

# ROYAL CROYDON

As well as links with the church, Croydon has royal connections. Early records of royal visits include one by Coenwulf, king of the ancient Saxon kingdom of Mercia, who was entertained here by Archbishop Wulfred in 809 in what are believed to have been substantial buildings and a church. By the time the Norman Conquerors were taking stock of their ill-gotten gains in the Domesday Book, Croindene manor had been allotted to the Norman Archbishop Lanfranc and the town was out of Saxon hands. Kings and queens continued to visit with their huge retinues while their archbishops were in residence in the Old Palace, so it is natural that some visits gave rise to legends.



Queen Victoria on a royal visit

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Anne Boleyn**  
**The Queen and the Collier**  
**Dilligrout**  
**Tudor Week**  
**The Feast of Thomas Cranmer**  
**Royal snippets**



Anne Boleyn views Carshalton

# ANNE BOLEYN

**Anne Boleyn was the second of Henry VIII's six wives. Born around 1507, she secretly married Henry in 1533 before his marriage to sometime Croydon resident Katherine of Aragon had actually been annulled. In order to rid himself of the ageing and sonless Spanish queen, to whom he had been married for many years, Henry brought about major changes in the Church in England, precipitating the acrimonious split with the Roman Catholic Church. Anne's only child was the future Elizabeth I. Although reputed still to be in love with Anne, Henry was desperate for a son and heir. He had Anne executed for adultery, incest and treason and became betrothed to Jane Seymour, the third of his six wives, the very next day.**

Anne Boleyn met a tragic end. Maybe it is her ultimate fate that gives her a special place in the sympathies of many people. She was queen for just three years, and yet a great many legends have sprung up about her. Not only is she said to walk the Bloody Tower in the Tower of London 'with her head tucked underneath her arm', as the Weston and Lee song goes, but she is also involved in traditions stretching from Addington in the east to Carshalton in the west. Outside our immediate area, Henry VIII is said to have stood on a barrow at Pembroke Lodge, Petersham Park, near Mortlake, to watch for a signal from the Tower of London announcing Anne's execution. Just how far can a man see, even an all-powerful monarch?

Anne returned to England from the French court in about 1521. She was later courted by Henry VIII in Addington. Anne was then living in nearby Wickham Court, a residence belonging to her great uncle Henry Heydon. The king had a hunting lodge in Addington Park, believed to have occupied the site where Addington Palace now stands. Tradition has it that Henry's courting of his future queen took place in an

underground passage leading from Addington to Wickham Court. It is also said that Henry stayed at Selsdon Manor while courting Anne, who was staying nearby. This building later became Selsdon Park Hotel, after a certain amount of remodelling.

The nation had originally hated the coquettish young queen for turning the king against the pious and popular Katherine, a devout Roman Catholic. Anne had spent her early years at the French court, where she is said to have learnt her flirtatious behaviour. Natural disasters and signs in the heavens were interpreted as foretelling Anne's fate. Rumours also spread about a sixth digit on one of her hands - this was interpreted as a sign that she was a witch, as was a large mole on her long neck. She was described as wearing very long sleeves, which fuelled the rumours of a deformed hand.

Despite all this, Anne's end was later romanticized in poems, and her dignity at death turned her tragedy into martyrdom. Even today she is a well-known historical figure and is viewed sympathetically. A musical interpretation of aspects of her character can be

heard on Rick Wakeman's 'The Six Wives of Henry VIII'.

According to a tale said to have been told in Addington until relatively recently, evidence for the existence of such a tunnel was uncovered in Addington Place (now known as Addington Palace). A duck ventured into the cellars and was not seen again for two days, when it emerged from the cellars of Wickham Court up on the hills above Addington. Another story tells of a labourer digging a pit at Kent Gate, roughly in line with the two buildings. He is said to have discovered a dome which may have formed part of the passage.

*'A romantic tradition alleges that a blow from the hoof of Anne Boleyn's horse caused the spring (now dry) to rise. However, "Bullen's Well" more likely refers to "Bolonia" or "Boulogne". The Count of Boulogne was Lord of the Manor in the 12th century. The well may be have been near a chapel dedicated to "our Lady of Boulogne".'*

This pretty much scotches the romantic notion that Anne's almost magical presence gave rise to a spring, but the thought is a nice one!



Anne Boleyn's Well, Carshalton

In Carshalton we come across another tradition. On the busy road outside All Saints church is an overgrown well. The London Borough of Sutton has commemorated the legend in a plaque, which reads:

# THE QUEEN AND THE COLLIER

**Charcoal was just as important to Croydon as our royal connections. A couple of royal Tudor half-sisters had a run-in with the colliers or charcoal burners who provided the town with much-needed fuel!**

According to legend, Elizabeth I offered to help young Margaret Clarke, one of her maids. She was the victim of unwanted attentions from charcoal burner Michael Quaig in Beddington. Quaig arranged to meet Clarke at a cave, and the Queen and her attendants waited close by. Quaig flung a bag of gold at the girl, who screamed for help. Before anyone could come to Clarke's assistance, the angry Quaig threw his torch at a bag of gunpowder and he and his victim were buried under the rubble.

In another tale Elizabeth I was walking through the cheering crowds in Croydon. A grimy collier jumped out in front of her and presented her with a bag of 'coals'. This amused the Queen, who immediately knighted him 'Sir Collier' with a sword borrowed from an attendant. If there is any truth in this tale, the sovereign is much more likely to have been presented with a bag of barbecue briquettes.

Henry VIII's other daughter, Mary Tudor, also had a run-in with a charcoal burner. Her health was poor and she spent some time convalescing in Croydon after becoming queen. Her lady-in-waiting, Jane Dormer, recorded how Queen Mary liked to visit the poor people in their cottages. On one of these visits, the queen sat with a collier while he ate his supper and found out that he had not been paid for providing the Court with fuel. This made her angry, and she arranged for payment to be made next day.

## DILLIGROUT

Matilda of Flanders, wife of William the Conqueror, followed him to England and was crowned queen. A lavish banquet was cooked by William's master chef, Tezelin, a Norman. He concocted a dish of white soup called dilligrout. The king was so pleased with it that he presented the manor of Edintone (one of two manorial estates in the Addington area) to his chef.

The hereditary honour and its perks fell to the Dymoke family for several generations. A Dymoke had to carry the salt and carving knives from the pantry to the king's table; in return he received the salt cellars, spoons and knives. He also had the honour of being the Champion, which required him to ride into the banqueting hall and challenge any dissenter to combat.

The tradition of a dish being offered by the Lord of the Manor of Addington at each coronation lapsed after the reign of George IV. Frederick English, a diamond millionaire from South Africa, bought the palace in 1898 and applied to serve dilligrout to Edward VIII. He was turned down on the grounds that the banquets had been discontinued.

Dilligrout varied over the years, but once comprised almond milk, capons, sugar, spices, etc. It was presented to Charles II at his coronation, but he didn't eat it. By the time dilligrout was served to George IV it was a 'herb pudding boiled in a pig's caul'. I think I would probably have left that, too.

# TUDOR WEEK

**Although our royal connections date back at least to the Norman Conquest, when William the Conqueror handed out bits of land hereabouts to his supporters, Croydon's royal involvement probably saw its apotheosis during the reign of the Tudors.**

Tudor Week was held in March 1996 to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Whitgift Foundation. It took two years of planning with a professional event organizer. Archbishop Whitgift loved the town and its palace. He spent a lot of time here on what was essentially a country estate, often visited by Elizabeth I and her retinue. He founded the almshouses on the corner of George Street, flanked by the Alders building, and established the Foundation that continues to support them and a number of other establishments.



Queen Elizabeth visits Croydon

The procession to mark Tudor Week was billed as one of the major events, expected to involve up to 200 people in costume. Tabards and tights were declared acceptable, but early on the planners were looking for Elizabethan costumes from drama groups, donations of curtain material and so on.

In the run-up to the week of festivities there were announcements of plans for a beer race by sedan chair and a Tudor-style country fair with jousting,

hawking and archery. At quite a late stage the organizers were still looking for more teams for the sedan race. The teams were due to race from pub to pub, with free beer and orange juice, ending with a barbecue in South End.

In February Elizabeth II visited Croydon, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, with a walkabout to meet people and a look at the new Lifetimes exhibition at the Croydon Clocktower, marking the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary. She also unveiled a plaque (or laid a stone? - the sources disagree) at the Whitgift Almshouses. The Archbishop of Canterbury also graced the town with a visit.

During Tudor Week Yvonne Walker led tours of the almshouses and the Old Palace. On the Saturday a 300-strong pageant through Croydon was led by Dorothy Baldock in the guise of Elizabeth I, carried on a litter, with peasants in sack cloth, nobles in doublet and hose, minstrels, rat catchers, wool spinners and bleating sheep. The procession left from Spice's Yard and was greeted at the Whitgift Almshouses by none other than Archbishop Whitgift himself. The procession included militia and Elizabethan notables such as Raleigh, Shakespeare and Sir Francis Bacon. The procession then moved off down Crown Hill to the Old Palace School. During the day there were exhibitions of arts and crafts including calligraphy, chain-mail, dance and wool spinning at various 'tableaux' sites around town.

# THE FEAST OF THOMAS CRANMER

**While his feast doesn't have pride of place in the nation's calendar, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury in the days of Henry VIII, played a major role in England's religious life. And for some reason the good folks of Florida have decided to celebrate him in a series of entertainments that has a lot in common with Croydon's own Tudor Week.**

According to the website of Sarasota Medieval Fair, Inc., we Croydonians used to celebrate the Feast Day of Thomas Cranmer annually on 16 October. Ring any bells? That is his feast day in the Protestant church's calendar, but I've not come across any evidence of actual feasting in the village of Croydon.

In 2005 the Lakewood Ranch Polo Club in Sarasota was planning to hold a medieval fair on the feast day, set in the village of Croydon as it would have been in 1559, three years after Cranmer's martyrdom. Cranmer was burned for heresy in Oxford during the reign of Mary Tudor, partly for having served his Protestant master, Henry VIII, too well. His dissolution of Henry's marriage to Katherine of Aragon had made Mary illegitimate. When Mary became Queen, she took her revenge.

The Florida event promised a feast, including live entertainment from jesters and musicians, a human chess match, an audience with the Queen and Royalty, music, dancing, hand-to-hand combat, a procession, singing, stories about Cranmer, and much more. Not only that, but bookings were also being taken for the 'Queen's Tea' on Saturday and Sunday in Croydon Palace: 'Enjoy while you share an audience with the Queen. Featuring live entertainment and DESSERTS!'

In addition to ripping yarns about a late medieval archbishop and tea and

scones with Elizabeth I, visitors were encouraged to support participants in the jousting tournament, with some dodgy Elizabethan marketing-speak: 'Get caught-up in the excitement, as thee must pledge ones allegiance to thy country of choice, be it the Kingdom of England, France, Spain, or Germany!' More cod medieval English follows in the descriptions of the positions of these countries in jostling for England's disputed throne. The jousting was to be provided by a couple of teams of re-enactors, the King's Champions and the Knights of Valor.

The website offers descriptions of the event's menus, featuring bread, cheese, salads, fresh fruit, 'légumes chevonnés', described as 'a dish of delicious, perfectly seasoned vegetables in mouth-watering sauce combinations', various roast meats and desserts consisting of 'an array of warm breads to be dipped in honey', cheesecake and tasty pies. So, swan's off the menu, then?

The website shows huge enthusiasm for all things Merry England. And unlike some recent events in Croydon, England, they planned to go ahead rain or shine! Annually. Let's hope the 2005 hurricane season didn't put paid to their celebrations.

# ROYAL SNIPPETS

**In no particular order, here are more royal connections with a slightly unusual flavour or at least a 'goodness, I would never have guessed' touch to them.**

1. It is said that keen sportsman James I established racing in Croydon early in his reign.
2. Some of Elizabeth II's ancestors once lived in Selsdon, and their graves are in the Smith vault in All Saints in Sanderstead. The Queen Mother contributed towards the restoration of the church's turret clock, which had been given by an ancestor, and this is commemorated by a plaque inside the church.
3. In 1587 Elizabeth I made Sir Christopher Hatton Lord High Chancellor while she was staying at the Archbishop's Palace.
4. Selsdon Mansion became Selsdon Park Hotel, but in its time it has been an Anglo-Saxon hall, a medieval farmhouse, a Tudor and Elizabethan manor house and a Victorian country seat. It was given in 1538 by Henry VIII to Sir John Gresham, his financial advisor.
5. Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, visited Surrey Street market in November 1994 and was reportedly well aware of its history. He also visited the Dog and Bull, one of Croydon's oldest pubs.
6. The restoration of Charles II was formerly celebrated by the Royal Oak pub on Surrey Street by hanging a sprig of oak outside the pub on 29 May, Oak Apple Day.
7. Hugh Warham gave Haling Manor to Henry VIII in exchange for other lands, possibly under compulsion. It remained in royal hands until Queen Mary granted it to Sir John Gage, her Lord Chamberlain.
8. A member of the Gage family of Haling Manor was executed by Elizabeth I for lying in connection with Mary, Queen of Scots. Another member of the family was imprisoned by Elizabeth for harbouring a Roman Catholic priest.
9. Elizabeth I gifted Haling Manor to Charles, Earl of Nottingham, one of the admirals who fought off the Spanish Armada.
10. Nicholas, son of Richard Carew of Carew Manor, Beddington, was raised with Henry VIII - it didn't do him any good, as he was still executed for treason and had his lands confiscated.
11. Our early markets and fairs were only possible because various archbishops obtained licences from the king, in this case Edwards I, II and III. Edward I actually visited Croydon in 1274.
12. Dastardly William Clewer was appointed Vicar of Croydon by Charles II even though he had persecuted Royalists during the Commonwealth.
13. When Sir Walter Raleigh married Bess Throckmorton (a Carew from Beddington), maid-of-honour to Elizabeth I, the queen was so jealous that she put them both in the Tower of London.
14. Elizabeth I visited Sir Frances Carew at Beddington for three days in 1599, and then again 12 months later. A grove of trees near Carew Manor is called Queen Elizabeth's Walk, from the belief that the queen used the path for a stroll. However, until the 1830s it was called Ladye Walk. A section survives between Queenswood Avenue and Croydon

- Road.
15. Archbishop Cranmer, later burnt at the stake during the reign of Bloody Mary, had earlier ordered the guide to beating the bounds to be written.
  16. Archbishop Parker is believed to have had the elevated pew at the west end of the Old Palace chapel built for Elizabeth I's use during her visits.
  17. Elizabeth I invited the French Ambassador to dine with her in Croydon after the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1587. She jokingly introduced him to guests as 'the man who wanted to have me murdered'.
  18. Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Christopher Hatton had a row over lodgings during the queen's visit in 1585, with Raleigh occupying the lodgings allocated to Hatton. Two years later Hatton was Lord Chancellor, and in 1592 Raleigh was out of favour and in the Tower.
  19. Henry VIII fell out with Croydon when his love for Katherine of Aragon began to fade.
  20. Some people believe that the carved wooden heads in the chapel of the Old Palace represent Edward IV and his son, Edward V, one of the two princes murdered in the Tower of London. Others think they just depict the carpenter.
  21. James I of Scotland, known as the 'poet king', was captured by the English on his way to France just before he acceded to the Scottish throne. At the age of 15 in 1409 he was moved to the Archbishop's Palace and held prisoner in the library, then known as the Guard Room. He was in the care of Archbishop Arundel, and for four years he dined at the Archbishop's table, hunted in the woods and was educated by some of the best teachers in England. He was later presented with a bill for £40,000 for his maintenance and education during his 18-year captivity in England. It turns out he was much safer living in England, as he was subsequently assassinated in Perth, Scotland, in 1437.
  22. Richard III stayed in Croydon after the death of his brother, asking Archbishop Bouchier to care for the two young princes who later died in the Tower of London. Their deaths left Richard free to become king.
  23. Whitehorse Lane was named after Walter Whitehorse, shield bearer to Edward III, who owned the land after 1368. Walter was granted 'free warren' by his king - this meant he could hunt small game on that land. Normally this right was a privilege of the king.
  24. Elizabeth II visited Croydon in 1983 to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the granting of borough status to Croydon by Royal Charter. She unveiled a plaque in Queen's Gardens in Park Lane when she opened them during her visit.
  25. The first queen to visit Croydon was Queen Philippa of Hainault in what is now Belgium. She was the consort of Edward III and a popular queen. She may have come here to escape the Black Death in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The wool trade flourished in England after Flemish weavers settled here. An elaborate system of chivalry developed under her influence, and she was the mother of the Black Prince.
  26. Elizabeth of York, consort of Henry VII, is believed to have visited Croydon frequently until her death in 1503. She was probably checking on the wellbeing of Katherine of Aragon, her daughter-in-law, who had been widowed when Prince Arthur died at Ludlow. The young Katherine used the palace as a dower house. Elizabeth and Henry established the Tudor dynasty out of the mess of the War of the Roses - she was

- daughter of Edward IV and sister of the Princes in the Tower.
27. Katherine of Aragon was in residence at the Old Palace when Henry VIII arrived to take her to Greenwich to marry him.
  28. Local legend in Norwood has it that Prince John, the epileptic and autistic son of George V and Queen Mary, was taken to a large house off Beulah Hill, possibly to see a doctor. Several doctors lived in the villas at that time. Queen Mary sent out Christmas cards with a picture of The Rookery on them in 1921 - the Rookery was nearby at Streatham Common, and she was known to visit it. The road between Beulah Hill and Crown Dale was renamed Queen Mary Road in December 1938 - previously it was just known as Queen's Road. George V also used to visit a German masseur by the name of Ziter in Maberley Road, sometimes accompanied by Queen Mary.
  29. In his memoirs from the 1820s, Croydon fishmonger William Page tells of the occasion when a mob of Croydon residents outside the Crown Inn booed and hissed George IV as he passed on his way to Brighton.
  30. Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII, lived in a succession of manor houses in the south, including Haling and Croydon Palace, then still known as Croydon House. Unexpected guests arrived in 1506 - Joanna of Castile, travelling with husband Philip the Handsome from the Netherlands to Spain to assume the throne in Castile, where her mother Isabella had just died. Bad weather forced them to land in England and they visited Katherine of Aragon, Joanna's younger sister, in Croydon.