

14/10/2020



Dear Club Members,

As a child my way of remembering the orders of the colour in the rainbow was Richard of York Gave Battle in Vain. I'm sure I've read somewhere that this is one of those things that only us Brits do... and I remember seeing a list of the mnemonics used by other countries somewhere, and I now can't find it. If you feel like it you could come and share your regional way of remembering the colour order in the Time Travellers discussion threads.

Anyway, this fibre isn't actually about the colours of the Rainbow (though we have done that as an inspiration in the past), it's about the mnemonic itself. The mnemonic comes from the final battle of what we now call the War of the Roses, which at the time was actually more likely to be referred to as the Cousins War. That name tells you everything you need to know about this conflict, it led to brothers fighting against brothers, fathers against sons. The nobility of England fought each other for over 30 years, leading to the death of up to 50,000 people. The final battle was the one in which fought between Richard III and Henry Tudor, who went on to become Henry VII. Richard was defeated, which led to the end of the conflict, he fought on vain against overwhelming odds.

30th October marks the 550th anniversary of one of the many battles in this war that led to the English throne changing hands. Henry VI returned to the throne after the Earl of Warwick rebelled against King Edward IV, and defeated him in the Battle of Edgecote Moor in 1470 (in modern day Northamptonshire).

The reasons for the conflict, and the twists and turns in the plot are the subject of books, not short letters, but in general they arose because kings repeatedly failed to have a living heir at the time of their death, and because many of the kings had been weak, leading to strong nobles, with royal bloodlines, feeling that they could do a better job.

The conflict become popularly known as the War of the Roses after the 1829 of Anne of Geierstein by Sir Walter Scott, he in turn was inspired by a scene in William Shakespeare's play Henry VI, Part 1. Shakespeare has noblemen picking out a white rose, or a red rose in order to show their allegiance. The white rose had long been used as a symbol by the House of York, and is still used as an emblem in Yorkshire today, but the use of a red rose to represent the House of Lancaster was a creation by Henry Tudor, who was keen to demonstrate that he intended to unite the country. Both roses are combined in the Tudor rose, which inspires our fibre for this month.

This unity wasn't actually that hard to achieve, every direct male heir of both lines had now died, Henry claimed the throne through his mothers bloodline, Margaret Beaufort was a great-granddaughter of Edward III. Aged just 12 she was married to important Lancastrian nobleman Edmund Tudor. Shortly after the marriage Edmund died, leaving Margaret a pregnant widow at just 13. The birth was difficult and traumatic, despite subsequent marriages Margaret never had another child. Henry spent much of his youth in France, and Margaret spent her time in England campaigning and scheming to make her son King. She may have been behind the killing of the Princes in the Tower (with them still alive it would have been very hard for the nobles and people

to accept the weak claim of her son Henry). She certainly brokered the marriage between Henry and Elizabeth of York (daughter of Edward IV) , joining the 2 houses.

Henry was on the throne for 24 years, and in that time he stabilised the government finances, and the country as a whole. He established the Tudor dynasty. His mother Margaret remained active in court life, with the title My Lady the King's Mother. She was the one who established the protocols of the new Tudor court. When Henry VII died it was Margaret who advised him about the members of his privy council, she died 2 months later, with the dynasty she had worked so hard to build, seemingly secure.

It's a tangled, but fascinating period of history, and Margaret isn't the only strong woman to feature..

Happy Spinning

Katie

Further Reading-

To understand more about this period of history I can thoroughly recommend the historical fiction written by Sharon Penman called The Sunne in Splendour

<https://sharonkaypenman.com/books-by-sharon-kay-penman/the-sunne-in-splendour-books/>

Margaret Beaufort-

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/history/real-life-game-thrones-henry-vii-s-mother-margaret-beaufort-had-become-shrewd-and-calculating-survive-her-troubled-era-9563489.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kt0BxFCse8c>

The War of the Roses

<https://www.history.com/news/9-things-you-should-know-about-the-wars-of-the-roses>

For Game of Thrones Fans, the plot is lifted almost entirely from this period of history!

<https://the-take.com/read/how-did-the-wars-of-the-roses-inspire-agame-of-thronesa>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjO55pKuBo4>

Margaret Beaufort-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ftgbUJ3ZLc&list=PL72jhKwankOh3-ngvMgaZWp8KTe0moYGI&index=2>

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28% Optim Merino

14% Mulberry Silk

58% 18.5 micron Merino