

Tudor Life

The Tudor Society Magazine

THE
TUDOR
SOCIETY

Members Only

Nº 21

May 2016

The myth of the
naughty
Jane Rocheford

Zips, rubber soles &
handrails

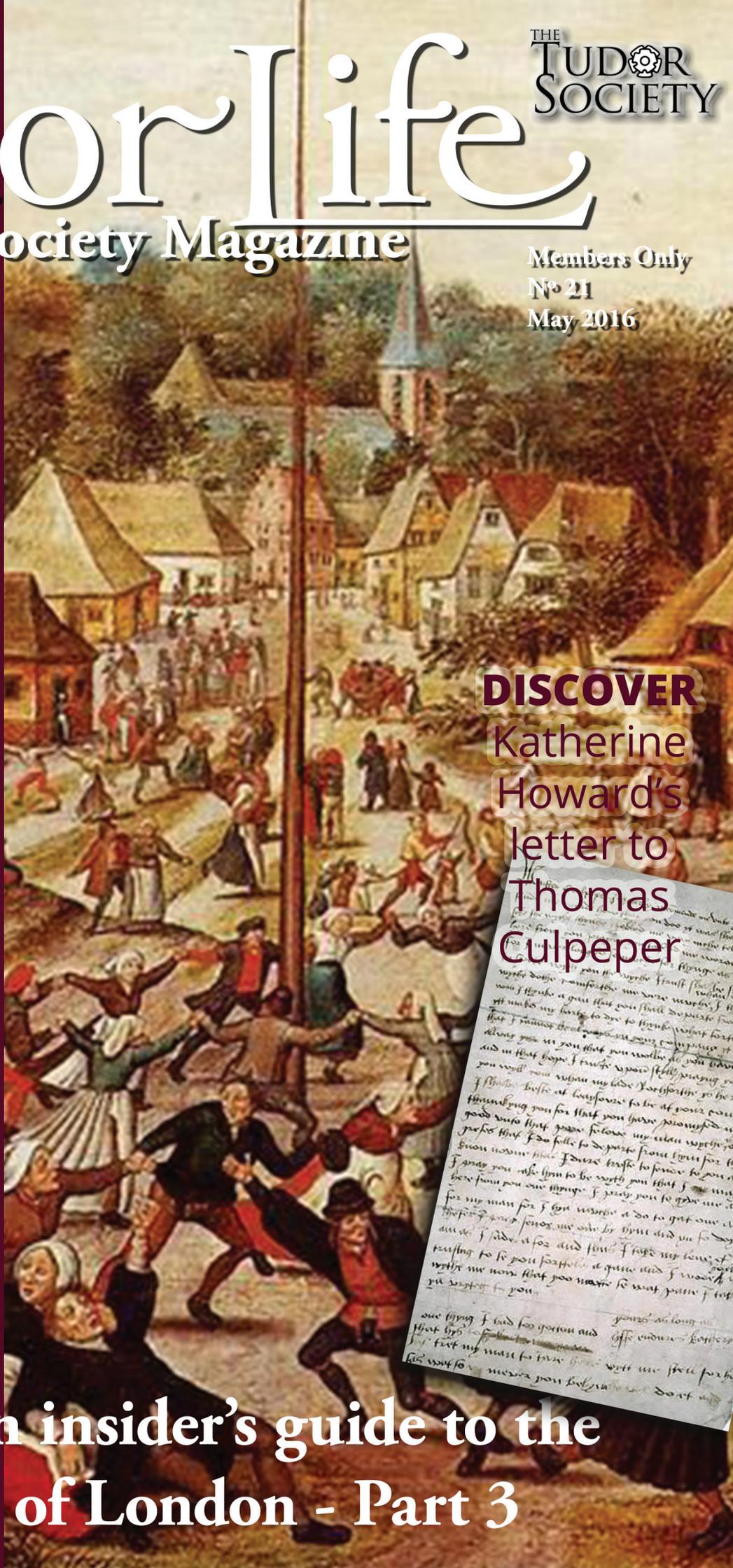
The Dudleys

A brief history of
Warwick Castle

Sweethearts and
Sweetmeats

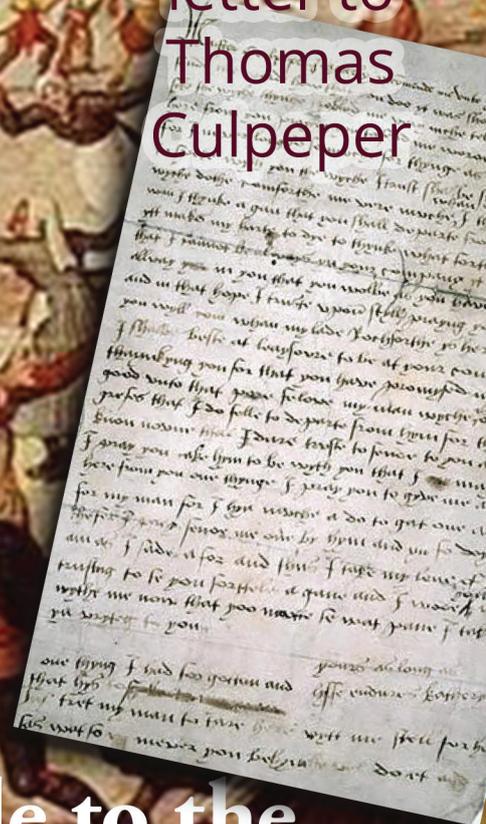
**CELEBRATING
THE
START OF
SUMMER**

**PLUS: An insider's guide to the
Tower of London - Part 3**



DISCOVER

Katherine
Howard's
letter to
Thomas
Culpeper





Welcome!

May 2016

MAY was a time of celebration and threat in Tudor England. The “month of Mary” in medieval Catholicism was not always so safe for earthly queens, as poor Anne Boleyn exemplified in May 1536. Conor Byrne writes about Anne’s tragic cousin Queen Catherine Howard, Emma Taylor takes a light-hearted look at how queens have been presented on screen, while Toni Mount’s guest article discusses the origins and traditions of Tudor merry-making in May. Dominic Pearce focuses on a different kind of celebration, with the rise to power of the Bourbon dynasty in France at the end of the sixteenth century. Many of their pivotal triumphs happened to occur in May and Dominic’s account of how a minor prince rose through the chaos of the sectarian wars to become king is an enthralling one. It’s only left to me to recommend our wonderful regular contributors and to wish you all a very merry May!

GARETH RUSSELL

An evening with me I'll be there

- Pages 8-14 →
- Pages 28-31 →
- Pages 44-46 →
- Pages 68-73 →
- Pages 56-59 →
- Pages 60-66 →
- Pages 32-43 →

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DISCOVER Katherine Howard's letter to Thomas Culpeper



Cover: The Dance around the May Pole by Pieter the Elder Bruegel

Tudor Life

Contents

2 Queen Katherine Howard's letter to Thomas Culpeper
by Conor Byrne

7 An evening with the authors

8 The myth of the naughty Jane Rocheford
by Adrienne Dillard

15 The Fall of Anne Boleyn
AUDIO BOOK
SERIALISED
by Claire Ridgway

16 The triumph of Henri IV of France
by Dominic Pierce

21 The trial of Anne Boleyn
word search quiz
by Tim Ridgway

22 Merry making and festivities
by Toni Mount

28 Zips, rubber soles and handrails
by Emma Elizabeth Taylor

32 An insider's guide to the Tower of London PART 3
by Tara Ball

44 The Dudleys PART 4
by Derek Wilson

47 Merrymaking
by Melanie V. Taylor

54 BOOK REVIEW:
Katherine of Aragon
by Charlie Fenton

56 Sweethearts and sweetmeats
by Olga Hughes

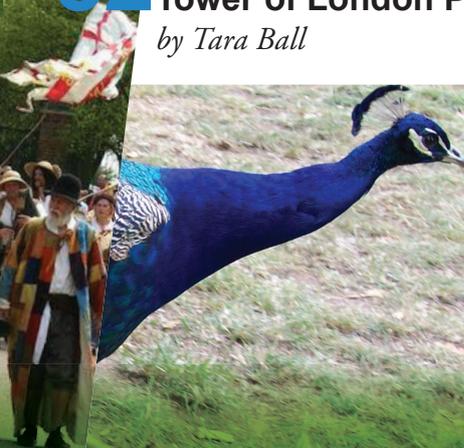
60 Celebrating the beginning of summer
by Jane Moulder

67 TUDOR SOCIETY
BULLETIN
by Tim Ridgway

68 Warwick Castle - a brief history
by Tim Ridgway

74 May feast days
by Claire Ridgway

76 On this day in Tudor history
by Claire Ridgway





My lorde Culpeper I greatly recomende me unto you
 and doe it was shewed me that you
 have from you praying you to find me worser how that you do
 for I was longed so muche for thinge as I do to see you and
 to speake wylth you the wyche fault sh^{all} be shortly now the
 wyche dothe comforte me w^{ch} muche, I thinke of it and
 w^{ch} I thinke a gaine that you shall departe from me a gaine
 yt make my hart to dye to thinke what fortune I have
 that I cannot be alwayes in your companye it my self
 alwayes you in you that you woulde do you have promised
 and in that hope I truste upon still praying you that
 you woulde see when my lade Northfolke go here for then
 I thinke beste at longforne to be at your comm^{ing}
 thankyng you for that you have promised me to be so
 good unto that your felow my w^{ch} man wylth you of the
 purpose that I do telle to departe from him for then I do
 knowe now that I dare truste to come to you and wylth
 I pray you wylth him to be wylth you that I maye sumtyme
 here from you our thinge. I pray you to geve me a purpose
 for my man for I have w^{ch} a do to get our and
 the purpose of your purpose me only by him and you for doinge
 and so I s^halde it for and then I hope my lene of your
 trustyng to see you shortly a gaine and I wylth wylth
 wylth me now that you wylth to see what youe I thinke
 you wylth to you.

yours at long
 Giffendun - Katherine

one thing I had for you and
 that bys of ~~the~~
 I wylth my man to have ~~the~~ wylth me still for the
 his wylth for ~~the~~ wylth you be ~~the~~ do it

QUEEN KATHERINE HOWARD'S LETTER TO THOMAS CULPEPER

by Conor Byrne

Traditionally, Queen Katherine Howard is said to have written a letter to her paramour, Thomas Culpeper, sometime in the spring of 1541. For the majority of modern historians, Katherine's 'love letter' is definitive proof of her adultery. It constitutes vital evidence that she was guilty of the crimes for which she was executed in February 1542. However, mystery surrounds both the letter and the circumstances in which it was written. This article examines the letter itself before moving onto the question of whether it supports the traditional view of a love affair between queen and servant. To do so, the letter will be situated in context of the convention of early modern letter writing. Only when it is examined in a broader context can Katherine's letter to Culpeper fully be understood.

Before proceeding to an analysis of the letter, it is useful to provide a historical context. Katherine Howard had married Henry VIII in the summer of 1540. Her queenship had, contrary to popular interpretation, been a success so far, and she had established cordial relations with her husband's family. Henry was, reportedly, besotted with his new bride, and foreign ambassadors at court remarked on his newfound energy and vigour. Unfortunately, his ill health continued to plague him. In the spring of 1541, the king's ulcer on his leg had closed; when this had happened some years earlier, he had almost died. Rumours circulated that Henry had closed his doors to all, including his wife, and one ambassador reported that there were stories that Henry wished to annul his marriage to Katherine, although these were certainly false. At around the same time, Katherine's former seducer Francis Dereham arrived at court, hoping to attain a place in the queen's household. According to a friend of Dereham, who provided later testimony, Dereham believed that many

courtiers 'despised' him because the queen showed him favour. He allegedly claimed: "Go to Mr. John, and tell him I was of the queen's council before he knew her and shall be when she hath forgotten him". In June, the court departed on a progress to the north of England, traditionally an area of opposition to the government. They reached York by the end of July. While there, Margaret Morton, who served in Katherine's household, carried a sealed letter without subscription from the queen to her attendant Lady Rochford, who promised to return an answer the next morning and sent word, 'praying her grace to keep it secret not to lay it abroad'. It is highly likely that the letter Margaret carried from the queen was the letter written to Culpeper. This also provides incontrovertible evidence that, irrespective of what was going on between Katherine and Culpeper, Lady Rochford was intimately involved.

The letter reads as follows, in the original English:

Master Coulpeper, I hertely recomend me unto youe praying you to sende me worde how that you doo. Yt was showed me that you was sike, the wyche thyng trobled me very mucche tell suche tyme that I here from you praying you to send me worde how that you do. For I never longed so mucche for [a] thyng as I do to se you and to speke wyth you, the wyche I trust shal be shortely now, the wyche dothe comforte me verie much whan I thynk of ett and wan I thynke agan that you shall departe from me agayne

*ytt makes my harte to dye to thynke what fortune I have
that I cannot be always yn your company. Y[e]t my trust ys
allway in you that you wolbe as you have promysed me
and in that hope I truste upon styll, prayng you than that
you wyll com whan my lade Rochforthe ys here, for then
I shalbe beste at leaysoure to be at your commarendmant.
Thaynkyng you for that you have promysed me to be so
good unto that pore felowe my man, whyche is on of the
grefes that I do felle to departe from hym for than I do
know noone that I dare truste to sende to you and therfor
I pray you take hym to be wyth you that I may sumtym
here from you one thyng. I pray you to gyve me a horse
for my man for I hyd muche a do to gat one and
thefor I pray sende me one by hym and yn so doying I
am as I sade afor, and thus I take my leve of you
trusting to se you s[h]orttele agane and I wode you was
wythe me now that yoo maitte se what pane I take
yn wryte[n]g to you.*

*Yours as long as
lyffe endures
Katheryn*

*One thyng I had forgotten and
that hys to
instruct my man to tare here wyt[h] me still, for he
sas wat so mever you bed hym he wel do et and [...]*

Before analysing the letter, to understand its contents it is necessary to consider the context and nature of letter writing at the time. Historians have questioned whether early modern letters are able to permit 'direct unmediated access to inner emotions' hundreds of years after they were penned. Certainly,

it would be naïve to think that Katherine's true sentiments could be transparently deduced from this letter alone. Moreover, the content and structure of letters was crafted in a similar manner to the manipulation of church court depositories. There were specific models of letter writing that contemporaries were encouraged to follow. Cultural archetypes were utilised to structure languages of feeling, meaning that, as Fay Bound explained, 'the rhetoric of love-letters was... paralleled in epistolary fiction, romances and letter-writing manuals'. Several historians have commented on the 'flowery' language utilised in Tudor letters. John Creke, for example, wrote in his letter to Thomas Cromwell: 'My love toward you resteth in no less vigour than it did at our last being together. My [hear]t mourneth for your company and Mr. Wodal's as ever as it did for men... I never had so faithful affection to men of so short acquaintance in my life; the which affection

increaseth as fire daily. God knoweth what pain I receive in departing, when I remember our gosly walking in your garden; it make me desperate to contemplate'. No-one has ever suggested, however, that Creke was homosexual or was involved in a sensual relationship with Cromwell, despite phrases such as 'My love toward you' and 'I never had so faithful affection to men'. Thus, as Katherine Kong has argued, 'far from providing a transparent portrayal of events or sentiments, letters offered a complicated conjunction of meanings shaped by compositional forms and conventions and the conditions of their expedition and reception'.

Notwithstanding, then, the complications of letters as a historical source, the phrases used in the letter have led historians to conclude that the queen was conducting a love affair with Culpeper. Lacey Baldwin Smith, for instance, opined that Katherine's subscription 'Yours as long as lyffe endures' was

‘quite enough to cost the queen her head’, but early modern letter writers typically concluded their letters in this manner. Elizabeth, duchess of Norfolk, for example, ended her letter to Cromwell thus: ‘By yours most bounden during my life’; no-one has, then or now, provided evidence that the duchess was involved in a relationship with him. In this context, ‘yours as long as lyffe endures’ appears less clear-cut than has usually been assumed.

It is also worth considering whether Katherine wrote the letter herself. No other example of her handwriting survives, so it is not possible to compare the letter with another written by her. The popular assumption is that she was illiterate. Moreover, Elisabeth Wheeler noted that the first sixteen words of the letter are penned in a different hand to the rest of the letter. Perhaps, then, someone (most likely Lady Rochford) assisted the queen in writing the letter. Alternatively, perhaps Katherine dictated the letter. Irrespective of its penmanship, the contents of the letter are fairly revealing. The abiding impression is that she wanted strongly to meet with him, although her reason for doing so was not specified, perhaps because it was feared that the letter would fall into the wrong hands. Certain phrases in the letter, such as ‘at your commandment’, were usually utilised in contemporary guides to letter-writing. Culpeper, for example, used this phrase in an earlier message to Lady Lisle. The language itself is dramatic, which perhaps provides evidence of the writer’s anxiety, even desperation. She referred to the likelihood that her heart would ‘die’ when Culpeper departed from her, and she wished that he could witness her ‘pain’ in writing the letter. Clearly, writing it was not a pleasant experience. The central theme, the desire to meet with Culpeper, is repeatedly emphasised in phrases such as ‘I never longed so much for a thing as I do to see you and to speak with you, the which I trust shall be shortly now’; ‘when I think again that you shall depart from me again it makes my heart die’; ‘praying you that you will come when my lady Rochford is here’; trusting to see you shortly again’. Clearly, in the summer of 1541, the queen desired to meet with Culpeper urgently. As tempting as it might be to read Katherine’s letter as a document of love and passion, it would be highly problematic, given the context of letter-writing. As James Daybell stated, letters were ‘subject to generic and linguistic conventions; texts

that were socially and culturally coded’. Certainly, several of the phrases used in the letter were ‘subject to generic and linguistic conventions’, which include ‘yours as long as lyffe endures’ and the admission that the writer was at Culpeper’s ‘commandment’. Moreover, as Daybell found, elite women commonly had access to published guides by the likes of Erasmus and Angel Day, and many women followed the style and conventions they had seen in other letters, meaning that many letters were formulaic. Given this, it is impossible on the basis of the letter alone to conclude that the queen was involved in an adulterous relationship with Culpeper. Aside from the complexities of letter-writing at the time, which involved the use of flowery language that served to conceal or obscure inner emotion, there is no real hint of adultery, as Warnicke concluded: ‘Loving, embracing, touching, kissing, she wrote none of these amorous words in the letter’.

The contents of the letter are a mystery, as are the circumstances in which it was discovered. Contrary to popular perception, the letter does not appear to have been used as evidence; it was not referred to in the attainder brought against Katherine. None of the resident ambassadors at court, including the well-informed Chapuys, eluded to it; the contemporary chroniclers alike were similarly silent. Edward Hall, for example, wrote simply that Katherine ‘was vehemently suspected with Thomas Culpeper, whiche was brought to her Chamber at Lyncolne, in August laste, in the Progresse tyme, by the Ladye of Rochforde, and were there together alone, from a leuen of the Clocke at Nighte, till foure of the Clocke in the Mornyng’. Several modern historians have stated that the letter was discovered among Culpeper’s possessions, leading to his arrest, but there is no contemporary evidence that this was the case. Much like the letter itself, its discovery is vague and ultimately elusive.

Katherine’s motives in writing to Culpeper will never be known with certainty. The impression we gain from reading the letter is that she desperately wanted to meet with him and learn whether he would keep his unstated ‘promise’ to her. Aside from this, the letter’s contents are elusive, and the circumstances in which it was discovered are ultimately a mystery. On its own, it is difficult to regard the letter as proof of an adulterous affair between Katherine and Culpeper. It is likely that

modern historians, swayed by their assumption of Katherine's guilt, regarded the letter to Culpeper as damning evidence of her promiscuity. This runs contrary to historical practice: one must examine the sources to produce an argument, an interpretation; one should not start with a pre-conceived idea and then manipulate the evidence to suit that view. If the letter is approached impartially, with an open mind, it is possible to view it not necessarily as a declaration of love or an invitation to sexual intercourse. Ultimately, Katherine's meetings with Culpeper were to prove fatal, but the letter itself does not appear to have provided the damning

evidence that so many historians have assumed it did. Tantalisingly, the letter provides a glimpse into the dangerous undercurrents of court life, in which the king's wife was undeniably anxious to meet with his servant. Frustratingly, the letter does not indicate why she wished to do so. Whether it was because they were involved in a love affair, or whether (perhaps more likely) she was seeking to prevent him from revealing her past to the king, the letter is silent about what was truly going on in the summer of 1541.

CONOR BYRNE

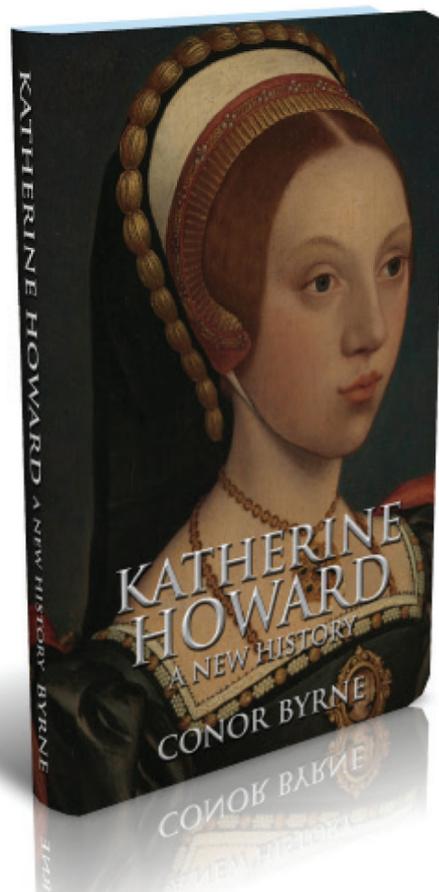


An evening with
I'll be there

Conor Byrne is a historian and author of "*Katherine Howard: A New History*" published by MadeGlobal Publishing.

He is a British graduate of History at the University of Exeter. Conor has been fascinated by the Tudors, medieval and early modern history from the age of eleven, particularly the lives of European kings and queens. His research into Katherine Howard, fifth consort of Henry VIII of England, began in 2011-12, and his first extended essay on her, related to the subject of her downfall in 1541-2, was written for an Oxford University competition.

Since 2012 Conor has embarked on a full-length study of queen Katharine's career, encompassing original research and drawing on extended reading into sixteenth-century gender, sexuality and honour. Some of the conclusions reached are controversial and likely to spark considerable debate, but Conor hopes for a thorough reassessment of Katherine Howard's life. Conor also runs a historical blog, conorbyrnex.blogspot.com, which explores a diverse range of historical topics and issues. He is also interested in modern European, Russian, and African history, and, more broadly, researches the lives of medieval queens, including current research into the defamed 'she-wolf' bride of Edward II, Isabella of France.



An evening with the authors



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The Myth of the Naughty Jane Rocheford



by Adrienne Dillard

With the
I'll be
there
An
ever
going

If you asked the average historical fiction reader to describe Jane Parker in one word, the answers would probably sound something like this: harpy, troublemaker, jealous, liar, voyeur, deviant, vulgar, or crazy... and those are the least offensive. Jane's reputation has been dragged through the mud ever since she found herself on the business end of the axe. As early as 1554, George Cavendish, former gentleman usher to Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, was lamenting her bad behavior in his verses, *Metrical Visions*:

*I, alas, that dyd myself incline
To spot them all by my owltrage,
Brought up in the court all my yong age,
Withouten bridell of honest measure,
Following my lust and filthy pleasure.
Without respect of any wyfely truthe,
Dredles of God, from grace also exempte
Viciously consuming the tyme of thys my youth;
And when my beauty began to be shent
Not with myn owne harme sufficed or content
Contrary to God, I must it nedes confesse,
Others I entised by ensample of my wretchedness.*

Bishop Gilbert Burnet, in his *History of the Reformation* written more than a century later, continues this character assassination and goes a step further – Jane is now to blame for the downfall of her husband, George Boleyn, and his sister, Anne.

Contemporary authors have long attributed their characterization of Jane to these literary works and the fact that Cavendish was a contemporary of the Boleyn family has only served to bolster his claims. *Well, he was there, wouldn't he be the best to know?* A fair argument to be sure, but Cavendish was human and humans are not always reliable witnesses. Humans have emotions that color their observations. They have pain and indignation over slights paid to them and those they love – and Cavendish loved Wolsey. Who did he blame for Wolsey's downfall? Those rascally Boleyns. What better revenge than to blacken their character for all eternity after they are no longer alive to protest? Like the delightful Paul Bettany said, as Chaucer in *A Knight's Tale*, "I will eviscerate you in fiction. Every pimple, every character flaw. I was naked for a day; you will be naked for eternity."

Bishop Burnet's characterization poses another issue. Unlike Cavendish, Burnet didn't have a personal vendetta against the Boleyns. In fact, he didn't even know them. However, he was a leading reformer and eager to denounce anyone who could be linked to their disgrace. *The History of the Reformation*

**harpy,
troublemaker,
jealous, liar, voyeur,
deviant, vulgar,
or crazy**

was Burnet's response to Nicolas Sanders' scathing attack on the reformation and those who perpetuated the break with Rome. Anne and her family were not spared from his diatribe. Burnet felt the need to respond to Sanders' criticisms of a family credited with instigating the reformation in England. The irony of the situation is that modern historians have been quick to refute Sanders' more outlandish claims about Anne

Boleyn, emphasizing how biased he was; yet almost nothing has been heard in regards to the very same bias Burnet had, but for the opposing view.

Very little has been written in defense of Jane's character; biographers and novelists choosing instead to take the same tact of Cavendish and Burnet. Jane's most notable supporter to date is Julia Fox. In her biography, *Jane Boleyn: The Infamous Lady Rochford*, Fox searches for the humanity in her subject. However, Fox posits that Jane is no saint. She may not have been responsible for the deaths of George and Anne or even Katherine Howard, but she was compromised by her addiction to the glitz and glamour of court life and, probably, quite foolish.

So, who was the real Lady Rochford? No one alive today truly knows the innermost thoughts and emotions that ran through Jane's mind so we will probably never know. However, we can certainly refute some of the mythology that has grown up around this elusive woman and, perhaps, shine a more favorable light on her life.

The Unhappy Wife

One of the biggest misconceptions about Jane's life is the idea that she was horribly mistreated by her husband and the victim of a very miserable marriage. Few writers have ever been kind to George Boleyn and

he is often painted as an abusive rapist, whiny homosexual or irresponsible libertine. How could marriage to him ever result in a loving union? Much less inspire much happiness in a bride? The truth is probably a lot less exciting

than popular fiction would have you believe. Far from the soap opera drama claimed, the Boleyn marriage seems to have been an unremarkable one...Literally. No other Tudor contemporary, besides

JANE ROCHEFORD

Cavendish, ever remarked on the nature of the marriage.

Much of what we know about the happenings in Anne and Henry's court come from the Imperial Ambassador, Eustace Chapuys. His missives back to Charles V are filled with references to the lover's quarrels and petty spats that tarnished the royal marriage. He had no problem repeating rumors that were often whispered about the court in darkened halls, making sure he always added the caveat that he was unsure of the truth to the claims. Yet, Chapuys made no observations about George's marriage. He actually had fair words for "the lady's brother," as he called him. In fact, he said he was quite genial and often went above and beyond in welcoming the ambassador to Court. His only real complaint was that George liked to argue about religion too much. If George's behavior was as bad as it has been made out to be, Chapuys would have certainly commented on it. Of course, Chapuys' lack of commentary doesn't prove anything, so we must consider the other evidence.

As one of Henry VIII's most trusted courtiers, George spent an enormous amount of time overseas. He even missed his sister's coronation to dutifully carry out the king's business in France. George was gone so often that it would be tempting to wonder if husband and wife even spent enough time together for the relationship to sour. These numerous trips to the French Court would also certainly explain the fact that no children came of the union. In addition, George

appears to have been friendly with Jane's family. When Jane's niece, Alice Parker, was christened sometime after her birth in October 1535, George was named godfather to the child with Lady Morley and Lady Audley standing in as godmothers. If the younger Henry Parker suspected George of mistreating his sister, it would be highly unlikely that he would bestow such an honor upon him. Particularly since, at this time, Jane was not named godmother along with him as she had received that honor with Henry's first child and heir born the summer before.

Jane has often been accused of conspiring to bring her husband down. Anne Boleyn's biographer George Wyatt called her a "wicked wife, accuser of her own husband," but he wasn't even alive at the time of the bloody May events and was working from unreliable family legends passed down over the years. No contemporary evidence of Jane's involvement in the coup exists. Not one person ever mentioned Jane by name and she was never called as a witness in George or Anne's trial. The only remark we have about her comes from a letter presented in court describing a jab that Anne made about the king's inability to please a woman. During this same trial George is recorded as saying "On the evidence of only one woman, you are prepared to believe this great evil of me." So yes, a woman did give evidence against George, but she is never named and it's reasonable to assume that George would have said "on the evidence of my wife" rather than "of one woman."

One piece of evidence that does exist to give any insight into the marriage is a letter described by William Kingston, Constable of the Tower during George's imprisonment. The letter was not addressed to George, as the king would not allow Jane to communicate with her husband. Instead, it was sent to the constable asking after George's welfare and begging of him to tell her husband that she would '*humbly make suit unto the king's highness.*' George was grateful for her efforts and asked Kingston to give her thanks. Jane had to know that approaching the king was futile and there is no record of her actually doing so, but the fact that she sent word to the tower declaring her loyalty and willingness to help George speaks volumes. By this time, every other person in the Boleyn family had cut ties with George and his sister. Jane was the only one to reach out in comfort.

Another letter from Jane, this time to Cromwell asking for assistance in the matter of her jointure, paints the picture of a woman in mourning. Jane describes herself as '*a poor desolate widow without comfort.*' This may be an embellishment in an effort to gain sympathy, but when Jane returned to court she wore nothing but black in mourning. In fact, it appears she wore nothing but black for the remainder of her life. She made a brave choice to openly mourn a convicted traitor. The letter to Cromwell should not be taken as an indication of her collusion with him in bringing down the Boleyns. Cromwell was known for helping widows, as Jane mentions in the letter: '*praying you, after your accustomed gentle*

manner to all them that be in such lamentable case as I am in, so it would not be out of the ordinary

for Jane to seek his assistance. I think we have to take Jane at her

word in this instance. She was a grieving widow.

My Sister, My Enemy

Like Mary Boleyn, Jane Rocheford is often cast as the foil to Anne Boleyn. When Anne is at her worst, being ambitious and conniving, Mary is portrayed as sweet and demure. When Anne is at her best, innocent and righteous, Jane is portrayed as deceitful and jealous. This sisterly dynamic is, more often than not, one of the driving plot points in Tudor novels; but is it true? This myth is harder to pinpoint. The relationship between the two was never remarked upon so there isn't a lot of contemporary evidence for it. As with the marital relationship, we have to look at the few clues hidden in the historical record.

We do know that Jane served in Anne's household at Court so, at least at one point, Anne viewed Jane favorably enough to want her around. The women who served the queen were in constant attendance upon her so Jane would have been in Anne's rooms most of the time. It's difficult to imagine that Anne would have appointed someone she personally disliked and didn't want around. The argument could be made that Anne did it to please her brother, but familial ties didn't seem to make too much of a difference when it came down to it. Anne had no problems banishing her pregnant biological sister from Court so it is highly unlikely that Anne would give preferential treatment to a sister by marriage. Further, an incident from the autumn of 1534 lends credence to

the idea that Jane and Anne had, if not close relationship, at least an amiable one.

In the October 13 dispatch to the Holy Roman Emperor, the ambassador Chapuys mentions that Jane was sent from Court for misconduct. A young lady had caught the king's attention, rising high in his affections, much to Anne's discontent. The queen enlisted Jane's help in quarreling with the said maid over some light matter in the hopes that she could convince the king to have her removed. The plot backfired and Jane was exiled instead. If Jane harbored any ill will towards her sister-in-law, it may have come from this event; but loyalty to Anne would have been the impetus for her participation in the plot. Jane took a gamble with her position in order to help her sister-in-law and, ultimately, lost.

Jane's appointment in service to Jane Seymour after Anne's execution has often been used as proof of Jane's disloyalty to the memory of her Boleyn family, but that interpretation comes from twenty-first century instincts and values. Like any other Tudor figure, Jane did what she needed to survive. Her father-in-law, the Earl of Wiltshire, was loath to part with her jointure so Jane was struggling financially. A position in the queen's rooms guaranteed her a consistent salary and room and board. When the king confiscated George's manor at Beaulieu, Jane's

choices were limited: either go home to Hallingbury in shame or return to Court for a second chance at improving her station. A position with the new queen would have been the more appealing decision. Jane is often the victim of a double standard in this regard. Both Anne's father and uncle continued to serve the man who ordered her execution and it has always been seen as the "smart" or "safe" choice. Jane has been held to a different standard.

The private act of Parliament and the two manors in Warwickshire that Jane received from the king in 1538 has often been seen as proof that Jane was rewarded by both Cromwell and the king for her part in taking down her husband and sister-in-law. Getting Henry to personally sign the act of Parliament was a major coup for someone who had ties to two convicted traitors so why would she receive such preferential treatment if not for some service she provided the Crown? The answer is that she did provide service to the Crown – she served multiple queens. Most importantly, she served a queen that had given Henry a male heir and died while the king still loved her. Jane played a significant role in the third queen's household and at her funeral; perhaps she had redeemed herself in Henry's eyes. It's also important to remember that the king could be very magnanimous when he wanted

JANE ROCHEFORD

to be. After the queen's death, he took personal responsibility for the welfare of her lady, Anne Bassett, because her family was under investigation and house arrest. Perhaps Jane was on the receiving end of that same generous spirit that possessed Henry while he was grieving. Finally, Jane's father was a favored courtier. His influence with the king on his daughter's behalf cannot be discounted. It is quite possible that any special treatment Jane may have received was due to Lord Morley's assistance rather than Cromwell's.

Jane's later friendship with Princess Mary indicates that she was perhaps sympathetic to the

king's eldest daughter and that may have caused tension. She is noted as an attendee at a protest that took place at Greenwich in support of Mary during Anne's time as queen, but the notation is a much later addition and not in the contemporary description so most historians have discounted it. It's highly unlikely that Jane would have participated in a demonstration against the family she was dependent on for financial security no matter how much she sympathized with the princess. However, her lack of participation doesn't necessarily mean that she agreed with Anne's derogatory remarks about Mary and they

may have clashed over some of the more inflammatory outbursts from Anne, but such disagreements can't be proven and don't always indicate mutual hate. Personality and ideological clashes can happen in even the most loving of relationships.

It's difficult to prove that Jane and Anne shared a sisterly bond with the scant evidence we have, but it does support the idea that Jane did not see Anne as her mortal enemy, nor was she rewarded for her assistance in the plot against her. Their relationship may have been contentions, but it was far from the soap opera drama of legend.

That bawd, the Lady Jane Rocheford

Jane and any involvement she *may* have had in the fall of her Boleyn family would have probably faded away into obscurity had she stepped away from service to the crown and retired to her properties after the king's divorce from Anne of Cleves. Her relationship with Anne's replacement, Katherine Howard, and her involvement in the young queen's scandal made her an irresistible target and her reputation did not emerge unscathed.

During the sweltering month of July 1540, Jane was among the retinue that retired to Richmond with the king's fourth cast-off wife. She remained with Anne until Henry's councilors arrived with the divorce papers, but at some point after she witnessed the signing of the documents, made her way back to court to begin her service with Katherine. With the benefit of hindsight, many historians have

concluded that Jane was chosen to serve Katherine because of their close relationship, but I would argue that, at least at this point, as far as Jane was concerned she was just serving another one of Henry's wives.

Jane and Katherine may have crossed paths from time to time in the queen's presence chamber, but it is unlikely that they spent an inordinate amount of time with each other. Jane's role kept her quite close to the queen's person. She would have helped Anne into her elaborate gowns, accompanied her to religious services and attended on the queen's every personal need. Katherine, on the other hand, was in a much different position. As a maid of honor, Katherine would have been around, mainly, for decoration. The maids rarely, if ever, attended on the queen personally. For the most part, Katherine would have

played music or cards; she would have danced or trailed behind the queen at state events. If she was particularly favored, she may have been asked to carry the train of one of the noble ladies. She would have slept in a dorm room shared with other maids rather than in the queen's bed chamber as Jane would have. There is no doubt that Jane and Katherine knew each other and perhaps conversed from time to time, but it is highly unlikely that they were close confidantes at any time before Katherine became queen.

Jane's subsequent assistance in Katherine's extra marital affair would seem to prove that the two eventually developed a close bond. Why else would Jane become involved in the dangerous liaison between Katherine and Culpeper? The truth of the matter is hard to ferret out and that is precisely why Jane takes the brunt of the blame.

The historical record is mired in a game of “he said/she said” and the guilty parties are all very quick to point the finger. While Jane had only one to point, she had four aimed right back at her.

While under interrogation, both Katherine and Culpeper painted a vivid picture of innocence. Katherine had always intended to be faithful to the king until Lady Rocheford instigated the meetings with her husband’s groom of the stool. Never mind the fact that she had blatantly told her amour that *‘if she had tarried still in the maiden’s chamber, she would have tried him.’* Culpeper was also quite chaste in the matter until Lady Rocheford *‘provoked him much to love the queen and he intended to do ill with her.’* Katherine insisted that Jane left her alone with Culpeper in order to tempt them into a forbidden relationship, but an argument could be made that Jane was possibly attempting to distance herself as much as she could while still obeying the queen. At one point, Jane even fell asleep during one of these covert meetings. Perhaps she believed that she would be relieved of her liability

if she never actually saw anything untoward.

Katherine and Culpeper were not the only ones laying the blame at Jane’s feet. Two other women of Katherine’s chamber added their voices to the chorus. Both Katherine Tylney and Margery Morton named Jane as the instigator of all the trouble, but those claims may have been made in an effort to pardon their own involvement.

When Katherine Tylney was questioned, she relayed a story about the queen leaving her chambers late at night while they stayed at Lincoln. Tylney and Morton had attempted to accompany the queen to Jane’s chambers, but were sent back. Tylney shrugged the matter off and retired to bed, but Morton decided that she was going to find out what was going on and went back to Jane’s room. She didn’t return until after 2 am. The next night, Tylney accompanied Katherine to Jane’s rooms, but claimed that she was hidden with one of Jane’s maids and had no idea who the queen was visiting in Jane’s chambers. While it would be easy to believe the worst of Jane with four people

naming her provocateur, it’s important to remember that all four witnesses were motivated by the desire to gloss over their own entanglements in the affair. The fact that the truth of the affair was revealed by Katherine, herself, only after the investigation into her past behavior had begun supports Tylney and Morton’s culpability. They did not report the suspicious behavior and probably never would have if Katherine had not incriminated herself.

Jane was, by no means, innocent in all this. She did carry messages and trinkets between the queen and Culpeper and she did provide a means for the two to secretly meet in spite of knowing how dangerous it was, but the power and influence that has been ascribed to her borders on the absurd. Jane was never in a position wield such control. There may have been complex motivations behind Jane’s actions, but it’s more likely that Jane was simply doing as she was told by her mistress, the queen. Katherine may have been the youngest of Henry’s queens, but she was not timid about using her position and she was the one ultimately in charge.

The madness of Jane Boleyn

A dispatch from the Imperial Ambassador, Eustace Chapuys, mentions the first reference to Jane’s mental state. According to Chapuys, she was seized with a fit of madness on her third day of imprisonment. He never elaborates on what kind of madness gripped Jane, only that she was recovered of the symptoms from time to time and that the king had sent his own

physician to care for her; not for her own benefit, but so he could execute her legally and with a clear conscience. Jane was eventually removed from the Tower and taken to Russell House on the Strand, the home of Lord Admiral John Russell and his wife, Anne to recuperate.

Jane’s composure after learning the sentence of her death and on the block, led some of her contemporaries and later historians to believe that her mental illness was feigned in an attempt to preserve her life; a very possible and a sensible argument, as it was illegal to execute anyone who was deemed mentally unstable. However, it is equally probable that

JANE ROCHEFORD

Jane was in fact suffering from a short term madness brought on by fear or some sort of post traumatic stress.

Jane's interrogation and imprisonment would have caused a great deal of stress and anguish and she may not have been able to handle the anxiety. In addition, it would have brought back memories of the events of 1536,

memories she probably tried very hard to forget and she may have been able to recover somewhat at Russell House only because she was no longer in the cold confines of the prison where her husband and sister-in-law lost their lives. PTSD could also account for the reckless way Jane behaved in the queen's affair, as sufferers of this

particular mental ailment tend to engage in self-destructive behavior.

Jane's somewhat miraculous recovery on the scaffold does seem indicative of a feigned illness when taken at face value, but the special act that the king introduced to Parliament making it legal to execute the insane demonstrates that even he was not fully convinced that she was faking it.

My thoughts

Jane is an enigmatic woman. There really is no way to determine her true motivations for many of her actions, but I think it's safe to say that her dark reputation is far from deserved. Jane has been an easy scapegoat for those wishing to rehabilitate the Boleyns and Katherine Howard and few historians have challenged the myths that have grown around her. Anne and Katherine have

particularly benefitted from this modern sympathetic view of history. Their more unattractive traits are often glossed over in an effort demonstrate how victimized they were, yet Jane's are usually amplified and used as justification for her own victimization.

Jane Rocheford was merely a human. She had the same emotions we all have: jealousy, sadness, regret, and anxiety. These

emotions played a role in her behavior. She made mistakes and bad decisions, but she was not the only woman to have failings. Jane is a not a woman to be pitied or reviled; but she does deserve the same consideration that others in her circle have received.

**ADRIENNE
DILLARD**

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Adrienne Dillard is the author of *Cor Rotto: A Novel of Catherine Carey* and *Catherine Carey in a Nutshell*. She is passionate about Tudor history and is currently researching and writing a book on Jane Rochford / Jane Boleyn which is due out later this year.

She is a graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies with emphasis in History from Montana State University-Northern.

Adrienne has been an eager student of history for most of her life and has completed in-depth research on the American Revolutionary War time period in American History and the history and sinking of the Titanic. Her senior university capstone paper was on the discrepancies in passenger lists on the ill-fated liner and Adrienne was able to work with Philip Hind of Encyclopedia Titanica for much of her research on that subject.



Tudor Life



THE FALL OF ANNE BOLEYN

A Countdown

CLAIRE RIDGWAY



FROM MAY 1 to MAY 19

The Tudor Society will be serialising

"The Fall of Anne Boleyn" as an exclusive audio download.

CLAIRE RIDGWAY is the **EXPERT OF THE MONTH**

THE TRIUMPH OF HENRI IV OF FRANCE

by Dominic Pierce

HENRI DE BOURBON was born on 13 December 1553 in the shadow of the Pyrenees. Henri was the only son of Jeanne d'Albret, who was herself the only child of King Henri II of Navarre. Legend tells us the baby was robust. His doting grandfather rubbed garlic on the newborn's lips and offered him a cup of red wine to smell, which supposedly prompted a happy response.¹ Fortunately for history that was as far as it went.

The little boy survived such enthusiasms to inherit the Kingdom of Navarre from his mother in 1572,² the year when he was married for the first time. Basse-Navarre



Considered ugly and unkempt by the Parisian court, Henri IV outwitted them all.
(Public Domain)

amounted to a few cantons but with it came the much larger Béarn, Foix, Bigorre, Albret and other lands.³ He also inherited from Jeanne his Huguenot faith. She ensured he was brought up a Reformed Protestant (Calvinist).

From his father Henri de Bourbon inherited his destiny. Jeanne's husband was Antoine de Bourbon, Duc de Vendôme. The Bourbon family was a cadet branch of the French royal family. They and the reigning Valois descended from a common ancestor, that is to say St Louis (Louis IX) who ruled France in the thirteenth century. The key was

1 JP Babelon, *Henri IV* (Fayard 1982) pp 41-43

2 She had inherited it from her father, as his only child, in 1555. Unlike France, Navarre did not bar women from the throne.

3 Navarre straddled the Pyrenees. The much larger southern portion was annexed by Spain in the early sixteenth century. The northern part was called Basse-Navarre.

that in both cases the descent was male line, father to son. French royal rights could not be inherited by or through women. There could not be a French Elizabeth I, or even James I (whose claim came through his great-grandmother).

Thanks to this exceptionally distant male line relationship with the Valois, Antoine was the 'first Prince of the Blood.' He would be King of France if all the Valois men died without leaving sons to inherit. However he died in 1562, as a result of injuries received at the siege of Rouen, so his son Henri inherited his position, lands and rights. Ten years later, when his mother died and he married, Henri de Bourbon – now, as we can call him, Navarre – had in turn become first Prince of the Blood. Not that anyone thought this would mean anything since there were three Valois brothers alive and well and every one of them certain to have a family.

Yet the Valois after all failed. Their long, inglorious exit started in 1559 when King Henri II of France was wounded in a tournament. His opponent's lance splintered. A fragment of wood pierced the king's eye and brain. It was removed but septicemia set in. The death agony of Henri II (he died on 10 July 1559) presaged a death agony for his family. He left four sons, all dead before forty. His immediate successor was François II who died in December 1560 (aged sixteen). His second son Charles IX reigned from 1560 to 1574 (twenty-four when he died). The third boy took the throne as

Henri III and lasted until 1589 when he was knifed by Jacques Clément who had bluffed his way into the king's presence at St Cloud dressed as a friar. The next day Henri III died, 2 August 1589 (aged thirty-seven). There was a younger brother, the Duc d'Anjou, known as Monsieur, but he had died like his other two brothers of disease in 1584 (aged twenty-nine). None of these princes had legitimate sons, although Charles IX had a short-lived daughter and also an illegitimate son (who was never a factor in French politics).

In short, in 1584, after the death of Monsieur, Henri de Navarre became heir to the throne; and in 1589 he succeeded. 'Here is your king,' said the dying Henri



Henri's father Antoine, Duke of Bourbon.
(Public Domain)

III on 2 August, indicating Navarre to the surrounding lords.⁴ Far from this being the day when Navarre/Henri IV took power, it was the start of his struggle for his crown and his life. Not that this came as a surprise. The King of France, whether it was Henri III or the new Henri IV had to deal with a kingdom in meltdown. France had been at war internally since 1562. This period is called the Wars of Religion for very good reasons however power and ambition were the heart of the matter, especially the ambition of the Guise family.

*

In most situations of this sort two parties battle head to head, but in

⁴ Pierre de L'Estoile *Registre-Journal* (Paris 1900) p 33

sixteenth century France, after the death of Henri II, there were three. That made the situation unusually unstable. The royal Valois government headed by the king (and queen mother, Catherine de Médicis) was one. The Huguenot lords, who included Navarre – he was young in the early phases but as senior Bourbon he was their head – were another. The worst was the third. Devoted to the Pope, bent on the extinction of

massacre, protected by Charles IX, but his retinue was slaughtered (by royal command) in the next room. Navarre soon announced that he had become a Catholic but we cannot hold it against him if this was not entirely sincere. We cannot but his opponents naturally did.

Navarre escaped the royal court in February



The glamorous but unstable court of Henri III, the last of the Valois kings. (Public Domain)

heresy, the Guise ruthlessly exploited the situation. It was their militant Catholic influence that terrified the Huguenots in the 1560s. It was François, Duc de Guise, who started the Wars of Religion on 1 March 1562 when his supporters butchered an unarmed Huguenot congregation worshipping peacefully outside Vassy in north-east France. And it was his son Henri behind the assassination attempt that led to the massacre of St Bartholomew's Day of 23/24 August 1572 (just after Navarre's wedding in Paris), when at least 5,000 Huguenots died in Paris and the provinces - men, women and children.⁵

The eighteen-year-old Henri de Navarre survived the

1576 and reasserted his Huguenot identity in June that year. Now he was not

only a heretic but a false convert, which was worse. Although Protestant he was excommunicated in 1585 by Pope Sixtus V (after the death of Monsieur). The Pope, the Guise family, and King Philip II of Spain made it clear they could not accept a Protestant King of France. Was it their business? They thought so. At the same time the Holy Catholic League took its final shape in France, a national movement dedicated to the destruction of Protestantism, headed by Scarface ('le balafré') as, thanks to a disfiguring wound, Henri de Guise was known.

After Monsieur's death Henri III made war on Navarre. At the Battle of Coutras (20 October 1587) Navarre defeated the royal troops, who were commanded by the Duc de Joyeuse. This defeat sent Guise and his supporters into paroxysms of rage

⁵ See the account in Geoffrey Treasure *the Huguenots* (YUP 2013) Chapter 16 pp 167-175S

against... Henri III, who was clearly not up to the job. The government of Paris fell into the hands of Catholic militants headed by a committee called the 'Seize,' after the sixteen administrative districts of the capital. Henri III, resident in the Louvre, tried to root out foreign agents by a house to house census. The citizens turned on their king. On 12 May 1588 they built barricades in the streets to blockade royal

went. On 22 December 1588 Scarface, separated by a trick from his armed protection, was cut down by the king's guard. The cardinal thought his status as a prince of the church would protect him, but he too was killed. Like his brother Charles in 1572, the last Valois king had opted for murder. This brilliant idea of Henri III earned his mother's contempt, led to his excommunication by Pope Sixtus, and in 1589



The Bourbon family owed their rule to the tenacity of Henri IV. (Public Domain)

troops. Henri III escaped from Paris and set up court at Blois.

Philip II congratulated himself on this turn of events, which he had engineered. He was about to send his great Armada to the English Channel as part of the destruction of Elizabeth I. Chaos in France suited Spain. But the Armada failed. Elizabeth I most outrageously triumphed over her vastly more powerful brother sovereign and mortal enemy. In France Henri III called the States General⁶ in Blois to try for national consensus. He summoned Henri de Guise and his brother the Cardinal de Guise to discuss a settlement. They were advised not to go. They

his assassination by Jacques Clément.

Who was king now? We have seen that Navarre inherited according to French law, but his Protestantism could not be denied. Most French were Catholic. Regardless of the politics, could he be crowned king in the ancient Catholic rite? Could a Huguenot be anointed with the same holy chrism first used at the coronation of the first King of the Franks, the fifth century (and therefore Catholic) Clovis? Could he appoint the bishops who controlled huge tracts of French land, and expect obedience from them? The new leader of the League, the Duc de Mayenne (the third Guise brother), decided to recognise Navarre's Catholic uncle, the Cardinal de Bourbon, as King of France. This confirmed the Bourbon claim but insisted on Catholicism. Nonetheless the cardinal was sixty-two, had no

⁶ The French nation's representative body. There were 'parlements' in France but they were regional and hereditary.

children and was Navarre's prisoner.⁷

Probably Mayenne was considering his own claim. He did not have the requisite male line descent, but he descended from St Louis through his grandmother Antoinette de Bourbon. He also descended from Charlemagne. What was wrong with a Guise King of France? By contrast Philip II was thinking of placing his daughter the intelligent, competent Infanta Isabela on the French throne. She broke all the masculine French rules but her mother was Elizabeth de Valois, eldest daughter of Henri II. Between them, Guise and Philip II had far more troops and money than Henri IV/Navarre who would surely retreat, in August 1589, to the south-west.

*

Yet on 27 February 1594 Henri IV was crowned King of France in Chartres Cathedral. On 22 March that year he entered Paris without having to fight his way in. In early 1596 Mayenne was reconciled with the king. In spring 1598 Henri IV issued the Edict of Nantes – a long and complicated set of documents – which provided a lasting religious settlement allowing for Huguenot worship and security. The same year Henri IV agreed peace with Spain. In October 1600 he married his second wife, Marie de Médicis, with whom he would have six children, three of them boys, thereby establishing the Bourbons on the throne of France up to the French Revolution of 1789.⁸ How did this come about?

First it was a case of expect the unexpected. Against all advice Henri IV refused to retreat to the south west in August 1589, since he knew that Paris would be lost forever if he ran away. Instead he headed for Normandy where he hoped Elizabeth I would send reinforcements, and where Paris was in reach. The Queen of England did send troops to Henri IV, but only after he was left in possession of the field after the Battle of Arques, on 21 September 1589 – when Mayenne's troops outnumbered his almost five to one! On 14 March 1590 he won the battle of Ivry, also against Mayenne (the odds were less outrageous but the king's troops were again heavily

outnumbered).⁹ After both battles Henri IV went on to besiege Paris unsuccessfully. Philip II sent his best general, Alessandro Farnese, Duke of Parma to support Mayenne from Flanders, which saved Paris in 1590. The action moved into the provinces. But in December 1592 Parma died as the result of a wound received eight months before.

Then Henri IV trumped the League by converting to Catholicism a second time. In fact from the moment he became king, he had reassured Catholics in every way possible. He maintained the Catholic Chapel Royal, and swore to maintain the Catholic Church of France. He also promised to receive instruction. On 17 May 1593 the Archbishop of Bourges, who headed the Chapel Royal, announced that Henri IV would renounce heresy entirely.

On 25 July 1593 the king walked in solemn procession to the abbey church of St Denis outside Paris and there made a formal abjuration of his Protestant past, embraced Catholicism, and swore a vow of obedience to the Pope (who was in no way consulted about the conversion, ceremony or vow). At the moment the king received Holy Communion – like a priest he took both bread and wine – a flock of doves, the emblem of peace, was released from the belfry to wheel above the church, while the huge crowds outside, most of them from Paris, watched in awe.

These were the decisive developments but there was a good deal more to do. Philip II did not give up easily. In March 1597 Amiens, ninety miles north-east of Paris, was occupied by a surprise Spanish attack. In Brittany a Guise cousin, the Duc de Mercoeur, attempted to set up an independent lordship. However by 1598, the year when Philip II died, Henri IV had overcome all military and most political resistance to his rule. France was maintained as a single kingdom. Royal authority commanded general, if not universal, obedience. Bourbon absolutism was on its way.

DOMINIC PIERCE

TudorLife

⁷ The Cardinal de Bourbon died on 7 May 1590.

⁸ Henri IV's first marriage was annulled. Marguerite de Valois lived until 1615, on excellent terms with Marie de Médicis (to whom she was related).

⁹ D Buisseret *Henry IV* (London 1984) pp 29-34

THE JURY AT ANNE BOLEYN'S TRIAL WORDSEARCH

W A C N X S K D P R T W F N S
Y M C L A E N L E O E N O Z R
N W O N Y A S T O N W R C E E
D O D U L N S S T F T E X L V
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S E U G C T O O U S T U T D R
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R A O C T I B G R G F O B U L
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W A G B R D M N M E Q H R A M
C L K L W O M O U N T A G U E
I R A D R O F X O H T M H X N
D N A L E R O M T S E W M J A
D E E R S T N U A D R O M T C
W Y O A U D E L E Y B R E D C

ARUNDEL
CLYNTON
DERBY
LAWARE
MORLEY
NORTHUMBERLAND
RUTLAND
SUSSEX
WORCESTER

AUDELEY
COBHAM
EXETER
MALTRAVERS
MOUNTAGUE
OXFORD
SANDES
WENTWORTH
WYNDESORE

BURGH
DACRE
HUNTINGDON
MORDAUNT
MOUNTEGLE
POWES
SUFFOLK
WESTMORELAND

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE TRIAL CAN BE FOUND HERE
<http://www.theanneboleynfiles.com/15th-may-1536-the-trial-of-anne-boleyn/>

May Day Merry-making and Festivities

by Toni Mount



"Maypole merriment was frowned upon after the monarchy fell in 1649." (The Dabblers)

WITH CHRISTMAS long gone and Easter now passed, it might seem that medieval and Tudor folk had a very long wait through the summer and autumn, until the next time there was a Christian feast day, when they could celebrate and have fun. So no wonder some of the ancient pagan fes-

tivals weren't forgotten. Even the date of Christmas had been deliberately chosen by the early Church Fathers to coincide with the Roman feast of Saturnalia and the mid-winter celebrations of the Celts, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. The Christian Christmas was just a new name and a new god tagged onto



Katherine of Aragon was instrumental in averting a May-time catastrophe.

some very old pagan traditions. The Church Fathers were clever enough to realise the pagans they were hoping to convert to the new religion wouldn't want to risk offending their old gods too much, nor would they want to miss out on an excuse for a good party.

The Christian Easter festival celebrates the resurrection of Christ from the dead but many pagans already had their own way of delighting in the rebirth of nature in the spring, with flowers blooming, trees coming into leaf, the birth of baby animals and the hatching of birds' eggs. In most European languages the word for the Christian festival is Pasque or Passion and you may wonder what chocolate eggs have to do with

it. But the English word 'Easter' predates any Christian ideas as it comes from 'Eostre', the Anglo-Saxon goddess of the dawn and the rebirth of life – hence the eggs. [The word 'oestrogen' or 'estrogen' – the hormone that governs female egg production – has the same origin.] So, with these important Christian celebrations over and done, it was a long time until Christmas came round again, but throughout the year, the pagans had had regular celebrations and the Christians determined to adopt and adapt many of them.

The ancient Celts had the festival of Beltane, 'the fire of Bel'. The first day of summer was celebrated with bonfires to welcome in the new season. From pre-Christian times,

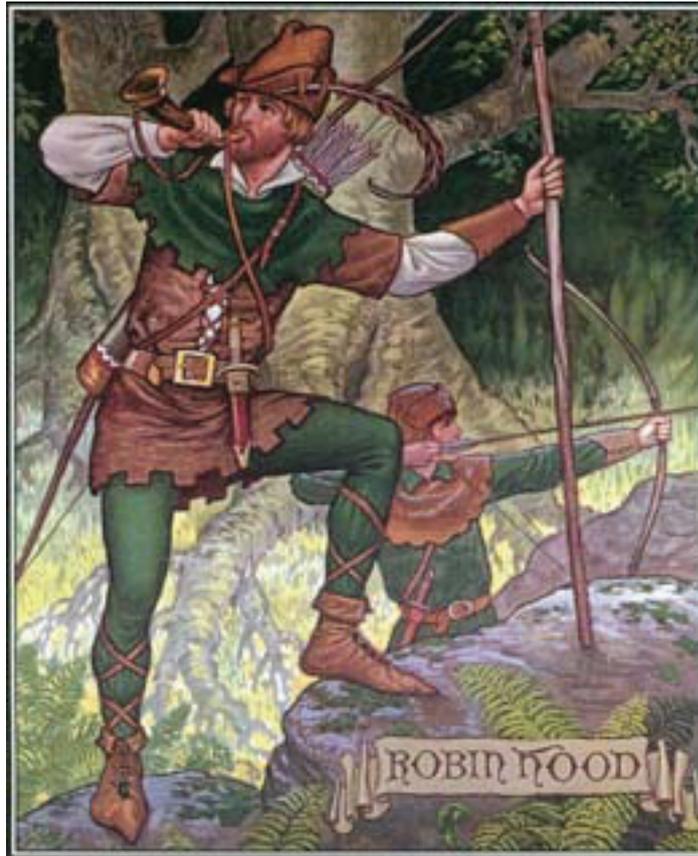
the 1st May was a significant day, from the Roman festival of Flora and the Walpurga festivities in Germanic countries, to the medieval English Morris dancing and mummers' plays. Still celebrated today as May Day, it meant fun, revelry and, perhaps most important of all to the Celts, fertility. In Tudor times, the occasion still involved villagers dancing around the maypole – originally, the pole had been a phallic fertility symbol, so it's not surprising the Church didn't always approve. In fact, following the English Civil War, when Oliver Cromwell and his Puritans took control of the country in 1645, the new religion described maypole dancing as 'a heathenish vanity generally abused to superstition and wickedness'. Parliament saw to it that legislation was passed, banning maypoles throughout the country.

But before Oliver Cromwell spoiled the fun, the day had included the choosing of the May Queen and the cavorting figure of Jack-in-the-Green leading the procession round the village, collecting boughs of white hawthorn flowers, still called may blossom today. Jack was a relic from ancient times when the Celts worshipped tree gods and his coupling with the virgin May Queen was believed to get the blossoming and fruitfulness of summer off to a great start. Even today, there are pubs called 'the Green Man', a throw-back to those days of tree-worship. Unsurprisingly, Christianity had to take matters in hand and give the celebrations a more moral, religious tone. May became

the month of the Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven, as represented by the May Queen crowned with flowers. Churches were decorated – 'garnished' was the word used – with flowers, especially lilies, in the Virgin Mary's honour. However, since the virgin May Queen still 'danced' with that totally pagan fellow, Jack-in-the-Green, I wonder what interpretation the Church put on that, what with their favourite virgin saint enjoying herself with an unmistakably non-Christian male?

In Henry VIII's reign, on one occasion, the celebrations did go beyond a bit of fun, becoming an excuse for drunken excess and mayhem in London. St Paul's Cathedral was at the heart of the 'Evil May Day Riots' of 1517. A Londoner named John Lincoln, led a mob of more than a thousand men, many of them poor labourers, supported by their womenfolk and clergymen. They congregated on Cheapside and surged through the city, looting and

destroying property which they thought belonged to foreigners. Their efforts were aimed mainly at French immigrants but Dutchmen, Germans and other incomers, anyone seen as an economic threat to English workers, were also targeted. After five hours of rioting that night, calm was restored by the authorities. Hundreds were arrested, many had been injured but, fortunately, no one was killed. Most of those arrested were pardoned when Queen Catherine of Aragon begged King Henry to be merciful, but thirteen men, in-



The outlaw who became a mythical hero, Robin Hood. (The Independent)

cluding the ringleader, John Lincoln, were hanged, drawn and quartered on Cheapside.

Riots aside, May Day could include much more than dancing round a maypole. Sporting events often took place on this holiday. In the open space of Smithfield, just north-west of the city walls, Londoners could enjoy horse races, wrestling matches, archery competitions, bowling and skittles, to win the traditional prizes of a yard of ale or a 'pig[let]-in-a-poke', a 'poke' being a sort of basket. For those who weren't feeling very sporty nor in the mood for dancing, troupes of mummers

would perform comedy sketches that had been passed down the centuries. A favourite play was that of St George in which the not-so-saintly knight fought and slew an assortment of enemies, from dragons and evil knights to Beelzebub. Costumes were often very basic but the players either blackened their faces or wore masks because it was a tradition since pagan times that they shouldn't be recognised, except as the character they played. The script was always in verse. Here is a brief excerpt from one of many versions, though no originals are extant:

Saint George:

Show me the man that dare before me stand
I neither care for thee, nor thy bright sword in hand
Pray what bold art thou?

Bulgard:

I am the Turkish champion,
From Turkeyland I came
I come to fight the daring Saint,
George they call his name
And if he calls himself the champion,
I think myself as good
And before I would surrender
I would lose my precious blood

Saint George:

Stir up the fire and make a light
And see Saint George and the Turkey fight
The hour is gone
The clock's struck one
Tip, tap, bodge

They fight and Bulgard falls.

[This text was noted down at a modern re-enactment.]

This was free street theatre entertainment, although the players would pass around hats, pots and even ladles, hoping the audience would put in a few coins. There were also Moorish, or Morris, dancers, again with blackened faces, bells and ribbons, who would dance to the music of pipes and fiddle-like instruments.

However, in the fifteenth century – and maybe earlier – a new hero and heroine joined the festivities: Robin Hood and Maid Marion. No one is quite sure when or if Robin Hood ever existed but William Langland mentioned the name, in passing, in his *Piers Plowman* work of the later fourteenth century, saying that the ballad of Robin Hood was as well known to

some folk as the religious Creed. With Robin were Little John, Much the Miller's son, Will Scarlet and, soon to join them, Friar Tuck – all the merry men – but there was, as yet, no trace of Maid Marion. By 1425, the first known play about the outlaw had been written but Maid Marion seems to have originated in a pastoral play, *Robin et Marion*, written way back, c.1283, in courtly French by Adam de la Halle. In this case, Robin is a respectable lad, not an outlaw, but the play made a connection between the two names. Marion then became a character in *Le Mirour de l'homme*, a poem by John Gower, dated to 1376-79, in which she takes part in rural festivals. Following Marion's lead, it wasn't too much of a jump for Robin Hood to join her in the fifteenth century, in the May Day revels.

By Tudor times, the May Day activities of Robin and Marion were widespread in England, licensed by Church authority, allowing Robin and his players to make charitable collections among the audience – not always politely and sometimes far from gently. The churchwardens met the expenses for the costumes and entertainment and received an account of the collection money so, in effect and under licence, Robin Hood *was* taking from the rich and giving to the poor. The claim that he was of noble birth was an idea dreamed up by the Tudor poet and antiquary, John Leland (1503-52). His version was expanded by Anthony Munday – a playwright contemporary with Shakespeare and just as popular with Elizabethan theatre-goers – in his play: *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington* (1598), but there is no historical

evidence for Robin being anything more high status than a medieval yeoman.

London had two maypoles: one was kept in an alleyway, hung on the outside wall of the church of St Andrew Undershaft – the shaft being the maypole. The other was massive, forty metres high, erected in London's Strand. Maypoles can still be seen on the village greens at Welford-on-Avon and at Dunchurch, Warwickshire, both of which stand all year round. Barwick in Yorkshire, claims the largest maypole in England, standing thirty meters high.

Other May Day traditions continue into the present in southern England, including the Hobby Horses that still rampage through the towns of Dunster and Minehead in Somerset, and Padstow in Cornwall. The horse or the Oss, was also popular throughout Kent until the twentieth century. It was normally a local person dressed in flowing robes wearing a mask with a grotesque, but colourful, caricature of a horse. In Oxford, May Day morning has always been celebrated by the singing of a Latin hymn, or carol, of thanksgiving from the top of Magdalen College Tower, followed by Morris Dancing in the streets below.

Tudor May Day celebrations must have been great fun and always included plenty of food and drink. I hope you enjoy your twenty-first-century version just as much – barring a riot, of course.

Happy May Day!

TONI MOUNT

Toni Mount is a teacher, speaker and historic interpreter, living in Kent in England. She is the author of "*The Colour of Poison*". After many years of teaching history to adults her courses are now available online at www.medievalcourses.com and the Tudor Society highly recommends them.



TONI MOUNT

A
Sebastian Foxley
Medieval
Murder Mystery



THE
COLOUR
OF
POISON

Zips, Rubber Soles and Handrails

Artistic Licence in Historical Dramas

by *Emma-Elizabeth Taylor*

HISTORICAL dramas are, without a doubt, one of the most popular forms of entertainment that grace our screens. One only has to look at the track record: from the iconic 1995 BBC adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to the hugely successful ITV production of *Downton Abbey*. Our obsession with historical dramas is far from being sated; they continue to proliferate our television schedules well into the twenty-first century.



The lives and labours of the aristocratic Crawley sisters in "Downton Abbey" prove that our love affair with the costume drama is far from over. [PopSugar]



Claire Foy as Queen Anne Boleyn in "Wolf Hall" [Radio Times]



Rebecca Ferguson as Elizabeth Woodville on her coronation day in "The White Queen" [Starz]

In Britain, historical dramas usually focus on our own history; as British history provides such a wealth of incredible, moving, and ultimately human stories, it is easy to see how history provides perfect fodder for the nation's favourite Sunday night-entertainment. And yet, some of the most popular of these historical dramas are awash with historical inaccuracies. Some may easily be forgiven; in cases where historical evidence and documents are fragmentary at best, one can certainly excuse some creative storytelling. However, one area that is noticeably inconsistent in costume dramas is, ironically, costume. For every perfectly-constructed Elizabethan ruff, there are one thousand zips, rubber soles, and flimsy French hoods. Here, I am going to discuss two very different costume dramas: *Wolf Hall*, the 2015 adaptation of Hilary Mantel's best-selling novels *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up The Bodies*, and *The White Queen*, the 2013 adaptation of Philippa Gregory's *The Cousins War* series. While, chronologically, there are only 36 years between the historical timeframes of these shows, the differences in the accuracy of costuming are vast; *Wolf Hall* was widely praised

for its accuracy, with almost all of the scenes filmed in natural lighting, including the interior scenes. Viewers hailed the uniqueness and accuracy of *Wolf Hall* in a TV landscape full of hyper-sexualised versions of history. *The White Queen*, however, fell victim to these accusations, and was beleaguered with accusations of total inaccuracy within days of the premiere.

Wolf Hall was a critical success for the BBC, with critics almost unanimous in their praise of the show, which drew, on average, 4 million viewers each week. Staring Mark Rylance, Damien Lewis, and Claire Foy as Thomas Cromwell, King Henry VIII, and Anne Boleyn respectively, the show's cast and crew placed an emphasis on historical accuracy, which certainly guided the costume department's hand. Over 70 costumes were handmade by the small team, following a technique used by The Globe called 'original practice', meaning that the clothes were made and held together by entirely period-accurate means, using only materials and techniques that the Tudors themselves would have used. Alongside the fantastic script and incredible performances, this



Jonathan Rhys-Meyer as Henry VIII and Natalie Dormer as Anne Boleyn in a publicity still for "The Tudors" [StarPulse]

set *Wolf Hall* apart from the rest of the historical drama canon. Everything deliberately looked entirely authentic, and no attempt was made to censor items of clothing that are somewhat less palatable to the 21st-century viewer. To say I was delighted to see codpieces may raise a snigger from a few readers, but codpieces are a vital part of Tudor men's court fashion that are so often overlooked. A covering flap or pouch that attaches to the front of men's trousers, accentuating the genital area, codpieces are so rarely seen in historical dramas – most likely due to the modern mind sets of the viewers. While a viewer may accept the 'man in tights', they will likely distance themselves from the character because he seems outlandish; the tights are one item of clothing, but the entire Tudor ensemble, complete with codpiece, hose and square toed 'ducks bill' shoes seems too alien for the modern audience to accept as historical fact. However, *Wolf Hall* did not shy away from history. King Henry and Thomas Cromwell's costumes were both entirely accurate, and I tend to argue that this created a far more believable, rich world onscreen.

The same applies to the women's costumes in *Wolf Hall*. Anne Boleyn, played by Claire Foy, was clad in beautiful and entirely period appropriate gowns. *Wolf Hall's* costume designer, Joanna Eatwell, constructed Anne's dresses in separate parts that could be reassembled and re-used with separate underskirts (also known as *kirtles*), something that would have been common to the noblewomen of the day. Eatwell relied on paintings for much of her visual research, taking note of the importance that the country of origin had on the style of clothing evident in the painting; Eatwell made a clear definition between the English styles and the styles of the rest of Europe, always ensuring that the costumes in *Wolf Hall* were representative of English fashions specifically. While the costumes have a few very small slip-ups in terms of accuracy, they are generally one of the closest television has come to truly representing the Tudors onscreen in their own fashions.

The White Queen averaged similar audience numbers to *Wolf Hall* over its 10-week run. The critical reception was, however, an entirely

different story, with many viewers noting the similarities in narrative to HBO's fantasy series *Game of Thrones*, which is somewhat ironic, when considering George R.R. Martin, author of the book series of *Game of Thrones*, has cited the War of the Roses as the main narrative inspiration for his series. Critics also noted the many historical inaccuracies that arose repeatedly, with modern drainpipes and handrails appearing in the misé-en-scene of the show, and zips, rubber soles and padded trousers evident in many of the leading actor's costumes. The padded trousers, worn with riding boots, are one of the most consistent examples of modernisation that took place within *The White Queen's* costume department. Similarly to *Wolf Hall*, aristocratic men at the time would have worn hose and shoes, a far cry from the dashing riding boots and tight trousers sported by the leading males. The riding boots shown in the series did not come into existence until the 17th century, with advances in footwear design. Rumour has it that some influential players at the BBC told the producers of *The White Queen* 'no wimples!' This gives us, I think, a great deal of insight into the choices made by the costume department. With a young, attractive cast, a primetime viewing slot, and a story full of treachery, marriage and deceit, the producers simply did not risk costuming the actors accurately. The modern viewing public apparently cannot be trusted to translate the costumes directly, and by modernising, or I dare to say, 'sexing-up' the costumes, they ensured that the costumes were flattering, modern and matched the attractiveness of the actors, rather than risk the public thinking of the show as another 'men in tights' story.

The question must be asked – just how important is costume in historical dramas? The answer to that question depends on whom you ask. While many historians decry the modernised, sexualised costumes that take centre stage on shows such as *The Tudors*, an equal number claim that one mustn't rely on television dramas for a true representation of history. I would tend to agree with the latter to a certain extent – television, as an artistic medium, must have a certain degree of flexibility in their

representations of historical characters. After all, if every show were created to the same degree of accuracy, one would be holding back the creative talents of hundreds of talented designers, and soon the audience would become tired of the pedantic accuracy.

However, when representing real people, and real history, I do think it is important to have a certain degree of respect within the representation, and one way of presenting this to an audience is remaining accurate to the time period, to at least some degree. Unless it is a piece somewhat divorced from reality, or set in an alternate timeline, I do believe that there is a certain degree of responsibility within the production to represent a real person. When performing or writing a fictionalised version of real events, one must take into account that the person in question existed; they are more than just a character on a piece of paper. There is a

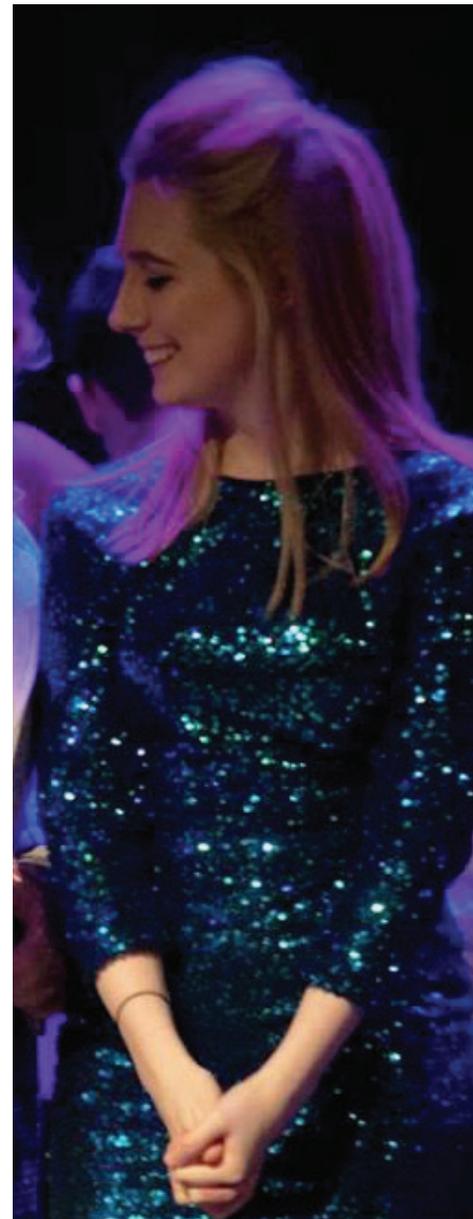
fine line between making history more attractive to a modern viewer, and completely divorcing the piece from any kind of historical accuracy.

As a costume lover, and a history lover, I will continue to enjoy costumes for what they are; beautiful pieces of art, and historical documents. Costumes are a cloth and thread representation of a person's character; a person made alive again through fabric. Costumes have helped Anne Boleyn to sweep through the halls of Hever Castle again, and they have allowed Elizabeth Woodville to relive the heady delight and uncertainty of her coronation day once more. I will continue to watch these moments with both delight, and a certain degree of trepidation – let Anne and Elizabeth live again, as they were; without a zip, handrail or rubber sole in sight!

EMMA-ELIZABETH TAYLOR

Emma Taylor is based in Belfast, Northern Ireland, where she is currently researching on the impact of post-colonialism, history, and cultural identity in theatre. As an actress, she appeared as Imogen Dawson in all the theatre adaptations of MadeGlobal's "Popular" novels. She has styled costumes for productions of "Les Misérables" and "Little Shop of Horrors". Her next project is the costumes for "The Gate of the Year", set in the court of Marie-Antoinette.

Tudor Life



AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO HER
MAJESTY'S PALACE AND FORTRESS

THE TOWER OF LONDON

White Tower photo
by Tim Ridgway

PART THREE

WRITTEN BY
TARA BALL





Prisoners of The Tower

Of the many visitors and tourists the Tower of London receives today, most have come in search to discover the Tower's role as a prison and its long list of prisoners.

The Tower of London was never intended for such a purpose, but because it was so secure, it appeared to be the best place to keep the most dangerous offenders. In saying that, the first prisoner, Ranulf Flambard, was imprisoned in the White Tower shortly after its completion in 1100. His friends brought in some wine in barrels. Using the wine to get his guards drunk, he escaped using a rope concealed in one of the barrels, which he used to bravely scale the ninety or so foot walls to his same friends with horses. Other prisoners were not so lucky. Another early prisoner, Gruffydd ap Llewelyn attempted the same feat in 1244, only he used his bed linen and it gave way under his weight and he fell to his death.

There are about twenty buildings ("Towers") on the site today, but not one was a specific "prison" Tower. Where and how a prisoner was kept depended on the seriousness of his offence. Some were allowed freedoms, like access to books and writing materials, sometimes even had their own servants and would live comfortably as they would in their own home.

Sir Walter Raleigh was imprisoned in the Bloody Tower. His wife and children lived there with him; one child was baptised in the Chapel Royal of St. Peter Ad Vincula on Tower Green. Sir Thomas More was also imprisoned comfortably in the Bell Tower, before continually displeasing King Henry VIII by refusing his will and recognising him as Head of the Church of England, thus his luxuries began to reduce until he was left in thin clothes and bare stone walls, with no warmth and no communication with his family. After eighteen months of incarceration, he was taken to Tower Hill and publicly beheaded in 1535, telling the bystanders he was 'the King's good servant, but God's first'.

The Towers were also gradually added over time, and the complex did not really complete its recognisable layout until the White Tower (the first and oldest Tower) was around two hundred years old. Each Tower was built for a purpose and that purpose would change as the monarchs came and went. Some preferred to use the Tower of London regularly to live; others avoided it all together. Some were prisoners themselves, like King Henry VI, who was held there from 1465 to 1470, after being overthrown by King Edward IV. After briefly returning

to the throne in 1470, he soon lost it once more and was murdered possibly in the Wakefield Tower in 1471. Queen Elizabeth I had been a prisoner in her early womanhood, so the Tower became abhorrent to her, yet she sent her prisoners there, knowing first-hand of the fear those walls could strike. Some used it as a place of refuge for themselves when the people became restless, such as Queen Elizabeth Wydeville and eventually her daughter, Queen Elizabeth of York. There were a few Royal names, as did many other noble prisoners, that were executed either in private on Tower Green or subjected to roaring crowds on Tower Hill, just outside the Tower of London site and from there buried within its walls for all eternity.

Today, the Tower is a historic site were many tourists visit each day, curious of its tragic and sometimes shocking history. However, just as the Tower was never officially a prison, it has never ceased to be used as one. Enemy spies captured in World Wars one and two found themselves incarcerated within its walls, often in the Queen's House, the Tudor white plaster and black timber house that still stands on Tower Green. Some like Josef Jakobs, a spy for the Germans and captured after injuring himself parachuting into England, were executed by firing squad within the walls of the Tower, echoing the fates of many Tudor figures. Even as far into the early 1950s, the notorious Kray Twins found themselves imprisoned in the Waterloo Block, the same building that houses the Crown Jewels today. The last high-profile prisoner held at the Tower was Rudolf Hess, right-hand man to Adolf Hitler, in 1944. There is no complete or official list of prisoners, but it is estimated that around 8000 people were imprisoned in the Tower over the course of its history, some as little for crimes like debt or marrying without permission, others for murder or treason, planning to overthrow and replace the monarch. Today, modern opinion even believes some prisoners to be totally innocent of the accusations, such as Lady Jane Grey, beheaded in 1554 for being a 'puppet' for her father-in-law to keep hold of the power he enjoyed as Lord Protector for



A selection of Tower Prisoners (Top to bottom, left to right) *From Author's personal archive - Anne Boleyn, Katherine Howard, The Lady Elizabeth, Margaret Pole, Lady Jane Grey, Sir Thomas More, Thomas Cromwell, Arbella Stuart, Edward Seymour, John Dudley*

King Edward VI, after the boy-king suddenly died young. Anne Boleyn, the infamous second Queen of King Henry VIII, has posthumously swayed public opinion so, that centuries after she too was beheaded in 1536, it seems unthinkable that she was guilty of plotting to murder a King on whose good will she ultimately relied on, simply because she was the 'other woman' in Henry's life.

The Tower of London started life as palace of luxury and a formidable protector of both the people and the monarch. Yet its history as a notorious prison and scene of horrific death and murder has captured the modern imagination, when beheading is no longer part of society. Yet one can still feel a chill upon hearing the words "To the Tower!" as many unfortunate souls did, knowing there was very little chance of ever leaving those walls. And even then, if only to meet their fate in front of a jeering crowd baying for blood and no mercy.



“Traitor’s Gate” – the Water Gate where supposedly, so many entered the Tower of London, never to leave. *Author’s own photo*

Tower Green

Tower Green is not actually a building. It is an area of grass within the inner ward of the Tower of London, and named because it acted as a village Green for the ancient Tower community. Today, it is a strip of grass, over-looked by four important buildings; “Bloody” Tower in the south (once known as “Garden” Tower), The Queen’s House in the south west, the Beauchamp Tower in the north west and the Chapel Royal of St. Peter Ad Vincula in the north. The Bloody and Beauchamp Towers are two buildings that have held a number of prisoners each in their time, and the Chapel now holds the remains of many of these prisoners. The Queen’s House was the lodgings for the men in charge of The Tower, such as the Lieutenant and the Constable. To this day, the current Constable, Sir Richard Dannatt lives there still, on behalf of HM The Queen.

In the 16th Century, Tower Green was not limited to this western side but the grass expanded northwards and eastwards, running outside the Waterloo Barracks (which is a 19th century building) where the entrance of the Crown Jewel exhibition is today. It was not known as Tower Green either, but known simply as “the Green” or “East Smithfield Green”. The latter name stuck as it had been named

before the Tower’s walls had enclosed it and made it part of the complex. Around this time, seven people were executed here. Their names are:

Lord Hastings – June 1483 – He was a victim of Richard III, whom apparently accused him of the murder of the “Princes in the Tower”, and was executed so swiftly, legend has it they mustered up a log for a block.

Queen Anne Boleyn – 19th May 1536 – She had been King Henry VIII’s ultimate desire for many years, as Henry fought for an annulment of his first marriage to Katherine of Aragon. They married probably in 1533 and Anne gave birth to Elizabeth, not Henry’s desired son. In 1536 she was suddenly arrested for incest, adultery and plotting to murder the King. She was swiftly beheaded by a sword after a show trial.

Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury – 21st May 1541 – She was a relation of Henry’s, and had been governess to his eldest daughter, Lady Mary. She had been on good terms with Henry for most of his reign, but her son opposed Henry’s reformation and fled



Tower Green within the Tower; as seen from the Beauchamp Tower. The Scaffold memorial is under conservation. *Author's own photo*

abroad. In frustration, Henry punished the mother instead. Her execution, at the age of sixty-nine, was apparently a brutal one. She refused to kneel over the block,

where the executioner was obliged to swing his axe wildly before he could successfully complete his bloody task.

Queen Katherine Howard – 13th February 1542 –

Katherine had been risen from obscurity by her powerful family, who were also related to Anne Boleyn. She was married as the fifth wife of the aging King Henry VIII and in the beginning it was idyllic. However her promiscuous past was brought to Henry's attention and the discovery of a love letter suggested she had committed adultery. An angry, heartbroken Henry sent her to her fate on the scaffold.

Jane Boleyn, Lady Rochford – 13th February 1542

– Anne's widowed sister-in-law, became involved with Katherine Howard as Chief Lady-in-Waiting. She supposedly assisted Katherine in her adultery and thus was a traitor to the crown and followed her mistress to the block.

Lady Jane Grey – 12th February 1554 –

The teenage girl with a drop of Royal blood was a pawn in the power struggle that followed the untimely death of Henry VIII's son, King Edward VI in 1553. As a Protestant, she was proclaimed Queen, in favour of Protestant Edward's half-sister, the Catholic Lady Mary. She reigned for nine days, before Mary overthrew Jane's supporters. Mary knew that Jane had simply been used and seemingly intended to pardon her. But a rebellion in Jane's name was surely a precedent of what would happen if she were allowed to live. Mary reluctantly sent the innocent girl to her death.

Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex – 25th February

1601 – He had enjoyed Queen Elizabeth I's favour for some time, before he defied Elizabeth and unhappy with the loss of favour, attempted a revolt. Elizabeth, after forty years experience of thwarting her enemies (some that had once been friends), knew that she had no choice but to execute her friend for the good of the realm and the love of her people.

Lovers of the Tower

The Tower of London does not strike most as a place for love stories. Yet to fall in love could be dangerous in times past. Amongst the nobility, to marry or consent to marry without Royal permission was seen as a great insult to the monarch, even an act of treason.

Marriage for the nobility was for dynastic gain, favour and business. A marriage for love alone was simply not important and seen as frivolous. Love stories often caused gossip, rumour and scandal. The Tower saw a few lovers in its cells, those who had dared to marry for their own will.

With the noble families being so intricately related to Royalty and one another, during Tudor times there was nearly always a black sheep of the family who had angered the monarch at some point, and the Tudor monarchs found it hard to let bygones be bygones. The descendants often carried the stigma of their ancestors' betrayal, even if the relation was slight. With the Tudor monarch's succession to the crown was often tenuous and often without a legitimate, unquestionable heir to the throne, the succession was vulnerable to those with ancient Royal blood, who could court Royal favour but be plotting to take the crown. So no one could blame them if marriage occurred between unsuitable persons and be seen as a potential hazard to the throne.

Margaret Douglas, niece of King Henry VIII was one such prisoner. She had fallen in love with Lord Thomas Howard, uncle to Anne Boleyn, and was imprisoned in the summer of 1536. It was a case of bad timing, for Anne had fallen from favour having been executed in May and her family were also suffering her disgrace. As Henry had no legitimate heir, Margaret, daughter of Henry's elder sister, was heiress to the throne as an English subject (her half-brother, King James V of Scots was a rival to Henry). Her fiancé was also held in the Tower. Margaret was later moved to Syon Abbey still in disgrace. She eventually cut her ties with her lover and he died still within the Tower in 1537. You would think having King Henry VIII as an uncle, a King who had abandoned a respected wife and Queen, executed another Queen for taking lovers and had shown the same ruthlessness to a number of his trusted men, that Margaret would have learnt from her experience of falling out with Henry. But in 1540 she found herself

in the Tower again, after an affair with Sir Charles Howard, son of Lord Edmund Howard, the half-brother to her previous lover, Thomas. Perhaps she thought Henry would approve, for in 1540, Henry had married Charles' sister, Katherine Howard. By 1543, she was back in Henry's good books and was a witness at his final marriage to Katherine Parr. She herself finally married in 1544 with approval. She would become the mother of Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley who would marry her niece, Mary, Queen of Scots (King James V's daughter) and be murdered in 1567. She also meddled with an unsuitable marriage again with her younger son, Charles Stuart, whom she married to Elizabeth Cavendish, daughter of the Countess of Shrewsbury, otherwise better known as 'Bess of Harwick' and one of the richest women in the realm. The young couple had a daughter, Lady Arbella Stuart who would also find herself in the Tower for marrying without Royal consent.

Lady Arbella Stuart was orphaned young and raised by her maternal grandmother, Bess of Hardwick. Queen Elizabeth I kept a close eye on the girl as without a direct heir herself, Arbella was a candidate for the throne in the event of Elizabeth's death, having descended from Elizabeth's Aunt, Margaret Tudor. Just before Elizabeth's death, Arbella was in disgrace after supposedly considering a marriage to Edward Seymour, 1st Earl of Hertford (nephew to King Henry VIII's third wife, Jane Seymour). Seymour's father had been Lord Protector to King Edward VI and had been overthrown and executed in 1552. His uncle Thomas Seymour had also been a thorn in Elizabeth's side, as in her youth, he had flirted with her and caused the jealousy of her beloved step-mother (Thomas's wife) Katherine Parr. Elizabeth had also been forced to reveal aspects of their 'relationship' under threat of arrest and execution when he himself was arrested and executed for treason in 1549. The Seymour's therefore remained under heavy suspicion as potential usurpers for Elizabeth. Arbella denied she ever wanted to marry Edward without permission and escaped Elizabeth's wrath.

It was a different story in 1610, seven years after Elizabeth's death, when Arbella was imprisoned in the Tower for marrying William Seymour, Lord Beauchamp and grandson to the same Edward

TOWER OF LONDON

Seymour, who had previously been involved with Arbella. The couple denied being engaged to King James I (Elizabeth I's successor and who was also Arbella's cousin, as he was the son of Lord Darnley and Mary, Queen of Scots) but later married in secret, infuriating the King. Seymour was imprisoned in the Tower and Arbella in Lambeth, under the custody of Sir Thomas Perry. When the King discovered Arbella was in communication with Seymour, he ordered her to be moved somewhere more secure in Durham.

(one of a very few who did) and Arbella dressed as a man went to meet her husband. They planned to escape abroad, but Seymour missed Arbella's ship and boarded the next. Arbella's ship was intercepted by King James's men. She was imprisoned in the Tower and never saw her husband again. She declined to eat and died in the Tower in 1615, reportedly having gone mad. William Seymour eventually remarried and died in 1660.

William's great-grandfather, Edward Seymour,



The modern day glass memorial.
Photo © 2013 Tim Ridgway

Arbella feigned illness to plot to escape with her husband. Seymour did manage to escape the Tower

had been imprisoned in the Tower and executed in 1552 (as previously mentioned). His son, also



walls. The Gaoler appears to have pitied the couple and let them meet. Perhaps it would have remained a secret had Catherine not fallen pregnant once again. A second son was born in the Tower and Catherine was moved away and permanently separated from her husband. Their union was declared invalid in 1562 and the children were therefore illegitimate. Catherine died in 1568 of consumption after a series of stays at various houses, still in disgrace for her illegal marriage.

Whereas Catherine Grey and Edward Seymour were prisoners in love, there is a curious story of love between a prisoner and her guard.

Alice Tinkerville was originally involved in a heist, where 'The King's Gold' was stolen. 366 golden crowns (equivalent of over £1 million today) disappeared off a ship when it docked in London and Alice's common law husband was imprisoned for the crime. It appears Alice initially befriended

Edward Seymour (William's grandfather), had been imprisoned in the Tower for marrying without permission. His spouse was Lady Catherine Grey. She was the granddaughter of Henry VIII's younger sister, Mary Tudor, and thus also a cousin to Queen Elizabeth I when she married Edward Seymour in 1560. Her sister was Lady Jane Grey, the nine day Queen who had been used to usurp the throne from Queen Mary I in 1553 and was executed for it in 1554. Catherine Grey only revealed her marriage when she was forced to. Her pregnancy was beginning to show and as Lady in Waiting to Queen Elizabeth I, she could not hide it no more. Elizabeth was furious and imprisoned both Catherine and Edward in the Tower. She gave birth to a son (William Seymour's father) whilst still in the Tower. The Tower is known to be a secure enough place to hold prisoners within, but in this case, offered no control once within its

a guard, John Bawde, to give herself access to her husband. Bawde fell in love with Alice himself and a tangled web of love grew. In 1534 Alice found herself imprisoned when it was discovered of her involvement in the heist. With Bawde's help of sneaking a copy of the key to her door and some ropes, Alice escaped the Tower one night and as Alice and Bawde made their way up Tower Hill, the Nightwatch approached and recognised them. Alice was taken back to her cell and Bawde had the pleasure of meeting 'Little Ease'; a room that was neither tall enough to stand nor big enough to lie down. Alice and her husband were put to death in a curious manner. Chained to the outer walls of the Tower, they hung waist deep in the Thames at low tide. Slowly the water rose where the couple screamed and writhed in a futile attempt to save themselves from being slowly drowned. As

for Bawde, he met with the rack and then hung in chains from the Tower walls for all to see. He was simply left there, his joints still twisted and mangled from the rack. He died of starvation, dehydration and exposure, his corpse remaining where it was hung as a lesson to those who defied the Tower's trust.

Most of the Tower's lovers came to a tragic ending, but the love between Lord Nithsdale and his wife, Winifred, was so strong, she was willing to put herself in danger in order to save him.

William Maxwell, 5th Earl of Nithsdale was a Scottish peer and a Jacobite. He rebelled against King George I and was captured at the Battle of Preston in 1715. George had him imprisoned in the Tower and intended to execute him with no mercy. Winifred, Lady Nithsdale (who also supported the cause), took up lodgings with her female servants in London and visited her husband. On the eve of his execution, she provided some hidden clothing; women's clothing. From there, Lady Nithsdale and her ladies confused the guards by going in and out of the cell, so that they could not tell how many were accounted for. Nithsdale donned the clothes his wife had provided and with the help of cosmetics and a handkerchief on his face, managed to walk past posing as one of the ladies. When her husband had walked free, Lady

Nithsdale was alone in the cell, carrying out a one-sided conversation with her 'husband'. After some time, she came out and told the guard to not disturb him as they had said their goodbyes and he was now deep in prayer to ready himself for his ordeal tomorrow. Upon the morrow they came for him and found an empty cell. Lord and Lady Nithsdale by then were on their way to Rome, where they would remain until the end of their lives.

In most cases, being in love within the Tower would cost the ultimate price, but in the case of the Nithsdales, even the strength of the Tower could not match how strong love could be.

— TARA BALL

More information about the formal role of HRP can be found on their website

www.hrp.org.uk/about-us

Author's Note:

This work is dedicated to all Staff of HM Tower of London. The Author has also made a donation to Historic Royal Palaces in recognition of their dedication to their cause.

Sources/Further Reading:

Prisoners of the Tower – Pitkin Guide

The Beefeater's Guide to the Tower of London – G. Abbott

The Mysteries of the Tower of London – G. Abbott

(Other works about the Tower of London and its history by this ex-Yeoman Warder are also a gem to read)

The White Tower – Edward Impey

The Tower of London: An Illustrated History – Edward Impey

Tara was just eight years old when she first 'discovered' The Tudors, after studying it in Primary School. Since then it has defined her life for over twenty years. Through encouragement, passion and a very talented memory 'for dates', she is an entirely self-taught Tudor expert. She has also completed a short course on Henry VIII: Portraits and Propaganda with Birkbeck, University of London. She has worked in tourism in a well-known historical landmark for over ten years. She lives near London in the UK with her husband, baby daughter and five guinea pigs.

THE DUDLEYS

A Drama in Four Acts

by

Derek Wilson

PART THREE

On 24 August 1549 John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, won his last military victory. It was a success that gave him no satisfaction. With a band of German professional soldiers he defeated a peasant rabble, led by Robert Kett who had seized control of Norwich, England's second city. On 22 August 1553 – four years later almost to the day – John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, was executed as a traitor. Those four years were years of mounting tension and recurrent tragedies. They were also years that set England firmly on a path from which there was no turning back.

Henry VIII's death in 1547 had left to his 9-year-old heir, Edward VI, a bankrupt nation, with a half-reformed church, embroiled in foreign wars. Tackling these problems would have been a daunting task for any ruler. Unfortunately, the man at the helm, Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset and Protector of the Realm, was not equal to the task. He lacked well-thought-out policies and the determination bordering on ruthlessness necessary to carry them through. By the time a palace coup had removed him from office rebellions had broken out in many places, of which Kett's revolt at Norwich was just one.

John Dudley was the man who filled the political vacuum. He was not a skilled politician but he was an experienced military leader, good at making decisions and imposing discipline. He made peace with France. He set a clear course of further religious reform, thus removing any ambiguity about the Protestant identity of the English church. He introduced measures which began to restore financial stability. Part of his economic solution was to press further the appropriation of ecclesiastical property that had been begun by Henry VIII. Gradually these measures began to pull England out of the mire.

They were also unpopular. Religious traditionalists resented the move further away from Rome. The bishops resented the loss of more land. To the common people Dudley was the butcher of Norwich and they particularly resented his treatment of the Duke of Somerset. As Protector, Seymour had posed as 'the people's friend', promising social and economic reform. He could not deliver but the rhetoric went down well. Seymour and Dudley were old comrades-in-arms and, instead of keeping his friend

well away from the seat of power, Dudley re-admitted him to the Privy Council. Somerset repaid this generosity by intriguing against the new regime – action which led to his eventual arrest, trial and execution.

Unpopularity mattered little as long as Dudley had the support of the young king. Edward was now in his teens, a strong-minded lad all set to follow in his father's footsteps. In matters of religion he was particularly forthright and determined to push the Reformation as far as it would go. He had a good relationship with Northumberland who made a point of involving him in the work of the Privy Council and generally 'grooming' him for the day when he would take over full regal power. For Dudley that day could not come soon enough. His health was indifferent and he did not bear lightly the burden of office as he confided to William Cecil, the king's secretary. Unlike other councillors,

When they went to their suppers and pastimes after their travail I went to bed, careful and weary. Yet no man scarcely had any good opinion of me. Now, by extreme sickness and otherwise constrained to seek health and quiet, I am not without a new evil imagination of men. Why should I wish longer life – but for my few children?

[*Calendar of State Papers Domestic – Edward VI*, 1992, No.800]

Within weeks of this letter being written, the king fell ill, though it was not immediately realised that the malady was terminal. Not till June was it understood that Edward would not reach his majority. This brings us to the notorious 'Devise for the Succession'. The young king was convinced that it would be a terrible sin if he were to allow the heir apparent, his half-sister Mary to in-

herit the Crown and set about undoing the English Reformation. His fierce determination to be succeeded by a Protestant led to the document which named his first cousin once removed, Jane Grey, as heir. He forced council members and leading judges to accede to his wishes. Most of those involved were uneasy about the arrangement. Was it legal? And whether it was legal or not, could it be made to stick?

Dudley had a choice. He could advise the king against the Devise. He could throw himself into enforcing the royal will. He could go along with Edward's plan until the king was dead and then declare his allegiance to Mary. He chose the second option, made a bungled attempt to force Jane Grey's accession and paid for his failure with his life.

The question the historian has to grapple with is Northumberland's character as revealed by the events of 1549 to 1553. The simple answer and one that held court for many years was that Dudley engineered the death of Seymour and that he planned the diversion of the succession, having already married one of his own sons to Jane Grey. The inescapable verdict: Dudley was a Machia-

vellian schemer driven entirely by personal ambition. The false or, at least, inadequate assumption was that, because things happened, they must have been planned. Yet, nothing in Dudley's career reveals him as a subtle politiquer. He was reactive rather than pro-active. Seymour, who still had a popular following, provoked a response by his attempt to gather personal support in court and Council. As to the succession issue, most historians accept that Edward was the driving force behind the Devise. In firmly supporting it Northumberland was demonstrating loyalty to the sovereign. If he had masterminded a coup to deprive Mary of the Crown he would have made a better job of it.

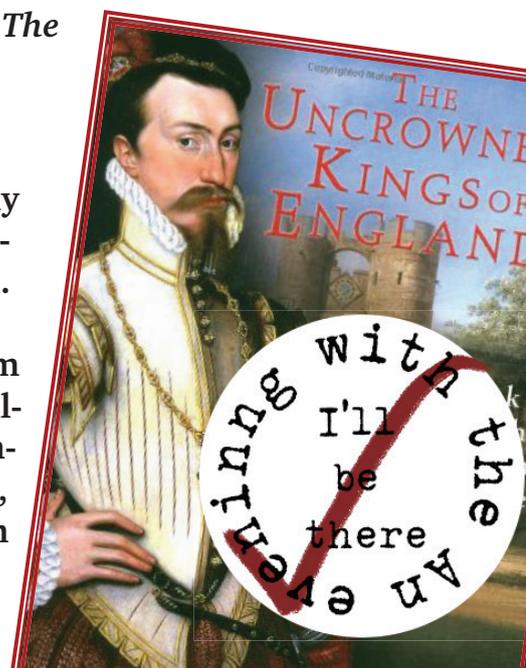
However we read John Dudley's character, one fact remains inescapable: when he submitted to the headman's axe in August 1553 it was for the same reason that his father had been executed forty-three years earlier – loyalty to the reigning Tudor king. Two generations of the family had died bearing the taint of treason. Surely for the Dudleys there could be no way back from that.

DEREK WILSON

Derek Wilson is the author of
*The Uncrowned Kings of England – The
Black Legend of the Dudleys*

“In the political ferment of 16th-century England, one family above all others was at the troubled center of court and council.

Throughout the Tudor Age the Dudley family was never far from controversy. They were universally condemned as scheming, ruthless, overly ambitious charmers, with three family members even executed for treason.”



Merrymaking

BY MELANIE V. TAYLOR



MAY DAY is traditionally the first day of summer, just as 1st February used to be thought of as the first day of Spring. The tradition of dancing round maypoles and crowning a May Queen all have their roots in paganism. So it is that we have to look to Bruegel for a glimpse of merrymaking in the sixteenth century.

Today we look at these paintings and admire the way the artist has caught the evident enjoyment of the party-goers. However, in the 1560s Bruegel was painting for an audience that needed reminding and warning of the dangers of the sins of gluttony, lust and drunkenness. He paints several images of peasants dancing round the Maypole as well as peasant weddings. The fertility rites of the 'old

ways' might not have met with the approval of the Church, but traditions such as maypole dancing, Morris dancing and crowning of a May queen were not easily stamped out. Beltane fires were lit on Walpurgis Night to usher in the first day of summer on 1st May then everyone celebrated. In Bruegel the Elder's painting of this May Day celebration we have to look at the detail. Our first impression may be of a well ordered event, but closer examination shows a man on the left relieving himself and his companion just to his right with his back to us, appears to be adjusting his codpiece. Seated on the ground is a woman who appears to have a rather drunken man lying in her lap. In fact, if you look deeper into this painting there are many who seem to have drunk more than is good for them. Some

are quite mellow, but on the road a group of men are drawing swords and a fight is about to break out. Children tug the tunic of a fool who wields a bladder on a stick.

There is an inn to the left, which looks prosperous and appears to be doing a good trade. Two of the patrons have come outside and they are urinating on the wall just under the ground floor window! Breughel does not spare our blushes in his portrayal of village life.

In contrast, the beer tent on the right is a temporary drinking establishment who has a motley collection of patrons seated outside around a barrel. A bagpipe player can be seen here too. Bagpipes were long known by medieval illuminators as a way of denoting lust.

Breughel the Elder's works are much loved to this day. The robustness of his peasant characters could suggest he was painting a time of plenty, but this was not always the case. What is the purpose of painting chubby people? These joyful scenes were meant to be moral lessons. Committing the sin of gluttony would lead to a large waistline; the well-emphasised codpieces are very unsubtle suggestions of lust. Virginity was a commodity, even for those at the

bottom of society where lineage was not considered as important as those of the ruling elite. However, marrying a virgin meant you knew you were the father of any consequential children.

In Breughel's paintings each figure is rendered as an individual. The Peasant Wedding was painted in 1567 and hangs in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. The event is taking place in a barn with the bride seated at the table under a cloth of estate with a symbolic paper crown above her head. Our bride looks very pleased with herself, but it is difficult to make out just who is the bridegroom. The married women all wear wimples of various shapes covering their hair, thus declaring their married status. The status of the men is not so easy to identify except for the man in black on the right who appears to be more richly dressed than the others and he seems to be talking to a priest. The diners are being entertained by two pipers who play the pijzak while the food is being carried to the table by two men using a door as an improvised tray.

The various ideas as to the identity of the groom are many, including his being the man dressed in green and pouring beer into a flagon on the foreground to the left to this painting being





Breughel's interpretation of the Mystical Wedding at Cana. It is also speculated this is an allegorical comment on the corruption of the Church in that the bride represents the Church and her groom has not appeared to claim his corrupt bride. Another more Freudian observation by the mathematician and sci fi novelist, Rudy Rucker, is that the man with the red hat seated at the table and passing a bowl of food to the bride is the groom. Rucker suggests this man's movement is a symbolic gesture of the taking of his bride's virginity. In Rucker's opinion there are three phallic objects pointing towards the bride; a knife, the man's arm and what appears to be a salt cellar. Rucker goes on to suggest that the angled bowl the seated red hatted man is holding forms an ellipse and this is a visual metaphor for the bride's vagina. Personally I think this is a post-modern over analysis of the image, but since Breughel did not leave notes we will never know what he intended, let alone that he was intending to impart a modern Freudian subconscious concept and art historians

will continue to argue over the meaning of these wonderful images until the end of time.

The festivities have got to the point where everyone is relaxed, to the point that the small child in the foreground, with the peacock feather in his hat, is being completely ignored. He seems to be licking out a bowl. But the more intriguing element is a very simple one. Who owns the strange third foot we can see under the improvised tray?

Then after the feast, it is time to dance.

In *The Wedding Dance* of 1566 (*above*) the bride has been described as dancing with her father. I am unsure why the writer thinks this is the case because it is more likely that she is dancing with her bridegroom now that her father has handed her over to him. Our pipers are to be seen standing to the right while the dancers whirl and jump to their tunes. There are all sorts of liberties being taken and the male dancer just in front of them seems to be pinching his partner's bottom! The lewd look on the man with the red legs tells us he has one thing on his mind.

If we look deeper into the background we see that it is not all debauchery. We might even conclude that the differences between a modern wedding and that in the 16th century are few. Everyone has eaten and drunk more than is good for them, some are dancing, others are standing around in groups talking and right at the very back we see the matriarchs of the village sitting quite probably discussing whether or not this relationship is going to last. In many ways I am reminded of the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral!* This raunchy painting was thought to have been lost until it was discovered in the 1930s and bought by the Detroit Institute of Arts, Michigan where it hangs to this day.

What Breughel does is bring to a wider audience the themes seen in the illuminations of Simon Bening. Tucked away in the British Library are a number of manuscripts illuminated by Bening and his workshop. In particular the illumination for the month of May in *The Golf Hours* (BL Add. MS 24098) shows a group of well to do people enjoying themselves in a boat on the river. Have they, like the riders on the bridge, been out gathering May blossom? The group seated on the barge seem very restrained in comparison to the Breughel paintings. Musical entertainment is provided by the richly dressed man who is playing a recorder and his lady partner

who seems to be playing a tabor, or perhaps what we see is the bottom part of a lute? These vignettes of contemporary Flemish life were what the Bening workshop was famous for, but being in a *Book of Hours* meant these paintings were seen by the privileged few. Since the *Book of Hours* would have been commissioned and owned by a member of the upper classes, it may well be that Bening was told what to portray by the person commissioning the work. Studying these images today what we learn from these demure images of the wealthy is that perhaps the upper classes did not let their hair down



in quite the same exuberant way as the peasants who worked the land.

Or did they?

It would be wrong to say that England does not have any images of people having fun, but the examples are few and very far between. Sixteenth century English painting has little in the way of narrative or allegorical scenes and as far as I am aware, the Höefnagel painting of *A Fete at Bermondsey* is unique. It measures 29 x 39 inches (73.8 x 99 centimetres) and has been in the family of the Marquis of Salisbury since before 1611, when we think it makes its first appearance in an inventory. It is believed it is the picture 'of the solemnities of a marriage' and appears as such in subsequent inventories. If you are visiting Hatfield House then it is hung at the bottom of the main staircase.

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bc/Marcus_Gheeraerts_the_Elder_-_Festival_at_Bermondsey.png

Höefnagel painted this *Fete* from a slightly elevated viewpoint south of the River Thames in the village of Bermondsey looking north towards The Tower of London, which you can see in the distance. The River Thames has various ships on it and to the right of the Tower we can make out a series of buildings that appear to be the docks. Behind the action at the front of this painting there are figures that appear to be practicing archery in the large green space and a loaded wagon is being pulled towards the church by four horses. These people do not seem to be involved in the festivities in any way.

The church to the very right is thought to be that of St Mary Magdalene and there is a procession of black clad people entering the festival space led by a man holding above his head what appears to be a cup filled with greenery decorated with ribbons. Tabitha Barber, writing in *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor & Jacobean England 1530 - 1630*, quotes a nearly contemporary description of a bridal procession where a silver cup 'wherein was a goodly braunch of Rosemarie gilden very faire, hung about with wilken Ribbons of all colours' that was carried before the bride. The bride would be followed by 'the chiefest maydens of the Countrie, some bearing great Bride Cakes.'

For many years the woman at the front of this group was thought to represent Elizabeth I, presumably because the painting dates from c1569 -

70, but recent thought is that this woman is not the queen and the group is well-to-do family arriving stage right.

If we step back and look the whole painting, perhaps like me, you are struck by how it resembles a scene in a Hollywood musical. The people are dressed in their best clothes and seem to be moving from both sides of the painting towards the middle. They seem to be gathering in anticipation of a special event. You can almost hear the musicians at the bottom right tuning up ready to entertain those invited to this event. In the centre there are two girls and two men each carrying what appears to be a large pie wrapped in white linen, but they seem to be going away from where the table is set. Have they just picked up pies from the counter behind them? Behind them are two fiddle players, who lead the man with the greenery filled cup and presumably are playing a suitable melody.

The central building stands out from the others because it is made of brick, with a tiled roof that needs some attention. These building materials were expensive and more resistant to fire than the wattle and daub walls and thatched roofs of the nearby buildings. Inside the interior of the left wing is where it appears a feast is being prepared. If you look very closely a woman can be seen in the back of this room turning what looks to be a long spit with various bird spitted on to it. This does not appear to be a kitchen of a house, but somewhere where food is first prepared and then sold over a counter, which we can see at the front of the opening. There is a man emerging from the 'kitchen' door and a further two men appear to be involved in the preparation of the feast. One carries a dish and the other, a flagon. There is a chimney above the fire where the birds are being roasted, which may also serve the room under the eaves as well as the single storey 'kitchen'.

In the same building, but in the room next to the kitchen, we see a table set with a white cloth and place settings. The room above this festive space is occupied and the two windows show women and children leaning out to see what is happening below.

We can tell from their clothes that the various guests come from all walks of life, but there is none of the exuberance of Breughel's paintings. What the exiled Höefnagel has in common is his observation of the life of the everyday of all walks of life.

Höefnagel produced panoramic views of Spain and France before coming to England c1568, from Antwerp. The Hatfield painting, which is signed and inscribed b.l., but only the signature is visible to the naked eye, is unlike the other paintings he created during his stay in England. He created a view of Nonsuch Palace, which is how we know this palace looked, but that appears in a book. He produced watercolour sketches of several costumed female figures, which appeared in the book of English views and one of these figures appears again in this painting of a Fete. If you look at the entry for this on Wikipedia this painting is now attributed to Marcus Gheerhaerts the Elder. Unfortunately there is nothing to say why there is this new attribution, especially since Höefnagel original signature appears on the painting. If someone can point me to the source of this new attribution, I would be extremely grateful.

Höefnagel friend and colleague, Lucas de Heere was in England at the same time and de Heere produced watercolour costume sketches for a treatise on the geography, customs and manners of the British Isles (*Der Beschrijving der Britsche Eilanden*). Both artists were members of a close-knit community of exiles from Antwerp, all living in London. It is just possible that they lived together in Bermondsey and Tabitha Barber reports that Höefnagel may well have included his friends and himself in this scene. Perhaps Höefnagel is the man leaning against the tree with two of his friends next to him, one being seated to Höefnagel's left and the other, wearing a hat, to his right. Höefnagel may well be the man who looks directly at us, which is always an indicator of a self-portrait within a painting.

How this unusual image came into the possession of the Cecil family is not known.

Hanging in Penshurst Place, Kent is a painting allegedly showing Elizabeth I dancing Lavolta with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/dc/Robert_Dudley_Elizabeth_Dancing.jpg This painting has no signature and in my opinion lacks the verve of the Breughel paintings. It is variously described as *The School of Fontainebleau* and *The Valois School*. At a time when dancing was a formal art, this 'hands on' image may well be a sarcastic visual comment by an anonymous French artist on the liberties taken by Robert Dudley when he

danced with his queen. Many detailed descriptions of how Lavolta should be performed survive and all of them describe in detail how the woman is lifted into the air. There are two scenes in Elizabeth where Kate Blanchett, as the queen, dances Lavolta with Joseph Fiennes playing the role of Robert Dudley. According to the Wikipedia entry for Lavolta these two scenes depict a very inaccurate rendition of the dance.

Whether this painting is of an English court, or perhaps a glimpse into the French court, there is no doubt that the couple in the centre are enjoying themselves and the richly dressed onlookers seem eager to join them on the dance floor. The musicians are working hard and one of them looks directly out of the painting as if challenging us to join the throng to learn this new risqué dance. What is a trifle baffling is the presence of the shaggy dog centre stage. It seems too large to be a lapdog and its presence is slightly incongruous. It could cause havoc should it decide to dart across between the dancers!

By the mid 1500s the Horenbout family had died out, the David workshop had ceased and of the internationally famous Ghent-Bruges school of illumination, only the Bening workshop remained. Printing had revolutionised book making and the reproduction of images. Breughel was very aware that the aspirational middle classes wanted his paintings, which is why he repeated themes, but he was also a printmaker and so was able to reach an even wider audience by making affordable prints for those with less disposable income. He often chose to portray peasant life and it is considered that his paintings such as *The Hunters* and other various winter scenes are evidence of the exceptionally cold winters we know as *The Little Ice Age*. It is possible that Breughel and Bening met since both were members of the Guild of St Luke and Bening served as dean three times during his life.

In various seminars and discussions it is often debated that Breughel took his lead from Bening. Both men lived at a time of great religious upheaval. Bening (c1483-1561) learned his skills from his father, Alexander Bening and inherited his workshop and patrons. Breughel, born in 1525, was apprenticed to Pieter Coecke van Alst, court painter to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. During the Renaissance humanist learning broadened the choice subjects for

artists and patrons to include classical myths as well as interpretation of religious texts. The iconoclasm that followed Luther's publication of his Ninety-Five theses meant that the market for religious paintings ceased to exist in those lands where Protestantism became the state religion. So it was that the Reformation brought about a revolution in art in the same way as it did for religion and led to new genres such as paintings of landscape and contemporary scenes. Hoefnagel came to England in the late 1560s when he was just twenty, but from what we know of his career it is unlikely, but not impossible, that it was to escape religious persecution, but instead to develop links with merchants. He worked for Albert V, Duke of Bavaria and in Rome, for Cardinal Farnese. It was not until 1591 does it become obvious that he was a Protestant. He had lived in Munich at the ducal court for about nine years and in 1591 a rule was introduced that court members had to demonstrate their Catholic faith. Hoefnagel left and joined the court of Emperor Rudolf II until 1594 when Calvinists were repressed and he left.

While Hoefnagel may be considered by some to be the last of the great illuminators, his illuminations are not of a religious nature so therefore do not come under the same umbrella of works as that of Bening. His manuscript illuminations for books of scenes, people and nature for various European members of the nobility demonstrate his skill at observing nature and it is considered these works form the basis for the portrayal of "still life" as an independent genre and the Dutch excelled at portraying.

Both Bening and Breughel died in the 1560s, before the beginning of the Eighty Years War and the eventual split of the Dutch Republic from Hapsburg rule. Whereas the works of Bening may have inspired Breughel to paint large paintings of everyday scenes, it is the latter's portrayal of the everyday that is considered to be the inspiration for many Dutch artists of the seventeenth century. Hoefnagel and Breughel may have been painting in the sixteenth century, but their works herald the development of the Golden Age of Dutch Art in the seventeenth.

MELANIE V. TAYLOR

Melanie Taylor is the author of "*The Truth of the Line*" and a regular contributor to the Tudor Life magazine. She's making a name for herself in the Tudor and Medieval art world, specialising in works by Teerlinc and Hilliard. She is also preparing a course for the new online courses website MedievalCourses.com as well as working on a number of new non-fiction works.



Charlie

KATHERINE OF ARAGON: THE TRUE QUEEN

Our Books



by **ALISON WEIR**

Alison Weir has recently set herself the huge task of writing a novel on each of Henry VIII's six wives, the aim being to release a novel each year. Being such a large task, some couldn't help but wonder how she would pull it off, and the answer is, at least for the first one, extremely well. Weir does not compromise with Katherine's life and, with nearly 600 pages of story, readers need to look no further if they want to find out more about Henry's first queen.

Weir takes her attention to historical accuracy seriously, even at the start of the novel with many of the Spanish and English customs and how they differ. This is timed to inform the reader before the two customs clash in front of Katherine, making it clear that this is not an insignificant thing and foreshadowing the later problems with her ladies:

'In Spain a young lady must be veiled when presented to a gentleman. I repeated that you had retired for the night. And do you know what he said... he said that this is England, and that he would see you even though you were in your bed. The very shame of it! We are come among savages!'

As well as this, Weir establishes that Katherine had to have her name changed when she came to England, which is also a slight nod to the reader about the confusion with the spelling of Katherine's name:

'I must always remember that, as soon as I set foot on English soil, I am no longer the Infanta

Catalina but the Lady Katherine, Princess of Wales!' Catalina had been told that her name must be anglicised to please her husband's future subjects, for one day, when King Henry died and Prince Arthur succeeded to the throne, she would be queen of England.'

It is quickly established which side of the debate about whether Katherine and Arthur consummated their marriage Weir stands on. She portrays Arthur as a sickly boy and compares him often to his younger brother Henry, 'where Arthur was pale and thin, his brother was stocky and blooming with health; even kneeling he exuded vitality and self-assurance'. The portrayal of Arthur as sickly and 'clearly unfit for the duties of marriage' may be criticized by some readers. However, Weir presents it in a way that is believable, and she backs up her argument in the author's note section.

There is a section between Arthur's death and Katherine's marriage to Prince Henry where the book does become a little repetitive, mainly because Henry VII seemed to keep changing his mind about the future king marrying Katherine. It does become a little tedious, but it also helps the reader feel Katherine's frustration at her uncertain future in a country that was unfamiliar and strange to her.

Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon start off as extremely happy, something which is often overshadowed by the later events of their relationship and Henry's interest in Anne Boleyn. Although, it is made clear to the reader that the most important thing to the couple is having a son. Even when Katherine chooses her symbol, the pomegranate,

Henry comments: *'Very apt, for I hope we will have many sons.'*

I like how it shows Katherine defending Anne at first, and once again Weir doesn't let herself be influenced by later events, *'She has always served me well and been an ornament to my court. I can find no fault in her.'* Weir shows how Anne faithfully served Katherine while Henry was pursuing her and did not let on to Katherine as to what was happening. You can also tell it is from Katherine's point of view as throughout she protests that Henry has a good heart and that everything is Anne's fault; he would even come back to her if Anne were gone. It seems accurate that Katherine would say this due to her feelings for Henry and also because, even with the likes of Bessie Blount giving him a son, he had never tried to leave Katherine for one of his 'mistresses'.

Away from Katherine and Henry's relationship, there are a few hints at future events that some readers may pick up on. One that particularly stands out is when Katherine and Margaret Pole discuss Princess Mary. Margaret tells Katherine how all of the changes are affecting her, and Weir effectively hints as to what Mary would be like as queen, but she also puts in a reason as to why Mary is so pious,

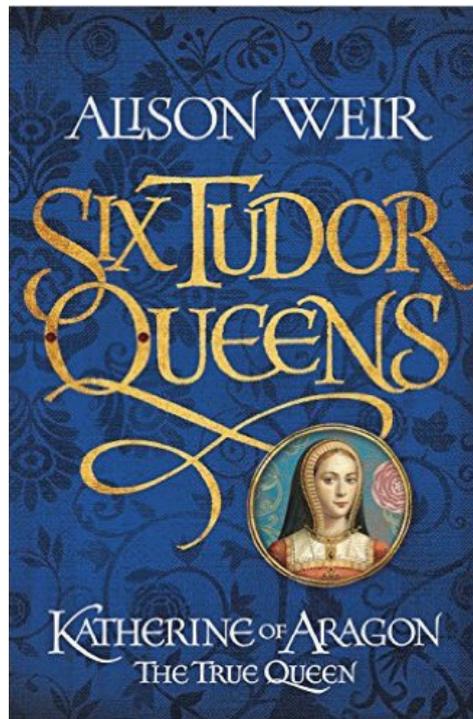
'It is as if it [religion] represents the security she knew when she was little, before all this happened - a fixed mark in a changing world. It hasn't surprised me when she has got into a passion and said she loathes heresy in any form. I cannot tell you how greatly these latest reforms are grieving her, for she will not discuss them.'

One thing that may divide readers is Katherine of Aragon's reaction to the Pope ruling that the marriage is valid and that Henry has to return to her. Katherine is made to believe that Henry would listen to the Pope, despite his threats and actions otherwise,

'She remembered him saying vehemently that he would not heed the Pope, whatever judgement he gave, but she knew that, underneath the anger

and the bravado, there lurked a true son of the Church who had been led astray, and she could not believe that he would ignore this ruling. It would jolt him into the realisation of what he was doing, and how he had put his immortal soul in peril.'

I do not quite believe that Katherine would be that naïve, especially as at that time Anne Boleyn was pregnant with what Henry hoped would be his son. She soon after asks a question that again has been asked by many familiar with Katherine's story: 'Was I right to make a stand against what I believed to be wrong? Even though many ills have come from it? I have been asking myself this a lot lately.'



Experiencing Katherine's story through her own eyes has made me question my ideas as to whether or not she should have just stood aside. She would have had a much more comfortable life, as well as her daughter, yet she would have had to accept that Mary was illegitimate. That everything she went through to marry Henry after Arthur's death was for nothing. It leaves the reader thinking this over and either way feeling sorry for the woman who stood up for what she believed in.

Katherine of Aragon: The True Queen is an addictive and interesting read, even if you already know all about Katherine's life. This book connects you directly to her, and her words and actions don't feel out of character in any way. It is not too dry and is entertaining throughout, although perhaps slightly leaning towards modern and simple in its use of language. There are no inaccuracies that stand out and, as has to be done with any historical fiction novel, the decisions Weir does make about Katherine (such as whether or not she and Arthur consummated their marriage) seem plausible.

CHARLIE FENTON



OLGA HUGHES' Tudor Kitchen

Sweethearts and Sweetmeats

- The Tudor Banquet -

Dessert as a final course after a savoury meal is very familiar to us, but the sweet course has gone through various changes over the centuries. The Tudor, in particular the Elizabethan, trend of the banquet course saw a breathtaking display of flamboyant wealth; from the spectacular 'houses' built to host a fest dedicated entirely to sweets and wine, to the elaborate confectionary and edible crockery prepared for it.

The banquet evolved from what was initially known as the "void" after a meal. In the middle ages wine, spices and wafers were usually served at the end of a grand meal; it was thought to aid digestion, but it was also a display of luxury. Withdrawing to another room for the void also allowed for the dining hall to be cleared and the servants to eat. In wealthy households 'servants' often included the nobility serving in ceremonial positions, so guests would wait until the servants had finished their meal. Then the servants would return after their meal to serve the wine and spices.

A hundred years on, Elizabethan society seemed to feel the need for more privacy and intimacy. On the one hand, the fortress-like walls that used to surround grand houses were no longer desirable or fashionable. But the nobility also began to enjoy their gardens as private places. And separate rooms for

banqueting were a way for the family and guests to relax away from the general bustle and noise of large households.

There was also, as Alison Sim puts it, a “darker and much less sophisticated side” to intimate banquets. Phillip Stubbes, who published a criticism on Elizabethan society in his *The Anatomie of Abuses*, described banqueting houses with typical Puritan melodrama:

In the fields and suburbs of the cities they have gardens, either paled or walled about very high, with their harbours and bowers fit for the purpose. Banqueting houses with galleries, turrets and what not else therein sumptuously erected, wherein they may, and doubtless do, many of them play the filthy persons.

What Stubbes describes as ‘filthy’ was more likely the opportunity for the nobility to relax in an intimate setting with friends. Gardens were certainly seen as a romantic setting, and with the servants dismissed, a small gathering of friends could indulge in too much wine and flirtatious conversation, free from their daily societal ritual.

The Banqueting House

The aristocracy never shied away from competition when it came to having the most lavish hospitality, and banqueting houses became a true mark of wealth and style. As banqueting houses were in some part created out of that desire for privacy, they were usually set on the roof of the house, or in the garden. Many great houses had their banqueting houses set on the roof, and sometimes multiple houses. One of the first known was Sir William Sharington’s, who had two banqueting halls in the octagonal lookout tower set on the roof of his converted abbey Lacock in Wiltshire. Bess of Hardwick’s six banqueting houses can still be seen on the roof of Hardwick Hall. Sir John Thynne had four built on the roof of Longleat house.

These were small banqueting houses designed for more intimate banquets. Banqueting houses set in the garden tended to be far more elaborate.

You may remember the amazing banqueting house set in an ancient lime tree, described by John Parkinson:

And I have seen at Cobham in Kent a tall or great bodied Lime tree, bare without boughes for eight foote high, and then the branches were spread round about so orderly, as if it were

A Banquet Menu from Randle Holmes’ “The Academy of Armory”

Third Course

1. *March-pan set with several sorts of Sweet-Meats.*
2. *Preserves or wet Sweet-Meats in Plates as, Pears, Plums, Cherries, Quinces, Grapes Respass, Pippins, Oranges, Lemmons, young Walnuts, Apricocks, Peaches, &c with their Syrup about them.*
3. *Dried Sweet-meats & Suckets of Oranges Lemmons Citron: or Conserves, or Candies, and Rock-Candies of Cherries, Apricocks, Plums, Damasius, Pippins, Pears, Angelica, Rosemary and Marygold Flowers, Pippins, Pears, Apricocks, Plums, Ringo roots: or Marmalet of Quinces, Damasins, Plums, Oranges etc. Pastes made of Citron: Pippins, Apricocks, Rasbery, English Currants.*
4. *Biskets, Mackroons, Naple Bisket, Italian Bisket, Comfeits round, Longs and Loseng like, Gingerbread, Almond Cakes, Apricock Cakes, Losenges, Quince Chips, Orange cakes, March-pane Collops.*
5. *Sugar cakes, Jamballs, Jemelloes, Sugar Plate, Plum and Rasbury cakes, Cheese cakes.*
6. *Tree Fruit as Apples and Pears of diverse kinds, Cherries, Plums, Strawberies, Currants, Raspes, Walnut, Chestnuts, Filbernuts, Dates, Grapes, Figgs, Oranges, Lemmons, Apricocks, Peech, Dried Raisins and Currants, Prunes, Almonds blanched. Solis. Sina, quod inatios tiessat, publium pulin dita maximisimis sere noc ia dit id di in rei factura, que talium horterio, tem se ereo Cupiorei sci publiin tam senite partem hosupermilium mod re, patuit, unum fur acere morsum*

done by art, and brought to compose that middle Arbour: And from those boughes the body was bare againe for eight or nine foote (wherein might be placed half a hundred men at the least, as there might likewise in that underneath this) and then another rowe of branches to encompass a third Arbour, with staires made for the purpose to this and that underneath it: upon the boughes were laid boards to tread upon which was the goodliest spectacle mine eyes ever beheld for a tree to carry.

Henry VIII's spared no expense on his Greenwich Palace banqueting house, built in 1527 to impress the French whom he was attempting to secure an alliance with. It measured 110x30 feet and was lavishly decorated. In a staggering display of wealth, the entire floor was covered with silk, embroidered with gold lilies. The roof was decorated with a mural depicting the world surrounded by the planets and symbols of the zodiac.

Henry's ill-fated Nonsuch Palace, a favourite of his daughter Elizabeth I's, also had a spectacular banqueting house. Set on the highest hill in the park grounds, the banqueting house was half-timbered and three stories tall. It had round turrets on each corner, and a crowning, lead-covered lantern. A great hall covered the ground floor, and the upper stories were comprised of three more rooms on the first floor and five on the second. The rooms were all panelled with oak and had windows all round. From the upper floors one could go to the balconies on each turret and take in the view.

Lord Burleigh's house Theobolds had a banqueting house to rival that of his Queen's. A guest Paul Hentzner described the banqueting house and gardens.

...one goes into the garden, encompassed with a ditch full of water, large enough for one to have the pleasure of going in a boat, and rowing between the shrubs: there are a great variety of trees and plants, labyrinths made with a great deal of labour, a jet d'eau with its baison of white marble and columns and pyramids of wood and other materials up and down the garden. After seeing these we were lead by the gardener into the summer house in the lower part of which, built semicircularly are the twelve Roman emperors in white marble, and a table of touchstone, the upper part of it is set round with cisterns of lead, into which water is conveyed through pipes, so that fish may be kept in them and in summertime they are very convenient for bathing, and another room for entertainment very near this, and jointed to it by a little bridge, was an oval table of red marble.

A Bawdy Banquet Menu

The banquet was a veritable feast for the eyes as well as the palette, with marchpane centrepieces, edible plates and goblets made out of sugar and, as we can see from Randle Holme's 17th century menu, an enormous variety of sugar work, pastry and fresh and dried fruit. Wine was also an important part of the banquet, and several sixteenth-century physicians were of the opinion that banquet menus were created to inflame lust. John Gerard wrote in his *The Herball, or Generall Historie of Plantes*, that wine "moveth pleasure and lust of the body", while also decrying plants such as pine kernels, aniseed and candied eringo roots. Marmalade was thought to increase fertility, as well as cinnamon, almonds, candied orange peel, cloves and mace. So much of the banqueting menu could be seen as being connected with sex.

The current Duchess of Northumberland stumbled across a recipe book from 1576 in the Alnwick Castle annals which was compiled by Edith Beale, the the great-great-great grandmother of Elizabeth, the first Duchess of Northumberland. According to the current Duchess Jane Percy, Edith's recipe book was passed from grandmother to grand-daughter down through the ages. The Duchess found a recipe for "aphrodisiac" marmalade using quinces.¹ Both marmalade and quinces were considered aphrodisiacs, quinces even being thought to have been the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden.

1 Hall, Jane, "Duchess of Northumberland delves into Alnwick Castle archives for new food venture" *The Journal*, 7 Nov 2014

Mary I was given a gift of marmalade to help her conceive, containing a complicated combination of sugar, quinces, candied orange peel, almonds, candied eringo roots, musk, ambergris,² rosewater, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and mace.³ A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen instructs:
To make an excellent marmalade which was given to Queen Mary for a New-Year's gift.

Take a pound and a half of sugar and boil it with a pint of fair water until it comes to the height of Manus Christi, then take three or four small quinces, one good orange peel, both very well preserved and finely beaten and three ounces of almonds blanched and beaten by themselves, and two and a half ounces of eringo roots preserved, stir these with sugar until it will not stick, and then at the last put in musk, ambergris dissolved in rose water, of each four grains, of cinnamon, ginger, cloves and mace, of each three drammes⁴, of oil of cinnamon two drops.

Another, rather frightful, marmalade recipe in A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen contains ginger, eringo roots, cock's stones (testicles), red nettle seeds, rocket, the lizard scincus marinus and Diasatyrium, a kind of orchid, all supposedly with aphrodisiacal properties.⁵

Thankfully there were plenty of rather less complicated marmalade recipes. Thomas Dawson's quince marmalade contains more instructions than ingredients, with merely quinces, water, sugar and rosewater required.

'Spanish Paps' were a cheeky confection of cream served in little mounds to resemble breasts. Hannah Woolley instructs:

To make Spanish Pap.

Boil a quart of Cream with a little whole Spice, when it is well boiled, take out the Spice, and thicken it with Rice Flower, and when it is well boiled, put in the yolks of Eggs, and Sugar and Rosewater, with a very little Salt, so serve it to the Table either hot or cold, with fine Sugar strewed on the brims of the Dish.

But really, few spices or sweets entirely escaped censure. Lists and lists of spices like ginger, pepper, cumin, caraway, coriander, cloves, saffron, nuts such as almonds and pine kernels, and even the stodgy and slightly dull potato and stewed prunes were all thought to inflame lust somehow. Thomas Tryon opined in 1696 that young people:

out to avoid the eating of all sweet compounded foods, and drinking of strong Cordial drinks, for such things heat their Blood, irritates their Spirits, sets open the Gates of Venus, putting Nature and all the Propertie into an unequal operation.⁶

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2 Ambergris is a waxy substance produced in the digestive system of sperm whales, also previously used in perfumery. It is 'found' on shorelines as a waste substance.
3 Stead, Jennifer, 'Bower of Bliss: The Banquet Setting' *Banqueting Stuffe*, Wilson, C. Anne (ed), Edinburgh University Press, 1991 pp. 151
4 A fluid dram.
5 Stead, Jennifer, 'Bower of Bliss: The Banquet Setting' *Banqueting Stuffe*, Wilson, C. Anne (ed), Edinburgh University Press, 1991 pp. 151
6 Ibid

CELEBRATING THE BEGINNING OF SUMMER MAYPOLES AND MAY GAMES IN TUDOR ENGLAND

by Jane Moulder



The maypole in the centre of Wolfenbüttel, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany

ON my first trip to Germany a few years ago, I was struck by the sight of a maypole standing in the squares of several of the towns I visited. They formed a great sight, towering over the streetscape, often topped with a garland and covered with shields of the local craft guilds. This sight took me straight back to being a child, dancing with ribbons round a maypole each May Day. Maypoles continue to make an annual appearance in some schools and communities but they don't have the prominence that they still have today in Germany and other northern European countries. Upon investigation it seems that there is a similarity in the origins of May celebrations throughout Europe and the roots of the various traditions go back, certainly to the 13th and 14th centuries. The common themes are a maypole, games, dancing, music, feasting and the decoration of both objects and people with greenery and flowers. There is also a much earlier, pagan tradition of Beltane, which is also celebrated on 1st May but this is just one of the many Spring and Summer festivals that have traditionally taken place during this time of year.

The reason that the 1st May was cause for celebration was that this date was designated as the formal commencement of summer. Coming out of the cold, dark, damp days of winter with fresh food supplies dwindling, there was every reason to mark the coming of the new season and new growth.

In England, May celebrations can be traced back to the medieval period. An early reference is dated 1240, when the Bishop of Lincoln, Robert Grosseteste, complained to his priests that they had demeaned themselves by joining "*games, which they call the bringing in of May*". Geoffrey Chaucer, writing in the late 14th century, gives various descriptions of May celebrations, including;

*"Forth goeth all the Court, both most and least,
to fetch the flowers fresh and branch and bloom".*

Although a variety of practices are described in the numerous references and accounts of celebrating May, a key theme emerges from this early period: the practice of people going into the countryside before sunrise on May Morning to bring home flowers, and greenery to decorate houses and the streets. As we will discover, this basic theme expanded over the years to include a number of other elements. It is also worth noting that May celebrations are unusual in the English calendar because they have no religious association, unlike other events such as Easter or Christmas.

Whilst 1st May was the main event, the day actually signalled the start of a period of celebration which lasted for over two months and didn't end until early

July. Collectively, all of these were known as the May (or Whitsun) Ales, May Revels or May Games – even if the event was held in June or July! The purpose of these events was the same - to celebrate the arrival of summer and the joy of communal life. The May Ales would also have the added benefit of generating a much needed contribution to parish funds. In fact, the money raised during this period was often the largest single source of parochial revenue across the whole year. (Church ales are a fascinating subject and I will be writing about these in a future edition of Tudor Life.) Whenever there was a May Revels or Games, music and dancing formed an integral part of the celebrations.

From the Tudor period we have various accounts of the May events, including some from well-known contemporary commentators, Edward Hall, and John Stow. Stow relates that "*on May Day in the morning, every man, except impediment, would walk into the sweet meadows and green woods, there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers, and with the harmony of birds*". Stow goes on to describe how, later in the day, Londoners would fetch and erect maypoles and then carry out various games and pastimes, which included the performance of plays. To conclude the celebrations, in the evening they would light bonfires in the streets.

It seems that even royalty was not exempt from joining in. There is an account by Hall, in his *Chronicles* published in 1548, (which was later copied by Stow), of Henry VIII taking Katherine of



The Thames at Richmond, Flemish School, c 1620. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. This fascinating painting is an early depiction of morris dancers accompanied by a hobby horse.

Aragon, out on May morning in 1515. He describes how the royal couple rode out from Greenwich, along with many members of their court, and their destination was Shooter's Hill. On the way, they met some yeoman who were dressed completely in green, carrying bows and arrows led by "Robin Hood". There were over 200 in the company and there's no doubt that they were actually the King's Guard in disguise! Having gained permission from the King, the company then all fired arrows simultaneously, much to the delight of Henry, Katherine and the court. The entire gathering then continued into woodland, where an area had been decorated with flowers, and they all dined sumptuously on wine and venison – served by Robin and his retinue. The event concluded with everyone playing a variety of games.

Robin Hood was a popular character in the 16th century and he often made an appearance during the May Games. Many towns and villages have

accounts of plays being staged to celebrate this folk hero. Another feature of the May Games in early Tudor England was the appearance of a hobby-horse, where a person would entertain onlookers. There were hobby horse traditions throughout England but they were particularly prevalent in the Midlands and they even appear in the May Revels at the Tudor court as well as in London Guild processions. The hobby horse tradition still exists today, especially in the West Country in towns such as Minehead, Coombe Martin, Barnstable and the famous 'Obby 'Oss Festival in Padstow. Whilst these festivals cannot show an unbroken tradition going back to Tudor times, they are still a great reminder of the type of celebration that could have taken place in the 16th century.

However, the one thing that everyone associates with May Day is the maypole. There are records and accounts of maypoles being bought and erected from the very beginning of the Tudor period. Whilst

the first record of a maypole dates from the mid-14th century, they flourished during the later 15th and early 16th centuries.

As well as noting some of the games and activities, John Stow described the maypole in London. It was set up annually in Cornhill opposite St Andrew's Church and it was so tall that it was apparently higher than the top of the steeple. However, in 1517 there were riots in the city. These riots, now known as the "Evil May Day Riots" were spurred on by the increasing number of foreigners living and working in London. Over 1000 apprentices and workers

was so shocked by the events, that they decided that in the future, May Day celebrations should be toned down a bit. The maypole, being a significant symbol of the day, was therefore taken down and kept stored in a nearby alley. From reading about these accounts, it seems that the modern marking of May Day as being the "worker's day" had its revolutionary beginnings in Tudor England. Whilst the London maypole seems to have been kept stored in the alley, its concept wasn't forgotten. A number of years later, in 1553, a new maypole was bought and erected in Fenchurch to the great excitement



The Dance of the Noses at Gimpelsbrunn, 1534, by Niklas Meldman. Private collection. Music and dancing around the maypole. The accompanying text contains various sexual jokes related to nose sizes. The prizes, displayed at the top of the pole are a garland, nose mask and a some brays – early underpants.

ran riot, and attempted to destroy property and goods belonging to foreigners. Many hundreds were arrested but later pardoned due to the intervention of Katherine of Aragon, although 13, including the ring leader, were hung, drawn and quartered. Whilst calm was quickly restored to the city, the government

and celebration of Londoners. It was painted white and green and carried into place by people wearing the same colours and was accompanied by a model giant and morris dancers. A mock castle, decorated with streamers, was erected next to it. Maybe fearing a recurrence of the mob and riots of 1517,

the Lord Mayor objected to the events and ordered the pole and fortress to be broken up. Londoners, however, seemed to be a resilient people and they were determined to carry out the same celebrations being conducted elsewhere in the country because a few years later another maypole appeared in the city. This time it was brought by the City's butchers and fishermen and it was decorated with horns to mock cuckolds. Apparently this was well received by the population, who loved the joke and cheered it.

Maypoles seemed to have been central to a parish's celebrations but they must have involved some effort and expense. Unable to afford one of their own, there are several accounts of where villages clubbed together to buy a communal one. This is not surprising as maypoles were quite large and timber was a very valuable commodity in this period. In 1603, the Earl of Huntingdon was furious to find out that his woodland estates had been used as the source of the city of Leicester's maypoles. There was also competition amongst neighbouring communities as to who had the best maypole and it seems that inhabitants were not against stealing the maypole of a rival village.

During the later years of Henry's reign there was a rise in Protestantism in England and certainly by the time of Edward VI, maypoles were considered by some to be heathen. Whilst they weren't banned, the erection of maypoles certainly seemed to decline from this time on. In 1549, a protestant curate denounced his town's maypole as being idolatrous and some of his followers chopped it into pieces and ceremoniously burned it.

Whilst May celebrations were purely secular and had no religious root, they were all encompassing community events and, as such, the church would have been involved. Some church wardens even became actively involved in the proceedings and there are even accounts of where morris dancers were invited to perform in the church. In 1587, a church warden, John Cornishe of Pawlett, came to the aid of his village's rivalry with their neighbour. In order to prevent the potential theft of the prized maypole, he allowed it to be set up and stored in the steeple of the church. When the local magistrate found out about this, Cornishe, in his defense said that he had allowed it for "merriment" and to protect the pole from thieves. Another clergyman, Stephen Baker of Catcott, was sacked for exactly the same deed. He

again pleaded that it had just been for "merriment" and several villagers came to his defence saying that it had only been a bit of fun.

During the reign of Mary I and the suppression of Protestantism, it seems that maypoles once again became a regular feature in English towns and village. The Earl of Surrey and the Duke of Norfolk both gave money to allow their parishioners to celebrate Mayday, and funded the purchase of new maypoles. Villagers clubbed together to hire in musicians, morris dancers and clowns and other entertainers. Robin Hood saw a resurgence in popularity and began appearing in the various May Revels.

By the mid-1560's, Tudor May Revels were well established and all followed a now familiar format: the erection and decoration of a maypole, the hiring of at least one musician (usually either a bagpiper or pipe and taborer) entertainment from hobby horses and morrismen and, finally, fireworks! There is a fantastic description by Philip Stubbes, writing in 1589

"Against May, Whitsunday, or some other time of the year, every parish, town and village assemble themselves together, both men, women and children, ... they go some to the woods and groves, some to the hills and mountains, some to one place and some to another, where they spend all the night in pleasant pastimes, and in the morning they return, bringing with them birch boughs and branches of trees, to deck their assemblies withal. ... But their chiefest jewel they bring from thence is their May-pole, which they bring home with great veneration, as thus, they have twenty of forty yoke of oxen, every ox having a sweet nose-gay of flowers placed on the tip of his horns, and these oxen draw home this maypole (this stinking idol, rather) which is covered all over with flowers and herbs, bound round and about with strings from the top to the bottom and sometime painted with variable colours, with two or three hundred men, women and children following it with great devotion. And thus, being reared up with handkerchiefs and flags streaming on the top, then they fall to banquets and feast, to leap and dance about it, as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idols.

Whilst Stubbes's account has sometimes been dismissed as being something of an exaggeration, especially concerning the numbers of people

involved, his description is backed up by writings from a variety of other sources. It seems that these large celebrations took place across England from Plymouth up to Nottingham and across to Kent. Despite there being a strong association of maypoles with dancing, there are, however, no accounts of today's practice of using ribbons. This is a 19th century introduction and was imported to England from southern Mediterranean customs.

The other tradition that is practiced today which has its roots in Tudor times is the crowning of a May Queen. There is a detailed description of the procession of the Queen of May in Oxford, dated 1598. She is described as being decked in garlands and brought into town by militiamen, together with morris dancers, drummers and men wearing woman's dresses. Some of the descriptions of the May Queens depict how they were carried triumphantly in chairs. The Protestant preacher, Stephen Batman, on seeing the Pope, transported in a similar manner, compared him to "*whitepot queens in western May games*"; a whitepot was a type of cream custard.

As noted earlier, May Games were not solely celebrated by commoners and Henry VIII wasn't the only royal to take part in the events. In the first year of Elizabeth's reign in 1558 she commanded a personal performance of May games at Greenwich Palace. It included a giant, drummers, the Nine Worthies, St George and the Dragon, Robin Hood, Little John, Maid Marian, Friar Tuck and morris dancers! Despite the waning of the tradition by the end of the 16th century, Elizabeth I reputedly always danced on May Day and did so right through her life.

In modern times, it was assumed that May day was also a time for people of the opposite sex to "get together". However there are hardly any accounts of carnal practices taking place to back this viewpoint but I suppose it must have been inevitable given that dancing, music and drinking was involved! There is one reference, in the anonymously authored "*Vox Graculi*", dated 1622, saying that May Day was a time when "*divers dirty sluts*" wandered the countryside, getting into clinches with their lovers in ditches. But this could just have been the disapproving ramblings of a Puritan. In the early 17th century there were a few slightly risqué songs hinting at lustful goings on but there actually isn't much other evidence to suggest that the May Games were anything but a



A re-enactment of the May Day procession at Kentwell Hall, Suffolk. Each year, historical re-enactors gather at Kentwell to re-live Tudor life and events. www.kentwell.co.uk

in his Book of Sports as he felt it brought "*communal harmony*". It is not surprising that the clampdown of the May Revels did not meet with everyone's approval. There's even an account of Londoners, when robbed of their maypole, going outside the city limits (and therefore out of the city's jurisdiction) to celebrate the May. There are also various accounts of congregations resisting their priest's attempts to ban the May Revels and church ales. In Devon, by 1595, a law had already been passed to forbid the practice of Church Ales on a Sunday. But then another law was passed banning Sunday May games and reinforcing the earlier ban by stating the Ales could only take place in daylight, without music or dancing and any drink must only be provided by a licenced alehouse keeper [indicating that there must have been considerable unlicensed drinking]. The stated reason for this ban was that the various practices caused the "*dishonour of Almighty God, increase of bastardy and of dissolute life and very many other mischiefs*". However, the ruling couldn't have been too effective because further attempts to enforce it occurred again in 1600 and in 1615.

The pattern shown in Devon occurred throughout the rest of England. Whilst some towns and villages clung on to their old celebrations, the May Games and all its associated events to mark summer, dwindled away to just a few pockets of the country. The Commonwealth period finally cemented the demise of these practices until the Restoration of Charles II when, yet again, villages, towns and cities across England were encouraged to welcome in the summer with May Games.

JANE MOULDER

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Jane Moulder is a regular contributor to Tudor Life magazine, and is also a well respected musician, helping to run the Tudor Music group PIVA. Jane has recently been spending a lot of time in the recording studio with PIVA, preparing for a new album release later this year. What few people know is that, along with her husband, Jane is involved in actually making the instruments that she performs with.

Upcoming dates for PIVA include:

Leek Arts Festival - Friday, 13th May All Saints Church, Leek at 7.30pm

Meet the Music Makers - Wednesday, 18th May, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek at 7.30pm

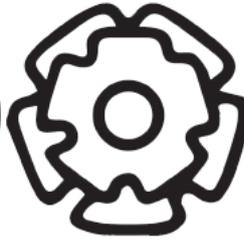
Real Roots! Residential Course and Concert, Halsway Manor, Crowcombe, Somerset. 20 - 22 May

Midsummer Madness! Little Moreton Hall, Nr Congleton, Cheshire, 18 and 19 June throughout the day.

AND OF COURSE ... **“AN EVENING WITH THE AUTHORS”** - Sept 24th in London



THE TUDOR SOCIETY



Bulletin

We've decided to add these little sections to the magazine to encourage you to get involved with your society more and more. The Tudor Society has been going now for over 20 months - this is our 21st monthly magazine and each one is, as you know, packed with quality articles.

This month we've chosen to focus on asking you to tell people that you are a member of the Tudor Society. We're proud of the work that's gone into getting us where we are. There are many people who tirelessly work to bring you the magazines, expert chats, keep the website on the road and a whole host of other things.

It's time that we all announce our membership of the Tudor Society to the world. Growing the society is vital to sustaining it. If the society isn't growing, sharing amazing information about the Tudor period, then what is it all for?

That's why we'd love you to start by telling one person who doesn't know that you're a member of the Tudor Society that your passion is history, and that you love the Tudor Society. In fact, why stop at that one person? Why not go on and tell three or five people you know that you're a proud member of our society?

In our personal experience, it's amazing how many people there are who love Tudor history. So many people have their own personal "hero" or "heroine" from the period, be it Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII, Elizabeth I. Some people even surprise us when we get chatting, and it turns out that their hero is Cromwell or Cranmer or ... the list is endless. One thing we always find is that people know *something* about Tudor history. Often they want to know more!

Why not send us an email telling us how you get on with telling your one, three or five friends that you're a member of the Tudor Society, and together we'll grow. THANK YOU!

**Please do get involved with the Tudor Society
WE RELY ON YOUR ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP**

Warwick Castle

A brief History.





FOLLOWING on from last month's article written by my father about Arundel Castle, I thought that I should share my photos and impressions of a stunning castle ... Warwick.

With a known history stretching back to at least the year 900, Warwick has had a fascinating role to play in English history. In 1068, just three years after his conquest, William the Conqueror was instrumental in making the castle grow when he established a motte and bailey on the site. It was a perfect site because it is on the bend of a river, and being situated where it is in the country, it provided great access to large areas.

By 1260 the wooden fort was replaced with a stone construction, and the construction work continued on for over three hundred years.

Of interest to the Tudor Society is a visit from Elizabeth I who came to the castle during 1572. But of course the historical events continued on well beyond that point. It was sieged during the Civil War in 1642 (and withstood it!) and was even visited by Queen Victoria in 1858.

Today, the castle is an amazing place to visit. The grounds are extensive, and especially during the summer season it's a brilliant day out for families. There are displays of fighting, jousting, falconry, drama and all sorts of other activities to fill your time.

In 2005 a giant trebuchet was built on the grounds, and it used to be regularly fired (I must say that I don't know if they still do!) It's a fascinating machine which takes an age to "wind up" but then fires a heavy metal ball an incredibly long way... our children loved sitting on the hillside, eating icecreams and watching it all happen. And then, of course, it was on to watch the black knight in a joust which was very dramatic indeed!

More recently a little "high tech" magic has arrived in the shape of a multimedia "Merlin" exhibition. Though it wasn't for us, I know that some families like it. Climb the tower and maybe you'll meet Merlin or a Dragon!

In 2013 the castle has opened up many more rooms to visit too ... there's so much to see!

On a personal note, I must say that Warwick holds a special place in my life. Both my wife and I studied at Warwick University, and we have returned to the area many times since those days. Warwick Castle is always worth visiting.

TIM RIDGWAY

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TUDOR PLACES: WARWICK CASTLE





TUDOR PLACES: WARWICK CASTLE



TUDOR PLACES: WARWICK CASTLE



MAY FEAST DAYS

1 MAY – MAY DAY

1 May, or May Day, was seen as the first day of summer and had its roots in ancient celebrations of fertility. It was celebrated with special processions, plays and pantomimes, pageants, Morris dancing and the crowning of a May Queen. There would also be a Maypole, a tall wooden pole decorated with greenery and flowers and hung with ribbons. People would hold the ribbons and dance around the Maypole weaving the ribbons together in patterns.

People would also “bring in the May”, i.e. collect flowers and branches to make garlands and wreaths.

2-5 MAY ROGATIONTIDE AND ASCENSION DAY

Rogationtide (from the Latin *rogare*: ‘to ask or beseech’) is the three days leading up to the Feast of the Ascension, which is celebrated forty days after Easter Sunday and which commemorates the Ascension of Christ into Heaven. It is celebrated on the fortieth day after Easter because of what it says in Acts 1 verse 3:

“After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.”

In Medieval and Tudor times, this was the traditional time for “beating the bounds”. Parishioners would process around the boundaries of the Parish led by the clergy carrying crosses and banners, praying for farms and a good harvest. Not only did it bless the land, but it also reminded people of landmarks and the boundaries of the Parish. Landmarks were impressed upon children’s minds, in particular, by dangling them upside down at a landmark (a stream or a tree, for example) or beating them there, and then rewarding them with a treat.

The tradition of beating the bounds is kept alive in many parishes in the UK today. One example is All Hallows by the Tower, the oldest church in the City of London. Here is an explanation of the custom from the All Hallows website:

“The Beating Party is made up of students from St Dunstan’s College, Catford, who return to their roots in the parish of St Dunstan-in-the-East to take part in the proceedings. The south boundary of the parish is mid-stream of the Thames and the Beating Party, together with the clergy and the Masters of our associated Livery Companies, board a boat which takes them out onto the river to beat that boundary mark. They then return to shore and the procession moves around the parish, stopping at various points for the beating party to mark the boundaries with canes as they go. The ceremony is followed by a service of Festal Evensong at All Hallows.”

What I love about the All Hallows tradition is that every third year the beating party has a mock battle with the Governor and Yeoman Warders of the Tower of London over the boundary that they share. Apparently, this boundary was always in dispute in medieval times and in 1698 there was a riot over it!



15 MAY – WHIT SUNDAY (PENTECOST)

This feast day celebrated on the seventh Sunday after Easter, commemorated the Holy Spirit descending on the Apostles and Christ's followers, "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

It was traditional for communities to come together for a "church ale", a festival which aimed to raise fund for the church. Ale would be brewed for the occasion, and there would be food and entertainment such as Morris dancing and archery competitions. Attendees were expected to make a donation or ale would be sold.

There would also be special Whitsun markets.

19 MAY – ST DUNSTAN'S DAY

St Dunstan (909-988) was Abbot of Glastonbury Abbey, Bishop of Worcester, Bishop of London, and Archbishop of Canterbury, serving Kings Edgar and Edward the Martyr. He is known for restoring monastic life, reforming the English church and his service as a minister of state. Before Thomas Becket, St Dunstan was the most popular English saint, and he is the patron saint of goldsmiths, silversmiths, musicians, locksmiths and blacksmiths.

According to Ruth Goodman of the Tudor Monastery Farm team, the feast day of St Dunstan was the traditional day to do spring-cleaning.

22 MAY – TRINITY SUNDAY

Trinity Sunday is celebrated eight weeks after Easter and on the Sunday following Whitsun. It celebrates the Trinity, i.e. the three persons of God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

26 MAY - CORPUS CHRISTI

The Thursday after Trinity Sunday is the feast day celebrating the body and blood of Jesus Christ and the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the miracles of transubstantiation. It was usually celebrated with a procession of the Host around the town and also with Corpus Christi plays, mystery plays which told stories from the Bible and which provided entertainment and gave moral messages.



MAY'S ON THIS

<p>1 May 1517</p> <p>May Day, a mob of young apprentices and labourers gathered at St Paul's and then went on a rampage through the streets of London, causing damage to property and hurting those who stood in their way. It was called the <i>Evil May Day Riot</i>.</p>	<p>2 May 1536</p> <p>Sir Henry Norris, Henry VIII's Groom of the Stool and great friend, was taken to the Tower of London.</p>	<p>3 May 1536</p> <p>A very shocked Archbishop Thomas Cranmer wrote to King Henry VIII regarding his patron Queen Anne Boleyn's arrest. In his letter, he wrote "I am clean amazed, for I had never better opinion of woman" but tempered this with "but I think your Highness would not have gone so far if she had not been culpable".</p>	
<p>8 May 1559</p> <p>The "Act of Uniformity" was signed by Elizabeth I, and the "Act of Supremacy" was given royal assent.</p>	<p>9 May 1538</p> <p>Marie de Guise and James V of Scotland were married by proxy at the Château de Châteaudun, with Robert Maxwell, 5th Lord Maxwell, standing in.</p>	<p>10 May 1536</p> <p>Giles Heron of the Grand Jury of Middlesex announced that the jury had decided that there was sufficient evidence to suggest that Anne Boleyn, George Boleyn, Mark Smeaton, Sir Henry Norris, Sir Francis Weston and Sir William Brereton were guilty of alleged crimes and that they should be indicted and sent to trial before a jury.</p>	<p>11 May 1536</p> <p>The Grand Jury of Kent met and also decided Anne Boleyn's trial should go ahead.</p>
 <p>ANNA · BOLINA ANG · RECINA</p> <p>Anne Boleyn</p>	<p>17 May 1536</p> <p>Sir Henry Norris, Sir Francis Weston, Mark Smeaton, Sir William Brereton and George Boleyn, Lord Rochford, were led out to a scaffold and beheaded.</p>	<p>18 May 1536</p> <p>Anne Boleyn's execution was postponed.</p>	<p>19 May 1536</p> <p>Dressed in a robe of grey or black damask trimmed with ermine, with a crimson kirtle, Anne Boleyn was executed on Tower Green.</p>
<p>24 May 1546</p> <p>Letters were sent from Privy Council to Anne Askew and her husband Thomas Kyme, ordering them to appear in front of the council within fourteen days..</p>	<p>25 May 1551</p> <p>Croydon, south of London, and its neighbouring villages experienced a shock from an earthquake.</p>	<p>26 May 1536</p> <p>Lady Mary, daughter of Henry VIII, wrote to Thomas Cromwell asking him to intercede with her father, now that Anne Boleyn was gone.</p>	
<p>29 May 1533</p> <p>Queen Anne Boleyn's coronation was a four-day affair, beginning on the 29th May and culminating in the coronation ceremony on the 1st June.</p>	<p>30 May 1536</p> <p>Just eleven days after the execution of Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII married Jane Seymour in the Queen's Closet at York Place (Whitehall), the property renovated by himself and Anne. The King and Jane Seymour had become betrothed on 20th May, a day after Anne's execution, but did not marry immediately.</p>		

DAY IN TUDOR HISTORY

<p>4 May 1536 Arrests of Sir Francis Weston and Sir William Brereton during the fall of Anne Boleyn. They were both taken to the Tower of London.</p>	<p>5 May 1536 The final arrests of Sir Thomas Wyatt and Richard Page had been made in the fall of Anne Boleyn.</p>	<p>6 May 1536 It is said that Anne Boleyn wrote a letter to her husband, King Henry VIII, from the Tower of London. It was headed with the words "To the King from the Lady in the Tower", alleged to have been written by Thomas Cromwell.</p>	<p>7 May 1536 Queen Anne Boleyn's chaplain, William Latymer, was searched by the Mayor and jurates of Sandwich on his arrival back in England.</p>	
<p>12 May 1536 Mark Smeaton, Sir Henry Norris, Sir Francis Weston and Sir William Brereton were found guilty on all charges, declared traitors and sentenced to death.</p>	<p>13 May 1536 Queen Anne Boleyn's royal household at Greenwich was broken up, even though she hadn't been tried yet.</p>	<p>14 May 1571 Matthew Stewart, Earl of Lennox and regent to James VI, held the "Creeping Parliament".</p>	<p>15 May 1536 Anne and George Boleyn were tried in the King's Hall of the Tower of London in front of an estimated 2,000 spectators. Both were found guilty.</p>	<p>16 May 1536 Archbishop Cranmer visited Anne Boleyn at the Tower of London to get Anne to confess to an impediment to her marriage.</p>
<p>20 May 1535 The imprisoned Bishop John Fisher was made a Cardinal by Pope Paul III. It made no difference to his treatment, as he was executed 22nd June 1535.</p>	<p>21 May 1535 The arrest of William Tyndale, Bible translator and religious reformer, in Antwerp, after he was tricked into leaving the English House owned by Thomas Pontz. He was condemned as a heretic and strangled, then burned in October 1536.</p>	<p>22 May 1537 Edward Seymour, brother of Jane Seymour, was sworn in as a Privy Councillor.</p>	<p>23 May 1533 Archbishop Thomas Cranmer declared that Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon had been annulled</p>	
<p>27 May 1536 Cardinal Reginald Pole sent Henry VIII a copy of <i>De Unitate</i> where he criticised the King's divorce and the trouble it had caused.</p>	 <p>William Tyndale</p>		<p>28 May 1533 Following on from the decision of the special court held at Dunstable, and Cranmer's declaration that Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon was invalid and had been annulled, Cranmer proclaimed the validity of Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn on this day in 1533.</p>	
<p>31 May 1533 Anne Boleyn's coronation procession through the streets of London, from the Tower of London to Westminster Abbey.</p>				



TudorLife

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The Ghost Queens

GARETH RUSSELL
Gregory Cromwell in Calais

ELENA MARIA VIDAL
Mary, Queen of Scots

TONI MOUNT
The Colour of Poison

TARA BALL
The Tower of London PART FOUR

DEREK WILSON
The Dudleys PART FOUR

BETH VON STAATS
Stephen Vaughan

JANE MOULDER
Thomas Whythorne – The first
English Autobiographer

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EXPERT TALKS!