

## Anne runs out of time

[Dr Kate Williams]

In January 1533 Henry VIII married Anne Boleyn in secret and this is a copy of the clock Henry gave to Anne as a wedding present.

Ironically from the moment she was married she would never escape the ticking timebomb – she had to bear a son.

The queen's fertility obsessed the court. Her maids and ladies reported back on her menstrual cycles to politicians, spies and ambassadors.

When she became pregnant everyone rejoiced but to Henry's dismay Anne produced not a son but a daughter – Elizabeth. Henry didn't want a daughter – a queen might marry a foreign prince and allow England to be dominated by a foreign power. Anne had to give him a son.

Two years later Anne suffered a miscarriage at just under four months. Even worse the unborn child was male. Henry was furious and told Anne bluntly: 'He would have no more boys by her.'

In Henry's eyes she had not delivered on her promise. As Anne grieved the loss of her son, I wonder if she had an inkling that her day as queen were numbered.

Henry had found Anne seductive as a mistress but that passion and independent now seemed likely unwelcome defiance in a wife.

Here Henry is looking down at us and next to Anne is her lady-in-waiting with whom Henry had fallen desperately in love. She was younger, meek and submissive, just what Henry now wanted. But Anne was furious and refused to turn a blind eye to the affair.

By 1536 Henry wanted to get rid of Anne. Anne didn't help herself – she had close male confidantes and that made people gossip about loves. One of her ladies in waiting accused her of infidelity. Her position was now extremely dangerous.

The king was ruthless. He ordered an investigation and Anne was tried for high-treason and adultery with five men – including her own brother. The guilty verdict was a foregone conclusion. In his relentless pursuit of a male heir the king killed off the woman for whom he had turned England upside down.

Filmed at Hever Castle, Kent