

# TudorLife

The Tudor Society Magazine

THE  
TUDOR  
SOCIETY

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## Jane Seymour

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The secret life of  
musicians

The Pilgrimage  
of Grace

Tudor monarch's  
health issues

Jane Seymour in  
portraiture

Bolton Castle

Cooking with Quails

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*Top Article*

**What's in a name? The Pilgrimage of Grace**  
*by Stephanie A. Mann*



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# Welcome!

*Great historical events* do not change everything they come in to contact with. The roar of change and the pursuit of private peace are not mutually exclusive; they can, and do, exist at the same time. Balancing the fury of significant era-defining moments against the mystery of quietly-lived lives, this edition of “Tudor Life” has several articles inspired by the events of 1536 - the great pro-traditionalist uprising known as the Pilgrimage of Grace and the rise of Queen Jane Seymour to the consort’s throne. The Pilgrimage of Grace was one of, if not the, most significant rebellion in Tudor history; it was a direct response to soul-shattering changes, as Stephanie Mann makes clear in her article on what motivated the revolt. Yet, the Pilgrimage also coincided with the career of one of England’s most enigmatic queens consort. We explore negative portrayals of Henry’s third wife and also the ways in which attitudes to queenship may provide the answer to her career.

**GARETH RUSSELL**

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# Tudor Life

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# The Secret Life of Musicians

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**Jane Moulder** examines an aspect  
of Tudor life which many would never  
suspect was true...  
and that's just as it should be!

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**T**he life of a professional musician has always been a slightly tenuous one from a financial perspective and, today, the majority derive their income from variety of sources such as performing in a number of groups, teaching or taking up various freelance opportunities. Also, it is not unusual for a musician to have to travel for work or move to a new geographical area in order to take up a paid position. So, not a lot has changed for the profession in 500 years! A musician of the Tudor period would often have to look for various sources of income and always be alert to potential patrons. Musicians were expected to travel and the very best would often travel from court to court across Europe and not just within their home country. The reputation of the best musicians could precede them and they would be sought out by the wealthy and influential patrons and royal courts.



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The fact that musicians travelled was a privilege not afforded to the general population and they were able to visit courts and countries across Europe. Their relative freedom of movement gave them the ability to capitalise on money making opportunities, such as passing messages and information from court to court without fear of being traced or tracked. In other words, the life of a professional musician was also the perfect disguise for being a spy.

Thomas Morley, Antony Holborne, Alfonso Ferrabosco and John Dowland were all recorded as having transmitted documents and information on behalf of Queen Elizabeth's court. In 1595, the lutenist John Dowland proved very useful to Elizabeth, by giving her officials the names of potentially troublesome exiled English Catholics whom he had observed whilst working in Italy. Alfonso Ferrabosco divided his time between Rome and England and he was, at one point, arrested by the Inquisition on suspicion of being a spy for Elizabeth. He had supposedly been advising Elizabeth on "Italian matters pertinent to her State".

The fact that musicians were used for carrying private letters and documents could be that they were, in effect, a convenient postal service and quite different from our modern understanding of "spy" or "agent". The gathering of news, communications and observations was necessary as, after all, the State needed to get its information from somewhere or someone. However, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that musicians were not entirely innocent and they had many of the requisite attributes of being a secret agent. As well as their ability to travel freely and not draw too much attention to themselves by doing so, musicians were also very likely to be able to read and write and speak more than

one language. Part of a professional musician's or chorister's education involved attendance at university. Also, with their familiarity with music notation, musicians were potentially versed in "code" which gave them an ability to understand symbols and ciphers. Court musicians would also have access to royal inner circles, perhaps being required to perform in the same room where important political or economic discussions were taking place. Some musicians also had direct contact with royalty and heads of state. As well as employing a large entourage of musicians, Henry VIII also had his own personal musicians

who would have access to the King's private chambers where his counsellors were present and thus hear confidential news and information. Some musicians were chosen to travel abroad to buy instruments or to engage other musicians, again giving them access to either large sums of money or

to officials in high places.

Whilst many of the musicians acting as couriers and go-betweens remain anonymous to this day, two musicians involved in the business of espionage are known to us. As well as both being respected musicians and artists, their involvement at the highest level of political intrigue, meant that they equally had a reputation of being spies and double agents.

In the late 15th and 16th centuries, Antwerp was melting pot of people and cultures due to its strong trading links and commercial ties with the rest of Europe. It therefore attracted people, including musicians - from all over Europe. Petrus Imhoff, who originated from a wealthy and powerful German merchant family, settled in the city and changed his name to Van der Hove in order to blend in more with the local population. However, he changed his name again - to Petrus



Alamire's signature, showing a staff with an F clef and three notes, la, mi and re.



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Alamire. The name is in itself a musical pun and is made up of the names for musical notes la, mi and re. In fact, Alamire used the device of a stave with notation as his signature. Petrus Alamire was not only a musician and composer but the leading musical scribe of the time. His music manuscripts were famous for their beautiful calligraphy, rich illustrations and decorations. They were works of great beauty and very costly to produce and buy and his manuscripts were to be found in the major establishments across Europe.

Alamire did not leave his merchant roots behind and as well as his musical activities he continued to trade and, unusually, appears to have been well regarded as a mining engineer as well! In 1515 Alamire sent a lavishly illustrated volume of music to Henry VIII which still survives in the British Library today. The manuscript contains sacred pieces by some of the greatest composers of the time, including Josquin Des Prez. It was obviously made especially for Henry as it contains the king's coat of arms together with red and white Tudor roses and the pomegranate of Catherine of Aragon. Alamire also gave him some musical instruments including 13 crumhorns and a clavichord.

These gifts were undoubtedly made in an effort to win favour and influence and at this time, Alamire also offered to work for Henry as an agent. He had already had experience in this shadier side of life having been an agent for the Burgundian-Habsburg court where he had managed to secure information and secrets from Frederick, the Duke of Saxony.

The other musician in this story is Hans Nagel. He came from a family of musicians and, like Alamire, was of German origin. His father, also called Hans, was active in Leipzig in 1479 where he was appointed to the civic ensemble as a musician "with two sons". After leaving Leipzig in 1483 no more is heard of the father but Hans Nagel the younger arrived at the English court at some point in the mid-1490's. The first documented evidence we have of him playing outside of Germany is in 1501 when there is an account of musicians receiving a sizable sum of

money for playing for Archduke Philippe-le-Beau (Philip the Fair), King of Castile and Duke of Burgundy, on a royal visit to Brussels. Nagel was one of the musicians and he was recorded as a sackbut player (the early trombone) for the "English King". This makes him one of the five sackbut players employed by Henry VII and it is known that he played at Queen Elizabeth's funeral in 1502/3. Hans Nagel continued to be one of the "lowde mynstrels" of Henry VII until at least 1504 at which point, connections made during his visit to Philip's court seems to have paid off as Nagel then went to work for Philip. Both these royal appointments indicate that Nagel must have been an exceptionally gifted musician as Philip's court, especially, attracted the very best musicians from across Europe. According to the Burgundian records, Nagel travelled with Philip to Spain in 1506. There was a fleet of at least forty ships and "the trumpets drums and wind instruments provided a cheery atmosphere". Unfortunately, this joyous feeling did not last long as the fleet was hit by a severe storm just off the English coast. Some people were drowned, including two of the chapel singers. The fleet took refuge in Weymouth harbour and, as relationships were cordial between Burgundy and England, the huge, stranded, entourage was welcomed and hosted by the English court. The Burgundian royal party stayed in England for three months and it visited a number of locations, including Windsor Castle. There are accounts of Philip's musicians, which included Nagel, entertaining the English court. No doubt this extended stay afforded Nagel the time to become re-acquainted with old musical colleagues and perhaps make important connections with the English royal court. Having eventually left England for Spain, Philip died suddenly a few weeks later. Now without an employer, it seems that Nagel somehow returned to Flanders where he found employment with Margaret of Austria and Archduke Charles at the court of Mechelen (a city midway between Brussels and Antwerp and the then capital of Flanders). He is recorded as a "master musician", the only one who had this status. This shows that



# TUDOR LIFE EXCLUSIVE

he must have been regarded as an exceptional musician and Nagel was employed both by the court and the city through until 1518/19. Alamire was also at the court of Mechelen and the two of them met, worked together and began their undercover partnership.

The full story and extent of the espionage carried out by Nagel and Alamire will never be known due to the paucity and confusion of the surviving records. However, what the surviving documentation includes various pieces of correspondence between Alamire, Henry VIII, Cardinal Wolsey and several ambassadors that, when pieced together, a picture of events can be formed.

It appears that Henry VIII requested Nagel and Alamire to act as espionage agents against Richard de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk. De la Pole, a descendant of the House of York and known as The White Rose, was in exile in Metz. He was seen as a very real threat to the Tudor claim to the throne especially because he had won the support of Francis I of France. Alamire had a network of musician friends, some of whom worked at Francis' court, and they kept Alamire informed of Pole's efforts to mount a credible threat to Henry. Richard was of great concern to Henry throughout his reign and when de la Pole's death was reported in 1525 at the Battle of Pavia, Henry is reported as having

said "God have mercy on his soul .... All the enemies of England are gone".

It seems that both Nagel and Alamire were in constant communication with each other enabling Alamire to write to Henry in May, 1515 explaining that Nagel had left for Metz in order to make contact with de la Pole. In October of that year, Sir Thomas Spinelly, the English Ambassador in Flanders, wrote to Wolsey to explain that Alamire had promised to accompany Nagel to visit de la Pole. That same letter also seemed to suggest that Henry was keen to have Nagel and his fellow musicians come to play with him at the English court. However, it seems that Nagel was concerned that he may have blotted his copybook with the



An engraving of three civic musicians including a sackbut player and two trumpeters. Heinrich Aldegrever, 1538. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

English king as, despite Henry's specific request, he is reluctant to accept the invitation and return to England without having a guaranteed amnesty from the King. Although the exact nature of any indiscretion or misdemeanour is not made clear, it could well have been due to an existing link between Nagel and de la Pole, or the fact that he was known to keep some disreputable company! The negotiations over the visit also included making a case for extra money being provided for the wives of the musicians as their husbands were going to be away from home for so long.





An illustration by Alamire from one of his works.

Nagel seems to have used his musical connections to curry favour as he knew musicians who worked for de la Pole, and those musicians also seemed to have become involved in espionage activities. Alamire then uses the production of a new book, the 'Matins of Our Lady', as a means of validating Nagel's reason to communicate with de la Pole. Ambassador Spinelly provided Nagel with a horse to make the journey to de la Pole in January of 1516. Later, in a letter addressed to Henry VIII from the ambassador to Charles V of Spain, Nagel is described as "a minstrel greatly in favor with Sir Georg Neville" – a man who had rebelled against Henry VII. Nagel appears to have been playing quite a dangerous game as it seems that he used his influence and attempted to have Neville freed from prison in Mechelen. Perhaps it was for this reason that Alamire was then required to accompany Nagel to visit de la Pole who had a number of letters and correspondence to deliver to him. Despite the English court's doubts about

Nagel as to his trustworthiness he still seems to have had work both as a spy and as a musician and, consequently, he was granted his pardon.

A number of generous payments were made to Nagel and it is clear that visits to de la Pole were made, information was passed back to the King about de la Pole's movements and letters were also exchanged. By the April, Alamire and Nagel had returned from seeing de la Pole and were resting in Antwerp. However, according to a letter written to Henry, it seems that Ambassador Spinelly now did not fully trust either of the musicians and suspected that they had been influenced by de la Pole. He demanded that Wolsey order the pair to return to England to appear in front of the King. It is not entirely clear from the records but it is





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thought that Alamire returned to England whilst there is doubt whether Nagel did. Both Nagel and Alamire appear to be back in Mechelen by November 1516 and they were still acting as agents and conveying information back and forth between England and de la Pole. However, in September 1517 information was passed on to the King by Thomas Stanley, a man who had been in the service of de la Pole. He mentions that two of de la Pole's spies were living in Mechelen, thus exposing Nagel and Alamire as double agents. It is not known what, if any action was taken against them, but a letter survives where Alamire tried desperately to repair his reputation with Wolsey. In the correspondence he claimed that he had been treated very harshly by Wolsey. In order to try and regain favour, he tells Wolsey that he promises to continue to supply information and

also said that de la Pole had been in negotiations with King Christian of Denmark. Alamire ended the letter by complaining to Wolsey that he had not received any thanks for the music books he had donated to Henry, nor had he received payment for eight cornets (a type of wind instrument), some choral music manuscript and some lute strings all of which he had purchased for the king at great expense.

After that letter, no more correspondence survives and we do not know whether Alamire ever received recompense or if either of the two musicians were pardoned for their actions. Alamire was still providing information up until April 1518. In 1534 Alamire received a generous pension from Mary of Austria and Hungary for whom he had written a number of manuscripts in the early 1530s. He died in 1536 in Mechelen.

Pages from the music manuscript written and designed by Petrus Alamire and given to Henry VIII in 1515, now in the British Library.





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Nagel remained in the employ of Mechelin until 1518/19 and then there is a gap in the information until 1528/9 when he was recorded as living in Antwerp. A 'Janne Nagel' is listed as a civic musician in 1530. Nagel died the next year in 1531 and a number of his instruments were claimed by the city. These included a sackbut, a soprano shawm and a case of eight flutes. The

instruments were then passed on and used by his replacement, Jan de Brasser.

Henry continued to use musicians as agents and spies and records indicate that Giovanni de Bustis, an Italian lute player and Michael Mercator, a Bavarian organ builder, were also employed for espionage services during his reign. I wonder what tales some 21st century musicians could tell!

**JANE MOULDER**

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Jane is the resident music expert of the Tudor Society and writes articles like this for every edition of Tudor Life magazine.



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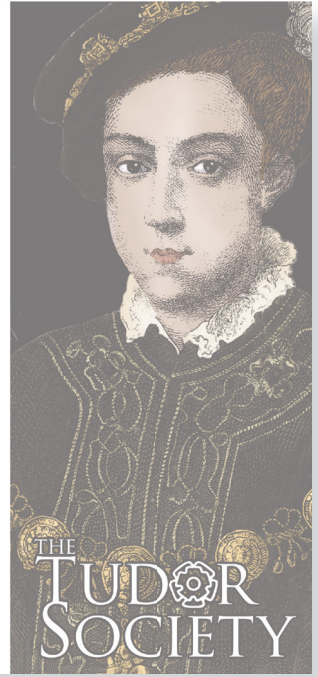
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# What's in a Name?

## The Pilgrimage of Grace

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Stephanie A. Mann

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he Pilgrimage of Grace has been called “The Rebellion That Shook Henry VIII’s Throne” (Geoffrey Moorhouse); it has been viewed as a grassroots protest against the suppression of the smaller monasteries and other religious changes (the Dodds, Bush, Haigh, and others); it has also been interpreted as a conspiratorial rebellion led by the nobility using a religious

pretext (Elton). Susan Loughlin provides an excellent overview of these historical views in the introduction of her new book *Insurrection: Henry VIII, Thomas Cromwell, and the Pilgrimage of Grace* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: The History Press: 2016).

Whatever the interpretation, it has always been called “The Pilgrimage of Grace”.

The participants not only chose that title for their protest,

but they also chose an emblem, marching under banners depicting The Five Wounds of Jesus. This title and this emblem are redolent of late Medieval Catholicism. Understanding their meaning will help us understand the motivations of the 30,000 to 40,000 or so men and women who marched from Yorkshire in the autumn of 1536.

## “Pilgrimage” and the Pilgrimage of Grace

hoosing the word pilgrimage meant the rebels had a certain goal.

A pilgrimage, which is not just a Catholic practice, is a journey, undertaken with danger and hardship, to visit a shrine, venerate a sacred relic, and participate in a religious ritual. Christians through the ages have travelled to the Holy Land to visit the sites associated with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The walking routes to Compostella in Spain are nearly as popular today as they were in the Middle Ages. In England, two of the most important were the shrines of St. Thomas a Becket in Canterbury

and Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk.

Pilgrimages could be undertaken in search of a healing miracle, venerating the relic of a great saint like St. John of Beverley, St. Cuthbert at Durham, or St. William of York, or they could be extraordinary penances for grave personal or corporate sin. The journey to a shrine could also gain the pilgrim an indulgence for herself or her deceased family members, lessening the time spent in Purgatory.

Pilgrimage sites offered a mixture of the sacred and profane: the saint and the merchant side by side. The churches, cathedrals, and monasteries also

benefitted from the pilgrimage activity, as visitors made donations, offered stipends for Masses and prayers, and left bequests for more prayers and Masses after their deaths.

This mixture of sacred and profane, profit and devotion, led Erasmus of Rotterdam among others—including Hugh Latimer, who would burn at the stake under Mary I in 1555 after preaching when Father John Forest was burned at the stake in 1538—to descry not just the abuses of the pilgrimage system, but the very fact that people went on pilgrimage. In *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to*





*The banner of the Pilgrimage of Grace, showing the Five Holy Wounds of Christ (Luminarium)*

*Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Carlos M.N. Eire describes how Erasmus criticized pilgrimages in his *Colloquies*, especially in “On Rash Vows” (1522) and “Pilgrimage for the Sake of Religion” (1526).

Erasmus thought that pilgrimages engendered a “false

sense of holiness” making “the individual feel that he was religious” when he was “merely carrying out a formal observance”. He commented that the pilgrim faced temptations on the journey; a pilgrimage could be an “occasion for sin and irresponsibility”. In general, Erasmus believed that pilgrimage piety was

misplaced because it suggested that God was more powerful in some places (Compostella or Canterbury) than others (the pilgrim’s parish church) and might divert resources from the poor. He also derided the bargaining mentality of making vows to saints in exchange for favors,



turning “piety into a commercial transaction.” (pp. 43-45)

As ever with Erasmus, he did not mean for his comments to be taken too far. He was not either categorically attacking the cult of the saints or approving of iconoclasm. He recognized the value of pilgrimage piety to a certain extent, willing to “tolerate a complex gradation of practice, even to the point of allowing for some merit to be found in simple-hearted pilgrims who showed true devotion before a spurious relic” as Eire notes (p. 49). His dissent from this popular medieval devotion, however, led many reformers to think that Erasmus was supportive of their cause, and was certainly taken up more resolutely by Latimer in the 1530’s.

In 1532 and 1533, Hugh Latimer had attacked not only the practice of pilgrimage, but also the invocation of the saints and the use of images. So by



*Traditional Catholic concepts, like pilgrimage and the gift of God’s Grace, permeated the uprising. (Public Domain)*

naming their uprising a pilgrimage, the Yorkshire rebels were certainly emphasizing their rejection of Latimer’s reforms and the 1536 Ten Articles. Yet they

were not on a pilgrimage to a shrine at all—they were on pilgrimage to defend the tradition of pilgrimage and of shrines.

## “Grace” and the Pilgrimage of Grace



*“The Blessing of the Pilgrimage of Grace”  
by Fred Kirk Shaw (1913)  
(Leicester City & Maritime Museum)*

he pilgrims did not call their effort a “Pilgrimage of Works” but a Pilgrimage of “Grace”.

article. Nevertheless, the choice of this term demonstrates that the pilgrims knew they needed Grace, the gift of salvation from

A theological dissertation on the meaning of Grace in the Christian Church from St. Paul in the New Testament to St. Augustine of Hippo through St. Thomas Aquinas to Martin Luther or John Calvin is beyond the scope of this

God. The classic Catholic understanding of this saving Grace has always been that it is a free gift from God that no one can claim to merit or deserve (grace is gratuitous). Inspired by the love of God, itself a gift from God, the pilgrims sought God’s Grace for their own salvation and for their country’s holiness.

They were free to respond to God’s Grace and by going on pilgrimage to defend the monasteries and traditional religion, they were exercising that freedom. They also believed that they could reject God’s Grace (that is, they could and did sin) and so they prayed for God’s gracious forgiveness and mercy.



# The Banner of the Pilgrimage of Grace: The Five Wounds of Jesus

They marched under banners depicting the Five Wounds of Jesus. As Eamon Duffy demonstrates in *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (First edition, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), this was “one of the most popular cults of late medieval Europe, and in England it was growing in popularity up to the very eve of the Reformation” (p. 238). The five wounds are the nail wounds in the right and left hands and in the right and left feet by which Jesus was nailed to the cross, and the spear wound in his side, pierced as he hung on the cross. The wound in his side, Duffy notes, “had a par-

ticular fascination and devotional power, for it gave access to his heart, and thereby became a symbol of refuge in his love”. (p. 244)

This devotion was also associated with the icon of the Man of Sorrows, also called the Image of Pity (comparable to the icon of Extreme Humility in the Eastern Orthodox tradition) and the Mass of St. Gregory the Great. The votive Mass of the Wounds was the most popular Mass offered for the Poor Souls in Purgatory, often requested in wills. Devotional—and indulgenced—prayers to the Five Wounds filled prayer books, and the imagery was cited in

“countless vernacular sermons, prayers, and verses”. (p. 245).

Choosing this symbol—marching forth from Yorkshire to protest the suppression of the monasteries, the imposition of the Ten Articles, the changes in religious worship and devotion with these Five Wounds depicted on their banners—with all its associations, liturgical and devotional, was significant. They were declaring their belief in the doctrine of Purgatory and prayer for the dead, and in what Duffy calls “the whole medieval Catholic system”, the “doctrinal, devotional, and liturgical” (p. 248) means of salvation through Christ’s Passion and in his Church.

## Conclusion

he Pilgrimage of Grace might have shaken Henry VIII’s throne, but he crushed it in the end.

Dom David Knowles suggests in his *Bare Ruined Choirs: The Dissolution of the English Monasteries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), that the

pilgrims (or at least their leader, Robert Aske) had not reckoned or were not willing to pay the full expense necessary to achieve victory: they were not willing to consider their king

their enemy or to vanquish him as their enemy (pp. 219-220). Henry VIII certainly was ready to defeat them as necessary, in spite of the name or the banner they had chosen.

**STEPHANIE A. MANN**

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# Jane Seymour and Sixteenth-Century Expectations of Queenship

*by* Conor Byrne





**JANE SEYMOUR, THIRD** wife of Henry VIII, became Queen of England following Anne Boleyn's execution for treason in May 1536. An apparently unassuming woman in her late twenties, Jane is perhaps the most elusive of Henry's queens. Scarcely any evidence survives for her true personality. She was Henry's wife for merely seventeen months; yet her period as queen was tumultuous, in that it witnessed the restoration of Mary Tudor to favour, the unrest of the Pilgrimage of Grace, and the long-awaited birth of a healthy son to the king.

Jane has attracted few biographers because of the shortage of evidence concerning her. It can be argued that the mystery of Jane Seymour's brief career makes her as fascinating a person of study as Henry's other wives. Whether Henry VIII truly did love Jane, his 'entirely beloved' third wife, as legend has it, is an issue that has provoked debate. In actuality, the tantalising evidence we have suggests that the story is more complex. Jane's queenship was passive and her famously meek, subdued character may have owed far more to the control of her domineering husband than is usually considered.

Although she was not associated with the controversies of the Reformation, as her predecessor was, Jane's life deserves analysis because of what it can inform us about sixteenth-century understandings of queenship. Scholars have occasionally disagreed about how successful Jane was as consort. Some have dismissed her as in-

Jane's life deserves analysis because of what it can inform us about sixteenth-century understandings of queenship

effectual and either unable or disinclined to exert influence in religion or politics. Others have praised her for satisfying her husband's expectations and in submissively abstaining from seeking to influence his policies. Usually Jane's life is examined with reference to the downfall of Anne Boleyn, her possible involvement, and her later relationship with her stepdaughter Mary Tudor. Given that these aspects of her life can never be known with certainty, it is perhaps more fruitful to analyse her actual acts and behaviour as queen in the context of sixteenth-century expectations of the queen's role.

Before examining Jane's tenure as consort, it is worth considering the circumstances in which she moved from being a king's mistress to a king's wife. Commencing their study of her with Henry's courtship, historians have often suggested that Henry VIII was attracted to Jane because she 'was unquestionably virginal' and because 'there was certainly no threatening



sexuality about her'. In short, according to this interpretation, it was Jane's virtue, piety and goodness that charmed the ageing king. As queen, Jane selected the motto 'Bound to Obey and Serve', thus confirming her submission to Henry VIII's will both as her husband and as her king. How far the king himself directed his new wife in this, however, should be considered. Henry VIII had been obsessed by Anne Boleyn, an assertive, educated and independent young woman who had refused to become involved with him because it offended her piety and endangered her virtue. Anne's inability to provide the much-desired male heir had gradually reduced Henry VIII's burning love to burning hatred, leaving him with a strong desire to destroy her and to rejoice in her execution, to the surprise even of Ambassador Chapuys. With Jane, he had no wish to be denied and no wish to be told 'no'. Jane's motto confirmed her husband's ownership of her and signalled to the world that passivity and submission, rather than the proactive stance of Katherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn, would characterise Jane's tenure.

Just as it is problematic to view Anne Boleyn as directly responsible for Katherine of Aragon's rustication from court and subsequent ill-treatment, so it is erroneous to view Jane as responsible for Anne's brutal end, as Victorian historians often did. In questioning her morals and condemning her actions, as Agnes Strickland did, these historians failed to understand the position Jane was in and the character of the man she married. Like Anne, she simply could not say no. With the passing of time, Henry had become increasingly autocratic and,

The absence of evidence for her inner feelings means that we cannot suggest that Jane was hostile to Anne Boleyn

on the single occasion that Jane did dare to voice her true opinion, she was brutally put in her place by her irascible husband, who warned her to consider her predecessor's fate before involving herself in affairs of state. There is scarcely any evidence for Jane's supposed love and admiration of Queen Katherine, and there is next to no evidence that she was hostile to Anne or resented her rise to queenship. While she did offer friendship to Mary Tudor once she had married Henry, this is understandable given their closeness in age and their shared devotion to the Catholic faith. In 1536, perhaps Jane, mindful of Henry's rejection of Anne and indifference to his second daughter, wisely judged it best not to antagonise her husband by showing marked favour to her stepdaughter Elizabeth.

The absence of evidence for her inner feelings means that we cannot suggest that Jane was hostile to Anne Boleyn or deliberately sought to bring her down because of her aversion to the reformed faith favoured by Anne or because of her supposed loyalty to Katherine. In rejecting Henry's advances, in refusing to accept presents of money from him, in behaving 'modestly' rather than flirtatiously, perhaps Jane intended to signal a lack of interest that may well have been genuine. Her true feelings for Henry are usually ignored in the rush to condemn her supposedly callous behaviour. Jane Seymour's personality and motivations are swathed in mystery and remain largely inscrutable. She may have been ambitious, but equally she may have felt that she had no choice, as Katherine Parr did when presented with an unwanted marriage proposal by the king in 1543. Perhaps Jane resent-





*A 19th-century painting of Jane  
Seymour (Public Domain)*



ed Anne, but equally she may have accepted her as her mistress and wished to show her no ill-will. What does seem likely, however, is that Jane was coached by her ambitious relatives to attract the besotted king. Certainly they profited handsomely from her rise: her brother Edward became Viscount Beauchamp and her brother Thomas was knighted. It is uncertain whether Jane was a willing participant in the schemes of 1536 or whether she was manipulated by her family to serve their own ends.

Despite her marriage to Henry

VIII, Jane was never crowned as queen and her subsequent tenure as consort has been interpreted as passive. Usually, the new queen is credited with restoring Mary Tudor to favour, but it is more likely that it was Henry himself who approved and brought about his daughter's return to court only after she had grovelled to him for her disobedience: 'I beseech your Majesty to countervail my transgressions with my repentance for the same'. Jane may have been sympathetic to Mary but she was not responsible for the latter's return to favour. Even if she had wished to enjoy Mary's company, Jane would not have forgotten for a second that her primary duty as queen was to provide a male heir, and would have acknowledged



*Jane Seymour's clever and ambitious brother Edward, by Magdalena de Passe (Public Domain)*

Described by Cromwell as 'a most virtuous lady', Jane conformed entirely to Henry's wishes.

that Mary's status as the bastard of an unlawful union was a foreboding reminder of her own potentially perilous position. As Henry is said to have warned Jane ominously: 'She ought to study the welfare and exaltation of her own children, if she had any by him, instead of looking out for the good of others'.

Despite the oft-repeated legend that Jane Seymour was Henry VIII's most beloved wife, there is, in fact, surprisingly little evidence of his love for her dating from her own lifetime. As noted earlier, when

she had voiced sympathy for Mary her husband had bluntly advised her to concern herself with producing an heir herself. If the story of her plea for the abbey to be saved from dissolution is true, then

Henry's response, in brutally reminding her of Anne's fate, is indicative of a bullying husband seeking to control a wife and prevent her from becoming unruly. Within days of his marriage to Jane, Henry VIII reportedly was acquainted with two beautiful women and

voiced regret that he had not met them before he had remarried. The Second Act of Succession, which was passed in the summer of 1536, vested the succession either in Jane Seymour's offspring or in the offspring the king might have with any future

wife. How Jane viewed this Act cannot be known, but as the months passed without a pregnancy, she must have lived in considerable anxiety, if not fear.

Described by Cromwell as 'a most virtuous lady', Jane conformed entirely to Henry's wishes. If she had ambition, she suppressed it. If she held opinions, she chose not to voice them. If she disagreed with her husband's policies, she did not inform him. How far Jane willingly assented to her marginalisation, how wholeheartedly she embraced her motto 'Bound to Obey and Serve', are questions that simply cannot be answered. Yet she had witnessed Katherine of Aragon's determined refusal to obey Henry's wishes, and she had heard of the ill-treatment inflicted on the proud queen in consequence. Jane's own marriage had been made in blood: her former mistress had been imprisoned, tried and executed in less than three weeks mainly because she had failed to give her

husband a son.

Jane's queenship is characterised by modern historians as passive, but they have not usually considered whether she was willing in the circumscribing of her queenly authority. In concerning herself solely with domestic affairs, Jane sought to please her husband, but his threatening behaviour on

several occasions towards her was a chilling reminder of the danger she faced if she displeased him. By giving birth to her son Edward on 12 October 1537 at Hampton Court Palace, Jane earned Henry's undying love and appreciation, but his relationship with her was not founded on passion. In her own lifetime, Jane was a ci-

Despite the oft-repeated legend that Jane Seymour was Henry VIII's most beloved wife, there is, in fact, surprisingly little evidence of his love for her

pher. During her brief tenure as queen, she walked on a knife edge. Her two predecessors had been rusticated and had died, alone and shamed, for their failures to give birth to a son. This thought must have constantly been in Jane's mind, and her overriding emotion at providing the male heir



*An elegant and demure Jane Seymour, as played by Annabelle Wallis in season 3 of "The Tudors". (Radio Times)*



in the autumn of 1537 may well have been relief.

Philippa Gregory's novel *The Taming of the Queen*, which describes the life of Katherine Parr as queen, focuses on the circumscribing of the queen's authority, the restriction of her power and the utter submission of the queen to her husband. This portrayal could, with some fairness, apply to Jane Seymour. Her reign has been viewed as unremarkable and devoid of achievements, with the exception of Prince Edward's birth. Historians have appreciated that, outside of her immediate household, the queen was little more than a cipher, never exercising the militant authority of Katherine of Aragon or seeking to influence religious policies, as did Anne Boleyn. But they have, tellingly, failed to consider how willing Jane was in the restrictions she faced. Perhaps she willingly accepted them, perhaps she accepted her submission as the price of her queenship. Or perhaps she resented the limits imposed on her and bridled when faced with her husband's suffocating presence.

There is no evidence to suggest that

It was only after her death that Jane became 'entirely beloved' and her memory revered.

Jane was unquestionably hostile to Anne Boleyn and sought her destruction, nor can it be indisputably claimed that she admired and revered Katherine of Aragon. There is scarcely any evidence for Henry's supposed love for her. It was only after her death that Jane became 'entirely beloved' and her memory revered.

Only in 1544 was she celebrated in Holbein's painting as Henry's one true wife, rather than Katherine Parr, his queen at the time. Jane Seymour's queenship was circumscribed, 'tamed'. She remains a mystery in a sense because she was

a cipher at court. What emerges from the sources is the strong likelihood that it was Henry VIII who was responsible for holding her in submission and curtailing her authority to ensure that she pleased him and conformed to his will. Her career demonstrates the limits faced by the queen consort in the exercise of authority; when these limits were imposed by the king himself, the queen had little choice but to accept the restrictions placed on her and concern herself with her primary duty: the deliverance of sons to secure the continuation of her husband's dynasty.

**CONOR BYRNE**



Conor Byrne, author of "Katherine Howard: A New History" is a British graduate of History. He has been fascinated by the Tudors, medieval and early modern history from the age of eleven, particularly the lives of European kings and queens. Some of the conclusions he has reached in his biography are controversial and likely to spark debate, but Conor hopes for a thorough reassessment of Katherine Howard's life. He is soon to publish a new book on Queenship in England.

*The Family of Henry VIII,  
c. 1543-1547*

*A fictitious representation which  
shows Jane Seymour*







# The Smiling Assassin?: Modern criticism of Queen Jane Seymour

by Gareth Russell



The dark legend of Anne Boleyn – whore, schemer, shrew, murderess – is notorious and vitally healthy. Ever since her head landed in the dust of the scaffold in May 1536, it has been open season on Anne's reputation and some, most infamously the Elizabethan Jesuit historian Father Nicholas Sander, were not slow to depict the dead queen as a depraved pseudo-satanic witch. With far less excuse, modern novelists have often presented Anne as a duplicitous trollop who rode roughshod over the lives of nearly everyone who got in her way.

Criticisms of Anne's successor, Jane Seymour, have never been quite so strident or, more accurately, quite so hysterical, but they have nonetheless existed. Jane's reputation has been overwhelmingly positive among most historians – in her bestselling 1991 book *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, Alison Weir captured the popular perception of Jane when she summarised her as 'a strong-minded matriarch in the making' – yet there has been a long list of subversive critics of Queen Jane, beginning with one of her own allies, the diplomat Eustace Chapuys, who was, initially, privately contemptuous of Jane's intellectual capabilities and morals. As he got to know her, Chapuys's opinion of the new queen seemed to improve, but he was the first in a long line of people who considered Jane as dull as dishwater.

Born into a gentry family in the first decade of the sixteenth century, Jane emerged from privileged obscurity to wear a crown in such a short period of time that she was a mystery to many of her contemporaries and, given the tragic brevity of her career, a mystery is what she was destined to remain. We know almost nothing of Jane's political and religious beliefs, except to say that the limited evidence left to us suggests she inclined towards tradi-

tionalism. She was never devout or passionate enough to risk her life or title for it, as Katherine of Aragon had been before her. The assertion of some historians that 'the gentleness of Queen Jane certainly came out in her attitude towards the unhappily situated Princess Mary' (Walter Jerrold, *Henry VIII and his wives*, 1933) is tempered by remembering that Jane only publicly supported her beleaguered stepdaughter's rehabilitation once Mary had been pushed to the brink of a nervous breakdown by her enforced capitulation to religious policies which she considered utterly abhorrent. In 1905, the Edwardian historian Martin Hume concluded that 'all these fine [traditionalist] hopes were rapidly banished. Jane never possessed or attempted to exercise any political influence on her husband. She smiled sweetly and in a non-committal way ... but Cromwell's was still the strong mind that swayed the King.' In regards to her younger stepdaughter, Elizabeth, Queen Jane's attitude constituted a deafening silence.

For some historians, all of this supports a view of Jane Seymour as an average woman, tossed onto the pages of history because she happened to catch the eye of a middle-aged monarch at a fortuitous time in his life – when he had tired of an outspoken confrontational queen and sought refuge in the company of a reassuring nonentity. Anne Boleyn's biographer, Marie Louise Bruce, writing in 1972 considered Jane 'one of the least remarkable women' ever to play a significant role in British history, while David Starkey, in his superb 2003 study of Henry's marriages, frankly and honestly admitted that there was no point in pretending that any of Henry's final four queens were as historically important as his first two.

Boredom can, of course, breed contempt. Karen Lindsey, who in 1995 pub-



lished *Divorced Beheaded Survived: A Feminist Reinterpretation of the Wives of Henry VIII*, could barely contain her disappointment at the demure apolitical silence of Jane's career, particularly after the cheer-inducing bravery of her two predecessors who were, in Starkey's words, 'worthy titans' in their opposing agendas. Lindsey compared Jane Seymour to the mythical Sleeping Beauty and concluded that Jane had shown almost no agency in pursuing any kind of path that might have caused even momentary inconvenience to her husband or brothers. If popular myth has unfairly immortalised Anne of Cleves as 'the ugly one' in this half-dozen tribe of queens consort, then it has often also enshrined Jane as 'the boring one'.

For others, however, this is to let Jane off too lightly – she was devious, rather than dull. A minority view persists that Henry VIII's third wife was a subtle but vicious game-player, whose subpar intellect was not enough to prevent her having the intelligence to mask her ambition behind a veneer of doe-eyed submissiveness. The late, great Eric Ives, best-known for his biographies of Anne Boleyn and Jane Grey, went to town on Jane Seymour in a 1995 interview with a Birmingham-based magazine, when he slammed her as 'a milk-and-water little tart'. Joanna Denny, who wrote biographies of Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard, considered Jane to be a willing pawn in her predecessor's destruction. And

it's that image, of the blink-and-you've-missed-it interlude between Anne Boleyn's execution and Jane Seymour's marriage, that many of Jane's latter-day critics cannot erase from their mind's-eye. The Strickland sisters, the "founding mothers" of popular history, were particularly revolted by the circumstances of Jane's rise to power and in the reign of Queen Victoria, when they published their blockbuster series on the lives of the queens of England, they articulated, with savage precision, the most stridently vicious critique of this enigmatic queen: -

'Customs may alter at various eras, but the laws of moral justice are unalterable ... Jane Seymour's shameless conduct in receiving the courtship of Henry VIII was the commencement of the severe calamities that befell her mistress, Anne Boleyn. Scripture points out as an especial odium the circumstances of a handmaid taking the place of her mis-



tress. Odious enough was the case when Anne Boleyn supplanted the right royal Katharine of Aragon, but the discreet Jane Seymour received the addresses of her mistress's husband, and passively beheld the mortal anguish of Anne Boleyn, when that unhappy queen was in a state which peculiarly demanded feminine sympathy; she knew that the discovery of Henry's inconstancy had nearly destroyed her, whilst the shock actually destroyed her infant. Jane saw murderous accusations got up against the Queen, which finally brought [Anne] to the scaffold, yet she gave her hand to

the regal ruffian before his wife's corpse was cold.... And let it be remembered that a royal marriage could not have been celebrated without previous preparation, which must have proceeded simultaneously with the heart-rending events of Anne Boleyn's last agonised hours. The wedding-cakes must have been baking, the wedding-dinner providing, the wedding-clothes preparing, while the life-blood was yet running warm in the veins of the victim, whose place was to be rendered vacant by violent death. The picture is repulsive enough, but it becomes tenfold more abhorrent when the woman who caused the whole tragedy is loaded with panegyric.'

The purpose of this article is not to suggest that any of these criticisms of Jane are fair, nor is to dismiss them entirely. It is merely to underscore the ways in which a royal woman's reputation could be made and re-made as the centuries progress. One can easily understand why a queen who was involved in great political events, or perhaps even destroyed by them, would become the object of intense debate. Elizabeth Woodville in the Wars of the Roses, Anne Boleyn and Mary I in the English Reformation, Catherine de Medici in the Wars of Religion, Mary, Queen of Scots and Elizabeth I in their deadly feud, Henrietta-Maria in the English civil wars, or Marie-Antoinette and Alexandra Feodorovna in the French and Russian revolutions, were royal ladies whose lives collided with, and shaped, momentous historical events. If we are re-fighting the Wars of the Roses on the pages of our books and in the corridors of our mind, we might be tempted to once again pick "sides" between Elizabeth Woodville and her estranged brother-in-law, Richard III. An apologist for English

Catholicism might leap to exonerate Mary I, as quickly as their Protestant equivalents have laboured to eulogise Anne Boleyn's legacy. Was Marie-Antoinette a wronged victim of unhinged political terror or a self-absorbed, manipulative foreign diletante – that question quickly bleeds into asking if the French Revolution was more a horror or a blessing?

For Jane Seymour, the shifts in her reputation are not so easily understood. As this edition's juxtaposition of her and the Pilgrimage of Grace suggests, Jane was queen at a time of enormous social unrest in England, but aside from one comment that was quickly ignored, we do not know what she – the highest-ranking woman in the country – thought of the uprising, and we can be certain that her presence did not change the outcome in any discernible way. Jane's was a reactive life and she has had a reactive reputation. Most obviously, what one thinks of Anne Boleyn very often influence how one views her replacement.

Years after her death, Jane was painted in a glistening golden gown, sitting next to her enormous husband and the son she died giving birth to. Her pale face is cast downwards, devoid of any emotion save submission. For Tudor dynastic art, Jane was immortalised as the perfect wife and mother, but in doing so they helped craft a narrative that has obscured the real Jane for centuries, and which continues to do so. The truth is that we know so little of Jane's thoughts, feelings or motivations, and because of that we have been able to cast her in whatever role we would like, just as easily as her husband's artists did when they inserted her, long-dead, into the great murals celebrating the Tudor succession.

**GARETH RUSSELL**



# THE TUDOR MONARCHS' HEALTH ISSUES

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Historian **Toni Mount** takes us through a whirlwind tour of afflictions which affected the Tudor kings and queens ...

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Most people have heard of the Black Death, which killed up to 60% of Europe's population during the mid-fourteenth century, yet there was a disease specific to the Tudor period that took thousands of lives, known as the English sweating sickness, or *Sudor Anglicus*. There is the possibility that it began among Henry Tudor's soldiers as they invaded England, determined to oust Richard III from his throne. Although this disease claimed far

fewer lives than the plague, it became notorious because its victims could die in less than twenty-four hours, literally sweating to death.

The first record of the sweating sickness was in August 1485, coinciding with Tudor's arrival in England, and by October it had wiped out thousands in London. Contemporary physicians didn't know what to make of it. They noted the first symptom would be an attack of trembling, then pain all over



the body, followed by lethargy and exhaustion. Then came the profuse sweating which gave the illness its name. The victim suffered a severe headache, light-headedness and insatiable thirst before sleep overcame them. For many, it was a sleep from which they would never wake. The time between the first symptom and death could be just a few hours.

The illness vanished in 1492 and for sixteen years there was no further sign until it returned in 1508. A doctor noted that the majority of victims were either of the upper class or the poorest of the poor: *They which had this sweat sore with peril of death were either men of wealth, ease or welfare, or of the poorer sort, such as were idle persons, good ale drinkers and tavern haunters.* Another Tudor physician recorded that a victim could be *merry at dinner and dead at supper.*

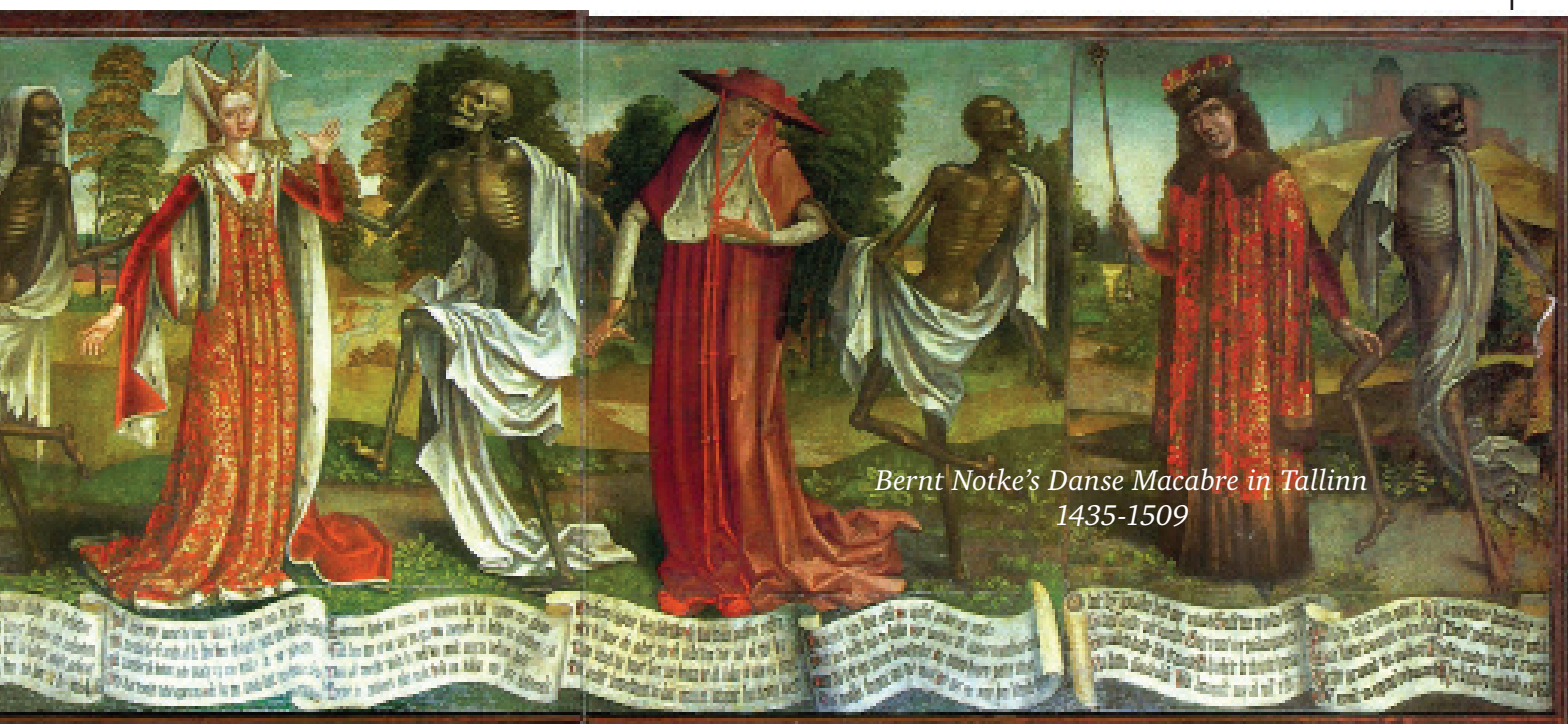
The year 1528 saw the next epidemic – also the most widespread – as London was again the first city affected but it quickly spread to all parts of England. This was also the only known occurrence of the disease spreading beyond the British Isles into Germany, France, Italy, Scandinavia and as far as Russia, taken by ship.

King Henry VIII (r.1509-47) had recently begun his relationship with Anne Boleyn. He had a great fear of illness and panicked, as he often did whenever disease threatened. He left London, staying in various households throughout the country, accompanied by Queen Katherine of Aragon, becoming zealous in his acts of piety. It is interesting to speculate that his return to Katherine and strict religious observance may reveal Henry's fear that his sins of adultery with Anne were being punished by God and his own survival might depend upon his atonement. True or

not, Anne was sent home to her father, Thomas, at Hever Castle in Kent, yet their separation did not stop Henry from writing to his beloved. The king reassured her in a letter that *few women or none have this malady* but, despite these heartening words, Anne fell ill and so did her father. Both would recover but Anne's brother-in-law, William Carey – husband to Anne's sister, Mary – was not so fortunate. He died on the same day that Anne became ill, 22 June, which must have troubled the sweat's latest victim.

When he learned that Anne was sick, Henry wrote to her again, saying *I would gladly bear half of your illness to make you well*, and immediately dispatched his 'second-best' doctor, William Butts to her, with yet another royal *billet-doux*, signed with the initials 'H' and 'R' either side of a heart and 'AB'. Henry advised Anne to do as Butts instructed, so they could be reunited which would be to him of *greater comfort than all the precious jewels in the world.* Fortunately for Butts, Anne and her father recovered, raising Butts in the king's esteem to the tune of £100 per annum. He became well respected and continued to tend Anne when she became queen. The king was overjoyed by Anne's recovery and, after a few weeks of quarantine, she was back at court with the king's passion for her stronger than ever, such that the French ambassador reported *the king is in so deeply that God alone can get him out of it.* The last recorded occurrence of the sickness in England was in 1551.

Henry VIII successfully avoided the sweating sickness but was afflicted by other ailments. Although contemporary chroniclers wrote in detail about the king's physical condition, any negative aspects of his health were not mentioned. Health bulletins had to



Bernt Notke's *Danse Macabre* in Tallinn  
1435-1509





Danse Macabre. XV. The Abbess - Hans Holbein the Younger

be very positive, as if his majesty would live forever, otherwise a physician could be in trouble. To mention any signs of deterioration in the king's condition was seen as an act of treason.

In 1513, Henry VIII suffered from an unidentified skin disease and a mild attack of smallpox. He was also plagued by recurrent headaches. Otherwise, generally, he seems to have had good health. The king suffered a bout of 'quartan fever' (malaria) in 1521, at a time when the disease was prevalent in marshy areas of south-east England – places ideal for the infected mosquitoes to breed and the best for falconry and hawking, pastimes enjoyed by the king. Henry seems to have made a full recovery and continued to take part in tournaments, archery competitions, bowling and real (royal) tennis. According to the Great Wardrobe Accounts of 1526 he even had 'one leather pair of shoes for football'.

All this changed in 1536 when the king, in his mid-forties, suffered a serious wound to his leg while jousting. This never healed and became ulcerous, leaving Henry increasingly incapacitated. Four years later, having taken to drowning his sorrows in drink and comforting himself with huge amounts of rich food, his waistline had expanded from a trim thirty-two inches to an enormous fifty-two inches. In the months preceding his death, he was forced to suffer the humiliation of being winched onto his horse and had to use a manpowered chair-lift contraption to get up and down stairs. Despite this, artists who painted the king's portrait scrupulously avoided any sign of his misshapen leg and bandaging. Sadly for Henry, it is these later images of the corpulent old king that have become most famous.

Some sources suggested the king may have had syphilis and while this would explain his violent mood swings, ulcerated legs and even an abnormality beside his nose, others point out that an endocrine (hormonal) problem would also explain his symptoms. There is no evidence that Henry was given the new mercury treatment for syphilis but whether this indicates the absence of the disease or the fact that English doctors had not yet learned of the fashionable continental treatment is impossible to say. The king may have had an abnormality of the pituitary gland (basophil adenoma) and what's known as hyper-function of the suprarenal glands that lie just above the kidneys, known today as Cushing's disease. In these cases, the patient's face is bloated,

he becomes obese, aggressive and quarrelsome with recurrent headaches, as well as suffering a loss of sexual function (virilism). This seems to fit what we know of Henry's health problems in his later years. Other experts think that type-2 diabetes could have added to his woes. Henry died at Westminster on the night of 27-28 January 1547 of renal (kidney) and hepatic (liver) failure, aggravated by his obesity. He was aged fifty-five.

Edward VI (r.1547-53) was only ten-years-old when he succeeded his father and all his life was cosseted and protected from infections. Anyone in the prince's household who became unwell was sent away and any member of his staff who had cause to visit the filthy city of London, where diseases were rife, was obliged to spend time in quarantine before rejoining the prince's company. The royal apartments were regularly given a thorough spring-clean. Despite, or maybe because of, this regime to protect Edward from contagion, he seems to have had little resistance to infection. He suffered a bout of smallpox, or possibly measles in April 1552 and from that time his health declined. Edward himself wrote: I fell sike of the measles and the smallpookes. At Christmas 1552, he was very weak. We know that his grandfather, Henry VII, may have died of pulmonary tuberculosis and the boy's uncle, Prince Arthur, had definitely died of the disease in his mid-teens, as did Henry VIII's illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy, Edward's half-brother, in July 1536, so it appears that the Tudor menfolk were rather susceptible to this disease.

During the following spring of 1553, it was obvious to his physicians that King Edward, like his close male relatives, was also dying of consumption (tuberculosis). On his doctors' orders, he was moved to Greenwich (then in the rural countryside) where the air was healthy and free of filthy miasmas. By now, Edward was emaciated and coughing up blood-tinged sputum. Treasonous or not, an honest medical bulletin was released on the subject of the king's health: The physicians are all now agreed that he is suffering from a suppurative tumour on the lung. He is beginning to break out in ulcers [possibly bed sores]; he is vexed with a harsh and continuous cough, his body is dry and burning, his belly is swollen [possibly tuberculous peritonitis], he has a slow fever upon him that never leaves him. On 6 July 1553, Edward whispered his last prayer and died. He was only fifteen years old.



Edward was succeeded by his half-sister, Mary Tudor (r.1553-58). At the time of her accession and subsequent marriage to Philip II, King of Spain, at Winchester on 25 July 1554, Mary's health seemed good. Soon after the wedding, although thirty-eight years old, Mary believed she was pregnant. It proved to be a phantom pregnancy and was followed by unspecified gastric and intestinal troubles. This spate of ill-health was followed by what seems to have been another phantom pregnancy, but was in fact the early

*great number of people.* This seems to be a reference to the sweating sickness as the ultimate cause of Mary's death but since there is no other evidence for the disease re-emerging at that date, it seems unlikely.

The next and last Tudor monarch, Elizabeth I (r.1558-1603), certainly had a longer life than her half-siblings, but she too had health problems. Despite these, she was generally very active, an accomplished horsewoman who rode daily up until the last months of her life. She would stand for



The Dance of Death (1493) by Michael Wolgemut, from the Liber chronicarum by Hartmann Schedel

symptoms of the ovarian cancer that eventually killed the queen in November 1558. However, one source, *The Life of Mary*, which may be contemporary, stated that the queen *fell into a fever which, increasing little by little, at last put an end to her life, which fever at that time raged in most of England and swept away a*

hours in council meetings without tiring, much to the distress of some of her elderly counsellors who could not sit while their monarch stood. However, in 1559, Elizabeth suffered a recurrent fever which may have been malaria. The queen contracted smallpox in 1562 but recovered. Throughout her life she seemed

to suffer from debilitating headaches – sometimes at remarkably convenient moments, such as when Queen Mary demanded her presence at court. Elizabeth was also plagued by toothache and tooth decay, perhaps because of her love for expensive sugar confectionary, but her physicians were wary of suggesting she have the decayed molars extracted. One of her courtiers volunteered to have his bad teeth removed in the queen's presence, so she could see that the process wasn't so awful after all. The queen relented and permitted the offending royal teeth to be taken out.

During Elizabeth's reign, the royal medical staff was small because the queen regarded any mention of illness as a weakness in itself, but she employed John Dee, her 'Merlin', as her toothache specialist, general health consultant, astrologer and heretical mystic. Dee gave his personal regimen for good health as *eight hours a day study; two hours eating and four hours sleeping*. He does not say what he did for the remaining ten hours.

In March 1603, now sixty-nine years old, Elizabeth became unwell, although she denied it. She retired to her favourite home, Richmond Palace, upriver from London in the pleasant Surrey countryside. Stubborn as ever, she wouldn't allow her doctors to examine her, insisting she wasn't ill. She refused to go to bed, standing for hours, occasionally relenting to rest in a chair. As her condition worsened, her ladies spread cushions on the floor for her. Eventually, the queen gave in and lay down on them. She spent almost four days, lying on the floor, barely speaking except to insist she would not go to bed. Even Elizabeth could not deny death indefinitely, but only when she was too weak and speechless to argue with her servants did they succeed in putting her to bed. Soft music was played to soothe her as her counsellors gathered around.

The cause of her death cannot be confirmed because there was never a post mortem. She may have died of septicaemia (blood poisoning), possibly caused by years of application of the white make-up known as ceruse – a poisonous mixture of white lead and vinegar. If the final cause was septicaemia, Elizabeth's bad teeth may have contributed. The queen possibly had a tooth abscess and, in the days before efficient antibiotics, this may have become life threatening. An example of a severe tooth abscess complication is known as Ludwig's angina which inflames the tissues of the floor of the mouth. In extreme cases, this condition can close the airway and cause suffocation. It certainly makes speech very difficult, as well as eating and drinking – symptoms that affected the queen. Infection can then spread to the chest area, with serious implications for the heart and lungs. If the abscess does not drain, it may lead to sepsis, a whole-body infection that can cause limb loss, organ dysfunction and death. Her physicians, surgeons and even her 'Merlin', John Dee, could do nothing to stave off the inevitable. Elizabeth I died on 24 March 1603, the last of the Tudors.

We may speculate as to whether the Tudor monarchs were any more or less healthy than their subjects. Did their ability to afford the best medical care of the day help their fight against infection? Was their plentiful but over-rich diet an advantage, compared to the meagre, semi-vegetarian fare of the poor, or did it do more harm, causing obesity, diabetes and tooth decay? Was there, perhaps, some hereditary factor that made the male Tudors so prone to pulmonary diseases? We may never know the answers to these questions but one thing is certain – just like us today, the Tudor monarchs were greatly concerned to do all they could to keep healthy, fighting until their final breath to ward off the inevitable.

**TONI MOUNT**

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# Jane Seymour in Portraiture

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Art historian **Melanie V. Taylor** takes  
a fresh look at some well loved  
Tudor portraits

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On October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1537 Henry VIII got his heart's desire. He finally became the father of a son and thus had his longed for heir to the English throne. Sadly his wife of only seventeen months, Jane Seymour, died a few days later.

Henry had married Jane on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1536, just days after



the execution of Queen Anne Boleyn. Immortalised later that year by the artist Hans Holbein the Younger, Jane's portrait now hangs in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. It is not a big portrait measuring 65.5 x 40.5 cms (25.78 x 15.8 inches) and is painted on wood.





Since this is a portrait, Queen Jane's face is the obvious starting point for our analysis. Holbein was famous for his psychological insight in the character of his sitters, so what do you make of his portrait of Queen Jane?<sup>1</sup>

I am immediately struck by her pursed mouth. Holbein has emphasised the muscles around her mouth as if she is pinching her lips. This makes her look stern and unforgiving. The description attached to this painting on the World Gallery of

Art website suggests she is 'frozen in an official sense of responsibility.'<sup>2</sup>

The sketch for this painting is in the Royal Library at Windsor and the original sketches for many of Holbein's sitters show a different side of their character than the eventual oil painting. For instance, his finished portrayal of Lady Mary Guildford shows a woman whose expression is enough to stop a man in his tracks should he put a foot out of line. This portrait was painted nine years before the one of Jane and is now in the St Louis Art Museum, Missouri. It measures 87 cms x 70.5 cms (34.3 x 27.8 inches) and is painted on panel. However, the sketch that Holbein did from life gives us a completely different insight into Lady Guildford. The dimple in her chin is still there, but the sketch shows a woman who looks to have a hint of mischief in her. Lady Mary's husband, Sir Henry Guildford, was Henry VIII's Controller of the royal Household between 1521 and his death in 1532. This portraits was during Holbein's first visit to England.

Looking at the sketch for Queen Jane's portrait the expression is just the same as in the finished portrait. We have no tantalising glimpse of a woman who may be even slightly mischievous.

There is a similarity with another image that some of you may think controversial. The surviving lead medal showing Queen Anne Boleyn, with the words 'The Most Happi', is in The British Museum. It shows

1 Image of Queen Jane taken from Wikipedia. The original is in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna: First Floor, Picture Gallery, Hall XV Accession No. GG 881 and has been in the collection since 1720.

2 This type of statement makes me wonder exactly whether or not the person writing this was trying to make up a word count. It is completely at odds with the accepted view that Holbein was a master of capturing his sitters' character.





the then queen in a similar three quarter profile as the portraits of

Queen Jane and

Lady Mary Guildford. The head-dress is similar to that of Queen Jane except Jane has her veil pinned up. Perhaps Holbein was asked to design the medal? He was the rising artistic star and from the wealth of sketches of members of the Tudor court held at Windsor Castle, plus we know that he was patronised by the greatest in the land.<sup>3</sup>

Lucy Churchill has examined this portrait medal of Anne Boleyn under intense magnification and observed that the diagonal weave of the headdress and jewels on the gable hood and the necklace is the same as worn by Jane in the Vienna portrait. We might have some qualms about wearing clothing worn by an executed rival, but clearly this did not bother Jane Seymour.

In all these portraits the women face left. For a pair of marriage portraits it was traditional for women to have their portraits painted with them facing to the left and their husband facing to the right. Those familiar with the Latin concept

of *sinister* and *dexta* will recognise that facing to the left is a subliminal reference to Eve's sin of accepting the apple from the serpent in the Garden of Eden, thus bringing about mankind's expulsion from the Garden.

The iconoclasm of the Anglican reformists has meant that we have very little examples of English art from before the arrival of the Tudors. There is mention of various foreigners in the surviving accounts, but it is not until the 1520s that English portraiture becomes popular with the arrival of the German artist, Hans Holbein the Younger.

Holbein set the artistic bar incredibly high and since he who pays the piper calls the tune, his sitters would have dictated how they wished to be portrayed. There is a wealth of information for the ordinary historian hidden in these images, if they but looked up from their written evidence and married up written inventories to the paintings. David Starkey demonstrated how important marrying up image and document in his descriptions of the various painting in the catalogue for the Philip Mould Gallery's *Lost Faces: Identity & Discovery in Tudor Royal Portraiture* exhibition of 2007.

For instance, in both Holbein's sketch and the finished portrait of Jane



<sup>3</sup> The design for the medal may also have come from the Horenbout workshop. The sculptor Lucy Churchill has recreated this medal. <https://lucychurchill.wordpress.com/2012/05/14/the-moost-happi-portrait-of-anne-boleyn-a-rec/>

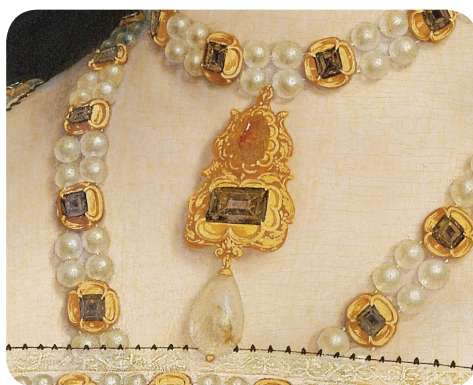


Seymour, there are jewels. The pendant at Jane's neck is very clear but does not immediately appear to have any symbolism. Queen Jane wears another jewel nearer her heart that does. The letters YHS are fastened to her bodice, but this jewel was once worn by another queen of Henry VIII. In this portrait of Queen Katharine of Aragon by Susannah Horenbout, Queen Katharine wears the jewel in exactly the same place.<sup>4</sup> This formation of letters is one of the earliest symbols of Christianity. Queen Katherine was a devout Catholic and the placing of this piece of jewellery over her heart symbolises her piety.

After Henry's fleeting dalliance with reformist religious ideas when he was married to Queen Anne, this jewel worn by Henry's new queen gives a clear

message that his new queen is a religious conservative. Anyone privileged enough to see this portrait would have understood that message.

Even the stones and setting are symbols of faith. Diamonds are symbols of constancy and gold symbolises perfection and justice. Gold is unchanging – like the Christian message. The way diamonds flash may be interpreted as reflecting the illumination of Christ's Word on the world. The three pearls would be understood to represent the Trinity and the purity of the Word of God.



This is the detail of Holbein's rendition of the jewel at Jane's neck in the Vienna portrait of Jane.<sup>5</sup> It is obvious the stone under the 'ruby' is not green.<sup>6</sup>

I said that the jewel at Queen Jane's neck did not appear to have any symbolism, but perhaps it does. She

is portrayed wearing it in The Family of Henry VIII that hangs in the Haunted Gallery of Hampton Court Palace, suggesting the



<sup>4</sup> *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art, 1485 – 1650: Woman as Consumers Patrons & Painters*; Routledge, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/422293/portrait-of-a-lady-perhaps-katherine-howard-1520-1542>

<sup>6</sup> Many red jewels are called rubies hence my use of single quote marks, but in reality may have been spinels since true rubies were very rare.





unknown artist of this group portrait knew Holbein's portrait.

The jewel also appears being worn by two of Henry's later wives, Queen's Katherine Howard and Katherine Parr. The jewel in the Holbein miniature (accepted as being a portrait of Katherine Howard), clearly shows this stone as green. The colour of these three precious stones can be interpreted as representing faith(white) hope(green) and charity/love (red).<sup>7</sup> The reference to faith, hope and love comes in St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians Chp 13 v 13. *Now abideth faith, hope and love, these three , but the greatest of these is love.* This pendant was

clearly given as a love token to at least three of Henry's wives.

What is apparent in the Holbein miniature is that the pendant is still on the same pearl, diamond and gold chain as in his portrait of Queen Jane. The inventory of the jewels Henry VIII gave to Katherine Howard is in the British Library ref. BL Stowe MS ff 55-68.<sup>8</sup>

In the portrait of Katherine Parr by Master John, Henry's sixth queen wears the same jewel and unlike in the oil painting of Queen Jane, we see the stones as red and green. It is clearly the same jewel as worn in the Vienna portrait. This detail of Katherine Parr wearing it is from Wikipedia. The original portrait is in the National Portrait Gallery, London ref. NPG 4451.

You may ask that if this is the same jewel, why is there a colour difference between the painting of the green stone in the Vienna portrait and the miniature? The answer is simple. Age and medium. The pigments and oils used in the large portrait have been exposed to the atmosphere and the dirt, pollution and humidity will have taken their toll resulting in the oxidation of the green pigment. The miniature in the Royal Collection is painted in watercolour. The size means it has spent much of its life in darkness either in a locket, or tucked away safely. The miniature is only just over two inches diameter.

Jane Seymour is the only one of Henry's many wives to appear within group

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.color-wheel-pro.com/color-meaning.html> for a quick reference. [bibles-online.net/1535/NewTestament/7-1Corinthians/](http://bibles-online.net/1535/NewTestament/7-1Corinthians/) This link will take you to the Coverdale Bible in use in England until 1611. The quotation is from 1 Corinthians 13:13. It is not until the King James Bible 1611 that the word charity is substituted for love therefore the quotation many are more familiar with is: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

<sup>8</sup> There is a transcription of BL Stowe Ms. 559 in Appendix A pp109 – 124 of the Lost Faces exhibition catalogue 2007. The original can be examined at the British Library.





portraits of the royal family, of which there are two. Holbein created the Whitehall mural in 1537. The original mural was destroyed in the fire of 5<sup>th</sup> January, 1698 but luckily the Royal Collection contains Remegius van Leemput's (1607-1675) much smaller copy of the original made for Charles II.<sup>9</sup> The other group portrait of the royal family hangs in the Haunted Gallery of Hampton Court and while we do not know the identity of the artist, it is apparent the creator owes a lot to Holbein's stand-alone portrait of Jane.

Let us first look at the Hampton Court portrait. It measures 66.5 x 150.5 inches (including the frame) and was originally hung on the wall facing the Whitehall mural in Henry VIII's Privy Chamber.

Clearly divided into three sections by the columns, we see Henry VIII seated on his throne under an elaborate cloth of estate that shows the Royal coat of arms with the Welsh dragon and Lancastrian greyhound. Henry immediately draws our attention because he is placed in the centre and magnificently dressed in cloth of gold.

A locket in the form of a gold Tudor rose with a diamond at its centre hangs around his neck. An expensive carpet protects all the royal feet from the cold marble floor, but the king's feet have extra protection and rest on a gold embroidered cushion. Having a carpet on the floor seems very usual to us today, but carpets were luxury items and only the wealthy could afford them. Prince Edward stands to the king's right and his father has laid his hand on his son's shoulder to reinforce the message that this is the heir to the English throne.

What also draws our eye to the king's person is the enormous codpiece protruding from the skirt of Henry's costume. An obvious statement of Henry's potency.

Queen Jane stands to Henry's left. This artist has clearly had sight of the Vienna portrait, and/or Holbein's sketches since the queen's stance is identical to those surviving images. She is expensively dressed in cloth of gold with ermine lined sleeves and overskirt. The locket hanging from her neck is the same as in the Vienna portrait, but the IHS jewel is missing from her bodice. A further locket with a central diamond hangs from her waist.

<sup>9</sup> [www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/405750/henry-vii-elizabeth-of-york-henry-viii-and-jane-seymour](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/405750/henry-vii-elizabeth-of-york-henry-viii-and-jane-seymour)





The Princesses Mary and Elizabeth are excluded from this central family group and stand outside the Ionic columns and directly on the marble floor. Mary is placed to the king's right and this may suggest that she is higher in esteem than the daughter of Anne Boleyn, who is placed on the left. Since both Mary and Elizabeth were declared bastards it is interesting that they have been included. However, politically

they could still be used to cement alliances by being married off to foreign princes. The artist could have excluded them altogether. It is likely that the placing of the two princesses was an aesthetic choice, but this does not preclude the inclusion of an arcane visual message from their being placed outside the decorated pillars. What that may be, I have no idea. By including Jane and Edward between the pillars, with the emphasis of the king's codpiece, we are being told that Henry is a potent king, capable of fathering male children. The fact that Henry's earlier wives miscarried was clearly their fault!

It is likely that Jane was dead when the Whitehall mural was created, but we have no evidence of the actual date of commission. The jewel hanging from her waist in the Hampton Court family group appears hanging around Henry's neck in the Holbein cartoon of Henry made to transfer the design to the wall.<sup>10</sup> The locket also appears in the three quarter profile portrait of Henry VIII that hangs in the Thyssen Bornemisza Museum in Madrid which we know was painted after Jane's death. The romantic in me likes to think that this locket contains a miniature portrait of his late queen, which may seem overly sentimental for a man of his reputation, but he did not remarry for some time after Jane's death and in 1547 was laid to rest beside her in St George's Chapel.

The final mural was evidently a wonder to behold. In 1600 Baron Waldstein visited

<sup>10</sup> Image taken from Wikipedia and the original is on display at the National Portrait Gallery, London.





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Whitehall palace and described the mural in his diary, including the Latin words inscribed on the plinth in the middle of the painting.<sup>11</sup>

Looking at Remegius van Leemput's small copy painted for the later Stuart king, we have to imagine the impact this work would have had on the privileged

few who saw it. The Philip Mould Gallery reproduced the original mural for their 2007 exhibition, *Lost Faces: Identity & Discovery in Tudor Royal Portraiture*, and it was calculated to have measured approximately 2.9 x 3.9 metres (9ft 5 ins x 12ft 10 ins). It has been suggested that the mural was created after Edward was born to celebrate his birth, yet if this were the case, why is the infant prince absent.

The counter argument is it had been painted to celebrate an imminent royal birth, this seems rather odd because it was

11 p45 *Lost Faces* exhibition catalogue. David Starkey provides an analysis of the recent discovery, translation and publication of Baron Waldstein's diary of 1600 by G W Groos (1981) which lays to rest the theories of Arthur Chamberlain and Roy Strong that the plinth was a later invention covering either a chimney or a window.



possible Jane may have produced a girl. This sounds like a very logical argument for a modern audience. However, what did the astrologers say? Was the birth of a boy predicted? If so then Holbein may have been told to get to work.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps there was another reason and the clue is in the Latin inscription.

In the October of 1536 the religious conservatives of the north of England rebelled against Henry's break with Rome and the imposition of royal supremacy, the dissolution of the monasteries and various other religious reforms being imposed on a reluctant populace. Today we know it as The Pilgrimage of Grace. To have used force to put down this rebellion would have been a disaster and with the benefit of hindsight we see a series of Machiavellian events.

The Christmas celebrations of 1536/7 presented the opportunity to bring about a possible rapprochement with the rebels. In the November the Duke of Norfolk had made the leaders an offer in the King's name. If they laid down their arms Parliament would be summoned and their grievances would be dealt with. To that end the rebel leader Robert Aske was invited to spend Christmas at the Court. You might wonder why a rebel leader was invited to spend the Christmas of 1536 at the Royal Court, but his third cousin was Queen Jane and his first cousin (once removed) was Henry Clifford 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Cumberland who

was married to Lady Eleanor Brandon, Henry VIII's niece. The magnificence of these particular Christmas celebrations may have been designed to intimidate Aske with Henry's power. Whatever the reason for the invitation, it is unlikely the mural was in place for the celebrations of the Twelve Days of the Christmas 1536/7.

Did Henry intend to honour the Duke of Norfolk's promises for a general pardon and to call a parliament within a year? Probably not and a further rebellion in February 1537 gave him the excuse he needed to renege on his promises. The leaders were arrested and dealt with horribly, including Robert Aske. Starkey believes that it was after this rebellion in the spring of 1537 and the announcement of Jane's pregnancy, that this visual statement of Tudor supremacy was commissioned.

The Latin inscription on the plinth that stands centre stage is a statement of the illustriousness of the first two Tudor kings and in particular of the correctness of Henry VIII's religious reforms. This is the translation, courtesy of Dr Lawrence Shafe.

*If it pleases you to see the illustrious images of heroes, look on these: no picture ever bore greater. The great debate, competition and great question is whether father or son is the victor. For both indeed were supreme. The former often overcame his enemies and the conflagrations of his country, and finally brought peace to its citizens. The son, born indeed for greater things, removed the unworthy from their altars and replaced them by upright men. The arrogance of the popes has yielded to unerring virtue, and while Henry VIII holds the sceptre in his hand religion is restored and during his reign the doctrines of God have begun to be held in his honour.*

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12 There is another version of this mural, again painted by van Leemput (1607-1675) that hangs in Petworth House. This does include a portrait of Prince Edward, which is clearly inspired by the portrait of the prince painted by William Scrots c 1552.

For those who had hoped that Henry's marriage to the religiously conservative Jane Seymour heralded his turning away from his religious reforms, this inscription would have dashed any hope of a return to the supremacy of the pope, the re-establishment of the monasteries and a revocation of all the other religious reforms that were being put in place. More importantly, if this were a celebration of the birth of an heir, why is there no mention of a further prince either hoped for, or existing. Considering the focus of the Latin inscription I think the fact that Jane was pregnant may never have been a factor in this design.

Looking at the complexity of the surviving cartoon of Henry VIII in the National Portrait Gallery you realise this design would have taken time to develop and be agreed. Van Leemput's copy reveals that the original was of such historical and political importance that it stands to reason the king would have wanted to be involved in the development of the design in some way.

The sight lines are, for me, significant. Henry VII looks towards Jane. If she were pregnant then why would the founder of the Tudor dynasty be looking at her? The baby might well be a girl. If Jane had already provided the heir that would be sufficient reason for Henry VII to be looking towards her as the mother of the third generation of Tudor kings.

Elizabeth of York looks at her son, who is the living embodiment of the unification of the Houses of York and Lancaster. Henry VIII was originally portrayed in

three quarter profile, but we know from the Van Leemput copy and the portrait in the Walker Gallery, Liverpool, (based on Holbein's sketch) that he looks directly out of the painting at the viewer. This suggests client intervention at the design stage. The stance and the challenging way Henry VIII looks out at us was a completely new way of portraying a sitter.<sup>13</sup> We also know from the Waldstein diaries that the inscription was original and the impact on those seeing this mural for the first time was profound.

Jane produced the longed for male heir in October 1537 then died. If we accept Starkey's argument and the evidence of the locket, then the figure of Jane was probably painted after her death in October 1537. Knowing something of the technique of mural production then it is likely that the painting was created in the spring and/or summer of 1538. The English weather is too damp for murals to be created in winter. Unfortunately the accounts for this period have not survived so we are unable to confirm this date and no idea of how much the mural cost to produce.

Queen Jane appears in these surviving group portraits and individual portrait because she provided Henry with his a male heir then died before she became victim of a political intrigue like her predecessor. We know from the accounts of September 1536 that Henry ordered all visual references of his second queen removed from all royal premises so

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<sup>13</sup> In a lecture at the National Gallery, London Starkey referred to the Walker Gallery portrait as 'the first portrait of a fat man'.



it is possible the Vienna portrait was commissioned early in the marriage to replace a portrait of Anne Boleyn.

When it comes to the painting of the various portraits of members of the royal family and the Tudor court, Holbein's genius stands alone. Van Leemput and the anonymous artist of the family painting that hangs in Hampton Court Palace tell us much, but compared to Holbein's work these are merely exquisite visual documents.

Henry allegedly said that he could create seven earls out of seven peasants,

but he could not make one single Holbein.<sup>14</sup> Holbein's portrait of Queen Jane in Vienna and his preparatory sketch in the Royal Collection bring Jane Seymour to life. Henry did not remarry immediately after Jane's demise and when he did he is reported to have fallen in love with Holbein's miniature portrait of that particular royal bride before she had even arrived in England, but that is another story.

**Melanie V. Taylor**

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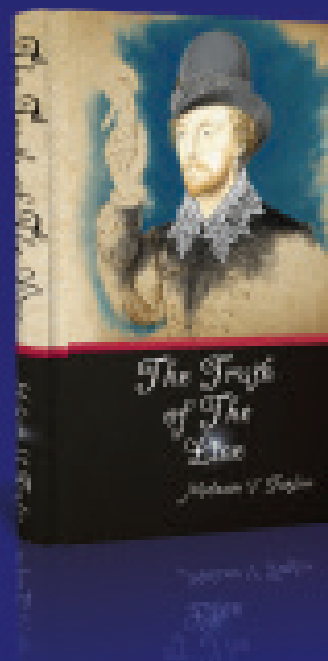
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**Melanie V. Taylor's** book *The Truth of the Line*, tells the story of Nicholas Hilliard, his relationship with Elizabeth I and her various courtiers, and investigates Melanie's intriguing discovery in a fast paced novel format. Melanie runs the website [www.thetruthoftheline.co.uk](http://www.thetruthoftheline.co.uk) and is the regular art historian for the Tudor Society.

MadeGlobal is just about to publish a modern-day novel for Melanie, she is the commissioning editor for MadeGlobal.com, so if you want to know what to write about or want to know anything about Tudor art history, Melanie is amazing!



# THE TUDOR SOCIETY



## Members' Bulletin

As I'm writing this message, we are busy packing up all of our books, bits and pieces to head off to London for MadeGlobal's "An Evening with the Authors" event. Quite possibly it will all be over by the time you get to read this bulletin. I do hope that you either joined the event in London (in which case we've now met in person!) or you were involved in the live streaming of the event (in which case we've virtually met on the internet!).

We don't have a guest expert speaker for October because we know that there will be a huge wealth of videos, interviews and photos from our weekend of history - ALL OF the historians involved in the event will be the experts for the month.

We're off to the Tower of London, and hope to grab people's thoughts and reactions to such an iconic setting. Some of us are also going to Hampton Court Palace and I hope we'll be able to do it some justice with video and photos. Then another group are going to Windsor Castle, another place which was so important in Tudor history. It will be an action packed time and we'll do our best to show you all the best parts!

**TIM RIDGWAY**

**Please do get involved with the Tudor Society**

**WE RELY ON YOUR ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP  
TO KEEP THINGS GOING!**



# BOLTON CASTLE, WENSLEYDALE

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY JANE MOULDER



The approach to Bolton Castle  
— sitting proud in the beautiful  
countryside



Looking up at the castle from the gardens





Sometimes life has a happy knack of throwing up coincidences when you least expect them. I have to admit that I was not familiar with one the Pilgrimage of Grace, one of the themes for this month's Tudor Life. A quick Wikipedia search filled in my missing knowledge! So, it was quite a surprise when I arrived at Bolton Castle in North Yorkshire to attend "Medieval Music in the Dales" this last weekend, to discover that it had played a role with the Pilgrimage of Grace – a subject with which I was now familiar.

Bolton Castle sits in a commanding position in Wensleydale. It is an imposing and impressive building and it is one of the country's best preserved medieval castles. What is also quite unusual is that it is still owned and managed by the direct descendant of the castle's original builder and owner, Sir Richard le Scrope, the Lord Chancellor to Richard II. The castle took 20 years to build, cost a staggering 18,000 marks to construct, and it was finally completed in 1399. Over a third of the original castle is still intact today and the ruins are all fully accessible. A trip up to one of the towers gives the most amazing views across the surrounding countryside.

In Tudor times, the castle was occupied by John, the 8<sup>th</sup> Baron Scrope. He had been persuaded to support the Pilgrimage of Grace rebellion against the Reformation and gave sanctuary to the Abbot of Jervaulx, Adam Sedbar. Sedbar had supported the rebellion along with the Abbots of neighbouring abbeys, Fountains, Bridlington

and Guisborough. It was soon discovered that Sedbar was being sheltered at Bolton Castle. Before Henry's troops arrived, Baron Scrope had managed to flee to nearby Skipton Castle for his own safety. The Abbot also escaped and hid out on the moors before he was finally found and captured. Sedbar was executed for treason and Henry ordered that Bolton Castle be torched as retribution. Although extensive

damage to the castle was incurred, Sir John immediately undertook repairs and restored the castle to its former glory. The king eventually forgave Sir John as he understood the duress that he had been put under to support the cause against his will and he was able to retake his seat in Parliament.

Years later, in 1568, the Castle became the prison for Mary, Queen of Scots. Following her defeat at the Battle of Langside she was moved to Bolton where Henry, the 9<sup>th</sup> Baron Scrope gave her his own apartments for her use. The Castle was initially not deemed to be suitable for housing a queen, so tapestries, rugs and furnishing were borrowed from nearby estates, with even Queen Elizabeth loaning some pewter vessels to make her life more comfortable. Mary's entourage of 51 included cooks, grooms, a physician, an apothecary, an embroiderer as well as her ladies-in-waiting. Her stay at Bolton was brief and she was eventually moved to Tutbury Castle in Staffordshire.

Here are a few of the photos I took during my visit over the weekend. I can thoroughly recommend a visit to the Castle but, as a word of warning, you need to be prepared for lots of stairs!

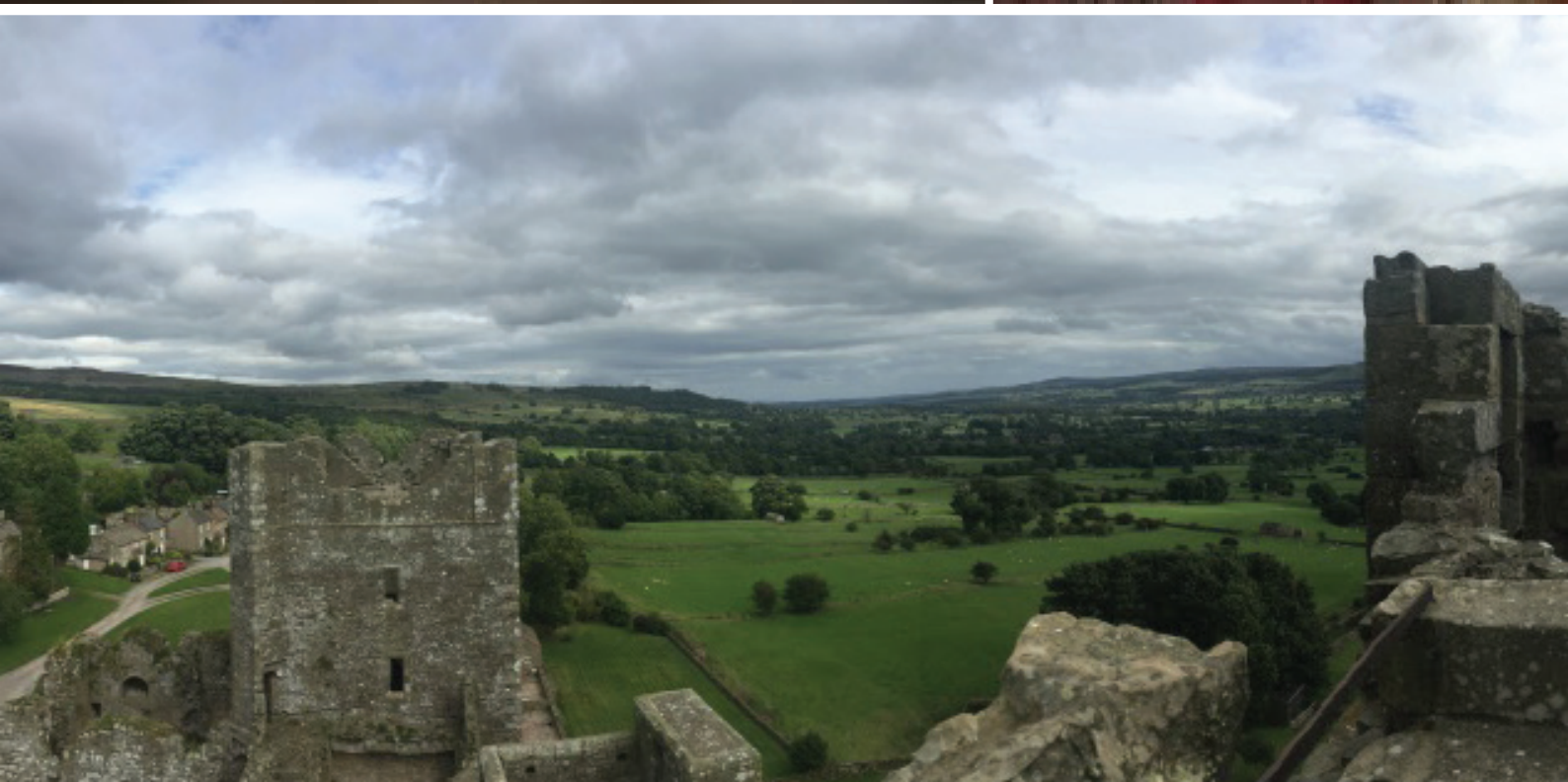
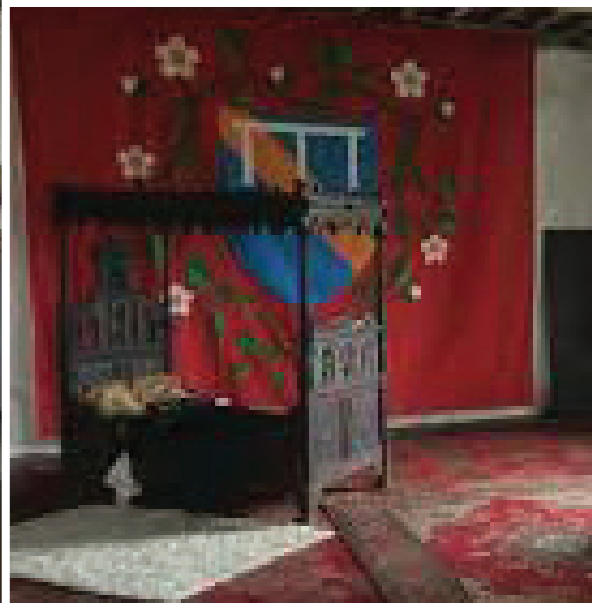
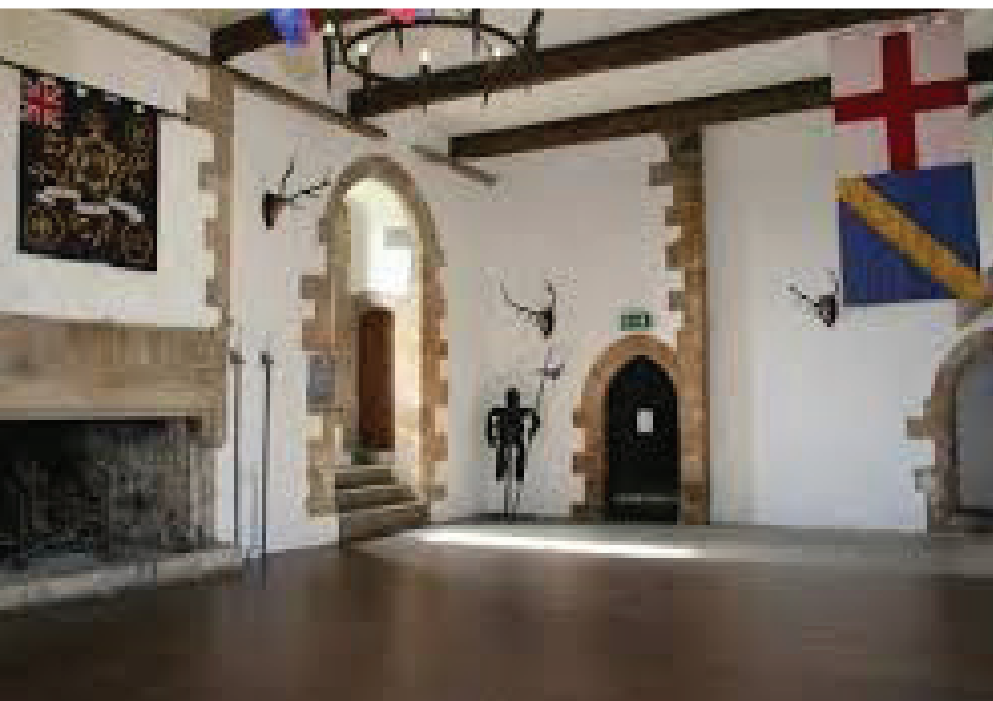
**Jane Moulder**







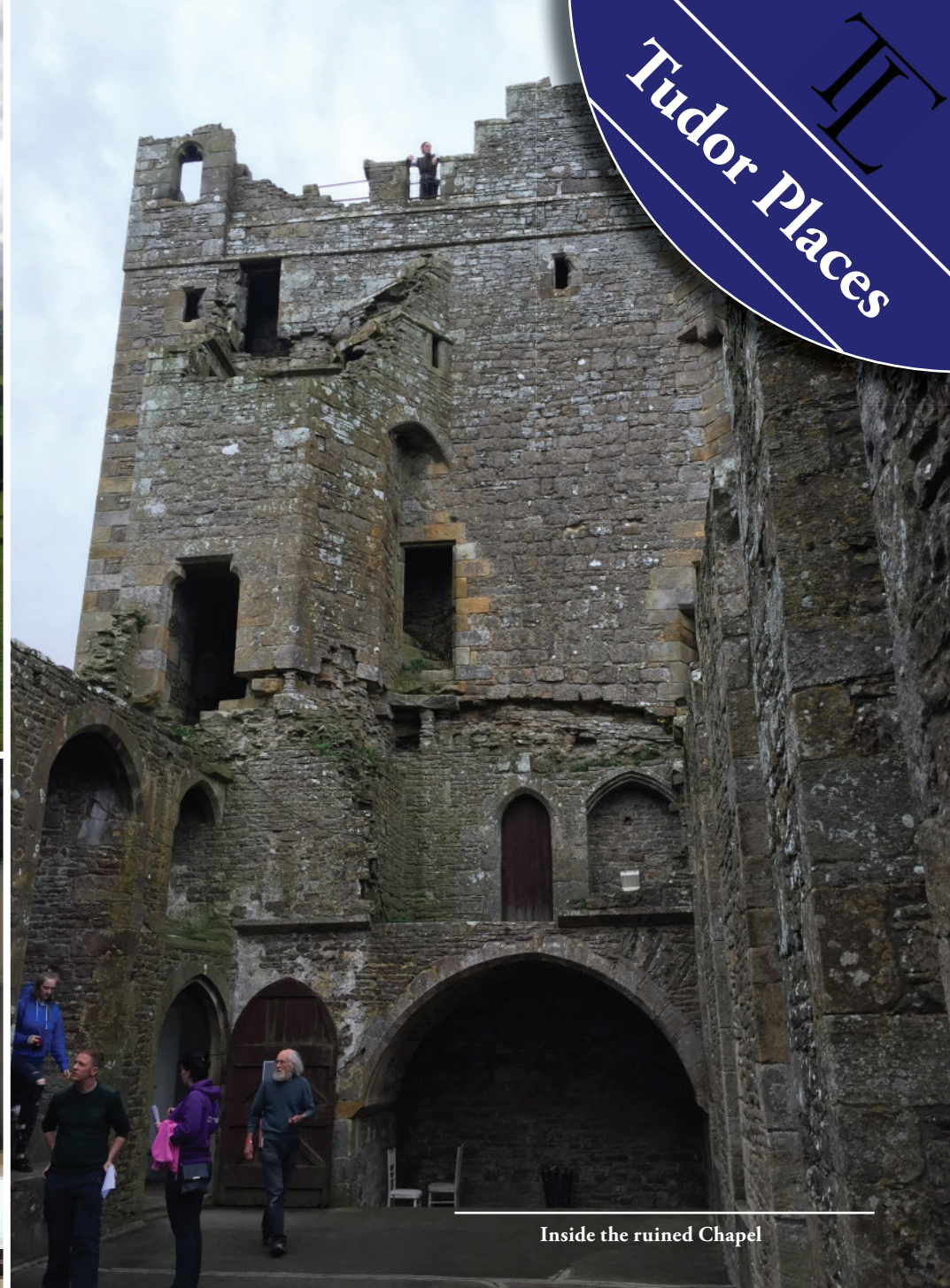
St Oswald's Church, opposite the castle.







Queen Mary's Chamber



Inside the ruined Chapel









# Tudor Places





# Charlie on Books

## **KATHERINE HOWARD: THE TRAGIC STORY OF HENRY VIII'S FIFTH QUEEN**

by Josephine Wilkinson



Josephine Wilkinson has become a well-known name in the history genre for books exploring previously obscure subjects, such as Mary Boleyn (the first of its kind) and the men in Anne Boleyn's early life. Now, she tackles a well-known subject, that of Henry VIII's fifth wife, Katherine Howard. Historians tend to take two different views on Katherine, unlike her cousin Anne Boleyn, with many arguing that she was guilty of the charges against her and a select few protesting against this. It is quickly evident that Wilkinson sees her as innocent, a stand that few have been able to successfully argue for.

Wilkinson starts by trying to establish Katherine's date of birth, a fact that we can still not be certain of today, due to the relative unimportance of women at the time. Katherine's parents, we are told, had:

*'three sons, Henry, Charles and George, and at least three daughters, Margaret, Katherine and Mary. It is probable, though not certain, that Katherine was born in 1525 at Lambeth, the second of the sisters.'*

This would place Katherine at around 17 years old at her death, which is plausible. Even the author

admits that, despite suggesting she was born in 1525, we can never be certain.

Wilkinson explores Katherine Howard's early years, with particular attention to detail during one of the most famous periods of her life, when she lived with the dowager duchess. It has been suggested that the dowager duchess's household did not have a good reputation, due to Francis Dereham visiting Katherine's bed, but the author dismisses this:

*'At Chesworth, according to one account, the young Katherine encountered a life of rigid austerity presided over by the dowager duchess, who dressed in the severe 'nun-like costume of the preceding reign, wearing a hair shirt and playing the lady abbess to a household of women and young girls, mostly of mean birth'*

The author briefly explains Katherine Howard's relationship with Henry Manno, proposing that she was not interested in him and they did not sleep together. However, as soon as she had managed to shake him off, Francis Dereham pursued her:

*'Dereham turned his attention to Katherine Howard. She, however, had no interest in Dereham. She was put off by his behaviour, which she found mischievous and ignorant. She disliked the way he would come into the gentlewomen's chamber early in the morning, where he 'ordered him very lewdly', though never at Katherine's 'request, nor consent.'*

Many have argued that she was interested in Dereham, but Wilkinson takes a different view. She takes Katherine's later statement, during her interrogation, at face value, as well as the fact that she would have known that a relationship between them would ruin her, not least because he was of a lower status.

Katherine was a young girl who could not ask for help, especially since Anne Boleyn's fall, as the Howard family was in a precarious position and she could not bring more shame on her family. She was also only 14 years old, legally an adult but still unable to stand up to Dereham. According to Wilkinson, this situation was made worse when she was coerced into calling Dereham her husband, which, in the eyes of the law of the time, made them legally married:

*'By using such terms of address to each other, Katherine and Dereham had entered into a contract of marriage per verba de futuro, or a betrothal. However, since they addressed each other as husband and wife publicly and their union had clearly been consummated, it took on the legal quality of a de praesenti contract. In other words, whether she was aware of it or not, whether she wished it or not, Katherine was, in the eyes of the law, Francis Dereham's wife.'*

This was soon put aside, however, when Katherine was called to court to serve Anne of Cleves. Dereham disappeared to Ireland and the matter was forgotten about for the time being, yet it would come back to haunt her, Wilkinson assures us. Katherine soon caught the eye of Henry VIII, yet not just because she was beautiful and he was unhappy with his current wife:

*'He, like many men whose early manhood was but a cherished memory, was drawn to young people because they reinforced his, perhaps idealistic, vision of his own salad days. Equally importantly, associating with the young rejuvenated him, and Katherine had many years ahead of her in which she could produce a brood of children for the royal nursery, thereby securing the Tudor dynasty for generations to come.'*

Unlike modern assumptions, Henry VIII was still looking to father more children. Ideally he needed two sons, an heir and a spare, to be secure. Katherine was young and so he hoped she could provide that.

Wilkinson proposes a theory as to why Katherine saw Culpepper with just Jane Boleyn, Lady Rochford, in attendance that was not to do with love or an affair. It is one that truthfully is hard to fully accept, however this may be due to the many other biographies arguing that she was having a full affair with Culpepper. I will leave it up to the reader to decide, but the author does make several valid points and disputes the view of Katherine as an adulteress.

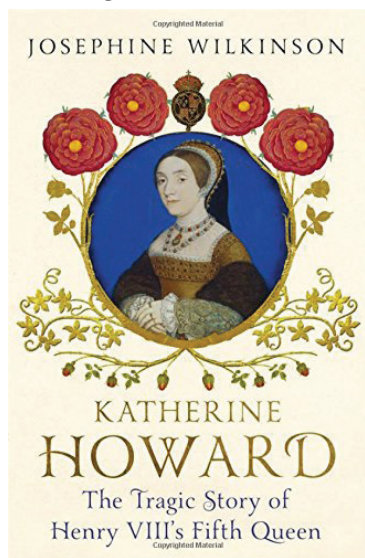
The author also clarifies that Katherine Howard did not say on the scaffold that she *'would rather be the wife of Culpepper'* and that it was only mentioned in one later account. It does not appear in any of Marillac or Chapuys' reports, ambassadors who reported the majority of the events at the English court and who would not have missed this. The earlier accounts by contemporaries just state that it was the standard scaffold speech, which would have been similar to Anne Boleyn's.

One thing that I am glad about is that Wilkinson addresses the myth that Katherine was a silly little girl, who could not even read. She was as intelligent as any other woman of noble birth of the time, especially as she was taught in the duchess's household so that she would make a good wife:

*'Katherine learned to read... She was taught to write, her letters and words formed by copying from an exemplar; and at least some level of mathematics was necessary if Katherine were to keep track of household accounts.'*

*Katherine Howard; The Tragic Story of Henry VIII's Fifth Queen* is a readable account of the second of Henry's wives to be executed. It offers a different opinion to the norm regarding Katherine's guilt, yet still tells her story in a way that readers will enjoy even if they do not agree with Wilkinson's verdict. I would suggest it to anyone wanting to know more about Henry's young wife.

**Charlie Fenton**







<http://cooking.nytimes.com/>

# OLGA HUGHES' Tudor Kitchen

## Quails for the Queen

*Queen Jane Seymour lived for a fleeting moment in Tudor history; just long enough to give Henry VIII his deepest heart's desire, a son and heir to the Tudor throne.*

We know very little of Jane Seymour. Most of the incidents committed to paper were public ones. We know that she returned Henry's gift of a purse of gold with a kiss while he was still married to her predecessor, Anne Boleyn. We know that she was kind to Princess

Mary. We know that she begged Henry to stop the destruction of the monasteries, and that he responded with a vile threat. We know she seemed very strict in her household. Yet all of these incidents were seen through the eyes of others. They are weighed up and scrutinised, and judged, but the real Jane will always remain elusive. Perhaps that is why the story of Jane craving quails during her pregnancy is such a well-known one. It humanises Jane, because craving food is





something that everyone can relate to. Jane, for her part, craved something that, at the time, was particularly exotic.

Farming quails was not a new concept, they were farmed by the ancient Egyptians. However, it seems quails fell out of favour with the Romans, who feared that the quail's habit of feeding on hemlock

would cause poisoning. Quails rarely appear in medieval or Tudor cookbooks, but there is some record of quail breeding becoming popular around

1600.<sup>1</sup> Robert May, whose *Accomplisht Cook* was published in 1660, gives instructions on feeding quails, along with pheasants, partridges and wheatears.<sup>2</sup> It would appear that the raising of quails was popular again in the Stuart period, which is no surprise, considering the difficulty of hunting them. The small birds were "flushed out" of hiding by hounds, preferably spaniels,<sup>3</sup> and then brought in by hunting birds. Guns were used in hunting later on, but would not have been precise enough for quail hunting, but even now the quail's unpredictable flight pattern makes them "especially sporting game".<sup>4</sup>

It is possible that quails were never actually abundant in England.<sup>5</sup> There is evidence that quails were, more often than not, imported. When Jane requested quails for dinner, Henry looked to his courtiers to oblige. France and Flanders had a good supply of quails, for the

poulterers obtained quails by "netting", setting large net traps to catch the birds rather than the difficult business of hunting them. The trappers would imitate quail calls to attract them. For the Field of the Cloth of Gold meeting, 3000 quails were supplied, and a meeting between Henry, Francis I and the Count of Flanders at Calais in

1532 saw 2784 quails consumed.

Around this time poulterers would import quails to England, live in small cages, supplied with food and water.

Still, Henry had some difficulty obtaining enough

to satisfy his pregnant wife's cravings. Sir John Russell had written to Arthur Plantagenet, Viscount Lisle, who was Deputy Governor of Calais from 1533-1540, in May asking him for some "fat quails, for the Queen is very desirous to eat some, but here be none to be gotten."<sup>6</sup> Lord Lisle's business agent, John Husee, also wrote to him:

*Pleaseth it your lordship to be advertised that this day, at my being at the court, Sir John Russell called me unto him, and asked me when I heard from your lordship, saying further that he had these days past wrote unto your lordship ii sundry letters by the king's commandment expressly, and how the very effect of those letters was for fat quails for the queen's highness, which her Grace liveth very well, and length not a little for them; and he looked hourly for your lordship'd answer on the said quails, in so much that he did further command me in the king's*

*Tacuinum Sanitatis (Table of health), an eleventh century medical treatise and health manual, describes quails as "warm and moist foodstuff" similar to other game birds, that generate good blood and provide good nutrition. Pomegranates, cinnamon and nuts are thought to prevent any negative side-effects from consuming quail.*

1 Shrubbs, Michael, *Feasting, Fowling and Feathers: A History of the Exploitation of Wild Birds*, Poyser, 2013, pp. 106

2 May, Robert, *The Accomplisht Cook, or, The Art & Mystery of Cookery*, [online]<<https://archive.org/details/theaccomplishtco22790gut>> pp. 723

3 Almond, Richard, *Medieval Hunting*, History Press 2011

4 Jackson III, Harvey H., *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Volume 16: Sports and Recreation*, University of North Carolina Press, 2014, pp. 174

5 Shrubbs, Michael, *Feasting, Fowling and Feathers*, pp. 107

6 Byrne, Muriel St. Clare, et al. *The Lisle Letters: An Abridgement*, University of Chicago Press pp. 206



*behalf to write your lordship in all haste expressly again for the said quails.*<sup>7</sup>

When Husee obtained the quails he immediately took them to court himself, where Jane and Henry “were right glad of them”,<sup>8</sup> with Jane asking for half to be roasted immediately and the rest kept for supper. By July the quails seemed to have been less plump, for Husee wrote to his Ladyship that “The Queen thanks you for the quails. Those sent hereafter should be fat, or they are not worth thanks.”<sup>9</sup> Husee gave 2 dozen quails away “because they were not worth presenting to the Queen”.<sup>10</sup>

Exactly how the quails were served to Jane is a mystery. Roasted quails appear on various early menu lists but recipes are scarce. Thomas Austin’s *Two Fifteenth Century Cookery-Books* suggests a “sauce gamelyne” to accompany a roasted quail, but instructions on roasting the quail are simply:

Quayle roasted: Take a Quayle, and slay him, and serve him as thou does a partridge in all degree. His Sauce is sauce gamelyne.<sup>11</sup>

A partridge, according to Austin’s book, is roasted the same way as a pheasant, for which the recipe instructs to butcher like a crane, and the crane’s instructions go back to the butchering of the swan. The swan is prepared thusly, but does not have the final say:

Swan roasted: Cut a swan on the roof of the mouth towards the brain[...]and let him

bleed, and keep the blood for chawdewyn;<sup>12</sup> or else knit a knot in his neck. And so his neck will break; then scald him. Draw him and roast him even as thou dost goose in all points, and serve him forth with chawdewyn.

Now we are finally at the bottom of the matter:

*Goose or capon (rooster)  
stuffed: Take parsley, swine’s grease, or suet of sheep, and parboil them in water and fresh boiling broth; And then take hard-boiled egg yolks, and cut them small, with the herbs and the salt; and cast thereto powder of ginger, pepper, cinnamon, and salt, and grapes in time of year; And in other times, take onions, and boil them; and when they have boiled enough with the herbs and with the suet, all these together, then put all in the goose, or in the capon; And then let it roast enough.*

It seems rather unlikely that the quail needed the same preparation as the swan. They may have made an elegant meal stuffed. The sauce gamelyne is a tart sauce of vinegar, wine and spices.

A later recipe from “A.W.”, who compiled the charmingly titled *A Booke of Cookrye Very Necessary for all Such as Delight Therein* gives very simple instructions.

12 an offal dish

7 Ibid

8 Ibid

9 L&P, Vol XII, no 271, 17th July

10 L&P, Vol XII, no 272, 17th July

11 Austin, Thomas, *Two fifteenth-century cookery-books* : Harleian MS. 279 (ab 1430), & Harl. MS. 4016 (ab. 1450), with extracts from Ashmole MS. 1439, Laud MS. 553, & Douce MS. 55, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Humanities Text Initiative 1999



# Tudor Life



*Sauce gamelyne: Take fair bread, and cut it, and take vinegar and wine, and steep the bread therein, and draw it through a strainer with powder of cinnamon, and draw it twice or thrice until it be smooth; and then take powder of ginger, sugar, and powder of cloves, and cast thereto a little saffron and let it be thick enough and then serve it forth.*

Roste a Quaile: With his legs broken and knit one within an other.<sup>13</sup>

We can imagine the quails were roasted on the crown with the legs tucked together, presenting a whole, plump quail for the diner. This technique would be ideal with a stuffed quail, and perhaps Jane enjoyed a similar dish. While all the earlier recipes mention roasting, Thomas Dawson's late Elizabethan cookbook has a very interesting recipe of 'boiled' quail served upon sops (cubes of stale bread) and garnished with fruit.

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<sup>13</sup> A.W., A Booke of Cookrye Very Necessary for all Such as Delight Therein, 1584, 1591[online]<<http://jducoeur.org/Cookbook/Cookrye.html>>

## To Boil Quails

First put them into a pot with sweet broth and set them on the fire. Then take a carrot root, and cut him in pieces and put into the pot. Then take parsley and sweet herbs, and chop them a little, and put them into the pot. Then take cinnamon, ginger, nutmegs and pepper, and out

in a little verjuice, and so season it with salt. Serve them upon sops and garnish them with fruit.<sup>14</sup>

We can certainly imagine that, with the efforts of the Tudor courtiers and Henry VIII's talented cooks, that Jane was able to dine with all the quirks and foibles of any pregnant woman, even if she really did dine like a Queen.

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<sup>14</sup> Dawson, Thomas, The Good Housewife's Jewel, Southover Press 1996 pp. 16

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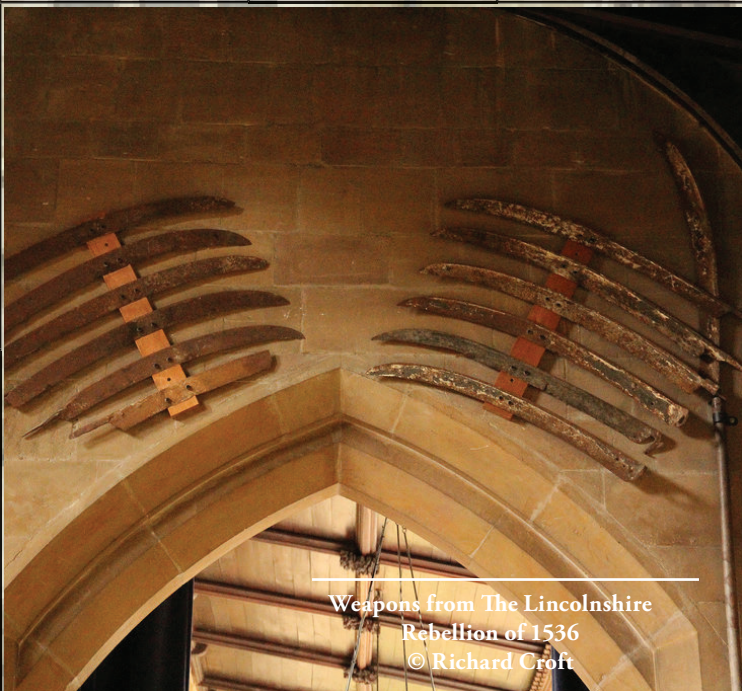
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# OCTOBER'S ON THIS

<b>1<sup>Oct</sup></b> <b>1553</b> <b>Mary I</b> was crowned Queen at Westminster Abbey by <b>Stephen Gardiner</b> , the Bishop of Winchester.	<b>2<sup>Oct</sup></b> <b>1536</b> Start of the Lincolnshire Rising, the beginning of the <i>Pilgrimage of Grace</i> .	<b>3<sup>Oct</sup></b> <b>1559</b> Death of Sir <b>William Fitzwilliam</b> , Gentleman of <b>Edward VI</b> 's Privy Chamber. He was buried in St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle.	<b>4<sup>Oct</sup></b> <b>1536</b> There was trouble in Horncastle, Lincolnshire. This was part of what we know as the Lincolnshire Rising which, in turn, was part of the <i>Pilgrimage of Grace</i> rebellion. Henry was not giving in to their demands	
<b>8<sup>Oct</sup></b> <b>1536</b> The commons (i.e. the people) approved the petition of grievances drawn up by the rebels of Horncastle, Lincolnshire.	<b>9<sup>Oct</sup></b> <b>1536</b> The Pilgrimage of Grace rebels of Horncastle, Lincoln, dispatched their petition of grievances to the King and also north into Yorkshire.	<b>10<sup>Oct</sup></b> <b>1549</b> <b>Edward Seymour</b> , Duke of Somerset and Lord Protector, was ordered to leave Windsor Castle and to give himself up.	<b>11<sup>Oct</sup></b> <b>1537</b> Solemn procession at St Paul's to pray for <b>Jane Seymour</b> , who was in labour, a labour which lasted over 30 hours	<b>12<sup>Oct</sup></b> <b>1537</b> At 2am, <b>Jane Seymour</b> finally gave birth to the future King <b>Edward VI</b> after a long and tiring 30 hour labour. <b>Henry VIII</b> had a legitimate son.
<b>15<sup>Oct</sup></b> <b>1536</b> <b>Henry VIII</b> wrote to the rebels in Lincolnshire promising " <i>to show them mercy if they leave all their harness and weapons in Lincoln</i> ".	<b>16<sup>Oct</sup></b> <b>1555</b> The burnings of two of the Oxford martyrs: <b>Hugh Latimer</b> , Bishop of Worcester, and <b>Nicholas Ridley</b> , Bishop of London.	 <p>Weapons from The Lincolnshire Rebellion of 1536 © Richard Croft</p>		
	<b>22<sup>Oct</sup></b> <b>1521</b> Death of Sir <b>Edward Poynings</b> , soldier, administrator and diplomat at his manor of Westenhamer in Kent.			

## FEAST DAYS

First Sunday - Dedications of local churches  
 13 October - Feast of St Edward the Confessor  
 18 October - Feast of St Luke the Evangelist  
 25 October - Feast of St Crispin and St Crispinian  
 28 October - Feast of St Simon and St Jude  
 31 October - All Hallows Eve

<b>27 Oct 1526</b> Bishop <b>Cuthbert Tunstall</b> presided over the burning of Lutheran books, such as <b>William Tyndale</b> 's New Testament, at St Paul's.	<b>28 Oct 1532</b> The last full day of <b>Henry VIII</b> and <b>Anne Boleyn</b> 's time with <b>Francis I</b> in Calais. This included a chapter of the Order of the Garter and wrestling.	<b>29 Oct 1618</b> Sir <b>Walter Raleigh</b> , courtier, explorer, author and soldier, was executed at Westminster
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# DAY IN TUDOR HISTORY



**5<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1528**  
Death of **Richard Foxe**, Bishop of Winchester, founder of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and Lord Privy Seal in the reign of Henry VII

**6<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1536**  
This is the traditional date given to the execution of reformer, scholar and Bible translator, **William Tyndale**

**7<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1589**  
Death of **William Hawkins**, merchant and sea captain In 1588, he was involved in leading seven ships from Plymouth against the Spanish Armada.

**13<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1549**  
The Council abolished **Edward Seymour**, Duke of Somerset's Protectorate, and his membership of the Council.

**14<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1536**  
*Pilgrimage of Grace*. By 14th October the uprising in the north had turned into a proper rebellion. On the 13th, **Lord Darcy** had reported to **Henry VIII** that the Ridings and "all the commons of Yorkshire" were "up" in rebellion. This day **William Haryngton**, Mayor of York and Sir **George Lawson**, wrote to the King asking for aid..

**17<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1560**  
Baptism of **Walter Marsh**, spy and Protestant martyr, at St Stephen's Church, Coleman Street, London.

**18<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1555**  
**Elizabeth Tudor**, the future Elizabeth I, was finally given permission to leave court and travel to her estate at Hatfield, rather than return to house arrest.

**19<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1536**  
**Henry VIII** got tough on the *Pilgrimage of Grace* rebels. "We lately commanded you to make ready your forces..."

**20<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1536**  
**Thomas Maunsell**, **Robert Aske** and the rebels of the *Pilgrimage of Grace* threatened an assault on Pontefract Castle and its owner, **Lord Darcy**.

**21<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1536**  
During the *Pilgrimage of Grace* rebellion, **Lancaster Herald**, on nearing Pontefract Castle, encountered a group of armed peasants.

**23<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1545**  
Death of Sir **Humphrey Wingfield**, lawyer, Speaker of the House of Commons (1533-36) and patron of humanist education, at Ipswich.

**24<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1537**  
Just 12 days after giving birth to **Edward**, **Jane Seymour**, died of suspected puerperal fever (childbed fever) at Hampton Court Palace.

**25<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1536**  
Four Chaplains of Poverty were appointed by the *Pilgrimage of Grace* rebels.

**26<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1536**  
The rebels halted at Scawsby Leys, where they met troops captained by the **Duke of Norfolk**. The rebels were said to number around 30,000 and Norfolk's army only a fifth of the size. **Robert Aske** chose to negotiate, and a deal was eventually struck. Unfortunately, Henry VIII later broke his promises to the rebels.

**30<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1485**  
**Henry Tudor**, was crowned King Henry VII at Westminster Abbey. Raphael Holinshed, recorded: "...with great pompe he rowed unto Westminster, & there the thirtieth daie of October he was with all ceremonies accustomed, anointed, & crowned king, by the whole assent as well of the commons as of the nobilitie, & called Henrie the seaventh of that name..."

**31<sup>Oct</sup>**  
**1491**  
**Henry VII's** son, **Henry** (the future **Henry VIII**), was created Duke of York.

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# TL

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