Henry VIII: Dressed to Kill

John Cooper

A York historian has helped create *Henry VIII: Dressed to Kill* - a stunning new exhibition of Henry’s personal arms and armour at the Tower of London, five hundred years since his accession to the throne. *Dr. John Cooper* worked closely with curators at the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds to interpret the collection, which is displayed over three floors of the historic White Tower.

Dr. Cooper’s collaboration with the Royal Armouries has grown out of his research into Tudor royal propaganda. ‘The striking thing about so many of these objects is just how beautiful they are’, John says. ‘Henry VIII had an instinctive understanding of the relationship between art and power’.

Henry VIII’s armour also brings home the sheer size of the king. At six foot one, Henry would have towered over his courtiers. But it also tracks the dreadful decline in his physique, from slender prince to grossly overweight tyrant.

Dr. Cooper co-edited the exhibition catalogue *Henry VIII: Arms and the Man* and contributed the introductory essay on ‘Henry VIII: Power and Personality’. His students at York have been treated to a behind-the-scenes tour of the Royal Armouries Museum, handling sixteenth-century objects from the collections and rare books from the archives. He is looking forward to developing his role as Honorary Historical Consultant to the Armouries.

*Henry VIII: Dressed to Kill* runs at the [Tower of London](http://www.toweroflondon.org.uk) until 17 January 2010.

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