

1599 – A True Story of the Elizabethan Court

An authentic Manchester-based docudrama
With all net profit going to local charities

Narrated by **Christopher Eccleston**



Presented by **Clare McGlinn**



The Production

This is a content-rich educational/cultural production, exploring what life was really like at court during the late Tudor period and showcasing some of the finest historic buildings in Manchester/the North West.

Innovative Features

- * Drama with dialogue in an approximation of Elizabethan English (one national museum curator commented that the script was "far more authentic" than that of any period drama he had seen on television)
- * An unusual emphasis on culture in the drama (i.e. the things people would actually have been talking about at this time and reflecting the correct viewpoint for the period)
- * An unusually high drama content for a docudrama (40 mins of actual drama, rather than just reconstructions)
- * A specially recorded period soundtrack: 4 singers and a lutenist perform the complex harmonies and haunting solos of the highly acclaimed late 16th century composer, John Dowland (this music introduces the drama scenes and builds their atmosphere; it is far removed from the generic Tudor music sometimes associated with period drama)
- * A narration accompanied by over 90 high quality period artworks and specially recorded lute music by John Dowland

The Story

'1599' is about two young people from Ordsall Hall in Salford (Margaret Radclyffe was a maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth I and her twin brother, Alexander, was a friend of the foremost celebrity of the day, the Earl of Essex). We see court life and the topics of the day through their eyes and experience their (ultimately tragic) story as it unfolds. The drama is elucidated by the narration and the topics covered are further fleshed out in the documentary interviews, in which we follow Clare McGlinn on her quest to discover more about Margaret and Alexander, in parallel to the drama being played out.

The Components

- * Drama (shot on location at Haddon Hall in Derbyshire; with a specially recorded period soundtrack) – 40 mins
- * Voiceover narration by Christopher Eccleston – 18 mins
- * 9 documentary-style interviews conducted by actress, Clare McGlinn (interviewees range from academic specialists to present-day musician, Peter Hook, and the locations are all historic/iconic landmark buildings) – 40 mins

End Product

A feature-length docudrama: approximate duration 98 mins. This will be sold as a DVD (together with a CD of late 16th century music by John Dowland) – targeted at historic houses and museums and also schools (it fits well with a new GCSE history module).

1599 Productions Association

We are a voluntary non-profit association. Members are unpaid for work done and all net profit will go to local charities (The Friends of Salford Museums Association, youth and community groups in Salford and The Manchester Victoria Baths Trust). The project has been entirely run on goodwill (from over 100 members/contributors, including the performers, the production team and all of our excellent locations). Funding has been received from The Friends of Salford Museums Association, Forever Manchester and Salix Homes, Salford. Our website is: www.1599.org.uk.

List of Locations

	<p>Haddon Hall, Derbyshire Drama/drama-supplementary shoots (I: 2 actors and 16 extras, II: 12 extras); Haddon Hall is one of the top locations for Tudor dramas in the UK and made a perfect stand-in for the Elizabethan court.</p>
	<p>Ordsall Hall, Salford Introductory interview with manager of Ordsall Hall and a member of The Friends of Salford Museums (filmed outside the gates, owing to restoration work). Ordsall Hall, an historic manor house with a Tudor great hall, was the home of the 2 characters in the film.</p>
	<p>Chetham's Library, Manchester Interview with former keeper of Salford Museums, who is the foremost authority on the history of Ordsall Hall. Part of a unique intact late medieval collegiate complex, we filmed the interview in the historic reading room at the iconic table where Marx and Engels used to write.</p>
	<p>Gawsworth Hall, Cheshire Interview with owner about the notorious maid of honour, Mary Fitton (possibly Shakespeare's 'dark lady'), whose home this was. A beautiful Tudor manor house with remnants of an Elizabethan garden.</p>
	<p>John Rylands Library, Manchester Interview with University of Manchester academic about/with Elizabethan 'bestsellers', 'Arcadia' and 'The Faerie Queene', which the 2 characters have been shown reading. This late Victorian Gothic Revival building houses a fine collection of early/rare books.</p>
	<p>FAC 251, Manchester Interview with Peter Hook (bassist, Joy Division and New Order) and '1599' lutenist about John Dowland/Elizabethan music. FAC 251 was the HQ of the iconic Factory Records and we filmed in the former boardroom.</p>
	<p>The Greenroom Theatre, Manchester Interview with 2nd University of Manchester academic about Shakespeare in his own time (the 2 characters have been shown returning from a play at The Globe theatre). We filmed in the auditorium of Manchester's stylish contemporary home to alternative theatre.</p>
	<p>Manchester Cathedral Interview with executive producer about Dr Dee, an eminent mathematician and astrologer to Queen Elizabeth I (nowadays of occult fame) and warden of this church (Alexander talks about meeting him). A lovely late medieval building/site of the Radclyffe family chapel.</p>
	<p>The Royal Armouries, Leeds Interview with assistant curator of edged weapons and former soldier and founder of 'Forgotten Heroes' charity, Adam Douglas, about the arms and armour/combat Alex would have known on the battlefield and the campaign he fought in (he is shown going off to war).</p>
	<p>Georgian house, Winslow, Buckinghamshire Interview, in his home, with present-day descendant of the Radclyffe family about Margaret and Alexander and what happened to the family after their deaths. We see various historic portraits and insignia etc.</p>
	<p>Additional Shoots: Peover Hall, Cheshire – drama-supplementary shoot; St James Church, Gawsworth (Fitton family memorial); Imperial War Museum North (view of Salford).</p>