the artist was Teerlinc (the first woman ever to be appointed as an official Court artist), or an anonymous artist working for the newly reinstated Catholic Church, this is a wonderful illuminated treasure and we are lucky it has survived all these centuries.

I hope you enjoy my photographs of this prayer book and I apologise that they are at a slight angle; unfortunately I did not have a camera stand with me. I wish I could have recorded the Westminster Abbey choir rehearsal I could hear during my time in the Muniment Room. That too was magical.

MELANIE V TAYLOR

Melanie Taylor studied The History of Art, Architecture & Design at Kingston University, graduating in 2005. followed by a Master of Arts degree in Medieval & Tudor Studies at the University of Kent, Canterbury. Melanie now lives in Surrey and lectures in art and social history. She is the author of "**The Truth of the Line**", a fictional telling of the life of Nicholas Hillyarde.

NOBODY SOLVES A PROBLEM LIKE MARIA

by Kyra Kramer

WHILE public attention has lately come to focus on Katherine Willoughby Brandon Bertie as Henry VIII's potential amour, it is this estimable lady's mother, Maria de Salinas Willoughby, who intrigues me the most. Maria was one of the most devoted friends in history. We're talking Samwise Gamgee from *Lord of the Rings* level true-blue friendship. This loyalty, along with her intelligence and courage, makes Maria de Salinas one of my favorite people of the Tudor era.

Katherina of Aragon was widowed just few months after she had come to England to marry Arthur Tudor, but while her mother the queen of Spain lived the young woman's future did not seem bleak. Her marriage was arranged to Arthur's younger brother, the future Henry VIII, and her mother sent new ladies from Spain to join her household as a sign of support. One of these new ladies was Maria de Salinas. Neither the Spanish queen nor Maria could have foreseen the long years of penury and confusion that would dog Katherina's household after her mother's death. Maria, however, remained loyal to Katherina in spite of the hardship.

Maria's friendship was rewarded with a place by Katherina's side at court when the widowed princess married Henry VIII in 1509. Katherina loved Maria, and more importantly *trusted* her. No slouch in the devotion department herself, Katherina was as loyal to Maria as Maria was to her. History is rife with occasions of former friends betraying each other and becoming enemies, but that never happened to Maria and Katherina.

Maria, as the queen's closest companion, was sought after and feted within the English court. In 1511 she became the godmother of Mary Brandon, the daughter of Charles Brandon and his wife Anne Browne. (As chance would have it, Charles Brandon, who would soon become the duke of Suffolk thanks to his close friendship with Henry VIII, was also Maria's future son-in-law.) Maria was also a source of contention in Spain. Ferdinand of Aragon, who had treated his daughter shamefully during her widowhood, still expected Katherina to actively promote Spanish interests in her husband's court. Maria, who had doubtlessly not forgotten Ferdinand's treachery and callousness, encouraged the queen to support the needs of her English subjects over the desires of Spain. Ferdinand's ambassador, Luis Caroz de Villaragut, complained bitterly about this to his master in Castile but it didn't affect Maria's position in Katherina's court in the slightest.

After her marriage in 1516 to William Willoughby, who was the 11th Baron of Willoughby de Eresby, remained a lady-in-waiting to the queen. Like her friend Katherina, Maria also suffered the loss of children. Both of her sons, Henry and Francis, died as infants. Maria's only child to survive to adulthood, Katherine Willoughby, was born on March 22, 1519 and was almost certainly named for the queen.

Maria was widowed in 1526 and wound up in a protracted legal dispute with her brother-in-law, Christopher Willoughby. The queen, who had been supplanted in the king's affections and who had become the target of an annulment, was unable to give the full weight of her position in aid of her friend. Charles Brandon, however, remained Maria's staunch ally and bought her daughter Katherine's warship from the king. In part, this was because Katherine Willoughby was an heiress and he had arranged that she marry his eldest son, Henry Brandon. This was a very common way of arranging the security of minor female heirs in

Catherine of Aragon – Lucas Hornebolte, 16th Century

Mary Tudor and Charles Brandon – Attributed to Jan Gossaert (1478–1532)

this time, so was not as mercenary as it appears. Maria was probably very grateful for the politically powerful Brandon's help, protection, and interest in the matter.

When Brandon's third wife, Henry sister Mary Tudor, died in 1533 the duke decided not to leave the 14 year old Katherine on the shelf waiting for his young son to grow old enough to wed her; the 49 year old Brandon married the girl himself. As creepy as it looks to us today, this was not that unusal in the Tudor era. Nonetheless, the rumors about Brandon's prurient interest in Katherine when she was only twelve and his wife still alive meant that the union did merit a bit of scandalous mention at the time. Brandon didn't wait to consummate the marriage either, with the first of his sons with Katherine being born in 1534.

How Maria felt about her daughter's wedding and bedding by the decades-older duke we do not know, but since Katherine and Brandon had, from all appearances and records, a happy marriage we can hope Maria was pleased by her child's good fortune … or at least resolved to bear it. At any rate, Maria would have been more entangled in the tribulations of her friend Katherina, who unlike Katherine Willoughby Brandon was truly suffering at this time. The former queen had been cast off, forbidden from seeing her daughter, cut off from her friends, and was enduring Henry's remarriage to Anne Boleyn as well as the birth of his new daughter with his new wife.

Christmastime of 1535 brought Maria news that her oldest and dearest friend was dying. Maria desperately petitioned the king to be allowed to go Katherina's side, but not even the fact Maria's daughter was married to Henry's best friend could sway the stubborn and vengeful monarch. He expressly and steadfastly forbade Maria to see Katherina. Notwithstanding the risk of imprisonment or worse, when Maria received word the first week of January that Katherina was on death's doorstep, Maria bit her thumb at the king and rode hell-for-leather for Katherina's cage at Kimbolton.

A brave and true friend, Maria rode sixty miles through the dark of night in freezing weather on to reach Katherina before her death, arriving in the chill evening of January 6, 1536. At some point in her journey Maria, who was in her mid-to-late 40s and would have been considered an elderly woman in that time period, was thrown from her horse. Having a stainless-steel (and thus unbreakable) backbone, Maria was undeterred by her tumble. Moreover, Maria turned this accident to her advantage and used the stains on her dress to convince Katherina's steward and de facto jailer, Sir Edward Bedingfield, that she had "lost" the papers giving her permission from the king to see the former queen. Her ploy worked, and Bedingfield let her inside the house. Once Maria had breached the manor, she went to Katherina's room, locked the door, and then refused to come out again. Bedingfield was unwilling to physically drag out a peeress and could only wring his hands.

Therefore, Maria was there to hold Katherina in her arms as the queen breathed her last on the following day. Despite the king's attempts to keep Katherina from any personal comfort, Maria's courage and physical daring secured the bereft former princess of Spain some solace.

Maria got away with her impudent defiance of the king's commands, probably because of the influence of her daughter and son-n-law. The duchess of Suffolk attended Katherina's funeral with her mother, even though the smart thing to do at that time would have been to side with the king's living wife, Anne Boleyn. Maria herself died in May of 1539, and legend has it that she was interred at Peterborough Cathedral with Katherine, staying by her queen's side in death as she did in life.

Maria's daughter Katherine would marry again after Suffolk's death, to a man named Robert Bertie. She and Bertie had two children. The son and eldest, Peregrine Bertie, was an ancestor of Lady Diana Spencer, the deceased mother of Princes William and Harry. William, duke of Cambridge, will one day inherit the throne of England. Thus, Maria De Salinas is, in a manner of speaking, revenged on Henry VIII for her friend's death. It is Maria's direct descendants, not Henry's, who will wear the crown.

It is a fitting legacy for a woman of such high courage and unshakable friendship

KYRA KRAMER

Member focus: Catherine Brooks

A HUGE THANKS goes out from the team here at the Tudor Society to Catherine Brooks and her friend Claire who went to Leicester Cathedral ahead of all of the Richard III events to be interviewed by Sky News. As you can see from these photos, Catherine did a magnificent job on our behalf and we can't thank her enough.

On Monday she returned to the Cathedral to join the massive queue to see the coffin of Richard III before it was buried. In Catherine's words:

> **"I went to the Cathedral on Monday to see the coffin. It was rather nippy! We queued for around two hours (the queue was 4 hours by the time we got out!), and we were only in there for about a minute - so many people came that they had to keep us all moving. But it was wonderful - emotional, respectful and beautiful. We saw Bishop Tim Stevens (just to say good afternoon to), Michael Ibsen (who I JUST missed talking to as we were going into the Cathedral - gutted!), and I stalked Dr John Ashdown-Hill into a cake shop for a chat and an autograph!"**

Well done Catherine, and I hope you enjoy your signed copy of "George Boleyn" by Claire Ridgway.


Leicester Cathedral Gardens
5 July 2014
Cathedral Gardens
EUROPEAN UNION


St MARTINS
RICHARD III
KING OF ENGLAND
1483 1485

NEWS

HARDWICK REMEMBERS TUDOR ENGLAND'S WOULD-BE QUEEN

THE majesty of Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire will take on whole new meaning this year as the National Trust marks the 400th anniversary of the death of Arbella Stuart. Granddaughter to the powerful Bess of Hardwick, Arbella was a prospective successor to Queen Elizabeth I, but hers is a little-known and dramatic story.

The only daughter of Elizabeth Cavendish and Charles Stuart, and orphaned at a relatively young age, Arbella was cared for by her maternal grandmother, the Countess of Shrewsbury, otherwise known as Bess of Hardwick. She was raised as a princess at Hardwick with her grandmother's ambitions for her set high.

With no heir to Elizabeth I's throne, there were a number of contenders who could have succeeded her. Arbella was one of them, being cousin to James VI of Scotland, who eventually succeeded to the throne of England, and niece to Mary Queen of Scots.

But Arbella's life was not to follow a smooth path. Instead it was one filled with events often contained in the most gripping period-drama, where she found herself at the centre of political wranglings, dispelled from court and ending her days in the Tower of London.

Arbella's biographer, Sarah Gristwood, comments:

"Queen Elizabeth I had at one stage spoken of Arbella as a possible successor to her. Bess of Hardwick had grand ambitions for Arbella, so it is not surprising that the young girl's contemporaries expected her to succeed to the throne. When she made a bid for the crown and later tried to flee the country both were matters of national security. She's been lost to sight over the four centuries since her death in the Tower, so staff and volunteers at Hardwick are presenting her extraordinary story to visitors."

Visitors will be taken on a revealing room-by-room journey, set in the place where some of the key events happened and invited to consider whether Hardwick was a palace or a prison for Arbella. The story continues outside, in the garden and wider parkland, within the confines that were later imposed on Arbella.

One of the striking features of a visit will be the chance to meet eye-to-eye with portraits of the key players, brought off the walls to see them in the powerful light they were perhaps intended.

"We want visitors to get a sense of the power, ambition and politics at play as well as the turmoil and uncertainty of this time," explains Dr Nigel Wright, Hardwick's House and Collections Manager. "Hardwick was more than a big house on a hill. Built by Bess of Hardwick in the late 16th century, it could have ended up as the seat of England's power, and the turning point in this country's history."

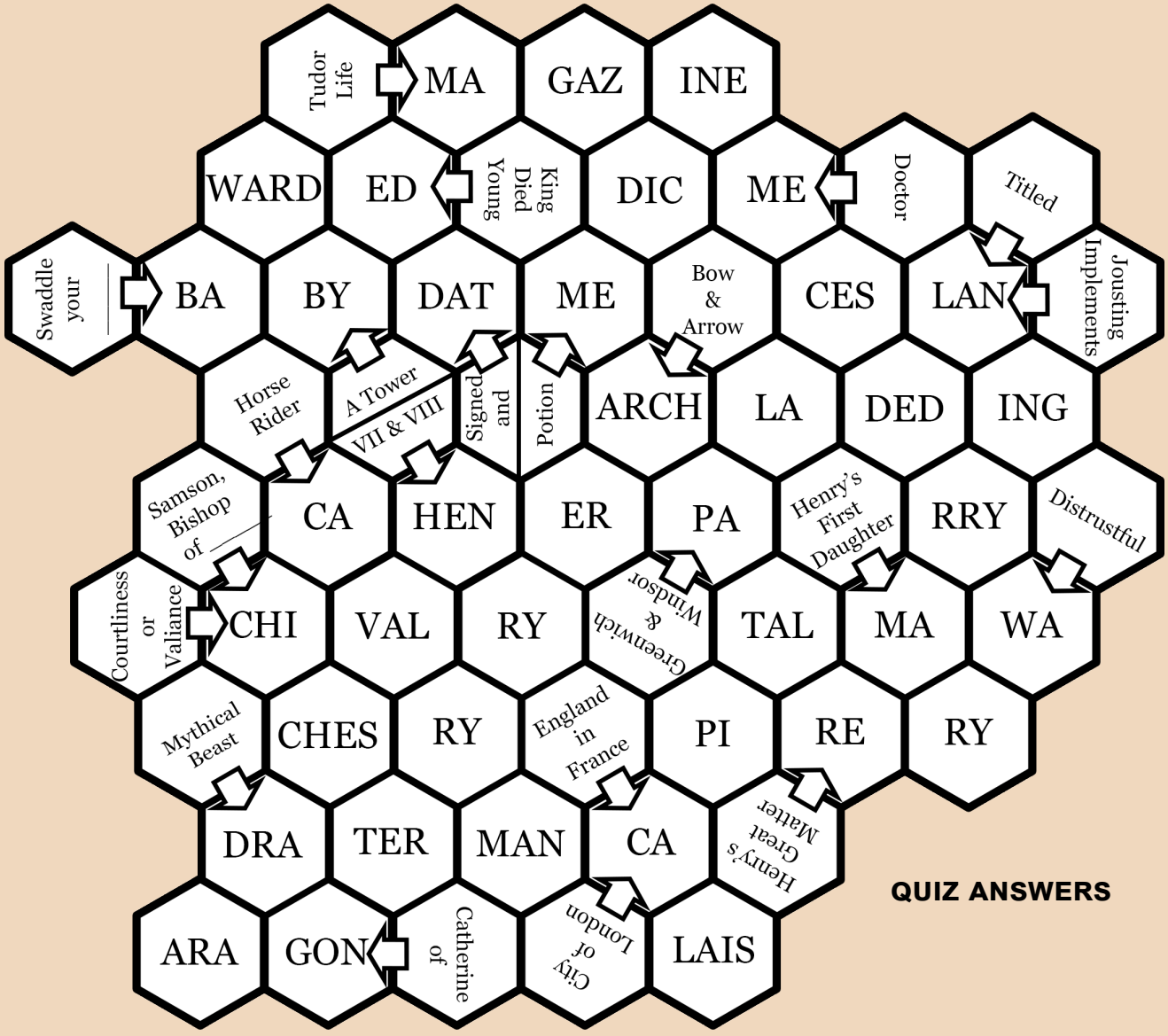
Volunteers have been involved in researching the Arbella story to help put the experience together. Volunteer Jane Iliffe adds:

"Arbella's is a fascinating story about what might have been. I have enjoyed sorting out some of the myths and getting a better understanding of who Arbella was and how she fitted into the politics of the day. I hope our visitors will be just as interested in gaining an insight into this little known woman and her life, which started with such promise and ended in tragedy."

Visitors can experience Arbella at Hardwick until 1 November 2015. Full opening times and further information can be found at **www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hardwick**.

Hardwick Hall, Doe Lea, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S44 5QJ
Tel: 01246 850430
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hardwickhall

Hardwick Hall



QUIZ ANSWERS

Tudor Life

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS

Claire Ridgway
Gareth Russell
Charlie Fenton
Melanie V. Taylor
Kyra Kramer
Beth von Staats
Jane Moulder

ART

LAYOUT Nada Sertić

VIDEO

VIDEOGRAPHER Tim Ridgway

MAGAZINE EDITOR

Tim Ridgway
info@tudorsociety.com

CONTACT

info@tudorsociety.com
Calle Sargento Galera, 3
Lucar 04887
Almeria
Spain

ONLINE

www.TudorSociety.com

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DON'T MISS
THIS MONTH'S GIANT
GIVE-AWAY & EXPERT TALK!