

= Anne Boleyn =

Anne Boleyn (/ ˈbɒliːn / , / bɒʊliːn / or / bʊʊliːn /) (c . 1501 ? 19 May 1536) was Queen of England from 1533 to 1536 as the second wife of King Henry VIII , and Marquess of Pembroke in her own right . Henry 's marriage to Anne , and her subsequent execution by beheading , made her a key figure in the political and religious upheaval that was the start of the English Reformation .

Anne was the daughter of Thomas Boleyn , 1st Earl of Wiltshire , and his wife , Lady Elizabeth Howard , and was educated in the Netherlands and France , largely as a maid of honour to Claude of France . She returned to England in early 1522 , to marry her Irish cousin James Butler , 9th Earl of Ormond ; the marriage plans were broken up by Cardinal Wolsey , and instead she secured a post at court as maid of honour to Henry VIII 's wife , Catherine of Aragon .

Early in 1523 Anne was secretly betrothed to Henry Percy , son of the 5th Earl of Northumberland , but the betrothal was broken by Cardinal Wolsey in January 1524 and Anne was sent back home to Hever Castle . In February / March 1526 , Henry VIII began his pursuit of Anne . She resisted his attempts to seduce her , refusing to become his mistress ? which her sister Mary had been . It soon became the one absorbing object of Henry 's desires to annul his marriage to Queen Catherine so he would be free to marry Anne . When it became clear that Pope Clement VII would not annul the marriage , the breaking of the power of the Catholic Church in England began . In 1532 , Henry granted Anne the Marquessate of Pembroke .

Henry and Anne married on 25 January 1533 , after a secret marriage on 14 November 1532 . On 23 May 1533 , newly appointed Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer declared Henry and Catherine 's marriage null and void ; five days later , he declared Henry and Anne 's marriage valid . Shortly afterwards , the Pope decreed sentences of excommunication against Henry and Cranmer . As a result of this marriage and these excommunications , the first break between the Church of England and Rome took place and the Church of England was brought under the King 's control . Anne was crowned Queen of England on 1 June 1533 . On 7 September , she gave birth to the future Queen Elizabeth I. Henry was disappointed to have a daughter rather than a son but hoped a son would follow and professed to love Elizabeth . Anne subsequently had three miscarriages , and by March 1536 , Henry was courting Jane Seymour .

Henry had Anne investigated for high treason in April 1536 . On 2 May she was arrested and sent to the Tower of London , where she was tried before a jury of peers ? which included Henry Percy , her former betrothed , and her own uncle , Thomas Howard ? and found guilty on 15 May . She was beheaded four days later . Modern historians view the charges against her , which included adultery , incest , and plotting to kill the king , as unconvincing . Some say that Anne was accused of witchcraft but the indictments make no mention of this charge .

Following the coronation of her daughter Elizabeth as queen , Anne was venerated as a martyr and heroine of the English Reformation , particularly through the works of John Foxe . Over the centuries , she has inspired or been mentioned in numerous artistic and cultural works . As a result , she has retained her hold on the popular imagination . Anne has been called " the most influential and important queen consort England has ever had " , since she provided the occasion for Henry VIII to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon , and declare his independence from Rome .

= = Early years = =

Anne was the daughter of Thomas Boleyn , later Earl of Wiltshire and Earl of Ormond , and his wife , Lady Elizabeth Howard , daughter of Thomas Howard , 2nd Duke of Norfolk . Thomas Boleyn was a well respected diplomat with a gift for languages ; he was also a favourite of King Henry VII , who sent him on many diplomatic missions abroad . Anne and her siblings grew up at Hever Castle in Kent . However , the siblings were born in Norfolk at the Boleyn home at Blickling . A lack of parish records from the period has made it impossible to establish Anne 's date of birth . Contemporary evidence is contradictory , with several dates having been put forward by various historians . An Italian , writing in 1600 , suggested that she had been born in 1499 , while Sir Thomas More 's son @-@ in @-@ law , William Roper , indicated a much later date of 1512 . Her birth was most likely

sometime between 1501 and 1507 . As with Anne herself , it is uncertain when her two siblings were born , but it seems clear that her sister Mary was older than Anne . Mary 's children clearly believed their mother had been the elder sister . Most historians now agree that Mary was born in 1499 . Mary 's grandson claimed the Ormonde title in 1596 on the basis she was the elder daughter , which Elizabeth I accepted . Their brother George was born around 1504 .

The academic debate about Anne 's birth date focuses on two key dates : 1501 and 1507 . Eric Ives , a British historian and legal expert , advocates the 1501 date , while Retha Warnicke , an American scholar who has also written a biography of Anne , prefers 1507 . The key piece of surviving written evidence is a letter Anne wrote sometime in 1514 . She wrote it in French to her father , who was still living in England while Anne was completing her education at Mechelen , in the Burgundian Netherlands , now Belgium . Ives argues that the style of the letter and its mature handwriting prove that Anne must have been about thirteen at the time of its composition , while Warnicke argues that the numerous misspellings and grammar errors show that the letter was written by a child . In Ives 's view , this would also be around the minimum age that a girl could be a maid of honour , as Anne was to the regent , Margaret of Austria . This is supported by claims by a chronicler from the late 16th century , who wrote that Anne was twenty when she returned from France . These findings are contested by Warnicke in several books and articles , and the evidence does not conclusively support either date .

There are two independent contemporary sources for the 1507 date . Author Gareth Russell wrote a summary of the evidence and relates that Jane Dormer , Duchess of Feria , wrote her memoirs shortly before her death in 1612 ; in it the former lady @-@ in @-@ waiting and confidante to Queen Mary I wrote of Anne Boleyn : " She was convicted and condemned and was not yet twenty @-@ nine years of age . " William Camden wrote a history of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and was granted access to the private papers of Lord Burghley and to the state archives . In that history , in the chapter dealing with Elizabeth 's early life , he records in the margin that Anne was born in MDVII (1507) .

Anne 's great great great @-@ grandparents included a Lord Mayor of London , a duke , an earl , two aristocratic ladies , and a knight . One of them , Geoffrey Boleyn , had been a mercer and wool merchant before becoming Lord Mayor . The Boleyn family originally came from Blickling in Norfolk , fifteen miles (24 kilometres) north of Norwich . At the time of Anne 's birth , the Boleyn family was considered one of the most respected in the English aristocracy . Among her relatives , she numbered the Howards , one of the preeminent families in the land ; and one of her ancestors included King Edward I of England . According to Eric Ives , she was certainly of more noble birth than Jane Seymour , Catherine Howard , and Catherine Parr , Henry VIII 's three other English wives . The spelling of the Boleyn name was variable , as common at the time . Sometimes it was written as Bullen , hence the bull heads which formed part of her family arms . At the court of Margaret of Austria in the Netherlands , Anne is listed as Boullan . From there she signed the letter to her father as Anna de Boullan . She is also referred to as " Anna Bolina " ; this Latinised form is used in most portraits of her .

Anne 's early education was typical for women of her class . In 1513 , Anne was invited to join the schoolroom of Margaret of Austria and her four wards . Her academic education was limited to arithmetic , her family genealogy , grammar , history , reading , spelling , and writing . She developed domestic skills such as dancing , embroidery , good manners , household management , music , needlework , and singing . Anne learned to play games , such as cards , chess , and dice . She was also taught archery , falconry , horseback riding , and hunting .

= = = Netherlands and France = = =

Anne 's father continued his diplomatic career under Henry VIII . In Europe , Thomas Boleyn 's charm won many admirers , including Margaret of Austria , daughter of Maximilian I , Holy Roman Emperor . During this period , Margaret ruled the Netherlands on her nephew Charles 's behalf and was so impressed with Boleyn that she offered his daughter Anne a place in her household . Ordinarily , a girl had to be twelve years old to have such an honour , but Anne may have been

younger , as the Archduchess affectionately referred to her as " la petite Boulin [sic] " . Anne made a good impression in the Netherlands with her manners and studiousness , Margaret reported that she was well spoken and pleasant for her young age. and told Sir Thomas Boleyn that his daughter was " so presentable and so pleasant , considering her youthful age , that I am more beholden to you for sending her to me , than you to me " (E.W. Ives , op.cit.) . Anne stayed with Margaret from spring 1513 until her father arranged for her to attend Henry VIII 's sister Mary , who was about to marry Louis XII of France in October 1514 .

In France , Anne was a maid of honour to Queen Mary , and then to Mary 's 15 @-@ year @-@ old stepdaughter Queen Claude , with whom she stayed nearly seven years . In the Queen 's household , she completed her study of French and developed interests in art , fashion , illuminated manuscripts , literature , music , poetry , and religious philosophy . She also acquired knowledge of French culture , dance , etiquette , literature , music , and poetry and came to gain experience in flirtation and the game of courtly love . Though all knowledge about Anne 's experiences in the French court are conjecture , even Eric Ives , in his latest edition of the biography , conjectures that she was likely to have made the acquaintance of King Francis I 's sister , Marguerite de Navarre , a patron of humanists and reformers . Marguerite de Navarre was also an author in her own right , and her works include elements of Christian mysticism and reform that verged on heresy , though she was protected by her status as the French king 's beloved sister . She or her circle may have encouraged Anne 's interest in reform , as well as in poetry and literature . Anne 's education in France proved itself in later years , inspiring many new trends among the ladies and courtiers of England , and it may have been instrumental in pressing their King toward the culture @-@ shattering contretemps with the Papacy itself . Eric Ives 's latest version of his biography hypothesises that Anne may have had evangelistic conviction and a strong spiritual inner life . William Forrest , author of a contemporary poem about Catherine of Aragon , complimented Anne 's " passing excellent " skill as a dancer . " Here " , he wrote , " was [a] fresh young damsel , that could trip and go . "

Anne had been of average height and she had a slender build with long straight and thick black or dark brown hair , dark brown eyes , a considerably strong nose , a definite wide mouth with slim lips , and an olive complexion . She was considered to be brilliant , charming , driven , elegant , forthright , and graceful with a keen wit and a lively , opinionated , and passionate personality . Anne was depicted to be " sweet and cheerful " in her youth and she enjoyed cards and dice games , drinking wine , eating French cuisine , flirting , gambling , gossiping , and hearing a good joke . She was fond of archery , falconry , hunting , and the occasional game of bowls . Yet Anne also had a sharp tongue and a terrible temper .

Anne exerted a powerful charm on those who met her , though opinions differed on her attractiveness . The Venetian diarist Marino Sanuto , who saw Anne when Henry VIII met Francis I at Calais in October 1532 , described her as " not one of the handsomest women in the world ; she is of middling stature , swarthy complexion , long neck , wide mouth , bosom not much raised ... eyes , which are black and beautiful " . Simon Grynée wrote to Martin Bucer in September 1531 that Anne was " young , good @-@ looking , of a rather dark complexion " . Lancelot de Carle called her " beautiful with an elegant figure " , and a Venetian in Paris in 1528 also reported that she was said to be beautiful . The most influential description of Anne , but also the least reliable , was written by the Catholic propagandist and polemicist Nicholas Sanders in 1586 , half a century after Anne 's death : " Anne Boleyn was rather tall of stature , with black hair , and an oval face of a sallow complexion , as if troubled with jaundice . It is said she had a projecting tooth under the upper lip , and on her right hand six fingers . There was a large wen under her chin , and therefore to hide its ugliness she wore a high dress covering her throat ... She was handsome to look at , with a pretty mouth " . Sanders held Anne responsible for Henry VIII 's rejection of the Catholic Church , and writing fifty years after her death , was keen to demonise her . Sanders 's description contributed to what biographer Eric Ives calls the " monster legend " of Anne Boleyn . Though his details were fictitious , they have formed the basis for references to Anne 's appearance even in some modern textbooks .

Anne 's experience in France made her a devout Christian in the new tradition of Renaissance

humanism . Anne knew little Latin but , trained at a French court , she was influenced by an " evangelical variety of French humanism " which led her to champion the vernacular Bible . While she would later hold the reformist position that the papacy was a corrupting influence on Christianity , her conservative tendencies could be seen in her devotion to the Virgin Mary . Anne 's European education ended in 1521 , when her father summoned her back to England . She sailed from Calais in January 1522 .

= = At the court of Henry VIII : 1522 ? 1533 = =

Anne was recalled to marry her Irish cousin , James Butler , a young man who was several years older than she and who was living at the English court , in an attempt to settle a dispute over the title and estates of the Earldom of Ormond . The 7th Earl of Ormond died in 1515 , leaving his daughters , Margaret Boleyn and Anne St Leger , as co @-@ heiresses . In Ireland , the great @-@ great @-@ grandson of the 3rd earl , Sir Piers Butler , contested the will and claimed the Earldom himself . He was already in possession of Kilkenny Castle ? the ancestral seat of the earls . Sir Thomas Boleyn , being the son of the eldest daughter , felt the title belonged to him and protested to his brother @-@ in @-@ law , the Duke of Norfolk , who spoke to King Henry about the matter . Henry , fearful the dispute could be the spark to ignite civil war in Ireland , sought to resolve the matter by arranging an alliance between Piers 's son , James , and Anne Boleyn . She would bring her Ormond inheritance as dowry and thus end the dispute . The plan ended in failure , perhaps because Sir Thomas hoped for a grander marriage for his daughter or because he himself coveted the titles . Whatever the reason , the marriage negotiations came to a complete halt . James Butler later married Lady Joan Fitzgerald , daughter and heiress of James FitzGerald , 10th Earl of Desmond and Amy O'Brien .

Mary Boleyn , Anne Boleyn 's older sister , had earlier been recalled from France in late 1519 , ostensibly for her affairs with the French king and his courtiers . She married William Carey , a minor noble , in February 1520 , at Greenwich , with Henry VIII in attendance ; soon after , Mary Boleyn became the English King 's mistress . Historians dispute King Henry VIII 's paternity of one or both of Mary Boleyn 's children born during this marriage . Henry VIII : The King and His Court , by Alison Weir , questions the paternity of Henry Carey ; Dr. G.W. Bernard (The King 's Reformation) and Joanna Denny (Anne Boleyn : A New Life of England 's Tragic Queen) argue that Henry VIII was their father . Henry did not acknowledge either child , as he did his son Henry Fitzroy , his illegitimate son by Elizabeth Blount , Lady Talboys .

Anne made her début at the Château Vert (Green Castle) pageant in honour of the imperial ambassadors on 4 March 1522 , playing " Perseverance . " There she took part in an elaborate dance accompanying Henry 's younger sister Mary , several other ladies of the court , and her sister . All wore gowns of white satin embroidered with gold thread . She quickly established herself as one of the most stylish and accomplished women at the court , and soon a number of young men were competing for her .

The American historian Retha M. Warnicke writes that Anne was " the perfect woman courtier ... her carriage was graceful and her French clothes were pleasing and stylish ; she danced with ease , had a pleasant singing voice , played the lute and several other musical instruments well , and spoke French fluently ... A remarkable , intelligent , quick @-@ witted young noblewoman ... that first drew people into conversation with her and then amused and entertained them . In short , her energy and vitality made her the center of attention in any social gathering . " Henry VIII 's biographer J. J. Scarisbrick adds that Anne " revelled in " the attention she received from her admirers .

During this time , Anne was courted by Henry Percy , son of the Earl of Northumberland , and entered into a secret betrothal with the young man . Thomas Wolsey 's gentleman usher , George Cavendish , maintained the two had not been lovers . If Cavendish is to be believed , their relationship was celibate . The romance was broken off when Percy 's father refused to support their engagement . Cardinal Wolsey refused the match for several conjectured reasons . According to Cavendish , Anne was sent from court to her family 's countryside estates , but it is not known for

how long . Upon her return to court , she again entered the service of Catherine of Aragon . Percy was married to Lady Mary Talbot , to whom he had been betrothed since adolescence .

Prior to her marriage to King Henry VIII , Anne had befriended Sir Thomas Wyatt , who was one of the greatest poets of the Tudor reign . In 1520 , Wyatt married Elizabeth Cobham , who told by many accounts , was not a wife of his choosing . Thus , in 1525 , Wyatt charged his wife with adultery and separated from her ; coincidentally , historians believe that it was also the year where his interest in Anne intensified . While Anne Boleyn was still King Henry 's mistress in 1532 , Wyatt accompanied the royal couple to Calais in France . A year later , Anne Boleyn and the King were secretly married , and Wyatt served in Anne 's coronation in June 1533 .

In 1526 , King Henry became enamoured with Anne and began his pursuit . Some say that Anne resisted the King 's attempts to seduce her , refusing to become his mistress , often leaving court for the seclusion of Hever Castle . But within a year , he proposed marriage to her , and she accepted . Both assumed an annulment could be obtained within a matter of months . There is no evidence to suggest that they engaged in a sexual relationship until very shortly before their marriage ; Henry 's love letters to Anne suggest that their love affair remained unconsummated for much of their seven @-@ year courtship .

= = = Henry 's annulment = = =

It is probable that the idea of annulment (not divorce as commonly assumed) had suggested itself to Henry much earlier than this and was motivated by his desire for an heir to secure the Tudor claim to the crown . Before Henry 's father Henry VII ascended the throne , England was beset by civil warfare over rival claims to the crown and Henry wanted to avoid a similar uncertainty over the succession . He and Catherine had no living sons : all Catherine 's children except Mary died in infancy . Catherine of Aragon had first come to England to be bride to Henry 's brother Arthur who died soon after their marriage . Since Spain and England still wanted an alliance , a dispensation was granted by Pope Julius II on the grounds that Catherine was still a virgin . The marriage of Catherine and Henry took place in 1509 , but eventually he became dubious about its validity , due to Catherine 's inability to provide an heir being seen as a sign of God 's displeasure . His feelings for Anne , and her refusals to become his mistress , probably contributed to Henry 's decision that no Pope had a right to overrule the Bible . This meant that he had been living in sin with Catherine of Aragon all these years , though Catherine hotly contested this and refused to concede that her marriage to Arthur had been consummated . It also meant that his daughter Mary was a bastard , and that the new Pope (Clement VII) would have to admit the previous Pope 's mistake and annul the marriage . Henry 's quest for an annulment became euphemistically known as the " King 's Great Matter . "

Anne saw an opportunity in Henry 's infatuation and the convenient moral quandary . She determined that she would yield to his embraces only as his acknowledged queen . She began to take her place at his side in policy and in state , but not yet in his bed .

Scholars and historians hold various opinions as to how deep Anne 's commitment to the Reformation was , how much she was perhaps only personally ambitious , and how much she had to do with Henry 's defiance of papal power . There is anecdotal evidence , related to biographer George Wyatt by her former lady @-@ in @-@ waiting Anne Gainsford , that Anne brought to Henry 's attention a heretical pamphlet , perhaps Tyndale 's " The Obedience of a Christian Man " or one by Simon Fish called " Supplication for Beggars , " which cried out to monarchs to rein in the evil excesses of the Catholic Church . She was sympathetic to those seeking further reformation of the Church , and actively protected scholars working on English translations of the scriptures . According to Maria Dowling , " Anne tried to educate her waiting @-@ women in scriptural piety ? and is believed to have reproved her cousin , Mary Shelton , for ? having ' idle poesies ' written in her prayer book . ? If Cavendish is to be believed , Anne 's outrage at Wolsey may have personalised whatever philosophical defiance she brought with her from France . Further , the most recent edition of Ives 's biography admits that Anne may very well have had a personal spiritual awakening in her youth which spurred her on , not just as catalyst but expediter for Henry 's

Reformation , though the process took a number of years .

In 1528 , sweating sickness broke out with great severity . In London , the mortality rate was great and the court was dispersed . Henry left London , frequently changing his residence ; Anne Boleyn retreated to the Boleyn residence at Hever Castle , but contracted the illness ; her brother @-@ in @-@ law , William Carey , died . Henry sent his own physician to Hever Castle to care for Anne , and shortly afterwards , she recovered . It soon became the one absorbing object of Henry 's desires to secure an annulment from Catherine . Henry had set his hopes upon a direct appeal to the Holy See , acting independently of Cardinal Wolsey , to whom he at first communicated nothing of his plans related to Anne . In 1527 William Knight , the King 's secretary , was sent to Pope Clement VII to sue for the annulment of his marriage to Catherine , on the grounds that the dispensing bull of Pope Julius II permitting him to marry his brother 's widow , Catherine , had been obtained under false pretences . Henry also petitioned , in the event of his becoming free , a dispensation to contract a new marriage with any woman even in the first degree of affinity , whether the affinity was contracted by lawful or unlawful connection . This clearly referred to Anne .

As the Pope was , at that time , prisoner of Charles V , the Holy Roman Emperor , as a result of the Sack of Rome in May 1527 , Knight had some difficulty obtaining access . In the end he had to return with a conditional dispensation , which Wolsey insisted was technically insufficient . Henry now had no choice but to put his great matter into Wolsey 's hands , who did all he could to secure a decision in Henry 's favour , even going so far as to convene an ecclesiastical court in England , with a special emissary , Lorenzo Campeggio from the Pope himself to decide the matter . But the Pope never had empowered his deputy to make any decision . The Pope was still a veritable hostage of Charles V , and Charles V was the loyal nephew of Henry 's queen , Catherine . The Pope forbade Henry to contract a new marriage until a decision was reached in Rome , not in England . Convinced that Wolsey 's loyalties lay with the Pope , not England , Anne , as well as Wolsey 's many enemies , ensured his dismissal from public office in 1529 . George Cavendish , Wolsey 's chamberlain , records that the servants who waited on the king and Anne at dinner in 1529 in Grafton heard her say that the dishonour that Wolsey had brought upon the realm would have cost any other Englishman his head . Henry replied , " Why then I perceive ... you are not the Cardinal 's friend . " Henry finally agreed to Wolsey 's arrest on grounds of praemunire . Had it not been for his death from illness in 1530 , he might have been executed for treason . A year later in 1531 (fully two years before Henry 's marriage to Anne) , Queen Catherine was banished from court and her rooms were given to Anne .

Public support remained with Queen Catherine . One evening in the autumn of 1531 , Anne was dining at a manor house on the river Thames and was almost seized by a crowd of angry women . Anne just managed to escape by boat .

When Archbishop of Canterbury William Warham died in 1532 , the Boleyn family chaplain , Thomas Cranmer , was appointed , with papal approval .

In 1532 , Thomas Cromwell brought before Parliament a number of acts including the Supplication against the Ordinaries and Submission of the Clergy , which recognised royal supremacy over the church , thus finalising the break with Rome . Following these acts , Thomas More resigned as Chancellor , leaving Cromwell as Henry 's chief minister .

= = = Premarital role and marriage = = =

Even before her marriage , Anne Boleyn was able to grant petitions , receive diplomats , give patronage and had enormous influence over her future husband to plead the cause of foreign diplomats . The ambassador from Milan wrote in 1531 that it was essential to have her approval if one wanted to influence the English government , a view corroborated by an earlier French ambassador in 1529 .

During this period , Anne Boleyn played an important role in England 's international position by solidifying an alliance with France . She established an excellent rapport with the French ambassador , Gilles de la Pommeraye . Anne and Henry attended a meeting with the French king at Calais in winter 1532 , in which Henry hoped to enlist the support of Francis I of France for his

intended marriage . On 1 September 1532 , Henry granted her suo jure the Marquessate of Pembroke , an appropriate peerage for a future queen ; as such she became a rich and important woman : the three dukes and two marquesses who existed in 1532 were the King 's brother @-@ in @-@ law , the King 's illegitimate son , and other descendants of royalty ; she ranked above all other peeresses . The Pembroke lands and the title of Earl of Pembroke had been held by Henry 's great @-@ uncle , and Henry performed the investiture himself .

Anne 's family also profited from the relationship . Her father , already Viscount Rochford , was created Earl of Wiltshire . Henry also came to an arrangement with Anne 's Irish cousin and created him Earl of Ormond . At the magnificent banquet to celebrate her father 's elevation , Anne took precedence over the Duchesses of Suffolk and Norfolk , seated in the place of honour beside the King which was usually occupied by the Queen . Thanks to Anne 's intervention , her widowed sister Mary received an annual pension of £ 100 , and Mary 's son , Henry Carey , was educated at a prestigious Cistercian monastery .

The conference at Calais was something of a political triumph , but even though the French government gave implicit support for Henry 's remarriage and Francis I himself held private conference with Anne , the French King maintained alliances with the Pope which he could not explicitly defy .

Soon after returning to Dover , Henry and Anne married in a secret ceremony on November 14 , 1532 . She soon became pregnant and , to legalise the first wedding considered to be unlawful at the time , there was a second wedding service , also private in accordance with The Royal Book , which took place in London on 25 January 1533 . Events now began to move at a quick pace . On 23 May 1533 , Cranmer (who had been hastened , with the Pope 's assent , into the position of Archbishop of Canterbury recently vacated by the death of Warham) sat in judgment at a special court convened at Dunstable Priory to rule on the validity of the King 's marriage to Catherine of Aragon . He thereupon declared the marriage of Henry and Catherine null and void . Five days later , on 28 May 1533 , Cranmer declared the marriage of Henry and Anne to be good and valid .

= = Queen of England : 1533 ? 1536 = =

Catherine was formally stripped of her title as queen and Anne was consequently crowned queen consort on 1 June 1533 in a magnificent ceremony at Westminster Abbey with a banquet afterwards . She was the last queen consort of England to be crowned separately from her husband . Unlike any other queen consort , Anne was crowned with St Edward 's Crown , which had previously been used to crown only a monarch . Historian Alice Hunt suggests that this was done because Anne 's pregnancy was visible by then and she was carrying the heir who was presumed to be male . On the previous day , Anne had taken part in an elaborate procession through the streets of London seated in a litter of " white cloth of gold " that rested on two palfreys clothed to the ground in white damask , while the barons of the Cinque Ports held a canopy of cloth of gold over her head . In accordance with tradition she wore white , and on her head a gold coronet beneath which her long dark hair hung down freely . The public 's response to her appearance was lukewarm .

Meanwhile , the House of Commons had forbidden all appeals to Rome and exacted the penalties of praemunire against all who introduced papal bulls into England . It was only then that Pope Clement at last took the step of announcing a provisional sentence of excommunication against the King and Cranmer . He condemned the marriage to Anne , and in March 1534 , he declared the marriage to Catherine legal and again ordered Henry to return to her . Henry now required his subjects to swear the oath attached to the First Succession Act , which effectively rejected papal authority in legal matters and recognised Anne Boleyn as queen . Those who refused , such as Sir Thomas More , who had resigned as Lord Chancellor , and John Fisher , Bishop of Rochester , were then placed in the Tower of London . In late 1534 parliament declared Henry " the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England " . The Church in England was now under Henry 's control , not Rome 's . On 14 May 1534 , in one of the realm 's first official acts protecting Protestant Reformers , Anne wrote a letter to Thomas Cromwell seeking his aid in ensuring that English merchant Richard Herman be reinstated a member of the merchant adventurers in Antwerp and no

longer persecuted simply because he had helped in " setting forth of the New testament in English .
" Before and after her coronation , Anne protected and promoted evangelicals and those wishing to study the scriptures of William Tyndale . She had a decisive role in influencing the Protestant reformer Matthew Parker to attend court as her chaplain , and prior to her death entrusted her daughter to Parker 's care .

= = = Struggle for a son = = =

After her coronation , Anne settled into a quiet routine at the King 's favourite residence , Greenwich Palace , to prepare for the birth of her baby . The child was born slightly prematurely on 7 September 1533 . Between three and four in the afternoon , Anne gave birth to a girl , who was christened Elizabeth , probably in honour of either or both Anne 's mother Elizabeth Howard and Henry 's mother , Elizabeth of York . But the birth of a girl was a heavy blow to her parents , since they had confidently expected a boy . All but one of the royal physicians and astrologers had predicted a son for them and the French king had already been asked to stand as his godfather . Now the prepared letters announcing the birth of a prince had an s hastily added to them to read princes [s] and the traditional jousting tournament for the birth of an heir was cancelled .

Nevertheless , the infant princess was given a splendid christening , but Anne feared that Catherine 's daughter , Mary , now stripped of her title of princess and labelled a bastard , posed a threat to Elizabeth 's position . Henry soothed his wife 's fears by separating Mary from her many servants and sending her to Hatfield House , where Princess Elizabeth would be living with her own sizeable staff of servants , and where the country air was thought better for the baby 's health . Anne frequently visited her daughter at Hatfield and other residences .

The new queen had a larger staff of servants than Catherine . There were more than 250 servants to tend to her personal needs , everyone from priests to stable @-@ boys , and more than 60 maids @-@ of @-@ honour who served her and accompanied her to social events . She also employed several priests who acted as her confessors , chaplains , and religious advisers . One of these was Matthew Parker , who would become one of the chief architects of Anglican thought during the reign of Anne 's daughter , Elizabeth I.

= = = Strife with the king = = =

The king and his new queen enjoyed a reasonably happy accord with periods of calm and affection . Anne Boleyn 's sharp intelligence , political acumen and forward manners , although desirable in a mistress , were , at the time , unacceptable in a wife . She was once reported to have spoken to her uncle in words that " shouldn 't be used to a dog " . After a stillbirth or miscarriage as early as Christmas 1534 , Henry was discussing with Cranmer and Cromwell the possibility of divorcing her without having to return to Catherine . Nothing came of the issue as the royal couple reconciled and spent summer 1535 on progress . By October , she was again pregnant .

Anne Boleyn presided over a magnificent court . She spent lavish amounts of money on gowns , jewels , head @-@ dresses , ostrich @-@ feather fans , riding equipment , furniture and upholstery , maintaining the ostentatious display required by her status . Numerous palaces were renovated to suit her and Henry 's extravagant tastes . Her motto was " The most happy " , and she had chosen a white falcon as her personal device .

Anne was blamed for the tyranny of her husband 's government and was referred to by some of her subjects as " The king 's whore " or a " naughty paixe [prostitute] " . Public opinion turned further against her following her failure to produce a son . It sank even lower after the executions of her enemies Sir Thomas More and Bishop John Fisher .

= = Downfall and execution : 1536 = =

On 8 January 1536 , news of Catherine of Aragon 's death reached the King and Anne , who were overjoyed . The following day , Henry and Anne wore yellow , the symbol of joy and celebration in

England , from head to toe , and celebrated Catherine 's death with festivities . In Spain , the home country of Catherine of Aragon , yellow was the colour of mourning , in addition to black . For this reason , the wearing of yellow by Henry and Anne may have been a symbol of mourning . With Mary 's mother dead , Anne attempted to make peace with her . Mary rebuffed Anne 's overtures , perhaps because of rumours circulating that Catherine had been poisoned by Anne and / or Henry . These began after the discovery during her embalming that her heart was blackened . Modern medical experts are in agreement that this was not the result of poisoning , but of cancer of the heart , something which was not understood at the time .

The Queen , pregnant again , was aware of the dangers if she failed to give birth to a son . With Catherine dead , Henry would be free to marry without any taint of illegality . At this time Henry began paying court to Jane Seymour . He gave her a locket with a miniature portrait of himself inside and Jane , in the presence of Anne , began opening and shutting it . Anne responded by ripping off the locket with such force her fingers bled .

Later that month , the King was unhorsed in a tournament and knocked unconscious for two hours , a worrying incident that Anne believed led to her miscarriage five days later . Another possible cause of the miscarriage was an incident in which , upon entering a room , Anne saw Jane Seymour sitting on the lap of Henry . After flying into a rage , Henry soothed her , saying " peace be sweetheart , and all will be well . " Whatever the cause , on the day that Catherine of Aragon was buried at Peterborough Abbey , Anne miscarried a baby which , according to the imperial ambassador Eustace Chapuys , she had borne for about three and a half months , and which " seemed to be a male child " . Chapuys commented " She has miscarried of her saviour . " In Chapuys ' opinion , this loss was the beginning of the end of the royal marriage .

Given Henry 's desperate desire for a son , the sequence of Anne 's pregnancies has attracted much interest . Author Mike Ashley speculated that Anne had two stillborn children after Elizabeth 's birth and before the male child she miscarried in 1536 . Most sources attest only to the birth of Elizabeth in September 1533 , a possible miscarriage in the summer of 1534 , and the miscarriage of a male child , of almost four months gestation , in January 1536 . As Anne recovered from her miscarriage , Henry declared that he had been seduced into the marriage by means of " sortilege " ? a French term indicating either " deception " or " spells " . His new mistress , Jane Seymour , was quickly moved into royal quarters . This was followed by Anne 's brother George being refused a prestigious court honour , the Order of the Garter , given instead to Sir Nicholas Carew .

= = = Charges of adultery , incest and treason = = =

Anne 's biographer Eric Ives believes that her fall and execution were primarily engineered by her former ally Thomas Cromwell . The conversations between Chapuys and Cromwell thereafter indicate Cromwell as the instigator of the plot to remove Anne ; evidence of this is seen in the Spanish Chronicle and through letters written from Chapuys to Charles V. Anne argued with Cromwell over the redistribution of Church revenues and over foreign policy . She advocated that revenues be distributed to charitable and educational institutions ; and she favoured a French alliance . Cromwell insisted on filling the King 's depleted coffers , while taking a cut for himself , and preferred an imperial alliance . For these reasons , Ives suggests , " Anne Boleyn had become a major threat to Thomas Cromwell . " Cromwell 's biographer John Schofield , on the other hand , contends that no power struggle existed between Anne and Cromwell and that " not a trace can be found of a Cromwellian conspiracy against Anne ... Cromwell became involved in the royal marital drama only when Henry ordered him onto the case . " Cromwell did not manufacture the accusations of adultery , though he and other officials used them to bolster Henry 's case against Anne . Historian Retha Warnicke questions whether Cromwell could have or wished to manipulate the king in such a matter . Such a bold attempt by Cromwell , given the limited evidence , could have risked his office , even his life . Henry himself issued the crucial instructions : his officials , including Cromwell , carried them out . The result , historians agree , was a legal travesty . However modern lawyers have concluded that the rules of the time were not bent in order to assure Anne Boleyn 's conviction ; there was no need to tamper with rules that guaranteed the desired result since law at

the time , like armies , was an engine of state , not a mechanism for justice .

Towards the end of April a Flemish musician in Anne 's service named Mark Smeaton was arrested . He initially denied being the Queen 's lover but later confessed , perhaps tortured or promised freedom . Another courtier , Henry Norris , was arrested on May Day , but being an aristocrat , could not be tortured . Prior to his arrest , Norris was treated kindly by the King , who offered him his own horse to use on the May Day festivities . It seems likely that during the festivities , the King was notified of Smeaton 's confession and it was shortly thereafter the alleged conspirators were arrested upon his orders . Norris denied his guilt and swore that Queen Anne was innocent ; one of the most damaging pieces of evidence against Norris was an overheard conversation with Anne at the end of April , where she accused him of coming often to her chambers not to pay court to her lady @-@ in @-@ waiting Madge Shelton but to herself . Sir Francis Weston was arrested two days later on the same charge , as was William Brereton , a Groom of the King 's Privy Chamber . Sir Thomas Wyatt , a poet and friend of the Boleyns who was allegedly infatuated with her before her marriage to the king , was also imprisoned for the same charge but later released , most likely due to his or his family 's friendship with Cromwell . Sir Richard Page was also accused of having a sexual relationship with the Queen , but he was acquitted of all charges after further investigation could not implicate him with Anne . The final accused was Queen Anne 's own brother , George Boleyn , arrested on charges of incest and treason . He was accused of two incidents of incest : November 1535 at Whitehall and the following month at Eltham .

On 2 May 1536 , Anne was arrested and taken to the Tower of London by barge . It is likely that Anne may have entered through the Court Gate in the Byward Tower rather than the Traitors ' Gate , according to historian and author of *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* , Eric Ives . In the Tower , she collapsed , demanding to know the location of her father and " swete broder " , as well as the charges against her .

In what is reputed to be her last letter to King Henry , dated 6 May , she wrote :

" Sir ,

Your Grace 's displeasure , and my imprisonment are things so strange unto me , as what to write , or what to excuse , I am altogether ignorant . Whereas you send unto me (willing me to confess a truth , and so obtain your favour) by such an one , whom you know to be my ancient professed enemy . I no sooner received this message by him , than I rightly conceived your meaning ; and if , as you say , confessing a truth indeed may procure my safety , I shall with all willingness and duty perform your demand .

But let not your Grace ever imagine , that your poor wife will ever be brought to acknowledge a fault , where not so much as a thought thereof preceded . And to speak a truth , never prince had wife more loyal in all duty , and in all true affection , than you have ever found in Anne Boleyn : with which name and place I could willingly have contented myself , if God and your Grace 's pleasure had been so pleased . Neither did I at any time so far forget myself in my exaltation or received Queenship , but that I always looked for such an alteration as I now find ; for the ground of my preferment being on no surer foundation than your Grace 's fancy , the least alteration I knew was fit and sufficient to draw that fancy to some other object . You have chosen me , from a low estate , to be your Queen and companion , far beyond my desert or desire . If then you found me worthy of such honour , good your Grace let not any light fancy , or bad council of mine enemies , withdraw your princely favour from me ; neither let that stain , that unworthy stain , of a disloyal heart toward your good grace , ever cast so foul a blot on your most dutiful wife , and the infant @-@ princess your daughter . Try me , good king , but let me have a lawful trial , and let not my sworn enemies sit as my accusers and judges ; yea let me receive an open trial , for my truth shall fear no open flame ; then shall you see either my innocence cleared , your suspicion and conscience satisfied , the ignominy and slander of the world stopped , or my guilt openly declared . So that whatsoever God or you may determine of me , your grace may be freed of an open censure , and mine offense being so lawfully proved , your grace is at liberty , both before God and man , not only to execute worthy punishment on me as an unlawful wife , but to follow your affection , already settled on that party , for whose sake I am now as I am , whose name I could some good while since have pointed unto , your Grace being not ignorant of my suspicion therein . But if you have already determined of me ,

and that not only my death , but an infamous slander must bring you the enjoying of your desired happiness ; then I desire of God , that he will pardon your great sin therein , and likewise mine enemies , the instruments thereof , and that he will not call you to a strict account of your unprincely and cruel usage of me , at his general judgment @-@ seat , where both you and myself must shortly appear , and in whose judgment I doubt not (whatsoever the world may think of me) mine innocence shall be openly known , and sufficiently cleared . My last and only request shall be , that myself may only bear the burden of your Grace 's displeasure , and that it may not touch the innocent souls of those poor gentlemen , who (as I understand) are likewise in strait imprisonment for my sake . If ever I found favour in your sight , if ever the name of Anne Boleyn hath been pleasing in your ears , then let me obtain this request , and I will so leave to trouble your Grace any further , with mine earnest prayers to the Trinity to have your Grace in his good keeping , and to direct you in all your actions . From my doleful prison in the Tower , this sixth of May ;

Your most loyal and ever faithful wife , Anne Boleyn "

Four of the accused men were tried in Westminster on 12 May 1536 . Weston , Brereton , and Norris publicly maintained their innocence and only the tortured Smeaton supported the Crown by pleading guilty . Three days later , Anne and George Boleyn were tried separately in the Tower of London , before a jury of 27 peers . She was accused of adultery , incest , and high treason . By the Treason Act of Edward III , adultery on the part of a queen was a form of treason (because of the implications for the succession to the throne) for which the penalty was hanging , drawing and quartering for a man and burning alive for a woman , but the accusations , and especially that of incestuous adultery , were also designed to impugn her moral character . The other form of treason alleged against her was that of plotting the king 's death , with her " lovers " , so that she might later marry Henry Norris . Henry Percy , 6th Earl of Northumberland sat on the jury that unanimously found Anne guilty . When the verdict was announced , he collapsed and had to be carried from the courtroom . He died eight months later , leaving no heirs and therefore was succeeded by his nephew . According to a 1980 legal review by Schauer and Schauer , " there is little if any evidence , apart from Smeaton 's possible torture , that the rules of the time were in any way bent in order to assure Anne Boleyn 's conviction " .

On 14 May , Cranmer declared Anne 's marriage to Henry null and void .

= = = Final hours = = =

Although the evidence against them was unconvincing , the accused were found guilty and condemned to death . George Boleyn and the other accused men were executed on 17 May 1536 . William Kingston , the Constable of the Tower , reported Anne seemed very happy and ready to be done with life . Henry commuted Anne 's sentence from burning to beheading , and rather than have a queen beheaded with the common axe , he brought an expert swordsman from Saint @-@ Omer in France , to perform the execution . On the morning of 19 May , Kingston wrote :

This morning she sent for me , that I might be with her at such time as she received the good Lord , to the intent I should hear her speak as touching her innocency alway to be clear . And in the writing of this she sent for me , and at my coming she said , ' Mr. Kingston , I hear I shall not die afore noon , and I am very sorry therefore , for I thought to be dead by this time and past my pain . ' I told her it should be no pain , it was so little . And then she said , ' I heard say the executioner was very good , and I have a little neck , ' and then put her hands about it , laughing heartily . I have seen many men and also women executed , and that they have been in great sorrow , and to my knowledge this lady has much joy in death . Sir , her almoner is continually with her , and had been since two o 'clock after midnight .

Her impending death may have caused her great sorrow for some time during her imprisonment . The poem " Oh Death Rock Me Asleep " is generally believed to have been authored by Anne and reveals that she may have hoped death would end her suffering .

Shortly before dawn , she called Kingston to hear mass with her , and swore in his presence , on the eternal salvation of her soul , upon the Holy Sacraments , that she had never been unfaithful to the king . She ritually repeated this oath both immediately before and after receiving the sacrament

of the Eucharist .

On the morning of Friday 19 May , Anne Boleyn was executed within the Tower precincts , not upon the site of the execution memorial , but rather , according to historian Eric Ives , on a scaffold erected on the north side of the White Tower , in front of what is now the Waterloo Barracks . She wore a red petticoat under a loose , dark grey gown of damask trimmed in fur and a mantle of ermine . Accompanied by two female attendants , Anne made her final walk from the Queen 's House to the scaffold and she showed a " devilish spirit " and looked " as gay as if she was not going to die " . Anne climbed the scaffold and made a short speech to the crowd :

Good Christian people , I am come hither to die , for according to the law , and by the law I am judged to die , and therefore I will speak nothing against it . I am come hither to accuse no man , nor to speak anything of that , whereof I am accused and condemned to die , but I pray God save the king and send him long to reign over you , for a gentler nor a more merciful prince was there never : and to me he was ever a good , a gentle and sovereign lord . And if any person will meddle of my cause , I require them to judge the best . And thus I take my leave of the world and of you all , and I heartily desire you all to pray for me . O Lord have mercy on me , to God I commend my soul .

This version of her speech is found in Foxe 's , Actes and Monuments and an almost identical version in Ives (2005) . In a 1 @, @ 318 line poem , written in French , two weeks after Anne 's death , Lancelot de Carle provides a moving account of her last words and their effect on the crowd :

She gracefully addressed the people from the scaffold with a voice somewhat overcome by weakness , but which gathered strength as she went on . She begged her hearers to forgive her if she had not used them all with becoming gentleness , and asked for their prayers . It was needless , she said , to relate why she was there , but she prayed the Judge of all the world to have compassion on those who had condemned her , and she begged them to pray for the King , in whom she had always found great kindness , fear of God , and love of his subjects . The spectators could not refrain from tears .

Lancelot de Carle , a secretary to the French Ambassador , Antoine de Castelnau , was in London in May 1536 , and was an eyewitness to her trial and execution . The poem , Épistre Contenant le Procès Criminel Faict à l 'Encontre de la Roynne Anne Boullant d 'Angleterre , (A Letter Containing the Criminal Charges Laid Against Queen Anne Boleyn of England) , provides a detailed account of Anne 's early life and the circumstances relating to her arrest , trial and execution . All the accounts are similar . It is thought that Anne avoided criticising Henry to save Elizabeth and her family from further consequences , but even under such extreme pressure Anne did not confess guilt , and indeed subtly implied her innocence , in her appeal to those who might " meddle of my cause " .

= = = Death and burial = = =

The ermine mantle was removed and Anne lifted off her headdress , tucking her hair under a coif . After a brief farewell to her weeping ladies and a request for prayers , she knelt down and one of her ladies tied a blindfold over her eyes . She knelt upright , in the French style of executions . Her final prayer consisted of her repeating continually , " Jesu receive my soul ; O Lord God have pity on my soul . "

The execution consisted of a single stroke . It was witnessed by Thomas Cromwell ; Charles Brandon , 1st Duke of Suffolk ; the King 's illegitimate son , Henry Fitzroy ; the Lord Mayor of London , as well as aldermen , sheriffs , and representatives of the various craft guilds . Most of the King 's Council were also present . Cranmer , who was at Lambeth Palace , was reported to have broken down in tears after telling Alexander Ales : " She who has been the Queen of England on earth will today become a Queen in heaven . " When the charges were first brought against Anne , Cranmer had expressed his astonishment to Henry and his belief that " she should not be culpable . " Still , Cranmer felt vulnerable because of his closeness to the queen , and so on the night before the execution , he declared Henry 's marriage to Anne to have been void , like Catherine 's before her . He made no serious attempt to save Anne 's life , although some sources record that he had prepared her for death by hearing her last private confession of sins , in which she had stated her

innocence before God . On the day of her death , a Scottish friend found Cranmer weeping uncontrollably in his London gardens , saying that he was sure that Anne had now gone to Heaven .

She was then buried in an unmarked grave in the Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula . Her skeleton was identified during renovations of the chapel in 1876 , in the reign of Queen Victoria , and Anne 's resting place is now marked in the marble floor .

= = Recognition and legacy = =

Nicholas Sander , a Catholic recusant born c . 1530 , was committed to deposing Elizabeth I and re-establishing Catholicism in England . In his *De Origine ac Progressu schismatis Anglicani* (The Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism) , published in 1585 , he was the first to write that Anne had six fingers on her right hand . Since physical deformities were generally interpreted as a sign of evil , it is unlikely that Anne Boleyn would have gained Henry 's romantic attention had she had any . Upon exhumation in 1876 , no abnormalities were discovered . Her frame was described as delicate , approximately 5 ' 3 " , with finely formed , tapering fingers .

Anne Boleyn was described by contemporaries as intelligent and gifted in musical arts and scholarly pursuits . She was also strong-willed and proud , and often quarrelled with Henry . Biographer Eric Ives evaluates the apparent contradictions in Anne 's persona :

To us she appears inconsistent ? religious yet aggressive , calculating yet emotional , with the light touch of the courtier yet the strong grip of the politician ? but is this what she was , or merely what we strain to see through the opacity of the evidence ? As for her inner life , short of a miraculous cache of new material , we shall never really know . Yet what does come to us across the centuries is the impression of a person who is strangely appealing to the early 21st century : A woman in her own right ? taken on her own terms in a man 's world ; a woman who mobilised her education , her style and her presence to outweigh the disadvantages of her sex ; of only moderate good looks , but taking a court and a king by storm . Perhaps , in the end , it is Thomas Cromwell 's assessment that comes nearest : intelligence , spirit and courage .

No contemporary portraits of Anne Boleyn survive . A bust of her was cast on a commemorative medallion in 1534 , believed to have been struck to celebrate her second pregnancy .

Following the coronation of her daughter as queen , Anne was venerated as a martyr and heroine of the English Reformation , particularly through the works of John Foxe , who argued that Anne had saved England from the evils of Roman Catholicism and that God had provided proof of her innocence and virtue by making sure her daughter Elizabeth I ascended the throne . An example of Anne 's direct influence in the reformed church is what Alexander Ales described to Queen Elizabeth as the " evangelical bishops whom your holy mother appointed from among those scholars who favoured the purer doctrine " . Over the centuries , Anne has inspired or been mentioned in numerous artistic and cultural works . As a result , she has remained in the popular memory and has been called " the most influential and important queen consort England has ever had . "

= = Legends = =

Many legends and fantastic stories about Anne Boleyn have survived over the centuries . One is that she was secretly buried in Salle Church in Norfolk under a black slab near the tombs of her ancestors . Her body was said to have rested in an Essex church on its journey to Norfolk . Another is that her heart , at her request , was buried in Erwarton (Arwarton) Church , Suffolk by her uncle Sir Philip Parker .

In 18th-century Sicily , the peasants of the village of Nicolosi believed that Anne Boleyn , for having made Henry VIII a heretic , was condemned to burn for eternity inside Mount Etna . This legend was often told for the benefit of foreign travellers .

A number of people have claimed to have seen Anne 's ghost at Hever Castle , Blickling Hall , Salle Church , the Tower of London , and Marwell Hall . The most famous account of her reputed sighting has been described by paranormal researcher Hans Holzer . In 1864 , Major General J.D. Dundas

of the 60th Rifles regiment was quartered in the Tower of London . As he was looking out the window of his quarters , he noticed a guard below in the courtyard , in front of the lodgings where Anne had been imprisoned , behaving strangely . He appeared to challenge something , which to the General " looked like a whitish , female figure sliding towards the soldier " . The guard charged through the form with his bayonet , then fainted . Only the General 's testimony and corroboration at the court @-@ martial saved the guard from a lengthy prison sentence for having fainted while on duty . In 1960 , Canon W. S. Pakenham @-@ Walsh , vicar of Sulgrave , Northamptonshire , reported having conversations with Anne .

= = Issue = =

= = Ancestry = =