

HISTORICAL ENQUIRY

HOW RELIGIOUS WERE THE TUDOR MONARCHS?

In medieval England, almost everybody was a **Catholic** and followed the instructions of the **Pope** in Rome. All of that changed under the Tudors. Religion in England was never the same as one Tudor after another changed the way God was worshipped in England. These dramatic changes didn't just affect the kings and queens, but ordinary people all over the country. This meant that your religion could place you in a powerful position one minute and in danger of a horrible death the next! Thousands of people died or saw their lives ruined as different rulers forced one change after another. So what were these changes? Why did they make them? And just how religious were the Tudor monarchs?

I: What was young Henry VIII like?

MISSION OBJECTIVES

- To understand how young Henry VIII spent his time and money.
- To decide whether Henry was religious when he was a young man.

Everybody has heard of Henry VIII. Most people think they know a few things about him too. They usually say:

- He was a big fat bloke.
- He had six wives... or was it eight?
- He beheaded most of his wives.

Some of these statements are true. Henry did have six wives but he didn't chop the heads off most of them; although he did get someone to behead two! As for him being a big fat bloke – well yes he was – but only for the last few years of his life. In fact, on his forty-fifth birthday, Henry was the same size as he was when he was 23 – and at that age, Henry was a fine sportsman. As a young man, he enjoyed hunting, tennis, wrestling, archery and jousting. He was even known to enjoy a good snowball fight in winter. Henry wrote music and poetry and could speak four languages. So despite having a bit of a weight problem when he was older, Henry was an impressive man when he was crowned in 1509.

As you will learn, many fantastic facts surround the life of Henry VIII. In fact, Henry was desperate to become known as a super king and even liked to call himself 'Henry the Great'. But although he is most famous for his wives, the most important events in Henry's life were the religious changes he made. Not only did they affect religion in Henry's time, they changed religion in England and Wales for good.

SOURCE A: A portrait of Henry VIII showing him in his late twenties. ➔



TONIGHT ONLY

AT HAMPTON COURT PALACE
IN THE PRESENCE OF
HENRY THE GREAT

A ROYAL GALA PERFORMANCE

*A feast fit for a king – beef, pork, lamb, chicken, eggs,
venison, pigeon pie, rabbit, wine and apple tart*

Anne Penn – plays the harp

Fat Scotty the jester – jokes and rude stories

Matthew Morrish – the little juggling stilt walker

*The fighting Dunkley Brothers – will wrestle each other
and any challengers – Prizes to be won*

*Dance the Pavane, the Volta and the Galliard to the
wonderful music makers followed by – STOP PRESS –
Hear our king's latest song, 'GREENSLEEVES'*

Henry was a very religious man and, like most people in the country at the time, he was Catholic. He visited church at least three times a day and even wrote a book supporting the Pope, who was the Head of the Catholic Church. Henry was such a good Catholic that in 1521, the Pope rewarded Henry with the title 'Fidei Defensor', which means 'Defender of the Faith'. Henry liked the title so much that he made sure the letters FD were on all the coins made in his name. You can still see the letters FD or the words 'Fid. Def.' on some British coins today – have a look yourself.

However, by 1533, Henry had fallen out with the Pope, who **excommunicated** him, meaning he was expelled from the Catholic Church. This was a very serious punishment at the time because it meant that the person could not talk to a priest about their sins. If a priest did not forgive you for your sins, then you wouldn't get to heaven. So how did Henry VIII and the Pope fall out with each other? What had Henry done that was so terrible that he received the worst kind of religious punishment? The next few pages chart an amazing story.

Henry the big spender

Henry loved to bet on anything – cards, dice, tennis, wrestling, or jousting. He used to win (and lose) the equivalent of thousands of pounds every day. Henry also loved to dress in the smartest, most expensive clothes. His silk shirts, gold buttons and jewel-encrusted jackets would have cost a fortune. So, too, would his legendary parties, held at any of Henry's 55 palaces.

WISE-UP Words

Catholic
excommunicated
Pope

FACT Henry, the good Catholic Henry's book said how good the Catholic Church was. In it, he wrote that the Pope, as Head of the Catholic Church, did a good job. Henry even wrote about marriage, which he said should be forever – one woman, for life.

Work

Your task is to write a profile of the young King Henry VIII.

Search through the text to find out details about the young king, using the following subheadings to guide your writing:

- Henry the athlete
- Henry the good Catholic
- Henry the big spender.

Finally, write your own opinion in answer to the following question – Should the young King Henry have been called 'Henry the Great'?

FACT What a job

Henry VIII employed someone to wipe his bottom! He was officially called the 'Groom of the Stool'. It was a much prized job because the employee got to spend so much time with the King!

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED?

- Could you name a sport that Henry enjoyed?
- Could you tell somebody about a strange thing that Henry spent his money on?
- Do you know why the Pope called him 'Defender of the Faith' and have you decided if he deserved it?