

Welcome to this month's expert live chat, a Q&A session with Emma on the medieval tournament. I very much enjoyed Emma's talk on it, particularly learning about Henry VIII's scores in 1511! A big thank you to Emma for her talk and for her time today. Do feel free to ask questions about the Westminster Tournament and the tournament in general. It really is a wonderful topic.

Lorna Wanstall0:00

Hi Bill how are you

RealTudorLady0:00

Hello again. Just been outside to look at Moon and Mars.

Bill Wolff0:00

Hi Real

Emma Levitt0:01

Yes so Tracy was on the one I'm taking about "Henry VIII: Man, Monarch and Monster", but then she also this week did a show on "The Fall of Anne Boleyn".

Lorna Wanstall0:01

Emma what was the point behind a tournament

Claire Ridgway0:01

Ah, ok, need to watch both!

Claire Ridgway0:02

Emma, who would you say was the best jousting in Henry VIII's reign? Charles Brandon?

Emma Levitt0:02

So, initially the tournament acted as a training ground for warfare the original tournaments were similar to mock battles

Clare Shepherd0:02

I did too, but it has clouded over and the temp is down to 2 degrees. Evening all.

Lorna Wanstall0:02

I saw the man, monarch, monster. was very good

RealTudorLady0:02

Hi, Bill. I have just watched Anne Boleyn and I have not seen the Henry VIII but have the book.

Ceri Creffield0:03

Hello everyone

Lorna Wanstall0:03

Am I right in thinking that quintaine was another word for ringing at the ring?

Emma Levitt0:03

Over time it became more of a theatre of display a spectacle for men to showcase their prowess in front of a live audience and more of a sport as the nature of warfare had changed so much by the 16TH

Lorna Wanstall0:03

Riding, not ringing

Emma Levitt0:03

Yes the quintain was used as practice for jousting in agility/accuracy of hitting the ring

RealTudorLady0:04

I remember seeing the two giant jousting lances at the Tower and thinking how on earth did they lift them? The men who trained must have had tremendous upper body weight.

Ceri Creffield0:04

What was the usual programme of events in a 16th century tournament?

Lorna Wanstall0:04

If I have remembered it rightly H 7 forbid young Henry to joust but allowed him to ride at the ring instead.....

Emma Levitt0:04

In the letters and papers from the reign of Henry VIII there are sources that detail Henry running at the ring early on in the reign so he was clearly training for jousting contests and had every intention to compete

Clare Shepherd0:05

I really enjoyed your talk, but was unclear as to why the suits of armour were more expensive than those for war.

Lorna Wanstall0:05

Typically how long was a lance?

Emma Levitt0:05

Yes definitely RTL strength was a key component of a man's body that was why it was such a manly sport and there is so much to say about masculinity!

Emma Levitt0:07

Ceri the usual programme would be a full scale tournament involving 3 contests usually the joust, the tourney and the foot combat. The joust would be the high point of the tournament. Some tournaments lasted a day, some 2 days and some even a week.

RealTudorLady0:07

I take it those fancy helmets you see sometimes were just for identification as they would not be very practical.

Ceri Creffield0:07

Poor horses having to carry all that weight!

RealTudorLady0:08

Did they use war horses in tournament

Emma Levitt0:08

Lorna Yes so Henry VII did not allow Henry VIII to joust in his reign as it was too dangerous and he was worried about losing his spare. The common misconception is that Henry VIII jousted in his father's reign, but you are quite right in that it was just training that he took part in.

Lorna Wanstall0:08

Clare S perhaps the suits of armour for the joust were thicker (for want of a better word) to give the jouster the better protection if they fell

Clare Shepherd0:09

I think Emma said they were special horses, and expensive.

Bill Wolff0:09

The horses loved it. They were stallions after all!!

Clare Shepherd0:10

I wondered if that was the case. I think id have worn it to war. Motorcycle helmets are expensive, but who wants their head in a cheap helmet?

Emma Levitt0:11

Clare so suits were so expensive as they tended to have etchings/and the use of gilding/large crests as the tournament armour was part of the spectacle of the tournament. In fact the Greenwich workshop set up by Henry VIII in 1511 developed a distinct style that used lots of gold gilding so it wasn't just about practicality.

RealTudorLady0:11

I love the early armour of Henry VIII in the Tower with the initials KH woven around the skirt, showing Henry was wearing it at the time of his love for Katherine of Aragon. These suits of armour were great works of art.

Emma Levitt0:12

Lorna about 4m average

Lorna Wanstall0:12

Clare S In war some protection was of use, but remember when they were in the head of battle they would have wanted as much mobility as possible. Jousting armour if it was as I said would have been of no use on the battlefield as you would barely be able to move

Clare Shepherd0:12

Oh, I remember seeing some really expensive etched suits in a museum near Gloucester Place. They were very ornate

Bill Wolff0:13

Emma, one pic you had for your presentation showed horses with no armor, just fabric. Was this typical?

Emma Levitt0:13

Lorna there is a lance in the Royal Armouries believe to be Charles Brandon's, the King's favoured jousting companion and it measured 4.36m

RealTudorLady0:13

How did the Tudor tournament differ from the Medieval tournament?

Emma Levitt0:13

RTL so the horse were specially trained tournament horses and very expensive!

Lorna Wanstall0:13

Their upper body strength must have been incredible to joust

Clare Shepherd0:14

I remember reading that zwilliam Marshall

RealTudorLady0:14

Cheers Emma

Emma Levitt0:14

RTL yes so the crests wouldn't have been used in the actual fighting they were added for the entry into the lists

Bill Wolff0:14

Lorna, no different than from we Boys of today!

Lorna Wanstall0:15

There were prizes given after a joust, what would these usually be

RealTudorLady0:15

Is it true they could get up to between 25 and 40 miles per hour?

Emma Levitt0:15

RTL yes and Holbein was used by Henry for the etching on lots of his suits of armour. The silver and engraved suit that you are talking about on display at the Tower of London is lovely.

Lorna Wanstall0:15

LOL Bill very true

Clare Shepherd0:16

Oops, made money by jousting all over the continent. The money was from ransomed knights and their armour etc. I don't think that was the case in Henry's time.

RealTudorLady0:17

The curator at the Tower likes Henry's armour. Whenever she does a programme she is stroking the legs lol.

Emma Levitt0:17

Lorna Yes exactly tournament armour was far heavier that's why it wasn't practical for fighting on foot and different tournament garniture was needed for reinforcement for the joust. You would generally have one suit of armour with lots of different component parts for the various forms of competition and to save money.

Lorna Wanstall0:17

RTL perhaps she has a fetish for armour LOL

RealTudorLady0:18



Clare Shepherd0:18

The Wallace Collection has some jousting ar our in its basement t

Emma Levitt0:19

Bill Wolff that was just for entry into the lists, they would dress up the horses who became a major part of the spectacle, but they would have worn armour for the actual combat.

RealTudorLady0:19

My favourite Knight is William Marshall, the man made his fortune and life at the tournament and the armour was so expensive that it was part of the prize.

Claire Ridgway0:19

Was there anyone that was really bad at the 1511 tournament? Anyone whose score was atrocious?

Bill Wolff0:20

I am with you, Real. I am a huge Pembroke Fan!!

Lorna Wanstall0:21

Claire I think you could say that everyone was bad at the 1511 joust as H 8 would have thrown his dummy out of his armour if anyone bested him

RealTudorLady0:21

I read once that in the 1400s the King had the streets of London cleared in order to have a tournament there and impress his foreign visitors.

Lorna Wanstall0:22

How long was the jousting arena?

Emma Levitt0:22

RLT in early tournaments, the mock battle of mêlée was not formalised, or even confined to the tournament field. The knights would charge on a given signal in a mock battle, which would have been hard to award the victor. Early on they would also capture knights/horses as ransom. Then in C13th we get the broken down single combat the joust, but without a tilt barrier so it is still very dangerous.

Claire Ridgway0:23

Lorna, Henry won the 2nd day, but not the first, so there were some very skilled knights there.

Lorna Wanstall0:24

Claire I guess this is the young H 8 at the time but later in his life I think he was a bad loser.

Ceri Creffield0:24

Was entry to a tournament in Henry's day by invitation or was it open to all?

Emma Levitt0:24

It is not until the C15th in Edward IV's reign that we get the tilt barrier added and the introduction of John Tiptoft's jousting rules in 1466, which add score cheques and prizes. The Tudor tournament combines all 3 stages of competition the foot combat, the tourney, and the joust and is a more regulated sport, with score cheques and prizes.

RealTudorLady0:24

Cheers Emma for the details of the Medieval tournament. Where many people killed?

Claire Ridgway0:25

Lorna, I'm not sure. I think he would have hated it if he thought men were going easy on him, but I can see why men might want to let him win!

Clare Shepherd0:25

I don't think tournament horses could run at 40 mph. Racehorses can, but a 6ft man in armour and a big enough horse to carry him would surely be slower.

Emma Levitt0:26

Lorna Yes upper body arm strength was key which is why Henry VIII was so suited to the joust in his youth as he was physically very fit. It was also why the amount of hours spent training were so important for knights as they had to build those muscles. It is interesting that Edward IV also took an active role in jousting contests clearly there was a link between height/physique and the ability to joust.

Roland Hui0:26

Emma - I believe Prince Henry (James I's son) jousted. Was he the last royal to do so? Did later Stuart royals participate?

Lorna Wanstall0:27

Clare S but whatever speed they went they could still cause serious damage... King Henri of France, was badly injured in a joust and died as a result of his injury

Emma Levitt0:27

Lorna yes so prizes I have found in the Tudor period are typically gold clasps, silver/gold belts, ruby/diamond rings, gold chains are all really popular. They tended to be presents that could be worn, which is interesting it was a way for men to show off that they had been successful in a tournament.

RealTudorLady0:28

Given that Henry's horse almost fell on top of him and he got skewed by Charles Brandon who nearly took his brain out, its a wonder Henry really wasn't killed while jousting. It was very dangerous and Francis Bryan lost an eye on one day.

Clare Shepherd0:29

Well, Lorna, a 4.36 lance would easily kill and at perhaps 25 mph certainly lethal.

Lorna Wanstall0:29

RTL Just as well H8 was wearing thicker armour as if he was wearing battle armour he would have died.

Emma Levitt0:29

RT yes so a horse can quickly get up to 25 miles an hour, making the combined speed twice that, and so if you think about the moment of impact, with a heavy lance, and limited vision it's an incredibly difficult sport to master and still dangerous in the Tudor period despite the rules/scoring system

Ceri Creffield0:30

As both horses would be moving, the impact would be doubled too.

Bill Wolff0:30

Remember too, shields were used in many events.

Ceri Creffield0:30

Whoops, just saw your comment, Emma!

Emma Levitt0:31

Clare yes that's right ransoming knights was a bit part of the earlier tournament the aim was to knock men out of a saddle, but by Henry's time it's about making hits on the body/head of your opponents that's how you gain the prizes.

Lorna Wanstall0:31

You can understand why Jousts were so thrilling to watch

RealTudorLady0:31

If you hit someone in a car at 30mph you could kill them. A hit with even a blunted lance at speed would be very bad.

Emma Levitt0:31

RTL haha I haven't noticed that but I will keep an eye out for next time...

Claire Ridgway0:31

I remember a news report about a re-enactor being killed a few years ago jousting, so dangerous even with today's safety measures.

ADMIN Tim0:32

We've seen the "tourist" type jousting a number of times, and even though it's very staged it's always exciting. It must have been on the edge of the seat viewing to see it in real life.

Emma Levitt0:32

Clare -Toby Capwell showed me around some of the armour at the Wallace Collection it was fascinating hearing about all the different sets

Clare Shepherd0:33

It's almost as if the medieval joust, as preparation for war had by Tudor times been refined into a sport.

Emma Levitt0:34

Claire yes actually there were a couple of knights who were Answerers who actually lost points because they made poor hits, which are marked on the score cheques that survive from the 1511 tournament. It's the only time that I have ever seen that on any of the Tudor cheques held in the College of Arms.

Lorna Wanstall0:34

I believe they Leeds Castle hold jousting events in the summer

RealTudorLady0:34

Yes, Lorna, if it wasn't for the armour, Henry might have been a dead man. Well that's what it was designed for and why the best armour was so expensive.

Clare Shepherd0:34

I used to often go to the Wallace Collection as I worked less than a hundred yards away.

Claire Ridgway0:35

Emma, thank you!

RealTudorLady0:37

Was there any such thing as a foul stroke in jousting, anywhere on the body or you could not hit?

Emma Levitt0:37

RTL I'm not sure on the occasion but it was quite common in the C15th for knights to parade through the streets of London as Smithfield in the reign of Edward IV (I have written on this quite a bit) was a main site for jousting. At a major tournament in 1467 Edward IV actually declared a public holiday and 100s made their way to watch the jousts/parades of the Burgundian/English knights through the streets.

Lorna Wanstall0:37

Who was it that knocked H 8 off his horse in 1536? and what happened to them?

Bill Wolff0:37

OK, here's a dumb question from a Dumb American. Is there any truth to the old rumor that you Brits, et al drive on the left side of the road because that's how the jousters rode??

Lorna Wanstall0:39

Bill anything is possible when it comes to us limey's lol

RealTudorLady0:39

Thanks Emma.

Clare Shepherd0:40

Isn't it because the sword was worn on the left and drawn by the right hand?

Bill Wolff0:40

Got it Lorna. I also heard swords were most often in the right hand, so it was best to keep that one close to oncoming traffic.

RealTudorLady0:40

Bill they also drive on the left in Malta and South Africa.

Lorna Wanstall0:41

Clare S I also think that may have been down to the spiral staircases that some castles had

Emma Levitt0:41

Lorna to be honest they varied in length. Henry VIII had them built into his palaces at Whitehall and Greenwich and then there were those erected at Westminster. The recent discovery this month of Greenwich tiltyard they reckon was about 650 feet by 250 feet (200 by 76 m).

Ceri Creffield0:41

And Malaysia and Singapore

ADMIN Tim0:41

I thought we had Napoleon to blame for the change of side from left to right.

Bill Wolff0:41

And Japan and Australia.

Ceri Creffield0:42

Tim, yes, I understood that too.

RealTudorLady0:43

So what did you do if you were left handed?

Bill Wolff0:44

Actually Real, being left handed can be an advantage. Confuses some fighters.

Ceri Creffield0:44

RTL, most left-handers were made to use their right.

Emma Levitt0:44

Ceri so in order to participate in a tournament you had to be of at least middling/high status not only for the cost of the tournament armour but because Henry would not want to be seen losing against someone of low status, so they tended to be courtiers of the king from within his household/privy chamber there is a lot of overlap. The main challengers would have been by invitation from the king, but you do get the tournament challengers circulated around the country by heralds and knights would sign up to compete.

Lorna Wanstall0:45

RTL Learn to use your right possibly. I think Left handed people were seen as not normal..

RealTudorLady0:45

Henry VIII once changed the teams around when he checked the score sheets as the others were bringing his scores down and put Brandon on the other team to get their scores up. He liked a challenge.

Clare Shepherd0:45

Was the reason that the left hand was "sinister", it was dangerous, some even traied themselves to use the right, but a levtha def could catch an appointment e t unaware

RealTudorLady0:45

That's true, Lorna.

Ceri Creffield0:46

Thanks Emma

Clare Shepherd0:46

Apponent sorry.

RealTudorLady0:46

Something to do with Lucifer, Clare.

Emma Levitt0:46

RTL you do get a lot of deaths in the earlier medieval tournament, but saying that there are still bad accidents in the C16/C17th I mean Henry II of France died from a jousting accident in 1159, we know Henry VIII was badly injured in 1536 and almost died, Francis Bryan hurt his eye in a jousting accident in 1526

Lorna Wanstall0:47

Clare S the word "Sinister" meant left I believe during roman time.. I.e Sinister= Left Dexter= right when the roman army was marching

Clare Shepherd0:47

.ucifer?sinister I Latin means left, ut was thought to be bac u k.

Emma Levitt0:48

Roland yes I think you are right in that he was the last to compete in jousts. I can't think of any other Stuart royals who participate and to be honest by the end of C17th they disappear completely.

Clare Shepherd0:48

Other, I'm off to adjust settings

RealTudorLady0:48

I bet the ladies were thrilled with all the pageantry and the dressing up as Robin Hood and Lancelot that they did. Henry loved to dress up.

Bill Wolff0:49

Just poured first cocktail of the evening. A few more and I'll take on all comers; Liquid Courage!!

Emma Levitt0:49

Claire absolutely I remember a number of years ago a modern day joustier I think was killed on time team

Emma Levitt0:50

Clare Yes I would agree albeit a dangerous sport

Claire Ridgway0:50

Emma, yes, that was it, Time Team. I think there have been accidents in the US too.

Lorna Wanstall0:50

RTL Yeah H 8 stupid dress up games didn't help him one bit when he met Anne of Cleves..... You can't blame her being frightened out of her skin when a very overweight Robin hood came up on her.

Emma Levitt0:51

Lorna I know the Royal Armouries in Leeds hold jousts in the tiltyard at Easter I have been for the past few year and many of the English Heritage sites do as well in the summer

Lorna Wanstall0:52

I really must try to go, Leeds castle isn't far from where I leave.

Emma Levitt0:52

RTL yes you would get fouls for hitting a man below the saddle it says in the rules and hitting a horse too, and or the tilt

Clare Shepherd0:52

Do the foot contest element use swords?

Claire Ridgway0:52

I've seen jousting at Warwick Castle and Hever.

RealTudorLady0:52

No, Lorna, but Katherine of Aragon liked it. You see her being thrilled in the Westminster Tapestry Tournament Roll. You also see John Blake a Black Trumpeter.

RealTudorLady0:53

It's Leeds, Yorkshire.

Emma Levitt0:54

Bill you know I have never heard that before! I love that idea so not dumb at all! I thought it went back to the Romans but I could be wrong!

Claire Ridgway0:54

I think at Warwick they also demonstrated other parts of the tourament, like the combat element.

Lorna Wanstall0:54

RTL are you on about Leeds castle.... As Leeds Castle isn't far from Lenham in Kent

RealTudorLady0:55

I want to go to Leeds Castle down south and Hever one day. Maybe when this nonsense is over.



Clare Shepherd0:55

The armouries are in Leeds, North of England

Lorna Wanstall0:55

RTL If it ever does get over with

Claire Ridgway0:55

Lorna, Emma mentioned the Armouries at Leeds, and that's the Yorkshire Leeds.

Ceri Creffield0:56

Did they fight with blunted swords in the foot com at?

Emma Levitt0:56

RTL yes the ladies were a big part of the spectacle often forgotten and they tended to award the prizes at the ceremony. I think it's important that men were there to impress other men, but also women helped to confer masculinity

Claire Ridgway0:56

Royal Armouries - <https://royalarmouries.org/venue/royal-armouries-museum/>

RealTudorLady0:56

No. Leeds Castle is south just to cause confusion and Leeds where the RA is in Yorkshire.

Ceri Creffield0:56

Combat

Lorna Wanstall0:56

Thank you clare guess I missed that bit

Claire Ridgway0:56

Don't worry, Lorna! A visit to Leeds Castle would be lovely too!

ADMIN Tim0:57

I'll put some photos into next month's Tudor Life magazine of jousts we've been to.

Clare Shepherd0:57

A visit anywhere would be nice at the moment.

Lorna Wanstall0:57

Yes It would but not a chance of it yet until Covid finally buzzes off.

Emma Levitt0:58

Lorna yes I think in the 1540s at Rochester Henry was a bit passed it for dressing up in disguise so she was repulsed by him. Henry always reverted back to his youthful days of chivalry. He did dress up for Katherine of Aragon as Robin Hood early on in the reign.

Clare Shepherd0:58

That will be great, Tim. Thanks.

Lorna Wanstall0:58

Clare S yes it would... Going into town once a week is about as far as we can go at the moment

RealTudorLady0:58

I have been to the Royal Armeries. I have seen tournaments in Spain and Wales.

Emma Levitt0:59

Clare yes the foot contests would use a range of weapons it depended on what the challenged specified it tended to be poleaxes

Clare Shepherd0:59

Me too Lorna, and only to the village, 300 yards away.

Claire Ridgway0:59

Yes, being allowed anywhere would be lovely!

Lorna Wanstall0:59

Emma Wonderful Rochester Castle I love it.

Bill Wolff0:59

Fun discussion pals, thanks and see you next time!! Stay healthy!!!

Claire Ridgway0:59

That hour flew! A big thank you to all of you for coming to the chat and to Emma for giving her time to answer our questions so well. It's been a wonderful hour, as usual. Our Christmas informal live chat, or Christmas party, will be on Friday 18th December. I think we'll leave Julian's expert chat until early Jan.

Emma Levitt1:00

Claire Yes I have seen jousting at Tatton Park too which is not far from me in the North West

Lorna Wanstall1:00

Clare S Town is an hour and half bus ride. for me

RealTudorLady1:00

I broke out and went to see the lights in town yesterday because next week the world will be there after lockdown. A few people had the same idea but it was lovely.

Claire Ridgway1:01

Emma, if you have photos of the jousting there then please do share them with us.

Lorna Wanstall1:01

Our chat hours always seem to go so fast...

Emma Levitt1:01

Ceri the rules would specify you do get them fighting with blunted/sharp swords it depends if it's a 'joust of war' or a 'joust of peace'.

Claire Ridgway1:01

Right, time for bed, I think! Thank you so much, everyone. Thank you, Emma, your talk and this chat were both brilliant.

Clare Shepherd1:01

Thanks Emma for a fascinating hour, and everyone for their comments. Good night.

Ceri Creffield1:02

I have a video of foot combat - very vicious!

Emma Levitt1:02

Royal Armouries is great and it's free!

Ceri Creffield1:02

Thanks Emma, thanks Claire and Tim. Goodnight all.