

## Blog piece for **Deaths, Disasters and Destinies: Anglo-Norman History in Twelve Lives**

Being asked to write a blog piece about my new book by Red Lion is a real pleasure for me as Red Lion Books is a great supporter of local writers and their work. I was delighted when I knew my book would be displayed in the medieval history section in the shop. It is called **Deaths, Disasters and Destinies: Anglo-Norman History in Twelve Lives.**

The book came about when I realised that after researching my four novels set in the Anglo-Norman period I had amassed a huge amount of historical and archival material. I was struck by how many fascinating personalities I had encountered in chronicles, letters and other documents and yet how little-known they were, except probably by historians. I felt strongly that these figures deserved to be better known by a wider audience of non-specialists because their stories were exciting, astonishing, tragic and very human. In this way I could create a collection of historical true stories and at the same time give an account of Anglo-Norman history through the portrayal of twelve interlinked lives. I wanted to create a focused but spacious history book, sharp on facts where known and fully researched but not afraid to embrace history in the spirit of the old chroniclers. I wanted to create the kind of history book that historians wouldn't reject and readers of novels would enjoy. Well, that was the ambition anyway.

I was also struck by the thought that our modern sense of history with its established areas of knowledge, rules for research, evaluation and analysis etc. is very different from the medieval sense of history. But common ground can be found in the basic human need to tell stories. A need that reaches to the dimmest parts of human memory and comes back brightly in the form of myths, legends and fables; a need that has been answered in every age in innumerable ways and is never exhausted. We are fascinated by our own lives and the lives of others, wherever and whenever they lived. That, I hope, is what will make this collection of historical true stories interesting to anyone who just loves a good story.