

## WOMEN IN TUDOR ENGLAND



### INFORMATION GUIDE FOR NEWCASTLE MEDIEVAL SOCIETY

The purpose of this guide is to assist members of Newcastle Medieval Society (NMS) in discovering information pertaining to the women of Tudor England (1485-1603).

This guide does not provide the information itself. Instead, it is a collection of appropriate resources with brief descriptions of their content and how to access them. The resources included are limited to the availability of items in Newcastle Region Library's (NRL) physical collections and online databases. Where appropriate, some publicly available websites are also recommended where the site's validity has been established. The resources cover a variety of issue pertaining to sixteenth century women in England as well as providing an overview of Tudor England for contextual purposes. Access to images and suggestions for further research are also included.

All items with call numbers are located in the reference section of the Civic branch of NRL, unless otherwise stated. If assistance is required in accessing or exploring any resources, please contact the reference team in-branch, by phone 02 4974 5346 or email [reference@nrl.gov.au](mailto:reference@nrl.gov.au).

## Overview of Tudor England

Capern, A. (2010). *The historical study of women: England 1500-1700*. Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills.

### **305.40942/CAP – Book: 2 week loan**

Capern draws on her experience as a lecturer in Women's History to provide a framework for studying the range of issues affecting women of early modern England. Written for students and those interested in women's history, this book is a good starting point for understanding Tudor women.

Loades, D. & Trow, M. (2011). *The Tudors for dummies*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

### **942.05/LOA – Book: 4 week loan (located at Civic branch)**

Compiled by renowned Tudor historians Loades and Trow, 'The Tudors for dummies' is a simplified analysis of the Tudor dynasty. As the information available on this period can be complex, this book is a handy ready reference for providing context. Genealogy charts are included which clarify relationships between notable figures.

Routh, C. R. N. (1990). *Who's who in Tudor England*. London: Shephard-Walwyn.

### **942.050922/ROU – Book: not for loan**

Historian Routh delivers a simple ready reference tool elaborating on the background of key players in Tudor history. As many names of the period are repeated (Mary Tudor may refer to Henry VIII's younger sister or his eldest daughter), this guide provides necessary clarification.

## The roles and expectations of the Tudor woman

Plowden, A. (1979). *Tudor women: Queens and commoners*. London: Butler and Tanner Ltd.

**301.4129/PLO/1.1 – Book: not for loan**

Plowden uses simple prose to discuss the role of women in sixteenth century England. Although an older publication, Plowden's experience as a writer of Tudor women allows an exploration of women in the establishment of Tudor rule, as well as discussion on the influence of women on Henry VIII and the job opportunities available to women during the Elizabethan reign.

Traub, V. (1988). Jewels, statues, and corpses: Containment of female erotic power in Shakespeare's plays. *Shakespeare Studies*, 20. 215-238. Retrieved from EBSCOhost database.

**Journal article: access via NRL online database**

As a Professor of English and Women's Studies, Traub's research focuses on performance, gender and sexuality. In this article she discusses how Shakespeare consistently created female characters to demonstrate male anxieties toward female power. She proposes that the fictional gender relationships of Shakespeare's work characterised the gender relationships of Elizabethan society.

Parolin, P. (2012). 'If I had begun to dance': Women's performance in Kemps Nine Daies Wonder. *Early Theatre*, 15(1). 45-63. Retrieved from Gale Cengage database.

**Journal article: access via NRL online database**

Contrary to modern popular belief, Tudor performance was not a strictly all-male affair. Parolin, who is author of numerous articles on women's performance in early modern

England, uses this academic paper to discuss how women's performance made a difference both culturally and in their private lives.

Warnicke, R. (1999). Inventing the wicked women of Tudor England: Alice More, Anne Boleyn, and Anne Stanhope. *Quidditas: The Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association*, 20. 11-30. Retrieved from <http://humanities.byu.edu/rmmra/>

**Journal article: access via Internet**

This paper, published as part of a journal devoted to medieval and early modern disciplines, discusses the lives of three historically controversial Tudor women. Writing for an academic audience, Warnicke suggests these women were victims of the age they lived in and the subjects of misinformation, misunderstanding and many layers of bias from over the centuries.

Knox, J. (2011). *The first blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women*. Retrieved from <http://www.gutenberg.org>

**E-book: access via Internet**

Written by Protestant Reformer Knox in 1558, the year Elizabeth I inherited the English throne, this pamphlet denounces women in power. Written in Knox's own words and free from scholarly interpretation from over the centuries, it is significant not because his views of women are now considered outrageous, but because these views were widely accepted as fact in sixteenth century England.

## Politics & monarchy

Harris, B. J. (1990). Women and politics in early Tudor England. *The Historical Journal*, 33(2). 259-281. Retrieved from JSTOR database.

### **Journal article: access via NRL database**

This article provides an interesting take on Tudor politics, arguing that the true politics of the age were played out in the Royal Court. Although women did not hold formal positions of power, they did hold great influence at court and behind the scenes.

Sington, D. (Director), & Starkey, D. (Presenter). (2009). *Love. Henry VIII: The mind of a tyrant* [Documentary]. United Kingdom: British Broadcasting Corporation. Retrieved from <http://whiv.alexanderstreet.com.ezproxy.csu.edu.au/view/1520649/play/true/>

### **Audio visual presentation: access via NRL database**

Presented by well-known Tudor historian and television personality David Starkey, this documentary focuses on Henry VIII's second wife, Anne Boleyn. Dramatisation is used to demonstrate the political persuasion of influential women at court. This documentary complements the Harris article listed above.

Richards, J. (2004). Gender difference and Tudor monarchy: The significance of Queen Mary I. *Parergon*, 21(2). 27-46. Retrieved from Informit database.

### **Journal article: access via NRL database**

Published in an Australian-based medieval journal and drawing on her extensive research as Mary I's biographer, Richards discusses the gender-based issues faced by the female Tudor monarchs and how these issues differentiated them from their male counterparts.

## Religion

Zahl, P. F. M. (2002). *Five women of the English reformation*. Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans.

### **274.206/ZAH – Book: 2 week loan**

This book studies the Protestant theology of women during the English Reformation, perhaps the most significant event to occur during the Tudor dynasty. Although written with episcopal bias (Zahl is a church dean) this work does give an indication of women's relationship with Christianity.

## Education

Daybell, J. (2005). Interpreting letters and reading script: Evidence for female education and literacy in Tudor England. *History of Education*, 34(6), 695-715. Retrieved from EBSCOhost database.

### **Journal article: access via NRL online database**

Daybell analyses letters written by women in Tudor England to determine levels of female literacy. He provides insight into informal female education and argues that their letter writing promoted wider female literacy. Although a journal article, this paper is a straightforward read.

Dowling, M. (1991). A woman's place? Learning and the wives of Henry VIII. *History Today*, 41(6). Retrieved from <http://www.historytoday.com/maria-dowling/womans-place-learning-and-wives-henry-viii>

#### **Magazine article: access via Internet**

Dowling, a distinguished historian of sixteenth century England contributed this article to the respected magazine, 'History Today'. It includes an analysis of the influence of Henry VIII's first wife, Catherine of Aragon, on the promotion of female literacy and education during her time as queen. Exploring the rest of 'History Today' magazine may also uncover more useful information.

## **Illustrations**

National Portrait Gallery. (n.d.). *Tudor and Jacobean portraits database*. Retrieved from <http://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/making-art-in-tudor-britain/matbsearch.php>

#### **Online database: access via Internet**

London's National Portrait Gallery is home to a collection of portraits of historical significance to Britain. This database provides access to significant portraits of the sixteenth century including a number of Tudor women. Portraits of other women not included in this database can also be accessed using the gallery's general search option at the top of the page.

Sichel, M. (1977). *Costume reference 2: Tudors and Elizabethans*. London: B.T. Batsford.

#### **Q391.00942/SIC/1.1 Vol. 02 – Book: not for loan**

This volume of the 'Costume Reference' series shows illustrations of Tudor and High Elizabethan fashions as worn by all levels of society. Descriptions and illustrations of gowns,

undergarments, hairstyles, shoes and other accessories are provided. Contains a glossary explaining obscure terms such as jerkin, coif and mandillion.

## **Historical fiction**

Hirst, M. (Creator). (2007-2010). *The Tudors: Seasons 1-4* [TV series]. United States: Showtime.

### **TV SERIES – DVD: 2 week loan (located at Civic branch)**

A retelling of the reign of Henry VIII, focusing on his six wives and the circumstances of his court. The creators make a reasonable attempt at historical accuracy, though liberties are taken with some facts for entertainment purposes (in the series, the King's illegitimate son dies in toddlerhood to exasperate the need for a male heir, where in fact he lived to 17). The political manoeuvres of women are well represented, illustrating the challenges that befall them.

Kapur, S. (2008). *The complete Elizabeth collection* [Motion pictures]. United States: Universal.

### **MOVIES – DVD: 2 week loan (located at Civic branch)**

Like 'The Tudors', this collection, comprising the Hollywood films 'Elizabeth' and 'Elizabeth: The golden age', is a partially accurate account of a Tudor monarch. Although the intention of the films is to entertain, they characterise the struggle of Elizabeth I in a male dominated era.

Gregory, P. (2006). *The Boleyn inheritance*. London: HarperCollins.

**FICTION – Book: 4 week loan (located at Civic branch)**

Gregory uses her experience as an established historian to tell the story of Henry VIII's fifth wife through the eyes of three Tudor women – Queen Catherine Howard, lady-in-waiting Jane Boleyn and Henry's previous wife, Anne of Cleves. In illustrating the perils of women at the Tudor court, Gregory makes a reasonable attempt to base the story on known facts. Readers should, however, keep in mind many events portrayed are fictitious. Check NRL catalogue for other books by Gregory on Tudor women.

**Further research**

Purvis, J. (Editor). (1992-). *Women's History Review*. Retrieved from Taylor & Francis online database: <http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.csu.edu.au/loi/rwhr20>

**Journal: access via NRL online database**

See annotation in next entry.

Quataert, J. H., & Wheeler, L. A. (Editors). (1989-). *Journal of Women's History*. Retrieved from [http://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/journal\\_of\\_womens\\_history/](http://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_womens_history/)

**Journal: access via Internet**

These peer-reviewed journals provide a useful platform for further research into Tudor women. They provide access to scholarly articles devoted exclusively to the field of women's history. Both journals can be searched by entering keywords (such as those listed below) into the search boxes on the main pages.

Bibliography of British and Irish history. (n.d.). Retrieved from

[http://apps.brepolis.net.ezproxy.csu.edu.au/bbih/search.cfm?action=search\\_simple](http://apps.brepolis.net.ezproxy.csu.edu.au/bbih/search.cfm?action=search_simple)

### **Online database: access via Internet**

This database searches relevant historical databases and provides bibliographies of writing relevant to British history. Information sources available include, but are not limited to, peer-reviewed journals and electronic and hardcopy books. Use keyword suggestions to find relevant readings on Tudor women.

### **Suggested keywords**

- Women
- Tudor
- Elizabethan
- Reformation
- Anne Boleyn
- Henry VIII
- Sixteenth century England
- Early modern England
- English royalty
- British history
- Medieval life
- Historical costume
- Church of England
- Protestantism