

The RICARDIAN HERALD

Connecting our global community



The magazine for the worldwide branches and groups of the Richard III Society



Ricardians invade Tudor territory!

Was Bosworth but a minor setback?

The South Wales Group was formed two years ago; and this year they held prime real estate at the Brecon County Show. One local man declared his support for what's his name; the local Mayor did a double take and decided to find out more. He ended up asking the group to give a talk to some of the groups he belongs to and took a Ricardian business card. One member managed to give a teacher visiting from England her entire history GCSE curriculum for the coming year, plus an alternative text to that Shakespeare play. **Learn more about those brave souls who have launched a defiant push into Tudor country – Pages 14-21.**

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John Whiting and Sue Ollier chat about their experiences as former Treasurer and Secretary.

EVERY WHERE!

Branches and Groups celebrate Richard's birthday and the society's centenary year.

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The historic venue for the Society's 100th year annual meeting could not have been more appropriate.



Former Society Chairman Matt Lewis talks to the Ricardian Herald about the central role played by Branches and Groups. **Page 2**



Sword fights broke out at the Australasian Conference recently. **Pages 12-13**



Richard gets killed – again. On top of which he's plagued by the media this time. **Pages 22-25.**

It was with disappointment, but understanding, that we learned Society Chairman Matt Lewis was going to step down at the annual meeting in September this year. The Herald asked Matt to reflect on his time at the top.

'I hope I made a difference'

This, I hope, will not be a goodbye.

Although my tenure as Chair of the Society has come to an end, my commitment to the Society and the Ricardian cause has not. As I've begun to reflect on my time as Chair, I'm left hoping I've made a difference, that it was a positive one, and that the Society will continue to move forward in its second century.

Speaking to Branches and Groups has been part of my efforts as a Ricardian and an author for a number of years, long before I became Chair. A lot of my contact with other Society members and with Ricardians who were not members was a result of speaking to Branches and Groups. I hope that the central role you and your network has played in my career has been reflected in the commitment I have tried to give to drawing the Society and Branches and Groups closer together.

The connection between the bodies is often nuanced and complex, but overriding all of this is a commitment to the same cause. Even if we disagree about how we might get there, I think most of the time, we are clear about the destination.

There's a phrase that I encountered years ago in one of my jobs that stuck with me, and I've seen it in plenty of other places, so it's nothing new.

Nevertheless, I think it's something that is important to the Society, to the Branches and Groups, and to Ricardians more generally. Never let perfect be the enemy of good.

There are times when we can get bogged down in small disputes which gain little and only detract from the broader aims that we all share. I have always tried to prevent these sorts of things from blowing up and obscuring our vision.



There are times when it might feel like we aren't making enough progress – Ricardians are impatient, and to be fair, it's been more than 500 years already! But our impatience shouldn't overshadow the progress we do make. Enough small steps in the right direction will result in the coverage of a huge distance in the end. It's rare that one leap forward will solve everything.

One of the unexpected benefits of the pandemic, as I've mentioned before, has been the increased embracing of technology to connect a geographically diverse global membership. The same has been true of the Branches and Groups. I hope you will feel more a part of the Society now than you might have in the past. I also hope these connections will continue to grow to allow Branches and Groups to thrive further. Can the improved connectivity work across Branches and Groups? Is there a way the network could pool resources and ideas, perhaps run joint events?

I'm sure the Society's new Chair will make a positive impact, and I hope they will enjoy the support of the Branches and Groups that I have felt to help them achieve that.

Thank you, and I hope to see you again soon!

Here's to another 100 years!

I was not expecting to be writing as Acting Branches and Groups Liaison Officer (BGLO) for the October *Ricardian Herald*, but instead to be reading what the new BGLO had to say!

Unfortunately, due to a very busy AGM period, the Board decided it didn't want to rush the process so postponed the election of the new BGLO to ensure everyone in the Branches and Groups community had the chance to cast their vote. It does mean, however, that I have the pleasure of a few more weeks with you and another opportunity to say how much I have enjoyed my time as BGLO.

Thank you for making me feel a real part of your individual Branches and Groups. I have always enjoyed reading your emails and chatting to those I have met at events and regularly pass on news to the Board, so they are aware exactly just how much the community is achieving and contributing to the Society.

I hope those of you who attended the AGM and Members' Weekend in York had an enjoyable time.

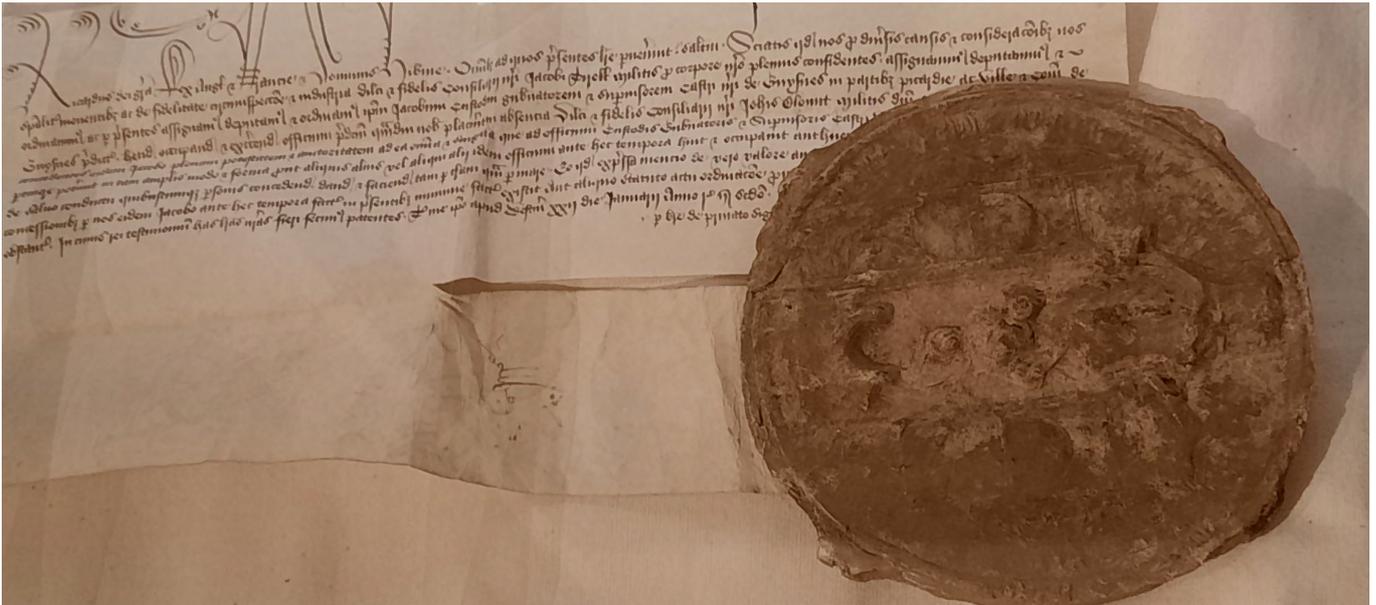
It was fabulous to see so many people attending all the planned events and it was very fitting to use the beautiful medieval buildings of The Hospitium and The Merchant Adventurers' Hall. We had a good mix of activities



Academics debated issues on both the Friday evening and Saturday morning (including unofficial audience participation on Friday), stall holders on Saturday sold their wares in a crowded Undercroft. It was full of members purchasing goods including artwork, much in favour of George of Clarence, jostling with others catching up over coffee or chatting with Annie Garthwaite and other authors who were there.

The York Waits medieval minstrels entertained us so appropriately at our Centenary Dinner, getting us out of a huge hole as our booked entertainers, Trouvere, were stuck in the Scilly Isles due to the weather. Of course there was plenty of delicious food and drink throughout the weekend.





A highlight for me, however, was the opportunity to see the Tyrell Grant that the Society has recently purchased.

It wouldn't have been a Ricardian event without that! A highlight for me, however, was the opportunity to see the Tyrell Grant that the Society has recently purchased. It was displayed very nicely by the Yorkshire Museum. As I start my new role as Society Secretary, I do not want to lose touch with you all and hope you will continue to email me to keep me up to date with what you are getting up to.

I shall also look forward to receiving the *Ricardian Herald* every quarter and enjoy reading about the vast array of interests and activities you all pursue.

Keep on being the active backbone of the Society and here's to another 100 years of our community. Most of all, let's continue to have fun!



York hosts fabulous event

The last weekend of September 2024 was a very special one for the glorious Richard III Society. This year, at the annual general meeting in York, the Society celebrated its first Centenary.

Yorkshire and Scottish Branches Email Distribution Manager Maria Grazia Leotta reports on the Annual Meeting and Members' Weekend - Pages 9-11

Treasurer of six year passes on the baton

John Whiting, who is stepping down as the Society's Treasurer, reflects on his time in the role.

Why did I put my hand up for the Treasurer's job? Like, I suspect, most of the many people who take on a Society role, I wanted to express my support for and belief in the Society in a more tangible way. I'd been a member of the Society since the 1980s but always 'passive' – an avid *Bulletin/Ricardian* reader but work and family meaning no time to participate more fully. Finding some time available and noticing an appeal for a new Treasurer, I expressed interest and found myself being interviewed by the then chairman Phil Stone and others. I must have passed as I got the job...though I did later discover that I was the only applicant!

The Treasurer role per se was (and is) simple: keeping the books, paying bills, keeping an eye on our (initially substantial) bank balances. But I found myself in a time of transition as the Society became a Company. I got well involved and in time succeeded Dave Wells as the main driver of the CLG work, generating Articles of Association and Rules (Society, Branches & Groups, Disciplinary). A lot to do but a highlight as so many members commented and contributed.

As for those big cash balances, at my first AGM in Edinburgh there were strong calls that we needed to spend our reserves, not just sit on them.



So that became an unusual part of my role – to spend! Hopefully members approve of what the Board has done – in particular, the quality of the *Bulletin* and the *Ricardian* which consume effectively all our subscription income, leaving our reserves to pay for generally running the Society and various projects. We're now at the stage of drawing on some generous legacies and so must raise subscriptions. Again, the member engagement has been a highlight as we've discussed how to take things forward with strong endorsement for increases that people appreciate must happen.



Lowlights? Yes, some. In my early days I was somewhat taken aback by the flak from some members about what the executive committee/board was doing; some seeming to think we were well paid for what we did! Do I really need to say we're all (unpaid) volunteers? But the lowest point was the passing of Phil Stone. Suddenly from acting deputy chair I became acting chair, steering the Society ship into calmer waters with a new Board elected, in amongst completing the CLG transition. And getting Matt Lewis to take the Chair – definitely another highlight.

So why step down? I'm a great believer in 'quitting while you're ahead' and I'll have done six years when I do finally pass on the baton, which seems enough. I will miss hugely my Board colleagues – hopefully it's not invidious to single out for special thanks Sue Ollier and Julia Langham, who've done so much.

"Suddenly from acting deputy chair I became acting chair, steering the Society ship into calmer waters..."

And maybe I'll finally have time to get involved in other Ricardian activities!

What about advice to my successor? The simplest is 'get involved': being Treasurer is a great platform for supporting and influencing the direction of the Society. If you ever doubt the contribution you're making, look at the bills you're paying and the people you keep happy by paying their expenses...

Bosworth red & white in South Australia



Casting back to special memories as Ricardians, Adelaide Branch's members recalled their 2015 picnic meeting held at The Battle of Bosworth Winery, in South Australia. The winery owner's surname is Bosworth and the Battle was to be certified as being organic.

Someone sent in an advertisement for the winery, which was in the *Ricardian Bulletin*. Clever marketing with York dozen-white wines, Lancaster dozen-red wines and Tudor dozen-6 red and 6 white wines.

‘Our claims should be evidence based’

Society Secretary Sue Ollier stepped down from her role recently. Here she reflects on how she survived her “baptism of fire” as well as internal upheavals, the Hume Report and the passing of a highly respected chairman.

When I was asked to write a personal piece for the *Herald*, the first question was how did I become involved?

As with many things, it started over a glass of wine. The then Events Co-ordinator, Jeanette Melbourne, was on the executive committee and knew me as a member of the Beds & Bucks Group. Having arrived at my home for a chat Jeanette put the *Bulletin* down firmly on the table, pointed to an advertisement for Secretary of the Society and said, “you could do that”.

A week later I was waiting outside a meeting of the then executive committee in London to be interviewed by the then chairman Dr Phil Stone and by the then joint secretaries Sue and Dave Wells.

The key question seemed to be around how I felt about Society endeavours to change the prevailing narrative about Richard III.

Coming from a clinical science background, I replied that our claims should always be evidence based - at which point Phil said words to the effect of “OK you’re in”.



Almost my first official outing was to minute the AGM in Leicester: a daunting prospect.

How do you minute a crucial meeting where you know no one’s name, nor the intricacies of Society life? My eternal thanks go to Sue Wells who whispered helpful hints throughout. Having survived that baptism of fire, over six years later here I still am!

I have loved (nearly) every minute and it has been an honour to serve the Society as Secretary. It is a busy role taking (as I was initially warned) five to 15 hours a week and the road has not always been easy.



My tenure has covered internal upheavals, the Hume Report, the sad passing of our long-term Chairman Phil and the challenges of transitioning from an unincorporated entity to a Company Limited by Guarantee.

During the transition period I, perhaps foolishly, suggested that the valuable accumulated expertise of the Society's officers and supporters should be collected into written procedures giving more transparency and supporting succession planning.

After some initial resistance the project was firmly placed on my "to do" list by the Chair!

After several years and a lot of diplomatic conversations we now have around 40 procedures to build on as a basis for the future – something of which I am very proud.

I am stepping down from the Board only to take a rest (at least temporarily) from the relentless pace and pursue other, neglected, interests.

However, as many of you know, involvement with the Society is addictive and I hope to stay on the Events Committee contributing in other ways.

"And my advice to my successor – hold on to your sense of humour and keep a glass of red handy!"

Moving into the future, I am sure the Society will face new challenges. As a Society run largely based on the goodwill of volunteers, how will we continue to meet members' needs when our membership continues to grow? - it is now over 4.5 thousand internationally and growing.

Will we just "run out of hands"? How will we remain relevant as more is achieved?

Richard has already been found and laid to rest with honour and The Missing Princes Project continues to unearth evidence around the fate of the princes.

Perhaps the final success of the Society will be when the final questions have been answered and the public embraces the historical Richard, rather than the Shakespearian one! And my advice to my successor – hold on to your sense of humour and keep a glass of red handy!

Herald editor wins Jeremy Potter Award

***Ricardian Herald* Editor Susan Grant-Mackie won the Jeremy Potter Award at the annual meeting in York recently. This is for her "outstanding contribution to the Society" with her work on the *Ricardian Herald*. Acting Chair and Communications Manager Amanda Geary congratulated Sue, saying it was a thoroughly well-deserved recognition of her hard work.**

Sue said she was honoured. "The Herald was the brainchild of Branches and Groups liaison officer Jane Trump, who took a punt on someone in New Zealand to help bring a vision to reality. Every issue Jane and I work together to discuss and follow up story ideas; we begin with a plan and work from there. Without Jane's astonishing ability to organise and develop processes, things probably would not work as smoothly as they do!"

Sue also thanked the Society's international community, and fellow New Zealand Branch members, for their support - including forgiving some teething woes and mishaps!

Richard honoured in his ‘fair city’

By Maria Grazia Leotta
Email Distribution Manager
Scottish & Yorkshire Branches

The last weekend of September 2024 was a very special one for the glorious Richard III Society. This year, at the annual general meeting in York, the society celebrated its first Centenary.

“The fair city of York” King Richard used to call the capital of North England, his favourite place.

About 200 Ricardians from all over the world met in the Merchant’s Adventurers Hall, a gorgeous, medieval building in Fossgate that Richard himself had visited to support the return of the merchants of York to the Hall, after they were unjustly expelled to make space for the merchants of London.



The official Society celebrations started at the Hospitium in the Museum's Gardens, a perfect medieval venue. It was the Great Ricardian Debate between Matthew Lewis and Nicola Tallis.

The most important moment of the AGM took place the next day. The Hall downstairs was scattered with stalls and a lot of memorabilia and books.

I decided not to get too carried away this year so I bought JUST 27 of them. As I am a member of the committees of both the Scottish and Yorkshire Branches, I helped in the stall of the first, while Graham Mitchell, who was elected to the Board the same day, was in charge of the second one.

After a good coffee in the Undercroft, *Ricardian Bulletin* editor Alec Marsh entertained all guests in a panel discussion including Matthew Lewis, Philippa Langley and Annie Garthwaite.

We attended the Isolde Wigram Memorial Lecture that should have been delivered by John Saunders, former editor of the *Ricardian Bulletin*, on Zoom.

Due to technical problems, it was read by a member of the Board. The lecture was about Samuel Saxon Barton who started this unique Society with just three members in Liverpool 100 years ago.



Matt Lewis (right), Alec Marsh (centre) and Nicola Tallis during the Great Ricardian Debate.



A buffet lunch was served for delegates in the Undercroft before the annual meeting started. Many Ricardians who couldn't attend in person, connected via Zoom. The Society counts now around 4,770 members and is thriving more than ever.

For many people, the annual meeting ended with the Grand Raffle 2024 in aid of the Ricardian Churches Restoration Fund organised by Elizabeth Nokes, and the nomination of six new members of the Board. But for some of us the best part started in the evening with the Gala Dinner.

The hall was absolutely stunning, decorated with candelabra and white roses on big round tables. Scrumptious food was served including prosecco, canapes and two courses, not to mention wine and a delicious dessert. The event was accompanied by music from The York Waits medieval minstrels.

My friends and me were honoured to have Philippa Langley at our table. We enjoyed her talking about the dig and the film *The Lost King*. The Centenary dinner ended with Peter Hammond toasting the King and to the Society's future.

I enjoyed every moment of this spectacular event even though I couldn't avoid thinking none of us will attend the second centenary. However, it is incredible how a medieval king killed in battle and maligned for centuries can inspire so much loyalty and admiration in 2024. When this thought crossed my mind, I felt blessed and immensely proud to be there.



Members at the Hospitium



The event was accompanied by music from The York Waits medieval minstrels.

Swordplay and knights at Mittagong

By Rhonda Bentley

The New South Wales, Australia, branch hosted around 50 members and friends from Australia and New Zealand for a weekend of Ricardian themed talks at Mittagong, about 110 km south of Sydney.

Registration and welcome drinks on Friday let us find old friends and meet new ones. The committee had organised a second-hand book table, and a sales table with Ricardian gifts, which were well patronised on the day and a half of the conference.

Presenters on Saturday entertained and informed us on: *The Life of Saxton Barton*; *The Death of Henry VII*; *Warwick's Grandson (Edward, Earl of Warwick)*; *The Strange Death of Shakespeare's Patron (Ferdinando Stanley, the Earl of Derby)*; *France in the Late 15th Century* and *Richard's Travels*. A display and presentation on swords and weapons by Justin Crébert was also exciting, with lots of questions from the audience

Our organisers Helen and Denise updated us on The Voice for Richard and encouraged us to join the livestream of the reveal on November 17 at the York Theatre Royal. We all agreed this was an exciting project and were impressed with the science behind the work. They also presented some interviews with the enthusiastic Ricardian and amateur historian Eileen Bates from sparkypus.com.

Most attendees of the conference also chose to attend the Saturday night medieval banquet. A lot of us dressed in medieval or historical dress. We had a few competing kings, plus noble ladies, peasants, knights, crusaders, monks, William Shakespeare, and a Mother Superior handing out indulgences and prayer cards.



Swordplay with Justin Crébert.
Photo: E & J Hansen



Pastance. Photo: R Bentley

A jester from the Victorian Branch recited a number of passages, including Jack Point, from Gilbert and Sullivan's Yeomen of the Guard...

We arrived to beautiful music and song from historical music duo Pastance, who performed throughout the night and also explained some of their instruments such as the lute, oud, harp and shawm. The tables were decked out in white roses tied with murrey and blue ribbons. The banquet was delicious with a buffet style selection and then desserts.

A jester from the Victorian branch recited a number of passages, including Jack Point, from Gilbert and Sullivan's Yeomen of the Guard, which received a rousing applause. An enjoyable night was had by all.

Sunday's half day included: The King Who Never Was (John de la Pole), and Richard III's Parliament of 1484. Some light-hearted entertainment closed the day after which we conducted a short business meeting and drew the raffle.

We sincerely thanked our presenters, organisers and the committee. What a great weekend of history and friendship. Looking forward to the next one.



Ron Pidcock (Victoria) as Jack Point.

Photo: E & J Hansen



Fellow of the society, Rob Smith (NZ) giving the toast. Photo E & J Hansen

Richard's voice will be heard

The international launch of "Richard's voice" will be held on November 17 at York Theatre Royal, England. The voice is the result of a research project developed by voice teacher and specialist vocal coach Yvonne Morley-Chisholm. Experts will talk about their part in what is being called the new science of Historical Human Reconstruction or Historical Postmortalism.

Ricardians march into ‘what’s-his-name’ territory

By Julieanne Welch

It’s been a busy, but fun, two years since the group first met. So much fun that Jules, the person responsible for getting the group off the ground, actually thought it was three years instead of two! A case of time flying while you’re having fun, or did it really seem like much longer since that first meeting?



The team at Brecon County Show

The group has certainly been busy; last year we spent four rather wet and blustery days at the Royal Welsh Show which was hard work but did bring us more members both for the Society and our group.

Over the year since, we have started meeting bi-monthly at Y Gaer in Brecon, which is the library inside the new museum building, and have started putting out a group newsletter – hats off to Penny who has mysteriously become our newsletter editor, these things happen.

We were also contacted by a local school who invited us to come and talk to an entire year of students about Richard III and his two nephews. Always happy to talk to people about this subject, this time we had a captive audience! The talk went extremely well, and the students enjoyed it almost as much as we did.

On August 3 we had a stand at the Brecon County Show, which is a longstanding event and extremely popular and well attended.

It was also really well organised, so we were able to access the site and put together the gazebo, tables and chairs that we needed on the evening before the show so that “all” we had to do on the day was turn up. The weather was very kind and we had lots of bright sunshine which brought out the crowds.

A lot of people stopped to talk to us, mainly because our stand had pole position as the first after the entrance gate, but also because a lot of them wanted to know why a group of Richard III supporters had pitched their gazebo in Wales! Only one gentleman got decidedly heated about it, but he subsided and left after having said his piece.



“I’m Welsh and support Henry Tudor!” he was heard to bluster with Chris - “Well, he was more French really!” following after. Well, you can’t win them all. For the most part, the rest were genuinely interested. Mike managed to give a teacher visiting from England her entire history GCSE curriculum for the coming year plus an alternative text to that Shakespeare play. He suggested she and her students read *The Daughter of Time* on the grounds that this was the book Jules had told him to read when he first joined the group.

The Mayor of Brecon strolled by, did a double take, which was becoming standard practice by now, but then stopped for a chat and posed for a photo with Jules – Penny ensuring that the Richard III banner was in the background. He ended up asking if the group would come and give a talk to some of the groups he belongs to and took our business card. More converts beckon.

Enough people fell foul of our “fines” board, where they were fined £1 for saying any of a list of the most commonly used phrases about Richard III, that we were able to make a £20 donation on behalf of the group to the Poppy Appeal.

One poor chap, who managed to mention princes, humps and car parks, thought he owed us more than £1 but we let him off and yes, we had at least one alleged relative of Rhys ap Thomas who clearly didn’t read the room.

All in all, it was a really enjoyable event and the team, Chris, Mike, Penny and Jules, worked hard to make it a success.



Jules chats to the Mayor of Brecon

We were assisted in our endeavours by Chris’ husband, who clearly has plenty of experience in putting gazebos up, Jules’ partner who knows how to get them back down again and Mike’s better half who found the pancake stall.

Penny went to extremes of devotion to duty by booking herself into a hotel in Brecon for the weekend just so that she could be a part of the team, although how on earth she managed to find a spare room in Brecon for show weekend is another mystery.

And, of course, Amy, Jules’ daughter, who obviously knows everyone living in the Brecon area and happily chatted to them all.



Our second outing of the year was to Bosworth on August 22 to place a wreath during the rose laying ceremony.

We were very lucky that Jules knows a fabulous florist based in Brecon called Becca who created the wonderful white rose wreath for us with huge white roses in amongst rosemary, for remembrance, and evergreen foliage.

Penny did a sterling job of translating the inscription we'd decided upon into Welsh, which with hindsight possibly confused a few people, and with our wreath carefully stowed away in the boot the four of us set off in Jules' car.

The morning started off not so well, even by Welsh standards it was raining and blowing a gale. By the time we'd reached Brecon to pick up our fourth and final group member we were beginning to see echoes of Buckingham's failed attempt to get into England from Brecon – would we, in fact, make it over the border?!

Thankfully as we headed east, we seemed to outrun the worst of the rain although it was still very windy and so a decision had been made to hold the ceremony at the new "coin" installation in the courtyard at Bosworth instead of out by the sundial.

We arrived just in time, having managed to navigate our way through the closed road diversion only minutes from the visitors' centre.

The ceremony was very moving, despite our being offered some red roses to lay at the memorial to which Amy, Jules daughter who is autistic, loudly announced "no thanks they're the wrong colour". Out of the mouth of babes!



Above: Our wreath by Flowers by Becca, Brecon

There were many more white roses than red laid and ours was the only wreath but the three clergy who officiated, having to almost shout to be heard over the noise that the wind was making, attempted to ensure unity by encouraging all of the roses to be laid on one side of the "coin", the Henry VII side.

As we sat in the Tythe Barn having lunch we watched a gentleman, clearly of Ricardian sympathies, surreptitiously rearranging the roses so that the red ones were on the Tudor side of the coin and the white were on the Richard side.

Perhaps he forgot or even never knew that the restaurant next to him had windows?! We weren't about to complain.



We then had a look around the exhibition which we felt was very informative and educational but also very unbiased – our group wanted more of the “brave King Richard” and less of what’s his name - and we’re from Wales. We felt that it’s quite disconcerting to see your national flag being appropriated by someone who spent half of his life as a fugitive in Europe.

By the time we emerged from the exhibition, our early start was beginning to show along with the realisation that we still had a four-hour journey to get home so, after having a lingering look at the standards, by now blowing almost horizontally in the wind, it was time to get back in the car and set off for Wales.

On the journey home we fell to discussing, amongst other things, the cavalry charge down Ambion Hill.

Was it a clever strategy that backfired, was Richard betrayed again or was it a foolish spur of the moment idea that cost Richard his life? After much debate it was agreed that people are people, whatever clothes they wear and so the emotions, wants and needs of those at Bosworth are the same as people living today.

This being true, Richard’s last cavalry charge can be seen as putting himself in God’s hands, he’s known to have been a religious man, not just in terms of protection but also for judgement “If I’m meant to continue as King then let me win today”.

It’s also true that he had only recently lost both his only legitimate son and his wife, so there must have been an element of grieving mixed up in his decision making.



The newly installed “coin” in the courtyard at Bosworth Battlefield centre

Had his grief left him not caring about his own survival or at least, not caring enough? We’ll never know for certain but it’s good to speculate.

Oh, and one last point – we found it quite tricky to identify Ambion Hill as we walked around the site, eagerly scanning the horizon for something that could be a hill.

Unfortunately, to our eyes at least, the site looked remarkably flat and so we turned to the site map for assistance. As it turned out, we were standing on Ambion Hill looking down its gently sloping sides towards the slightly lower ground of Redmore Plain in front of it.

We can only apologise but to Welsh eyes that’s not a hill, it’s a slope.

Despite having only just started on their project and learning about King Richard III, the students had clearly already picked up a number of key facts: when asked what they knew about Richard III they gave answers such as “He was called Duke of Gloucester”, “He was killed in battle” and only one said that he had killed the princes in the Tower.

Welsh students introduced to Richard

By Julieanne Welch

Earlier this year members of the South Wales Group were invited along to Brynteg School in Bridgend to give a talk to Year 8 students about Richard III and the princes in the Tower.

The students were working on a project with the theme Extraordinary Lives and felt that the mystery around what happened to the princes fitted into this.

In the end two group members, Penny and Jules, went along to the school armed with a PowerPoint presentation and a gift of five Ricardian books for the school library.

The students attended the talk in two groups of 75, so the presentation had to be done twice but, undaunted, the students were led through the tale of intrigue, treachery and mystery finding out about Edward IV and his penchant for secret marriages, the law concerning bigamy and how the rain in Wales put the damper on Buckingham’s plot.



Using the words of Winston Churchill “history is written by the victor” as well as legal jargon “que bono” and police maxims “means – opportunity – motive” the talk enabled the students to look at the mystery about what happened to the princes in a new light, and consider who else might have wished them harm or did they in fact survive into the Tudor age?

Despite having only just started on their project and learning about King Richard III, the students had clearly already picked up a number of key facts: when asked what they knew about Richard III they gave answers such as “He was called Duke of Gloucester”, “He was killed in battle” and only one said that he had killed the princes in the Tower.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable and enlightening morning discussing Richard and his life and times with a group of youngsters who were obviously interested and keen to learn more.

Group defies Tudors Rhys ap Thomas descendants



By Julieanne Welch

The first meeting of the South Wales Group was held September 21, 2022. The group, started by member Jules, decided to mark the occasion on that specific date this year.

South Wales is a bit of a misnomer, as the catchment area for our group encompasses almost two thirds of Wales! Our usual venue for meetings is in Brecon, chosen in error as the town is more or less central to South Wales but not, unfortunately, central to our patch. Therefore, it was decided to look for somewhere more accurately central and this turned out to be Ystradgynlais.

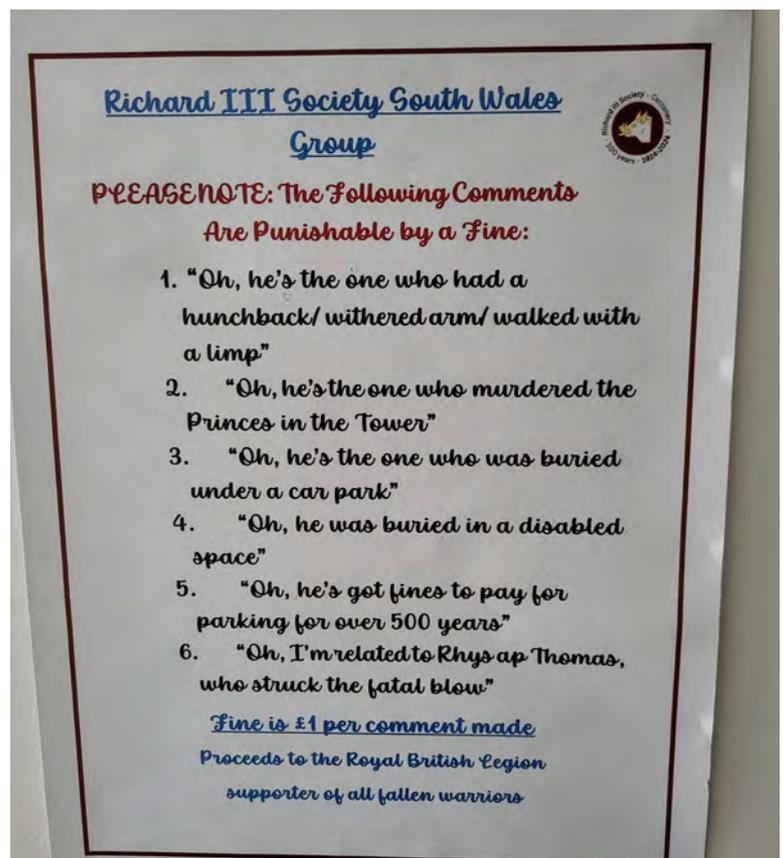
For those who don't know, Ystradgynlais, is a small town about 16 miles inland from Swansea. Its near neighbour, Lower Cwmtwrch, has the most incredible tribute to Richard III in a huge carved wooden boar as its village sign. In reality, this boar is actually from the Mabinogion, a series of Welsh legends, but we can dream!

The venue for our birthday event was to have been St. Cynog's Church Hall but, after a diary mix up, we were given permission to use the actual church instead. This led us to change the subject matter of our event to cover the religious and spiritual side of the life of Richard III.



This boar is from the Mabinogion, a series of Welsh legends, but we can dream!

Pictured right: Saying any, or all of these statements earns the speaker a one pound fine. This results in excellent donations to the Poppy Appeal...



SOUTH WALES GROUP MARKS SECOND BIRTHDAY



From left: Penny, Newsletter Editor; Jules, Chair; Mike, Treasurer; Chris, Secretary.

Having read and researched around this topic, we put together information sheets, along with those about the more usual Ricardian subjects – the princes, the hunchback, the Butler marriage, Francis Lovell and a print-out of the PowerPoint presentation we used for our talk at a secondary school earlier in the year.

Invitations were sent out to every member of our group, inviting them to bring along family members or friends who might be interested; every local and family history group in our area was contacted with an invitation - with our fingers firmly crossed that we didn't unearth any Rhys ap Thomas descendants - and posters about our birthday event went up in libraries and shops in the towns and villages that group members live in.

Our aim was to gather as many local people as possible with an interest in history and see if we could encourage an interest in Richard III.

Bearing in mind that this is Wales and one of the groups we contacted was run by someone with the surname Tudur, we certainly deserve 10/10 for daring and bravery, not to mention positive thinking!

On the day we set out all of our information sheets along with Society leaflets and our group business cards – we'd decided to leave our now infamous "Fines" board in the cupboard, even though it had been such a success at the Brecon County Show, earning us £20 in total from members of the public.

They were who were fined £1 for mentioning princes, hunchback, car parks, disabled parking spaces or being related to Rhys ap Thomas. We had medieval music and carols playing on a CD and, of course, a birthday cake with a candle shaped as a figure "2".



Unfortunately, we were let down by the weather which, in true Buckingham style, included heavy rain, wind and thunderstorms, so we didn't have the number of guests that we were hoping for. However, those who did attend spent an enjoyable couple of hours discussing Richard III and what he did, and didn't, do in his lifetime.

The church warden, Julie, who unlocked the church for us, was interested enough in what we were up to she stayed and learned more about King Richard and his life and reign than she'd ever done at school! Before talking to us, all she knew about Richard was that he'd shouted for a horse, but by the time we'd finished enlightening her she knew all about the Butler marriage, illegitimacy, Richard's ascending the throne and how he was betrayed at Bosworth.

As a Magistrate, Jules was, as ever, keen to talk about the right to bail - she has to restrain herself in court from shouting at defendants "and who have you got to thank for getting bail? Richard III, that's who!" - and how today's courts and legal system owe much to King Richard's short reign.

Today's courts and legal system owe much to King Richard's short reign

Penny, as ever, gave the Welsh perspective, pointing out that most Welsh men who joined Henry Tudor's army were nobles and landowners aggrieved by English incursions into Wales and that many properties once held by Welsh families were now in English hands.

They may also have been swayed by Tudor using the Welsh red dragon, y ddraig coch Cadwallader, as his emblem on his standard.

Of course we lit the candle, sang "Happy Birthday" and we were about to blow the candle out when, as we finished singing, it blew out on its own!! You can blame coincidence and a stray gust of wind, but we prefer to think that it was King Richard III wishing the South Wales Group of his Society many happy and successful years to come.

King Richard dies...again

King Richard stopped by his society's Ambion Gateway stand at Bosworth recently. He was in fine fettle. Our correspondent says he commented that he'd already died once and needed something to eat before dying a second time. He went on to brave the media and paparazzi, as well as the Tudor gang, and did, indeed, die. See our coverage on the following pages.

Richard is pictured with, in the background, Julia Langham of the society's Arundel Group, left, and Sally Henshaw from the Leicestershire Branch.



Remembering Richard and 100 years

Words by Jane Trump

Photos by John Langham,
Neil Trump and Jane
Trump

I always find the Bosworth Festival a bitter-sweet experience. I thoroughly enjoy all that the festival has to offer, but of course it is a reminder of what England was robbed of – a thoroughly decent king.

However, I was really looking forward to helping Sue Ollier with hosting in the Society Marquee, a second presence to the Ambion Gateway stand this year as part of the Centenary celebrations. My experience didn't disappoint.

We had all the Ricardian favourites of good food and drink plus 'Fred', the full suit of armour and the added attractions of Philippa Langley and Matt Lewis for book signings, along with Dominic Smee and his mother, Christina who spent a lot of time engaging with members - Christina signing her book and Dominic posing for photos.



Above: Richard acknowledges the paparazzi on his way to the battlefield. Below: Richard and Sir Percival Thirlwall, left, and another bodyguard.



Dominic looked every inch our 'Richard' in his authentic Ricardian outfit and he was a hit with everyone who came in the tent and with plenty of the public outside as well!

I thoroughly enjoyed catching up with members I knew but especially getting to know members I didn't, quite a few of whom were re-enactors involved in the two battles 'performed', Barnet and, of course, Bosworth. I met a family of 'Woodvilles' and got to learn much about the living history and re-enactor world. It sounded great fun and deadly serious at the same time.

I always thought battles were semi-choreographed but apparently not – everyone goes for it! However, unlike re-enactors of a later period, it was good to hear that Lancastrians and Yorkists were happy to mingle and enjoy each other's company when not bashing seven bells out of each other in battle!

What was really encouraging was the number of young Ricardians who came into the tent. They were so keen and knowledgeable about their subject and were excited to meet Matt and Philippa to discuss Richard more fully. Their knowledge and enthusiasm were impressive. It gives hope that the Ricardian baton will be carried forward into the next generation.

The Society Marquee, a second presence to the Ambion Gateway stand this year as part of the Centenary celebrations.



What was really encouraging was the number of young Ricardians who came into the tent.
Dominic Smeed and a young Ricardian.





From top, left: Fred stands guard; Phillipa Langley and Dominic Smee; the Society presence at the Albion Gate.



As always there were excellent and entertaining demonstrations, discussions and shows. There was a medieval fashion show, outlining clothing during the later Middle Ages, from the lowest to the highest in society.

A jester entertained the children and a falconer demonstrated his craft with his birds, although he anticipated that, with the weather as it was, some of his birds may just fly up to the roof of the Tithe Barn and stay there.

He explained that they definitely had a mind of their own! For the more academic of us, there were several discussions and a Q&A session on what may have happened if Richard had won Bosworth – fascinating food for thought.



The concern prior to the Festival was whether there would be a King Richard as the original re-enactor had moved on and it was difficult to find someone who could manage a charge in full armour and on horseback.

However, King Richard was in evidence throughout the weekend and looked very much the part in his armour, surcoat and crown. He paid a visit to the Society stand at the Ambion Gateway on Saturday and stopped briefly at the Marquee, commenting that, having already been killed once that day, he was going to get something to eat before being killed again!

This was a reference to a first-rate 'blow-by-blow' account of how Richard may well have died, taking account of the damage inflicted to his skeleton but particularly his skull. It was a little harrowing for the average Ricardian to contemplate but it was so interesting as to how Richard may have met his end and I was also interested to learn that Charles the Bold of Burgundy and James IV of Scotland both met their deaths in a similar manner on the battle field. (Unlike Richard, Charles and James were so mangled they could only be identified by clothing, etc.)

Poor Richard came an extra cropper during his battle charge on Saturday as his saddle had not been fastened properly and he came off his horse before he had even reached Henry Tudor. However, he valiantly got up (luckily unhurt apart from some bruising) and charged Tudor on foot. Unfortunately it didn't change anything and he still lost.



Richard being harried by his enemies and the media...

My friends and I were cheering Richard on loudly, much to the surprise of some young Tudor fans and the amusement of their father. He turned to me at one point, tongue firmly in cheek and asked me if I was aware of how the battle ended. I had to admit that very unfortunately I was, but it didn't stop me cheering Richard on. You never know, they may let him win one year...

Daughter of Time a celebration highlight



ABOVE: 'The Players' with director M. Kilburg Reedy (seated 2nd from left).

The 2024 Middleham Festival has been rated an enormous success by both organisers and visitors who crowded into the Yorkshire Dales Town on July 6 and 7.

The Society and the Yorkshire Branch were prominent in their gazebos inside the castle walls and the events committee had asked the Yorkshire Branch to be responsible for arranging activities in the town.

With the kind co-operation of Rev Jeff Payne, three illustrated lectures were presented on July 6 at 11am, 1pm and 2pm in the church of St Mary & St Alkelda, where Richard would have worshipped, with a comprehensive Q&A and book signing at 3pm.

The topics were Richard, the Northern King, The Princes in the Tower, the New Evidence and The Coldridge Connection with Graham Mitchell, Philippa Langley and John Dike respectively as speakers. The church was packed with enthusiastic visitors throughout the day who contributed £555 in donations to the church.

On July 7 a new dramatic production of Josephine Tey's *The Daughter of Time* by M. Kilburg Reedy was staged in The Key Centre to an equally enthusiastic crowd. The Yorkshire Branch is grateful that Ms Reedy herself and a cast and crew of nine who made the journey by train and minibus from London to York to Middleham, just for one day, to perform this exciting production.

BELOW: Actor Alan Cox as Insp Alan Grant.



Personal presentations by Matt Lewis and Philippa Langley, Richard's lasting legacy; hotel venues reminded of Richard's existence; banners and battle standards; intricate details of Richard's coronation; medieval chefs and glorious cupcakes. These are among the wonderful ways in which our worldwide community of Branches and Groups chose to honour the Society's Centenary, and Richard's coronation. Here are some snapshots:

Arun Group

We had a lovely lunch, then toasted the small but very active Arun Branch; the Society's Centenary and, last but not least, His Grace Richard III, with a glass of non-alcoholic prosecco -most of us were driving! This was followed by a delicious chocolate cake made by one of our members, Marjory.

The Swan Hotel had a picture of every monarch on its restaurant wall - except for one glaring omission, so we presented them with Richard's framed SOA portrait to redress this.

Right: Members toast Richard, with the portrait and chocolate cake on display.



American Branch

On Saturday, July 6, members gathered on Zoom for a celebration of the Richard III Society's 100th anniversary and a lecture commemorating the dual coronation of Richard III and Queen Anne, which took place on this date in 1483.

Chair Susan Troxell provided an informative history of the founding of the Society, touching on the king's cultural significance in the centuries since his death and the shifting viewpoints on his reign that have inspired the Society and its ongoing work.

Research officer Dr. Compton Reeves presented a lecture about the joint coronation of Richard and Anne, including fascinating details about the ceremony, the attendees, and the regalia (one piece, the anointing spoon, survives today). Members shared a toast to the King and the Society in honour of this historic milestone.



New South Wales Branch

The NSW branch was again privileged to welcome our Chair, Matt Lewis as we were joined by members and friends from around the world.

The date July 6 was chosen as a worldwide day of celebration, the day also being the anniversary of Richard III's coronation on July 6, 1483.

Matt's presentation covered the various aspects of Richard's coronation. Richard's coronation would not have been much different to Charles III's coronation in 2023 - we would have recognised a lot of the elements and procedures in both. Matt detailed the five main elements of a coronation – recognition, oath, anointing, crowning and the homage. Matt compared a coronation to a marriage, both involving pledges and consent. Richard was the eighth king to sit on St Edwards's Chair (Coronation Chair) with its Scottish 'Stone of Scone' - Stone of Destiny - held underneath. Richard probably gave The Oath in English, the first time for an English monarch.

New Zealand Branch



Having secured a chef with an interest in historical cooking, the New Zealand branch held an extremely enjoyable feast on July 6. The entertainments included appropriate games, caption competition, dancing and readings.

Richard probably gave The Oath in English, the first time for an English monarch

Some parts of Richard's coronation, such as the coronation procession and post-coronation banquet are no longer held. Handel's music for Zadok the Priest became part of the ceremony in the early 18th century.

Matt noted the number of nobles at the coronation who later rebelled against Richard, including Margaret Beaufort, who carried Queen Anne's train at the coronation; but by October her son Henry Tudor was attempting to invade the country.

We all enjoyed Matt's presentation and hope to have him back at some stage. Marnie congratulated Matt on his Chairmanship of the society and said it was sad he had resigned. We wish him well as he continues his writing on - we hope - history topics.



Canadian Branch

Months of work went into the day's celebration. A souvenir menu was created based on 1924 menus. Books from the library available for loan were almost all written by Society members past and present.

Banners and the Battle Standard were strategically placed throughout the venue and of course a lot of thought was given to the catered meal, with a special cake ordered for the occasion. They got the colours wrong, but the cake was delicious. Danièle Cybulskie tailored her talk on Richard and chivalry perfectly to the audience.



Thames Valley Group

Some of the Thames Valley Group got together on July 6 to celebrate the Centenary of the Society and the Coronation of King Richard III and Queen Anne 541 years ago. We each had our Centenary badge and a special RIII cupcake with a crown. It was a lovely occasion for us to be together.



London and Home Counties Branch

The London and Home Counties Branch arranged a Question-and-Answer session with Philippa Langley on Wednesday, July 3. Philippa was booked for the Middleham Festival on July 6, so this was the nearest date we could arrange for the event. It was held at our regular meeting place, Birkbeck, and was thrown open to all Society members who were invited to attend, expecting to attract those in London and home counties who had not had the opportunity to hear Philippa 'live'.

Philippa supplied and spoke to relevant illustrations and then answered questions from the floor. As well as celebrating the Society Centenary, the event was also the first Pauline Stevenson Memorial Lecture, in recognition of her bequest to the Branch, and we were pleased to have as guests, relatives of Pauline: Mr and Mrs Hamill and Barbara Hazeldine. Philippa pointed out that the book was the first report, with research ongoing, and there would be updates. We hope to arrange a further event, next summer, to hear about these. All who attended seemed to enjoy the event, and the Branch Committee thanks those who helped and supported it.





Accidental church bells honour new plaque

We made plans to celebrate the Centenary of the Society on July 6 with several events in Penrith.

For various reasons, we were unable to go ahead with these, but we now have a firm arrangement in place to take part in Local History Month next year, which is celebrated with enthusiasm by Penrith Library.

Our cancelled events will be resurrected then.

So we fell back on Plan B for the Centenary. Last year we planted a white rose bush under the Neville window in St Andrew's Church, Penrith. This was to commemorate the 550th anniversary of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, becoming Lord of Penrith. The event was delayed due to Covid.

We intended to mark the bush with a plaque explaining its presence in the churchyard, but permission for this proved more difficult to obtain than for the bush itself!

An agreement was reached, and the plaque was designed and commissioned by our chair, Marilyn Parkes-Seddon. It carries the date July 2024 to mark the Society's Centenary.

We gathered at the church on September 7 and the plaque was duly installed next to the rose bush. At that moment, a peal of bells rang out from the church tower. But we can't claim to have arranged that – there was a wedding taking place at the church at the time! The sun shone and the group posed for photographs before departing for a celebratory lunch.

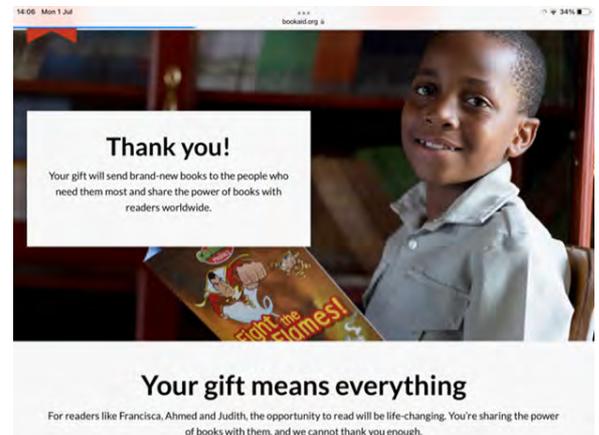
Sale supports Book Aid International

The Thames Valley Group held a book sale at its June meeting on June 22.

An impressive array of books was brought in and a donation of £50 was made to Book Aid International. Members had an enjoyable time looking at the books and, like all Ricardians, enjoying tea and cake!

Thames Valley members encourage other branches and groups to hold a book sale to raise money to support Book Aid International. Around the world poverty, displacement and discrimination mean that millions of people have never even held a new book.

Every year, Book Aid International work to provide over one million brand-new books to readers in 22 countries. Given how much Ricardians value their books, this is a worthy charity.



Thames Valley members encourage other branches and groups to hold a book sale to raise money to support Book Aid International.





Stuart Soul, aka Bishop Stillington, is second from the right. He is supported by some of his flock. Note his business card.

World's first 65 and still going strong

The Victoria Branch of the Society was formed in 1959, the first branch outside the UK. This year members celebrated two birthday milestones.

By Hazel Hadju

At first glance there seems to be no connection between the Richard III Society and the musical *My Fair Lady*. But in Melbourne, Australia, in 1959, there was!

In that year, *My Fair Lady* came to Melbourne for a season. Robin Bailey played the part of Professor Higgins; his wife, Pat Bailey accompanied him.

I've not been able to establish whether Pat was a member of the Society, but she was certainly a Ricardian at heart.

During her stay in Melbourne, Pat met Stuart Soul, an expatriate English retired naval officer. Stuart was also a Ricardian at heart.

The upshot of this acquaintanceship was the decision for form a branch of the Society in Melbourne.

This they duly did, thus forming the first branch of the Society outside the United Kingdom.

It was named Richard III Society Melbourne Branch.

I believe that a third person was also involved in the formation of the Branch, but I have not been able to confirm her identity.

Stuart Soul was absolutely dedicated to the Society, its mission and its expansion.

He canvassed on behalf of its cause tirelessly, and combined in himself the roles of secretary, treasurer and chairman.



The membership increased steadily; monthly meetings were held in members' homes. This practice continued for many years until the membership outgrew such accommodations. It became necessary to find more capacious venues, and it was decided that a city location was most practicable.

The subsequent venues varied in character. At one city meeting, members watched the video of *The Trial* in a meeting room at the YMCA, whilst simultaneously hearing the bumps and thumps emanating from the gym overhead!

Meetings were moved to a church hall very shortly after that. Finally, city libraries provided suitable venues. Our present meeting room is well-equipped and central. Unfortunately, there is no longer storage space for the Branch library books, which are presently kindly accommodated in the living room of our librarian, Anne Maslin.

Membership continued to grow, and in 1988 it was decided that the burden of the Branch's administrative responsibilities should not be left to Stuart alone, so a committee was formed and Stuart became our Chairman. This structure worked very co-operatively and well.



One initiative stemming from that change was the production of a regular newsletter.

Our present editor, David Bliss, produces six excellent newsletters a year. They run for at least a dozen pages, and include amongst many diverse and interesting articles, a reproduction of talks given at the previous meetings.

This last feature is a boon to those members who are unable to attend meetings.

Another innovation was to hold a memorial service in August to mark Bosworth Field.

This was originally held at Trinity College Chapel at Melbourne University, and later on in a local church.



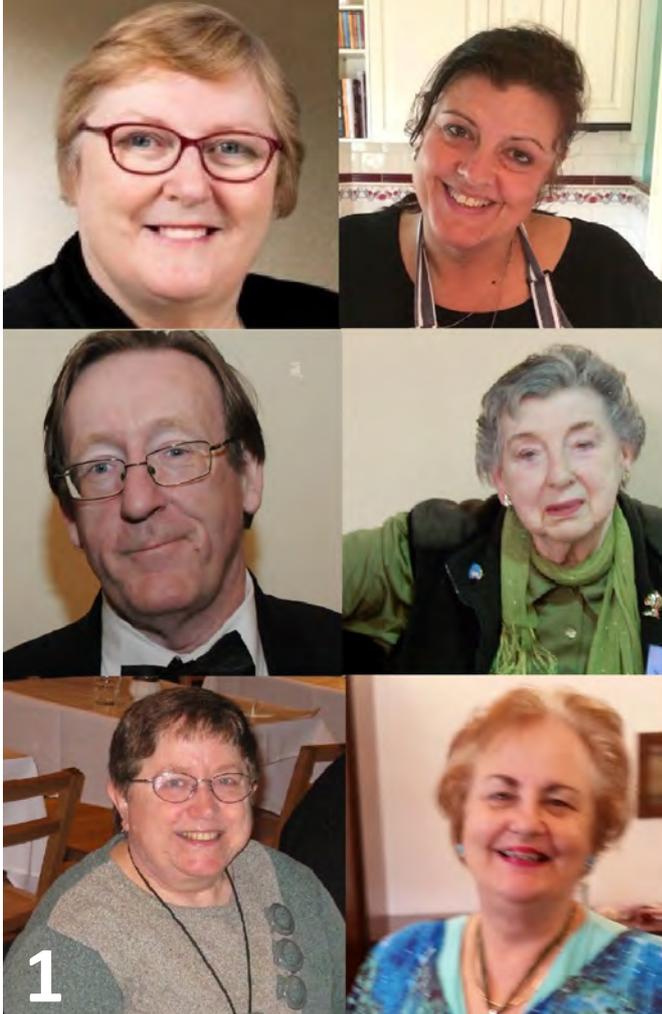
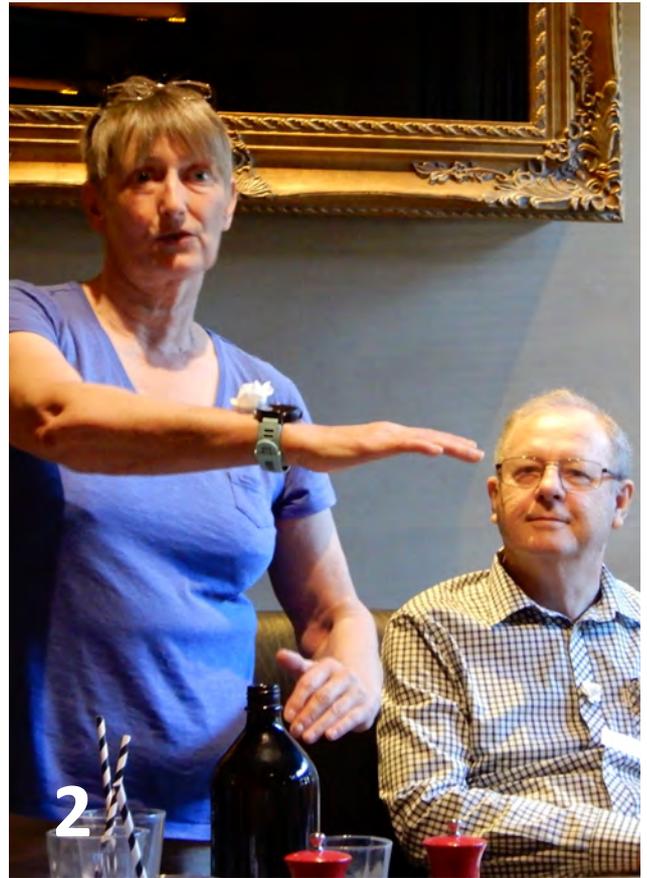
Above: Long-term members Hazel Hadju and Michal Liffe, and inset: Mercia Chapman.

The most significant innovation by the Branch was the institution of the biennial Australasian Conventions. The idea was the brainchild of Yvonne Liffe, a long-time member.

By that time, Branches had been formed in other Australian States and in New Zealand.



The first convention, held in 1991, proved to be very successful, so much so that since then the other Branches in Australia and New Zealand have taken it in turns to host these conventions. Members look forward to these reunions, which are always enjoyable and stimulating. The Branch holds three lunches each year. One to welcome the start of the new year, one in July to commemorate the Coronation, and a third at Christmas time. We are fortunate to have a dedicated and harmonious committee, and a membership which is steady, and which enjoys the sense of companionship that prevails at our meetings. On September 29, at a special lunch, we celebrated not only the Society's Centenary, but also Victoria Branch's 65th birthday!



Photos

- 1 The recently elected committee of the Victoria Branch
- 2 Prof Jane Evans speaking at a branch lunch.
- 3 Long-standing member Susan Voutier
- 4 Past chairman and long-standing member Ron Pidock

A Mass he was probably denied...

By Graham Mitchell

To mark the Society's Centenary Year, a Solemn Requiem Mass was sung in St Anne's Catholic Church, Keighley West Yorkshire on August 22, 2024, for the repose of the soul of King Richard III and the souls of all who died at the Battle of Bosworth on that day 539 years ago.

The Mass was in the Ordinary English Form with Gregorian Chant from the 'Missa Pro Defunctis' (Mass of the Dead) as set out in the music books of the Catholic Church. It was felt this was the closest to the Latin chant which King Richard and his contemporaries would have heard in the 15th century.

Six members of the resident choir of St Anne's Church who sang the Mass are also members of the Yorkshire Branch.





The Mass was introduced by Branch Secretary Graham Mitchell who is also a member of St Anne's Choir.

Celebrant was Parish Priest Monsignor Canon David Smith who wrote in the Parish Bulletin:

"I am sure many of you will remember the extraordinary story of the discovery of King Richard's body a few years ago. It was evident that he had been hastily buried with few rites and ceremonies. It is a most Christian thought to offer so many years later a Mass which he was probably denied at the time."

In his previous Wakefield Parish of St Austin's, Mgr Smith regularly celebrated the December 30 Requiem Mass for Richard, Duke of York, and Edmund Earl of Rutland at the Chantry Chapel on Wakefield Old Bridge.



Award-winning theatre hosts *The Lost King*

The Southport Bijou Cinema agreed to show *The Lost King* for us on July 6.

Members of the Merseyside and West Lancashire Group held a Q & A session afterwards about the film, Richard III and the Society.

The cinema is a small, not-for-profit community cinema which won the Liverpool City Region's Best Hidden Gem category in The Guide Liverpool's 2022 Tourism Awards.



Mini banquet warms a cold day

Our celebration afternoon tea was held during our July meeting.

Our afternoon tea was a mini banquet of medieval cold finger food. The recipes were originally collected by our late Feastocrat Yvonne for our banquets. Later they were compiled into a book by Carole.

We were unable to decorate our room owing to the room hire conditions. The afternoon was enjoyed by all attending. No medieval toast with mulled wine or Champagne, just tea and coffee. Not exactly medieval but warming on a cold day.



Ricardian Maria Grazia Leotta's book Riccardo III: il Re piú amato (Richard III: the Most Beloved King) was published last year, in Italy. Reviewed in the Centenary edition of The Ricardian Bulletin, the book is the first serious exploration of Richard, or any of the Plantagenets, in the Italian language. Maria explains why an Italian became a staunch warrior for an English king. NOTE: In the interests of cultural exchange, Maria's interview is presented in Italian on pages 50-53.

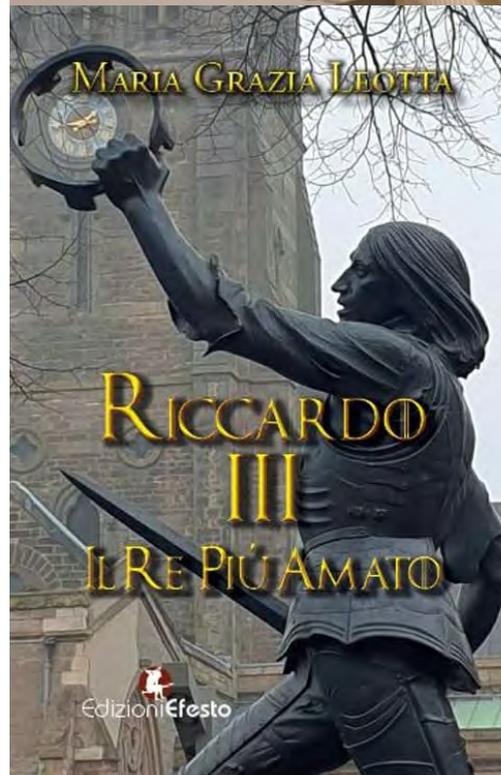
Truth is the daughter of time... ..and that time is coming soon

What role do you play with the Yorkshire and Scottish Branches? What does the job entail?

My role with the Scottish and Yorkshire Branches is very interesting. I oversee the e-mail distribution, so I send out every message from the committee to the membership of both branches and from one branch to the other and occasionally to other branches too. In addition to this, I participate to every committee meeting for both branches and their AGMs. I really enjoy my role; I just wish I had the time to do more for Richard. The branches are the beating heart of the Richard III Society, and it is important to promote and assist them. The Yorkshire and the Scottish Branches are doing very well, they count many members, and more people ask to join. I can't be prouder to work for them

How long have you been a member of the R3 Society? As an Italian, how did you hear about Richard and the Society, and what got you interested in getting involved?

I became a member of the Richard III Society on March 14, 2018, after watching the documentary *The King in the Car Park* on YouTube. It was a rainy afternoon. I had already heard about the dig and the discovery of Richard's remains because I arrived in England the very week he was found.



Yorkshire and Scottish Branches Email Distribution Manager Maria Grazia Leotta has written about Richard for Italian readers.



I recently started to give talks for many associations and clubs and the results have been beyond my expectations.

On August 29, 2012, the day I landed in Gatwick to start my new life in Britain, I bought a newspaper and I saw a picture of Philippa pointing at the gravesite. I read the article, and I was really impressed. I remembered Richard was lost and I was happy to know he had been found but I didn't go beyond that article. I was too busy with renting a house and find a school and doctor for my children, so Richard was put aside again.

Three years later, I visited Leicester a couple of weeks before the reburial. I could see so many people in Leicester Cathedral, especially children, preparing white paper roses for the King.

I also visited the Visitor Centre and I felt so touched to see Richard's skeleton replica. I wanted to go to the reburial but my son was not very well that week so I couldn't. Once again, Richard was put aside, and I carried on with my life. I wanted to see the reburial on TV but after a few minutes, I felt so emotional I had to switch off the TV.

Three more years passed until I found that documentary on YouTube. I started watching with interest and the more I watched, the more I felt involved until the very moment Philippa cried looking at the skeleton displayed on the table. I went back and watched the same scene about ten times and eventually I also cried and felt an incredible emotion inside.

It was at that point I became a Ricardian. I immediately looked online for the Richard III Society and the Missing Princes Project, and I became a member of both. From that day on, my interest in the compelling story of Richard III has grown and I have several projects for the future.



I recently started to give talks for many associations and clubs and the results have been beyond my expectations.

My goal is to present Richard in a different way, his true life, and the real man, a loyal, committed, responsible and pious person and a gallant, brave, courageous, and skilled warrior and king. I noticed the tide is changing for Richard and many people ask questions and clarifications at the end of each talk. I couldn't have hoped for more when I started...



You are bi-lingual. Why did you learn English?

I was fascinated by foreign languages. I really wanted to speak something other than Italian. When I was just four, me and my family often went to visit some relatives by train. There were many signs and warnings in different languages on the train and I copied all of them and tried to read and learn those words from heart

When I started my secondary school, my parents who knew my passion for languages, applied for a private high school for languages when I studied English, Spanish, French and Latin. After my Sixth Form, I graduated in Modern Foreign Languages adding Russian as well.

When I came to England, I earned a master's degree in Translation Studies but the best way to improve my pronunciation and skills in English was learning from English people, not just from the academic world.

They were drivers, my neighbours, cashiers at the supermarket and all those people I met coming from different backgrounds. That was my true English language school.

What do Italians understand about Richard's story? One Italian told me that in his school years, there was some attention paid to the Tudors, but not the Plantagenets. Is this your experience?

I had the same experience in my school. My English and my history teachers were both convinced Richard was a villain and the Plantagenets a very bad dynasty before the 'semi-gods' the Tudors.

Every book told the same, regurgitated stuff and Henry VII is seen as the saviour coming to save England from the evil Plantagenets. Very little is taught about them.

Even the beheading of two queens of England and Mary Queen of Scots and the dissolution of monasteries are presented in a very light way.

I have the feeling that academics and teachers just avoid talking about the Plantagenets and justify the horror and destruction the Tudors caused in England.

Even the beheading of two queens of England and Mary Queen of Scots and the dissolution of monasteries are presented in a very light way.

I was fascinated by the name "Plantagenets", and I never believed Richard killed his nephews. I still don't know why, but the princes' smothering made no sense to me.

Even my mum, the day I told her about Richard III, told me it was just a terrible lie. Surprisingly, she had never studied English history in her life and had never heard anything about Richard III before. There should be something in our DNA that is pro Richard.

What inspired you to write your book - *Riccardo III: il Re piú amato (Richard III: the Most Beloved King)*; specifically, why for the Italian market? Did you and the publishers, Efesto Edizioni, see a gap in the market there?

When I started to research for TMPP (The Missing Princes Project), I tried to find material in all the languages I could speak, especially Italian, but there was absolutely nothing in my native language apart from many different translations and interpretations of Shakespeare and Thomas More.



It was at that point that the idea to write a biography of King Richard III came to my mind but it was a very ambitious project at that time, so I decided to write an article about the dig for a magazine and asked a friend of mine to proofread it.

A couple of weeks after, I received a message from him on WhatsApp. He was in reality a proofreader for Efesto Edizioni who had shown my article to the editor who commented "This book is wonderful; I would like to publish it".

There was nothing else apart from that article, but I accepted the challenge and started to write the rest of the book. It was published on December 2022.

I also chose the cover, a picture I had taken in Leicester the very first time I visited. The crown of Richard encircles the clock of the cathedral's tower. There is a hidden meaning behind it; the truth is the daughter of time, and that time is coming soon.

The title is in contrast with many other books about Richard. What I wanted to say is that this king has been so much maligned and slandered but there are many people nowadays who are fighting to reassess his reputation, and, in this sense, Richard is indeed the most beloved king.

How has it been marketed in Italy and elsewhere. What has been the response thus far to your book?

In the last months, I have received many messages from readers, and I am really impressed by their appreciation.

A student from Ca' Foscari in Venice used my book to start her dissertation about Richard III.

A review by Alessandro Stagni, a fellow Italian living in New Zealand, was published in the Centenary edition of the *Ricardian Bulletin* and I was absolutely delighted reading it. Alessandro perfectly understood the reason behind my book's publication and my intentions: spreading the word about Richard III in Italy where for most academics and common people, he is still the Shakespearian monster, the evil uncle who smothered his nephews to seize the throne.

Alessandro did a very good job and yes, it is clear the book was written by a Ricardian but the bibliography shows I based my writing on sources not just on my beliefs about the King. I admit, I was thrilled to see that review in the Centenary edition of the *Bulletin*. I thank Alessandro for this.

If you could tell Italians just one thing about Richard, what would it be?

I would tell them they should forget everything they studied about Richard and the Plantagenets and start their own investigations because history is written by the winners, and it is our duty to rewrite it producing proof of evidence and perseverance.

Is there anything else you would like to share?

I am completing two more books and this time they are in English. The first one is a collection of short stories mostly based on historical facts (a couple of them are fictional).

The second book is non-fiction, and it is about Ricardian writers, I can't say more now. Many people have asked me to translate my book into English; I am tempted to do this too at some point. Watch this space.

DEAD and ALIVE in Lincoln

The mitochondrial DNA of Richard III

Gerald Wilson explains how getting to the truth about his ancestors led him to a possible connection to Richard's great-grandmother Kathryn Swynford.

I was never much interested in history as a child. In fact, I failed O Level History. But I made up for it by marrying an historian and eventually, after almost half a century, she has won me over.

It was the early 1990s when my wife, Fiona, took up family history and I followed her into this fascinating hobby in the days before the internet when research meant visiting libraries and record offices with hours spent looking through microfilms and fiches.

My father's family was relatively straight forward, many of them being tidily buried in several family graves in Grangetown Cemetery in Sunderland: the genealogist's dream.

My mother's family on the other hand always seemed a bit more mysterious and questions usually led to a rapid change of subject.

Solving the mystery took the best part of another quarter century with my mother having taken many secrets to the grave with her in 2005. The fact is that she was illegitimate and adopted at an early age. However, my mother didn't know this and didn't want to admit her ignorance.



The Famous Five. Gerald's research led to five new J1c2c3 descendants in one hit. See page 46.

In a last attempt to get to the truth I did a DNA test with FTDNA in 2013. Since it was my mother's line I was investigating, I did what was then a traditional mitochondrial DNA test together with the latest newfangled autosomal test. I followed up numerous matches over several years but never made much headway. The cousin matches were too remote and the matrilineal matches almost impossible to interpret.

This was also about the time that work was going on in Leicester to identify the skeleton that had been found there, an exercise also making great use of DNA, so naturally it quickly caught my attention.



Many Ricardians will be well aware that it was in 2004 that the late John Ashdown-Hill identified a living matrilineal descendant of Richard III's sister, Anne, and therefore a person whose mitochondrial DNA would match the mitochondrial DNA in Richard's bones.

This person was Joy Ibsen, living in Canada. John published his discovery in the Ricardian in 2006 in a paper entitled, *Alive and Well in Canada: the Mitochondrial DNA of Richard III*. Sadly, Joy died in Canada in 2008, but fortunately her mtDNA was passed to her son, Michael, who was happy to support the Looking for Richard Project in 2012 by providing a DNA sample himself.

Note: a mother passes her mitochondrial DNA on to her children, both male and female, though it is only the females who pass it on to their own children.

At the same time a second matrilineal descendant of Richard III's sister, Anne, was found by the Leicester University team under Kevin Schurer and this was a Wendy Duldig from New Zealand. Wendy was 14th Cousin twice removed to Michael Ibsen.

Fortunately, her mitochondrial DNA sample provided an almost perfect match to Michael's with just one mutation in the more than 16,000 bases that make up the mitochondrial genome. This was only to be expected in the 15 or so generations since the common ancestor.

The match between the mitochondrial DNA in the bones and the samples given by Michael Ibsen and Wendy Duldig was the fundamental piece of evidence in identifying the bones as those of Richard III.



John Ashdown-Hill identified a living matrilineal descendant of Richard III's sister, Anne, and therefore a person whose mitochondrial DNA would match the mitochondrial DNA in Richard's bones.

Of course, there were other potential subjects contemporary to Richard III, who shared his mtDNA, and thus other evidence such as the scoliosis of the spine and battle wounds came into play, but the fundamental determinant was the mtDNA, identified some seven years previously by Ashdown-Hill as "alive and well in Canada."

In technical terms this mitochondrial sequence is known as haplogroup J1c2c3, which turns out to be a very rare haplogroup currently with only about 30 identified carriers and at best maybe only a hundred or so worldwide.

Most of those 30 are Americans with ancestors going back to the first settlers but none as yet with an identified link back to England. In early 2017 my luck changed with respect to my own DNA test when I got a close relative autosomal match to a retired professor of chemistry in New York with whom I shared 470 centimorgans of DNA.



This was seriously close and suggested a first cousin once removed or a half first cousin.

This was Graham Underwood, an American, retired and ten years my senior, whose daughter had given him a DNA kit for Christmas. Graham turned out to be a wonderful correspondent and as intrigued as I was by the unfolding story. He had emigrated to New York in the 1960s from Australia, whither his mother had arrived in 1925 from England. It turned out that, like mine, his mother had been sparing with the truth, and, like mine, she was illegitimate. The process of teasing out the truth was not quick or easy, but as a first step to deciding how Graham and I were related, whether on father's side or mother's side, I asked him to do a mtDNA test.

This turned out not to match mine, which led to the conclusion that we were related through a common grandfather, who turned out to be "a bit of lad" with three children by his wife and at least two others by other women, our respective mothers. However, it also turned out to our shock and initial disbelief that Graham was a J1c2c3 and therefore related to Richard III.

The next question was whether we could establish any sort of lineage from Graham back to Richard III's family as had been done for Michael and Joy Ibsen and Wendy Duldig.

We had established that Graham's grandmother was Elizabeth Wright, a cook, who had given birth to Graham's mother on April 1, 1902, in Eastbourne, Sussex. This being only a year after the 1901 census I made a search for Elizabeth Wrights in the census, single women of child-bearing age, probably in domestic service.

...we were related through a common grandfather, who turned out to be "a bit of lad" with three children by his wife and at least two others by other women...

This led to just one candidate, Elizabeth Wright, born in Hemyock, on the Devon/Somerset border on August 23, 1863, daughter of John and Elizabeth Wright. In order to prove the point, I worked forward to two living relatives, presumed cousins of Graham's and willing to do autosomal DNA tests. One was a second cousin once removed and the other was a third cousin. Sadly, neither test showed up a match to Graham though they did match to one another. It looked very probable therefore that I had identified the wrong Elizabeth Wright.

Come 2023 and now having my own DNA on the Ancestry website, I noted the benefit in particular of the Ancestry Sideview algorithm, which splits autosomal DNA matches between maternal and paternal matches.

I therefore asked Graham to do an Ancestry test, which he readily agreed to.

With Ancestry's massive data base of results this immediately gave three matches in the range 100-160cM with enough populated public trees on Ancestry to establish that so far from being a single woman, May's mother and Graham's grandmother, Elizabeth Wright, was in fact a married woman born Elizabeth Cope in Nottinghamshire and living in Battersea, London, with five other children (one girl and four boys). The original very reasonable basis for my census searches (i.e. that Elizabeth was a single woman) was completely wrong.



Having now established a new candidate for Elizabeth Wright, it was important to prove that we now had the right one by looking not just for autosomal DNA matches but for mtDNA matches, which would provide almost incontrovertible proof that I had landed in the right place. This turned out to be not so easy as first thought. However, with the aid of other people's family trees posted on Ancestry and quite a lot of luck I was able to work up through five generations and then down through a further seven to a living relative.

This led, through Margaret Wood, the common ancestor born in Norwell near Newark in Nottinghamshire in 1777 to a Peter Keane, living just outside Lincoln (Figure 1 - see following page) Fortunately, Peter responded to a letter from me and readily agreed to take a mtDNA test with FTDNA, the only major company offering the full genomic analysis of mtDNA. After a two month wait patience was rewarded with a positive J1c2c3 match. As Peter had both a sister living and a niece and grand nieces, this discovery found five new J1c2c3 descendants in one hit: The Famous Five.

Starting from Margaret Wood at Norwell near Newark and ending with Peter Keane and family in Lincoln this whole matrilineal line has hardly moved more than 25 miles in 250 years. At last, we can say that Richard III's mitochondrial DNA is alive and well not just in Canada, New Zealand, and the United States of America, but in Lincoln, in the King's Realm of England.



The author Gerald Wilson meeting their "Royal Highnesses" Sue and Peter in the Lincoln Guildhall

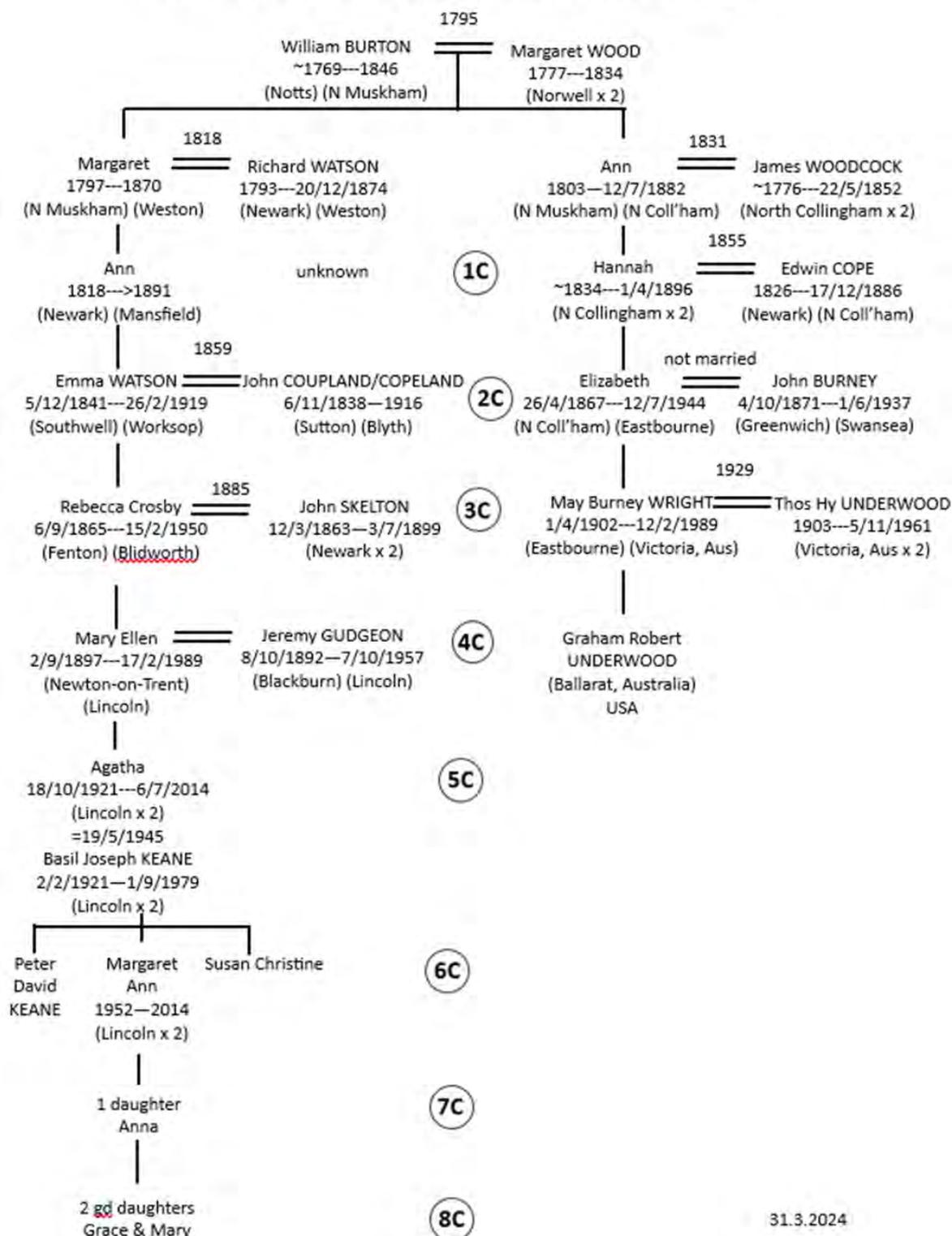
It can be said therefore that Richard III's mitochondrial DNA is not only alive and well in Lincoln but dead and buried as well.

The next question is whether we can trace the line back to Richard III and for the moment the answer must be NO. However, as Ashdown-Hill pointed out in his original paper, this same DNA would be found not just in Richard's sister Anne, but also his mother, Cecily Neville, his maternal grandmother, Joan Beaufort, and his great grandmother Katherine Swynford, not to mention Cecily Neville's many sisters.

As it happens both Katherine Swynford and her daughter Joan Beaufort are buried next to one another in Lincoln Cathedral, having both lived long periods in Lincolnshire. It can be said therefore that Richard III's mitochondrial DNA is not only alive and well in Lincoln but dead and buried as well.

Could "The Famous Five" be descendants of Katherine Swynford? Watch this space!

Figure 1
J1c2c3 MATRILINEAL LINES RELATED TO GRAHAM UNDERWOOD
Including dates & places of birth & death and dates of marriage



31.3.2024

Strange tale of the princes' fate

The Princes in the Tower *Solving History's Greatest Cold Case*

By Philippa Langley
History Press, 2023

Reviewed by Kerrin Maratas
Adelaide Branch

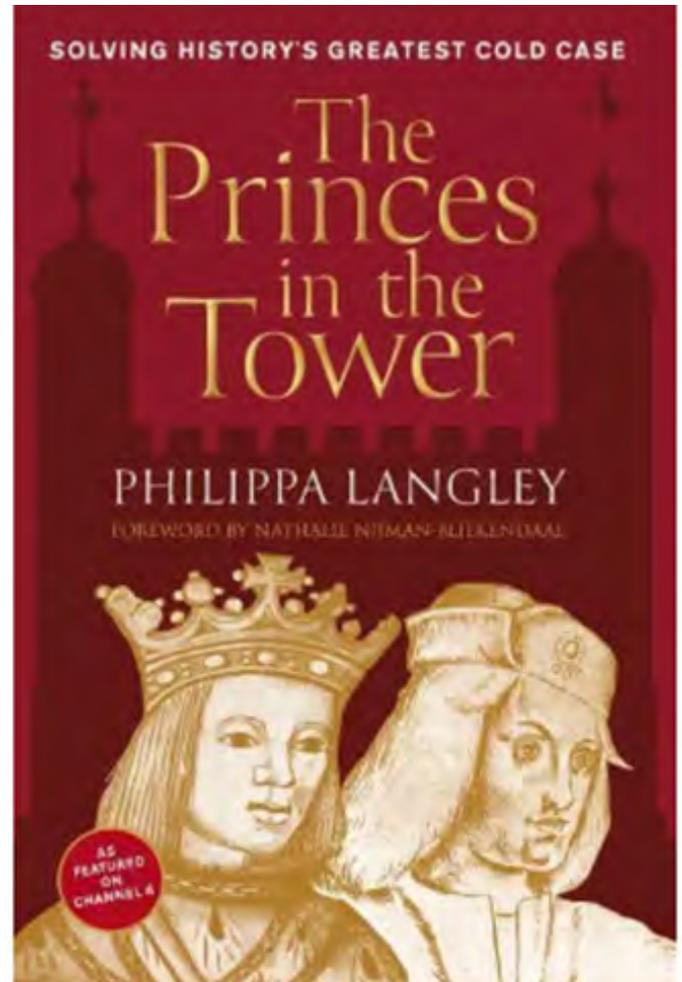
Note spoilers!

The book is set up like a police investigation - with long sections discussing the history and the background of each person of interest in the case. I was however much more interested in the actual evidence that they found "proof of life" beyond 1483.

I had watched the TV documentary - which I recommend - prior to reading this book about the new evidence. I think, surprisingly, the documentary covered this new evidence more thoroughly than the actual book did. And most importantly with more scrutiny

I was disappointed in the book regarding Perkin Warbeck – also known as missing Prince Richard - in that he was not covered in more detail. The book covered Perkin's life in Europe, but that was about it. Other books I have read offer quite a lot of evidence about him in England, yet it was not covered in this book.

I understand this book is really Part 1 of a research project. So, more detail about Perkin may be uncovered in Part 2.



Regarding Lambert Simnell - also known as Edward V - the evidence was interesting and the mystery of whom the Irish crowned is quite baffling, considering the real life genuine heir attended the ceremony – the Earl of Lincoln, heir of Richard III. Lincoln seemed quite happy to see a supposed "imposter" crowned king, as well as fight by his side, and die, in battle. This doesn't make sense at all, yet it happened. And Elizabeth Woodville, mother of Edward V, was supportive of this "imposter" - whilst her own daughter was crowned Queen with a son as a Tudor heir. It's never made sense that Elizabeth would favour an "imposter" over her own living daughter sitting on the throne.



Another thing that grabbed me about the book was just how doggedly determined Henry VII was to obliterate all documentation by Richard III - even demanding that other countries destroy every single record. What had Richard been writing? What was destroyed? And was this a usual thing to do as an incoming monarch?

Henry VII sabotaged any support of a York contender by threatening families with financial ruin, or their lives, if they supported these "pretenders". I can see why the Yorkists ultimately failed.

And what's with Henry VII publicly declaring if any heirs of Edward IV were alive to come forward now, with the promise he would help them get crowned? This straight after his army had so mercilessly killed Richard III on the battlefield.

Did he not believe the princes were dead? I suspect he had no idea where they were. He just didn't know.

Then there's the matter of Thomas Grey. He fled England under Richard III to support Henry Tudor – Henry VII - in France.

Elizabeth Woodville asked her son Thomas to come back from France under the protection of Richard III. When Henry caught wind of Thomas' defection back to Richard, he held him back in France.

So, Elizabeth and her son must have trusted Richard III enough for Thomas to be happy returning to England. Henry had Thomas imprisoned in France whilst he went off to the Battle of Bosworth. Thomas had switched his allegiance back to Richard - why?

And what of the children's bones found in the Tower 200 years later? These were scrutinised by contemporary experts - there is doubt who they belong to. They could be a lot older than 600 years - possibly Roman. And, most glaringly, there's a possibility the eldest was female. Until these bones can be re-examined properly not much can be determined.

Is there enough evidence that the princes survived?

I think there is. It is such a strange tale indeed. It just unleashes more questions at every turn.

This is a good solid read.

Medieval curiosities

10th October: On this day in 1141, a strange phenomenon was recorded in London: the tide in the Thames went out and failed to flow in again for an entire twenty-four hours.

From *A Year in the Life of Medieval England* by Toni Mount, Amberley Publishing 2016

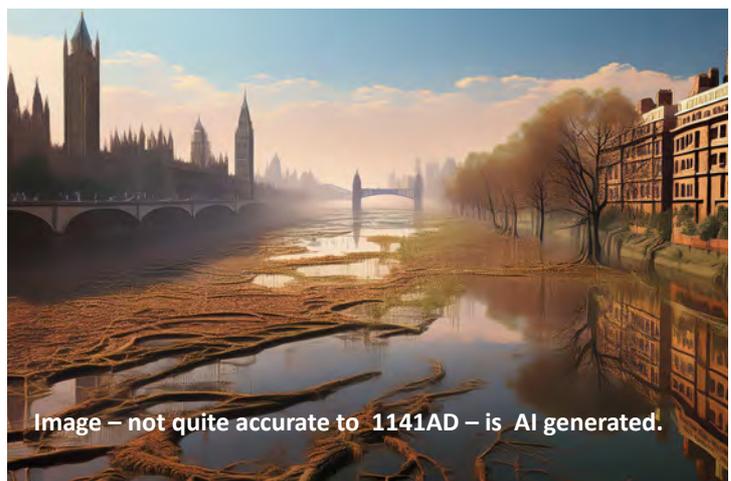


Image – not quite accurate to 1141AD – is AI generated.

Il libro della Ricardian Maria Grazia Leotta, Riccardo III: il Re piú amato (Richard III: the Most Beloved King) é stato pubblicato in Italia nel dicembre 2022. È stato recensito nel Bollettino della Richard III Society nel numero speciale del Centenario ed é la prima, vera e finora unica pubblicazione su Riccardo III e sui Plantageneti mai scritta in lingua italiana. Maria ci ha spiegato per quale ragione un'italiana dovrebbe diventare una fedele paladina per la causa di un re inglese.

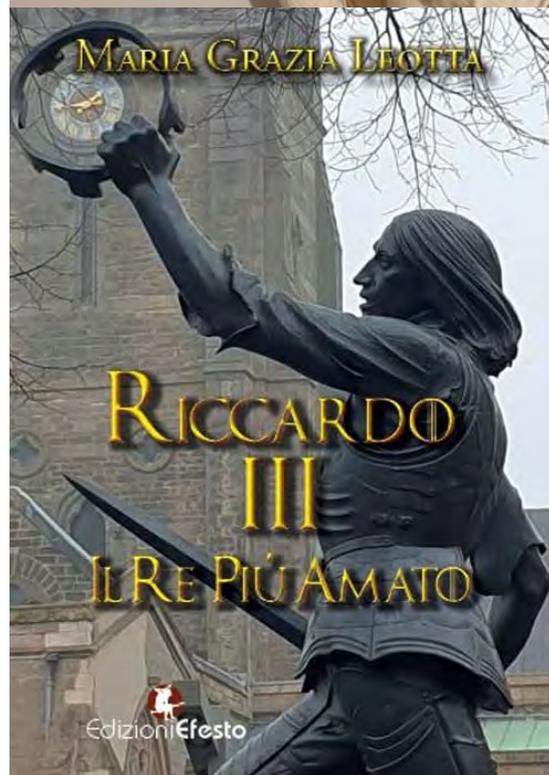
La verità é la figlia del tempo ... é quel tempo presto arriverá

Che ruolo svolgi nelle filiali dello Yorkshire e della Scozia? Cosa comporta questo lavoro?

Il mio ruolo nelle filiali della Scozia e dello Yorkshire è molto interessante. Sono responsabile della distribuzione delle e-mail, quindi invio tutti i messaggi del Comitato ai membri di entrambe le filiali e da una filiale all'altra e occasionalmente anche ad altre filiali. Inoltre, partecipo a tutte le riunioni del Comitato di entrambe le filiali e alle loro assemblee annuali. Mi piace molto il mio ruolo, ma vorrei avere il tempo di fare di più per Richard. Le filiali sono il cuore pulsante della Richard III Society ed è importante promuoverle e assisterle. Le sedi dello Yorkshire e della Scozia stanno andando molto bene, contano molti membri e sempre più persone chiedono di aderire. Non potrei essere più orgogliosa di lavorare per loro.

Da quanto tempo sei membro della R3 Society? Come italiana, come sei venuta a conoscenza di Richard e della Society e cosa ti ha spinto a farne parte?

Sono diventata membro della Richard III Society il 14 marzo 2018 dopo aver visto il documentario "The King in the Car Park" su YouTube. Era un pomeriggio di pioggia. Avevo già sentito parlare degli scavi e del ritrovamento dei resti di Richard, poiché ero arrivata in Inghilterra proprio la settimana del ritrovamento.



Il 29 agosto 2012, il giorno in cui sono atterrata a Gatwick per iniziare la mia nuova vita in Gran Bretagna, ho comprato un giornale e ho visto una foto di Philippa che indicava il punto dove la tomba di Richard era stata ritrovata. Lessi l'articolo e rimasi molto colpita. Ricordavo che Richard era perduto ed ero felice di sapere che era stato ritrovato, ma non andai oltre quell'articolo.

Ero troppo occupata ad affittare una casa e a trovare una scuola e un medico per i miei figli, così Richard venne messo da parte ancora una volta.

Tre anni dopo, visitai Leicester un paio di settimane prima della nuova sepoltura. Vidi tante persone nella cattedrale di Leicester, soprattutto bambini, che facevano delle rose bianche di carta per il re.

Visitai anche il Visitor Centre e mi commossi nel vedere la replica dello scheletro di Richard. Avrei voluto esserci il giorno del funerale, ma mio figlio non stava molto bene quella settimana e quindi rinunciai.

Ancora una volta, Richard fu messo da parte e io ho continuato la mia vita. Volevo vedere il funerale in TV, ma dopo pochi minuti mi sentii così emozionata al punto da dover spegnere la TV. Passarono altri tre anni, finché non trovai quel documentario su YouTube.

Iniziai a guardarlo con interesse e più lo guardavo, più mi sentivo coinvolta fino al momento in cui Philippa ha pianto guardando lo scheletro esposto sul tavolo.

. Sono tornata a guardare la stessa scena una decina di volte e alla fine ho pianto anch'io, provando un'emozione incredibile: fu in quel preciso momento che diventai Ricardian.

Cercai subito il sito della Richard III Society e il Missing Princes Project e divenni membro di entrambi. Da quel giorno, il mio interesse per l'avvincente storia di Riccardo III è cresciuto e ho diversi progetti per il futuro.



Recentemente ho iniziato a tenere conferenze per molte associazioni e club e la risposta finora è andata oltre le mie aspettative. Il mio obiettivo è presentare Richard in modo diverso, la sua vita e l'uomo che davvero era, una persona leale, impegnata, responsabile e pia e un guerriero e re valoroso, coraggioso e abile.

Ho notato che la corrente sta cambiando a favore di Richard e molte persone fanno domande e chiedono chiarimenti alla fine di ogni conferenza. Non potevo sperare di meglio quando iniziai...



Sei bilingue. Come hai imparato l'inglese?

Ero affascinata dalle lingue straniere. Volevo parlare qualcosa di diverso dall'italiano. Quando avevo solo quattro anni, io e la mia famiglia andavamo spesso in treno per visitare dei parenti.

Sul treno c'erano molti cartelli e avvisi in diverse lingue. Li copiavo tutti e cercavo di leggere e imparare quelle parole a memoria.

Quando iniziai la scuola secondaria, i miei genitori, che conoscevano la mia passione per le lingue, mi iscrissero a un liceo linguistico privato dove studiai inglese, spagnolo, francese e latino. Dopo il diploma, mi laureai in Lingue straniere moderne aggiungendo anche il russo.

Quando arrivai in Inghilterra conseguii un master in Traduzione, ma il modo migliore per perfezionare la mia pronuncia e le mie conoscenze in inglese è stato imparare direttamente dalle persone inglesi e non solo dal mondo accademico.

Erano autisti, vicini di casa, cassieri al supermercato e tutte le persone che ho incontrato provenienti da contesti diversi. Quella è stata la mia vera scuola di inglese.

Qual è l'opinione degli italiani riguardo la storia di Richard? Un italiano mi ha detto che nei suoi anni di scuola si è prestata attenzione ai Tudor, ma non ai Plantageneti. È stata questa la sua esperienza?

Ho avuto esattamente la stessa esperienza a scuola. I miei insegnanti di inglese e di storia erano entrambi convinti che Richard fosse un mostro e che i Plantageneti fossero una pessima dinastia prima dei semidei Tudor.

Ogni libro raccontava le stesse cose, rigurgitate, ed Enrico VII era visto come il salvatore che veniva a liberare l'Inghilterra dai malvagi Plantageneti.

Di loro si insegna ben poco. Ho la sensazione che accademici e insegnanti evitino di parlare dei Plantageneti e giustificino l'orrore e la distruzione che i Tudor hanno causato in Inghilterra.

Persino la decapitazione di due regine d'Inghilterra e di Maria Regina di Scozia e la dissoluzione dei monasteri sono presentate in modo molto leggero. Mi ha sempre affascinato il nome "Plantageneti" e non ho mai creduto che Richard avesse ucciso i suoi nipoti.

Non so ancora perché, ma l'assassinio dei principi non aveva senso per me. Persino mia madre, il giorno in cui le parlai di Riccardo III, mi disse che era solo una terribile bugia.

Sorprendentemente, non aveva mai studiato storia inglese in vita sua e non aveva mai sentito parlare di Riccardo III. Ci sarà senz'altro qualcosa nel nostro DNA a favore di Richard :)

Cosa ti ha spinto a scrivere il tuo libro - Riccardo III: il Re più amato; in particolare, perché per il mercato italiano? Tu e la casa editrice Efestò Edizioni avete notato una lacuna nel mercato italiano?

Quando iniziai le ricerche per conto del TMPP (The Missing Princes Project), cercai di trovare materiale in tutte le lingue che sapevo parlare, soprattutto in italiano, ma non c'era assolutamente nulla nella mia lingua madre, a parte molte traduzioni e interpretazioni diverse di Shakespeare e Tommaso Moro.



Come è stato commercializzato il libro in Italia e altrove. Qual è stata finora la risposta al tuo libro?

Negli ultimi mesi ho ricevuto molti messaggi dai lettori e sono rimasta davvero colpita dai loro apprezzamenti positivi.

Una studentessa della Ca' Foscari di Venezia ha usato il mio libro per iniziare la sua tesi di laurea su Riccardo III, suscitando di conseguenza interesse per il re.

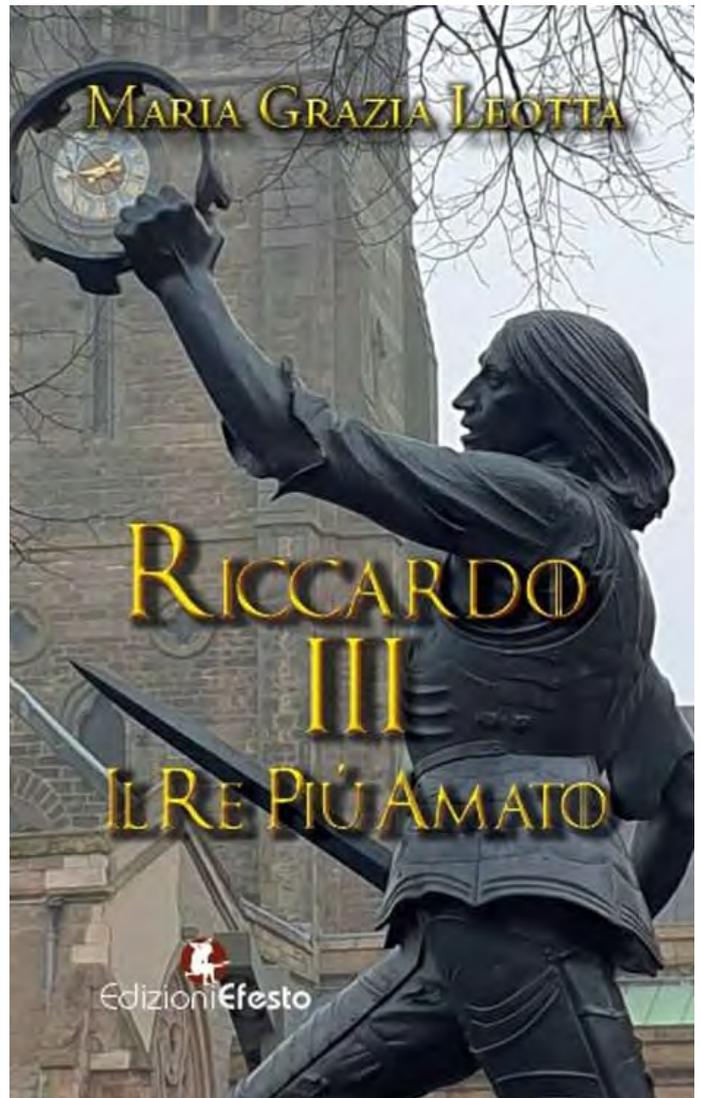
Una recensione di Alessandro Stagni è stata pubblicata sul Bollettino del Centenario della Society e mi ha fatto molto piacere leggerla.

Alessandro ha capito perfettamente il motivo della pubblicazione del mio libro e le mie intenzioni: far conoscere Riccardo III in Italia, dove per la maggior parte degli accademici e della gente comune è ancora il mostro shakespeariano, lo zio cattivo che ha soffocato i nipoti per impossessarsi del trono.

Alessandro ha fatto un ottimo lavoro e sì, è chiaro che il libro è stato scritto da una Ricardian, ma la bibliografia dimostra che ho basato il mio scritto sulle fonti e non solo sulle mie convinzioni sul re. Ammetto che mi ha entusiasmato vedere quella recensione sull'edizione del Centenario del Bollettino e ringrazio Alessandro per questo.

Se potessi dire agli italiani una sola cosa su Richard, quale sarebbe?

Direi loro di dimenticare tutto quello che hanno studiato su Richard e i Plantageneti e di iniziare le loro indagini perché la storia è scritta dai vincitori ed è nostro dovere riscriverla producendo prove e mostrando perseveranza.



C'è qualcos'altro che vorresti condividere?

Sto completando altri due libri e questa volta sono in inglese. Il primo è una raccolta di racconti brevi, per lo più basati su fatti storici (un paio sono di fantasia).

Il secondo libro è di saggistica e riguarda gli scrittori che hanno scritto su Richard, non posso dire di più al momento. Molte persone mi hanno chiesto di tradurre il mio libro in inglese; sono tentata di fare anche questo, prima o poi. Ve lo farò sapere.

EXCLUSIVE!!

Herald columnist Jack Clarke has been trying to keep a low profile of late. This is because of outrageous claims, published in the Ricardian Bulletin, that Jack created a disturbance at a recent Ricardian event. According to the Bulletin he was disruptive and had to be escorted out.

The Herald reached out to Jack to seek his side of the story. We tracked Jack down at an undisclosed location, and was granted an interview:

North Mercia security boss: ‘I was just doing my job’

The John Ashdown Hill Lecture took place at Nantwich Civic Hall in April - in the presence of Jack and an audience of more than 200 people. Jack says he is often too busy to attend events in person - but once he knew there would be refreshments, including cake, he cleared his diary.

After arriving fashionably late Jack took his seat just in time for Philippa Langley to begin her talk about the Missing Princes Project. Jack has followed this project closely and was thoroughly enjoying himself when suddenly he became distracted and asked to leave the hall.

Herald: Hello Jack. Thank you for taking time to talk to me. I read in the Bulletin that you left the lecture early - can you tell us why?

Jack: Hi Sue, how’a’ya?! The John Ashdown Hill Memorial Lecture was a very busy day for me. As you know, one of my responsibilities as co-mascot of the North Mercia branch is security. I had intended to do my rounds before the lecture, but my staff Jane and Alan didn’t get me there on time.



Jack pictured with the then society chairman Matt Lewis and North Mercia Branch’s Marian Moulton. Jack oversees security for the branch.



I alerted Jane and Alan to a possible security breach – that's when I raised the alarm

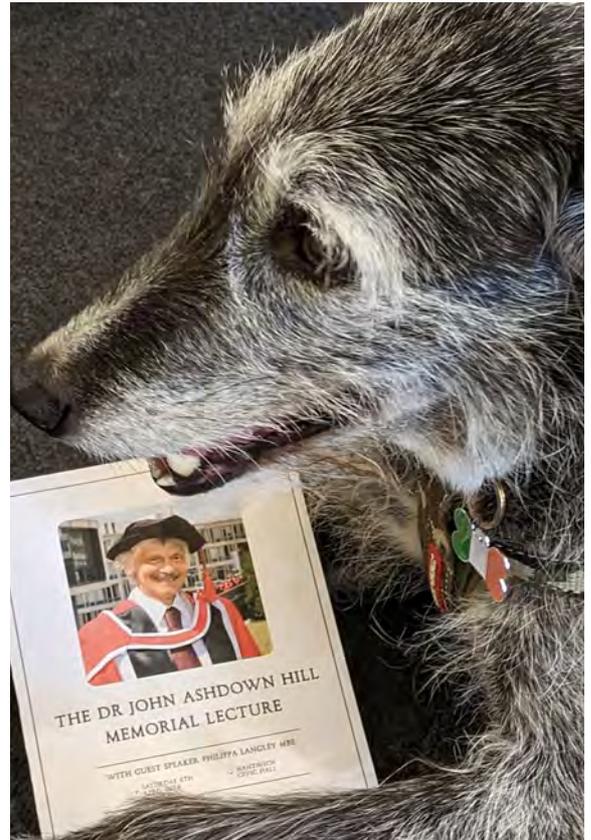
So, I had to do my security checks during the proceedings. I alerted Jane and Alan to a possible security issue – that's when I raised the alarm and had to leave to deal with what turned out to be quite a few situations.

A couple of people tried to get in without tickets, - and then a 'tribute band' came in. They were rehearsing in another part of the building. I asked them to be quiet as they brought their equipment past the lecture hall.

They were very interested in our event, and I signed autographs for them. Then another man came in - I think he was looking for the band. But the band had gone to their room. Undeterred, he seemed to think he could do an audition for Jane and me. He began singing. Can you believe it?

This was an afternoon with Philippa Langley, not Nantwich Has Got Talent. Besides, he didn't have any talent. I can howl more tunefully. So, after sorting all that out and making sure that nobody disturbed the speakers, I decided I had fulfilled my security commitments. So, I headed back into the hall to do my photoshoot with the Matt Lewis our chairman, and to check if the cakes were being served yet. Yes, I did get my fair share, I always do.

I then decided that the vestibule was a good spot to meet members of the audience when they began to leave. I signed some more autographs and told people that I might do my lecture next year. It's a bit controversial but we need to solve this historical mystery: which is better, greyhound or lurcher?



Herald: Do we have to wait a year for the answer?

Jack: Well, obviously it's lurchers. Not as posh as greyhounds but more versatile!! But if you want to know more, you'll have to read my book.

Reflecting on the memorial lecture it was a huge success and I, along with Jane and Alan, would like to thank Marion for all her hard work organising the event; all the helpers and the speakers, and of course Norma for supplying the treats.

Jane saw Matt Lewis a few weeks after the event when he came to talk to the North Mercia Branch. She asked him if he'd recovered from his encounter with Jack. He laughed and said he thought Jack might be recovering from meeting him. Matt really has been a fantastic chairman - we are going to miss him.



Mission Statement

'In the belief that many features of the traditional accounts of the character and career of Richard III are neither supported by sufficient evidence nor reasonably tenable, the Society aims to promote in every possible way research into the life and times of Richard III and to secure a reassessment of the material relating to this period and raise awareness of the role in history of this monarch.'