

Hello everyone. I know we're early, but I'll start us off officially. Thank you so much for joining us. Welcome to June's expert live chat and a big Tudor Society welcome to Siobhan, whose talk was excellent. I thoroughly enjoyed it, particularly zooming in on all those luscious details in the portraits!

Janet Hardcastle22:58

i have my glass of vino!

Siobhan CLARKE22:58

Oh thank you. So glad you enjoyed it. Do you have any questions or observations?

Denise Keay22:58

Thanks, Claire! As it's Saturday, I'm still in my "nightgown".

Lorna Wanstall22:58

Bottle of water on standby

Claire Ridgway22:59

I'm going to leap in with a question! Who came up with the symbolism for Elizabeth's portraits?

Elizabeth herself? Artists? Heralds? Advisors?

Lorna Wanstall23:00

Claire I would say Elizabeth did, she was very fond of blowing her own trumpet just as her father was

Siobhan CLARKE23:00

Oh, tricky question! A combination of the artist, the patron who commissioned it and Elizabeth herself.

Clare Shepherd23:00

Good evening everyone.

Siobhan CLARKE23:01

For example in the Sieve Portrait Christopher Hatton deliberately chose the Virgin theme, as he disapproved of the Anjou match. He commissioned the Sieve portrait and can be seen in it

Claire Ridgway23:01

Siobhan, thank you!

Lorna Wanstall23:02

Elizabeth portrait with the eyes on it was a statement of one of her mottos.. I believe it's video tecum loose translation being "I see all and say nothing."

Claire Ridgway23:02

Evening Clare!

Siobhan CLARKE23:02

Claire, a lot of the symbolism is about classical learning so Eliz would have had input herself.

Rainbow portrait has ears and eyes. We think Robert Cecil was patron. Eliz Secret Service.

Clare Shepherd23:03

Sorry lare. You seem well into an interesting question.

Claire Ridgway23:03

I adore the Rainbow Portrait. When I was at Hatfield, I just kept gazing at it.

Siobhan CLARKE23:03

Lorna, I think the eyes are for the secret service.

Denise Keay23:03

Another question for Siobhan. The necklaces with initials - Elizabeth's with an A for Anne, Anne's with a B for Boleyn. Any chance these initials were both "political" additions?

Claire Ridgway23:04

@Clare, I asked "Who came up with the symbolism for Elizabeth's portraits? Elizabeth herself?

Artists? Heralds? Advisors?"

Lorna Wanstall23:05

Siobhan on one of the portraits of Agnes Tilney she is wearing a cameo portrait of someone, do you know who that might be?

Siobhan CLARKE23:05

Denise, Eliz inherited the 'A' necklace from her mother. Wears it in family painting. Might have been added later, when she was Queen. So, yes, political and also identifies her as her mother's daughter

Clare Shepherd23:05

Yes, thank, I scrolled up.

Siobhan CLARKE23:06

Lorna, I don't know the portrait of Agnes. Sorry

RealTudorLady23:07

Hi Siobhan. What is your favourite portrait or costume from the collection?

Siobhan CLARKE23:07

When we put the Bacton alter cloth on display at Hampton Court they loaned us the Rainbow from Hatfield. It is truly gorgeous. colours so bright.

Siobhan CLARKE23:08

Yes, I think the Rainbow portrait is my favourite

Siobhan CLARKE23:09

It is the culmination of Eliz as goddess, her cult and also says something about her regime

Clare Shepherd23:09

It us a very rich, deep portrait. It must have been a time consuming work.

Siobhan CLARKE23:10

WE still don't know for sure who painted it

Denise Keay23:10

The Rainbow portrait is stunning (though I've yet to see the original) though I do find those eyes and ears a tad creepy.

ADMIN Tim23:11

I saw the Henry VIII portrait in the Thysenn museum in Madrid. Just me and Henry in a room all by ourselves. The detail on it, when you get up close, is unbelievable. To think that so much needlework went into making their clothes, all the gold thread, all the jewellery. Truly amazing.

RealTudorLady23:11

That Rainbow portrait is so captivating. I love all the eyes and ears and you know whose in charge. Its a very rich and vibrant dress and even the Queen has very red hair in it. I can't remember, is it a later portrait?

Siobhan CLARKE23:12

Yes Rainbow is very late, around 1600. She was well into her 60s.

Lorna Wanstall23:12

I believe that Elizabeth hated sitting for portraits as she got older and had a bust made of herself for artists to use when painting her.

Siobhan CLARKE23:12

Tim, I love the Thysenn portrait. Holbein used real gold to pick out the details

ADMIN Tim23:13

Yes, it was amazing. Worth the visit to Madrid to see it. And not a guard in site. Should have brought it home with me wink

Siobhan CLARKE23:13

No Lorna, it wasn't a bust. There was an approved face pattern that artists had to use.

Lorna Wanstall23:14

Thank you Siobhan,

Lorna Wanstall23:14

but Elizabeth certainly wanted to preserve the illusion of youth and beauty that's for sure

Clare Shepherd23:14

Some of the pigments were extraordinarily rare and expensive. I believe blues and hence purple was expensive for both paint and cloth dyes.

Bill Wolff23:15

Lorna, so do I!!

Siobhan CLARKE23:15

Yes blue pigment was expensive. Yes, Eliz was vain but it was also political.

RealTudorLady23:15

Thank you, Siobhan. Do you happen to know what Elizabeth 's wigs were made off? Was it real hair?

Siobhan CLARKE23:16

Yes real hair

Siobhan CLARKE23:17

Beauty was associated with goodness so she had to remain beautiful.

Clare Shepherd23:17

Some of the 18th century wigs were so huge they had an underlayer of horsehair to support the height

Roland Hui23:18

Siobhan - which historical figure(s) do you portray in costume at Hampton Court?

Siobhan CLARKE23:18

That sounds very itchy!

Clare Shepherd23:18

Ah, so it wasn't vanity?

Lorna Wanstall23:18

Siobhan do you think that illusion was also down to a little bit of propaganda? I.e I never married and kept my youth and beauty, whilst those who marry grow old and lose their looks.

Siobhan CLARKE23:18

Roland, I have portrayed Lady Margaret Douglas

RealTudorLady23:19

Wow. They must have been expensive. Which one is the Thysenn portrait?

Clare Shepherd23:19

I think below the horsehair was a wig base the horsehair was just used as a sort of strengthening padding.

Claire Ridgway23:19

RTL, it's the Holbein one, the real Holbein one, head and shoulders portrait.

Siobhan CLARKE23:20

There was a LOT of propaganda but the not marrying isn't so much about keeping her looks. It's keeping her virginity and keeping her POWER

Claire Ridgway23:20

RTL, for later - <https://www.museothyssen.org/en/collection/artists/holbein-hans-joven/portrait-henry-viii-england>

RealTudorLady23:21

Wow. The one in the Walker is intimidating. Thanks for the link Claire.

Lorna Wanstall23:21

Thank you Siobhan

Clare Shepherd23:21

Sometimes the Elizabethans seem so modern, but other times their thinking seems so different, almost alien.

Claire Ridgway23:21

RTL, yes, the pose of the Walker one and the others in that model is very powerful!

Siobhan CLARKE23:21

The Walker Gallery H VIII is an excellent copy but not painted by Holbein

Lorna Wanstall23:22

Elizabeth certainly knew how to play the propaganda game that's for sure.

Siobhan CLARKE23:22

All copies come from the Whitehall Mural

Siobhan CLARKE23:22

Yes Lorna, she was even better than her father. PR is on of the keys to her success

RealTudorLady23:24

Yes, after Holbein I think the label says. Its amazing, even copied. He is just staring, really staring, hands on hips....stretched out to look even bigger. I have been fascinated since a kid.

Clare Shepherd23:24

He speech at Tilbury, was it was a prime piece of Elizabeth's pr

Siobhan CLARKE23:24

Clare, they thought about everything in terms of religion. To understand the 16th c you have to put the religion back

Siobhan CLARKE23:26

Yes, she was also a great orator. The speech presents her as a warrior queen

RealTudorLady23:26

Revealing Henry Viii is a marvellous book from the exhibition we had in the early 2000s. Every version brought together in one place. Excellent.

Roland Hui23:26

Siobhan - do you have a favorite Tudor movie/tv program that you found the costumes especially well done?

Siobhan CLARKE23:27

Yes, the BBC versions of Six Wives of HVIII and Elizabeth R. They made really good copies of the gowns.

Denise Keay23:27

Siobhan, I think you also have to understand the politics. Political thought was influenced by the classical writers.

Clare Shepherd23:27

Yes, I have recently been reading about the Reformation. Living in z country that is now secular, it is easy to forget the importance of religion in Tudor and later times. After all the Civil War was partly based on religion, and of course politics too.

Siobhan CLARKE23:28

These are very old - 1970s but still worth watching

RealTudorLady23:29

Henry Viii wasn't shy about his size was he? Look at me isn't in it.

Siobhan CLARKE23:29

I was a child, when I watched. It's what got me into the Tudors. Does anyone else have a key moment that got them hooked?

Lorna Wanstall23:30

Siobhan agreed. I think the modern versions of anything to do with H8 etc, the clothing is far too bright.

Siobhan CLARKE23:31

Any favourite shows or books?

Lorna Wanstall23:31

Siobhan I remember my mum waking me up to watch Cathetine Parr in the 70's series.. I was about 7 or 8 when I saw it I was hooked from then on in

Claire Ridgway23:31

I love the Tudor Tailor books. I'd love to be able to sew to actually use the patterns in them though!

Siobhan CLARKE23:31

Ah, so you got drawn in at the same time as me, Lorna

RealTudorLady23:32

Siobhan did you see the Channel 5 Anne Boleyn? How did you think the costumes were for authentication? I loved the green dress which I think Anne has been shown in green a few times.

Clare Shepherd23:32

I had an inspirational history mistress in grammar school. She was a great fan of the Tudor history and lent me books. She started my interest. My grandfather encouraged me to read Shakespeare and books about him too so it all fired my 12 year old imagination.

Siobhan CLARKE23:33

I really liked the black Anne Boleyn on ch 5. She was so bold and beautiful. The script was not so good, unfortunately. Costumes not too bad.

Claire Ridgway23:33

I first got interested in the Tudors when I was 11 and did a project on Henry VIII and his six wives. I was gobsmacked that he had that many wives and that he executed two of them!

Siobhan CLARKE23:34

Claire, what did you think of the black Anne Boleyn?

Denise Keay23:34

I was always interested in history - fascinated by the portraits before I could read. But I skimmed over the Tudors for years - too many myths, too few facts. Now so many of the original sources are available on the internet, I started digging, and got hooked.

RealTudorLady23:35

My dad was my mentor. He got me into history at a very early age. I was hospitalised when I was 12 and they had a school. The tutor lent me Neville Williams's. Henry VIII and His Court. That was me hooked.

Claire Ridgway23:35

Siobhan, I thought Jodie was the best thing about it - great acting from her, but terrible script, storyline and characterisation. I mean, Henry was so very weak. Not a good series.

Siobhan CLARKE23:35

Yes, I agree. Jodie was the best thing.

Siobhan CLARKE23:36

RTL, I remember reading Neville Williams too, as a child.

Lorna Wanstall23:36

Unfortunately we had a seriously terrible history teacher at school, who basically hadn't got a clue on how to teach the subject. But I didn't let that stop me I love everything to do with history, the deeper one digs the more fascinating history becomes..

Claire Ridgway23:37

Siobhan, are you working on a book at the moment?

RealTudorLady23:37

Yes, I loved Jodie as Anne and the costumes and the idea, but the script should have been much better.

Lorna Wanstall23:38

Claire.. the guy playing Henry I feel looked the part, but he was as weak as water when it came to acting ability..

RealTudorLady23:38

Isn't it a brilliant book? So many wonderful pictures.

Claire Ridgway23:38

Lorna, yes, and Norfolk and Cromwell too, complete drips!

Siobhan CLARKE23:38

Yes, we have just finished the first draft of 'Gloriana: Elizabeth I and the Art of Queenship' so I have been looking at a lot of her portraits

Claire Ridgway23:39

Siobhan, oh that sounds like a wonderful book!

Clare Shepherd23:39

The books of A.L. Rowse were also influential to me. His trilogy of books on Elizabeth's era particularly.

Lorna Wanstall23:39

I'm sure Jodie is a very good actress but she really wasn't the right person to play an historical part.

Siobhan CLARKE23:40

WAS anyone surprised by anything in my lecture on Tudor dress?

Siobhan CLARKE23:41

I always remember my own surprise when I first learned about sumptuary legislation

Claire Ridgway23:41

It's incredible how much people spent on clothes, trying to impress. When you said about Dudley spending an amount that could have bought a house! Mad.

RealTudorLady23:41

Hi Lorna, its sad when history teachers are bad and boring. History is such a fantastic subject and yet we lose so many kids early. It can be easily made fun. I was lucky, Mrs Gwynn was great so by the time the poor teachers came along I knew more than them anyway.

Denise Keay23:42

Siobhan, that book sounds great! And I speak as one who isn't a huge fan of Elizabeth, though I would never underestimate her achievement in holding onto power for as long as she did in an age when women weren't thought fit to rule.

Siobhan CLARKE23:42

Yes Claire, and in Elizabeth's reign they got into debt, spending money on clothes - the men, that is!

Lorna Wanstall23:42

Siobhan did the woman of Elizabeth court have a heads up on what Elizabeth was going to wear so they could make sure they didn't clash with her in terms of colour of dress.

Siobhan CLARKE23:44

Great question Lorna. They had to be careful not to outshine the Queen. Sumptuary legislation also restricted colours

Siobhan CLARKE23:45

If a lady wore a dress that was too fine, Eliz would take it away

Lorna Wanstall23:45

I believe black and Royal purple were reserved solely for the queen/king and nobility.

RealTudorLady23:45

The laws were really strict, what materials you can wear, the colours you were allowed and if you were of status you had to fling the bling.

Lorna Wanstall23:45

they were also the most expensive dyes to make as well

Siobhan CLARKE23:46

Purple was for royalty. Black could be worn by anyone (merchants etc) but it was VERY expensive so only the rich wore true black

Jen Rowland23:46

Will I be able to read this afterwards since I'm missing out on the chat.

Lorna Wanstall23:46

Thank you.

Siobhan CLARKE23:46

As Lorna says, it's all about the dye and how hard it is to make a true black

Lorna Wanstall23:46

Jen yes you will

Clare Shepherd23:46

The 5hing that surprised me too about your lectures was the cost and the distant sources for many of the fabrics and dyes. Even English wool was exported for dyeing or even weaving sometimes.

Claire Ridgway23:47

Jen, yes, Tim is busy copying and pasting it, and he always adds the transcript to the site.

Jen Rowland23:47

Thank you Lorna!

Jen Rowland23:47

Thank you Claire!

ADMIN Tim23:47

We always put a transcript on the website a few days after the chat. So much valuable information is shared.

RealTudorLady23:47

Was there a dress code for the ladies in waiting?

Claire Ridgway23:48

Tim, yes, and it goes so fast too!

Lorna Wanstall23:48

I believe the royal purple dye was made from crushed up crustations.

Siobhan CLARKE23:48

Yes Clare, English wool was exported. Actually our main export.

Siobhan CLARKE23:49

All ladies dressed according to their husband's rank. Sometimes Eliz liked her ladies to dress in black and white. This showed loyalty to the Queen. B&W associated with chastity

Clare Shepherd23:49

I live in Devon and our cathedral i Exeter was built on money from exporting wool.

Denise Keay23:49

Siobhan, now I'm thinking of the c1599 portrait of the the 3rd Earl of Southampton, quite possibly his wedding portrait. I'm pretty sure he's wearing dashes of purple in that. Mind you, he's not likely to have shown it to the Queen.

RealTudorLady23:50

Siobhan, was the Duke of Anjou, Elizabeth 's intended really a cross dresser? Did she really see him in a dress?

RealTudorLady23:51

Thank you.

Siobhan CLARKE23:51

RTL, NO, I think that was made up for the film. Eliz was quite taken with Anjou. Her last serious suitor

Lorna Wanstall23:52

But it is possible that Anjou brother was a cross dresser he certainly had his favourites and they weren't all female.

Siobhan CLARKE23:53

The film with Cate Blanchette is not always accurate but it captures the spirit of the young Elizabeth.

RealTudorLady23:53

Yes. I think she would have married him but for the political goings on. Still he got some money out of it. Eric Cantata was brilliant as his Ambassador. Shame, as the dress suited him.

Lorna Wanstall23:53

Do you feel that Elizabeth truly wanted to marry Anjou?

Claire Ridgway23:53

Despite the inaccuracies, I did love Cate as Elizabeth.

Siobhan CLARKE23:54

NO Lorna. I don't think she would have married him but she enjoyed the attention and she was very sad when he left.

Lorna Wanstall23:55

I believe she did genuinely greive for him when he died as well..

RealTudorLady23:56

I love the costumes the Earl of Essex wears, they are very flamboyant. He was what my gran would call a dandy.

Denise Keay23:56

I'm sure that Elizabeth knew that of she married, a loss of power would be inevitable.

Siobhan CLARKE23:56

Yes, I think it may have been Anjou's brother. The film mixes different characters such as combining Dudley/Essex and then Ralieggh/ Drake in the sequel

Claire Ridgway23:56

Elizabeth was an astute lady.

Lorna Wanstall23:57

Elizabeth was very like her father, she enjoyed the thrill of the chase (flirting with men) but unlike her father she didn't want to be caught.

RealTudorLady23:57

Lord Flashheart in the Blackadder ii was much like the Earl of Essex.

Siobhan CLARKE23:58

She liked men like that, with lots of swagger

Lorna Wanstall23:58

Elizabeth was a very unique woman.... The combination of her father and mother was one of fire and thunder, but boy what a daughter they made.

Siobhan CLARKE23:58

Dudley was the love of her life

Claire Ridgway23:58

Well, it's just coming up to the hour! Thank you so much to Siobhan for answering all of our questions and doing the talk. Thank you everyone for the excellent questions and chat. Denise Keays is the winner of Siobhan's book "King and Collector" so we'll order that for you, Denise. I haven't published next month's schedule quite yet, but our informal live chat will be on 2nd July and our expert live chat with Dr Owen Emmerson will be on 23rd July. I'll be doing a Facebook Live talk on 16th July. I'll add those dates to the Events list very soon and to the Facebook group.

RealTudorLady23:59

She did. I don't think she would have married because it meant saying you obey and that's not Elizabeth.

Siobhan CLARKE23:59

Thanks you everyone for joining me!

Denise Keay23:59

Please, folks, be kinder to Essex. He's had an unfair press.

Bill Wolff23:59

Bye all, fun afternoon!

Lorna Wanstall23:59

Nice one Denise happy reading.

Claire Ridgway23:59

Denise, I like him!

Denise Keay23:59

Great session!

Siobhan CLARKE25/6/2021 23:59

Goodnight