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TIMELINE



1533–4	Henry Grey marries Frances Brandon
1536	Lady Jane Grey is born
October 1536	The Pilgrimage of Grace breaks out in Lincolnshire
12 October 1537	Prince Edward is born
1540	Lady Katherine Grey is born
1544	Third Act of Succession passed in Parliament
1545	Lady Mary Grey is born
30 December 1546	Henry VIII makes his final will
28 January 1547	Henry VIII dies, succeeded by Edward VI
February 1547	Jane becomes Sir Thomas Seymour's ward
May 1547	Thomas Seymour marries Katherine Parr
June 1548	Jane travels to Sudeley Castle
30 August 1548	Katherine Parr gives birth to a daughter at Sudeley
5 September 1548	Katherine Parr dies
7 September 1548	Jane is Chief Mourner at Katherine's funeral
Mid-September 1548	Jane travels home to Bradgate Park
October 1548	Jane returns to Seymour Place
17 January 1549	Thomas Seymour is arrested
21 January 1549	The Act of Uniformity is passed in Parliament
20 March 1549	Thomas Seymour is executed

TIMELINE

11 October 1549	Lord Protector Somerset is arrested
November 1549	Jane visits the Lady Mary at Beaulieu
December 1549– January 1550	Jane celebrates Christmas with her family at Tilty
June 1550	Roger Ascham visits Bradgate Park
11 October 1551	Henry Grey is created Duke of Suffolk
November 1551	Jane joins the welcome party for Marie de Guise
22 January 1552	Lord Protector Somerset is executed
25 May 1553	Jane is married to Guildford Dudley
June 1553	‘My Devises for the Succession’ is signed
6 July 1553	Edward VI dies and Lady Jane Grey becomes queen
10 July 1553	Jane is openly proclaimed Queen of England
19 July 1553	Jane is deposed and Mary is proclaimed queen
18 August 1553	Mary I makes a proclamation about religion
22 August 1553	The Duke of Northumberland is executed
5 October 1553	The Act of Repeal is passed in Parliament
13 November 1553	Jane is tried and condemned at Guildhall
January 1554	Negotiations for Mary’s marriage are concluded
February 1554	The Wyatt Rebellion ends in failure
12 February 1554	Jane and Guildford are executed

INTRODUCTION



MEMORIES OF LADY Jane Grey conjure up a life of sadness and injustice: a young lady sacrificed through the actions of ambitious power-players in the complex world of sixteenth-century politics. And there is no doubt that Jane was a victim, but that is only part of the story. Jane was, in fact, a spirited girl who demonstrated character, passion, talent and strength, and deserves to be remembered as such. She was precocious and intelligent, and could also be wilful on occasion, with an acute sense of her own abilities. Jane was also incredibly pious, and her Protestant zeal developed to the point of fanaticism. Moreover, it is certainly possible to argue that she had many of the ingredients necessary in a successful monarch. During her short term as queen, she demonstrated that she was capable of making strategic decisions and of asserting her authority – from the day of her proclamation on 10 July 1553, she showed that she had ample potential to wield the power behind the crown before it was snatched away from her with alarming speed. Furthermore, her numerous other admirable qualities that were showcased throughout the course of her short life support this: she had dignity, integrity and displayed bravery by defending herself against powerful men in an age when women were expected to be wholly obedient. While Jane was undoubtedly used and forced into a queenship she did not want, such qualities reveal that she had strength of character and will, and was capable of asserting them, often to the surprise and disturbance of those who sought to wield power through her. There are those who would argue that, having reigned for so brief a period and having never been crowned, Jane should not be classified as a monarch, but I would dispute this. To those who do acknowledge

her as such, Jane is often referred to as ‘the Nine Days Queen’, but this too is incorrect. She was, albeit for a short time, acknowledged as queen by the Council of the realm through the machinations of Edward VI from the moment of his death on 6 July. As the contemporary martyrologist John Foxe later remembered, ‘When King Edward was dead, this Jane was established in the kingdom by the Nobles consent.’¹ The news that Jane was queen, however, was not made public until 10 July, when she was conducted to the Tower of London and a proclamation was issued in her name, supported by the lords of the Council, which is where the ‘Nine Days’ comes from. Once again, Foxe remarked that Jane was ‘published Queen by proclamation at London, and in other Cities where was any great resort, and was there so taken and named’.² Jane was made queen and proclaimed queen, and the fact that she was referred to as such by many of her contemporaries is perhaps the most revealing evidence that this was indeed how she was regarded. For thirteen days, therefore, Jane was Queen of England, but only nine of these days were conducted openly with public knowledge of Jane’s exalted status. In the immediate aftermath of Edward’s death, Jane was given four days to prepare herself for the challenge that lay ahead, a task that she faced with dignity. It is true that Jane was not crowned, but neither were Edward V and Edward VIII, and Jane certainly deserves recognition on a par with both. Therefore, in writing Jane’s story, I do so very much with the belief that she was, and should be remembered as, Queen Jane.

The sources for Jane’s life are scant, and at times are absent altogether. For example, none of her contemporaries remarked on the precise date or place of her birth, and neither do we know anything of her childhood with certainty. By the same token, none of Jane’s contemporaries left a description of her physical appearance – the account accredited to the Genoese merchant Battista Spinola, in which she was described as being ‘very short and thin, but prettily shaped and graceful’, has been proven to be fraudulent.³ Unsurprisingly, most of the surviving sources relate to