



Yeomen of the Guard and the Early Tudors, The: The Formation of a Royal Bodyguard (International Library of Historical Studies)

Anita Hewerdine

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The Queen's Body Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard is the world's oldest surviving royal

bodyguard, having been founded by Henry VII in 1485. Today it is solely a ceremonial body,

but in the past it was also a true bodyguard and the nucleus of a fighting force at a time when

England had no standing army. Nevertheless, even in its early years, its ceremonial role was

of great importance, supplying a richly arrayed retinue to enhance the king's status. Although a few books have appeared describing its history covering several centuries, this is the first

comprehensive study to focus solely on the early years of the Yeomen of Guard during the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII. Anita Hewerdine's book is the result of intensive research, using numerous previously unpublished documents, as well as a variety of printed sources not readily available to the general public.

Hewerdine here examines the origins, foundation and constitution of the Guard, together with methods of recruitment, remuneration, rewards and other benefits received by the yeomen. Several reforms took place in this early period of the Guard's history, especially in the reign of Henry VIII, and the strength of the Guard fluctuated according to need. The Guard was based permanently at Court, with a sufficient number of the yeomen being on duty as required. Hewerdine illustrates the duties and functions of the Guard over the reigns of the first two Tudor monarchs and shows the variety of roles performed by the Guard, both within and outside the Court, as well as detailing the apparel worn by the yeomen and the weaponry with which they were equipped. Many of the yeomen's names are known through royal records, legal cases and wills, and a wealth of material is presented on individual yeomen, indicating their private occupations and activities when not at Court, as well as their family backgrounds.

This book, the first comprehensive study of the Guard in the early Tudor period, will be essential reading for researchers of Early Modern Military History and sheds light on a previously overlooked aspect of the Tudor Court.

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