

Claire Ridgway23:59

Welcome to our February expert live chat. A big thank you to Natalie for joining us and for her excellent talk. Thank you to Tudor Society members for joining in too. Natalie is here to answer your questions on her talk on Anne Boleyn's early life, her research and books, so do join in and ask questions. We'll be giving away one of Natalie's books to one lucky chat participant at the end. I'm sure we'll get others joining in as we go. So, let's start talking about Anne Boleyn!

Libby23:59

Hi Claire.

Natalie Grueninger0:00

Thanks for the lovely intro, Claire!

Lorna Wanstall0:00

Natalie, was Anne afraid of fire?

Natalie Grueninger0:00

Lorna, what an interesting question to begin with! I don't think I've ever read any contemporary source to suggest that. Have you?

Charlotte Donovan0:01

Hi everyone!

Roland Hui0:01

Natalie - do you go for the 1507 or 1501 date as her year of birth?

Claire Ridgway0:01

Hi Charlotte!

Charlotte Donovan0:01

Hi Claire!

ADMIN Tim0:01

Hi Charlotte.

Charlotte Donovan0:02

Hi Tim!

Natalie Grueninger0:02

Hi Roland! I believe that a birth date of c. 1501 makes more sense with what we know of Anne's life.

Charlotte Donovan0:02

I was interested in that too, Natalie 😊

Lorna Wanstall0:02

No I haven't Natalie it's just something that bugs me from the 1970's series.. don't know why

Natalie Grueninger0:03

What's the series called, Lorna?

Roland Hui0:05

I think Lorna is referring to the tv series where Dorothy Tutin (as Anne) expressed her fear of execution by fire if it came to that.

Lorna Wanstall0:05

The six wives series starring the wonderful Keith Michell

Lorna Wanstall0:05

Yes Roland

Claire Ridgway0:05

Which question about Anne Boleyn would you like to find a definitive answer to?

Natalie Grueninger0:05

Oh, I have seen the series but it's been a while!

Charlotte Donovan0:06

I was interested about the year of birth one 😊.

Roland Hui0:06

Natalie - was it always easy to trace Anne' whereabouts for your book?

Lorna Wanstall0:06

Claire I think my question would be what happened to your B Necklace Anne?

ADMIN Tim0:07

I've always wondered (and Claire is going to kill me on this one!) why people go for the 1501 date OR the 1507 date, but none of the years in between. Why do people only argue about the those two dates?

Natalie Grueninger0:08

It wasn't, Roland. Some places took a lot of digging! Nothing is ever simple when it comes to Anne Boleyn...

Lorna Wanstall0:08

Did Anne go to France, with Mary Tudor, when she was married to the French King?

Natalie Grueninger0:08

Tim, I think I can answer that!

Claire Ridgway0:08

For those of you who haven't managed to watch Natalie's excellent talk yet, here's the link for later - don't pop off now! 😊

Roland Hui0:08

Tim - 1507 was mentioned in William Camden's bio of Queen Elizabeth

Adrienne Dillard0:08

That's a good question, actually. I've never even thought of that! Maybe it was 1503 😊

Lorna Wanstall0:09

This is what Makes Anne so fascinating Natalie, she was an amazing woman, with somany different facets.

Roland Hui0:09

and backed by Mary I's former maid of honor Jane Dormer

Natalie Grueninger0:09

The 1507 date was written in the margin of Camden's Annals, I think. I believe that's the only reference to a 1507 birth date and then a number of writers/historians followed suit.

Charlotte Donovan0:09

She is by far, my favourite wife of Henry's. She truly was fascinating 😊

Roland Hui0:10

I think 1501 was made up by Victorian historians based on various pieces of evidence

Claire Ridgway0:10

The link again, it didn't come through for some reason <https://www.tudorsociety.com/expert-talk-natalie-grueninger-early-life-anne-boleyn/>

Natalie Grueninger0:10

She was fascinating, Charlotte!

Ceri Creffield0:10

Hi Natalie. What was the highlight of your research on Anne?

Charlotte Donovan0:11

Natalie, do you believe Anne did commit incest with her brother George? Or do you believe she was framed?

Adrienne Dillard0:12

If you could banish one myth about Anne, which one would it be? Which one annoys you most?

Natalie Grueninger0:12

Hi Ceri, there were so many! By following in her footsteps and standing where she'd actually stood, seeing things she'd seen etc. I felt like I came to know her more.

Lorna Wanstall0:12

Charlotte Anne is my heroine, if you think about it Anne planted the seed to woman's equality long before Emmaline Pankhurst

Ceri Creffield0:12

Wonderful to be able to do that!

Roland Hui0:12

Natalie - why do you think it was Anne - even though she was a younger daughter - sent to the Low Countries to serve Margaret of Austria - instead of her elder sister Mary? I think it was because Anne was the brighter one.

Charlotte Donovan0:13

100% agree Lorna, 100%,

Natalie Grueninger0:13

Charlotte, I don't for a second believe that Anne was guilty of incest. There were a number of factors that led to her downfall and I think the incest was thrown in to completely blacken her name.

Libby0:13

Natalie, which are the places in France which have links to Anne?

Charlotte Donovan0:13

i completely agree Natalie! So pleased you said that 😊.

Natalie Grueninger0:14

Roland, I agree with you. I think Anne was a precocious child and her family must have seen great potential in her.

Charlotte Donovan0:14

There was far too much political struggle going on and there was so much thrown in to blacken her name, for sure.

Lorna Wanstall0:15

Totally true, the only thing Anne was guilty of was falling in love with H8 and that was the thing that destroyed her in the end.

Charlotte Donovan0:16

Totally and utterly agree, Lorna. She fell in love with a man who was far too powerful in his time. In the end it was the end of her 😞.

Natalie Grueninger0:16

Libby, there are a number of palaces in the Loire Valley where we believe Anne spent time with the French court. For eg. Chateau d'Amboise and Le Chateau de Blois.

Stephen Sigler0:16

It's curious to me if Sir Thomas Wyatt / Poet actually connected with Anne, or was it simply his desire for her that she never returned favor or love.

Libby0:17

I would love to visit those. I have added them to my "places to visit" list!

Laurie Duerr0:17

I love those chateaus! And its amazing to think that Anne spent time at them!

Roland Hui0:17

Might Anne have spent time at Chenonceau - what a beautiful castle!

Charlotte Donovan0:17

I think she loved the affection she received from Wyatt, I don't know whether he truly connected with her

Lorna Wanstall0:18

Libby have only seen pictures on Amboise, but I think it is beautiful, can fully understand why Mary QoS loved it so

Elizabeth Goodman0:18

Natalie, why was the evidence brought against Anne at trial so poorly thought out (she was accused of adultery at a certain place when she wasn't even there)? Was she always going to be found guilty so it didn't matter or some other reason?

Natalie Grueninger0:18

Anne also stayed at the Hotel de Cluny, which you can visit today.

Libby0:19

Yes Lorna. Poor Anne and Mary...if only they had stayed there!

Libby0:20

Natalie, is the Hotel de Cluny also in the Loire Valley?

Lorna Wanstall0:21

Elizabeth, H8 wanted rid of Anne he didn't care how Cromwell did it or what lies he told H8 just wanted rid of Anne

Natalie Grueninger0:21

Great question, Elizabeth! Like most treason trials in Tudor times, there was almost no chance of being acquitted. The accused only discovered the exact charges laid against them at the trial, so they had no time to even prepare a defence.

Ceri Creffield0:21

Was there any one particular place where you felt Anne's presence more than any other, Natalie?

Natalie Grueninger0:21

Libby, the Hotel du Cluny is in Paris. It houses a wonderful museum.

Lorna Wanstall0:21

If the case against Anne was heard today it would be thrown out of court.

Claire Ridgway0:21

The Hotel du Cluny is now the Musée national du Moyen Âge in Paris and is well worth a visit.

Charlotte Donovan0:21

Its such a shame that certain figures were so determined to get rid of her that they had to accuse her of such things.

Lorna Wanstall0:22

H8 also tried to level a charge of witchcraft against Anne as well, but H8 couldn't get it to stick

Julie Lindner-Reid0:23

Claire--its a great museum isn't it? Loved it there

Libby0:23

Thank you, Natalie...I have added the Hotel de Cluny to my list!

Charlotte Donovan0:23

because he felt like she had put him "under her spell" so so ridiculous. 🙄

Claire Ridgway0:23

There's no evidence that I've found of Henry trying to get her charged with witchcraft, Lorna.

Claire Ridgway0:23

Sorry to butt in Natalie!

Lorna Wanstall0:24

Ah right my apologies

Natalie Grueninger0:24

Ceri, I felt Anne's presence quite strongly at Hever and Hampton Court. Both wonderful locations!

Claire Ridgway0:24

No need to apologise Lorna!

Ceri Creffield0:24

Yes, lovely places.

Adrienne Dillard0:24

We are going to Hever in October, I'm really excited about it. Will be my first time there!

Charlotte Donovan0:25

Hampton Court makes me feel so overcome with Anne's presence. It's a beautiful place.

Natalie Grueninger0:25

That's okay, Claire! Yes, no charges of witchcraft.

Adrienne Dillard0:25

Anything in particular I should make sure to see?

Charlotte Donovan0:25

and Hever was just as wonderful. Two truly beautiful places.

Claire Ridgway0:25

Don't miss out on the church just outside!

Lorna Wanstall0:26

Yes I'm certainly going to have to prod and nag the Dinosaur into taking me to Hever this year, been wanting to go there for ages.

Laurie Duerr0:26

Adrienne, be sure to walk around all of the grounds around the castle, they're really lovely! And makes you think of Anne!

Libby0:26

Was there any particular object or sight that especially moved you at Hever or Hampton Court?

Adrienne Dillard0:26

Claire - Sandi and I are planning on taking in a service there on Sunday!

Natalie Grueninger0:26

Hello Adrienne! Yes, make sure you visit the church outside Hever where Thomas Boleyn is buried. I missed it on my first visit!

Julie Lindner-Reid0:26

Natalie--perhaps a silly question, but... do you feel Henry ever loved Anne? Or was it just infatuation coupled with wanting what he 'couldn't have'?

Claire Ridgway0:26

How wonderful, Adrienne!

Charlotte Donovan0:26

The bedroom in Hever castle where Henry is meant to have stayed and also the court yard, it is as if you can see them both stood there talking.

Adrienne Dillard0:27

Yes, we are so excited! We made sure to plan to be there on a Sunday morning so we could!

Ceri Creffield0:27

Anne's book of hours at Hever is pretty special.

Natalie Grueninger0:27

I think he did love her, Julie, but I think his old paranoia got in the way. Let's also remember that Henry VIII was a medieval king. We cannot judge him by our standards.

Claire Ridgway0:28

Will you have a car, Adrienne? The church at Penshurst is little Thomas Boleyn's resting place and is only a few miles away.

Julie Lindner-Reid0:28

Agreed. I've just never quite been able to suss out whether I think they actually loved each other or not. I vacillate between 'of course' and 'no way'

Charlotte Donovan0:28

He was like his father in that aspects, they both worried about losing their crown through other people coming to take it :/.

Roland Hui0:29

As beautiful as Hever Castle is inside, the whole interior is a Victorian/Edwardian reconstruction by Lord Astor. Hever at one point was so dilapidated, it was used as a farmhouse/barn.

Lorna Wanstall0:29

I don't think H8 was capable of loving anyone else but himself, he was so puffed up in his smokebox with his own ego. But I believe he enjoyed the thrill of the chase with Anne, but once he had her he started to lose interest

Natalie Grueninger0:29

Also Julie, I think Henry was a master of self-deception. He probably believed that Anne was guilty and deserving of her punishment.

Julie Lindner-Reid0:29

Charlotte---and his daughter, to an extent

Elizabeth Goodman0:29

I think H8 accident changed him and he was never the same again!

Julie Lindner-Reid0:30

Natalie---absolutely! I can see him convincing himself of whatever necessary in order to make things go more easily for him.

Lorna Wanstall0:30

Elizabeth I don't think it was just his accident that changed him.

Charlotte Donovan0:30

Julie - yes Elizabeth could be said to have been the same!

Adrienne Dillard0:30

Claire - I'm not sure, but if we do have a car, I will make sure to visit there!

Charlotte Donovan0:30

I think that Henry became a little more of a "tyrant" after his accident in 1536 though

Laurie Duerr0:31

Natalie, do you think that it was hard for Anne to eventually expel her sister from court? Given that they were likely pretty close when they were growing up?

Ceri Creffield0:31

I think the accident was one of many things but it must have reminded him of his own mortality and lack of a male heir.

Lorna Wanstall0:31

I think he was tyrannical from the outset of his reign to be honest it just wasn't obvious until his jousting fall

Natalie Grueninger0:32

I think Henry VIII was always unpredictable and dangerous but this side of him was enhanced by the accident and chronic pain that he suffered later in life.

Charlotte Donovan0:32

Ceri - he had more time to think about it all I think, for he would occupy his time hunting or jousting, so when he could no longer do the both as well as he could before, I think he took a bit more of a look on his life and what it was to become

Charlotte Donovan0:33

100% agree Natalie 😊

Charlotte Donovan0:34

Natalie - do you believe that Henry did grow tired of Anne once he got what he wanted? Or was he just swayed from her by the people surrounding him at court with their opinions?

Natalie Grueninger0:35

One of Henry's first acts as king was to execute his father's trusted advisors.

Lorna Wanstall0:35

He had the Duke of Buckingham, his friend of many years executed on very little evidence. More and Fisher again his friends and mentors of many years executed just because they wouldn't sign a bit of paper. Those deaths I believe played on his conscious for ever more as did the death of Wolsey

Julie Lindner-Reid0:35

I know I said it before, but chronic pain can (and does) fundamentally change you. And especially for someone of Henry's mentality, not being the 'best' at everything anymore can really shake you.

Charlotte Donovan 0:35

I definitely feel the death of more affected his conscious, so so much.

Natalie Grueninger 0:36

I totally agree with you, Julie. I've seen first hand what chronic pain can do to a person, especially if not managed at all.

Charlotte Donovan 0:36

More*

Lorna Wanstall 0:36

Agreed Julie, chronic pain can lead to bouts of depression and erratic behaviour

Ceri Creffield 0:36

Not to mention the frustration of enforced inactivity.

Julie Lindner-Reid 0:36

Exactly. And he'd have had almost zero options for managing it. I totally feel his pain.

Charlotte Donovan 0:36

Definitely! it must have been awful for him to be so restricted all of a sudden.

Natalie Grueninger 0:37

Charlotte, I think that Henry believed that no male heir with Anne meant that God disapproved of his marriage. To make matters worse, Anne was not the quiet, submissive sixteenth century wife that Henry was probably expecting!

Adrienne Dillard 0:37

Ooh, I have chronic pain, I wonder what I could get away with! LOL But yes, it really does have an affect on your personality...however I think there has to be an element of that type of behavior beforehand. The chronic pain just emphasized it.

Charlotte Donovan 0:38

No she definitely wasn't how a sixteenth century wife was truly meant to be, she spoke her mind didn't she. She stood her ground. Something, as you said, that Henry was no doubt not expecting.

Lorna Wanstall 0:38

Charlotte that the frustrating part of having chronic pain. you get angry with yourself because you can't do something that just a few years ago you could do with ease.

Charlotte Donovan 0:39

Lorna, totally agree. It must feel slightly degrading and so frustrating. ./ can only imagine how he must have felt.

Adrienne Dillard 0:39

^ yep Lorna! And even more so for Henry because he was incredibly athletic. He had to change his entire behavior.

Libby 0:40

Yes, I totally relate to that, since my kneecap shattered into bits. But I don't think it has made me a bad person.

Lorna Wanstall0:40

Natalie agreed David Starkey said that Anne's demanding behaviour was accepted when she was a queen in waiting but H8 found it very trying when they were married

Elizabeth Goodman0:40

Exactly, Lorna, it wears you down after a while - and I'm not trying to rule a kingdom!

Lorna Wanstall0:40

Poor Libby that must have been terrible.

Natalie Grueninger0:41

Exactly, Lorna. A "mistress" is permitted a certain amount of freedom, whereas a wife and especially a queen is expected to conform.

Charlotte Donovan0:41

I think when she was a queen in waiting Henry found it an exciting personality trait, but after a while with such a demanding personality for him that must have gotten so tiresome.

Julie Lindner-Reid0:41

Adrienne--me too <gentle hugs> I think you're right--those elements have to already be there. But once you're spending all your energy just trying to perform basic functions, it gets harder to control the 'extra' stuff, like your temper in Henry's case.

Libby0:41

As a strong, intelligent woman it must have been so hard to be so submissive.

Charlotte Donovan0:41

I'm sorry to hear that Libby 🥺. That must be incredibly painful for you.

Natalie Grueninger0:42

Yes, their relationship was tempestuous to say the least.

Claire Ridgway0:42

Ouch, that sounds horrible, Libby, poor you!

Ceri Creffield0:42

Sorry to hear that Libby.

Charlotte Donovan0:42

Yes I can imagine them both not backing down in a confrontation.

Lorna Wanstall0:42

In H8 case his illnesses, were all the more frustrating because as King people would have almost seen him as a hero if that the the right words. so going from Hero to zero must have really Narked H8

Laurie Duerr0:42

Natalie, does your research support that Anne and Queen Claude became good friends, when she was at the French court?

Natalie Grueninger0:42

Absolutely, Libby! Anne was fiercely intelligent.

Julie Lindner-Reid0:43

Yeah, I think Henry expected she'd turn into that submissive, mild wife once they were married-- and was genuinely shocked when she didn't.

Ceri Creffield0:43

I doubt Anne was good at being sympathetic about Henry's infidelities.

Adrienne Dillard0:44

gentle hugs to both you and Libby, Julie! Yes, it really can be a struggle and does affect your mood. I think that some people can adapt much easier than others though. Henry was probably one of those people that just couldn't adapt and it took its toll. Plus he was already a bit dangerous to begin with, so that was not in his favor.

Ceri Creffield0:44

Infirmities predictive text!

Charlotte Donovan0:44

I think he felt he could turn her into a submissive, mild wife from day one. But, when it didn't happen I think a little reality hit home.

Julie Lindner-Reid0:44

Ceri--I mean either could be right though! lol

Lorna Wanstall0:44

Ceri No she wasn't she ranted a little at him, and H8 basically told her to shut her eyes as her betters had done.. Red rag to a bull comes to mind

Natalie Grueninger0:44

Laurie, they were of about the same age and spent many years serving her and was privy to all her martial ups and downs etc. So I think it's very likely that a friendship formed.

Charlotte Donovan0:45

Definite red rag to a bull I think, Lorna

Libby0:45

I read that Anne sent Henry a love token as a symbol of her submission: a diamond and a ship in which the damsel is tossed about!

Charlotte Donovan0:45

I read the same, Libby!

Lorna Wanstall0:45

I believe Anne was so upset at one lady who had caught the eye of H8 that Jane her sister in law gave the woman a slap

Charlotte Donovan0:46

:o I have never heard this, that would of been quite something to see though I'm sure.

Libby0:46

Thank you so much for the gentle hugs! I was in hospital a lot from 1998 to 2002. It certainly changed my life!

Natalie Grueninger0:47

Yes, Anne did send Henry letters and token before their marriage.

Natalie Grueninger0:48

I'm sorry to hear, Libby. Sending you love across the miles!

Charlotte Donovan0:48

Natalie - what other tokens did she send?

Libby0:48

Thank you!

Adrienne Dillard0:48

Lorna, I wish we knew what Jane did! Chapuys didn't give us enough details! I don't know that I've ever read that Jane slapped her, though. She maybe wanted to 🤔

Natalie Grueninger0:48

I'd have to look it up, Charlotte. Sorry!

Charlotte Donovan0:49

Don't apologise Natalie! 😊 I was just intrigued 😊

Lorna Wanstall0:49

Yes Libby I know that one, although my problems began in 85, lets just say after a lot of operations and 2 years of being unable to walk I finally managed to get back onto my feet. It's all catching up with menow though so I hve a morphine patch to help with the pain

Libby0:49

It is good that Henry was very concerned about Anne when she had the sweating sickness.

Charlotte Donovan0:50

So sorry to hear that Lorna 😞.

Natalie Grueninger0:50

Yes, he was, Libby. Shows he had a caring side under all that pomp!

Libby0:50

Sending gentle hugs across the miles to you Lorna.

Lorna Wanstall0:52

Adrienne If Jane did slap the other woman she really did take one hell of a risk cause she could have easily been sent from the court if she was caught or it was reported

Libby0:52

Yes Natalie. I like it when I spot the occasional good feature!

Natalie Grueninger0:52

Ha, ha! Yes, proves he was human after all. 😊

Charlotte Donovan0:52

I'm going to head off now guys. Natalie, thank you so much for tonight 😊. I have loved chatting to you. And to all of you! And thank you also to Claire and Tim 😊. See you all next time 😊 xx

Natalie Grueninger0:53

Thanks for joining in, Charlotte!

Claire Ridgway0:53

Night, Charlotte! Sleep well x

Adrienne Dillard0:53

Bye Charlotte!

Libby0:53

Goodnight Charlotte.

Lorna Wanstall0:53

The point s with Pain is that you should ever let it get the better of you, I'm a stubborn old cuss and refuse point blank to allow it to rule my life.

Lorna Wanstall0:53

Good night Charlotte Xx

Natalie Grueninger0:54

Good for you, Lorna! That's the spirit.

Lorna Wanstall0:55

How many times do you believe Anne was pregnant

Natalie Grueninger0:57

I think it was 3 times from memory, Lorna.

Lorna Wanstall0:57

How many months pregnant was Anne with the second baby when she lost it

Libby0:58

Yes. She was pregnant in 1534 and had a miscarriage in 1536.

Lorna Wanstall0:59

I depends on what you read, but some schools of thought say the second child lived long enough to at least be named.

Natalie Grueninger0:59

In researching our book, Sarah Morris and I concluded that Anne's second pregnancy ended in a stillbirth. It was all kept very quiet for a number of reasons.

Roland Hui0:59

The 1534 pregnancy was very mysterious - it might have been a 'false pregnancy' (like Mary Tudor's).

Claire Ridgway0:59

Our hour is up! Thank you so much, Natalie, for giving up time on your Sunday morning to chat with us. Thank you, everyone, for joining in and asking such wonderful questions. It's been fun as usual. Enjoy the rest of the weekend!

ADMIN Tim1:00

Thanks all for coming tonight! We'd like to announce that Ceri is tonight's winner of a book by Natalie. Ceri - I'll be in touch with you to find out which book you would like. Thanks EVERYONE for such a wonderful chat this evening. Feel free to keep chatting if you want to.

Natalie Grueninger1:00

Thank you everyone! Tim and Claire thanks for inviting me to chat!

Laurie Duerr1:00

Thank you Natalie, for your wonderful insights about Anne!

Natalie Grueninger1:00

Congratulations Ceri!

Ceri Creffield1:00

Lovely, thanks Claire! And thanks Natalie too.

ADMIN Tim1:00

Thank you Natalie!

Thank you Natalie!

Elizabeth Goodman1:01

Good night everyone, thanks for tonight!

Lorna Wanstall1:01

Thank you Natalie, please feel free to drop into the forum and make a comment on any post that tickles your fancy.

Ceri Creffield1:01

Goodnight everyone.

Natalie Grueninger1:01

Thank you Lorna!

Adrienne Dillard1:01

Thank you Natalie! Good night all!

Claire Ridgway1:02

Congratulations to Ceri! Thanks everyone. Good night/evening/morning! xxx

Lorna Wanstall1:02

Right just going to have a nice warm milk with Nutmeg in and then climb the wooden hill. Take care and keep safe everyone Xx

Laurie Duerr1:02

Thanks as always, Claire and Tim!

Libby1:03

Thank you Natalie. Thank you Claire and Tim. It has been lovely.