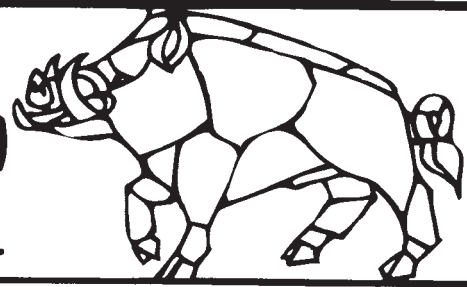


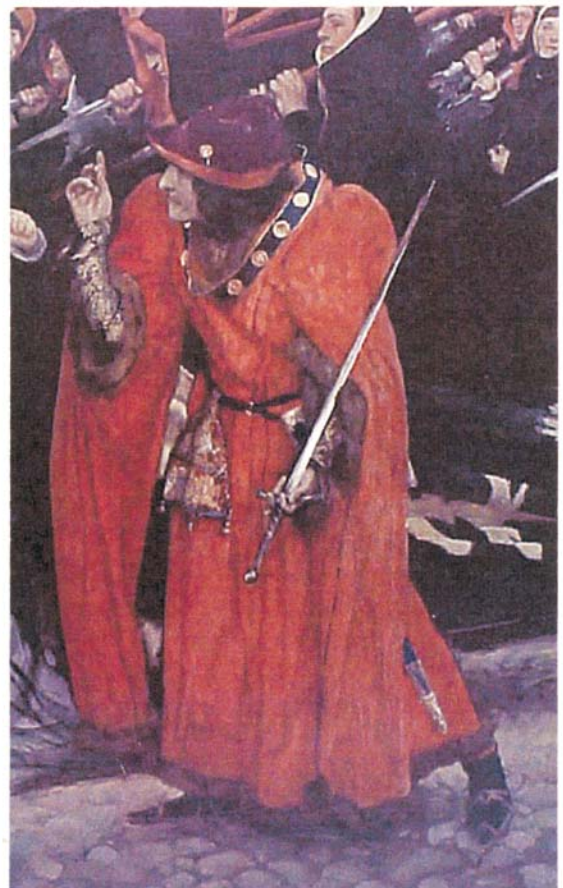
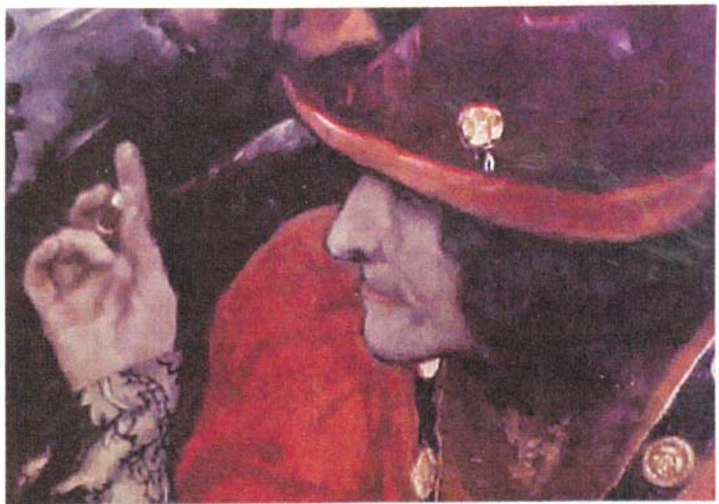
Richardian REGISTER



Richard III Society, Inc.

Volume XXX No. 4

Winter, 2005



THE ABBEY 'RICHARD AND ANNE'

— Geoffrey Wheeler

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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 re-assessment of the material relating to the period, and of the role in English history of this monarch

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Spring	March 15
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EDITORIAL LICENSE

Carole Rike

The time is out of joint.

I'm three issues behind and trying to sort out what is timely and lamenting items which are past their time. I regret that several time sensitive notices have gone unpublished during this fiasco.

Hopefully, the worst of the Katrina aftermath is drawing to a close. My husband and I have purchased a home about an hour north of New Orleans; we will be leaving Houston in two days to take up residence in Louisiana once again.

There are several Ricardians in the Houston area I had hoped to meet during our residence here, but I fear I have done none of that. This has been such an unprecedented time, filled with difficulties from the arcane to the ridiculous. I've also spent a good bit of 2006 on the road, traveling back and forth to Louisiana to see if anything can be done with our property in New Orleans and to search for a new home.

My daughter and son-in-law are returning to New Orleans to reopen my printing business, so the New Orleans addresses will be operable once again.

Geoffrey Wheeler has again come to the rescue, with cover art and an article on the Abbey Richard and Anne. Dear Geoffrey, I've not answered your notes but thought of you fondly often.

Elizabeth Dorsey Hatle has an interview with Robin Maxell on her new book, *To The Tower Born*, and Myrna just keeps on churning out her columns, despite the fact that her editor is lagging behind! Likewise Charlie Jordan and his band of Ricardians who prepare the Ricardian Puzzles!

I appear to have totally messed up the volume numbers on the last few issues. This volume is correctly identified as XXX, No. 4. If you are a librarian or are filing by my volume numbers, I apologize for the mishap.

Please, please, if you have ever considered a submission to the *Register*, I need material now! I would love to hear from all of you — letters, articles, thoughts, reviews, pictures, travelogues — whatever you might share with us.

Looking forward to better times . . .

THE ABBEY 'RICHARD AND ANNE'

Geoffrey Wheeler

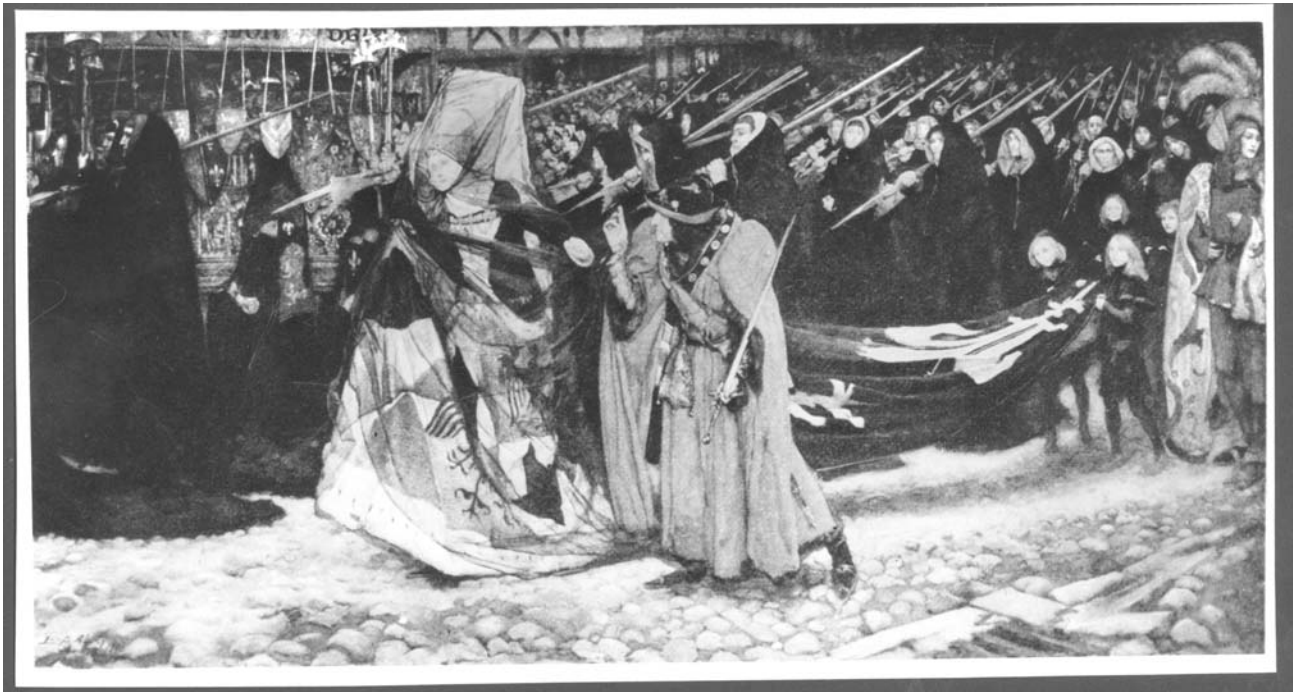


Fig. 1: "Richard, Duke of Gloucester and the Lady Anne", Edwin Austin Abbey
from the etching by L. Flameng

Born in 1852, Edwin Austin Abbey was brought up in Philadelphia, training there as a wood engraver and at the Academy, until he found employment with *Harper's*, publishers of the most famous of American illustrated journals, for whom he continued to work for twenty years. At the age of 26, he settled in England, dividing his time between London and Gloucestershire, and rapidly achieved a considerable reputation as an illustrator and water colourist, much influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites and the English masters of illustration at the time, but bringing his own intense, decorative manner to it. After showing only three paintings at the Royal Academy, he was, with astonishing rapidity, elected to A.R.A., an achievement that owed much to his work on the series of 'Holy Grail Quest' murals, for the Boston Public Library. He was as painstaking in his researches on English 15th and 18th century life as were Poynter and Alma-Tadema on Rome and classical antiquity.

In a letter to his brother of August 1895 ⁽¹⁾, he reveals the inception of his 'Richard' painting, one of his largest early canvases in oils: "I have begun, too, a largish picture 'Richard III and Lady Anne', 8 feet 9 inches by 4 feet 4 inches." (Fig 1)

Working on it steadily throughout the summer, he still

found time for cricket and baseball practice, in the afternoons. His wife's correspondence charts further progress, recalling that on September 28 they "Had a perfectly lovely day — spent the entire day at Westminster Abbey and in the Manuscript Room of the British Museum looking up data for the 'Richard III' picture. Ned is tremendously interested in it" ⁽²⁾ and later that month, "Went to the 'Tower' to look up materials connected with Henry VI and Richard III; but found very little there." ⁽³⁾

The wooing scene from *Richard III* had no painted precedent. Abbey may have gained inspiration and found a point of departure in an illustration by John Gilbert, from a volume of *Staunton's Shakespeare* (1897) (Fig 2) he owned, and a similar version of the scene had also been engraved by Gordon Browne in 1886, for an edition of the play, edited by Sir Henry Irving, with Frank Marshall (published 1890). (Fig 3)

The same basic elements appear in all the works: Lady Anne rejecting the proposal of a fawning Richard, the dead king Henry VI on his bier hung with coats of arms, the black-cloaked halberd-bearing funeral procession, led by an honour-guard displaying heraldic shields on tall poles, and the cobblestone street lined with houses. Abbey altered the relationship between the main characters, transforming Anne's attitude of righteous anger of an



Fig. 2: John Gilbert "Richard III" wood engraving by the brothers Dalziel. From *"The works of Shakespeare" ed. Howard Staunton, Vol 2 (1867)*

avenger, to fleeing victim, and Richard, from kneeling petitioner to aggressive pursuer.

The setting is a cobbled road, lined with half-timbered houses on the route from the Tower to King Henry's burial place in Chertsey. Moving across the picture's background is the funeral cortege of the king, whose armoured corpse appears at the upper left, resting on a bier supported by hooded mourners in black capes, streaming behind, filling the composition at the right and to the rear as far as the eye can see. In the foreground Richard proposes marriage to a furiously resistant Lady Anne, Henry VI's widowed daughter-in-law. At the far right, set off against the sombre crowd, is one of her gentlemen attendants, a dandyish courtier flamboyantly dressed in red and gold brocade. Immediately to the left of him stand four black-clad little pages, bearing her long train. ⁽⁴⁾

Shortly before the moment depicted Anne has heaped curses on Richard, describing how he brutally stabbed to death both her husband, Edward, Prince of Wales, and her father-in-law, King Henry. Undaunted, Richard praises her extravagantly, asserting that he killed them in order to get near her, and offers to let her kill him, or to kill himself, with the unsheathed sword that he holds up in the picture. But instead of plunging it into his breast, as she asks, he proposes marriage, offering her a ring. This is the moment Abbey chooses to illustrate.

Weakened by Richard's flattery and fooled by his declarations of remorse, she goes on to accept his proposal. H.H. Statham noted in his review of the Royal Academy exhibition: 'The point of the picture lies in the vivid realization of Gloster as presented to us by Shakespeare; his face is a most remarkable study of character and



Fig. 3: Gordon Browne, Engraving for the "Henry Irving Shakespeare" vol IV (1896)

expression, as we look at it, the whole result of the scene becomes intelligible; ugly and inviting as he is, he has the power to carry the situation; the woman, in spite of her vigorous action and clenched fist, is already struggling in the toils. Mr Abbey set his mark on that scene for good, and divides the honours with Shakspeare.

The wrangle took place (in the play) after the bier had been set down and the procession stopped by Gloster's imperious order; in the picture the group is in movement and Gloster walks by the lady's side, with better result, no doubt, for the animation of the scene.'

From Mrs Abbey's letters we learn that the model for Anne Neville was suggested to her husband by fellow artist, J. Singer Sargent. "He thinks he knows the very model for the Lady Anne's face, a girl with good colour, who has never sat. He will send her down." ⁽⁵⁾ However, she proved a disappointment, and after painting her daily for a month, he had to make a change. Scraping all he had done, he began again with a new model, this time completing in a single sitting the face as it now is. From his probable source engraving he changed Anne's dress from that of a mourning widow, to a more pictorially splendid one, and added her little pages. The basic design for her costume is derived from *Twelve Designs for the Costume of Shakespeare's Richard the Third* (Fig 4) by J. R. Planché, published in 1830, who gave as his authority for her dress 'an unidentified medieval manuscript' ⁽⁶⁾ Abbey embellished her surcoat with a dazzling



Fig. 4: Anne, Queen of Richard III. From costume design by J. R. Planché (1829)

display of her family's coat of arms and decorated it with gold chains and amulets. However, this attention to detail provided further complications, when the artist discovered that the costume from which he had been working all this time, bore the arms of the wrong branch of her family, so it had to be entirely remade, and painted a second time. He exaggerated the shape of her headdress, a tall butterfly of folded linen, rising from a gold mesh cap. Its astonishing height draws the viewer's attention to her upright carriage, in contrast to Richard's crabbed, hunchback pose.

Costume and settings exert expressive as well as historical and decorative effect, often translating Shakespeare's verbal imagery into visual terms. As Statham pointed out in his review: "Anne's sumptuous costume is stiff with heraldic embroidery, in which she seems to move with difficulty." In other words, she is literally trapped by her genealogy and her place in the social hierarchy, and the costume chosen for her by Abbey drives the point home. She is swathed in a sheer black veil, which she both clutches and pushes against. Since in accepting Richard's marriage proposal she succumbs to machinations that will result in her death, the veil symbolises both mourning and wedding garb, prison and shroud. It also resembles a spider's web trapping a helpless fly — suggesting the lines in the next scene, when another character is warned by Queen Margaret, against trusting Richard: "Why strewst thou sugar on that bottled spider, whose deadly web ensnareth thee about?"⁽⁷⁾ The sewer grate in the right foreground besides Richard serves as an extratextual metaphor, implying his true character.

Abbey also translates the more abstract, rhythmic aspect of Shakespeare's wordplay into pictorial terms. For example, the staccato impact of the halberd-bearing mourners streaming across the background, dressed in identical black garments and differing only in their facial types and small details such as the red or yellow linings of their hoods, embodies the rhetoric of the play. This rhetoric depends upon repetition with minor variation for many of its effects, as in Richard's gloating soliloquy at the end of the scene, in the lines Abbey quoted in the Royal Academy exhibition catalogue: 'Was ever woman in this humour woo'd? Was ever woman in this humour won!'⁽⁸⁾

M. H. Spielmann drew attention to Abbey's debt in the painting of the ranks of halberds to similar treatments in Velasquez's 'Surrender of Breda', Rembrandt's 'Night Watch' and Uccello's 'Rout of San Romano' battle scenes. Yet again, the inclusion of these weapons gave Abbey cause for extensive re-working during the course of painting the picture. By an oversight, he originally painted the halberds point up, until he discovered that for funerals they were always carried inverted, with their heads downwards,

so every one had to be repainted!

Finally completed in March 1896, on Varnishing Day, we hear from Abbey in a letter to his brother: "Poor Millais⁽⁹⁾ who is slowly dying of cancer in his throat, walked round the exhibition — I dare say I shall never see him again. They say my picture has made a hit — which is a gratifying thing in such a big show."⁽¹⁰⁾ Unlike the artist's own modest sentiments, Mrs Abbey's next letter to her mother tells the great news: "May 1st — this has been 'Private View' day. Ned's 'Richard' has been the picture of the year. He has had a perfect ovation . . . he would have had his head turned, if it were possible to turn it, but it is not possible."⁽¹¹⁾

If there had ever been any doubt in the Academy's mind whether it had acted wisely in choosing Abbey as an Associate — and probably there was none — it was instantly dispelled by this contribution, which enchanted everyone, both artist and amateur. Not only was the 'Richard' masterly in execution, but it interpreted the national poet in one of his great ironical moments. The satirical magazine *Punch* in praise of the picture packed so many puns into one paragraph, that it should have been fined for overcrowding: "No. 616, 'RICHARD, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER AND THE LADY ANNE'. Another title: Dick and Anne or the Double Gloucester, who thinks himself quite the cheese, and the lady who has just lost a sovereign." Had the artist needed a line of popular verse, he could have used 'Dick awry! Dick awry! Dock!' For if ever villain ought to have ended in the dock and been found guilty, it was that accomplished scoundrel! Afterwards RICHARD THE THIRD.' A marvellous work by Edwin Austin Abbey A.R.A. This will be the talk of the public. The scene is London, probably in the vicinity of Westminster, the situation being from *Richard the Third* Act 1, Scene 2, and will entitle the American artist to be remembered ever after as 'Westminster Abbey.' This is the picture of the year. Most certainly it is the very Abbeyest of 'Abbey Thoughts'.⁽¹²⁾ *Punch* also brought together in one drawing some of the principals in the various chief pictures of the year at the Academy exhibition, and showed Anne advancing upon the German Kaiser (a stand-in for Richard, due to his withered arm) from Mr Cope's portrait, followed by Mr Joseph Chamberlain, extracted from Mr Sargent's. (Fig 5)

The *Art Journal* likewise lavished praise upon the picture: "Mr Abbey is one of the artistic surprises of the century, an artist who has the faculty of coming suddenly to the front in all sorts of new branches of Art. He has made, this spring, an astonishing success with his picture . . . the wooing of the Duke of Gloucester and the Lady Anne, a success for which he has worked honestly and devotedly. As a piece of composition, of colour



Fig 5: Detail for "A Royal Academy Soirée — the more animated pictures of the year." E. T. Reed 'Punch' cartoon (1896). Centre: Lady Anne from the Abbey painting with (left) Kaiser Wilhem and (right) Joseph Chamberlain M.P.

arrangement, of dramatic, as opposed to theatrical effect, for qualities of earnest observation and careful painting, this canvas deserves praise that can scarcely be exaggerated. In drawing and movement it is admirable, and the audacity of the contrast between the deep, luminous blacks and the vivid reds of the colour scheme is delightful. The picture ranks as one of the greatest of the year, a welcome relief to the commonplaces which too plentifully surround it."

For the *Athenaeum* it was "The most powerful spectacle in the Academy", and even general visitors to the exhibition were moved to record their impressions: "We sat down quietly to study Mr Abbey's most remarkable picture of 'Richard, Duke of Gloucester and the Lady Anne'. The more we looked, the more we studied, the more remarkable the picture appeared to us. The young, angry and yet wicked face under the strange headdress, the nervous clasp of the left hand, while the right seizes the black veil, true to the instinct of some women, who, in the moment of deepest grief, never forget their clothes! Richard, with his winning courtesy and the bow which conceals the defects of his figure, in his red clothes, is a strange contrast to that other figure, which we know, rather than see, lies stiff and cold behind the guards. Historically perhaps, Richard looks a little old, as he was but thirty-five [sic] when killed on Bosworth Field. The guards, the crowd, the varied expressions fading actually away into the canvas, are very fine. The painting reminds one of the old Germans, and yet it is entirely original. Is it not indeed in Art what 'Esmond' is in literature — an old story told in an old manner, and yet without absolute mimicry of anything?"⁽¹³⁾

The 'Richard' was sold before the exhibition to Mr George McCulloch for £1,600, including the copyright, but he afterwards sold these rights for £300, when an

etching was made of it by Leopold Flameng. Though Abbey was dissatisfied with the quality of this, its publication by the Art Union was a tribute not only to the success of the painting itself, but to Abbey as a master in his chosen decorative style and the last of an extraordinary line of Anglo-Americans that began with Haydon and reached its zenith with Whistler and Henry James.

The contemporary impact of Abbey's conceptions of Shakespeare is most vividly demonstrated in their influence on the theatre. Following the triumphant reception of 'Richard, Duke of Gloucester and the Lady Anne', Henry Irving used it as a model for staging the scene in a new production of the play, which opened the following December. (Fig 6) According to his business manager, Bram Stoker, Irving 'recognized a master-hand of scenic purpose' in Abbey's painting and 'tried to realise some of the effect of the great picture' but was unable to achieve an exact recreation because 'it is possible to use in the illusion of a picture, a perspective forbidden on the stage by limited space and the non-compressible actuality of human bodies.'

Abbey's vision also appealed to Irving's successor as the dominant Shakespearean impresario in England, Herbert Beerbohm Tree, who considered re-creating Abbey's 'Trial of Queen Katherine' in his elaborate pro-



Fig. 6: H. C. Sepping Wright: Scene from Irving's production of "Richard II". Illustrated London News, December 26, 1896.

duction of *Henry VIII* in 1910, but later settled on a different staging. The eagerness of these prominent actor-managers to appropriate Abbey's Shakespearean pictures illuminates the common ground shared by painting and the stage in the late nineteenth century. Indeed, in 1898 Abbey 'crossed over' and accepted Irving's invitation to design sets and costumes for his new production of *Richard II*.

Soon after completion of the 'Richard', Abbey accepted a commission to paint one of the panels for the Royal Exchange series of murals in the City of London,

one of the few examples of his work still on show in the capital, (though he later supervised the mural decorations for the House of Lords by other contemporaries), this time portraying an actual event in the reign of the historical Richard III it shows "The Reconciliation of the Skinners and Merchant Taylors' Companies by Lord Mayor Billesden, after a quarrel as to precedence 1484", and once again gave the artist plenty of opportunity to indulge in his love of heraldry and painting fine costumes of rich brocades and silks.

In 1901, a little after exhibiting his last Shakespeare canvas at The Royal Academy, Abbey signed a contract with Harpers to provide seventy drawings for Shakespeare's plays: the *Tragedies and Histories*, having previously covered the *Comedies* for them in the 1880's. The firm envisaged eventually publishing them as a complete illustrated edition of all the plays, to be entitled *Abbey's Shakespeare*. However, due to the intervention of several other time-consuming commissions, chiefly the monumental 'Coronation of Edward VII' (which incorporates more than a hundred individual portraits), and a series of enormous murals for the new state capital at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (still unfinished at his death in 1911), Abbey missed the deadline. The final consequence of the late delivery of the illustrations was severe — the book was never published. Luckily, his work on the project can still be appreciated in the pages of *Harper's Monthly Magazine*.



Fig. 7: "Henry VI and Richard, Duke of Gloucester"
(*Henry VI Pt III Act 5 Sc 6*)
Harper's Monthly Magazine, January 1904

For the 'Henry VI' trilogy, Abbey delivered a number of striking compositions, including another giant panoramic canvas, almost as large as the 'Richard' 'The Penance of Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester'. Another smaller canvas illustrated King Henry and Warwick at the death bed of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, and 'King Henry VI and Richard, Duke of Gloucester' (Fig 7), whilst evocative line drawings, in his favourite medium, pen and ink, were introduced showing King Louis XI of France and the Earl of Warwick, and Henry VI's soliloquy during the battle of Towton.



Fig. 8: "Lady Anne", Harper's

Monthly Magazine, January 1904
For 'The Tragedy of King Richard III' completed in 1903, Abbey's illustrations accompanied a critical commentary by Ernest Rhys, which although naturally devoted to an analysis of the play, nevertheless acknowledges the "encyclopaedic study of the Richard saga by Professor Churchill of Amherst" (*Richard III up to Shakespeare*, George Bosworth Churchill, 1900) with its investigations into the chronicles of Croyland, Rous and Fabyan, which concludes that "Richard III is one of the best examples in all history of a very gradually concocted villain."

Lady Anne makes a return appearance, this time in a delicate line-engraving, again apparelled in the heraldic quarterings of the Montagu 'fusils' (diamonds) and eagle of Monthermer, one section of her complete family's quarterings. (Fig 8) Also in line, is a rarely illustrated scene from Act III, with Gloucester and Buckingham on the walls 'in rotten armour', showing the latter stifling a smile at Richard's hypocritical reaction to the display of Hastings' head: "So dear I lov'd the man, that I must weep". (Fig 9) Lastly, the coronation scene shows an uneasy Richard, denouncing Buckingham: "Thou troublest me; I am not in the vein" (Fig 10), this time a study in watercolour. Although about to desert the newly-made king, it is unlikely that Buckingham would display his Lancastrian allegiance so much, as to publicly wear their famous livery collar of S's, as the artist depicts. One small error that, for once, escaped the eagle eye of Abbey on this occasion.



Fig. 9: "Buckingham and Gloucester on the walls" (Richard III, Act III, Sc 5) Harper's Monthly Magazine January 1904

Notes and References:-

- (1) 'Edwin Austin Abbey The Record of his Life and Work' E.V. Lucas 2 vols (1921) vol II p. 285
- (2) Ibid. p. 286
- (3) Ibid. p. 288
- (4) Mistakenly believed to be 'the two little princes, also doomed to die under Richard's hand' by the authors of the 1974 Exhibition Catalogue of Abbey's works: Yale University Art Gallery (1973) p. 40
- (5) Lucas op. cit. pp. 286-7
- (6) Probably the figure of Anne in the College of Arms Latin copy of 'The Rous Roll'
- (7) 'Richard III' Act I scene 3
- (8) 'Richard III' Act I scene 2



Fig. 10: "King Richard and Buckingham" (Richard III, Act IV, Sc 11) Harper's Monthly Magazine January 1904

- (9) Sir John Everett Millais, who had, of course, experienced similar success in 1878 with his work 'The Princes in the Tower', still the most widely reproduced painting of the subject. See 'On Images of the Princes in the Tower' Peter A. Hancock, 'Ricardian Register' Spring 2005 pp. 4-18
- (10) Lucas op. cit. p. 296
- (11) Ibid. p. 296
- (12) PUNCH, or The London Charivari May 9 1896 pp. 226-7
- (13) 'Pot-pourri from a Surrey garden' Mrs C.W. Earle (1897) p. 293. I am grateful to Mary O'Regan of the Yorkshire Branch for this reference.

Most of Abbey's paintings and associated work, including the 'Richard and Anne' now from the 'Edwin Austin Abbey Collection' at Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut. Until recently, patrons of the ground floor restaurant "Le Cirque 2000", at the Trump Tower, Madison Avenue, New York, would have had the opportunity to dine beneath a full-size replica of the painting, situated above an ornate fireplace, as part of the décor. Unfortunately, this has now been closed since January last year, but is due to open at a new



Fig. 11: An idea of the scale of the painting can be gained from this picture of Isolde Wigram (Vice-Chairman and former Society Secretary) on her visit to the 1974 Exhibition, when in New York. (Photo by the late USA Chairman, William Hogarth)

location in 2006 (information kindly communicated by Dave Luitweiler), so local members are encouraged to keep a look out for further developments.

My thanks to Pam Benstead (Worcestershire Branch UK), Linda Miller, Iowa, Mary O'Regan (Yorkshire Branch UK) and Dave Luitweiler for assistance with this article.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS – EXECUTIVE BOARD

In October, three members of the elected board – Bonnie Battaglia, Jacqueline Bloomquist, and Laura Blanchard — will have completed their second terms in their elected office and need to be rotated off these positions.

Shown below is the full slate of officers elected at the 2004 AGM, as well as the section of the bylaws relating to nominations. Please note that candidates for Chair must have specific previous service to the Branch.

At the last Board meeting, the following members volunteered to serve on the nominating committee: Peggy Allen, Laura Blanchard, and Maria Torres. (No member of the committee, of course, can be nominated for board service.)

Board service is a wonderful way to get more familiar with the workings of the American Branch and to help advances its aims. Nominations will be accepted from February 1 through May 15, in accordance with the by-laws. If you would like to nominate yourself or any other member, feel free to contact any member of the nominating committee. We're all listed in the *Ricardian Register*.

Elections, 2004

Chair: Bonnie Battaglia (second term)

Vice Chair: Jacqueline Bloomquist (second term)

Membership Chair: Pamela J. Butler (first term)

Recording Secretary: Laura Blanchard (second term)

Treasurer: Maria Elena Torres (first term)

BYLAWS (Ratified 2002) – officers and nominations.

Article V- Officers

5.1. Eligibility: Any member in good standing, who is eighteen (18) years of age or older, shall be eligible to hold any office in the American Branch or to serve upon any committee.

5.1.1. A candidate for Chairman shall have served previously as:

- a. An officer or member of the Executive Board or
- b. The president of a chapter with at least ten (10) members , or
- c. Chairman of a standing committee, and must be
- d. A member of the American Branch for at least three (3) years continuously prior to nomination.

5.1.2. All prospective officers cannot be in arrears of membership dues or other financial obligations on

February 1st of the year in which the elections is to be held.

5.2. Officers: The Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, the Secretary, the Membership Chairman and the Treasurer of the Executive Board shall be elected by the membership by proxy ballots sent from the chairman of the Nominating Committee to the members via first class mail at least six (6) weeks prior to the AGM.

5.2.1. Officers shall serve for two years from the date of their election.

5.2.2. No officer shall be eligible to serve in any one office for more than four (4) consecutive years.

5.2.3. Appointed Officers: The Chairman and the Executive Board of Directors appoint other officers and Committee Chairmen as needed or as appropriate. (See 7.2.)

5.3. Nomination: Nominations are made with the prior or subsequent written consent of the nominee, either:

(a) By a petition or petitions signed by a total of no fewer than ten (10) members in good standing, or by E-mailed agreement to a petition, or

(b) By the president and secretary of a chapter or chapters with the consent of the members, or

(c) By the Executive Board of Directors , or

(d) By the Nominating Committee.

5.3.1. Nominating Committee: The Executive Board appoints a Committee of at least two persons for the purpose of selecting nominees. The Committee is appointed yearly by February 1. Nominations may be accepted from February 1st through May 15th. (See 6.7.)

5.3.2. Chapter Nominations: A chapter or a signed petition may nominate only one person for each officer being elected.

5.3.3. Deadline for Nominations : All nominations are to be selected by the Chairman of the Nominating Committee by July 1st.

5.4. Honorary Officers: The Executive Board shall have the power to appoint Honorary Officers for the American Branch.

5.5. Vacancies: A vacancy which occurs in any office following the AGM will be filled by appointment of the Executive Board.

5.6. Suspension from Office. Any elected or appointed officer may have his authority suspended by the Executive Board for cause, including (but not limited to) misconduct in office, neglect of or inattention to official duty

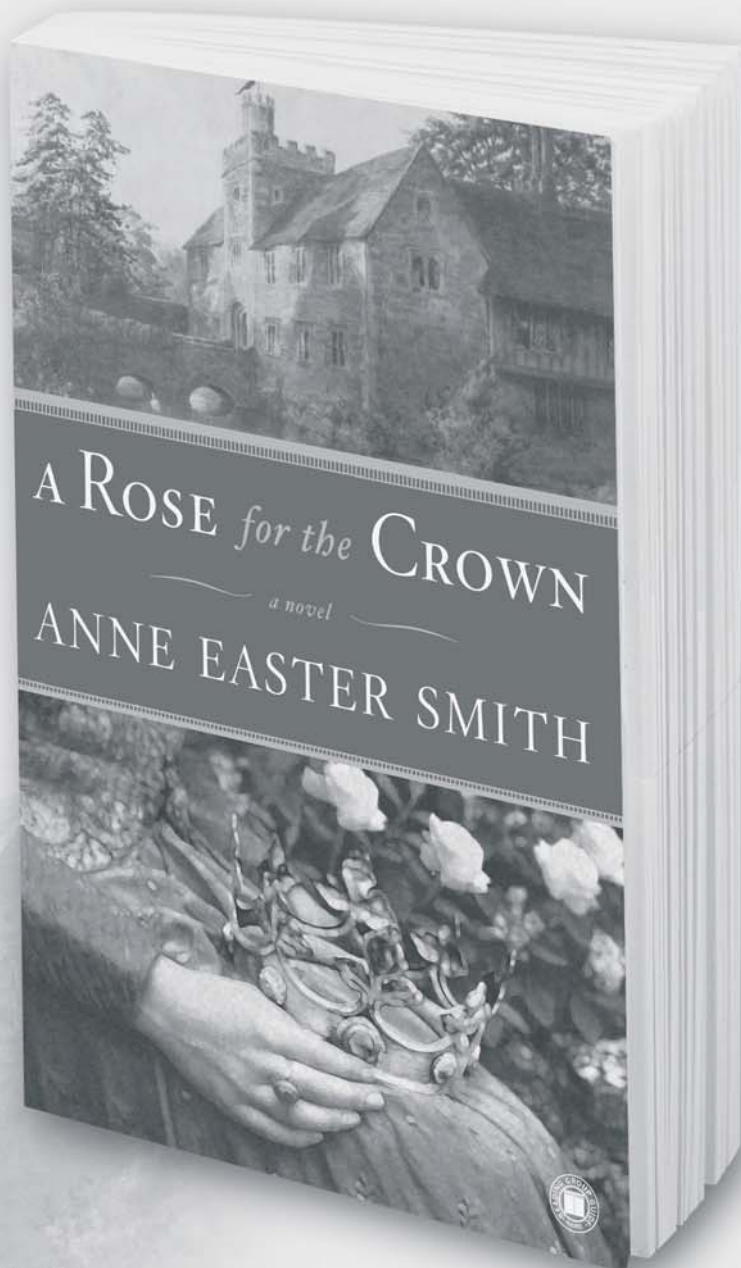
A vibrant, moving novel from a new voice in historical fiction.

**An unlikely heroine...
A misunderstood king...
A forgotten love.**

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— *Kirkus Reviews*

“A vibrant story full of careful historical detail and well-developed characters. Highly recommended.”
— *Library Journal*



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AN INVITATION TO THE SOCIETY'S AGM IN YORK

As you are all doubtless aware, 2006 sees the Society "Celebrating 50 years". It is 50 years since the Fellowship of the White Boar was refounded as the Richard III Society and as part of the celebration, a programme of special events has been put together, with a couple of study days, a meeting with our patron, HRH The Duke of Gloucester, as guest, and a weekend in York which will incorporate our AGM.

What may be less well known is that, unlike the event held by you, our transatlantic cousins, the main Society AGM has always been a one day affair, usually held in London. However, for this celebratory year, all that is going to change, and on behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to extend an invitation to all members, and especially those living outside the UK, to join us in York for a three day celebration beginning in the evening of Friday, 29th September and finishing on Sunday afternoon.

The programme for the weekend is as follows:

Friday 29 September

To set the weekend going, we will have a lecture in the evening from Professor Tony Pollard. The venue is the Hospitium, a fourteenth century building in the Museum gardens, and the speaker is an old friend of the Society. After the meeting, we hope to retire to a pub for refreshments and "merry meetings".

Saturday 30 September

We have hired the Merchant Adventurers' Hall for the whole of day and the AGM will take place during the late morning. Before and after we will have a range of attractions with stalls selling a variety of things, including second-hand books, as well as workshops on such themes as palaeography, Latin, music and costume. There will also be an exhibition of the entries for the Society's Schools Competition. Lunch will be available in the hall and in the afternoon, there will be an opportunity for members to attend private tours of the Minster, to include the Treasury.

The day will end with a banquet in the Merchant Adventurers' Hall. Dress for this will be formal, ie black tie, though members may wear medieval costume if they so wish. The menu will not be medieval, by the way, and those wanting a vegetarian option should let us know when they book.

Sunday 1 October

Although this day's events will be in Barley Hall for the most part, we are trying to arrange for a short service of thanksgiving to be held in York Minster in the morning. Barley Hall is a medieval house that is being restored as it might have been in the fifteenth century, and we are planning a range of activities. Various craftspeople will display and sell their wares, and a re-enactment group will provide 'living history' displays, re-creating some of the authentic atmosphere of fifteenth-century life in this very special place.

We are asking people to book early so that we have an idea of how many are coming and whether events will be viable. There are booking forms in the Winter 2005 edition of the Ricardian Bulletin. You will see that we are asking for deposits, too. With so many events on offer, this is also a way to help members spread the costs, though if you wish to pay for it all in one go, we won't object!

For those of you who are wondering how best to pay and who don't have any sterling about you, we are more than happy to take Mastercard and Visa credit (charge) cards. Send your details by post to Mrs Jacqui Emerson at 5 Ripon Drive, Wistaston, Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 6SJ, UK. Although deadlines have been given, they are very elastic, especially for those living beyond our shores. If you want to be sure of your place and are concerned about the postal services, send me an e-mail (ptstone@btinternet.com) and I will pass on your message to Jacqui, telling her that your letter is on its way.

Let us know, too, if you would like contact details for the Tourist Board in York. Some of you may already have a favourite hotel in that fair city, but others may need help in finding accommodation, and the Tourist Board can supply a list.

We are sure that this will be a great Society occasion, one to remember for the next fifty years – "I should live so long!" – and it will be all the better for seeing as many of our overseas members as can possibly make it. I look forward to meeting and greeting you all. If you can come, make yourselves known to me during the weekend – it's always good to put faces to names. I promise you all a warm and friendly welcome.

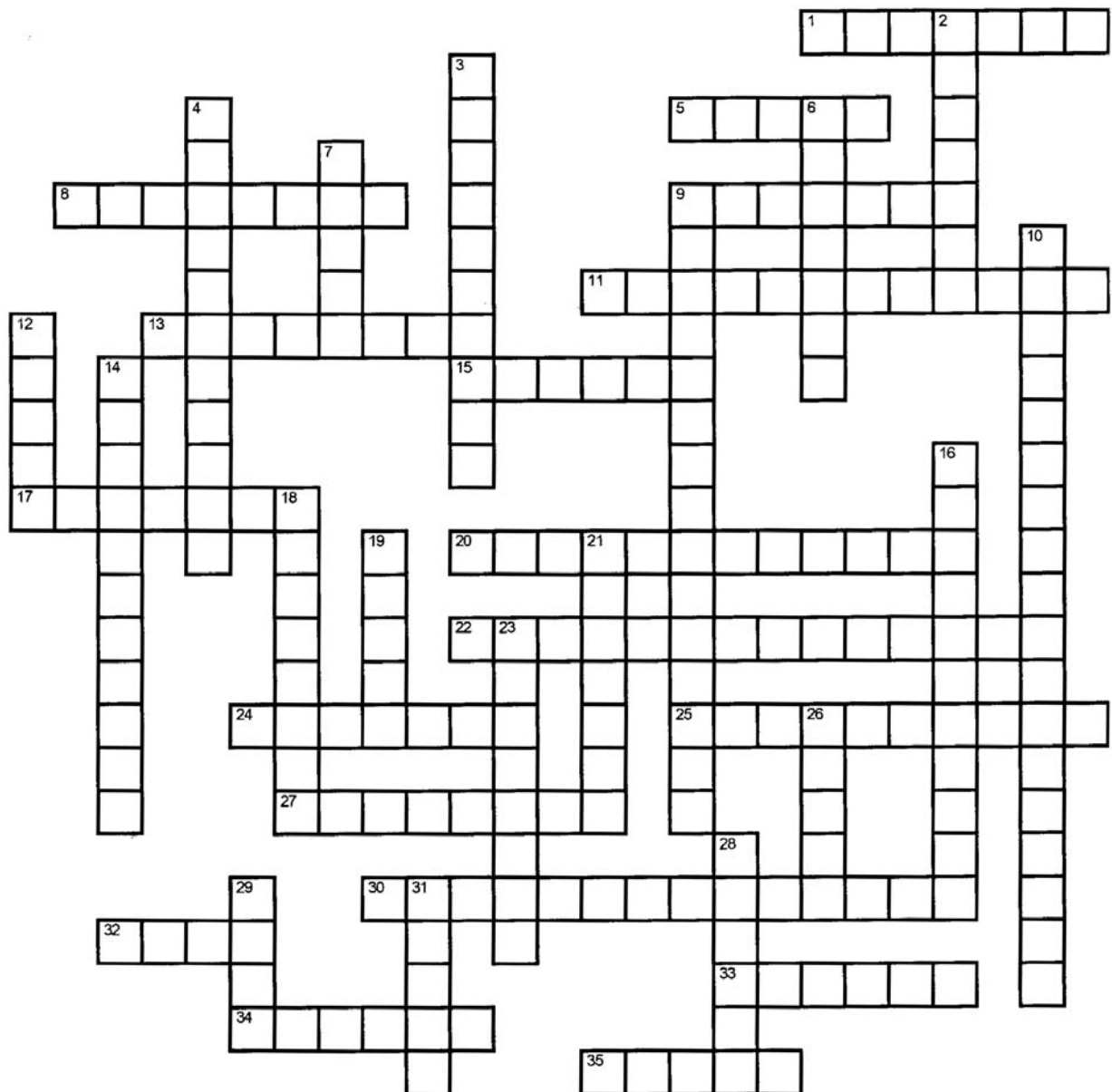
Thank you.

Phil Stone
Chairman

HIGH (AND LOW) FINANCE

Terms in this puzzle focus on the economy and money.

The Ricardian Puzzlers are Charlie Jordan, Lorraine Pickering, Marion Davis, and Nancy Northcott. The Ricardian crossword puzzles are intended as a fun method of learning about Richard and his life and times. Each puzzle will have a theme and clues are drawn from widely available sources. Suggestions are welcomed; please send comments to Charlie at charlie.jordan@earthlink.net.



Answers on page 21

Across

1. Commynes' Memoirs say that _____ had such a bad reputation for harsh taxation that men in neighboring regions fought extra hard to avoid falling under his control.
5. Unit of weight. As an indication of the value of money at Richard's coronation, a _____ of sugar cost 6.5 "d."
8. This king's failure to repay his loans forced a Medici bank to close its London branch in 1472. He was _____.
9. During the reign of _____ the Exchequer worked so slowly that it owed Duke Richard of York over 80,000 pounds for his service in France and Ireland and the soldiers at Calais 65,000 pounds in back wages.
11. Richard III abolished these.
13. This king earned a reputation for rapacity and avarice by demanding outrageously high bonds from his subjects. He was _____.
15. The Company of the _____ controlled imports/exports of wool through Calais.
17. For Richard's coronation, eggs were purchased at 10 "d" per _____.
20. The unit of the royal household superseded the Exchequer under Edward IV as chief financial office.
22. This powerful duke failed to repay huge loans he received from a Medici bank in Bruges. He was _____.
24. The king generally relied upon revenue from royal estates and _____ duties.
25. The 16-year old Duke of _____ asked a supporter to lend him a(n) hundred pounds of money, which he promised to repay by the next Easter.
27. In references to coins, the "d" in 1 p/2 s/ 3d refers to penny or pence; the "d" is an abbreviation of _____.
30. _____ was so troubled by her brother's failure to complete payments on her dowry that she left 115,000 crowns in her will to pay the debt.
32. One of England's most profitable exports became a cause of trade wars between England, Burgundy, and Florence. This export was _____.
33. Richard minted pennies inscribed "RICARD DEI GRA REX ANGL" at London, York, and _____.
34. A dealer or merchant of fine fabrics.
35. When he was king, Richard III raised money with _____.

Down

2. Richard III enacted laws to control _____ merchants.
3. Edward IV employed _____ in his royal mints in an effort to increase his money supply.
4. ...was in sole charge of minting English gold coinage from July 17, 1483.
6. Richard III's loyal supporter, the Duke of _____, was an unusually good money manager and was seldom short of cash, unlike many of his contemporaries.
7. In the Treaty of Picquigny, Louis XI agreed to pay Edward IV 75,000 crowns plus a yearly pension of _____ thousand crowns.
9. Edward IV granted this merchant group "a certain court situated in London, called the Staelhoeff..."
10. Someone who risked his or her money in overseas trade.
12. Circa early-mid 1400s, the export of wool diminished, replaced by the export of _____.
14. In 1464, this "alien" man acted as one of Edward IV's agents in selling wool.
16. Named for Henry VII's chancellor, this unpopular fund-raising tactic suggests devils wielding sharp instruments.
18. In 1464/65, Edward IV _____ coinage by increasing its nominal value without increasing the amount of alloy in the coins.
19. 4 pence.
21. One Medici bank refused loans to _____, because their courts didn't uphold lenders' claims when borrowers defaulted.
23. Lord _____, was one of many English nobles who accepted a pension from the king of France, but he refused to give the French steward the receipt he asked for.
26. Although the medieval Church banned this practice, popes and their bankers evaded the ban by calling interest payments "gifts."
28. Henry VI borrowed £30, 000 between 1448-1460 from "fathers" of this city: _____.
29. One of the most important industrial products of its time," necessary for dyeing cloth and processing leather. The Pope and his Medici bankers tried to create a monopoly by threatening to excommunicate anyone who bought from competitors. This product was _____.
31. Replaced the "rose noble" circa 1470s and valued at 6s 8d.

SCHALLEK AWARDS

Sharon Michalove

Five awards of \$2000 each were awarded.

- Katherine Olsen. Her project was on "Christianity in Wales before the Reformation."
- Jessica Barr: "Revelation and Knowledge in Visionary and Dream Vision Literature of the Later Middle Ages"
- James T. Bennett: "Urban Politics and Political Ideology on the Abbatial Estates of Bury St. Edmunds and St. Albans in the Later Middle Ages"

- Elizabeth Harper: "Gift-giving, Economics, and Monetary Language in Late Medieval English Vernacular Writings"
- Elizabeth Williamsen: "Christian Representations of Islam and the Quest for Collective Identity in the Middle English Charlemagne Romances"
- Michael Johnston: "The Social Practice of Middle English Romance: Three Late Medieval Collectors"

A FOND FAREWELL: MORRIS MCGEE

Carole Rike

As our membership waxes and wanes, many of our past leaders pass relatively un-noticed from among us. New members assume leadership or committee positions, often without knowing who has preceded them.

We all noticed when we learned Morris had left us, but a silence followed in this stranded publication. I noticed, but turned away — not wanting to entertain the thought that this delightful person was gone from us, forever.

I met Morris McGee in New York City in 1985 and came to admire and treasure him as the years passed. He had been elected to the position of Vice Chair. I had been elected to the position of Treasurer. Together with Mary Jane Battaglia, Secretary, we found ourselves in the unique position of serving on the board of a Society which was not only in open rebellion among a portion of the membership, but missing a Chairman. Our Chairman didn't resign — she simply disappeared.

For the balance of our term, Morris acted as Chairman in her stead, not a position he had sought and certainly not an easy one in those frenetic days. Under his leadership, we were able to restore some of the member services which had fallen into disarray, as well as develop new ones. After four years, he graciously moved aside for those who followed, and continued to root us on from his home in Montclair, New Jersey.

A member of the Society since 1972, Morris served as the first Chair of the Schallek Scholarship Committee. Known affectionately as "Sam" to his friends (from a mining song about Sourdough Sam McGee), he was praised in a 1992 *Register* by Dr. Charles T. Wood, now also sadly gone from us, for his insistence that literature and art students receive fellowships as well as those engaged in the history of the period. According to Dr.



Wood, "He made his decisions stick too, and not just because they were those of a no-nonsense Marine. Rather, he made them acceptable with telling quotes from his own literary creation, the endless tale of a Yorkist survivor in Tudor times that had us much too doubled up with laughter to protest. And, with the passage of time, even we historians can now see that his decisions were eminently correct."

Morris served in World War II and returned for the Korean conflict, receiving the wounds that left him wheelchair bound for the rest of his life. He was Professor Emeritus at Montclair State University, where he delighted students with his creative interpretations of Shakespeare, forming the Mighty McGee ArtPlayers who performed Shakespeare's plays in one-hour versions. In addition to English literature, he also taught creative writing and penned several alternative histories published in various anthologies.

Morris traveled extensively to England (His motto: "Have wheelchair, will travel!") and visited every site listed in the *Ricardian Britian*. An inveterate Irishman with an endless supply of slightly-naughty limericks, he claimed to have been a Viking in a prior life, but his wit and good cheer marked him as Irish in the very best sense of the term.

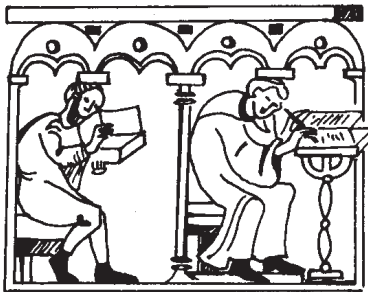
He met his wife of forty-seven years, Blanche, during his recuperation from his "encounter with a guy with a burp gun." Blanche, a Navy nurse, describes their first encounter. Looking up from his bed, he exclaimed, "My, aren't you a beautiful redhead!" After a pause, he continued, "I'm going to marry you." Seven years later he did.

Their son, Paul, goes each Sunday to visit his dad. On a recent Sunday evening, she asked if he had a nice visit with his father, and Paul responded, "No, he wasn't there." "He wasn't there? That's not possible. You know your dad is at the mausoleum!" Paul re-assured her, "Yes, I know, but this week he left me a note. He was out with two twenty-year old redheads."

And doubtless charming them as well!

In Memory of Morris G. McGee:
An Endowed Fund to Provide Honoraria for Our Annual General Meeting Speaker
Richard III Society, Inc.

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RICARDIAN READING

Myrna Smith

Most books reviewed here can be purchased at www.r3.org/sales.

THEREBY HANGS A.....

📖 *Great Tales From English History: Joan of Arc, the Princes in the Tower, Bloody Mary, Oliver Cromwell, Sir Isaac Newton and More* – Robert Lacey – Little, Brown & Company, NY 2004

An Alfred-and-the-cakes sort of history, except that it doesn't pretend to be a formal history book, and doesn't go back that far. The period covered is approximately 1387 – 1689. Still, it does have more serious pretensions. The jacket blurb speaks of the “unstoppable movement toward intellectual and political freedom” during that period. Sometimes this is a little hard to see. Lacey takes the conventional line, not just as regards Richard, but pretty consistently. This may serve as a way to get young people interested in history, but wouldn't the truth work just as well, if not better?

— m.s.

📖 *The Archer's Tale* – Bernard Cornwell, HarperCollins, NY, 2001

The archer is Thomas of Hookton, the illegitimate but acknowledged son of a mad priest. The priest, Father Ralph, speaks the Norman French of English nobility in 1342 and wants his son to be Oxford-educated. Thomas' ambition is to be an archer. He has made a bow and practices in secret. Hookton, a small village near the Dorset coast, has a treasure. Hung in the rafters of the tiny church is an ancient, huge lance tipped with a silver blade, the very lance, tradition says, used by St. George to kill the dragon. On the silver blade is a crest of a yale, a little-known mythical beast, holding a cup.

The story begins with a raid by French pirates on the village, with utter devastation. Thomas escapes and finds his bow and arrow. He fires arrows on the retiring pirates, loaded with plunder, human and material. They carry with them the object of the raid, the lance of St. George. Thomas finds his dying father, who tells him that his cousin led the raid and stole the lance. Thomas promises to bring the lance back home.

After several exciting adventures in France, as an archer for the Earl of Northampton, Thomas seizes the lance on the field at Crecy, but his cousin escapes. The broken lance is promised a place in Westminster Abbey. The escape of the cousin, who may or may not possess

the Holy Grail, leaves the opening for a second book.

Thomas is an appealing character. He is young, handsome, brave, and unstintingly honorable. All of the characters are finely drawn and convincing. The battle scenes, especially Crecy, are very vivid and historically accurate. I look forward to meeting Thomas of Hookton, English archer, again.

— Dale Summers, TX

📖 *The Clerk's Tale* – Margaret Fraser, Berkley Prime Crime, NY 2002

The first thing I noticed after my initial delight at finding a new Fraser novel was the dedication:

To Leslie, who said, "You can't die. Who else would make me laugh the way you do?" I didn't die, so here's another book.

It is, I think, an indication that Margaret Fraser escaped a mortal illness. If “Leslie” kept her alive, I'm grateful, as are her many fans.

The clerk is Master Gruesby, a small, nondescript, easily unnoticed man. His personality and looks make him an excellent observer. The year is 1446, six years before Richard's birth and his father's bid for the throne. Even in the cloister of St Frideswide, there is talk of the rise of the Earl, now Marquis of Suffolk, to influence over the king. The struggle between Suffolk and Lord Lovell for power underlies the plot. The book has three murders, three murderers, adultery and illegitimacy. The first murder victim is Master Monfort, crowner and escheator, with whom Frevisse has had unpleasant encounters. His loss is of no great grief to anyone and a source of joy to his wife. His son, Christopher, now crowner in his father's stead, is a very different man. He asks for Frevisse's assistance in solving the murder. As that crime unravels, the second victim, a lovely young girl, a true innocent, is found dead. No one mourns the third victim, her violent death being an act of simple justice.

The mystery is complicated and satisfying. Frevisse has grown spiritually. Her impatience has receded and her compassion and her control over her own thoughts have deepened.

Since Frevisse is cousin to Alice, wife of the Marquis

of Suffolk and soon to be Duchess of Suffolk, perhaps further books could take us into the struggle for the throne, including Richard, Duke of York.

— Dale Summers, TX

More books which, though they might not have the word “tale” in their titles, are tales of various sorts:

A Tale Of Many Cities

📖 *The Dictionary Of Imaginary Places* – Alberto Manguel & Gianni Guadalupi, Illustrated by Graham Greenfield, maps and charts by James Cook, Harcourt Inc. , Florida, 1999 (original edition published in 1980)

Not only a dictionary, this is a gazetteer and encyclopedia of all such imaginary places, from single buildings to entire continents. The authors have very specific criteria for the entries: no heavens or hells, no places in the future. Pseudonymous places, such as Hardy’s Wessex and Falukner’s Yoknapatawpha are also eliminated. A number of other places are in what might be called gray areas. Why include Crusoe’s Island, based on historical fact, and not Watership Down, for example? The authors’ reasoning is that the latter, or places very similar to it, may be easily seen by ordinary mortals, while Crusoe’s Island has a reality separate from the real reality. Perhaps on the same principle, Prester John’s realm is not recorded, although the Land of Cockaigne is. In any case, selections for a guidebook must of necessity be subjective. It should also be noted that the authors are European, and thus have included many areas little known to North Americans, who will enjoy broadening their horizons.

This would be a useful compendium for the adventurous traveler, advising him or her on what to take for the journey:

Mild summers, harsh winters, pleasant springs and sunny autumns can all be found at the same time in the different regions of Antangil, so that a traveler visiting the kingdom at any time...should be properly dressed for all seasons. (Except for the “mild summers” part, this could be Texas!)

... and what places to avoid: “... male travelers may wish to avoid the Province of the Viragos... here at one time women held all the power and men were held as slaves.” The flora, fauna, art and architecture (if any) of the various realms are duly described. The reader will also be enabled to discriminate between places with the same name, such as the state of Indiana and the legendary Indiana, and Liberia and Liberia.

It is not known which of these places the authors have visited, but they quote copiously from the works of earlier explorers/reporters, such as Baum, Tolkien, Burroughs, and E. Nesbit, among others. Thomas More is

mentioned as the geographer of several countries besides Utopia, among them Tallstoria. The illustrators also deserve much credit, whether they are copyists or originators. All illustrations and maps are in black and white, woodcut style.

The one drawback to this guide is that it is not pocket size, running to 731 pages of text.

— m.s.

The Gardener's Tale

📖 *Flowers In Medieval Manuscripts* – Celia Fisher, The British Library, London, 2004

All the magnificent illuminated manuscripts depicted in Celia Fisher’s illuminating 63-page book are from the British Library collections. As most of us are not able to run in and take a look at the originals there, this 7” x 14 ½” paperback will give us a feast for the eyes and food for thought. There is at least one illustration per page, and the reproduction is excellent, giving a good idea of how vibrant the colors must still be in the originals. Fisher traces floral illustration from around 1300 to its full flowering (excuse the pun) in our period — late 15th and early 16th century.

Using specific examples, Fisher explores the symbolism of flowers used in medieval illustrations and texts: pagan and Christian, medicinal and culinary. Some names of flowers are linked to birds: cranesbill, hawkweed, celandine (a Greek word for swallow), and Fisher postulates that flight was connected to the medieval idea of spirit and therefore these flowers appear regularly in prayer books. She points out the difference between flowers that surround a page of text and those that surround an illustration or miniature. Sometimes the flowers and vines meander through the text, creating a bond between the two. Those that surround a miniature may have been chosen to match colors in the illustration or geometrical patterns that are complementary. Blue and white flowers surrounding an illustration of the Virgin were symbolic of her purity, for example. One of my favorite pages is from a Treatise on Vices (late 14th century Italian). The two-columned page has a red-flowered vine growing from the bottom, up through the space between the columns, and spreading branches through the text. Around the edges, larger than life, are all manner of ugly insects — scorpions, fleas, beetles, spiders — one even eating a fly — and other horrid-looking bugs. Fisher writes: “The skill with which these creepy-crawlies have been observed renders them delightful. Yet, they also have a threatening aspect... Cocharelli (the author) used it to teach his children, it was necessary that these creatures and plants were convincingly real.”

Fisher’s narrative is a little dry but is filled with fascinating tidbits: Did you know that it was Edmund of

Lancaster, brother to Edward I, who first took the red rose as his emblem, for example. And the colorful glossy pages invite the reader to find out more about each illustration chosen.

— Ann Easter Smith

The Printer's Tale

 *To The Tower Born* – Robin Maxwell, William Morrow, NY, 2005

To The Tower Born starts off promisingly: Nell Caxton, daughter of the printer William Caxton, comes to the court of King Henry VII to visit her dear friend Queen Elizabeth (“Bessie” to her friends). Asked by young prince Harry about the deaths of the Princes in the tower, Nell and Bessie determine to tell him the truth. The story that follows is an intriguing theory as to the fate of the Princes, with a dramatic climax.

Unfortunately, Maxwell’s imaginative plotting is outweighed by the flaws in this novel. Maxwell doesn’t trust the reader to discern character; instead, we are told in no uncertain terms what to think. Henry Tudor is a “dreadful man.” Margaret Beaufort is “as fearsome as Saint George’s dragon.” William Caxton, on the other hand, is “loved by everyone in the royal family.” Most of the novel’s characterization stays firmly within such black-or-white terms: Elizabeth Woodville, for instance, having been characterized as “selfish and self-serving,” is not allowed a trace of maternal feeling. (Richard III is one of the few complex characters, at least by comparison, but he makes only a few appearances.) Nell and Bessie’s friendship is presented in a gushing manner reminiscent of a Victorian schoolgirl novel.

Giving readers unfamiliar with the Wars of the Roses the information they need to know to make sense of events is a formidable challenge for historical novelists. For someone with several novels to her credit, Maxwell handles this task awkwardly. Nell and Bessie, who have been close friends for years, are forced on several occasions to recite recent bits of Plantagenet family history to each other for the sake of updating the reader. On another occasion, Lord Hastings finds it necessary to tell Elizabeth Woodville that Stillington is the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

The most serious problem with *To The Tower Born*, however, is its many implausibilities. All of the novel’s sympathetic characters hold thoroughly modern attitudes: they’re appalled by arranged marriages, see nothing untoward when a member of the highest nobility proposes to a tradesman’s daughter, and regard women as the equals of men. A loving father accepts his daughter’s involvement with a married man with perfect equanimity. Bessie habitually speaks to her mother in a disrespectful manner that would be intolerable even to a

21st century parent — and would certainly be so to Elizabeth Woodville. Edward IV allows Anthony Woodville to hire a young woman as a Latin tutor to Prince Edward. Margaret Beaufort hires the same young woman as her correspondence secretary and, with no particular reason to trust her, makes her privy to her treasonous schemes. Taken together, these improbabilities were simply too much for this reader.


Maxwell’s style is highly readable, and the story is fast-paced. Given its flaws, however, this novel will be enjoyed best by those who know little about the period it covers.

— Susan Higginbotham

(For further discussion of this novel, consult the Society’s web site.)

The Actor's Tale

 *A Play Of Isaac*– Margaret Frazer, Berkley Prime Crime, pb, NY 2004

 *A Play Of dux moraud* – Margaret Frazer, Berkley Prime Crime, pb, NY 2005

Margaret Frazer is, I am happy to report, alive and well — well enough, at any rate, to start a new series. This features a character who appeared in one of the earlier books of the Sister Frevisse series; *The Servant's Tale*, I think. Sister Frevisse is mentioned in passing in this story, which features the actor Joliffe (last name varies) and his troupe. This consists of three men, a boy, and a wardrobe mistress. In spite of their lack of numbers, they manage to stage a variety of plays, but it is a struggle. Ms. Frazer takes us into the day-by-day lives of the players, showing how they adjusted to their circumstances, as well as the settings in which they find themselves. This fills in the time until the mystery really gets started, but by no means reads as filler. We learn very little about Joliffe’s background, though; only that he was a student at Oxford.

In *Isaac*, the troupe comes to Oxford to take part in the Corpus Christi Festival, and manage to get themselves invited to entertain at the home of a wealthy merchant, much to the glee of the leader of the troupe, Basset: “We’ve fallen into cream up to our hips!” His fellow actors can only agree. But all does not go that smoothly. Basset, among others, has a secret past. The merchant’s ward, who is what we would call now a Down’s Syndrome child — except he is an adult — is fascinated by the actors and spends a lot of time in their company. They are kind to him, but find themselves involved more than they would wish in the family dynamic. This helps Joliffe to solve the murder when it does occur. Having attracted the attention of Lord Lovell, they now have a wealthy patron.

Having a patron, of course, means you are hard put to

turn down any of his “requests.” Lord Lovell has an assignment for his actors. In *Dux Moraud*, he sends them to the home of a vassal of his, Sir Edmund Deneby, ostensibly to perform at the wedding feast of Sir Edmund’s daughter, but covertly to keep an eye on the household. He has no specific complaint, but just has the feeling that something is not right. Once settled in at the manor, Joliffe begins to wonder if Lord Lovell was exaggerating, as all seems perfectly normal. Of course, this situation doesn’t last. In this story, they augment their number by taking on another boy player — another case of not being able to turn down a patron. He does work out well, and it’s interesting to follow his training.

Since the protagonist in these novels is an actor and not a nun, the author is able to put in a little more romantic/sexual interest than in her other series. Not much more, though. Joliffe’s duties as script writer/doctor, stage manager, and detective, as well as actor, don’t leave him much time for outside activities. The reader with a little spare time will find a pleasant way to spend it in the company of Joliffe and his company of actors.

— *m.s.*

A Puppy's Tale

 *Casanova's Parrot And Other Tales of the Famous and Their Pets* – Mark Bryant, Carroll & Graf, NY 2002

This covers some of the feathered and furry companions of the great and good (or not so), including royalty, poets, figures in entertainment, art & fashion, and miscellaneous. Richard III’s White Surrey is here, though strictly speaking a war charger was not a pet. Did you know that Tsar Peter I (The Great), 6’7”, owned a miniature Italian greyhound named Finette? Or that tabby cats (the striped ones) were unknown in England before the 1630s? The original Olde English moggy was black and white. And the only saint known to have kept a cat was St. Jerome. Which brings us to . . .

Moral Tales

 *When The Saints Go Marching Out* – Charles Merrill Smith, Doubleday & Company, Garden City, NY 1969

An irreverent hagiography (isn’t that an oxymoron?) of Jerome and his fellows, including a brief recounting of the known facts of their lives and works (sometimes pretty scant) and the lessons to be learned therefrom. A sample:

St. Meinrad of Swabia: St Meinrad lived for a while on one of the peaks of Mt. Etzel, but later he went off to live in the depths of the forest of Sihl, where some bandits, who thought he had a hidden treasure, killed him.


The Lesson: If you act secretive, don’t be surprised if people think you have a secret.

The author also includes a section on persons who don’t qualify for sainthood, not being R.C., but who shouldn’t be overlooked. He calls them “Stalwart Christians,” among them Henry VIII and the translators of the King James Bible, an odd lot (in the sense of mixed, and sometimes in other senses too).

This has been out of print for some time, but may perhaps be found second-hand. I came across a copy in our local small-town library, which never throws anything away!

— *m.s.*

A Nursery Tale

 *The Big Over Easy* – Jasper Fforde, The Penguin Group, NY, 2005

This is a spin-off from another series, Mr. Fforde’s Thursday Next stories. It’s a police procedural about life and crime in the Nursery Crimes division. DCI Jack Spratt and rookie Mary Mary are on the case of Humpty Dumpty. Did he fall or was he pushed? Or was it suicide? A NCD sketch is reproduced on the back dust jacket to help readers try to outguess the detectives.. Trust me, they won’t.

The detecting goes on against the background of intra-departmental politics and Jack’s family life. He’s 44 years old, but his mother, a redoubtable and creative lady, still calls him ‘baby.’ Also on hand are such characters as Prometheus and Pandora, Goorgio Porgia, and some of Humpty’s ex-wives. (“Sophie Muffet-Dumpty was written out of an early draft of this novel and does not appear..”) Things come out right for the good guys in the end, and Jack even wins an award for Outstanding Courage in the Face of Something Nasty.


Typical dialogue, if anything is typical about this novel:

*I’ll be honest, Mary— “
“You should call me by my first name too, Jack.”
“Sorry. I’ll be honest, Mary – “
“That’s better.”*

The Ricardian connection? (and I realize this is reaching) Mary has appeared in Basingstroke as Lady Anne Neville, and can still quote fluently from that play. That’s just one of her many talents.

— *m.s.*

A Tale Of Treachery

 *Queen Isabella: Treachery, Adultery, and Murder in Medieval England* – Alison Weir

In *Queen Isabella*, Alison Weir takes it upon herself to “restore the reputation and rehabilitate the memory” of Isabella, dubbed “The She-Wolf of France” for her supposed role in the murder of her husband, Edward II. Though Weir’s effort makes for interesting reading, it falls


short of its stated goal.

Weir for the most part reports the known details of Isabella's life accurately; it is her interpretation of facts that is more troublesome. When Isabella does something that Weir regards as praiseworthy, she tends to view her as acting on her own; when she does something less admirable, she tends to view her as being dominated by her lover Roger Mortimer. Some of Weir's interpretations seem strangely naive. Noting that Isabella wrote a letter to Edward II's nephew shortly after his death in which she described herself as "in great trouble of heart," Weir writes that Isabella would not have used such language if she had been responsible for her husband's murder. That she might have been merely feigning sorrow does not seem to have occurred to Weir.

The author acknowledges the greed and corruption Isabella displayed during her years of power, but gives this little consideration in her assessment of Isabella's character, preferring to blame Isabella's unsavory image on her "involvement with the rapacious Mortimer" and on "male historians" who have held Isabella to a double standard because of her adultery. Weir's main argument in favor of Isabella, however, is her acceptance of the theory that Edward II was not murdered at all, but escaped abroad and ended up as a hermit in Italy. This theory, which has been around since the 19th century, has gained a number of advocates in recent years, but Weir does not present it with the passionate conviction needed to carry off the case. Only those readers who accept the survival theory, and who also manage to blind themselves to Isabella's other flaws, are likely to share her approval of her subject when they finish this book

— Susan Higginbotham

THE MISTRESS' TALE

 *A Rose For The Crown* – Anne Easter Smith, Touchstone Books, Simon & Schuster, NY, 2005

This is the story of Katherine Haute, nee Kate Bywood, farmer's daughter, poor relation to the gentry Haute family, eventual mistress to Richard III and mother of all three of his illegitimate children. This bare and brief précis hardly captures the scope of the story. A fair portion of it takes place before the main characters have even met, and another portion after their relationship ends, as they both know it must.

This is Katherine's story, only secondarily Richard's. Ms. Smith traces her heroine's rise in the world, from becoming a companion to her more nobly born cousin, through two well-placed, brief and unhappy marriages. She acquires maturity and polish without abandoning her country roots. If Richard at times comes across as almost too good to be true, Katherine remains genuine


and realistic throughout. The reader may be critical of her decision not to tell Richard about their third child, for example, but this only shows how Katherine has been accepted as a real person and not a fictional construct. If she didn't exist, she should have.

A number of persons who did exist are also depicted, aside from Richard. Chief among these are the redoubtable John Howard and his family. In the story, and in actual fact, as reported by the author in her afterword, Howard did literally move a fair-sized manor house from Chelsworth to Stoke. Katherine both admires and likes him, and so will the reader.

The point of view is always Katherine's. As she is not the narrator, the novel might have been opened out a bit by showing certain events from a first-hand perspective, rather than as they are told to Katherine. However, the author has chosen to be consistent, and it's hard to fault her for that, especially when she has succeeded in creating such a charming and unforgettable character as Katherine Haute.

— m.s.

..SAD STORIES OF THE DEATH OF KINGS

 *The Death Of Kings: Royal Deaths in Medieval England* – Michael Evans, Hambledon and London, London & NY, 2003

The period covered by this book is roughly the period from Edward the Confessor (1066) to Richard III, cutoff dates much to the annoyance of readers or scholars whose interests go beyond this, in either direction. A useful table gives places of death and burial for all these kings, as well as age of death. It is startling to realize that Henry IV, depicted by Shakespeare and even on his effigy (presumably taken from life) as well advanced in years, was actually 46. Some of my children are older than that! Even excluding those who died violently, being king of England was not conducive to a long life span.

Mr. Evans doesn't content himself with simply recounting the customs and formulae of the death of kings. He goes into some detail about the political implications and results of each transition, pointing out, for example, how John was viewed by the Catholic chroniclers of his time as a very bad man who met a bad end, but was somewhat rehabilitated by the Protestant Tudors, who were responsible for publicizing the tale that he was murdered by monks.

However, the ritual aspects are thoroughly covered also, in chapters such as "The Conception of the Body." The section on queens points out that "medieval manuals always advocated saving the mother's life before the baby's, even to the extent of killing and dismembering the foetus." He adds that "a study of fifty-five countesses in the period 1066-1230 reveals that only one died

from complications surrounding childbirth,” and the record for queens is similar. One, perhaps two did die in childbirth — by subsequent marriages, not while queen — and Mary of Bohun died before her husband became king. Given the general state of medicine in their times, few queens made old bones, but those who did survive their husbands had a measure of freedom and independence women of lower status could well envy.

The author’s attitude toward Richard III is hardly revisionary, but he does qualify it by speaking of “the most famous political murder (if such it was)” and “the truth will never be known.” Interpretations aside, the facts contained here are available elsewhere, but it is useful to have them all together in one place.

Speaking of the death of kings, and of other people, I

have been reading a very interesting book called *The Undertaker’s Wife*, by Loren Estleman. Mr. Estleman writes both mysteries and Westerns. This is neither, though much of it takes place in the West and Wild Bill Hickok has a small role. The author treats his main character with much sympathy and a good deal of detail. If you have wondered why funeral directors make up their “clients,” beyond all recognition sometimes, the answer is here — it is really necessary. Recommended, but only for the strong of stomach.

— m.s.

On that happy thought, I will leave you — until next time.

REMEMBER THE SOCIETY'S EARLY DAYS?

We've been asked by our parent society to contribute some reminiscences for the fall or winter Ricardian Bulletin. If you have memories of the early days in the society, either here or in England, please send to Pam Butler.



Sheila Bloom

Abigail Humburg Comber

Gilda Felt

Ronald Horton

Patricia Jackson

Audrey Jankucic

Anne LaRue

Tiki Lawson

Kenneth Lowe

Bruce Miller

Pamela Muha

Henry Mulloy

Ariella Nasuti

E. Warren Perry

Michael Richard Polino

Leslie Rovin

Claudia Saber

Margaret Schroeder

Alexandra Service

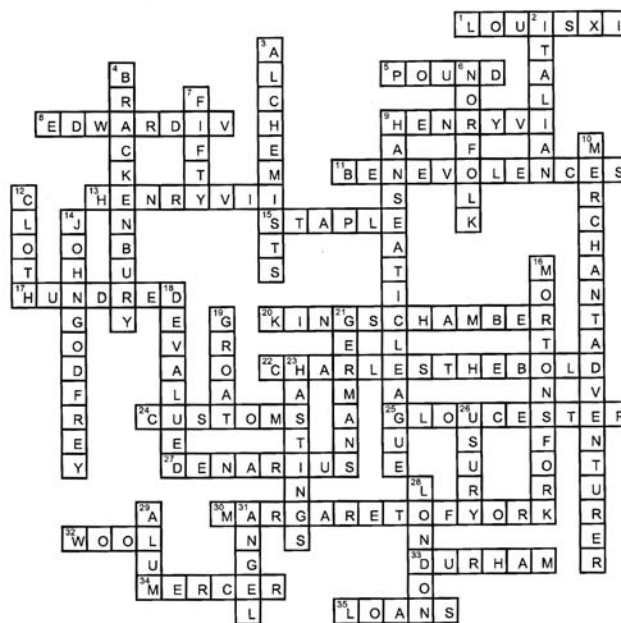
Joan Singer

Kate Skegg

Betsy Yancey

MEMBER REMINDER

Members who shop at Amazon.com can help the Society: Always start your Amazon.com shopping by going to www.r3.org/sales and clicking on the Amazon logo. The Society receives a small percentage of any purchases made this way.



AN INTERVIEW WITH ROBIN MAXWELL

Elizabeth Dorsey Hatle

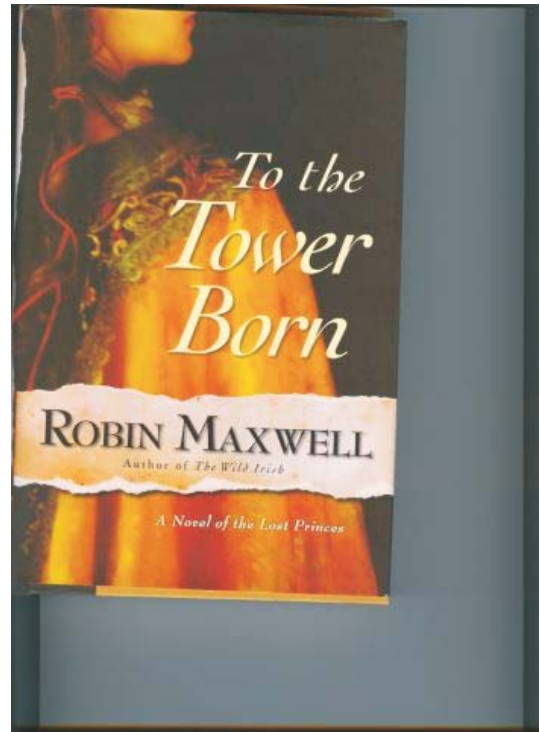
Robin Maxwell is the author of *The Wild Irish*, *Virgin: Prelude to the Throne*, *The Queen's Bastard*, *The Secret Diary of Anne Boleyn* and her most recent book, *To the Tower Born*. Her new book, published by Harper Collins, sheds new light on the vanishing of Edward IV's sons, Edward and Richard. *To the Tower Born* is historical fiction that Richard III members will appreciate reading. Robin Maxwell's writing entertains and opens new and tantalizing avenues of thought on the Princes' disappearance. The book, with the aid of two fascinating female characters based on historical personages leads the reader to an interesting possibility of others who may have been involved in what really happened to the princes. I had the opportunity to ask Robin questions about *To the Tower Born* and what went into writing her book about this subject. Here is what she had to say:

What made you want to write a book about the Princes disappearing while under Richard III's care?

"In my previous novels I've always made a point of using both the most fascinating and 'central-to-the action' figures in a particular period, as well as making a real historical mystery a major aspect of the plot. Two examples of mysteries I used in other books were: Why Elizabeth the First quite suddenly, after taking the throne, began to respect her long dead and much maligned mother, Anne Boleyn; and did Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester actually have a bastard son named Arthur Dudley?"

By the time I'd finished my fourth book, I'd pretty well 'done' the 16th century Tudors, but the family still fascinated me. When I turned to their immediate ancestors I found, of course, the greatest mystery in English history—what had happened to the little princes? I loved this idea and knew it hadn't been 'mined' in the fiction genre for a long time, but when I started my research I was frankly doubtful that the Yorks and Lancasters would be anywhere as colorful, scheming and bloodthirsty as Henry VIII, Elizabeth I and 'Bloody Mary.'

How wrong I was! The 15th century figures made their descendants look like political amateurs. So now, not only did I have a fabulous mystery to hang my story on, but remarkable characters to people it. I'm also inclined to write a book that takes a well-worn subject, or set of historical figures, and give a whole new twist to it — let the readers see the story from an entirely different perspective. I believe I accomplish that by seeing the little princes' story through the eyes of two female



characters, one who plays a small (though important) role in 'Sunne in Splendour' (Princess Bessie), and the other who no one had heard of before, (Nell Caxton)."

What was the initial response when you first had the idea to write this book? It's been quite a few years since the story of the missing Princes has received much attention from a national publishing house?

"The editor (at William Morrow) of my previous book was immediately taken by my original little princes idea — not just to write a historical fiction of the period and events, but a bit of a thriller as well. A deal was made to write a proposal and then the book. That first proposal almost came to be the novel's (and my sanity's) undoing. I had chosen to write the story strictly from the point of view of Nell Caxton, the daughter of the first English printer, William Caxton, who was an intimate of all the royal families in question, and whose shop was within the very walls of Westminster. I'd discovered in one of the three histories I'd used about Caxton that he'd had one daughter, that her name was Elizabeth, and that she'd divorced her husband, Gerard Croppe, in London. From those tiny tidbits of information I inferred and extrapolated the entire character and 'lifestyle' of Nell—streetwise but brilliantly educated, and beloved daughter living with her father within spitting distance of the royal palace. My editor fell in love with Nell, and this was where the problem began.

I wrote the first 150 pages of the book, and for many reasons, was compelled to put it down for almost 6 months. When I picked it up to finish it, I therefore came to the manuscript with a completely fresh and I believed objective eye. Much of what I had written — in order to keep the story from Nell's point of view — was rubbish. There was too much emphasis on Nell's romance with Anthony Woodville at Ludlow, where Nell was tutoring Edward. There was also no one for Nell to talk to or 'bounce off of' during the most important part of the story, and no one (who wasn't going to die or disappear) for her to have a solid, continuing relationship with from beginning to end. Most importantly, there was no way for Nell to be privy to some of the most important historical events necessary for the telling of the story.

I tried several different solutions, one of them giving points of view to several major characters, one of which was Richard of Gloucester, whom I believed was the most fascinating of all the historical figures of the century. I'd become so smitten with the period that I even suggested the whole story could not be told in one book—that it should become "The Roses Trilogy," with the Perkin Warbeck story a second novel, another dedicated especially to Richard and his relationship with Bessie after the princes go missing and Anne dies. Over the next 6 months I re-wrote those 150 pages four times and wrote seven different proposals. None of them was acceptable to my editor.

I finally came up with another solution I thought was simple and wonderful for *To the Tower Born*. I would make Princess Bessie Nell's best friend and give Bessie a point of view of her own. In fact, the body of the book would shift, chapter to chapter, between the two young women. Using both of them I was convinced that I could tell this tale properly, and I would have a terrific "girlfriends" relationship which would last from cover-to-cover. I wrote an impassioned proposal for this idea and handed it in.

My editor threw down the gauntlet. I was instructed that I must keep the book to no more than 100,000 words (approx. 300 pages). I was told readers of historical fiction today (mostly women) only wanted female protagonists and therefore I must forget any male points of view, including Richard's, and finally (and most mad-deningly) that I was only allowed to write the book from one point of view. And since the deal had been made with the protagonist as Nell Caxton, I was restricted to Nell Caxton's point of view. That meant NO BESSIE. If some major event happened while she was stuck in Westminster Sanctuary, then she could write about it in a letter to Nell. (Reread *Sunne in Splendour*, try counting

how many points of view there are in that — countless. And the book works beautifully.)

Anyway, there was to be no argument, no logic that could change my editor's position. I grew angry and frustrated about the way the publishing world had evolved, and how my creativity was being 'micro-managed.' But I also was confident that I was right about needing two points of view. So I did something I've never done before in my career — with the blessings of my agent (who was similarly baffled by the editor's rigidity) I backed out of my contract.

Once I'd written the manuscript my way—with both Nell's and Bessie's points of view, William Morrow was given 'right of first refusal' on it. My editor loved it. Admitted she's been wrong about Bessie's point of view. The book worked beautifully. They published it."

Did you feel many people were familiar with the story?

I was unhappily surprised at how few Americans outside of the Richard III Society and die-hard readers of historical fiction are aware of the little princes' story, Richard III and the surrounding history. I don't think they teach Shakespeare's *Richard III* in high school so it's all very, "Oh yeah, I kind of think I've heard of the little princes in the Tower, and Richard III, not so much."

To my further displeasure with my publishers, they would not allow me to use for my title the phrase 'Little Princes' in conjunction with the word 'Tower,' and also not allowed to use the beautiful painting of the two long legged, blond boys in black doublets and stockings that grace some of the non-fiction books about them. The American publisher, when planning the paperback edition wanted to change the book's subtitle from 'A Novel of the Lost Princes' to (I can hardly bring myself to remember this again) 'Two Beautiful Women Struggle to Protect a King.' Bodice-ripping historical romance, anyone? I threw a fit and they left the subtitle as is.

I was downright shocked and sorely disappointed that of all my novels, *To the Tower Born* is the only one that was not published in the U.K. I have to believe it being overlooked is a function of the trouble the English publishing business is in, and/or the fact that my foreign book agent was on maternity leave during the period she would have been selling the novel abroad. I do believe this book to be worthy and of interest to British readers. I hope that at least the U.K. branch of the Richard III Society becomes aware of the book though the *Ricardian Register*. They can always buy it on Amazon.co.uk.

Did you read any of the historical fiction books written about Richard III and the Princes previous to writing your own? Obvious examples being *Daughter of Time* and *Sunne in Splendour*. What do you think of those authors'

versions of what may have happened to the Princes?

“Of course I’d read *Sunne in Splendour*, but that was back in 1997, just for fun, long before *To the Tower Born* was even a gleam in my eye. When I’m writing, I make sure I do NOT read any historical fiction on the same subject, so I don’t inadvertently lift any ideas from it for my own book. I do my research strictly from histories, biographies, the internet, and with this particular book, from the *Ricardian Register*.

Just before this interview I re-read the last quarter of *Sunne in Splendour* — the part that dealt with the disappearance of the princes. Now I know much more about the period and story and characters . . . and I was completely enthralled. It was a fabulous read, so beautifully written, the dialog fresh and real, the historical research and detail spot-on. I was also delighted that Sharon Penman did not emphasize the ‘inside story’ of what happened to the princes, and that although she chose a different culprit (Harry Buckingham) and a different solution to what happened to the princes than I did, her take on the character, motivation and attitudes of Princess Bessie and Richard coincided closely with my own. I suppose it made me happy because I respected the quality of her work so much.

As for *Daughter of Time*, who could not love that book? It was such an original way to tell the story — a (then) modern day detective, bedridden, trying to solve the mystery of the little princes through reading history books and arguing with his equally interested friends. But again I was relieved that Ms. Tey had a different interpretation of the events than me. She was ‘warmer,’ in my opinion, of the culprit than Sharon Penman, naming Henry VII as her choice. My problem with him being the culprit was that preceding the time of the incidents in question, Henry had been an exile in Brittany for more than 15 years, and during the ‘duel rebellion’ (Buckingham’s and Tudor’s) Tudor was on a ship sailing to England to invade, but never made landfall. While he had motive, he did not personally have the opportunity or proximity to kidnap or murder the boys. To infer that ‘his agents’ did it, simply does not go far enough to explain him as the perpetrator.

I just bought Anne Easter Smith’s *Rose for the Crown*, and I’m looking forward to reading it. I find it fascinating that there are so many ways to tell the story — this time from the point of view of Richard’s mistress and the mother of his three bastard children.”

You were not able to attend the recent Richard III meeting in Chicago because your mother was dying and passed away in January, 2006. After writing *To the Tower Born*, doing extensive research on the subject, do you feel like the members of the Richard III Society do, that

Richard III was judged guilty of something he may not have done?

“Absolutely. Richard III had no motive whatsoever to kill or even have his nephews disappear. He was not a particularly ambitious person, preferred to stay in the north, in York, adored his brother, King Edward IV and, in my estimation, never would have laid a hand on his brother’s children. All the disappearance did was hurt Richard, and he was clearly intelligent enough to know that this would be the case.”

Of the research you did writing this book, what book on the subject did you find most challenging? What were the intellectual and emotional aspects for you writing about this period of history?

“Among all the authors I read on Richard, the princes mystery, the Yorks and the Tudors, I think was most peeved by Allison Weir’s *Princes in the Tower*, but then I have disagreed with every biography she’s written about figures I write about. To her, it’s cut-and-dried. Richard murdered the boys. The same is true for Desmond Seward’s *Richard III* and *England’s Dark Legend*. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but Paul Murray Kendall’s *Richard the Third*, seems to have Richard’s character drawn closest to what I believe, even though we disagree on the culprit.

One of my favorite books to research was written by Betram Field, *Royal Blood*. Fields is a lawyer, and he dissected the mystery with a legal mind. Every aspect of the ‘case,’ every motive, opportunity, and every character is laid out so perceptively and so clearly that the reader is able to come to conclusions as a member of a jury would do. It was an insight from this book that led me on the path to the Perkin Warbeck story.

Intellectually, it was most stimulating coming up with a brand new solution to the 500 year old mystery of the boys’ disappearance, and making it work within the bounds of the historical facts as we ‘know’ them. You always have to have a discerning eye, as the old adage is true — ‘History is written by the victors.’ I’ve always written using a technique I call ‘filling in the holes in history.’ Especially this far back in time, history is loaded with giant factual chasms. As a writer of fiction, there are liberties I allow myself, like expanding a character, such as Nell Caxton, from a few sentences in a history book, into a full-blown protagonist; a piece of information (like the huge storm that hit during the ‘dual rebellion’) that turned into a major plot device. There are techniques I refrain from such as changing facts or chronology that are generally accepted by some writers, simply to fit my story or make it more dramatic.

Emotionally, the most difficult moment for me to write in *To the Tower Born* was when Antony Woodville,

Lord Rivers, is executed for treason. Unlike Sharon Penman, I admired Rivers. By my reading, he was the least hated of all the Woodville clan and spent all his time at Ludlow in Wales (a small court with no women in it, uninterested in London court politics). He was a scholar, a patron and the closest friend of William Caxton (how I became convinced Rivers knew Nell). Rivers was also the author/translator of the very first book Caxton printed in the English language on his press at Westminster. Richard's decision to have Rivers executed — since I did not see Richard as a villain overall — I saw as a painful one for Richard, and therefore for me. When I wrote the chapter in which Nell and young Edward learn of Rivers' death, I got weepy.

One only has to think of Margaret Beaufort, Elizabeth Woodville and Cecily Neville to know they had an impact on their times. Their actions matched any man of that era in daring, determination and common sense to know their roles were just as important. In the book, Nell and Bessie, exhibit these same qualities giving us a road map of what may have occurred. By examining female involvement from that time more closely writing *To the Tower Born*, do you feel avenues about what really happened to the princes were explored that were neglected earlier?

"Certainly my book is 'female heavy,' and some take issue with that. But the fact is, the tragedy of the boys' disappearance started because of the actions of a woman, their mother, Queen Elizabeth Woodville, who decided on her own volition, to dismiss her dead husband's wishes about who was to be young Edward's 'Protector.' She didn't like or trust Richard and moved to push him aside. Everything followed from that fateful decision. It was Edward IV's sexual escapades with a woman (Eleanor Butler) that led to the bastardization of his children with Elizabeth Woodville, the circumstance that placed Richard III legitimately on the throne. And it was Margaret Beaufort's conspiracies that led not only to two rebellions (one that failed and one that succeeded) landing her son, Henry Tudor, on the throne in 1485. But it was her plotting with another woman, Elizabeth Woodville, that led to the uniting of the Yorks and the Lancasters in marriage (Bessie and Henry Tudor), thus ending the 'War of the Roses.' So yes, definitely, the female influence in this period has been grossly ignored by historians. There are a couple of biographies about Margaret Beaufort, which are 'love letters' about the 'Venerable Margaret.' She was in my estimation a tiny dragon-lady whose ambition outshone everyone else's. There is one good book that I found about Elizabeth Woodville by David Baldwin. There is only one (completely abysmal) 'pseudo-biography'

about Elizabeth of York (*Princess Bessie*), and a tiny bit of material about her on the internet. Unlike the later Tudor period and the endlessly written about individuals like Elizabeth I and Anne Boleyn, a writer is forced to 'mine' the histories and biographies that exist on the men, for tidbits about the women. And virtually no one gives them credit for being the driving force behind historical events.

What is your opinion of Shakespeare and Thomas More's interpretation of Richard III?

"I'm glad you asked about Shakespeare and Thomas More. If I were ever to write the 'Roses Trilogy,' More would be a major issue in one of the books. The fact is, his history of Henry Tudor, in which he extols Henry as a great king, and unequivocally names Richard as the person who set the murderers upon the boys, was an unfinished manuscript before his death, which came some time later than his writing it. He CHOSE not to publish it in his lifetime. It was only published posthumously by a nephew of More's who'd dug up the manuscript and saw there was money to be made doing so.

When I examine the possible reasons for More choosing not to publish this work about his very powerful patron, Henry VIII, my best guess is that he originally wrote it believing the material to be true, then discovered otherwise — that Richard III was not the monster who'd sent hit men to smother the boys and bury their bodies under a stairwell in the Tower of London. Personally I'm not a fan of Thomas More because he was too much of a Catholic fanatic who was quite happy to advise that heretics should burn at the stake. But I do think he was an 'honorable man,' someone with enough conviction about his beliefs that he preferred to die under Henry VIII's axe than give his blessings to the king's Protestant marriage to Anne Boleyn. Such a man, were he to find out he'd made such a terrible mistake in his judgment about Richard, would probably have given up writing flawed history and stopped it from being published in his lifetime.

As far as Shakespeare—who used More's posthumously published history for his 'research' on *The Tragedy of King Richard III*—he was a dramatist, not a historian. A wither-armed, hunch-backed monster who murders his brother and young nephews is a far more scintillating character than a shorter-than-average, thoughtful, intelligent, loyal-unto-death man whose right arm and shoulder are a tad more developed than his left because it's the arm he's been using for an incredibly heavy sword to fight his brother's battles since the age of 12.

Of course there are few historians of the earlier

period at the time Shakespeare was writing, and none of them as detailed or as inflammatory as More's. Its a shame and disservice to history that Shakespeare wrote his play based on More, because the huge majority of people who know anything about Richard got their information from Shakespeare. And most of those people are not discerning enough to question whether the history the play was based on is correct. Right now there is a wildly popular novel out called *The Other Boleyn Girl*. It is a sweet read, a real page-turner. But its author, Philippa Gregory has, like Shakespeare, 'villanized' a historical character — in this case Anne Boleyn — and now a whole generation or readers believe that Mary Boleyn (Anne's sister) bore Henry VIII a son, and that Anne (a woman who had adulterous affairs with five men, including her brother) and who was unable to have a male child herself, stole Mary's baby from her and brought him up as her own, at court. Since I am a one-person 'Anne Boleyn Society' trying to resurrect her reputation, I have great empathy with members of the Richard III Society, and understand their frustration dealing with popular literature like Shakespeare's."

What questions do most people ask you when talking about Richard III and the Princes? Why do you think people are still interested in this topic today?

"It was a personal loss for me not to be able to attend the Richard III annual event in Chicago. But due to my mother's illness and the trouble I had with an unsupportive editor, I had little time to talk about this book. I was dying to engage in meaningful conversation about the characters, the period, politics and mystery with people who felt as passionately as I did about them."

What is now your personal opinion of Richard III after writing your book *To the Tower Born*?

"There is not one mind in the 15th century into which I would like to dive into and explore more than Richard's. Richard's character, influences and the circumstances of his life — especially from 1483 till his death two years later, is such amazing grist for the mill. Surely the man was no saint, but he was loyal to a fault, was well-loved by the people who knew him (including his immediate family and Yorkshire men and women). It appears that he had a successful marriage and once wed to Anne, was faithful to her in an age and society where men didn't think twice about adultery. The bastard son we do know he had, was before his marriage. He was a good and fair administrator, and kept the poor in mind when he was making laws after he became king, sometimes to the disgruntlement of the noble class.

I think there were several flaws in his character, but they only became fatal flaws after Richard was thrust into the spotlight, a place where he never wanted to be. These weaknesses were his tendency to defer to others, allow himself to be influenced too easily, and to lack certain powers of discernment, especially about people's characters. Then, out of frustration over 'mistakes' he made, he acted rashly. He seemed to be a man of passion (love for his family and hate for the Woodvilles) who understood his responsibility to England. He took the throne not because he wanted it, but because England needed him.

I do believe that if Richard had never been called upon to take control of England at the time he did, he'd have lived out his life as a family man who enjoyed the country and the castles of his childhood, the 'Lord of the North' who stayed far away from the court and its bloody politics, which he deeply loathed. If he'd been allowed to continue his clean, stress-free existence surrounded by loved ones, he'd probably have made it to a ripe old age.

2006 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
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IN MEMORIUM RICHARD BAKER

Long time member Richard Baker of Sarcoxie, Missouri died in January, 2006, due to complications of diabetes.

Bob attended several AGM's, most recently in Chicago, Illinois. He was an attorney, and passionately engaged in research into the matter of the Bones in the Tower

He is survived by his wife, Pat.

W. Bowman Cutter

Audrey Jankucic

Bonnia Battaglia and Family

Erika Millen

Joanne Aarseth and Carole Jackson

Barbara Baker Barillas

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If you are interested in forming a chapter, contact Eileen Prinsen, Chapter Co-ordinator (see page 3 of this issue)



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