Emily Melling

I (virtually) met Jane and began work experience with her during my year out after graduating from the University of Southampton with a BA in History. The task that I worked on with her for about three to four months was to analyse data exported from The Tudor Tailor's database - a veritable goldmine of records and sources detailing Tudor garments. I did this by reorganising the data into a number of spreadsheets in Microsoft Excel, within which specific categories of data could be broken down, summarised and then analysed. The purpose of the project was to create material, specifically pie charts, which could be included in the Tudor Tailor's newest book, *The Typical Tudor*, and in readiness for future publications. Although Jane has been using the database to pull out the typical colours, textiles and garments for the book for several years, there was a need for a detailed snapshot of the data on which the book is based. It was also so that Jane and the Tudor Tailor team could continue to learn from the vast amount of data that they have collected.

The project started with the goal of analysing the records of garments by the different colours that would have been worn by the common classes from 1485 to 1603. After completing that, we moved on to similarly creating summary material about the different garment textiles commonly found in Tudor dress.

In total I completed 10 separate spreadsheets about each of the different colours. The largest spreadsheet and data set of these was Black, as it was the colour most frequently found in Tudor wardrobe. Making the spreadsheets for all the different garment textiles was a bigger job, which ended up being 26 spreadsheets in total. We assigned them into four categories: linens, wools, silks and mixed fibre. Within these categories cloth was the largest wool spreadsheet, velvet was the largest silk spreadsheet, unspecified and various linens was the largest linen spreadsheet and fustian was the largest mixed fibre spreadsheet. Another part of the process was creating a colour and textile summary spreadsheet to effectively compare the key information and totals across all of the spreadsheets I created, which was no doubt the most satisfying part of the project.

Jane and I often referred to this process of creating summary pie charts from the database as 'baking pies', and, while the pies didn't always come out of the oven perfect the first time, the project was a consistently rewarding learning experience. I had very little prior experience of processing and handling a large amount of data in Excel, so I was able to gain a lot of confidence from this project. Jane was always very patient with me while I got to grips with the data and figured out how we wanted to organise it. Despite us both working remotely, our consistent and productive communication led to me to be able to produce work that we were both happy with.

It was also clear that Jane wanted to make the work experience as beneficial for me as possible. During the project, I secured a place at the University of Bristol to do an MSc in Social Research Methods and Sociology, and she made sure that the work we did would be a useful experience of research methodology and statistics. Alongside this, my

love for history was also satisfied as I learnt a great deal about Tudor fashion that I didn't have the opportunity to learn about during my undergraduate degree - Jane was always happy to explain contextual details of the work I was doing. I found it really exciting to use this kind of quantitative methodology within a research field such as Tudor fashion history. It made me realise the wide area in which I could take my future training in social research, which could very well include history!

I think the key reason why this work experience was so positive was Jane's kindness and infectious enthusiasm throughout. Despite us not being able to meet in person during the project, I think we developed a lovely working relationship where we were able to have fun during the process. I'm very confident that the skills I gained during this project will stand me in great stead for my masters and wherever my future career takes me.