

Welcome to this evening's live chat with historian Lauren Mackay. I'm sure we'll get more members joining in as we go on. Please feel free to ask Lauren questions about the Boleyn men, her books or research. Lauren, your talk was excellent, thank you so much.

Lauren Mackay23:57

Thank you for having me!

Lauren Mackay23:58

I saw from the comments that people were very interested in the real Boleyn men.

Laurie Duerr23:58

Hi Lauren! yes, really enjoyed your talk, and I agree that especially George gets a tough reputation in the mainstream culture

Claire Ridgway23:58

I'll kick off, shall I? I was wondering about your views on Jane Boleyn, Lauren. Do you see her as having a part in bringing George and Anne down in 1536?

Claire Ridgway23:59

Hi Roland!

Lauren Mackay23:59

I don't at all, I do feel that the marriage started out well, but it became a fractious relationship. However, I do not believe she acted against George. The women who testified against Anne and George were described as maids..Jane was no maid.

Roland Hui23:59



Lauren Mackay0:00

I think she felt it was hard to compete with her sister in law, certainly

Lorna Wanstall0:00

Hi everyone

Lauren Mackay0:00

Welcome!

Claire Ridgway0:00

Hi Lorna! Hi RealTudorLady!

Claire Ridgway0:01

Thank you, Lauren!

Laurie Duerr0:01

Its a very good point, Lauren. But there were also advantages for Jane being married to the brother the queen of course!

Roland Hui0:01

Was a certain George Boleyn, Dean of Lichfield, supposedly the illegitimate child of GB, or just a relative?

Lorna Wanstall0:01

Lauren what sort of relationship do you think George and Jane had

RealTudorLady0:01

Hello everyone. Hello Lauren and Claire.

Lauren Mackay0:01

Absolutely...it was an arranged marriage, but it showed every promise of being successful.

Lauren Mackay0:02

To answer Roland first, I believe he was a relative, I don't believe that myth!

Lorna Wanstall0:03

I personally feel that George and Jane relationship was one of mutual affection

RealTudorLady0:03

I would like to ask about the charges of incest and the origin of them. Whose idea do you think it was and why did they use this against Anne and George?

Ceri Creffield0:03

Evening all.

Lauren Mackay0:03

Lorna, I think they started well, but it became very strained...and then when Jane publicly protested and supported Mary, there was a major breakdown. In a way, if Henry's affair with Anne had never occurred, I believe it would have grown into a successful partnership.

Claire Ridgway0:04

Hi Ceri!

Lauren Mackay0:04

I get the incest question a lot! Maybe it says more about Cromwell...I mean it was so unheard of, such a depraved accusation..I think it was designed to take the Boleyn name beyond the point of no return.

Lorna Wanstall0:05

But I believe Jane had some respect for Anne as she put her courtly career on the line when she slapped the lady in waiting who caught Henry's eye

Lauren Mackay0:06

Yes, but it kind of backfired! I think she felt a bit abandoned by Anne and that grew into resentment

Lauren Mackay0:07

But as I said, there is not enough evidence to suggest she then moved against George and Anne in such a way

RealTudorLady0:07

Thanks Lauren, I agree it really made them out to be capable of anything. I was asking because I recently heard somewhere that it may have been suggested by Charles Brandon because of his arguments with Anne before her marriage when she said he was too close to his daughter

Lorna Wanstall0:08

Anne and George were exceptional when it came to their learning and I feel that Jane was not as educated so perhaps felt that a little out of her depth when it came to conversation with them

Lauren Mackay0:08

She certainly made the suggestion that Brandon had "criminal intercourse" with his daughter, but I don't know that Brandon and Cromwell would have had a chat about that

Ceri Creffield0:09

Would it not have been unusual for a wife to turn publicly against her husband also?

RealTudorLady0:09

Cheers.

Lauren Mackay0:09

Lorna, perhaps, but Jane's own father was much like Thomas Boleyn. A gifted ambassador, translator and linguist...we don't know enough about Jane to say with certainty that she couldn't keep up.

Claire Ridgway0:09

What do you think about the idea that there was some kind of separation between Thomas and Elizabeth after the fall of their children and that's why she was at Baynard's Castle and was buried at Lambeth?

Lauren Mackay0:10

I don't believe it at all, Lambeth was customary for Howards who died in the capital. Many Howard women were buried in the Howard vault.

Lorna Wanstall0:11

I'm inclined to think that when Jane was questioned by Cromwell what she said was twisted and turned into something more sinister by Cromwell.

Lauren Mackay0:11

As to why she was in London...well that wasn't out of the ordinary, she may well have been visiting friends or family, and we know she was ill..I don't see it as enough evidence of a rift

Lauren Mackay0:11

Lorna, possibly, if she said anything

Claire Ridgway0:12

Yes, I think it's a leap and reading too much into it. Thanks!

Anthony Hillman0:12

Sorry is the Holbein drawing labelled Jane Parker supposedly Jane Boleyn???

Lauren Mackay0:13

I think people look for a rift between Thomas and his wife in the quest for evidence that she blamed him

Lorna Wanstall0:13

Claire this is something I have often wondered. How did Thomas and Elizabeth get on after the deaths of Anne and George?

Lauren Mackay0:13

*quest

Roland Hui0:14

Lauren - Jane Parker's father Lord Morley was a very sophisticated and educated man, but it seems that Jane did not share in his intellectual interests and pursuits - do you think that is fair to say?

Lauren Mackay0:14

We don't have enough evidence to make a firm judgement, but they both stayed at Hever for some time, and Thomas was obliged to return to court for various occasions.. then Elizabeth returned to court as well eventually. I think they were both devastated, but I don't see evidence of resentment.

RealTudorLady0:15

The early career of Thomas Boleyn as a special envoy in Flanders fascinated me in your talk, Lauren, as it went on and on for over a year. The Archduchess had a real balancing act with the Emperor hunting and playing for time as he was also looking at an alliance with France. I found Thomas used his wits a bit, coming home and back and really got on well with Margaret. Of course he was able to use the time to get to know her better and to secure a place for Anne.

Lauren Mackay0:15

Roland, well how can we know for sure? She didn't write with an eye to posterity and it's hard to get a fix on her interests and her intellectual level

Laurie Duerr0:15

And neither of them had any inclination to get in touch with Mary, their only living child at that point?

Lauren Mackay0:16

Absolutely! Margaret was a FAR superior negotiator, she was integral to that treaty, and this was Thomas' first embassy....he was totally thrown into the deep end

Lauren Mackay0:16

But we can tell that Margaret thought very highly of him, and he accompanied her to Antwerp on several occasions...a very interesting and sophisticated city at the time

Ceri Creffield0:16

he seems to have been equal to the task though!

Lorna Wanstall0:17

I don't believe Jane said anything about Anne or George, but people believed she had. She must have had some courage as their would have been people at court after the murder of Anne and George (I say murder because IMO that's what it was) who would have viewed Jane with suspicion and no doubt their was a lot of Chinese whispers about her from the other ladies in waiting

Lauren Mackay0:17

Laurie, we know that Thomas and Mary reconciled, and as I discuss in my book, I discovered an indenture between Henry VIII and Mary and her husband days after her father's death...Thomas provided for her

Lauren Mackay0:18

Ceri, he was a fast learner!

RealTudorLady0:18

His experience with Margaret certainly would have done his career good as well. It shows how much of a talented man he was and how skilled he was.

Lauren Mackay0:18

Lorna, I agree, her involvement is just not grounded in evidence

Lorna Wanstall0:18

Real Tudor Lady I believe Thomas B was also part of the entourage that took Margaret Tudor to Scotland when she married James 4th

Lauren Mackay0:19

It is also interesting that he was the most inexperienced of the lot, and yet Margaret singled him out. The reports begin with Thomas in the background, and slowly he emerges as the only one who seemed to know what on earth was going on. Wingfield just upped and left for a pilgrimage.

Lauren Mackay0:19

Lorna, he was!

RealTudorLady0:19

Yes, he was one of the gentlemen who went with Margaret to Scotland.

Lauren Mackay0:20

Thomas was involved in every major event from 1501.. weddings, births, and funerals

Lorna Wanstall0:20

Did either Elizabeth or Thomas ever spend any time with their granddaughter Elizabeth and did either of them leave anything in their wills to her

Lauren Mackay0:21

Thomas did leave certain properties which he intended to be passed to his granddaughter

Lauren Mackay0:21

as to time spent...well we can only speculate

Lauren Mackay0:21

I assume so!

Lauren Mackay0:22

I think Thomas would have been immensely proud of Elizabeth, she had the Boleyn gift of intelligence and linguistic skill, and was a shrewd negotiator

Lorna Wanstall0:22

Why was Thomas B a candle bearer at the christening of Edward in 1537.? Do you feel that was Henry's way of rubbing it in?

RealTudorLady0:22

The big surprise for me Lauren was the letters and connections that Thomas Boleyn had with the great scholar, Erasmus.

Lauren Mackay0:23

As a member of the nobility, he was obliged to attend, he didn't work his way "up the greasy pole" And yes, It was a cruel gesture to demand Thomas attend...but I think Henry thought nothing of it

Lauren Mackay0:24

Erasmus, yes! I devote a chunk of the book to their relationship...their letters back and forth are extraordinary

Lorna Wanstall0:24

Henry had rabbits in his head working the controls LOL

Lauren Mackay0:24

Thomas' first intro is such an enticing glimpse of the real man

Lauren Mackay0:24

Henry was just...ugh.

Lauren Mackay0:24

can one say that here?

Ceri Creffield0:24

That sheds a whole new light on Thomas's personality.

Lauren Mackay0:25

It was a real lightbulb moment...such an important part of his life and it was buried deep

Claire Ridgway0:25

Hi Bill!

Lorna Wanstall0:25

What year did Mary B and her parents finally come to terms with each other

Lauren Mackay0:25

Especially his third commission...preparation for death

Lauren Mackay0:26

Lorna, I wish, I wish people wrote these sort of events down for posterity, but they didn't. We don't know when exactly, it seems like maybe before Anne's death, but it's hard to pinpoint

Bill Wolff0:26

Hi CR

Laurie Duerr0:26

Lauren, how did Thomas B get on with the Duke of Norfolk after everything happened with Anne and George?

Lauren Mackay0:27

Ah

Lauren Mackay0:27

not well

Lauren Mackay0:27

Norfolk actually complained to Cromwell about Thomas

Laurie Duerr0:27

Not a surprise really!

RealTudorLady0:27

I believe we overlook that Thomas and George as well as Anne had skill as linguistic scholars and were very well educated. I assume Elizabeth Howard had some good education as well. The entire family seems to have had remarkable talents, even though Mary preferred to be a wife and mother, a more traditional role.

Lorna Wanstall0:27

Poor Mary she may have been seen as a sort of black sheep, but in a way she was the luckiest of the Boleyns.

Lauren Mackay0:27

Specifically his minstrel who sang awful songs about the Duke..Norfolk was a sensitive soul. Cromwell asked Thomas to stop his minstrel but I doubted he lifted a finger

Lauren Mackay0:28

I believe Elizabeth and Thomas had a deep partnership, and Mary...well we don't know exactly. I do know she was shrewd, based on the indenture between herself and her husband and Henry VIII

Laurie Duerr0:28

That's quite funny!

Ceri Creffield0:29

What a sense of mischief

Lauren Mackay0:29

I like to think Thomas was sending a message

Lorna Wanstall0:29

Norfolk? Sensitive?

Lauren Mackay0:29

And Cromwell was harsh on Thomas following the deaths of his children

RealTudorLady0:30

I suppose getting your minstrel to sing about someone was the same as insulting them on Twitter, everyone heard about it.

Lauren Mackay0:30

Exactly!

Lauren Mackay0:31

They never had a great relationship

Lauren Mackay0:31

Thomas adored his father in law, Norfolk's father

Lorna Wanstall0:31

Am I right in thinking, that at one point, Mary wrote to Cromwell begging him to sort out her husband stipened or something

RealTudorLady0:33

Cromwell was the great fixer so Mary wrote to him for help.

Lauren Mackay0:33

She did, much earlier...I believe her letter was dealt with. The indenture I discovered was drawn up with James Boleyn, Thomas' brother and his lawyers, but Thomas obviously wanted her to be well looked after...it was Henry who comes across as incredibly aggressive...very harsh penalty clauses etc

Lorna Wanstall0:34

Cromwell was a fixer alright, he certainly managed to be able to fix people's deaths if Henry wanted him to do that

Lauren Mackay0:34

For mafia style offers you can't refuse...

Anthony Hillman0:34

And comes back to haunt you 😬

Lauren Mackay0:35

But Cromwell and Thomas had a great relationship to begin with

RealTudorLady0:35

Until Henry fixed him.

Ceri Creffield0:35

He doesn't seem to have cared much about who he harmed or helped; he just did what was expedient or was ordered by Henry.

Lorna Wanstall0:35

Very true Real Tudor lady.

Lauren Mackay0:35

Cromwell helped Thomas' sister, Alice with legal advice in 1527, then Thomas introduced his godson, Thomas Tebald to Cromwell

Lauren Mackay0:36

Cromwell took him under his wing, and he became a key agent

Lauren Mackay0:36

Then Cromwell sent a cousin to Thomas...Nicolas Glossop, who was lame, impotent and blind in one eye...so someone to keep in the...back of the shop as it were

Lauren Mackay0:37

Thomas took good care of this cousin, and Glossop praised him to Cromwell as the man to whom he owed his life

Ceri Creffield0:38

That doesn't fit in with the stereotype of the callous schemer, does it?

Ceri Creffield0:38

*does

Lauren Mackay0:38

Ceri...indeed!

RealTudorLady0:39

Anne Boleyn and Cromwell had an interest in social care/justice, but do we know if Thomas or George made any special bequests or foundations in charitable causes?

Lauren Mackay0:39

In fact, the letters between Thomas and his godson are incredible

Lauren Mackay0:39

and it is tragic that we only have these as evidence of personal correspondence

Lauren Mackay0:40

His godson clearly adored him...Thomas financially assisted him, encouraged him to continue his Latin studies, wrote about various new books... we can only imagine what he must have written to his children.

Lauren Mackay0:41

And following the executions, his godson stepped up the correspondence..he was clearly worried for his godfather, and sent him books and all the gossip from the continent

Lauren Mackay0:41

Tebald was the son of the steward at Hever...it's yet another remarkable relationship (and one I delve into in my book)

Lorna Wanstall0:42

How did Elizabeth B get on with her brother, after the deaths of Anne and George. Did she have any level of resentment towards him since he was the one who had condemned her children

Lauren Mackay0:42

Am I going off on a tangent? I may be...

Ceri Creffield0:43

It's fascinating Lauren - all good stuff.

Lauren Mackay0:43

Elizabeth...well we just don't know. I don't think they were ever close!

Anthony Hillman0:43

No, it's fascinating Lauren. Don't worry! 😊

Lorna Wanstall0:43

I know what I would like to do to Norfolk and it wouldn't be pleasant

Lauren Mackay0:43

We see how close Thomas was to Elizabeth's father, and I think she was also quite devoted to her father...but Norfolk could hop it as far as Thomas was concerned

Lauren Mackay0:44

Again, Howard senior and Thomas' grandfather were instrumental in bringing Thomas into court circles

Lauren Mackay0:44

way back in 1500

Lorna Wanstall0:45

Norfolk was a slimy git.

Ceri Creffield0:45

Maybe Norfolk felt overshadowed by Thomas and resented his talents.

Lauren Mackay0:45

Thomas was also very close to his brother in law, Norfolk's older and far more dashing brother Edward Howard

RealTudorLady0:45

I feel sorry for Elizabeth and Thomas, the shocking and traumatic loss of two children, beheaded and innocent, having to somehow get on with life, having to deny them publicity, to come back to court, then they faced ill health very soon afterwards. I believe the double execution broke their health and their hearts.

Lauren Mackay0:46

They went into business together...and with William Compton...I feel that Thomas saw Norfolk from day one.

Claire Ridgway0:46

I feel so sorry for Margaret Boleyn, outliving most of her family like that, although not for long.

Lorna Wanstall0:46

It seems as if Norfolk had many enemies and not just within his own family either

Lauren Mackay0:46

I always say in my talks...to whom would Thomas have complained? what could he have done?

Claire Ridgway0:46

I just can't like Norfolk.

Lauren Mackay0:46

Claire, and how devoted Thomas was to his mother, too

Claire Ridgway0:46

Yes

Lauren Mackay0:47

His father had asked that he take care of her and he did

Ceri Creffield0:47

Never heard a good word for Norfolk anywhere!

Lauren Mackay0:47

I have a household receipt in my book, where Thomas sends fur cuffs to his mother at Hever and a Hogs head

Lorna Wanstall0:47

Real Tudor Lady I think you are right, Anne was incredibly close to her mother and I do feel Anne's death must have affected her greatly

Lauren Mackay0:48

And he stipulated that his mother could not be moved after his death

Lauren Mackay0:48

She was highly ambitious for her son...a formidable woman

RealTudorLady0:48

Claire, who is Margaret Boleyn? I am lost.

Claire Ridgway0:48

Thomas's mother

Lauren Mackay0:48

Thomas' mother

RealTudorLady0:48

Thanks.

Claire Ridgway0:49

Margaret Butler

Anthony Hillman0:49

She sounds ambitious like Margaret Beaufort was for her son

Claire Ridgway0:49

Margaret was still at Hever when it was visited after Thomas's death.

Lauren Mackay0:49

She was

Lauren Mackay0:50

Generations of Boleyns had married into nobility, and I feel the women were always at the helm of negotiations

Claire Ridgway0:50

Yes, some very strong women in that family

Ceri Creffield0:50

When did Margaret die?

Lauren Mackay0:51

And these were the women Thomas had grown up with...the sort of women he raised his daughters to be

Lorna Wanstall0:51

Yes but marriage into the Howard family was perhaps the most audacious marriage for the Boleyn family

Lauren Mackay0:51

Well, the Howards and Butlers were impressive too...but the Boleyns had a knack for marrying families whose stock was at a temporary low

Claire Ridgway0:52

@Ceri, I think it was 1539 too but I can't remember off hand, I have her inquisition post mortem in a file. Lauren, can you remember?

Lauren Mackay0:52

Yes, 1539, sorry!

Claire Ridgway0:52

Thank you!

Lorna Wanstall0:52

The howards had too many children and that was some of the problems with them

Lauren Mackay0:52

It is likely that she suffered from Dementia

Ceri Creffield0:52

Thanks both

Lauren Mackay0:53

Lorna, the Howards had a LOT of issues

Ceri Creffield0:53

How do you know that Lauren? Very sad if so.

Lauren Mackay0:54

In certain records she stops signing her name, and writing to her son...and then someone has to sign for her, or she puts a squiggly little initial, but there were also a few hints in other letters

Lorna Wanstall0:54

Lauren yes indeed and Norfolk was the biggest one.. well that and breathing of course but that's beside the point

Lauren Mackay0:55

Norfolk is the wolf of court...

Claire Ridgway0:55

I just hope that her dementia saved her experiencing some of her grief.

Lauren Mackay0:56

Well..we can only hope. I can't imagine!

Lauren Mackay0:56

And for the record, when people ask me whether Anne and her father were close...how can we know there was affection between them..

Lauren Mackay0:56

I point to Anne's famous letter written from Margaret's court, which still survives..do we all know that letter?

Claire Ridgway0:57

Yes!

Lauren Mackay0:57

It is beautiful in sentiment...a young girl hoping her father will be proud of her, anxious to please...

Claire Ridgway0:57

Definitely.

Ceri Creffield0:57

Very sweet.

Lauren Mackay0:57

that it survives is incredible, so preserved. That it survived Thomas' lifetime...

Claire Ridgway0:57

We're just coming up to the o'clock. Thank you so much to Lauren for being so generous with your time and knowledge. And thank you, everyone, for joining us and asking such interesting questions. It's been a fun and interesting chat.

Ceri Creffield0:57

He must have kept it carefully.

RealTudorLady0:57

Do we know if any personal property of George Boleyn survived?

Lauren Mackay0:58

he kept that letter...now what kind of man is that?

Lorna Wanstall0:58

I think Anne and her father were affectionate to each other but she was closer to her mother

Claire Ridgway0:58

Roland Hui is tonight's winner and wins a copy of Lauren's book on Thomas and George. Roland, we'll get that sent to you.

Bill Wolff0:58

Rear

Lauren Mackay0:58

I think Anne and her father were so close in temperament, and had a very close bond

Lorna Wanstall0:58

Well done Roland

Bill Wolff0:59

oops, Great conversation!

Lauren Mackay0:59

Congrats, Roland!

Ceri Creffield0:59

Congratulations Roland.

Anthony Hillman0:59

Congrats Roland, great book!

Lauren Mackay0:59

I do hope everyone will consider having a look at the book...plenty to discover!

RealTudorLady0:59

Congratulations Roland

Claire Ridgway0:59

Thank you, everyone, I've thoroughly enjoyed this chat. Thank you so much, Lauren!

RealTudorLady0:59

Thanks Lauren, very enjoyable hour.

Lauren Mackay1:00

It's been a lot of fun, great questions, thank you!

Ceri Creffield1:00

Thanks Lauren really interesting.

Laurie Duerr1:00

Thank you Lauren and Claire!!

Lorna Wanstall1:00

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

Lauren Mackay1:00

Ah, I shall!

Claire Ridgway1:01

Next month's speaker is yours truly, i.e. me! I'll be talking about the interrogations of 1541, Catherine Howard's fall.

Claire Ridgway1:01

I hope everyone has a lovely weekend Good night!

Lauren Mackay1:01

Goodnight everyone, thanks for having me!