

The Queen's House Lecture Series: *The 'Lost' Tudors*

Thursdays, 24 October to 21 November 2019
Queen's House, Orangery and South Parlours | 11.00-12.30



Edward VI, 1537-1553 (BHC2678)

The Tudor age was born in the violence of the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485. The bloody death of Richard III secured victory for Henry Tudor, ending the Plantagenet era and the long Wars of the Roses. The triumphant Henry VII set out to secure the crown and establish a new, powerful dynasty. What followed would prove to be one of the most turbulent periods in English history as successive Tudor monarchs strove, through sometimes extraordinary means, to maintain their hold on the throne.

This series of lectures explores the 'lost' Tudors, key figures whose destinies might otherwise have turned history in a decidedly different direction.

Thursday, 24 October

"England Now Pours Tears": expectation and tragedy in the short life of Arthur, Prince of Wales, 1486-1502

The birth of Prince Arthur Tudor in 1486 heralded a golden age in England and Wales after the acrimony unleashed by the Wars of the Roses over the previous forty years. Arthur embodied many royal claims and was trained from an early age to carry the aspirations of his parents, Henry VII and Elizabeth of York – unifying the country and cementing England's place at the top table of European states. He doggedly learned the skills of kingship in the Welsh Marches and his wedding to Katherine of Aragon in November 1501 was one of the most spectacular public events ever seen in England. That event was the highpoint of Henry VII's reign; but expectations came crashing down only five months later when Arthur died suddenly at Ludlow. Having invested all hopes for the future in Arthur's education and growing experience, the focus and character of the Tudor regime had to change course rapidly as Prince Henry reluctantly became the heir to a vulnerable dynasty. This talk examines Arthur's life, the glimpses of his character we can see, and the consequences of his tragic death as fate denied England its first King Arthur.

Dr Sean Cunningham is head of the medieval records team at The National Archives, where he has worked for over twenty years. Sean is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society and he has

written many studies of politics and government in the late medieval and early Tudor periods, including historical biographies of Henry VII (2007) and Prince Arthur (2016). He was part of the Tudor Chamber Books project (www.tudorchamberbooks.org), which has created a searchable website of the personal spending accounts of Henry VII and Henry VIII before 1524. He is currently co-writing a related study of the projection and reception of early Tudor kingship, and his short study of Henry VII in the Penguin Monarchs series will appear shortly.

Thursday, 31 October

Margaret Tudor: Fashion Icon or Warrior Queen?

Margaret Tudor, the cherished daughter of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, weathered the extraordinary cultural changes which were thrust upon her. She was married to James IV of Scotland at the age of 13, but found her new residence at Stirling Castle was home to the 'royal bairns', the king's seven illegitimate children. After James's death and defeat at the Battle of Flodden in 1513, the fashion-conscious queen realised that instead of ordering bales of red velvet and cloth of gold, she must find money to pay armies. Margaret was multi-talented, being highly accomplished musically, a tireless horsewoman and a good shot with a bow, killing a fine buck when a hunt was arranged in her honour. She was also regent during the minority of her son, James V, and played a major part in the turbulent Scottish politics of the age. While hugely interested in her outward appearance, Margaret had a steely and determined inner core.

Actress and Writer, **MARIA PERRY** was born in Cheshire and educated at Manchester High School for Girls and Somerville College, Oxford. She won an Exhibition to read History at Newnham College, Cambridge, but did not accept it. Ironically, many years later she was introduced to Sir Geoffrey Elton, Regius Professor of History at Cambridge, who would have taught her had she gone there. He procured funds for her to write *The Word of a Prince* (London, 1990) a biography of Queen Elizabeth I, which *received* much acclaim. Some years later he encouraged her to write of **Henry VIII's Sisters**, complaining he was "fed up with supervising doctoral theses about those wishy-washy wives." The reading public seem to have approved his judgement as the book is now in its ninth edition.

Thursday, 7 November

Jane Seymour, Henry VIII's True Wife

Henry VIII's third wife, Jane Seymour, is little remembered today. However, to the much-married monarch, she was his most successful wife and the mother of his beloved son and heir. Jane rose from obscurity to marry the king only days after the execution of his second wife, Anne Boleyn. Anxious that she would share her predecessor's fate, Jane struggled to establish herself securely as queen, aware that her safety was dependent on providing the king with a son. Her triumph on 12 October was short-lived, with the queen dying less than two weeks after giving birth. Retrospectively, she became the woman remembered by Henry VIII as his true wife, appearing posthumously in portraiture depicting his family dynasty. It was also Jane, whose tenure as queen lasted less than eighteen months, with whom Henry chose to be buried.

Thursday, 14 November

Catherine Parr, The Wife who Survived

Catherine Parr had already been widowed twice when she became Henry VIII's sixth wife in 1543. Although a reluctant bride, Catherine threw herself into her role as queen, serving as regent of England while her husband was abroad and playing an instrumental role in raising her stepdaughter, the future Elizabeth I. Catherine has the distinction of being England's first

Protestant queen, as well as being the first Englishwoman to publish under her own name. She survived her marriage to Henry VIII, finding time for a fourth marriage before her premature death in September 1548.

Dr Elizabeth Norton is a British historian, specialising in the queens of England and the Tudor period. She is the author of twelve books, including biographies of four of Henry VIII's wives and the recent 'The Lives of Tudor Women' (published by Head of Zeus). She makes regular appearances on television, including recently in 'Danny Dyer's Right Royal Family' on BBC1 and Digging up Britain's Past on Channel 5. She has degrees from the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford and currently teaches at King's College London.

Thursday, 21 November

The tragedy of Mary, Katherine and Lady Jane Grey

Lady Jane Grey is an iconic figure in English history. Misremembered as the 'Nine Days Queen', she has been mythologized as a child-woman destroyed on the altar of adult ambition. Behind the legend was an opinionated adolescent who died a passionate leader, not merely a victim. Growing up in Jane's shadow, her sisters Katherine and Mary had to tread carefully to survive.

The dramatic lives of the younger Grey sisters remain little known, but under English law they were the heirs – to the Tudor monarchs Mary I and Elizabeth I. The beautiful Katherine ignored Jane's dying request that she remain faithful to her beliefs, changing her religion to retain Queen Mary's favour only to then risk life and freedom in a secret marriage that threatened Queen Elizabeth's throne.

While Elizabeth's closest adviser fought to save Katherine, her younger sister Mary remained at court as the queen's Maid of Honour. Too disfigured to be considered significant, it seemed that Lady Mary Grey, at least, would escape the burden of her royal blood. But then she too fell in love, and incurred the queen's fury. Only one sister would die a free woman. One would leave England a son – a Protestant prince for a Protestant throne. A truly lost Tudor story.

Leanda de Lisle read History at Somerville College, Oxford University, before taking up national newspaper and magazine columns, and later publishing best-selling Tudor and Stuart history. She lives in Leicestershire with her husband and three children. She is the author of the bestselling *The Sisters Who Would Be Queen* and *Tudor: The Family Story*. Her latest book is *WHITE KING: THE TRAGEDY OF CHARLES I*, Winner of the HWA Crown for Best Work of Historical Non-Fiction 2018.

Tickets: £8 per lecture | concession £6

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13.00 | Great Hall, Queen's House | FREE



Wednesday, 30 October

Guitar Department

Wednesday, 27 November

Harp Department

Wednesday, 11 December

Harp Department

Wednesday, 18 December

Clara Gatti and Maria McNamee (shared harp concert)

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