

TudorLife

The Tudor Society Magazine

THE
TUDOR
SOCIETY

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Tudor Childhood

Children of the
Chapel Royal

Childbirth

Gender, age &
Status

Was it the Stork?

Lost heirs of the
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T

While writing my biography of Queen Catherine Howard, I became intimately aware of the scholarship that currently exists on concepts of infancy, childhood, and adolescence in Tudor history. I am thrilled this month to welcome my former colleague, current friend, and expert in early modern experiences of pre-adulthood, Dr Sarah E. George, who explores how a case of a dead teenager in Henry VIII's England illuminates contemporary views of gender, morality, and authority. Along with our regular contributors, I can also welcome actress and costume designer, Emma Taylor, who returns to the pages of "Tudor Life" with a piece on the costumes of "Lady Jane", a biopic of the young Queen whose life ended in such tragedy that she was, for centuries, presented as an icon of sacrificed innocence.

GARETH RUSSELL

Tudor Life

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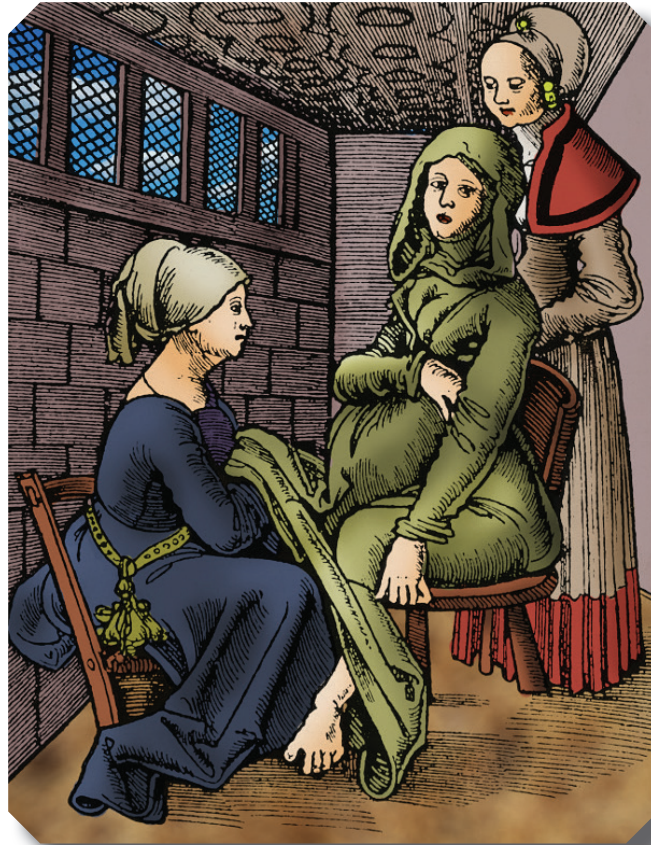


Childbirth in the Tudor Age

BY SARAH BRYSON

Giving birth during the Tudor age was a dangerous time for both the woman and child. The act of childbirth did not discriminate, young, old, rich or poor women could die in childbirth or from complications afterward. Sadly more than one in three women died during their child bearing years.

After a woman conceived they may not have even known they were pregnant until they felt the first movement of their baby inside of them. This happened at around four or five months and was known as the “quickening”. This may seem quite perplexing to women of the modern age but during the Tudor period there were no reliable pregnancy tests. A woman may have turned to a doctor to see if she was pregnant but the tests performed were far from reliable. One pregnancy test during the Tudor period was to examine the colour of the urine and if it was a pale yellow to white colour with a cloudy surface the woman may have been pregnant. Other tests involved examining a needle left in the woman’s urine to see if it rusted or to see what happened when wine was mixed with the woman’s urine. One might ponder why a woman did not realise that her regular menstruation had stopped; this however could have been related to several factors including illness, excessive fasting or even a poor diet. There simply was no fool proof way to confirm a pregnancy in the Tudor age until the baby began to move, even then some women may have doubted or disbelieved.



As there was no reliable way to monitor the baby’s heartrate or to take blood pressures women relied heavily upon other experienced women to support and guide them. Childbirth was predominantly women’s business and conducted in privacy. Physicians and doctors only attended under the most extreme circumstances, such as in Queen Jane Seymour’s case as she was giving birth to the future heir and King of England. More commonly if a woman had the funds or contacts she would have sought advice and support from a midwife, a woman who had a great deal of experience and knowledge in delivering babies.

Unfortunately there are very few accounts that detail what giving birth was like for the common Tudor woman. Not only was labour and childbirth a private affair but women generally did not write down or record their lives. However if a Queen gave birth, well that was deemed a public matter as she could be giving birth to the next heir. Therefore we can turn to the pregnancies and births of royal women to see what giving birth might have been like for some women during the Tudor period.

Women of noble birth such as the Queen would close themselves off from the world for a period of time before they gave birth, this was commonly known as 'lying in'. Before this an elaborate service was held where the Church would ask God for his blessing for the birth. After the service and the prayers from the clergy the Queen entered her private rooms. The common woman may have gone to church or sought the blessing from the Priest before they too removed themselves from the public eye for their own 'lying in'. Other women, predominantly lower class and working women may have had to work right up until they went into labour as there was no one to cover their daily responsibilities or earn money for their families.

No men were allowed in this private room or rooms and the pregnant woman was only allowed to be attended to by other women. The mother's rooms would be closed off and tapestries would be hung over the windows to block out as much light from the outside world as possible. Only a single window would have been left open to allow fresh air into the room and minimal natural of light as it was believed that too much light could damage the expectant mother's eyes. The room would have been hung with calming tapestries and images as not to upset the mother which could in turn harm the unborn child. Religious crosses and other related items would have been kept within the room to provide spiritual support for the mother. The idea was to recreate the womb, warm, dark and quiet. Other women, especially those of the common and lower classes would have worked right up until they went into labour if this was possible.

England during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was a strongly devoted Catholic nation following closely to the Catholic Faith and paying tribute to

the Pope in Rome. Religion and faith were part of everyday life and closely entwined with the act of childbirth. The pain associated with labour and childbirth was due to Eve's fall in the Garden of Eden. Her original sin meant that all women were to suffer great pain and many women turned to religion to provide them with support and relief from pain. There was also the strong possibility that a mother in labour could die and thus religion and faith played a hugely important role within the role of childbirth.

Women often clutched holy relics or recited religious prayers and chants to help them throughout the birthing process. Amulets and amber could also be placed upon the mother's stomach or prayer rolls could be read or even wrapped around the stomach to help with the pain of labour and safe delivery of a baby. During the pregnancies of Elizabeth of York, mother of King Henry VIII, it is believed that she called for the girdle of Our Lady, asking it to be brought to her from Westminster Abbey. The girdle would have been laid over Elizabeth's stomach and she and her ladies would have prayed, seeking the Virgin Mary to help the Queen's labour pains and bring a safe delivery.

Some mothers even clutched pieces of tin, cheese or butter which had charms engraved upon them. The church would have approved of these as they called upon God and that which he had created. Many women often called upon St Margaret who was the patron said of pregnant women and childbirth. St Margaret was eaten by a dragon but spat out again due to the crucifix she had been holding. It was hoped that babies would be delivered as easily as St Margaret had come out of the dragon. Although physically these things might not have assisted in the birth, the faith and belief that women had in them would have

helped them psychologically and could have helped them deal with their fear and worries over child birth.

The midwife also played an extremely important role during birth. These women had years of experience delivering babies and thus had a great deal of knowledge. The midwife had to be a woman of good character who was greatly trusted, she had to take an oath which dictated that she would not keep anything from the childbirth such as the umbilical cord or placenta which could possibly be used in witchcraft. A midwife might suggest different herbs to give the mother to help ease her pains, different ways to deliver the child such as sitting in a birthing stool or being cradled from behind or turning the child if it was not in the right position to be delivered.

It is interesting to examine medieval texts to see what they say about what happened during childbirth. Most of these texts were written by men, many of whom were clergy and members of the church. This is rather ironic as these men had taken a vow of celibacy and thus could neither have sex and nor enter the birthing chamber. Many men of the time believed that the female sexual organs were male organs turned inwards. Some people even believed that they could choose the sex of their baby by the types of foods they ate, things they drank or medicines they concocted. They had no concept that it was the male sperm that dictated the sex of the child. The gender and health of a child was the responsibility of a woman.

In reality what happened behind closed doors with the midwife would have been very different to what was written within the medieval text books. It would have been more like what happened today, with the midwife supporting and

providing advice to the pregnant mother and helping to deliver the child.

The English Reformation of the later years of the Tudor age had a dramatic effect in what was allowed to take place in the delivery room. Holy relics and other Catholic practices were destroyed. Many women no longer had holy relics, images or icons to rely upon and draw strength from while they were giving birth. Women were also banned from promising to go on pilgrimage for the safe delivery of her child. Instead of relying upon the saints and relics women were only allowed to call upon God for support and help.

If a woman and her baby survived the birth there were still dangers ahead. The midwife also was allowed to baptise a baby so if it was sickly or close to death so its soul would go to heaven. The act of baptism would remove the natural sin and cleanse the soul. It was the only time that a woman was ever allowed to deliver one of the sacraments and only to be done if the child was going to die. Caesarians were not a common occurrence and were only performed if the mother had died in the hopes of saving the unborn child. The loss of a child no matter the time is a traumatic experience that has huge emotional impacts upon the family.

A child born outside of a legal marriage carried the stigma of being illegitimate. Although the child could be made legitimate through legalization and marriage there would always be the issue of his or her birth outside of marriage. Sometimes women even went to the Church or to court to try and prove who the father of their child was in an effort to gain support. Tragically sometimes illegitimate children were given up and raised by the Church so that the woman would not have to carry the social stigma

with her for the rest of her life for having sex outside of marriage.

During the medieval period men believed that a women's purpose in life was to get pregnant and have babies. Childbirth during this period was a very

dangerous time for women and many wrote their wills before they gave birth in case they did not make it through the delivery. However despite the dangers many women gave birth multiple times and had large families of healthy children.

SARAH BRYSON

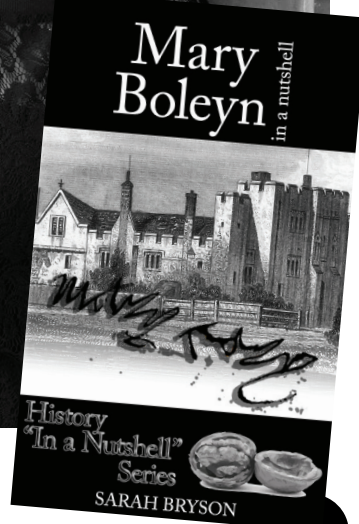
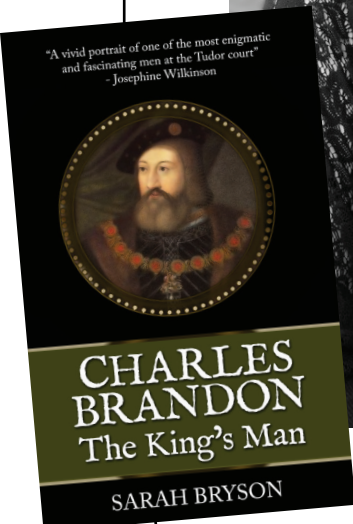
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Sarah Bryson is the author of "Mary Boleyn: In a Nutshell" and "Charles Brandon: The King's Man". She is a researcher, writer and educator who has a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education with Honours and currently works with children with disabilities. Sarah is passionate about Tudor history and has a deep interest in Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, Mary Boleyn, and the reign of Henry VIII and the people of his court.

Visiting England in 2009 furthered her passion and when she returned home she started a website, queentohistory.com, and [Facebook page](#) about Tudor history. Sarah lives in Australia, enjoys reading, writing, Tudor costume enactment and is currently working on a full length biography of Mary Tudor, sister of Henry VIII.



Wyatt Knight.

MARCH EXPERT GUEST

Wendy J. Dunn

talking about

**Sir Thomas Wyatt
the Elder**





TUDOR LIFE EXCLUSIVE

“The Death Downstairs”

Gender, age and status in the sixteenth-century household

BY

DR SARAH E. GEORGE

The publication of *L'Enfant et La Vie Familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* by Philippe Ariès in France in 1960 and its appearance in English translation as *Centuries of Childhood* in 1962 revolutionised the study of childhood and youth in the past. Crucially, Ariès demonstrated that a historicisation of these phases of the lifecycle was possible, planting the idea that childhood and youth were not natural or universal phenomena, but rather that understanding and experience of them varied according to period and place. According to his thesis, children, on reaching the age of seven, were fully integrated into the adult world. They were absorbed directly into the great community of men, and shared in the work and play of their companions, young and old alike. As

such, there was no place for a transitional, or adolescent, phase. Ariès believed that it was not until the eighteenth century that a social and cultural recognition of adolescence came to exist. Ever since his work appeared it has proved both highly influential and contentious, with historians of the pre-modern era debating the existence of a concept of adolescence as a lengthy and gradual developmental process from a state of dependence (childhood) to a state of relative independence and autonomy (adulthood).

One particularly interesting case that sheds light on the social and cultural understanding of adolescence in sixteenth-century England comes from a jurors' verdict following a coroner's inquest in Sussex in 1545, found in the edition

Early modern maid-servants



(Source: Lucas d'Heere, Public Domain)

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of *Sussex Coroners' Inquests, 1485-1558* published by R.F. Hunnisett in 1985. This verdict provides a rare window into the way in which the concept of adolescence was engaged with and reflected in social practice. It offers an account of how Alice Bennett, a fifteen-year-old servant, met her death whilst in the presence of John Onley, the thirteen-year-old son of her master, Thomas Onley of Pulborough, esquire, at his home in February 1545. The verdict states that John and Alice were both in the kitchen with no malice between them. Whilst John was poking a bird spit into the fire, thrusting it into a post at the end of the chimney and making a hole in the post, Alice was sitting on a stool sewing. Alice

scolded John for his destructive activity, bidding him to stop or else she would inform his father about his misbehaviour. He defiantly challenged her for doing so, asking: 'What for? What have you got to do with it?', before taking the spit and putting it into the fire again, intending to make the hole deeper. This prompted Alice to get up and run towards him hastily, intent on taking the spit from him. The narrative records that John then turned suddenly towards the post with the spit so that Alice by her misfortunate chance ran her left thigh against the spit and began to bleed profusely. The verdict claims that when she saw her own blood she fell down dead, the wound being at least half an inch deep and about the breadth of a penny. Accordingly the jury reached the decision

that Alice's death was caused solely by her negligent and misfortunate sudden running into the spit, which was valued at 4 pence, and nothing else. This verdict, recording her death as an unfortunate accident, was formed on the basis of the evidence of John Worley, the curate of Pulborough, Richard Smith, the constable, Harry Kennett, John Kennett, Thomas Wappham, John Burges and others.

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Throughout the narrative, a polarisation between the sexes is emphasised. John is depicted entertaining himself by poking a spit into the fire and damaging the chimney post, whilst Alice is shown to be sewing. There is a clear gender division as the teenage boy appears physical

and destructive, whereas the teenage girl appears diligent and productive. A status contrast is also clear. On one hand, Alice is presented carrying out her job. She is a servant and is actively employed. On the other, John appears to be exempt from the obligation to work because of his social rank as the son of a gentleman. Whereas she is shown as having domestic responsibilities, he has a superior status and can indulge in leisure. The implication from the pair being alone together in the kitchen is that Alice was not only supposed to complete her own domestic tasks but was also expected to look after her master's son. Whereas the boy is presented behaving in a very immature manner, the girl is shown to aspire to a more adult role effectively supervising and assuming

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– or attempting to assume – a degree of authority over him. Although she was only two years older, the connotations of this age gap gain more significance given that in the sixteenth century there was a long-established cultural understanding that females would mature more rapidly than their male counterparts. This was both reflected and reinforced by the distinct gender differences in the ages of majority under canon law, inheritance and criminal responsibility, all of which deemed young women to be capable a few years before young men. At the age of fifteen, it is likely that Alice would have been viewed as competent enough to order and manage a household.

Alice is presented trying to halt John's destructiveness, effectively acting in place of her master. She is even depicted evoking her master's superior authority by verbally warning the boy to stop or else she would tell his father. The power dynamic between the master's servant and his son is shown to have been very finely balanced. Alice may have been a girl and may have been of a lower social status than John, but her scolding of him suggests that as his father's

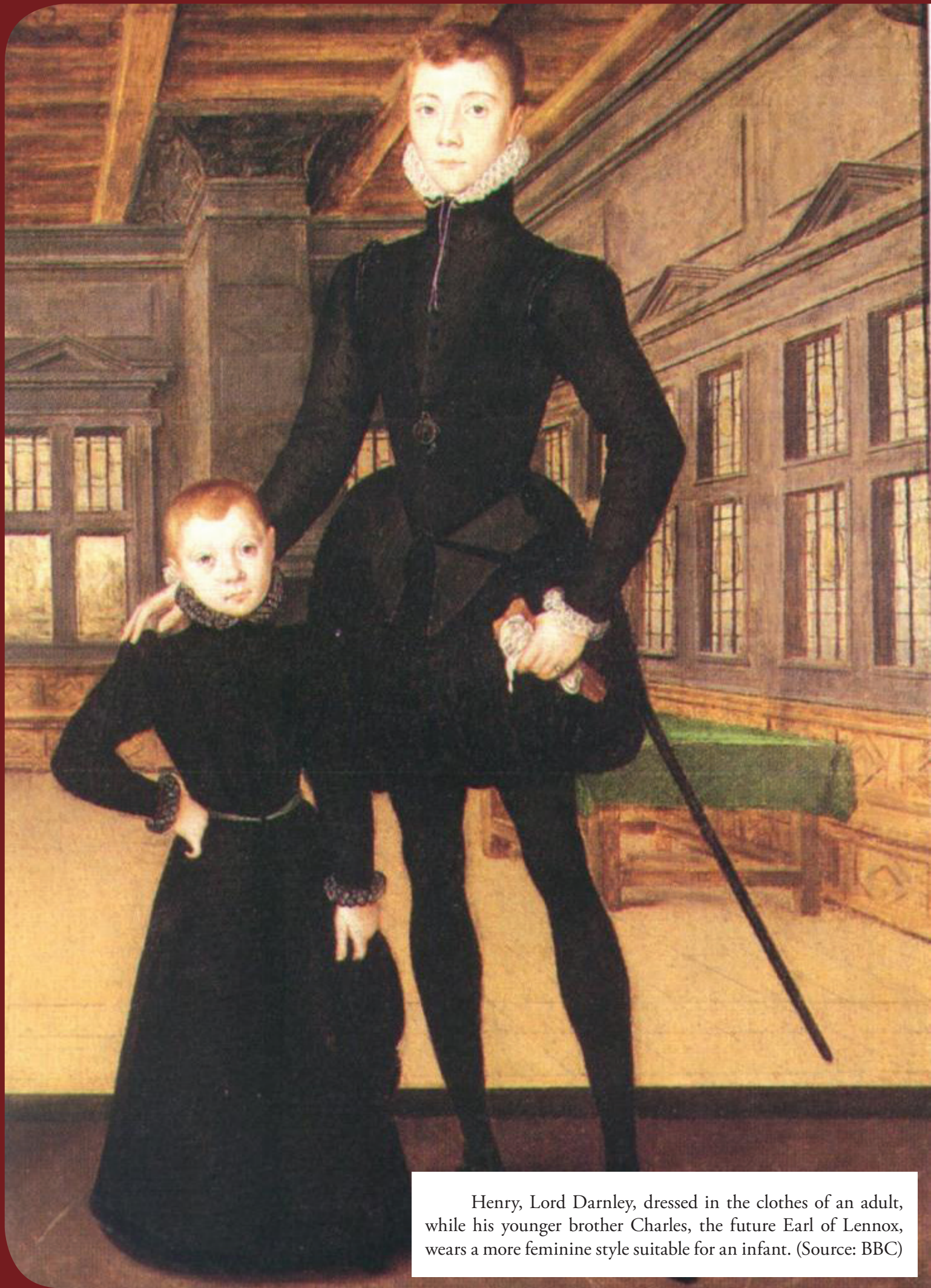
representative, she could have reasonably anticipated that he would defer to her deputed authority and obey her commands. Over the past forty years there has been a broad consensus in scholarship revolving around the notion that in the Reformation era patriarchy intensified and fathers punished misbehaviour more

harshly than they had done previously. The advent of Protestantism – and its associated drive for the home to become the primary site for the education and discipline of the young and the effective suppression of youthful sinfulness – is believed to have strengthened patriarchal control. Alice's threat is a manifestation of the contemporary cultural expectation that a father should occupy an authoritarian position within his household. By suggesting that the prospect of John's father being told would induce enough fear to make him stop his destructiveness, the jurors both affirmed the father's authority over his son and reflected the contemporary notion that a son's duty was to be obedient. This ideal is underpinned by the Ten Commandments, the fifth of which orders children of all ages to 'honour thy father and thy mother'.

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As a child in the household of a gentleman, upon reaching the age of seven it would have been usual for John's main source of care and instruction to have shifted from being female-dominated to male-dominated. Thus by the time he had reached the age of thirteen, he

would have passed far beyond the age to be socialised by women. We can presume that he would also have had a clear notion of his status as the son of a gentleman and of Alice as his father's servant and social inferior. These factors may explain why the jurors presented John ignoring her threats and defiantly resisting her deputed



Henry, Lord Darnley, dressed in the clothes of an adult, while his younger brother Charles, the future Earl of Lennox, wears a more feminine style suitable for an infant. (Source: BBC)

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authority. As the narrative unfolds, it relates that he challenged her directly by resolutely refusing to heed her and asking: 'What for? What have you got to do with it?' John is also shown wilfully making the hole in the chimney post deeper just to spite Alice. In doing so he is depicted as purposely wanting to assert *his* authority over *her*.

John's defiance is also potentially reflective of the attitude of a boy increasingly keen to establish a non-childish identity. He is shown to be intentionally disobedient, determined and resolute. The jurors' portrayal of him as such emerged from the contemporary cultural understanding about the common characteristics of young males. Associations between male youth, fieriness, hot-headedness, strength and power are evident in *Peter Idley's Instructions to His Son* – a didactic text written by an English gentleman for his son in the mid-fifteenth century that was still in circulation in the mid-sixteenth century. John is presented as a 'typical' thirteen-year-old male, determinedly defending his physical prowess against Alice's verbal threats. She is depicted being provoked by his persistent disobedience and approaching him 'hastily, willing to take the spit from him'. Since her verbal threat proved ineffective, she is shown resorting to physical force. In the mid-sixteenth century, such a hasty, physical response would have been deemed more characteristic of a young man than of a young woman. This is apparent in the instructional text for young women, *How the Good Wife Taught Her Daughter*, which originated in the mid-fourteenth century but lasted into the sixteenth century in terms of its popularity, and could well have been used to socialise daughters and servants like Alice in well-

to-do households. The *Good Wife* poem presents meekness and mildness in mind and mood, fair countenance and speech, and honesty as the types of characteristics that needed to be inculcated in young women. Whereas young males were believed to exhibit much greater physical strength than their female counterparts, there was a cultural expectation that young women had greater strength of mind. This gender-based ideology is encapsulated in the narrative given that Alice's strength of mind manifests itself though her scolding of John but is eventually overcome by his physical power. In choosing to respond physically, the suggestion is that she recklessly ignored the prevailing gender models.

Ultimately, the jurors attributed Alice's death to her physical reaction to John's provocation. Whilst his actions seem to be excused by his portrayal as a typically naughty young lad who did not intend to cause any harm to his father's servant, the inference from the verdict is that she can be viewed as at least partly responsible for her own demise because of her contravention of prescribed feminine behaviour. The decision to explain the death as the result of Alice's 'negligent and misfortunate sudden running' and her own 'misfortunate chance' reflects contemporary perceptions about gendered norms and the innate rashness and folly of youth, which both parties are shown to display when Alice attempts to snatch the poker from the wilful and disobedient John. The verdict implies that youth caused her to act precipitously rather than wisely. The jury explained Alice's death in terms of a teenage girl who lacked discretion, was provoked into taking foolish actions and as an unfortunate consequence lost her life.

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This case is unique because fifteenth- and sixteenth-century coroners' inquest verdicts do not usually record the evidential basis upon which the jury formed their eventual decision.

It provides explicit information about the verdict being reached as a result of testimonies from certain men, including the curate of the parish and the constable, who both held positions of significant social standing within the local community. Jurors were usually chosen to make the

point that they were not witnesses and so had no privileged knowledge as to what had happened, but in this case the names of Harry Kennett and John Kennett appear under both the list of eighteen jurors and the list of those who gave evidence. John Onley was the only other party present when Alice's death occurred. Given that he was the son of a local gentleman, the agenda of the jurors' verdict may have been driven by a desire to protect him from suspicion of culpability over the death. As such, the verdict may have been created in order to exonerate him.

Jeremy Goldberg argues that when juries constructed their verdicts, their intention was to offer a coherent and plausible account of the circumstances which led to a death, not an exact description of what did or did not happen as they could never have known this for sure. They aimed to produce a narrative that would be credible within the context of the society in which it was created.

Since Harry and John Kennett had a dual role, it is possible that these two men were empanelled to oversee the construction of the narrative and to ensure that it adhered

to a version of events approved by prominent members of the community. In this instance, the jurors may have intentionally set up their verdict to record an accidental death. Reaching such a verdict enabled both the gentleman and his son to be safeguarded. The jurors' determination to reinforce the

acceptability of this verdict is apparent from the fact that the number of jurors involved in this case is unusually high. Verdicts following coroners' inquests commonly record the names of twelve men, rather than the eighteen that are included in this one. Extra jurors may have been incorporated to make the verdict appear even more believable than it would had fewer jurors been listed. The inclusion of dialogue between John Onley and Alice also serves to make the narrative seem more realistic and therefore may have been an additional element integrated to distance the boy further from blame.

Given this context, it is impossible to make conclusions about the actual interaction that may or may not have occurred between John and Alice in social practice. Nonetheless, the case is useful for revealing some of the ideologies of gender, age and status that surrounded young people in the mid-sixteenth century. Even if the verdict was deliberately set up to

*...a triad of power
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deflect blame from the gentleman's son, it was still modelled on contemporary notions about how young males and young females were expected to behave. The events the jurors portrayed are underpinned by – and therefore indicative of – social and ideological assumptions about youth. In constructing their verdict, the jurors built upon a variety of cultural norms to establish a narrative that would command credence. They showed how a triad of power dynamics involving gender, age and status was contested between the two teenagers. These overlapping hierarchies shaped relationships, expectations and life experiences in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century society. The verdict reflects how as young people were growing up, they were socialised to regard prevailing ideologies

about gender, age and status as the norm and had to learn to negotiate their complex interactions in every aspect of their daily lives.

Accordingly, this verdict poses a challenge to the claim made by Ariès that the concept of adolescence did not come into existence until the eighteenth century. Indeed, it is apparent from the analysis of this narrative that in the mid-sixteenth century there was a social and cultural understanding that young people possessed characteristics which distinguished them both from older people and from each other on the basis of their gender. Contemporaries in early modern England were fully aware that youth occupied a separate and special phase of the lifecycle.

SARAH E. GEORGE



Sarah E. George gained her undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in History at Queen's University, Belfast, with studies on different stages of childhood in the early modern era. She recently gained her Ph. D. from York with her research into "Coming of Age: Youth in England, 1400 - 1600".

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CRIMINALS IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

.....

BY TUDOR SOCIETY MEMBER DMITRY YAKHOVSKY

**THE SYSTEMS OF LAWS IN MEDIEVAL
IN ENGLAND WERE DEVELOPED OVER
A PERIOD OF TIME AND THROUGH A
SUCCESSION OF REIGNS, FROM EDWARD
THE CONFESSOR IN 1042 – 1066, TO HENRY IV
IN 1399 – 1430.**

Although the system of laws changed, there was little or no change in the method of detection and so many crimes were unsolved and many perpetrators escaped judgement. Many of the origins of laws were based on unwritten customs, passed down from generation to generation.

Prior to the Magna Carter (the Great Charter of Liberties.) in 1215 created by King John and signed in Runnymede, England was subject to a Feudal system. The system gave judicial power to the Lords and Nobles over any cases that arose on their manors or lands. Sentences were usually in the form of a fine which produced income to their estates. The Lords and Nobles were very reluctant to surrender their fines to the state.

During medieval times, there was no form of crime detection, and methods were devised to determine the guilt or innocence of the perpetrator, such occurrences were called trial by ordeals. These trials included being given a red hot piece of iron to hold or having their

hands plunged into boiling water. The theory being that God would protect the innocent. Another ordeal was a trial by water in which if perpetrator drowned they were innocent; if they floated they were then deemed guilty and justifiably could be mutilated (by having a hand or foot cut off) or be executed.

Punishments also consisted of suffocating in water a common practice, beaten, being burned alive, being stretched on a rack, boiled in oil, eyes burned out, and branding was also common practice.

Communities in medieval England were originally agricultural and were based around small, sparse, villages. Crime was mostly by individuals and therefore dealt with by the feudal system. However, during the period from 1000 to 1250, England experienced a population explosion. This was followed by a stable but growing population from 1250 to 1348, England still retained its agricultural tradition and its villages, but with larger populations, some villages evolved into towns.

The closest thing the capital of England at this time was Winchester, the place where the treasury and financial records were stored. Around the year 1200, these records were then moved to Westminster, a small village upstream from the city of London. The city then grew in two parts, when Westminster became the Royal capital and centre of government and the city of London became the centre of commercial activities.

The nobility were not only enforcers of the law. They were also subject to the rule of law. However, corruption among the ruling classes during this period became a problem. With

lords and nobles able to raise and command private, well-trained armies, they could reign over their local populations, dispensing justice through a rule of terror or clemency depending on the whims of their commanders. As a result, some villagers were driven away into the forest to find a life of peace. This caused them to be branded as villains as they hunted and “stole” the game they needed to live on or whatever the nobles considered to be a crime.



LORD JOHN DE FOLVILLE

The case of Lord John de Folville and his family was an interesting case in point.

Lord John of Folville of Leicestershire and Teigh, Rutland had seven sons John, Eustace, Laurence, Richard (priest of Teigh, Rutland.), Robert, Thomas and Walter. When John the elder died John the younger (the eldest son) inherited the titles and lands that went with them, he then settled down to a quiet life and left his brothers to their own means. With no income to keep them in the style they were accustomed to, the boys, under the leadership of Eustace, became a gang of extortionists, robbers, vandals, hired thugs

and murders, probably retreating into the forests for sanctuary and safety. Some would argue that the boys had no option other than a life of crime because of their situation. But as the punishments were so severe it also makes one consider the fact that they might have been supported and protected by someone in authority.

The brothers became known as the “Folville gang”, reputed to be the first organised gang of criminals in England.

It is recorded that on the 19th of January 1326 Eustace, along with several others attacked and killed

SIR ROGER BELER

Belér was a Baron of the exchequer (a judge of the court who sat together as a court of common law). Belér had previously issued death threats against Eustace himself, Belér and Eustace were distant cousins, and was the henchman of Hugh le Despencer. This became the most famous crime of the day.

The gang escaped the country but returned again in 1327 and are recorded committing a series of robberies in Lincolnshire.

The Sheriff of Nottingham was informed by the government:

‘Robert and Simon de Folville, with a band of malefactors, were roaming abroad in search of victims to beat, wound, and hold to ransom’.

Between 1327 and 1330 Eustace alone was involved in 3 to 4 murders and 3 robberies.

Eustace died in 1347 never facing justice.

Richard Folville became the rector of county parish of Teigh, near Melton Mowbray, in 1321, but he still managed to run with the gang and often masterminded their audacious plans. One plan included the abduction of justice Sir Richard Willoughby, a man who later became Chief justice of the Kings bench.

During his captivity, Willoughby was moved from numerous dens and hideouts throughout the county from “wood to wood.” A ransom 1300 marks was eventually paid for Willoughby’s release.

Richard and some of his gang were cornered in the church of Teigh by Sir Robert Coalville, a Keeper of the King’s peace. Richard and his gang decided to make a fight of things and fired arrows from the church. Sir Robert lured Richard from the church and captured him. Once in custody, Richard was beheaded in his own church yard. Pope Clement VI ordered Thomas Bek, Bishop of Lincoln, to absolve Sir Robert and his men for killing the priest, on condition that they were whipped in the main churches in the area, by way of penance.

Richard was the only gang member to suffer official retribution.

During this period, many nobles were denounced as criminals, some because they had fled the field of battle. For example, Beler deserted the rebel side in the battle of Boroughbridge in 1322 this might have also a reason that he was assassinated.

Of course, women were engaged in criminal activity as well, including banditry. Many criminal gangs in Medieval England consisted of families, including wives with their husbands and sisters with their brothers.

Fulk Fitzwarine another noble who was outlawed for treason, when he rebelled against King John twice! When his family arrived with William the Conquer, the Fitzwarine family were not feudal lords. Their lands were given to them by King Henry II for Fitzwarine’s support of his mother Empress Matilda. The Fitzwarine rebellion included raising an army of around 50, including his brothers William, Philip and John, his cousins and family allies in

the Welsh marches. The only recorded acts of the rebellion were raids on shipping in Devon which was done with the help of a character called William Marsh.

The Coterel gang were involved in criminal activities in Sherwood forest area (1328 to 1333). The gang consisted of family members James, John, Nicholas and Laurence. The gang was officially outlawed on the 20th of March 1331 when they failed to appear in court. James became the leader of the gang and attracted nearly twenty recruits to his gang. The names were given to the Jurors of the High Peak hundred. The Coterels were not penniless peasants - they owned land and had some funds.

On January the 14th, 1332, the Coterels captured a justice of the King’s bench Sir Richard de Wylughby and ransomed him, the ransom was shared out among the criminals in Markeaton Park on the second of February 1332. It seems the Coterels stole from the rich as the poor had very little to offer.

A strange fact arises from this, the ransom was for 1300 marks, but only 340 marks were ever shared among the gang, so where did the other 960 marks go? Some would say that the money would go to the nobles who protected them. Others say that their ill-gotten gains went to the peasantry.

Medieval England was a land of inequality. Where nobility was everything and the peasantry were nothing. Records were kept but as for much of history, this was mostly for the nobility. Punishments for crimes were harsh; mutilations and brandings were commonplace. Crime was rife, with the peasants often stealing to eat. Strife among the ruling classes was common place as they jostled for positions.

Not a good time to live as a common person!

DMITRY YAKHOVSKY

Over: A portrait of fictional medieval character, Sebastian
Foxley
by Dmitry Yakhovsky

See more at sebastianfoxley.com



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RITUAL AND REFORMATION

Lauren Browne discusses the changes and continuities in the ceremonies surrounding childbirth



Godparents and clergy at a medieval christening
(Source: Churches of Christ website)

THE RITUALS and ceremonies that had been performed post-Reformation were impacted by the religious changes that were occurring throughout the course of the Tudor period. The birth, baptism and ritual of 'Churching' were all impacted in varying degrees.

Giving birth to a child was one of the most significant moments in a Tudor woman's life, regardless of social class. From the moment of conception, the mother was thought to have had some degree of control over the developing child. It was commonly believed that gender was determined by which side of the womb conception took place. Classically, males were conceived on the dry, cool right hand side whilst the wet, hot left hand side conceived females. It was also believed that if a pregnant woman stared at the moon for long periods of time the child's mental health would be effected - which is where the term 'lunacy' comes from.

As the birth approached, the mother began her 'lying-in' period. In wealthy families, rooms would be set aside, decorated and heated accordingly to recreate womb like conditions to make it less shocking for the new-born. In poorer households, a chamber could be created by hanging curtains to secure a private space where the mother could await the birth. Drafts were excluded, the lighting was kept dim and various herbs and spices were used to scent the room.

The actual process of childbirth was far from the private, clinical event we would be used to today. The presence of male physicians during childbirth was almost unheard of in the medieval period, and though this became more common throughout the Tudor period, in wealthier households, it was still very much the norm that a midwife would be the one to deliver the child. Midwives were usually local women who had knowledge of herbal remedies, and they dominated the birthing room. Also present were between four and six women, a

group which usually included the pregnant woman's mother. Others included women from the local community or extended family who were labelled as 'gossips' or 'god siblings'. Childbirth was wholly a female affair and men were not invited, the husband would not usually have access to wife during her lying-in and was certainly not present during the birth itself. Some historians would argue that this meant that the process of childbirth was a bonding experience for the women involved and gave them some degree of power in their local community. Alternative views have also been expressed as to the tension that existed between the women in the birthing room with so many opinions to be considered for the best interests of the mother and child. Furthermore, social tensions could rise between those who were invited to the birth and the women who had been excluded. The preparation of the birthing room and the presence of the 'gossips' and midwife continued long after the Reformation. However, the belief that charms could be used to procure a safe birth for both the mother and child gradually fell out of fashion. But this did not happen overnight, long scrolls with Latin prayers carefully copied out had been passed on through generations of women, and were still placed upon the stomach of a woman during childbirth after the Reformation.

After a successful birth, the next ritual to be performed was the rite of Baptism, which was profoundly altered by the Reformation. To the Catholic Church, baptism was essential to the salvation of the soul and took place as soon as possible after the birth, due to high infant mortality rates. The fact that midwives, who dominated the all-female sphere of the birthing room, were given the power to perform the sacrament, whilst the baby was still in the birth canal, if they thought the child was stillborn shows how important it was. Post-Reformation, baptism was not thought, at least officially, to have had as central a role in salvation. Thomas Becon explained in his *Catechism* (1560) 'that the baptism of water was only a seal or

confirmation of the fact that God had already received the child of Christian parents into his glory; only those who contemptuously refused it were excluded from heaven.¹ *The Book of Common Prayer* advised that baptism should be performed on a Sunday or Holy Day so that the congregation of the church could welcome the child, but it did permit immediate baptism if it seemed that the child might die. There was also a shift away from thinking that babies were born with the stain of original sin, and that they could be born into corruption or even demonic possession. By the latter half of the sixteenth century, babies were considered to have been born pure and were only corrupted by the world around them as they aged.

In the rite itself, some of the symbolic elements began to disappear from 1522, although the Protestant church retained the godparents' renunciation of the devil and the declaration of faith on behalf of the child, as well as its naming and immersion. To some, baptism may have retained a semi-magical quality essential to salvation, however this was no longer the teaching of the church. As with the belief in charms used in the birthing room, what people believed may have been very different to what the church was now teaching. This creates a problem for us, because understanding what the church was teaching post-Reformation can be easily discovered but assessing the belief in these new teachings remains out of reach.

The choice of godparents could be an important one, as even in the lower levels of society links through godparents could help the child's (and family's) social advancement in years to come. It was common for youths to be sent away from the family home during the years between the onset of puberty and marriage. During this time the adolescent would take up work as an indentured apprentice to learn a skill, or worked in the

home or on the farm of another family. Links provided by godparents could help secure these positions, and so it was an important decision for the child's parents to make. The choice of godparents could also reinforce existing familial or friendly relationships, as well as bolstering goodwill amongst employers. The main role of a godparent is to inform the religious instruction of the child, however, as with godparents in the 21st century, it hard to assess how far this went in practice.

In the medieval period it was usually the privilege of one of the godparents to name the child. Saints names were very common, especially the saint on whose day the child was born, as was the practice of the godparent naming the child after themselves. After the Reformation, this practice gradually fell out of popularity, due to 'Protestant hostility towards certain saints associated with popery, Puritan suspicion of godparenthood, and a positive feeling that names should be chosen from Scripture, commemorate a divine mercy or symbolise a good intention.'² Puritans sought to abolish the practice of naming godparents for a child because there was no Scriptural basis for the institution and they believe that it downplayed the responsibility of the parents to educate their children. Although the practice was banned during the Interregnum, it was brought back under the Restoration in the more limited basis we see today.

As we have seen, before the Reformation, the baptism was a rather hurried affair. Because of this, the main celebration of the birth did not occur until sometime after the event. This celebration usually encompassed the 'churching' of the mother, where she was ritually purified in order to be allowed to re-enter church. Churching encompassed two main elements: purification and thanksgiving. In its most basic form, churching served as a signal to the end of the mother's privileged month following childbirth. During this

1 Houllbrooke, *The English Family 1450-1700*, (London, 1984), p. 130

2 Houllbrooke, p. 131



period, she was given time to recover and rest. In some cases, where a maid could not be found or the family could not afford to hire one, the husband was forced to take over the domestic duties of the household. He was also excluded from the marital bed in order to give his wife time to recuperate properly. During the sixteenth century, even post-Reformation, women were taught that until they had been churching, they were not to leave the house, abstain from sexual intercourse and not participate in any of the sacraments of the church. Therefore, the ceremony of churching ritually ended this period and allowed women to resume sexual relations with her husband and her normal household duties.

The ritual itself involved the mother being led to the church, surrounded by her gossips, where she was met at the porch and led into the church. Holy water would be sprinkled on her as well as hyssop, a herb used to cleanse sacramental vessels. In pre-Reformation churchings, the mother usually carried a lit taper, often the gossips accompanying her also carried tapers. This was in reference to the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary, which occurred forty days after the birth of Christ, and may be more commonly referred to as Candlemas.

The scale of the event naturally depended on the social status of the mother at the centre of the ritual, as well as local custom, but there was usually fasting and drinking associated with it. Churching, like other major life-cycle events such as baptisms, weddings and funerals, formed a part of the social fabric of the town or village. The mother was at the centre of the practice, and was supported by her 'gossips', who may have been present at the birth but it was not a prerequisite for participation in the churching. Although the practice seems to have been dominated by women it was a mixed affair, and many diaries show numerous men in attendance. The ritual was a key social event for the women involved, they usually wore their best clothes, sat down to dinner and drank in celebration of the new child. The midwife was

also involved in churchings, usually taking on an organisational role which highlighted her importance. After all, the event would not have taken place without her skill in delivering the child safely.

Although the practice continued after the Reformation, its meaning and the acts involved in the ritual were changed in order to better negotiate them into the Protestant faith. Reformers believed that the emphasis placed on the purification of the mother during the ritual was a 'continuation of "Jewishness" and superstitious adherence to Mosaic and Levitical Law.'³ During Edward VI's reign, the emphasis placed on the purification of the mother was diminished. In 1552 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*, the Latin 'ordo ad purificandum mulierem' (the order for the purification of women) was translated to 'the thanksgiving of women after child-birth, commonly called the churching of women' and the church disowned any association with the ritual to 'penitential cleansing'.⁴ The service became more of a celebration of the new birth and a thanksgiving that the mother had been safely delivered of child. Because of this shift in emphasis, the mother was no longer led into the church by a member of the clergy after being blessed with holy water at the porch. Instead, she processed up to the altar and knelt before it. This change may seem rather insignificant, but it was a very important statement as it transformed the mother 'from a penitent to a celebrant'.⁵

In the 1570s there was yet more opposition to the practice of churching from radical reformers who were concerned about the Jewish and popish remnants in the *Book of Common Prayer*. The Puritan *Admonition to the Parliament* claimed that 'churching of women after child-birth smelleth of

3 David Cressy, 'Purification, Thanksgiving and the Churching of Women', *Past and Present*, (1993), p. 141

4 *Ibid.* p. 118-9

5 *Ibid.*, p. 119

Jewish purification.⁶ Another Puritan attack against the practice occurred in 1601, with an unauthorized pamphlet claiming that it contained ‘no one word, matter or form of thanksgiving,’ but was in fact a ‘Jewish or popish purifying shadowed and varnished over’ and survived ‘under the pretence and colour of a service of God.’⁷ In reality, it was only the radical reformers raised issues with the practice and its popularity continued, ‘few lay people knew or cared whether their religion had Jewish analogues or Jewish ancestry’, and though they may object to certain aspects of the ritual –like the wearing of veils- they did not want to dismiss the practice altogether.⁸ The practice continued in the Jacobean period, where evidence from London indicates that

between 92 and 96 per cent of women who had given birth and had their child baptised underwent the ritual of churching, and even if their child had died before baptism, 76 per cent of women were still churched.⁹

Churching was officially stopped in 1645 when the prayer book was suspended by the Directory of Public Worship, although there is a lot of evidence of women seeking out ministers to perform the rite after this date. After the Restoration, a form of churching was carried out by some women although records were not kept and so it is impossible to quantify how many women continued the practice. There are cases where churching was still being performed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and in some districts it is still performed today.

6 ‘An Admonition to the Parliament’, in Walter Howard Frere and C. E. Douglas (eds.), *Puritan Manifestoes*, (London, 1954), p. 28-9

7 *Certain Questions Concerning Churching of Women*, pp. 7-8, 12, 18.

8 David Cressy, ‘Purification, Thanksgiving and the Churching of Women’, p. 122-3

9 *ibid.*, p. 125



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The Tudors' Lost Heirs 1485-1603

BY CONOR BYRNE

On 14 September 1495, a princess of the House of Tudor died at Eltham Palace, aged three years old. She was the second daughter of the first Tudor monarch, Henry VII, and his consort Elizabeth of York.

The royal couple provided their late daughter with a tomb chest of grey Lydian marble 'on the right-hand side of the altar, just before St Edward's shrine', which cost £371 0s 11d. The Elizabethan antiquarian John Stow recorded that the inscription on the chest read: 'Elizabeth, second daughter of Henry VII, the most illustrious King of England,

France and Ireland, and of the Lady Elizabeth, his most serene wife... On whose soul God have mercy. Here, after death, lies in this tomb a descendant of royalty, the young and noble Elizabeth, an illustrious princess. Atropos, most merciless messenger of death, snatched her away. May she inherit eternal life in Heaven!'



The graves of the Stuart princesses, Mary (left) and Sophia. (Source: Westminster Abbey)

Over a hundred years later, on 16 September 1607, Princess Mary Stuart, daughter of James I of England, died at the age of two years. The Flemish sculptor Maximilian Colt created a monument for the late princess, in which her effigy represents a young girl, clad in a mature dress with a ruff, carved in ivory. The monument reads: 'I, Mary, daughter of James, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland and of Queen Anne, received into heaven in early infancy, found joy for myself, but left longings for my parents, on the 16th of September, 1607. Ye congratulators, condole: she lived only 1 year 5 months and 88 days.' (Mary actually died at the age of two years and five months: she had been born on 8 April 1605). Her younger sister, Sophia, had died on 23 June 1606 after living only one day. Colt also designed her monument, which resembled a stone cradle. The passage of time between Elizabeth Tudor's death in 1495 and those of Mary and Sophia Stuart, in 1606-7, witnessed profound changes to contemporary beliefs about, and the rituals concerning, death, the main reason being the advent of the Reformation in England following the break with the Roman Catholic Church. Monuments became more personal in tone and provided an outlet for relatives to grieve, while acting to convey hope of eternal life alongside a recognition of the transience of earthly life. The monuments of the two

Stuart princesses, moreover, celebrated the ruling dynasty and glorified that dynasty's relationship to God.

Strictly speaking, James I belonged to the House of Stuart, but he was related by blood to the Tudors.

As is well known, the Tudors ruled England for a comparatively brief period of time, compared with other dynasties: 118 years in total. Five Tudor monarchs ruled England between 1485 and 1603; the latter three were childless. The dynasty was plagued by early deaths, with several of its princes and princesses

dying in infancy or shortly after birth, while others died in their teens. Henry VII's eldest son, Arthur, died at the age of fifteen, a few months after his controversial marriage to Katherine of Aragon. Henry's daughter, Mary, lost two of her sons (both named Henry), while another daughter, Margaret, queen of Scotland, was pregnant six times by James IV; only one child, James V, survived to adulthood. Elizabeth of York was pregnant eight times during her seventeen-year marriage to Henry VII; three of her children survived to adulthood. She died on 11 February 1503, days after giving birth to a sickly daughter, Katherine, who died shortly after her mother. James I's mother, Mary, Queen of Scots – who believed that her claim to the English throne

*'Here, After
Death, Lies in
This Tomb a
Descendant of
Royalty'*

was superior to that of her cousin, Elizabeth I – herself miscarried twins in July 1567.

Henry VIII's consorts are notorious for their lost heirs. His first queen, Katherine of Aragon, was pregnant six times between 1509 and 1518: only one child survived to adulthood, the future Mary I, born in February 1516. The other pregnancies resulted in stillbirths (1510, 1513 and 1514), or the child died shortly afterwards (1511 and 1518). While counterfactual history is rarely helpful, it is worth considering how different England's history might have been had Prince Henry, born on 1 January 1511 at Richmond Palace, survived to adulthood. How would the Protestant Reformation, which enveloped Europe from the 1530s, have affected this prince's religious beliefs and policies as king, assuming that he succeeded his father as king in 1547, at the age of thirty-six? Might Henry IX, as he would have been known, have encouraged the flowering of the Renaissance in England and continued his father's artistic and architectural projects, which developed at Hampton Court Palace and later transferred to the likes of Nonsuch Palace? Would he have lent his support to reformed religion and, if so, what direction would the English Church have taken? His younger sister Mary would have been thirty-one years old in 1547 at her brother's accession and, presumably, would have been married to a European prince.

As is well known, however, Prince Henry did not succeed Henry VIII as king in 1547. The prince died only fifty-two days after his birth, to the heartfelt sorrow of his parents. He was buried in Westminster Abbey 'on the north side of the Sanctuary area near the entrance to the chapel of St Edward the Confessor', but there is no marker, in contrast to the monument commissioned for Princess Elizabeth in 1495 or those for the Stuart princesses in 1606-7.

Unfortunately for the royal couple, the prince's death was not the last tragedy to befall them. Katherine's later failed pregnancies, including the final stillbirth in 1518, occasioned 'great sorrow [to] the nation at large', in the words of the Venetian ambassador.

The medieval kings of England had been accustomed to siring large families. Edward I and Eleanor of Castile had at least fourteen (possibly sixteen) children together, six of whom survived to adulthood. Edward III fathered thirteen children with Philippa of Hainault, four of whom outlived their

father. And Henry VIII's grandfather, Edward IV, had ten children by Elizabeth Wydeville, five of whom survived to adulthood. Undoubtedly contemporaries were aware that their offspring might not reach adulthood; they accepted it as God's will and understood the transience of life on earth. However, Henry seems to have felt, nonetheless, that his first marriage had displeased God, given that only one of Katherine's six pregnancies proved successful.

Katherine surely shared the 'sorrow' of her subjects: five of her children had died, two of whom after living at least a few hours (in the case of Prince Henry, a few weeks). Various explanations have been given for her obstetrical history. Her experiences were, to an

extent, shared by her predecessor Anne Boleyn. It is untrue that 'the dreary tale of miscarriages was resumed' following Henry's marriage to Anne, as Geoffrey Elton states, for the king's second consort was pregnant a maximum of three times, whereas Katherine was with child six times. After the birth of Elizabeth in 1533, Anne is said to have conceived again quickly, and by January the following year, the imperial ambassador reported that the queen was of a condition to have many more children. Her 'goodly belly' was commented on in April 1534 by George Taylor in a letter to Lady Lisle, but by September, the imperial ambassador noted that the king had 'began to doubt whether his lady was enceite



Queen Eleanor of Castile, mother of 15 royal English children. (Source: Public Domain)



Elizabeth of York (left), Katherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn - mothers of lost Tudor heirs
(Source: Public Domain)

[pregnant] or not.' Recently, historians such as G.W. Bernard have speculated as to whether Anne was, in fact, not pregnant at all during 1534; that is, she was experiencing pseudocyesis, or a phantom pregnancy. Certainly, there is no evidence of a miscarriage or a stillbirth; contemporary chroniclers, as well as ambassadors stationed at court, had diligently reported the outcomes of Katherine of Aragon's pregnancies where a miscarriage or stillbirth had resulted. The silence regarding Anne Boleyn's pregnancy of 1534 points either to a stunningly successful cover-up on the part of the royal couple, or to the queen's pseudocyesis. It is worth noting, moreover, that sixteenth-century individuals could be uncertain about pregnancy. It was often difficult to ascertain whether a woman was with child or not; the quickening of the baby in her womb was usually

taken as evidence of pregnancy, but it was not an exact science as it is today. References to Anne's pregnancy, therefore, need to be read with caution. Further complicating our attempts to uncover the outcome of Anne's second pregnancy is what some scholars of queenship have termed contemporary obsessiveness with the childbearing queen. Signs of pregnancy were eagerly looked for by court observers, and could be attributed even when the queen was not pregnant.

If Anne was not pregnant in 1534, she certainly was in late 1535 and early 1536. Sometime in January 1536—perhaps on the 29th—the queen miscarried of a son. Occasionally, modern historians have suggested that the foetus was deformed, thus convincing the king that he had been bewitched into marrying Anne, which provoked divine anger and meant that,

as with Katherine, he would not be blessed with a living son. Irrespective of the finer details of that pregnancy, it was disastrous for Anne, and at least indirectly led to her execution four months later. Historians have rarely wondered what happened to the poor souls that were miscarried or delivered stillborn to their royal mothers. The queen was said to have experienced ‘peril of her life’ during her final pregnancy. Assuming that her son had been born healthy in July 1536 – the date of his expected birth – he would have succeeded his father at the age of ten years old in January 1547. Queen Anne, perhaps, would have acted as regent during her son’s minority. Having spent her childhood in Burgundy and France, she had observed at first hand the authoritative regencies of Margaret of Austria and Louise of Savoy (in the latter’s case, when her son Francois I was taken prisoner by the emperor following the battle of Pavia). Her sister-in-law, Margaret of Scotland, moreover, had acted as regent for her son James V. Perhaps Anne would have imitated the style of rule demonstrated by these formidable, capable women. Unlike with Katherine of Aragon, none of Anne Boleyn’s premature children were buried at Westminster Abbey, and there are no markers testifying to the tragic failures of these pregnancies.

*Modern
historians are
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Elizabeth of York, Katherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn were fertile women from fertile families but all three experienced losses, as well as failures in their pregnancies. The latter two were pregnant a combined eight (possibly nine) times, with only two living daughters to show for their efforts. Anne’s

successor, Jane Seymour, was pregnant only once, and her son Edward eventually succeeded his father as king in 1547. None of Henry VIII’s final three wives conceived, although rumours circulated briefly – and probably erroneously – at court in 1541 that Katherine Howard was with child.

Modern historians are occasionally tempted to criticise Henry for his treatment of his wives, including his upbraiding of Anne Boleyn following the miscarriage of 1536, but it is worth considering how he felt in relation to his wives’ losses. The unexpected death of Prince Henry in February 1511 was undoubtedly a blow to both Henry and Katherine; meanwhile, the fragmentary evidence from court observers in January 1536 testifies to his devastation following Anne Boleyn’s final miscarriage. His lack of a living son, until the birth of Edward in 1537, seemed to indicate divine disfavour, leading him to wonder if he had offended God in some way. Perhaps, to our modern



Jodhi May as a pregnant Anne Boleyn in 2003’s “The Other Boleyn Girl”, one of several modern dramas that popularised the idea that Queen Anne gave birth to a deformed foetus in 1536. (Source: BBC)

minds, this is an issue we are unable to adequately appreciate.

As is well known, none of Henry VIII's three surviving children had offspring of their own. Edward VI was rumoured to be affianced to Elisabeth of Valois, while other fragmentary evidence indicates that both Lady Jane Grey and Mary, Queen of Scots may tentatively have been considered as possible brides. His unexpected death at the age of fifteen ensured that none of these women became his queen and, potentially, mother of his children. Is it possible to speak of the lost heirs of Mary I? The first queen regnant of England was believed to have been with child in late 1554, which was celebrated with a procession and a *Te Deum* at St. Paul's Cathedral. The birth was expected to occur in May 1555; a rumour at the end of April falsely alleged that the queen had given birth to a healthy son, and her subjects celebrated with great joy. However, as Ann Weikel notes, Mary was not pregnant, for 'her physical condition was the result of a combination of long-standing menstrual problems and a great deal of wishful thinking.' The queen seems to have believed herself with child in late 1557, but she eventually learned that she was, once again, mistaken. She was forced to reconcile herself to the inevitability of her half-sister Elizabeth's accession, and in her forty-five years of rule, the last Tudor monarch mothered no children, having elected not to marry.

The Tudor dynasty was plagued by misfortune and early deaths. Henry VIII's first two wives experienced a combined eight miscarriages and stillbirths, at least, while Elizabeth of York lost five of her eight children at an early age. At a time of inexact medical knowledge and limited hygiene, difficulties in pregnancy were not uncommon, and were experienced at all social levels, from servant to queen. However, the lost heirs of the Tudors surely contributed to the path that English history took, most especially in its religious and political currents. How different might English – and perhaps, by extension, British – history have been had Prince Henry, son of Katherine of Aragon, succeeded his father in 1547? Conversely, if Anne Boleyn's son had become king upon Henry VIII's death? Alternatively, one could start at the beginning of the story and consider the untimely death of Prince Arthur in 1502 – but for his death, England might not have had Henry VIII, just as Edward VI's good health might have prevented either of his sisters from becoming queen regnant. To speak nothing of the tragic deaths of the sons of Mary Tudor, duchess of Suffolk, or the offspring of Margaret Tudor, queen of Scotland. In the realm of fiction, these intriguing possibilities can be explored endlessly, but in the study of history, we are reconciled to the knowledge that only five Tudor monarchs ruled England between 1485 and 1603, all of whom experienced the losses of their siblings, cousins and, in some cases, children.

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QUEENSHIP IN ENGLAND
1308-1485
GENDER AND POWER IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

CONOR BYRNE

Children of the Chapel Royal

by Jane Moulder

Today no cathedral choir would be complete without some boy choristers. Their role has always been, in the absence of female voices, to sing the high, soprano lines. Whilst girls and women are now welcomed into church choirs, this has not always been the case and certainly not in Tudor times. In the 16th century, boy singers played an important part in the day to day ecclesiastical life across England and the training they received during their years with the church would help stand them in good stead for later life. The most famous group of boy singers was undoubtedly the one that was attached to the Chapel Royal and they became as well known for their theatrical performances as their vocal ones.



A rare depiction of the Children of the Chapel Royal. This drawing by William Camden show the Children and Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal in the funeral procession of Elizabeth I – 1603. (British Library).

The “Chapel” was an accepted European term for describing the ecclesiastical establishment of a prince or noble person and it was a “body” rather than a building. The Chapel Royal belonged to the English royal court and it had been in existence from as early as the 12th century as it was well established when described in some detail in the Household accounts of 1135. The members of the Chapel Royal consisted of singers, some of whom were also instrumentalists, together with a number of chaplains, and their role was to reside and travel with the royal household in order to perform religious services as required throughout the year. Over the centuries, many famous composers and musicians have been associated with the Chapel Royal and during the Tudor period, Robert Fairfax, William Cornyshe, Thomas Tallis, John Bull and William Byrd who were all members of the choir.

The size of the Chapel varied but on average about thirty men were employed and boy choristers were included in this number and they were, regardless of age or status, collectively known as The Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal. It’s not known for definite when boys first were first used by the choir but the records of 1401 clearly indicate that they were part of the entourage. One of the Gentlemen was appointed as Master of the Children and his job was to train, look after and administer any punishment to the young boys. The Master had to ensure that the boys were ready to sing their nominated parts and he obviously had some sway in the choice of music to be performed: one of the rules that the sub dean had to obey was not to select pieces “*without the advice of the master of the children, for*

such songs as are to be performed by the children of the chapel”. There were normally twelve boys at any one time in the Chapel Royal, although this number was increased for special occasions and the master also had to accept responsibility for finding boarding, lodging and clothing for the boys and generally look after their care. To do this he had the help of an usher and two servants, one of which was a woman. The master was paid thirty pounds a year to be a Gentleman and then an additional forty pounds to look after the boys. In addition, the boys received a daily allowance of six pence per person for food. This, whilst not high, was certainly a more than adequate salary, and more than the court musicians were paid, and the amount to keep the boys should have been more than sufficient. However, by Elizabeth’s time, the master, William Hinnis, had other thoughts. He wrote a petition to Elizabeth requesting extra money as she had obviously cut back on some of the pay. He claimed that “*there is no allowance for the lodging of said children, such time as they attend upon the court, but the master to his great charge is driven to hire chambers both for himself, his usher, children, and servant. Also there is no allowance for riding journeys when occasions serveth the master to travel or send into sundry parts within this realm, to take up and bring such children as be thought meet to be trained for the service of her majesty. Also there is no allowance nor only do depend upon the charge of the said master until such time as he may prefer the same with clothing and other furniture, unto his no small charge. And although it may be objected that her majesty’s allowance is no whit less than her majesty’s father of famous*

memory allowed; yet considering the prices of things present to the time past and what annuities the master then had out of sundry abbeyes within this realm, besides sundry gifts from the king and divers particular fees besides, for the better maintenance of the said children and office. Besides also there hath been withdrawn from the said children, since her majesty's coming to the crown, twelve pence a day which was allowed for their breakfast. The burden hereof hath from time to time so hindered the masters of the children (Master Bower, Master Edwardes, myself and Master Farrant) that notwithstanding some good help from others, some of them died in so poor case, and so deeply indebted that they have not left scarcely wherewith to bury them. In tender consideration whereof, might it please your honours that the said allowance of six pence a day apiece for the children's diet might be reserved in her majesty's coffers during the time of their attendance. And in lieu thereof they to be allowed meat and drink within this honourable household for that I am not able upon so small allowance any longer to bear so heavy a burden."

The implication of his plea is that some of the boys died of starvation as there wasn't enough money to feed them and then there weren't sufficient funds to give them a decent burial. This seems quite extreme as forty pounds a year to look after twelve young boys should have been adequate. Hunnis also neglects to mention the extra money the boys would have been receiving for their freelance performances away from the Chapel (of which more later). Anyway, the plea worked to a degree as Hunnis was personally granted some crown lands, although he didn't receive any additional funds for the boys. However

it was Hunnis's successor, Nathaniel Giles, that was to benefit as the daily allowance per boy was increased to ten pence a day and his own pay was increased by ten pounds a year. Later masters also received compensation for travelling.

Whatever the conditions or the pay, nothing seems to have caused any deterioration to the high standards of performance in the chapel and the services. There is nothing but praise for the Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and all who heard their singing remarked on the astounding quality of the music.

Whilst the masters and the adult singers received a reasonable wage, the boys themselves had no pay. Their reward was their board and lodging together with an education in music and general subjects. Despite this seemingly good reward, recruitment of young boys into the chapel must have been quite difficult as the master had a royal warrant, first granted in 1420, to empower them to pressgang or seize boys anywhere in England except from Windsor Chapel, Westminster Abbey and St Pauls – all places which had established choirs employing boys who would sing for the Tudor court. The warrant to seize boys allowed the master to use their young charges only for singing in the chapel and not for other activities, such as carrying out domestic tasks or acting. However, this rule seems to have been disregarded as Solomon Pavy, a ten year old actor eulogized by Ben Jonson, was a member of the chapel who had been pressed into service. It is unclear what proportion of boys had to be pressed but there was at least one case when the enforced service was questioned by a father. Henry Clifton brought complaint before the Star Chamber in 1601, that Nathaniel Giles had



kidnapped his young son, Thomas, whilst he had been walking home from school. The boy was duly returned to his father.

Whether pressed into service or not, boys from the Chapel Royal must have given life opportunities not normally afforded to the majority. Even though they received no pay whilst working for the Chapel, they were able to go on to careers and enjoy lifestyles they would not have been able to do otherwise. The young boys' voices inevitably 'broke' at puberty, so the reason for their employ, in effect, ended. However, during Henry VIII's reign they had the promise of a university education if there were no vacancies for adult choristers: *"when they be grown to the age of eighteen years, and then their voices be changed, nor cannot be preferred in this chapel, nor within this court, the number being full; then if they will assent, the king assigneth every such child to a college of Oxford or Cambridge, of the king's foundation, there to be in finding and study sufficiently, till the king otherwise list to advance him"* However, according to Hunnis's petition, this practice was suspended

during Elizabeth's reign before being restored again by James I in 1604. Regardless of whether the boys would eventually continue to university, they would certainly have left the Chapel being able to read and write (both words and music). Also, being so close to the royal family, they would have made some useful courtly connections which would, no doubt, had stood them in good stead for the future. Some boys did, of course, stay within the Chapel and were promoted to full adult members whilst others continued with a career in music, being performers or composers in their own right.

It wasn't only the royal court that employed their own Chapel singers; members of the nobility did as well. Cardinal Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell both kept their own choir, which included boys amongst their number. In fact, in 1518, some letters passed between the king's secretary, Richard Pace and Wolsey which clearly indicated that the King was concerned that Wolsey's choir could sight-read music better than his own. The diplomatic response to this was that Richard Pygott,

Wolsey's choir master, had to relinquish one of his best boy singers to the Chapel Royal. He gave him to the Master with the caveat that he should treat the child decently as he would his own child.

Once having left the Chapel Royal, if they had not selected court, university or a life with music, then the other option for the young men was to become an actor or entertainer. This is because the boys had led a double life whilst being a choir boy; they had also been involved with the professional theatre.

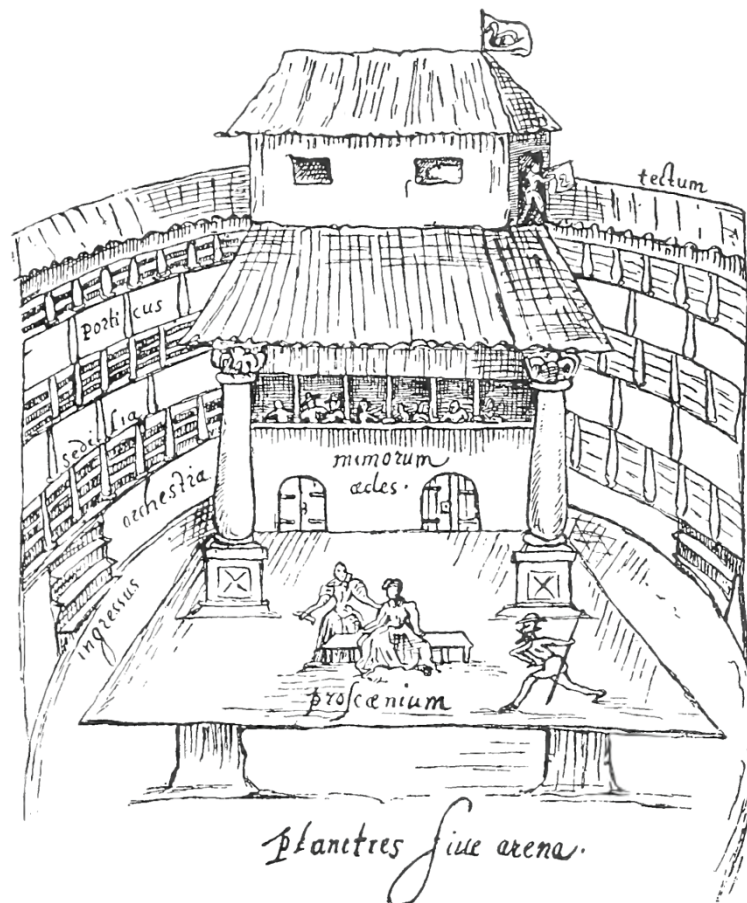
The repertoire of the Chapel Royal was almost exclusively sacred being required to sing and perform ecclesiastical works as part of church services. However, their singing abilities were also used in a number of court entertainments and pageants staged by Henry VIII. William Cornysh, Master of the Children during the early part of Henry's reign, first put the boys forward for performing in various dramatic interludes. The children would take roles in some of lavish productions put on by the royal court and they would be required to act rather

than sing. To rehearse and prepare for their acting roles, they were based in a building which had initially been part of Blackfriars Priory. Hunnis took their theatrical side one stage further and developed a dedicated

theatre company comprising solely of boys of the Chapel and they regularly performed at Blackfriars as well as continuing to take part in court entertainments. As mentioned above, Hunnis chose not to mention the considerable income he would have received for these activities in his plea to the Queen for more money!

The Children of the Chapel Royal put on full scale

productions at least once a week and they were incredibly popular with their audiences. For some reason, performances by young boys were more acceptable to the social elite (and worried neighbours in Blackfriars) than those staged by adults. The Children of the Chapel Royal were not the only young people taking an active performing role as the boys of St Paul's Cathedral choir were in a similar ensemble and equally as well known for their role in plays and entertainments as they



A 1595 illustration of the Swan Theatre. Similar to the Globe today, the main arena of the theatre was open to the elements.



The Sam Wanamaker Theatre at the Globe in London. This indoor theatre is based closely on the designs and drawings for the original Blackfriars theatre.

were for their singing. At one point, the two youth companies were vying with each other for staging the most adventurous plays and productions.

In 1567 the first dedicated, purpose built theatre had been established in London by James Burbage - inventively called The Theatre! The Theatre, the predecessor to the Globe, was really only suitable for summer performances as it was in the open, so Burbage was keen to find an indoor venue to allow year round activity. By 1590, it seems that Blackfriars was no longer occupied by the Children as the premises were being used for storage and lodgings. For Burbage, this was

the ideal venue and, having taken the lease on it, his theatre company often used the Children of the Chapel as actors in his plays, playing the female characters alongside the adult male actors. Theatres, whilst a popular pastime for all levels of society and were often mired in controversy, so at times it was not politically safe for them to perform. Consequently, children's troupes fell in and out of fashion and there were periods where they did not perform at all. However, by the end of the century, their popularity had returned and in 1600 they were back at Blackfriars giving regular performances by many of the great playwrights of the day, such as Ben Johnson,



The Tudor ceiling of the Chapel Royal in Hampton Court

and the boys were highly regarded, especially for their satirical, comedic roles.

The rising and strengthening Puritan movement objected most strongly to plays and entertainments as they felt it inevitably led to vice, debauchery and took people away from God. Puritan commentators were also angered by the use of boy players as they believed this would encourage homosexual activity and feelings. Philip Stubbes, in “The Anatomie of Abuses” said that plays were full of “*such wanton gestures, such bawdy speeches, such kissing and bussing*” that playgoers would go home together “*very friendly...and play the sodomites, or worse.*” Another Puritan, John Rainolds railed against the use of boys to play women and he thought that “*filthy sparkles of lust to that vice the putting of women’s attire on men may kindle in unclean affections.*” However, this view was not commonly held

and the famous playwright Thomas Heywood retorted that audiences knew the difference and were able to “*see our youths attired in the habit of women, who knows not what their intents be? Who cannot distinguish them by their names, assuredly knowing they are but to represent such a lady, at such a time appointed?*”

The fact that the children were often used to perform political and satirical works could lead them into trouble and this is reflected in the changing of the troupe’s name over the years. Having started life as the Children of the Chapel Royal this was shortened to simply Children of the Chapel. With the new Queen Anne in 1603 they became known as Children of the Queen’s Revels. Then, having fallen out of royal favour due to a play they performed, they dropped the ‘Queen’ to be simply known as Children of the Revels. Their last

incarnation was when the theatre company moved to Whitefriars, and they changed their name again to be Children of Whitefriars. The company collapsed and closed around 1616.

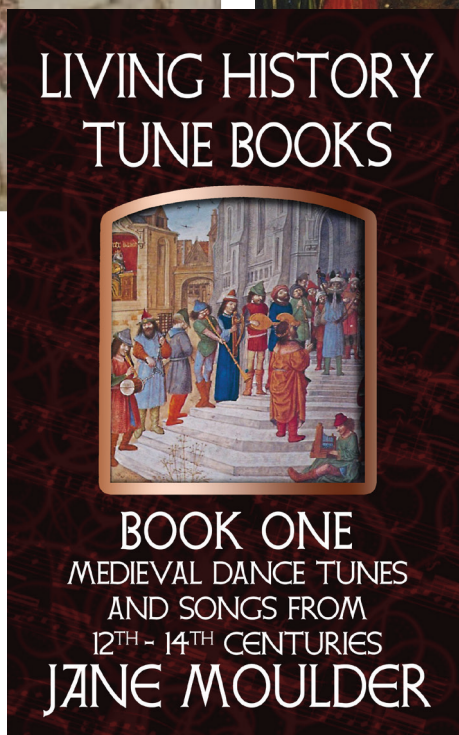
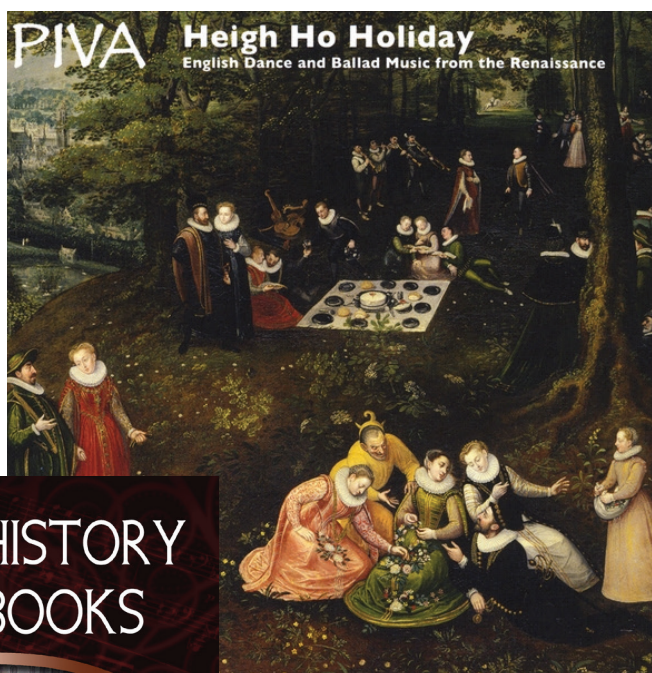
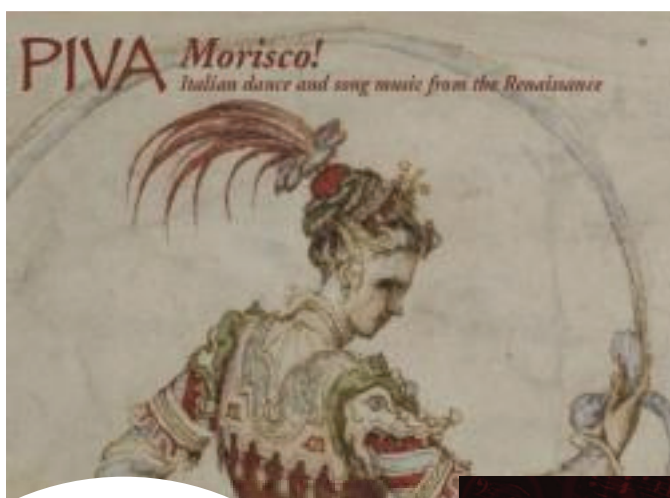
Whilst the theatrical element of the Chapel Royal died out, the choral tradition did not.

The Chapel Royal still exists today but it now has a permanent home at Hampton Court. There are ten boy choristers and the places are hotly contested and, you never know, some of them may well go on to be actors when they grow up!

JANE MOULDER

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No One Thought It Was The Stork

Children were greatly desired by married couples in the Tudor era, but there was a great deal of uncertainty and cultural myths attached to how conception was achieved. Yes, the Tudors knew sexual intercourse led to babies, but how this act could magically turn sperm into a small human being nine months later was very mysterious process to medical practitioners and theologians alike.

BY KYRA C. KRAMER

The official medical wisdom of the time was that women were ‘deformed’ men whose essential humors had been too ‘cold’ to properly extrude their penis during development. Both women and men were thought to have a penis, but a woman’s penis was inside out and upside down inside her body with the inverted scrotum creating a womb¹. Europeans also believed Aristotle’s argument that this “proved” women were the inferior gender, since such deformities made them inherently monsters, prone to greater sins and unable to rationalize like real, whole men².

The monstrous pseudo-men known as women became pregnant when correctly formed real men deposited seeds, via their ejaculate, into the woman’s womb to be mixed with the female seeds therein³. Female seeds were naturally considered less potent than male seeds, but still necessary for generation; thus the female orgasm was considered to be necessary for conception⁴. This had some clear advantages for women. Obviously husbands would have been very interested in making sure their wives enjoyed the sex act, since female pleasure was required in order to produce an heir, meaning that women would have been given their due attention in the bedroom. However, it has left a lingering cultural belief that pregnancy cannot result from rape; in recent years several American politicians have come under fire for reiterating the idea that ‘real’ or ‘legitimate’ rape could not result in pregnancy and thus rape could never be an excuse for an abortion.

Not just any male seeds could successfully fertilize the monstrous uterus, however. Not only did a man need to be a good lover capable

of bringing his partner to orgasm in order to get a woman pregnant, it was also assumed that a man’s sperm directly reflected his own strength and virility. Strong men would make strong sperm which would then beget male babies, while weaker men made weak sperm that produced deformed and weak babies ... AKA daughters. To have no offspring called into question whether a male was truly a man at all. Was he so puny that his seeds were all duds? Almost as bad was to have only daughters, which demonstrated before all the world that a man’s seeds were weak and hence he was less manly than he should be.

The main role of woman in reproduction was to be a fertile field in which to nurture the product of manly seeds, and to bear the fruit of a man’s loins. Childless men would often try to construct their wives as barren, rocky soil where no seed – no matter how hearty – could grow.

Extramarital children via a mistress was the easiest way to shift the blame for insufficient offspring from men onto their wives. Multiple lost pregnancies were often socially constructed as a woman’s failure as well; the man’s seed was clearly potent but it could find no purchase in infertile ground.

From this swamp of biological misinformation women were expected to figure out when they became pregnant and take care of the growing fetus. Simply missing a menstrual period would not have been seen as anything other than a hopeful sign that she might have, maybe, possibly conceived. Menstruation was connected to childbearing only in that it ceased during pregnancy because the uterine blood was being transformed into breast milk⁵. Unconverted menstrual blood was downright dangerous, in that most people, including physicians, thought it could kill plants and could

“Obviously husbands would have been very interested in making sure their wives enjoyed the sex act, since female pleasure was required in order to produce an heir”

1 Lyons 2006:152-153

2 Hartel, 1993:93

3 Thompson, 1999:68-69

4 Kandeel, 2007:6

5 Thompson, 1999:64, 70

cause dogs to go mad⁶. It was also thought to stop and start for reasons other than pregnancy, such as the humoral state of a woman during certain astrological phases in her horoscope. Midwives, the acknowledged experts in the field, couldn't even be sure if a woman was truly with child until there was fetal movement to confirm the diagnosis. This means that women couldn't be really sure they were gravid until they were about half-way through the pregnancy, around 20 weeks gestation.

However, if a woman and her midwife thought she was probably pregnant, she and her partner would take the precaution of acting as though the pregnancy was confirmed rather than risk harming the growing fetus. A pregnancy was always considered a fragile and tricky thing, since during the early modern period any pregnancy "had no better than a 50% chance of going to term"⁷. Women were cautioned to avoid loud noises, funerals, anything that would cause mourning or anxiety, hard physical work, and medical practices such as bloodletting, in order to protect the fetus from any "shocks to the mind or body [which] might dislodge a child from the womb"⁸. Midwives and 'wise women' had myriad concoctions that were thought to help prevent miscarriage. For example, sage was considered "the holy herb" because pregnant women likely to "come before their time and are troubled with abortments, do eat thereof to their great good; for it closeth the matrix, and maketh them fruitful, it retaineth the child, and give it life"⁹. Moreover, the baby's father was supposed to abstain from having sex with his pregnant partner during some stages of the pregnancy to

protect it. Couples were advised to avoid sexual intercourse for the first four months of pregnancy (or as soon as they suspected a pregnancy had occurred), as well as eschewing sexual intimacy during the sixth month and the eighth month, "for fear of shaking the child and bringing down her courses"¹⁰. Conversely, during the seventh and ninth month of pregnancy couples were supposed to have as much sex as possible so that the father of could 'fashion' his child and "set his influence on it"¹¹.

The biological factors of pregnancy were also joined by the theological and social aspects of gestation. Although a woman could be suspected to be pregnant for several months, she wasn't pregnant with a real baby until the fetus "quickened", or reached the point at which the mother could first feel movement inside her¹². People believed that the fetus did not receive a soul until the quickening, so until the mother felt movement in her uterus she

was merely carrying around a growing human-shaped shell that would house the future child¹³. Nevertheless, it was of the utmost importance to make sure this shell was nurtured to the best of her ability, lest it fail to thrive and be unable/unworthy to receive a soul from God when the time came. This understanding of ensoulment didn't change until the nineteenth century, when Pope Pius IX proclaimed that souls entered the embryo at conception¹⁴. Without a soul the fetus was not really a 'person' to the people of the Tudor time period. There was even doubt whether a fetus could be considered 'alive' prior to the quickening. As a result of these beliefs,

"Although a woman could be suspected to be pregnant for several months, she wasn't pregnant with a real baby until the fetus "quickened", or reached the point at which the mother could first feel movement inside her"

6 Pinto-Correia, 1998:255

7 Cressy, 1996:47

8 Cressy, 1996:46

9 Cressy, 1996:47

10 Cressy, 1997:46

11 Cressy, 1996:46

12 Cressy, 1997:45

13 Hull, 1996:105

14 Simon, 1998:2

pregnancies were often well into the second trimester before they would be announced. Nevertheless, a miscarriage often caused immense grief for the parents, even before the pregnancy had quickened. It was the loss of a hoped-for potential child if nothing else. The emotional pain people felt about the loss of wanted pregnancy was not 'easier' to deal with simply because it happened more frequently than it does today or was conceptualized differently.

Nor were multiple pregnancies guaranteed. There is an oft believed myth that women lived in a constant state of pregnancy during the early modern time period, but in fact a woman who bore a child almost every year was an exception not the rule. In the Tudor era women had an average of six or seven pregnancies over the course of their life spans, rather than dozens¹⁵. As a result of this rather limited fertility (compared to future eras), childless marriages were common. Even when there was the best access to food and shelter, no heirs were necessarily produced. Fully 19% of first marriages among the nobility did not produce living children, and 29% had no male heirs¹⁶. Multiple marriages weren't a guarantee of fruitfulness either, since 48% of second marriages were childless, and 58% produced no male heir¹⁷. Babies, both as

heirs and family assets, were valuable in part because of their potential scarcity.

Once the babies were born, the risk of mortality lessened only slightly. As many as 1/3 of children would be lost before their 5th birthday. However, it should be noted that only 1% of women died in childbirth and less than 5% of babies were stillborn¹⁸. Those are, compared to today, horrifyingly high odds of tragedy, but the death of birthing mothers and newborns was still relatively rare. Children were lost most often between the age of six weeks and their first birthday (part of the reason a baby's 1st birthday is a significant family celebration even today), and the odds of death decreased with each year. If you could get a child to 5, he or she would probably see adulthood. Some families were lucky in that all their children lived. Some families had only one surviving offspring reach adulthood out of 15 births. It was completely random, and was usually ascribed to God's will, and people had no choice but to endure their fates stoically regardless of private and internal suffering.

Unless you were Henry VIII. He apparently didn't think the 'rules' of reproduction in this era applied to him. He would increase his odds of having a male heir by bringing in fresh breeding stock whenever he could.

¹⁵ Cressy, 1996:30

¹⁶ Lindsey, 1995:64

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¹⁸ Cressy, 1996

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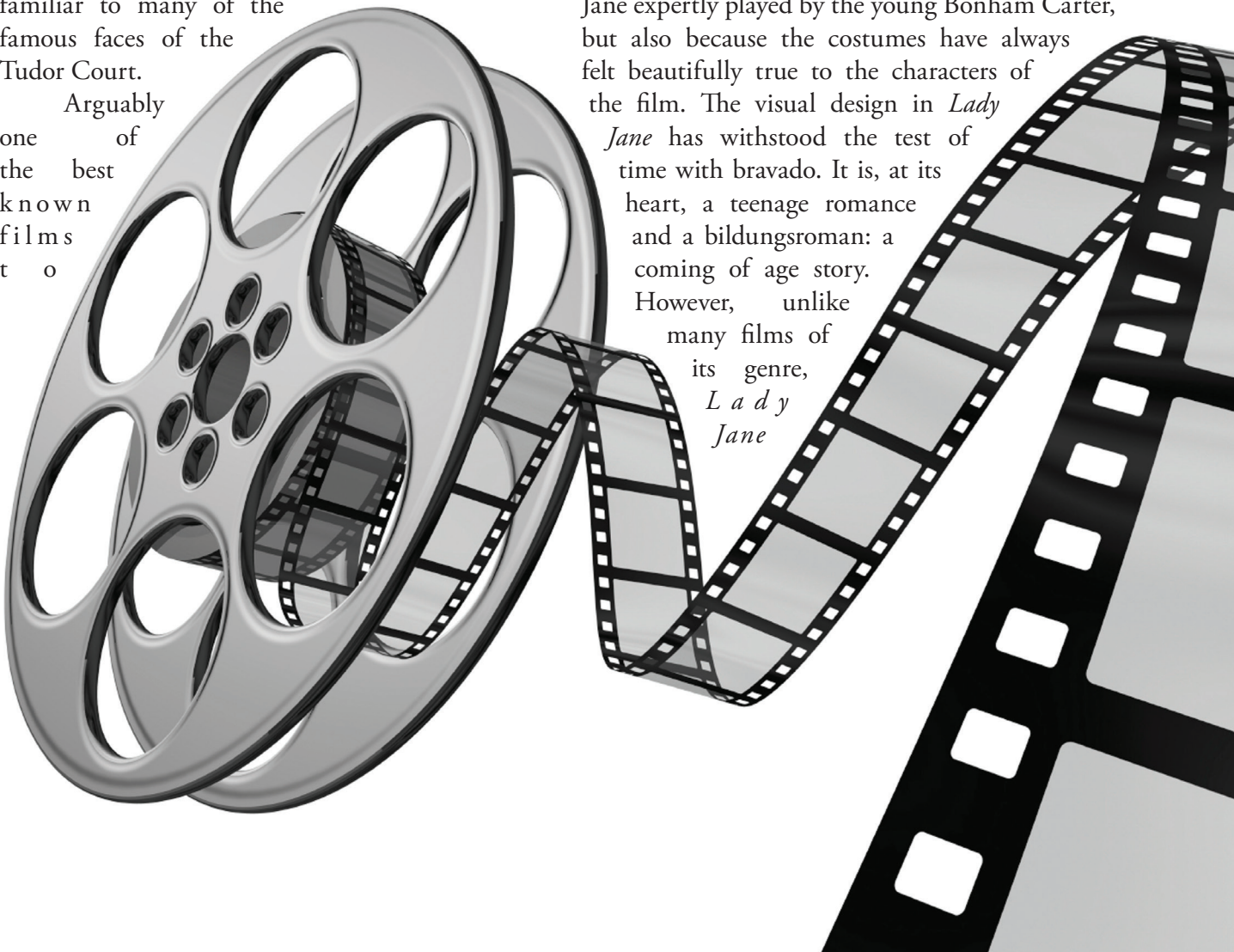
JANE THE QUEENE

Costumes and Visual Design in *Lady Jane*

The story of Lady Jane Grey, the Nine Day Queen, has been impressed into our collective conscience since her untimely execution on the 12th February 1554. Aged only 16, the young Queen was executed the same day as her husband, Guilford Dudley, and only 2 days before her father, Henry Grey, the First Duke of Suffolk. We have just recently passed the 463rd anniversary of Jane's death, and we are still enamoured with the young Queen's story. Since her death, she has been recreated in countless novels, movies and television shows; a fate familiar to many of the famous faces of the Tudor Court.

Arguably
one of
the best
known
films
to

feature Lady Jane Grey is the 1986 costume drama *Lady Jane*. Despite this, it is an oft-overlooked film in the plethora of films based around the Tudor Court. It stars Helena Bonham Carter as the formidable Lady Jane, and Carly Ewles as her dashing handsome husband, Guilford Dudley, with supporting roles played by Patrick Stewart, Jane Lapotaire and John Wood. As a lover of both Tudor history and costume, it is a movie which has always held a very special place in my heart; not only because I saw a lot of myself in the bookish, studious Jane expertly played by the young Bonham Carter, but also because the costumes have always felt beautifully true to the characters of the film. The visual design in *Lady Jane* has withstood the test of time with bravado. It is, at its heart, a teenage romance and a bildungsroman: a coming of age story. However, unlike many films of its genre, *Lady Jane*





An ailing Edward VI (Warren Saire), flanked by his courtiers

culminates in Jane's untimely death, and the sacrifice of childhood innocence to the schemes and games of a cruel adult world.

The costume design in this film is excellent, and the colours and styles expertly chosen. Jane cuts a determinedly sombre figure, never appearing in a strong colour throughout the film. She remains

pious and plain throughout, rarely straying from grey or black dresses, which are always plain and unadorned. The artists on this film have clearly adhered to the popular image of a pious, perfectly Protestant maiden.

Jane's costumes are the plainest amongst all the female characters, and yet their clean lines and stark beauty stand out even more against the backdrop of luxury presented

by Frances and Henry Grey, Jane's parents. A baby-faced Bonham Carter looks scarcely older than 15, and in the context of this film, this only makes Jane's inevitable demise all the more heart-wrenching. Ewles, at 24, is slightly older than the actual Guilford's 19 years of age, but he plays him with a believable spoilt swagger, and a roguish charm. While the real Guilford and Jane's marriage was reportedly far from a love match, Bonham Carter and Ewles' innocent performance helps one to suspend disbelief and enjoy their teenage romance for the sake of the emotional backbone of the film.

One of the key contrasts in the film is the tension between Jane and her mother Frances, who is undeniably painted as the villain of the piece. She is a beautifully dressed ice maiden; a foil to the bright, pious intellectual that is her daughter. Frances is always ornately costumed in rich, aristocratic colours; a clear representation of her wealth, status and power. Jane, as previously mentioned, remains in dark, sombre colours and simple gowns for the duration of the film. This contrast is also present between Queen Mary and Jane, both of whom appear as opposing forces to the other. Mary, the ageing, soon to be Queen, is richly and ornately costumed, and her various costumes throughout the film make reference to the surviving portraits of Mary, even including the flat hood, which she is credited with making popular. Jane is fiercely pious and defensive of her faith, as is Mary, and the visual



Carly Elwes as Lord Guildford Dudley

contrast between the two women helps to serve as a visual metaphor for the English Reformation, and the two ideologies that battled therein.

Another contrast which serves as key to the plot of *Lady Jane* is the contrast between Guilford and Edward. Warren Saire's performance as Edward VI is excellent, if short lived. The Edward of this film does adhere to the commonly accepted view of the sickly young prince; from his very first introduction, his poor physical health is made clear. However, his costume serves to create the illusion of a young man on the brink of adulthood, ready to follow in his famous father's footsteps. Edward's costumes are amongst the most opulent in the film, frequently costumed in jewel shades with padding, fur trims, and slashing evident in his sleeves and doublet. He wears large, padded surcoat to give the impression of larger shoulders; a tactic frequently employed by Tudor men, who's beauty ideals placed emphasis on the shoulders and calves as signs of virile, healthy masculinity. However, underneath this façade, we see Edward as the sickly young man he is. In a scene he shares with Jane, after she has received a beating for being disobedient, Edward removes his hat and surcoat and we see him almost half in size. He wears the Tudor short upper hose, lower hose, and long boots, which serve to show the audience just how slim he is. Edward brings Jane a puppet to play with,

a hugely symbolic toy given their age and situation. Saire's performance of the sickly boy king is, here, heart-breaking, especially when paired with Bonham Carter's youthful innocence. Upon leaving Jane's family home, he collapses and loses his surcoat, and is carried by one of his men to the barge. In the arms of his men, he looks small and frail; and his death a few scenes later comes as little of a surprise to the viewer. In contrast to Edward, however, we have Guilford. In Guilford's first two scenes, we see him involved in a fight, and then as a visitor in a brothel. While not in any way a refined presentation of his character, these actions and places speak of a young man full to the brim with abundant masculinity, engaging in base, passionate activities, in contrast to the well-mannered, softly spoken and refined Edward. Guilford's costumes rarely stray from the colour black throughout the film, which ensures that he matches with Jane, while also maintaining his hyper-masculine image and colour palette. Once Guilford and Jane are married, however, we see that we were mistaken about Guilford; underneath his bravado and swagger, there is a sensitive, intelligent man who is a perfect match for Jane. Despite our negative first impressions, the rogue in the dark clothes actually becomes the romantic hero of the piece. While many of relationships in *Lady Jane* may be facetious, as a love story it functions beautifully.

In *Lady Jane*, there are many examples of costumes as symbols; pieces of clothing and visual material that directly drive the narrative or perform a role in creating certain characters. One such example is Jane cancelling dinner with guests and appearing in her nightgown and Guilford's riding boots. She raises her nightgown to show Guilford and they both burst into a fit of childish laughter. It is an endearing moment of innocence for the two, and a tangible bonding moment in their relationship. Jane is developing as her own person, becoming braver, and disobeying the restrictive, tedious rules of how a lady should dress and behave. In the following scene, her and Guilford go riding together, and we see her moment of decision before she changes out of her gown and hood and into Guilford's riding habit, complete with men's upper and lower hose, loose shirt, and thigh-high boots. She also wears her hair uncovered, a rare occurrence for a married noblewoman in Tudor times. This change of costume is symbolic of Jane taking control of her own life, free of the constraints of her parents, and free of societies rules; starting a new life. Another defining moment for costume comes with Jane becoming Queen; however, this is a less happy occasion. Jane consistently protests; 'It's not mine', she whispers under her breath. Her advisors stand around coaxing her to try it on, before she all but throws the crown off her head and runs for Guilford. In the same way that donning male clothes gives Jane freedom, the crown removes this freedom. As Jane's story is so infamous, we, as the audience, know that the crown placed on her head portends her doom.

At the culmination of the film, even the colours become more sombre as the mood darkens, and Jane is made aware of her fate. Queen Mary's costume in her final scenes of the film is a beautiful dress of deep red silk, perhaps a reference to her posthumous sobriquet of 'Bloody Mary'. Jane attends her execution in a simple black gown; a costume that we would expect from the brave young woman facing death. Jane struggles to find the block when blindfolded, and grapples for it, whispering



Helena Bonham-Carter as Lady Jane Grey

'Where is it? What shall I do?' before she is helped to the block by John Feckenham, Queen Mary's Chaplain. This is a variation of the real life event of Jane's 1554 execution, and recalls Paul Delaroche's 1833 painting, *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey*.

Lady Jane still holds its own amongst the myriad of Tudor-centric television shows and films around today. While it can, at times, be gratuitous in terms of alteration of timelines and events, it has real spirit. It is beautifully made and designed, and it stands as a wonderful reminder of the smart, brave and admirable young woman who was a Queen of England, if only in name.



Jane Lapotaire as Queen Mary I



The Dudleys' romance depicted on screen



Patrick Stewart and Sara Kestleman as Jane's parents, the Duke and Duchess of Suffolk

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



THE REFORMATION

WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND?

In this, my new regular column in Tudor Life Magazine, I shall be looking at the lives of the ordinary people of England in the sixteenth century.

I'll begin by considering how King Henry VIII's need of a male heir profoundly altered the lives of everyone in the kingdom. As we know, his relationship with and eventual marriage to Anne Boleyn brought about England's breakaway from the Roman Catholic Church and changed the succession to the throne. These were matters of high politics, statecraft and royal conscience, causing the downfall of queens, archbishops and others of high degree but how did such dynamic issues affect Henry's humble subjects?

Since the fourteenth century, some people thought the Church of Rome was in serious need of reform. Bishops, cardinals and popes often seemed more interested in living lavishly in fine palaces than overseeing the conduct of the clergy and the religious houses in their charge. The

Benedictine Rule by which monasteries and convents were governed had become lax. The meat-free diet was disregarded, monks and nuns kept pets and entertained guests – sometimes of the opposite sex. Not every religious establishment was guilty but enough of them were that even ordinary folk were worried. In their wills, people often bequeathed money to churches and religious houses, giving instructions for prayers and masses to be said for their souls, to ensure the soul's time in Purgatory was kept to a minimum. But to prove effective, the prayers must be said by moral, spiritual men and women. The offerings of an ignorant, lascivious priest would hardly aid a soul in the afterlife, so some of Henry's subjects felt it time the Church in England was given a thorough makeover.

However, most Englishmen were probably content

TONI MOUNT

to carry on as they had for generations: attending church on Sundays, eating fish on Wednesdays and Fridays, celebrating feast days and saints' days, paying their tithes and Peter's Pence – a tax paid to the pope – being baptised soon after birth and confessing their sins before death. That the Church of Rome ruled every aspect of their lives was an unquestioned fact and there was little thought of an alternative.

King Henry's 'Great Matter' was seen as rather scandalous and his first wife Queen Katherine of Aragon's predicament roused a lot of sympathy for her among the common folk. She had been a loving, loyal and faithful wife to the king, serving him well in every way, except one – the production of the vital male heir to continue the Tudor dynasty. Was that her fault? Unfortunately for Katherine, the way conception was understood at the time, it seemed it was. After all, Bessie Blount had given Henry an illegitimate son, so the fault couldn't lie with the king, could it? Even so, many people felt sorry for Katherine and saw Anne Boleyn as the intruder in the royal marriage but none could have realised what profound changes the king's infatuation would have on all their lives.

At the time, the existence of Heaven and Hell was a certainty and the soul of anyone who died without the benefits of the Last Rites and Extreme Unction was in danger of spending an eternity in torment and agony. Can you imagine the very real terror that possibility must have aroused in the dying and their loved ones left behind? So wills were drawn up and charitable bequests made to ensure that didn't happen. For the wealthy, an entire chantry chapel might be set up and priests' wages paid to have masses said, sometimes for evermore, to hasten a soul to heavenly bliss. Even poor folk might donate a tablecloth to make cleaning cloths for the chalices or money for a candle to burn before the image of their favourite saint, so the saint would intercede for them, putting in a good word with God. Donations made to the poor required them to pray for the donor's soul in return.

When we think about the changes that Henry's break with Rome caused, we know it ended England's connection with the papacy and led to the Bible being written and services conducted in English, not Latin. This sounds very positive to us but try putting yourself into the Tudor mindset of the late 1520s and 30s. You were raised believing all those things I've mentioned. A loved one has recently died. You know his soul is safe as it is prayed for daily by a priest, the Grey Friars and St John because he left money in his will to that effect. Now, the king is saying chantry priests are abolished, the friaries dissolved and no more candles are to be lit before saints. Suddenly your loved one's soul is in jeopardy. And what of yours when the time comes? All those precautions taken for generations are swept away because the king cannot have his own way, the pope refusing his request for a divorce. Imagine the uncertainty, the fear and trauma felt by the people of Tudor England. A king's change of heart has destroyed their entire belief system.

And the devastation had a practical aspect too. Whatever their failings, the religious houses provided the welfare of the day: hospitals for the sick, bread and ale and a bed for weary travellers, charity for widows and orphans, asylums for the insane and granting licenses to needy beggars. Even education came under their remit. The dissolution of the monasteries may have freed up vast wealth and tracts of land for the Crown to redistribute but it left an entire stratum of society without hope. Gradually, realising the need, the state set up schools and hospitals but no one wanted responsibility for the poor. Henry's Reformation left his most needy subjects scared, bewildered, uncared for and with nowhere to go for assistance.

For too many, crime was the only answer – as we'll see next time.

TONI MOUNT



An excerpt from “Falling Pomegranate Seeds” by Wendy J. Dunn

Rubbing Josepha's belly, Beatriz whispered to the queen, "I fear her travail has begun." Little Maria clambered inside the andas. Beatriz glanced her way, unable to speak one word of reassurance to the child.

Queen Isabel took something out of her pocket and placed a small, golden rectangular box into Josepha's limp hand. She closed her hand over it. "Hold this to you, cousin. 'Tis my fragment from the robe of the Virgin I carry always. I had it with me for all my childbirths. The good Mother of God will keep you safe."

Josepha didn't seem to hear, or see. She gave another moan and shifted again. "Pray, forgive my weakness." Removing her hand from the queen's, Josepha stared at the tiny gold reliquary with distaste. "The fall hurt my back. 'Tis not my babe, 'tis not that!" Her eyelids fluttered closed. "'Tis not that..."

Beatriz rubbed at her wet eyes.

Josepha came to childbed before her time, giving birth to a dead boy the very same night they reached Sevilla. For days Beatriz and the queen's physicians feared her lost too, a knowledge sweeping Beatriz to the brink of a deep, bottomless void. For Josepha's little daughter it was more than the brink. For three

days Maria haunted the doors outside her mother's chambers, knowing her mother fought a battle for life. Within, her father refused to budge from his wife's side. Forgotten by her parents, shut out from their lives, Maria barely registered when, sooner or later, Beatriz led her back to the royal chambers.

On the third day the chamber's heavy door swung open. Fray Hernando de Talavera, the queen's elderly Hieronymite confessor, came through its narrow opening. The dark brown scapula covering the priest's white habit served only to make the harsh angles of his fleshless face more severe and deepened his dark, cavernous eyes. Beatriz strode over to him, Maria closely following.

Like so many times in the past, the priest gazed kindly at Maria, but this time a kindness overlaid with pity. Despite his unhidden disapproval of her, Beatriz held Fray Hernando in great regard. Like her, he was a respected professor of the university at Salamanca. He always spoke to children just as he would speak to adults – and always what he believed the truth.

Maria ran to him, clutching at Fray Hernando's scapula and then Beatriz's habito before falling to her knees. Her efforts to question them became lost and muffled in tears. Beatriz raised Maria up, keeping her arm wound around her.

"My mama..." she sobbed.

With a helpless gesture, Beatriz turned to the priest. Fray Hernando paid her no mind, his eyes were only for the child. Never before had Beatriz seen him so gentle.

"Come here, child," he said, taking Maria from Beatriz. Bending down, his aged bones cracked as he gripped Maria's thin, frail shoulders. "The crisis is coming, child. Perchance in the next hour we'll know... Pray, child, as we all are. Maria, if death does take your mother..." His grip tightened on her shoulders. "Little one, she goes to God's care. Go with your teacher, child, and wait for us to send word to you." The priest shuffled away in the direction of the chapel.

Beatriz clasped Maria's hand and led her to the library. Maria stopped her. Her eyes were wide, her mouth opening and shutting.

"What is it, child?" Beatriz asked.

"I don't want Mama with God. I want her here, with me."

Tired, miserable, Beatriz hugged Maria. "I know. I want that, too, as do all the people who love her. I promise you, we never give up while there's life. My heart tells me that God will hear our prayers and let paradise wait for your mother a while longer."

Maria wept. It took all of Beatriz's control not to weep, too.

Book 1 in the Katherine of Aragon story



Falling Pomegranate Seeds

The Duty of Daughters
Wendy J. Dunn

Charlie

THE TUDORS
IN 100
OBJECTS

by John Matusiak



John Books

The Tudors in 100 Objects is a beautiful book written by John Matusiak, in which it displays some of the most fascinating objects from the period. The images are high quality and on glossy paper, making the book surprisingly heavy, but a great read all the same. For those who are unable to see the objects in person, it is a real treat to hold and look through occasionally, or one that can be read from start to finish.

The book is split into twelve sections, a few examples being 'Dynasty, Politics, Nation', 'Crime and Punishment' and 'Birth, Childhood, Marriage and Death'. In each section the objects are listed in order of use/creation and significance, as not to confuse the reader by jumping around the reigns of the five (or six if you include Lady Jane Grey) Tudor monarchs. Although, in regards to the different sections the objects are placed into, most of the time you will find that an object could be sorted into multiple sections (such as Lady Jane Grey's prayer book, it could be under dynasty or religion), making it difficult to find again later on.

Matusiak provides the context for each object, so that the reader can fully appreciate the importance of it and where it fits within history. One good example is the silver-gilt boar badge from Bosworth Field, Matusiak provides context to the Wars of the Roses and a brief explanation of the events before moving on to the object itself. He also explains the importance of where they found the badge, as it was found around two miles away from where the

battle was traditionally considered to have taken place:

'there finally emerged the most iconic and conclusive object of all those discovered on Bosworth Field: a silver-gilt boar, the location and nature of which, beside the site of Fen Hole, not only confirmed the battle site but evoked the most poignant of images. For the boar was Richard III's own emblem, given in large numbers to his supporters, and while most of these badges were of base metal, this one is silver-gilt, and could only have been given to a knight or someone of even higher status.'

One nice addition is the inclusion of Lady Jane Grey as a Queen of England, even including one of her personal items, her prayer book. Matusiak makes it clear how important her prayer book was to her and to subsequent historians and scholars, as well as explaining how it was passed down, as well its links with another queen, Katherine Parr:

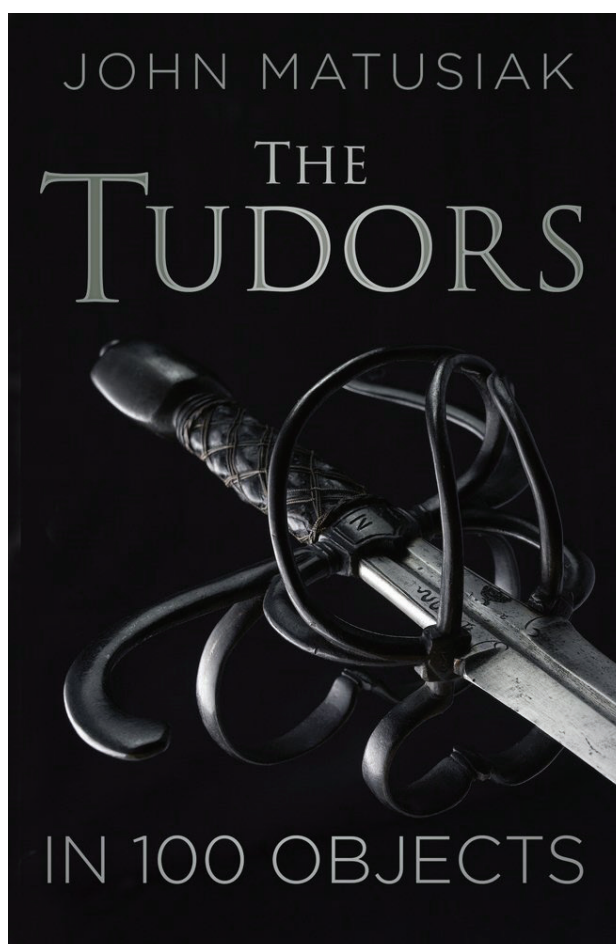
'the 16-year-old victim passed her prayer book to Sir Thomas Brydges in the expectation that he would give it to his 61-year-old brother, Sir John, the Lieutenant of the Tower of London, who had supervised Jane's incarceration... Within were messages of farewell both to Sir John and to Jane's father, who would himself be feeling the ample weight of the axe upon his neck only eleven days hence. The book, it seems,

had not only been given to her in early September 1548 by the former queen, Katherine Parr, as she lay dying of puerperal fever after the birth of her only child, but had actually been written by that same lady while still in good health.'

The sentimental nature of her prayer book really comes through in his description of it, even without seeing the object itself. The one problem with this book is that it makes the reader long to see the objects in person and physically touch them, as that would make you feel closer to the historical person it belonged to.

Other Tudor objects include a hornbook, which Matusiak insists was '*not in fact a book at all*', instead it was an educational tool for children which was a small wooden board with a handle. On one side was a sheet of vellum inscribed with a lesson such as the alphabet or the Lord's Prayer and it was protected by a thin, transparent layer of horn. He explains that this tool was vital, especially in an age where parchment was expensive and couldn't be trusted in the hands of children who were just learning to read and write. It is interesting to read about ordinary people's lives for once, although of course only a minority of children would have been taught to read and write.

Some of the objects have even more interesting stories as to how they were found or, in cases like the football in Stirling Castle, hidden:



'This ball, which is made from leather on the outside and a pig's bladder on the inside, was found at Stirling Castle in the 1970s, snugly tucked up in the rafters of a bedroom that had once belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots. Lying concealed since it had been accidentally kicked there some time before the 1540s when the ceiling was enclosed with wooden panels, it has a strong claim to be the oldest object of its kind ever found anywhere in the world and confirms the

antiquity of football itself.

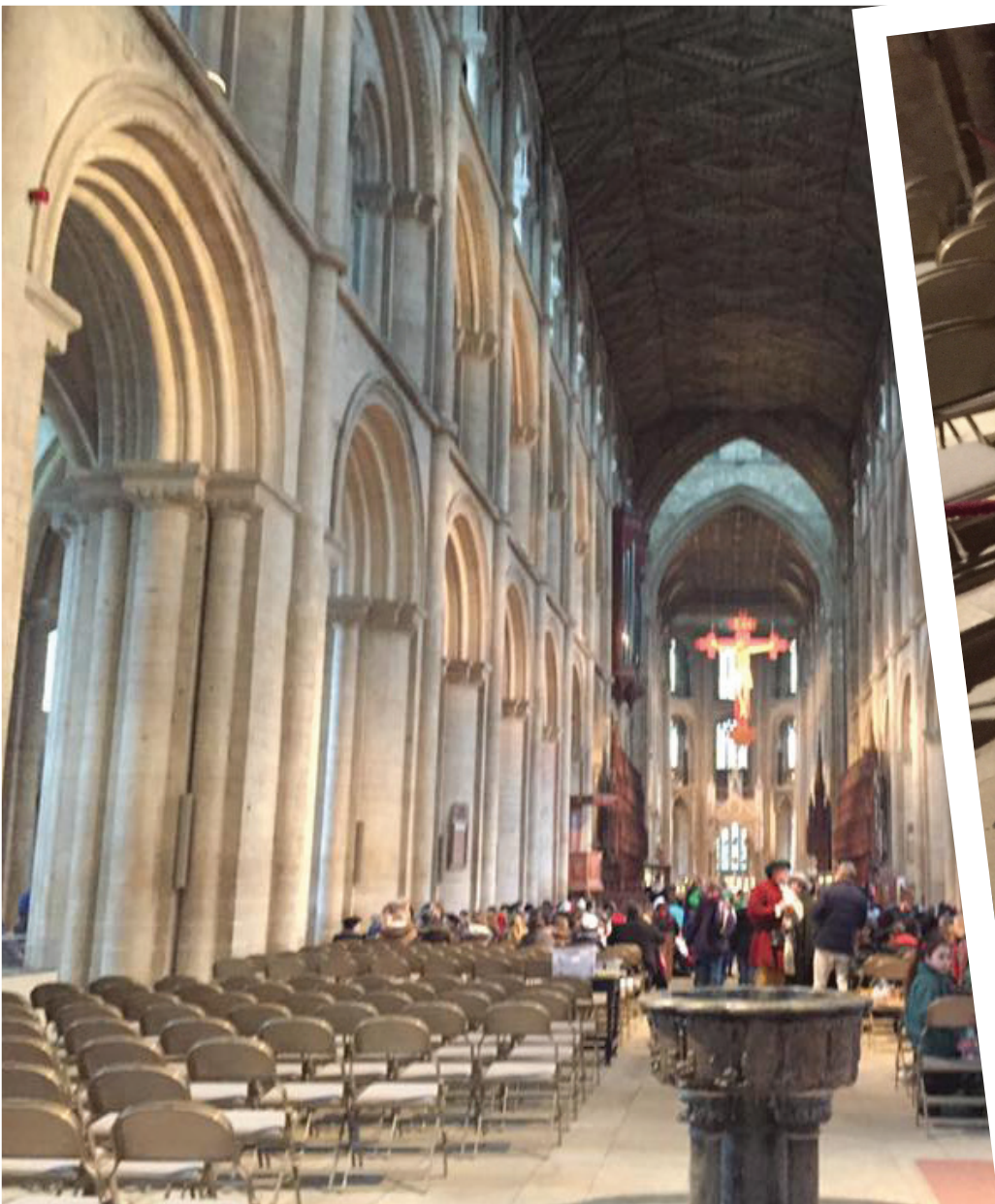
This and each object's story in the book is memorable, making this book an enjoyable and easy read.

The Tudors in 100 Objects gives readers an interesting take on the Tudor period; instead of just reciting facts and figures, it shows you what the rich and poor owned, how they would have used it etc. It is easy to read and can be read in sections, as a coffee table book or cover-to-cover. For those who read history books but long to see some of the things authors describe, this is the book for you. It is a beautiful and very well made book, perfect for anyone with an interest in Tudor history and/or social and cultural history. The only warning I would give is that it may make whoever reads it want to go out and see these objects in person!

CHARLIE FENTON

THE KATHERINE OF ARAGON FESTIVAL

Photos and report by Charlie Fenton



For the past few years, the Katharine of Aragon Festival has been hosted by Peterborough Cathedral to celebrate the life of the first of Henry VIII's queens. Katharine was buried in Peterborough Abbey, now Peterborough Cathedral, on 29th January 1536. She was buried as a princess dowager, not a queen, yet it is evident when you first step foot into the

Cathedral that they honour her as the queen she was.

The Festival ran from Thursday 26th January to Sunday 29th January, with several historians and authors taking part and events for the whole family. When I arrived on the morning of Friday 27th, the Cathedral was fit to burst with people, yet what stood out most was the amount of schoolchildren there were (**picture 1**). It was an amazing sight, as the children



were there to lay handmade wreaths on Katharine's grave, and it was nice to see them engaging with history instead of just reading about it in books. They had even drawn and made things for Katharine (**picture 2**), a heartfelt gesture, and were all dressed up to meet the Spanish Ambassador and local dignitaries as well, all in honour of Henry's discarded Spanish queen.

Katharine's grave itself is beautiful in its simplicity (**picture 3**). Despite her not being buried as a queen, the Cathedral later added the words 'Queen of England', and this particularly stands out among the flowers and pomegranates left for her. The pomegranate was her heraldic symbol and pomegranates are regularly placed on her grave by the public throughout the year. Next to her grave were several candles,





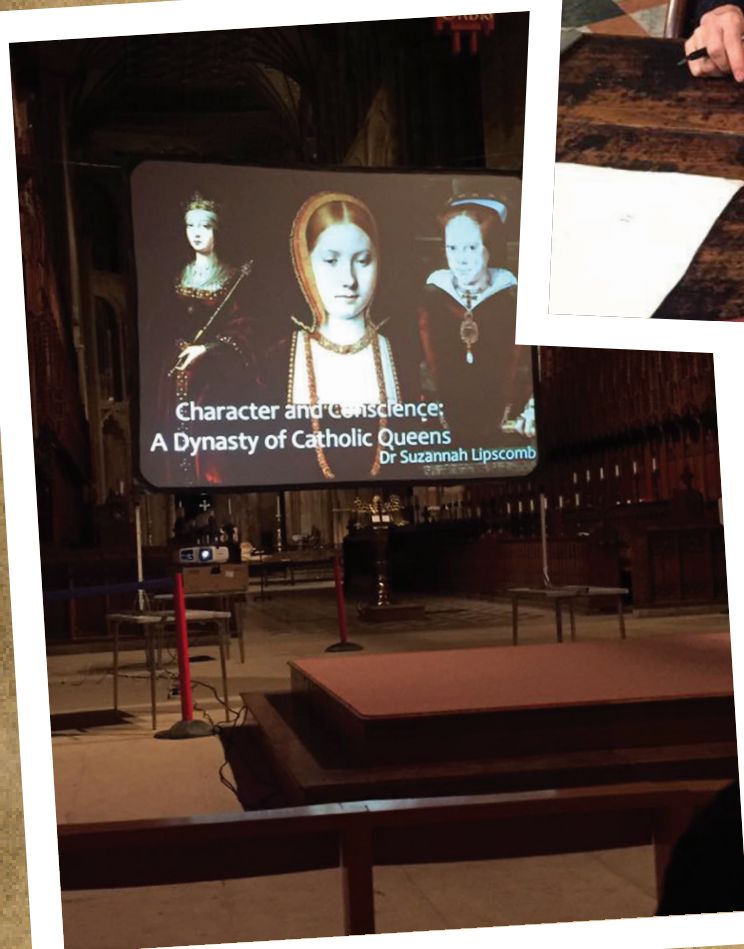
which people could light for Katharine, and I gladly lit one for her.

As well as the formal services in the Cathedral, the new Visitor Centre (opened in 2016) had a temporary exhibition, which told the story of Katharine's life, along with displaying a beautiful reproduction gown of the time (**picture 4**). It was hand stitched by Prior Attire using natural fabrics appropriate for the period and based on descriptions of one of Katharine's own gowns.

A floor above the exhibition was the room in which the Tudor pottage and ale supper was hosted. The room was the perfect setting and beautiful in

its simplicity, even more so with the few Tudor touches (**picture 5**). We sat, but soon had to stand for Katherine of Aragon (Gina from *Tudor Dreams Historical Costumier*) and her ladies in waiting. She apologised for the fact her husband was missing, apparently hunting – although she admitted she thought he was doing something else. Soon, Henry entered, with Anne Boleyn not long after (**picture 6**). Although Henry wasn't exactly accurate - he only really gained weight after the 1536 jousting accident - he still played him very well and his presence and voice filled the room, as most would imagine the real Henry would.

For those who bought the Tudor supper and lecture joint ticket, the royals led us back ready for Suzannah Lipscomb's talk. Lipscomb's talk was called *Character and Conscience: A Dynasty of Catholic Queens*, and explored the lives and similar traits of Isabella of Castile, Katherine of Aragon and Mary I, three generations of women (**picture 7**). The lives of these strong women and how they pass on these traits was explained very well by



Lipscomb.

She was engaging and kept the audience's attention well. After the talk, she very kindly signed books and took pictures with people (**picture 8**), even getting through a queue that almost stretched from the north to the south end of the Cathedral. She was patient and approachable, making it worth the wait to talk to her.

The second day of my stay there comprised mostly of visiting Peterborough Museum, which was



also taking part in the Katherine of Aragon Festival. It had a new exhibition on the Tudor period in which they displayed Tudor outfits, a copy of Mary Queen of Scots' death warrant and a book of hours, among many other things. In the exhibition room was Dave Tonge, author of the book *Tudor Tales* (reviewed in the April 2016 issue), telling some of the stories from his book as a traditional Tudor storyteller would. He had an audience of all ages and entertained them well, bringing history to life in front of our eyes (picture 9).

Throughout the Museum were several Tudor characters who were demonstrating different aspects of their

lives. This included demonstrations of Tudor cooking (which you could try yourself), women's lives, combat and arms, surgeons and remedies etc. Each character was approachable and informative, encouraging people to ask questions and take part. With crafts for families with young children, there was something there for everyone.

Overall, the Katherine of Aragon Festival was an exciting and interesting way to celebrate the life of the first of Henry VIII's wives. All of the days were full of activities, meaning that I would advise anyone wanting to go in the future to stay overnight to experience it all. It was great to see this amazing woman being appreciated by all ages, especially in this age full of technology and what feels like prioritising of other subjects in schools over history. Peterborough itself is a historic and beautiful area anyway, with the Festival being a good excuse to finally go and visit. The only regret I have is only going for two of the days (there were four in total), therefore missing some of the more religious aspects and Lauren Mackay's talk on Katherine and Eustace Chapuys. Luckily, I have heard her talk before, but she is great to see. The effort put in by all involved was obvious and I would encourage anyone to go if they have the chance. This is a yearly event and I look forward to seeing what they do next year.

CHARLIE FENTON

Book Now!



THE SPHERE OF LIGHT

THE BOLEYN SAGA AS NEVER TOLD BEFORE.

by

**Ann Henning Jocelyn
Countess of Roden**

**TO BE PRESENTED AS A REHEARSED READING AT THE
HOWARD THEATRE, DOWNING COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, ON
JULY 1ST, 2017, AT 4 PM AND 8 PM.**

TICKETS AT £12/10 FROM DOONREAGAN@EMAIL.COM

A NOTE FROM THE COUNTESS OF RODEN

My interest in the Boleyn family stems from the discovery that I am the wife and mother of two direct descendants of Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, son of Mary Boleyn and, presumably, King Henry VIII of England. Hunsdon, first cousin and presumed half-brother to Queen Elizabeth I, rose to eminence during his lifetime. As Lord Chamberlain, he was the patron of Shakespeare's company, The Lord Chamberlain's Men. On his death, he was given an impressive memorial in Westminster Abbey, and the Carey family remained close to the crown for centuries.

Having had my curiosity kindled by family sources and myth, I spent decades of research, reading all I could find of published material about the Boleyns. Like many others, I was intrigued by the mysteries surrounding this family: Why was Mary, the king's sweetheart, suddenly dropped without an explanation? Why were Thomas and George Boleyn, favourites of the king, ignominiously stripped of their high offices in late 1525, only to be gloriously reinstated a few months later? What drove the king to risk so much to make Anne his wife? Why did the ambitious George settle for a loveless marriage of little material or social benefit? Why were Anne and George and four of the king's friends and close associates executed, on apparently trumped-up charges of adultery, incest and treason? And what induced Jane, first to give fatal evidence against her own husband and sister-in-law, and, at a later date, to encourage Queen Katherine Howard to commit adultery, at the expense of her own head?

The various hypotheses put forward so far all failed to convince me. And then suddenly, to my great surprise, a breakthrough presented itself in the West of Ireland. A lecturer from Galway University mentioned in passing that, in the grounds of Clonony Castle in Co. Offaly, he had come across an old tombstone bearing the following inscription:

“HERE UNDER LEYS ELISABETH AND MARY BULLYN DAUGHTERS OF THOMAS BULLYN SON OF GEORGE BULLYN THE SON OF GEORGE BULLYN VISCOUNT ROCHFORD SON OF SIR THOMAS BULLYN ERLE OF ORMOND AND WILLSHEERE”

Another mystery: historians agree that no evidence exists of George and Jane Boleyn ever having had any offspring. One George Boleyn, documented in the late sixteenth century as Dean of Lichfield, has been dismissed as “some distant relation”. This tombstone, suggesting otherwise, led me to me to a highly plausible explanation that, amazingly, no one else seems to have explored. As a playwright, I chose to express my theory dramatically: *THE SPHERE OF LIGHT* is the result.

My Irish family is still in possession of the only known sixteenth-century painting of Mary Boleyn, as well as a rare oil portrait of Lord Hunsdon. The picture of Mary was stolen in 1990, in an aggravated burglary that cost my father-in-law his life. Twenty-three years later, in 2013, it surfaced in the catalogue of a Paris auction house. Scotland Yard and Interpol were alerted, but the consignor, a private French collector, claimed ownership under French law. It took my son a trip to Paris and some heart-rending negotiation to buy the picture back. Mary is now reunited with her son, tucked away in safe-keeping, though as I write, copies of their likenesses look down at me from the wall.

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THE TUDOR SOCIETY

Members' Bulletin

What a great magazine this has grown into. I am so happy that we now have so many amazing regular columnists in Tudor Life magazine, and then the extra special articles which add to it.

You might have missed an email from us recently, but we have set up a short member's questionnaire online where WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK about what we are doing as a society.

<https://www.tudorsociety.com/tudor-society-full-member-survey/>

This survey is for full members only, as it covers all of the activities that we do in the Tudor Society, not just the magazines. However, if you are a magazine-only subscriber, we STILL want to hear from you, so please email us if you have any suggestions, ideas or questions of your own!

Thank you so much for your continued support of the Tudor Society and the Tudor Life magazine!

TIM RIDGWAY

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



FROM THE SPICERY

Frontispiece to Dufour's
treatise on coffee, tea and
chocolate

WITH
RIOGNACH



ON CHOCOLATE

"THE NUT-BROWNE LASSES OF THE LAND, WHOM NATURE VAIL'D IN FACE AND HAND, ARE QUICKLY
BEAUTIES OF HIGH-RATE, BY ONE SMALL DRAUGHT OF CHOCOLATE."¹

HENRY HALL, 1660.

¹ Hall, H. *The Vertues of Chocolate, The East-India Drink*, Oxford, 1660.

With the Feast of Saint Valentine having come and gone, and with Easter looming on the horizon, I thought it might be fun to take a peek at the world of medieval and Tudor cocoa. Tonic, beauty treatment, love potion and status of conspicuous consumption all ground into one frothy, somewhat bitter hot drink.

At first glance, it would seem that cocoa falls outside the medieval and Tudor timeframe. In truth, however, it just squeaks in – literally. Owing to cocoa's New World roots, the good persons who have placed the reenactor's cookery bible, *A Boke of Gode Cookery*, on-line are adamant that the inclusion of reenactment feasts is a huge no-no.² However, we do know that the arch enemies of the Tudors, the Spanish, were serving up cocoa during the reign of Philip II (1527-1598).³ So my logic in looking at cocoa is this; if it was good enough for Philip

II, it was more than likely good enough for Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.

And now for a point of clarification; why 'cocoa' and not 'chocolate'? In the medieval and Tudor context what we are referring to is cocoa. The term 'chocolate' is both French and Spanish in origin and appears to refer to the treated cocoa must from which the hot drink was made. It was consumed a bit like a medicinal tonic, and apparently tasted as much: (ever recall being told as a child that taking medicine "was good for you")? The ladies of the Spanish court were apparently very fond of cocoa, but this may have more to do with the fact that they added sugar to it.⁴

The bean of *Theobroma Cacao* first made its appearance on the scene following the Hernando Cortez's return to Spain somewhere between 1527 and 1528. Cacao was very much marketed as a mysterious cure all, for those who were 'diseased' and were possessed of an 'inclination to be infirm'. I've included Henry Hall's glowing recommendation of cocoa, something I'm fairly certain that the makers of Cadbury's chocolate would be interested in.

2 Matterer, J. *A Boke of Gode Cookery*, <http://www.godecookery.com/how2cook/howto04.htm>, accessed 8th February 2017.

3 Coe, M. *The True History of Chocolate*, Horchow Auditorium, Dallas Museum of Art, 20th April 2006.

4 *ibid.*

THE VERTUES OF CHOCOLATE

East-India Drink.

*BY this pleasing drink health is preserved,
sicknesse diverted, It cures Consumptions
and Cough of the Lungs; it expells
poyson, cleanseth the teeth, and sweetneth
the Breath; provoketh Urine; cureth
the stone and strangury, maketh Fatt and
Corpulent, faire and aimeable, it cureth the
running of the Reins, with sundry other
desperate Diseases; It causeth Conception
according to these Verses,*

*Nor need the Women longer grieve,
Who spend their oyle yet not Conceive,
For 'tis a Help Immediate,
If such but Lick of Chocolate.*

*Beauty gaind and continued, as this verse
speaketh,*

*The Nut-Browne Lasses of the Land,
Whom Nature vail'd in Face and hand,
Are quickly Beauties of High-Rate,
By one small Draught of Chocolate.*

*It is impossible to innumerate all new and
admirable effects then producing every day
in such as drink it, therefore I'll leave the
Judgement of it, to those who daily make a
continuall prooffe of it.⁵*

5 Hall. *op. cit.*

If this was not enough to convince a potential consumer, Hall even gives the location where you could go to enjoy a cup – James Gough in Eastgate.⁶

OK, so how was cocoa made?

In short, it was a long and labour-intensive process.

Firstly, ripe pods had to be harvested from the cocoa tree, and their contents either spread out in the sun or placed in a vat and allowed to ferment. This process allowed the surrounding pulp to run off and leave the seed bare. The heat built up during this period of fermentation also prevented the seed germinating. An interesting fact is that the fermented cocoa pulp is apparently alcoholic – a win-win situation.⁷

These newly liberated seeds were then dried and roasted. The magic really begins to happen at this point. The bitter alkaloids in

the seeds were cooked off and the characters which we would associate with cocoa began to appear. The roasted and winnowed seeds were then ground down using a heated grinding stone and *ta da*, the cocoa mass was created!

The mass was shaped into little tablets and then dried in the sun. The Spanish also attempted to mimic the flavour of the indigenous spices originally added by Mesoamericans by adding their own familiar spices such as annatto (or achiote) for colour, cinnamon, and aniseed, almonds and orange flower water, and of course sugar. The tablets could also contain dried 'long red chillies' and cloves, and the seedpods of Bloodwood Tree. Bloodwood contains haematoxylin which is a natural dye, so I think that its addition to the cocoa tablets, along with annatto was more about improving the colour of the drink, rather than the flavour.

But we're not finished yet!

To make the drink, you had a couple of choices.

6 Hall. *ibid*

7 Hall. *ibid*

*"The Chocolate, being dissolved with cold water, and the scumme taken off, and put into another Vessell, the remainder is put upon the fire, with sugar, and when it is warme, then powre it upon the Scumme you took of before, and so drinke it."*⁸

To be honest, I'm not certain how this would have tasted, so I think I prefer the next recipe.

"The other is to warme the water; and then, when you have put it into a pot, or dish, as much Chocolate as you thinke fit, put in a little of the warme water and grinde it well with a molinet; and when it is well ground, put the rest of the warme water to it, and so drinke it with Sugar."

8 de Lara, M. "Physitian General for the Kingdome of Spaine", 1631.

9 de Lara. *ibid*.

For reference, a *molinet* is a small utensil not unlike a whisk. It is a wooden rod with several loosely fitting wooden disks. You'd put the *molinet* into the pot of cocoa, and twirl it between the palms of your hands to whisk the cocoa and water together until it becomes a deliciously silky smooth drink.

I've provided a link to a cooking show that demonstrates this process to create Mexican hot chocolate or *Cinco de Mayo*. <http://www.sbs.com.au/food/recipes/food-safaris-hot-chocolate>

All in all, I think that many Spanish ladies, and probably many of their Tudor counterparts, might possibly have become a little 'infirm' in nature, just so they could enjoy their daily fix of this mysterious sweet and spiced cure all.

Enjoy!.

RIOGHNACH O'GERAGHTY



MARCH'S ON THIS

1 March 1553 Edward VI opened Parliament. The King was ill at the time, so it was a much more low key ceremony than usual.	2 March 1619 Death of Anne of Denmark , consort of James VI and I, of dropsy and consumption.	3 March 1528 Marriage of Margaret Tudor , sister of Henry VIII and widow of James IV , and her third husband, Henry Stuart (Stewart), 1 st Lord Methven. She had divorced her second husband, Archibald Douglas , 6 th Earl of Angus, in 1527.	4 March 1526 Henry Carey , 1 st Baron Hunsdon, courtier and administrator, was born.
9 March 1566 David Rizzio , the private secretary of Mary, Queen of Scots was assassinated in front of Mary, who was heavily pregnant. Mary could not do anything to help him, as she had a pistol pointed at her. Rizzio was stabbed multiple times.	10 March 1524 King Henry VIII suffered a jousting accident after forgetting lower his visor in a joust against Charles Brandon .	11 March 1563 Death of Antoine de Noailles , French ambassador to the English court during the reign of Mary I .	12 March 1539 Thomas Boleyn , Earl of Wiltshire and Earl of Ormond died at Hever Castle, aged around sixty-two
16 March 1561 The body of Marie de Guise (Mary of Guise), mother of Mary, Queen of Scots , was put on a ship heading to France to be buried at Rheims.	17 March 1570 Death of William Herbert , 1 st Earl of Pembroke, who was married to Anne Parr , sister of Catherine Parr .	 David Rizzio	
21 March 1556 Archbishop Thomas Cranmer was burned at the stake in Oxford for heresy. His execution was a despicable act, in that it was unlawful because Cranmer had actually recanted five times. He should have been absolved, but he wasn't.	22 March 1519 Date given for the birth of Katherine Willoughby (married names Brandon and Bertie).		
27 March 1555 Burning of William Hunter , Protestant martyr. The nineteen year-old got into trouble when he was found reading the Bible.	28 March 1552 Death of John Skip , Bishop of Hereford. Skip is known for being the chaplain and almoner of Queen Anne Boleyn .	29 March 1551 The marriage of Mary Dudley and Henry Sidney . She is known for nursing Elizabeth I through smallpox in 1562.	30 March 1558 Mary I made her will, believing that she would soon give birth, and childbirth was a risky process.
			31 March 1553 Edward VI dissolved Parliament, after having opened it 1 st March. It was his last Parliament.

DAY IN TUDOR HISTORY

<p>5 March 1558</p> <p>Smoking tobacco was introduced in Europe by Francisco Fernandes.</p>	<p>6 March 1536</p> <p>Introduction into Parliament of the "<i>Act for the Suppression (or Dissolution) of the Lesser Monasteries</i>".</p>	<p>7 March 1530</p> <p>Pope Clement VII wrote to Henry VIII forbidding him to marry again, and threatening him with excommunication if he did.</p>	<p>8 March 1539</p> <p>Sir Nicholas Carew was beheaded on Tower Hill for treason.</p>
<p>13 March 1601</p> <p>Execution of Welshman Sir Gelly Meyrick at Tyburn for his part in the rebellion led by Robert Devereux.</p>	<p>14 March 1471</p> <p>Death of Sir Thomas Malory, known for his work "<i>Le Morte d'Arthur</i>", which he wrote in prison.</p>	 <p>Anne Parr</p>	<p>15 March 1532</p> <p>William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, criticised Henry VIII in the House of Lords.</p>
<p>18 March 1539</p> <p>Death of Sir Robert Wingfield, diplomat, probably in Calais.</p>	<p>19 March 1563</p> <p>Arthur Brooke died in the shipwreck of the <i>Greyhound</i>. Brooke is known for producing the first version of "<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>" in English.</p>		<p>20 March 1469</p> <p>Birth of Cecily, Viscountess Welles, third daughter of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville.</p>
<p>23 March 1540</p> <p>The Dissolution of Waltham Abbey, the last abbey to be dissolved by Henry VIII.</p>	<p>24 March 1603</p> <p>Queen Elizabeth I, daughter of Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII, died at Richmond Palace at the age of sixty-nine.</p>	<p>25 March 1571</p> <p>Roberto di Ridolfi left England with a commission to open negotiations to end the trade war.</p>	<p>26 March 1609</p> <p>Date of death for John Dee, adviser to Elizabeth I. (The traditional date for Dee's death is December 1608)</p>

FEAST DAYS

1 March – St David's Day

25 March – Lady Day, or the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin

29, 30 and 31 March – Borrowed Days

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~APRIL~

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