

**Trust Truth Only – Elisabeth Wheeler**  
*Court intrigue in the life of Catherine Howard*

TWO QUEENS of England, Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard, both the granddaughters of the second Howard Duke of Norfolk, were accused of High Treason, and were convicted and despatched within five years and nine months of each other; Anne in May 1536 and Catherine in February 1542.

The speed with which the Queen Anne Boleyn was accused and imprisoned was significantly short. Anne had suffered a miscarriage of a male foetus at the end of February 1536. Only eight weeks later intense interrogations to incriminate Anne with adulterous behaviour began, supervised by Thomas Cromwell. Anne was given a show-piece trial in the Tower of London. Five courtiers had been convicted and sentenced as her paramours before her own execution by the sword on May 15 on the Tower Green.

From the moment that Queen Catherine Howard sat under the Cloth of Estate on 8 August in 1540, moves began by those close to Henry VIII, on the Privy Council, and in her own Household, to remove her. Henry VIII's male heir was the child Edward Prince of Wales, son of Jane Seymour; who, as the historian James Anthony Froude put it: "accepted so instantly a position so frightfully made vacant [and] can scarcely be painted in too revolting colours".

The Reformists did not want a queen with future heirs to the throne having the Catholic persuasion of the Howard ducal house. Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury; the Duke of Suffolk; and the Seymours and others, were dismayed by this marriage. This book through painstaking research has come up with answers to the underhand manoeuvring that went on behind the king's back, to remove the queen by the same 'learned' method that had been experienced under Thomas Cromwell. Catherine was kept in isolation from the first week in November 1541; and interrogations began after the return of the King and Catherine from the Royal Progress to York. She did not have a state trial. Her so-called paramours were subjected to

trial. With only two victims to Anne's five victims, more violence was used for the dispatch of Culpeper (cousin of the Queen), and Dereham, a relative of Catherine's step-grandmother, Agnes Duchess of Norfolk. Both men were dragged to Tyburn. Culpeper was decapitated, but Dereham was hung, drawn and quartered.

Catherine's Howard relatives, including the aged Duchess of Norfolk, were convicted of misprison of treason for aiding and abetting the so-called misbehaviour of the Queen before her marriage to Henry VIII. The frightful Jane, Lady Rochford (her 'husband', Anne Boleyn's brother, was executed for incest with his sister) was involved, and caught up in the framed case against Catherine and Culpeper. An accomplice in the plot against Catherine, she went mad for a time, until coaxed into a better frame of mind for her execution on Tower Green. All had been attained in a hurriedly called Parliament on 16 January 1542.

After nearly three and a half months' imprisonment in isolation, Queen Catherine was removed to the Tower of London from Syon Abbey on 10 February 1542. Her remains were not found in the Chapel of St Vincula in the Tower, as Anne Boleyn's remains were, when excavations were approved by Queen Victoria during her own reign. Catherine's body was secretly removed from the Tower and buried in a church associated with the Culpepers, as she was a member of that closely-knit family. Lady Baynton, the Queen's step-sister (their mother being Joyce Culpeper), had been chosen by the king to be with Catherine at Syon Abbey during her imprisonment. Her husband, Sir Edward Baynton, had been chosen to be in charge of the Queen.

So a Queen was dispatched secretly and without compassion.

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