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Challenge in the Mist by Graham Turner

Dawn on the 14th April 1471, Richard Duke of Gloucester and his men strain to pick out the Lancastrian army through the thick mist that envelops the battlefield at Barnet.

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Featuring articles on Henry Wyatt, Elizabeth of York, and Edward IV

Inside cover
(not printed)

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The Questionable Legend of Henry Wyatt

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From time to time the exploits of Sir Henry Wyatt crop up in books, both fiction and non-fiction, for he was a fascinating character whose career encompassed espionage as well as military action and high office. Most writers, however, concern themselves mainly with grisly tales of imprisonment and torture in the cause of Henry VII, which grew to become Wyatt family legend. In recent years a flurry of interest was created by Hilary Mantel's characterization of Wyatt in her novel *Wolf Hall*, and a biography by Nicola Schulman of his son, the poet Sir Thomas Wyatt, has again rehearsed the same old legends. The true facts of Henry Wyatt's capture and incarceration may never be known, having been buried under an accretion of myths over the years, but this article addresses some versions of the story that we can certainly clarify, and some we can probably debunk.* Valuable background for all this can be found in Agnes Conway's *Henry VII's Relations with Scotland and Ireland, 1485–1498*.¹

The different versions of Henry's story are too numerous to catalogue in all their glorious variety, but the most popular tales may be summarized thus:

1. He was imprisoned and tortured in the Tower of London for two years during the reign of Richard III, on account of his support for Henry Tudor. A particularly good story claims the two Henrys attended Eton College together! Languishing in his cell, he was saved from starvation by the generosity of a cat who brought him pigeons to eat.
2. His torture is usually described as one or more of the following: being racked; having horse-barnacles applied to his mouth; and being force-fed mustard and vinegar. Sometimes heated knives are mentioned. The barnacles were a hinged and toothed metal pinching instrument which seem to have been the equivalent of the modern twitch, a device used by farriers to curb a restive horse by gripping and squeezing its sensitive upper lip area.
3. He was supposedly interrogated by none other than Richard III, who personally oversaw his torture. This, of course, represents a significant point of interest for Ricardians.

Some of these gaudy tales can actually be found in respectable books, even in a recent publication from The Royal Armouries.² There is no surviving account by Henry himself, and – perhaps I should emphasize this – *there are only two versions that are authentically derived from the Wyatt family's own traditions, and they occur in the family's letters and papers*. This has been verified by reference to their descendants, the Earl and Countess of Romney, who confirmed that the entire collection of Wyatt family manuscripts is now held in the British Library. The MSS comprise a substantial assembly of documents, and although several extracts have been separately published, there exists no complete transcription or publication of the collection as a whole.³ Therefore, in relation to the Henry Wyatt legend, this article now publishes the most extensive transcription of the relevant sections that can be found anywhere today.

The most useful document, thanks to its impeccable provenance, is actually not found in the Wyatt collection. This is a letter written in April 1538 by Henry Wyatt's son, Thomas the Elder, addressed to his own son Thomas the Younger who had recently married. It contains advice to the young bridegroom, in support of which the laudable example of the boy's grandfather, Henry, is extolled as a God-fearing man who earned the grace of God

which ‘preseruid him in prison from the handes of the tirant that could find in his hart to see him rakkid, from two yeres and more prisonment in Scotland, in Irons and Stoks, from the danger of sodeyn changes and commotions diuers, till that . . . he went to him that loud him . . .’ etc.⁴

The words here are confusing, and having been unable to inspect the document itself, I cannot say whether the punctuation is original. What it makes perfectly clear, as supported by other evidence, is that Henry’s lengthy incarceration was in Scotland, not the Tower of London. No suggestion of the Tower of London occurs in any Wyatt tradition until as late as 1702, and enquiries of the present Tower authorities have revealed no documentary record of it. With such a celebrated Tudor figure, immortalized by Holbein, one would expect to find some mention had Wyatt been imprisoned there.

Less clear is the letter’s opening phrase about preservation ‘from the hands of the tyrant that could find in his heart to see him racked’, which can be read in more than one way. Was he saved by God from being subjected to the rack at the hands of this tyrant, whose heart was sufficiently hard to have contemplated applying such extreme measures? Or was he racked and God permitted him to survive the ordeal? If the latter – which is what seems generally assumed – several questions must be answered. Most importantly, why is it that, of all the tortures his family’s papers so graphically record, no document but this ever mentions the rack, that most feared and potentially lethal device?

While making no particular claims of expertise in Tudor English, I have always found the *OED on Historical Principles* enlightening on archaic usage. Looking under the verb ‘rack’, one can find instances in the 1570s–80s where it referred not only to literal racking, but also being otherwise affected by physical pain or even mental stress. We still speak of being ‘racked’ in this way. Might Thomas have been using the word in its metaphorical sense?

With reference to the ‘tyrant’ – assumed to be Richard III – even more questions are raised by the fact that he never set foot in Scotland during his reign. We know Wyatt was ransomed and released from his Scottish prison upon Henry VII’s accession in the autumn of 1485 (his earliest recorded grant of office was on 11 October);⁵ so if he had been held there ‘two years and more’, when and where did Richard III get his hands on him? Can it have happened in 1483?

Let us imagine that Wyatt was apprehended by the crown on a secret mission *before* that which got him captured in Scotland. Richard was moving around the country on progress from 21 July, but he wrote from Oxfordshire on 29 July ordering a case to be tried in London which seems likely to have been the attempt, reported by Stow, to abduct the sons of Edward IV from the Tower.⁶ The perpetrators, who were executed, were said to have corresponded with the Tudor camp in Brittany. As a Tudor agent Wyatt might have been involved in this or something similar, but was he important enough to be racked? And if so, why did they set him free to carry out more intrigues? At any rate we know that Richard III was nowhere near.

Henry Wyatt was fond of a good story, and his dashing exploits must have provided plenty of them. If he did have a brush with the authorities in the summer of 1483, my guess is he was held on suspicion and warned by Richard III’s men that they would not hesitate to rack him if they thought he was fomenting rebellion. A lucky escape from the hands of the tyrant – and one that perhaps grew in the retelling – was a better tale than years spent rotting in a Scottish dungeon.

There seems no reason not to believe, however, that Henry was tortured with the barnacles, and the Wyatts made much of it in their family records and iconography. Possibly

the instrument was employed to immobilize the poor man's mouth while noxious substances were forced down his throat.

Moving on to the Wyatt papers, of which the relevant parts were compiled in 1727-31, we already find overlays of assumption and embellishment acquired through years of retelling. Our main source lies in an individual document: 'Passages taken out of a Manuscript wrote by Thomas Scott of Egreston in Godmersham Esquire concerning the family of Wyatt of Alington'. These 'Passages' were copied by Richard Wyatt in 1731, as he notes in his own hand.⁷

Richard Wyatt was a great-great-great-great-grandson of the famous Henry, so he was in no position to judge whether the tales he was copying were true. The document's author, Thomas Scott, was Henry's great-great-grandson, and although nothing is known of its provenance, we may guess at its date of writing from an anecdote it contains which derives from a publication of 1655.⁸ It therefore appears that a gap of some 170 years has elapsed. Within the story of the cat and pigeons is interjected the comment 'it was his own relation unto them from whom I had it', and it has been surmised, probably from this and from two later references to 'my grandfather' within the narration (see below), that the stories were recounted to Thomas Scott by his grandmother, Mrs George Wyatt. But even this is open to question: Thomas's grandmother should have referred to Henry as her (or her husband's) great-grandfather, not grandfather. It may seem a small point, but if people of that time were not in the habit of stipulating the requisite number of 'greats', it would be rash to assign any particular identity to the narrator. Certainly Henry was dead by the time George, and probably his wife, were born.

In the intervening 170 years the Wyatts had experienced the best and worst of fortunes. Henry himself, from what appear to have been undistinguished origins in a Yorkshire village, had risen high and grown rich in the service of Henry VII, being a councillor and entrusted with many commissions including military work, diplomacy, and acting as the king's agent/spy, mainly in Scotland (he was also active in Ireland). Moving from Yorkshire to Kent, Wyatt purchased Allington Castle in 1492, where among his later visitors were Henry VII, Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII.

Under Henry VIII he enjoyed even higher office, was created Knight of the Bath at the coronation and knight-banneret at the Battle of the Spurs. In 1503 his son Thomas was born, and it was this Thomas, the poet, usually identified as Thomas the Elder, who first brought the king's displeasure upon the family. Allington was a mere twenty miles from the home of the Boleyn family, and in 1536, at the time of Anne Boleyn's downfall, Thomas was thrown into the Tower of London prior to being called as a witness in the case against her. This (presumed) association with the luckless Anne continues to fire the pens of writers, among them Hilary Mantel.

Not only did Thomas endure another brief sojourn in the Tower in 1561, but his son, Thomas the Younger, in his turn landed there with more serious consequences, having rashly followed in his grandfather's footsteps by rebelling against his sovereign.⁹ He was executed in 1554, and his attainder plunged the family into disgrace and poverty which lasted until 1570 when they were restored in blood by Act of Parliament. His son George, obsessed with rebuilding the family's status, wrote copiously and was almost certainly responsible for commissioning several famous portraits of the Wyatts.

By now it will be clear that by the mid 17th century, when Thomas Scott set down the tales of his forebears, a tone of vindication and rehabilitation prevailed. Here are the relevant extracts (with occasional slight modernization of punctuation and spelling):

The account starts by relating Henry's virtues and Yorkshire ancestors, then continues: 'Of this Yorkshire house Sir Henry Wyatt was a younger brother, and in his young years did put himself into the service of Henry the Earl of Richmond, afterwards King Henry the 7th. Never any servant in this world was more faithful and constant to his master, or did or suffered more for him. The wit of Morton the Archbishop and others did that King, and the whole Kingdom, and the whole Island, and the whole Christian and Western World, it now appears, and it will appear, I doubt not, the whole World of Man inestimable service. But neither was Sir Henry Wyatt's council, nor his pains, adventures, courage and sufferance equalled by any.

'He was imprisoned often, once in a cold and narrow Tower, where he had neither bed to lye on, nor cloathes sufficient to warm him, nor meat for his mouth. He had starved there, had not God, who sent a crow to feed his prophet, sent this and his Country's martyr a cat both to feed and warm him. It was his own relation unto them from whom I had it. A cat came one day down into the dungeon unto him, and as it were offered herself unto him. He was glad of her, laid her in his bosom to warm him, and by making much of her won her love. After this she would come every day unto him divers times and, when she could get one, bring him a pigeon. He complained to his keeper of his cold and short fare. The answer was he durst not better it. But, said Sir Henry, if I can provide any, will you promise to dress it for me? I may well enough said he, you are safe for that matter; and being urged again, promised him and kept his promise, dressed for him from time to time such pigeons as his accator the cat provided for him. Sir Henry Wyatt in his prosperity for this would ever make much of cats, as other men will of their spaniels or hounds; and perhaps you shall not find his picture any where but, like Sir Christopher Hatton with his dog, with a cat beside him.'

There ensues a digression into the fidelity and service we receive from our animal friends, followed by examples of Henry's prowess as a raconteur with more family anecdotes, one of which concerns a heart-stopping encounter with a lion which is said to have delighted Henry VIII. Further interpolated matter refers to the family's heraldry, in which barnacles were introduced to replace the previous three boars' heads, then the manuscript continues with Henry's experiences as a prisoner. 'Besides his imprisonments he was divers times put into divers kinds of tortures, among others with an instrument made like the smith's barnacles. I know not what wrong they did unto him, that they might powre vinegar and mustard into his nostrils and head. In witness of this torment of Sir Henry Wyat in certain carpets of his which I have seen caused his arms there the image of the barnacles to be wrought, and ever afterwards ... the true arms of the Wyats was laid aside and the three barnacles chosen.

'One time after his torment, the Tyrant himself examined him, and joining flattery to furie, told him, saying Wyat why are thou such a foole? Thou servest for moonshine in the water. Thy master is a beggarly fugitive. Forsake him and become mine who can reward thee and, I swear unto thee, will. My grandfather's [*sic*] answer was, Sir, if I had first chosen you for my master, thus faithful would I have been to you if you should have needed it; but the earl, poor and unhappy though he be, is my master, and no discouragement or allurement shall ever drive or draw me from him, by God's grace. At this the Tyrant stood amazed, and turning to the Lords that stood about him, brake out into these words. Oh, how much more happy is that runaway Rogue in his extreme calamity than I in my greatest seeming prosperity. He hath a friend whom he may trust in his misery. I in this appearing happiness am unhappy only through the want of this happiness. Is there any one of you all, who will thus stick unto me, that is not already ready to leave me?

‘The Earl of Richmond anon after he was crowned king entertained my grandfather [*sic*] then coming out of imprisonment and affliction in Scotland, first with most gracious words unto himself, and then with this speech unto the Lords. Both I and you must bid this gentleman heartily welcome, had not he above human strength or example also shewed himself our constant friend, neither had I enjoyed now the crown nor you that peace and prosperity and honour which you now possess.’

A list of Wyatt’s outstanding qualities follows, and more anecdotes, all redounding to the credit of Henry and his family. Mistakenly, the writer assumes that Henry VII made him a knight-banneret (*recte* Henry VIII), ‘which is a higher title honour,’ he sniffs, ‘than that of our new baronets’.¹⁰

A further interesting reference to Sir Henry occurs later in the papers. ‘The most I can find relating to him,’ writes Richard Wyatt, ‘is on the monument in Boxley Church set up by my father’. So we now know who was responsible for a stone tablet, dated 1702, which contains the earliest known statement to the effect that Henry Wyatt was imprisoned in the Tower of London, something never previously suggested. Of the story of the cat, Richard Wyatt ‘can find no remains but his picture and another of a cat, seemingly in the same hand-painting, with a pigeon in her claws delivering it at the grates of the dungeon with certain words relating the story. The painting seems old, though we have no account by whose hand done’.

The pictures to which Richard Wyatt refers are probably those which eventually came into the possession of the Earls of Romney, Wyatt’s descendants. The picture of Henry (a copy of the Holbein portrait presently in the Louvre) was probably one of those family portraits which are estimated to have been commissioned by George Wyatt around 1600-1603.¹¹ The picture of the cat and pigeon was very likely painted about the same time. There is in existence, however, a third painting which Richard Wyatt does not mention and almost certainly never saw, although it has become rather well known. This is a combination of the earlier two pictures: it shows Henry in affluent old age, his elder-statesman figure as depicted by Holbein sitting incongruously against a background of dungeon and barred window while the caterer cat delivers his next meal. Underneath are the words relating the story, also reproduced in this third picture, which consist of two couplets, one in Latin and one in English. The reason Richard Wyatt would not have seen this picture is because in the opinion of Sir Roy Strong it was not executed until the eighteenth century – probably late in that century.¹²

The role of the cat need not long detain us: it would be nice to think it was true. A curious parallel exists with another cat bringing comfort to another prisoner, Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. In a portrait commissioned on his release in 1603 she is depicted with him in the Tower of London. It is tempting to think the George Wyatt painting may have been influenced by this, as they are roughly contemporaneous – but on the other hand, how safe was it to emulate Wriothesley, only recently emerging from prison at the start of a new and unpredictable reign?

Coincidence or not, it was then only a short step to assume that Henry Wyatt’s ‘cold and narrow tower’ was actually the Tower of London. Add the fact that Wyatt’s son and grandson were imprisoned there – and that Wyatt himself committed treason by supporting a rebel against his king – then the association with England’s most dread place of incarceration for traitors is complete. It had by now, of course, acquired its thoroughly horrid reputation under the Tudors.

The internet, as usual these days, has played a major part in disseminating the full gamut of Wyatt myths, in which connection it is disappointing to have to blame the *Dictionary of National Biography* whose 19th-century edition, currently available online, has him imprisoned in the Tower of London for two years by Richard III and ‘racked in Richard’s presence’.¹³

This much-quoted entry has been modified in the *Oxford DNB* of 2004, although too late to redress its widespread repetition which has reached, for example, the Wikipedia page for Henry Wyatt. The 2004 edition now interpolates a new element, stating that in 1483 ‘he probably participated in Buckingham’s unsuccessful revolt against Richard III’. There is no corroboration for this, and one can only regret that the writer failed to consult Agnes Conway. Conway has shed considerable light on Wyatt’s activities on behalf of Henry VII in Scotland, and reveals a fascinating tale of espionage and intrigue which is well worth reading. She cites plenty of evidence relating to Wyatt’s activities as Henry’s agent, both before and after Bosworth. ‘In later years,’ she adds, ‘Wyatt, as a trusted royal official, frequented the Border in times of danger and kept Henry VII informed of what was going on.’

As for his incarceration, ‘It is possible,’ she writes, ‘that Wyatt, engaged on the Earl of Richmond’s business, had fallen into the hands of some Scottish baron with Yorkist sympathies, only to be released when Henry VII was securely on the throne, after a period of cruel imprisonment, and on the promise of a huge ransom.’ It is certainly true that a large ransom was paid: ‘Thirty years later Henry VIII renewed his father’s grant of £20 a year towards Wyatt’s ransom from the cruel hands of the Scots, because he was convinced that he had not yet been able to pay off the sum.’¹⁴

The above makes perfect sense. But the dramatic scene with Richard III must, I am sure, be apocryphal. Given Richard’s evil reputation, it is perhaps unsurprising that Wyatt should have built a confrontation with ‘the tyrant’ into his exploits. Such a meeting was hardly likely in 1483, as we have seen, nor thereafter as Richard was never in Scotland. There is one last possibility – was Wyatt brought purposely to him? The context, with Richard lamenting the infidelity of his supporters, belongs to the moralistic tradition, cultivated by Shakespeare, that his dastardly deeds eventually left him without friends and followers. But at the end of Richard’s reign, a derelict Wyatt after two years in a Scottish dungeon would scarcely have possessed intelligence meriting examination by a king, let alone torture on the rack.

Still, who can blame Henry Wyatt, after enduring all those travails, for adding embroidery to the tale – simultaneously boosting his own role and favourably contrasting the loyalty of Tudor’s followers with the perfidy of Richard’s?

END NOTES

* Considerable appreciation must be expressed to Geoffrey Wheeler for supplying much of the material that made this article possible.

1. Cambridge, 1932.
2. B A Harrison, *The Tower of London prisoner book: a complete chronology of the persons known to be detained at their majesties' pleasure, 1100-1941* (Leeds, 2004).
3. The longest extracts in print, although abridged and redacted, were published by John Bruce in *The Gentleman’s Magazine and Historical Review*, June and September 1850.
4. Kenneth Muir, *Life and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, (Liverpool, 1963) pp. 38-41.
5. CPR HVII vol 1, 1485-94, p. 74 (thanks to Marie Barnfield for this reference).

6. Annette Carson, *Richard III: The Maligned King* (Stroud, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011), pp. 130-1.
7. BL Add MSS 62135-62138. Relevant sections are in 62135 (2 vols), vol 2, ff. 359-369 and 456.
8. David Loades, ed., *The Papers of George Wyatt, Esquire* (London, 1968), p. 4.
9. Queen Mary Tudor and her Spanish marriage.
10. A baronetcy (with origins dating back to the 14th century) is the only hereditary honour which is not a peerage. It ranks above all knighthoods except for the Garter and the Thistle. However, this comment undoubtedly refers to the revival of the Order of Baronets in 1611 which James I erected primarily as a money-raising exercise.
11. *Apollo* (March, 2006), p. 54.
12. Personal correspondence with Sir Roy Strong, 20 July 2011.
13. *DNB* (1885-1900) and *ODNB* (2004), s.v. Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder.
14. Letters & Papers, Henry VIII, vol 2, 1515-18 (1864) pp. 227-388 (again thanks to Marie Barnfield)



Elizabeth of York: A Biographical Saga

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Arlene Naylor Okerlund's biography of Elizabeth of York, published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2009, will appear in paperback in October 2011.

Any biographer of Elizabeth of York must first come to terms with several irrefutable and distressing realities. First, documented sources about the life of this Tudor queen are extremely scarce. The few references that do mention Elizabeth of York generally record accounts of court life and ceremonial events, the queen's quotidian routine. That is not the stuff that fascinates readers and sells books.

Equally annoying, all evidence points to the conclusion that Elizabeth of York was a genuinely "nice" person. That adjective, applied by a publisher's reader, was not a positive endorsement for publication. Queens who merit historical attention and attract biographers are noted for their power, mayhem, and bitchery: unruly Eleanor of Aquitaine, marauding Margaret of Anjou, and devious Mary, Queen of Scots. Even the great Elizabeth I derives fame from her personal peccadilloes as much as from her political intrigues. She-wolves sell. Thus, Elizabeth of York—lacking the notoriety we demand in royals—has been missing from the books, movies, and television shows featuring her queenly cohort. Her last biography by Nancy Lenz Harvey appeared in 1973.

Admired for her gentle, generous conduct, her subjects called her "the gracious queen."ⁱ Accordingly, any biography of Elizabeth of York must tell the story of a kind, caring sister, mother, and wife, who shared a rather remarkable affection with her husband, Henry VII. Contemporary documents record her constant presence at the king's side, but her role in the politics that swirled through the first Tudor Court hardly registers. While her marriage to Henry Tudor united the long feuding houses of Lancaster and York, her contributions toward stabilizing the reign of Henry VII derived from gentle manners and personal popularity, rather than from political power.

Because historical biographies generally analyze power and political influence, my manuscript of Elizabeth of York's life provoked many negative critiques from publishers' readers: *there is too much description of birthing chambers, the baby Arthur's "little Cradle*

of Tree” and “great Cradle of Estate,” the menu at the queen’s coronation banquet; too much narrative about the court and ceremony. Cut the quotations. Proper historians paraphrase and analyze—they do not quote long passages from original documents.

Problem is: I am not a proper historian. After fifty years of studying and teaching literature, I revere the original text. Only the text allows us to hear the “voice” of the era—the syntax and diction that creates tone, attitude, character, and perspective. The closest contact we will ever achieve with the fifteenth century lies through the text of contemporary documents. Other writers may paraphrase. But not this literature professor. The voice of the era best speaks for itself.

Those fifteenth-century documents reveal an amazingly normal Elizabeth of York, given that her childhood was fraught with trauma and tragedy sufficient to send most individuals into psychotic breakdown. If Elizabeth of York—and her mother, Elizabeth Wydeville—have stories to tell, they are about the survival of the human spirit when afflicted with tragedy and pain that seems almost unbearable, unendurable, unfathomable.

Princess Elizabeth was three years old when her father, Edward IV, was first deposed by the Earl of Warwick (his first cousin) and George, Duke of Clarence (Edward’s brother). During this episode, Elizabeth’s grandfather, Richard Wydeville, earl Rivers, and her uncle Sir John Wydeville were executed without trial. Her grandmother, Jacquetta, Duchess of Bedford, was accused of witchcraft—not a trivial charge, considering that 28 years earlier similar accusations against Eleanor Cobham, Duchess of Gloucester, ended in conviction, three humiliating processions through the streets of London, and exile until death. During this rebellion by Warwick, the princess Elizabeth and her two tiny sisters retreated with their mother into obscure residence in London until Edward IV regained control and restored their royal life.

Their respite was short-lived. Within the year, Edward IV was forced into exile in the Netherlands. Queen Elizabeth Wydeville—eight months pregnant—fled with her three daughters (all under age 4) into Sanctuary at Westminster Abbey. During six months in Sanctuary, princess Elizabeth gained a new brother—the future Edward V—born to her mother under conditions we can only imagine.

Ah, there’s the rub! Imagination is irrelevant—forbidden, even—to historical biographers. They must restrict themselves to contemporary documents that cite dates, places, and events, but disclose nothing about the emotions or the psychological state of those who lived through shattering experiences. Those documents reveal Elizabeth of York to be an extraordinarily resilient woman. Although her childhood oscillated between moments of glory and months of grief—a truly schizophrenic existence—she emerged relatively unscathed.

During their first sanctuary retreat, the children of Edward IV (ages 4, 3, 1, and newborn) lived without other childhood playmates—and without the royal privileges to which they were born and accustomed. Other residents of Westminster Abbey included monks, church attendants, shopkeepers, and the thieves, scofflaws, and rabble who populated the sanctuary grounds north of the Abbey entrance—hardly playmates fit for young children.

Seven months later Edward IV regained control, and the children returned to the palatial splendor of their royal lives. As a six-year old princess, Elizabeth of York danced with her father at royal parties; at ten she rode with her mother in Garter parades. She was a privileged child loved and cherished by her parents. Most spectacularly, at age nine, she was betrothed to the Dauphin of France, the first English princess deemed worthy of that honor. From that time on, she was addressed as “my lady the Dauphine” and educated to become the future queen of the most sophisticated court in Europe.

But at age 16, the Dauphin jilted Elizabeth. “Politics as usual,” she most certainly knew, since she had watched her father trade away all his daughters to the most powerful and

richest ruler he could buy with promised (and generally unpaid) dowries. Elizabeth was smart enough to know that her future marriage depended on politics, not love. But was she affected personally—emotionally—by her sudden shift in status from future queen of France to jilted princess? Contemporary documents record nothing about her feelings, and the historical biographer cannot speculate. (No wonder writers turn to fiction!)

Worse tragedy loomed. In April 1483 her father unexpectedly died, an event that shattered Elizabeth's world irreparably. Once again, she fled to Sanctuary with her mother and four sisters. A litany of horrors followed. Her twelve-year old brother, Edward V, was sent to the Tower of London to await his coronation. He never emerged from that immurement. Nine-year old Richard, the brother with whom Elizabeth grew up, joined Edward V in the Tower on June 16. He, too, vanished behind the Tower walls. Elizabeth's erudite uncle Anthony Wydeville, earl Rivers, and her half-brother Sir Richard Grey were sent north to prison. They were executed on June 25.

Within three months, Elizabeth of York lost her father, three brothers, and the uncle who was the male head of her Wydeville relatives. She, her sisters, and her mother were trapped in tenuous sanctuary at Westminster Abbey. When Richard III was crowned on July 6, their Sanctuary quarters lay immediately adjacent to the Abbey whose bells joyously announced the new king. With the pealing of the bells, these women knew with dead certainty that Edward V was no longer king. They did not yet know that they would never see either of their brothers—the famous “two princes”—again.

Worse was yet to come. In mid-June Ralph Shaa, Doctor of Divinity, had declared the children of Edward IV to be “Bastards,” an allegation that Parliament made the law of the land in January 1484. All possibility of a royal marriage—indeed, any prestigious marriage—ended for Elizabeth, who was fast growing beyond the desirable age for brides. Her wheel of fortune had turned from “my lady the Dauphine” to “Bastard” in less than six months.

Queen Dowager Elizabeth Wydeville began to negotiate a marriage for her daughter with the only man who might be interested: Henry Tudor, Lancastrian claimant to the English throne. At the same time, Elizabeth's resourceful mother began to negotiate departure from Sanctuary with King Richard III. In either case, the future was insecure, unknown.

After the king swore an oath to protect Edward IV's children, Elizabeth of York joined the court of her uncle, Richard III. Once more, her royal residence was temporary. Rumors about an incestuous attraction between the king and his princess niece caused Elizabeth to be banished from Court. She was sent north to Sheriff Hutton, where her uncle Anthony Wydeville had been imprisoned just before his execution.

Did the rumors reflect a romantic reality? Were Richard III and Princess Elizabeth in love? The available evidence [too complex to summarize in this brief article] produced definitive statements by historians Polydore Vergil and George Buck, each asserting exactly opposite conclusions. Subsequent historians continue to speculate, but the evidence points to no certain truth, and the nature of the relationship between Richard III and Elizabeth of York remains unknown.¹¹ For Elizabeth, the question became irrelevant when Henry Tudor invaded England, defeated Richard III at Bosworth, and married her.

By age 19 (more than half of her short life), Elizabeth had accumulated sufficient political and personal experiences to prepare her for the uncertainties that lay ahead. And nothing offered more uncertainty than life with Henry Tudor. If their marriage united the feuding houses of Lancaster and York, it did not end rebellions against the monarchy. The royal couple's first decade of marriage was fraught with repeated Yorkist attacks against the king and his Yorkist consort: rebellions launched by Viscount Lovell and Sir Humphrey

Stafford; by John, earl of Lincoln, and Lambert Simnel; by Margaret of Burgundy (Elizabeth's aunt) and Perkin Warbeck.

The threat from Perkin Warbeck caused Henry to make a foray into France, leaving Elizabeth home alone with their children: Arthur, age 6; Margaret, age 2; Henry, 15 months; and Elizabeth, 3 months. The children indicate that Elizabeth was carrying out her duties as queen consort impeccably. Indeed, while rebellions preoccupied Henry, Elizabeth's presence and public visibility assured his subjects that the Tudor reign was stable and secure.

That is why the heraldic accounts of pomp and ceremony are so important in recording the life of Elizabeth of York. If they lack the excitement of political plots, battlefield maneuvers, and body counts—the focus of much historical analysis pertaining to fifteenth-century England—they reflect another aspect of Henry VII's public policy, one that generally worked. Public pomp with Elizabeth of York at his side replicated familiar rituals from the court of Edward IV. The ceremony reminded Henry's subjects that their queen was the daughter of the king who had brought peace and prosperity to England, a king much loved by his subjects. Nostalgia and tradition sent the symbolic message that the nation would thrive under the equivalent and corresponding Tudor court.

Thus, when Arthur was born—eight months after the marriage of Henry and Elizabeth—bonfires blazed in the streets of Winchester, and messengers rode throughout the nation announcing the birth of a new dynasty. Similarly, after Henry's victory over Lambert Simnel, Elizabeth's coronation displayed to London and the world the magnificence through which English monarchs traditionally established authority and power. At every opportunity, Tudor propaganda emphasized the prosperity achieved through the union of Lancaster and York.

Ceremony was central to Henry's governing policy. He publically staged—and his heralds meticulously recorded—every royal event with an eye to its dynastic impact: Arthur's christening at Winchester, Elizabeth's coronation journey up the Thames from Greenwich to the Tower, the coronation itself at Westminster Abbey, the banquet menu in Westminster Hall. Heraldic records also document the couple's early years together—a succession of celebrations at Christmas, Easter, St. George's Day. Thanks to the heralds, we can visit with Elizabeth as she entered her birthing chamber and follow Prince Henry to his initiation as knight of the Bath and creation as duke of York.

Such accounts lack sensational impact. So, too, does the daily life of Elizabeth and Henry, which was strikingly ordinary—some might even say “dull”: the king and queen spent an unusual amount of time together, frequently exchanged presents, and lent each other money from their privy purses. Henry sponsored bonfires on Midsummer nights and paid a “lord of misrule” during Christmas seasons. Three more royal children were born, two of whom died as babies.

Elizabeth surrounded herself with family. She paid living expenses for all of her sisters except Cecily. Her youngest sister Bridget was a Dominican nun in the convent at Dartford. Her sister Anne required annual stipends because her husband, Thomas, lord Howard, would not receive his inheritance until his father's death (long after the death of Anne). Sister Katherine and her three children received both pension and gifts of clothing because Katherine's husband, William Courtenay, had fallen out of favor with Henry. The queen took into her household Arthur Plantagenet, one of the illegitimate sons of her father, Edward IV.

Frequent charitable contributions depleted Elizabeth's privy purse and contributed to her constant need for money. She covered her bills by borrowing money from Henry or other creditors. Henry returned the favor and borrowed money from his queen. The finances between Henry and Elizabeth were a muddled mess, and the queen never had an income

sufficient to cover her daily expenses. But she certainly wore luxurious jewels—many of them gifts from Henry—even as she mended the hems of her own skirts.

As the Tudor reign grew more secure, England prepared for the event that would certify its status as an equal among other rich, powerful European nations. Katherine of Aragon, daughter of Spain, would marry Prince Arthur, heir to the English throne. England never saw such splendor as Katherine of Aragon's arrival in the city of London. Once more, ceremony became political theater—and policy—as pageant stations welcomed Katherine with allegories of Tudor power and wealth. Both English subjects and European visitors noticed.

Arthur's wedding at St. Paul's Cathedral, the post-wedding tournaments at Westminster, and the pageants at the newly built Richmond Palace entertained thousands of dignitaries and guests with elaborate banquets and masques. When the Spanish prepared to depart, Henry lavished them with luxurious gifts, bestowing the leftover jewels on Katherine's attendants remaining in England. This king spent money extravagantly—prodigally, even—in ways that quite belie the penurious reputation he would gain after his queen's death.

Queen Elizabeth was centrally present at the ceremonies, but she may have played a role more important than has hitherto been recognized. Richmond Palace, newly constructed to impress both Henry's English subjects and European visitors, was a magnificent edifice built in the Burgundian style with many-windowed galleries and brick facades. Burgundian architectural design had initially been brought to England by Edward IV when he constructed St. George's Chapel, Windsor. Subsequent Tudor renovations, such as those at Greenwich palace, also incorporated Burgundian influences. Among the records for Greenwich, a mason's payment credits the "new platt [plan]...devised by the Queen." Simon Thurley, the foremost authority on Tudor architecture, writes: "the reference to Queen Elizabeth's part in the design...suggests that the readily discernible Burgundian influences reflect her personal taste rather than the King's."ⁱⁱⁱ Indeed, the note states that the Queen "devised" the very plan itself.

Because contemporary records are so scanty and incomplete, Elizabeth of York's contributions to contemporary architecture—and other arts—cannot be determined. While Elizabeth's privy purse accounts include frequent payments to musicians, minstrels, and court entertainers, those expenditures are nothing out of the ordinary. Someone, however, with both authority and interest stimulated the pageantry and artistry that became the hallmark of the first Tudor Court. Gordon Kipling's *Triumph of Honour* credits the Wydevilles and their Burgundian connections for many of these innovations.^{iv} Elizabeth of York's aesthetic sensibilities, inherited from her Wydeville mother and her Burgundian grandmother, may have played a generative role in the artistic innovations that characterized the Tudor court. Until additional evidence proves that point, however, her role remains undetermined.

Fifteen years of marriage produced a remarkably affectionate and stable relationship between Henry and Elizabeth. The tragic pattern of Elizabeth's early life, however, soon reasserted itself. Within five months of his elaborate wedding at St. Paul's, Arthur died. The boy lovingly nurtured by his parents to extend the Tudor dynasty—the heir whose marriage placed England on an equal footing with other European nations—fell ill around Easter and died on April 1, 1502. Henry and Elizabeth were devastated.

When Henry received word of his son's death, he immediately sent for Elizabeth, "saying that he and his Queen would take the painful sorrows together." Elizabeth comforted her husband, but upon returning to her own chamber she herself broke down. Her ladies sent for Henry: "Then his Grace of true gentle and faithful love, in good haste came and

relieved her, and showed her how wise counsel she had given him before, and he for his part would thank God for his son, and would she should do in like wise.”^v

Throughout the tragic moments of her life, Elizabeth of York had been sustained by family—her mother, her sisters, her cousins. Perhaps that explains her decision to journey to Wales just four months after Arthur’s death, even though she was pregnant with her eighth child. Elizabeth visited her first cousin Anne, daughter of Henry Stafford, duke of Buckingham, and Katherine Wydeville (Elizabeth’s maternal aunt). Anne was sister of Elizabeth Stafford, the queen’s principal Lady-in-Waiting. In the happy days of their youth, the cousins had grown up together.

Although Elizabeth was ill at the beginning of the journey, she apparently recovered with no noticeable problems. Her arrival in Wales received a warm welcome, perhaps alleviating some of the pain of Arthur’s death. After the queen returned home, she resumed her normal routine with trips between Windsor, Richmond, Westminster, Greenwich, Baynard’s Castle, the Tower of London, and Hampton Court.

On February 2, 1503, Queen Elizabeth gave birth to her eighth child, Katherine, at the Tower of London. Neither mother nor daughter survived the ordeal. Elizabeth of York died on her 37th birthday, February 11, 1503. Her daughter Katherine died nine days later.

Henry changed dramatically after Elizabeth’s death. History remembers a penurious, unsympathetic—at times mean-spirited—Henry VII. Gone were the royal parties, the lavish pageants and tournaments, the liberal gifts bestowed on family, friends, and visitors. Gone was the quiet, steady Queen Consort who had been at his side during the first 17 years of his reign. Though she lacks the political panache to interest proper historians, Elizabeth of York may hold an essential key to understanding the reign of Henry VII. The stabilizing force she provided to nation and husband was powerful both politically and personally. When she died, the bereft Henry VII lived in a diminished world.

Much remains unknown about Elizabeth of York. In my biography, I have tried to gather the known material about this neglected queen in hopes that it might become a springboard for further investigations. Both Elizabeth’s contributions to Henry’s reign and to the artistic innovations of England’s emerging Renaissance deserve further study. Perhaps a graduate student somewhere will delve into a dusty box of fifteenth-century records and find another note that mentions Elizabeth of York’s “platt,” the generative force behind an important aesthetic innovation. Maybe even a novelist will be inspired to flesh out this queen’s life in fiction (without turning her into a witch).

My most fervent desire is that this queen’s reputation for being “gracious” will not deter further investigation into a life worth knowing.

End Notes:

- i. *The Great Chronicle of London*, ed. A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley (London: George Jones, 1938), 203.
- ii. For a review of the available evidence, see Arlene Naylor Okerlund, *Elizabeth of York* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 35-39.
- iii. Simon Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England: Architecture and Court Life 1460-1547*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1993), 35-36.
- iv. Gordon Kipling, *The Triumph of Honour: Burgundian Origins of the Elizabethan Renaissance*. (Leiden: University Press for the Sir Thomas Browne Institute, 1977).
- v. *The Receyt of the Ladie Kateryne*, ed. Gordon Kipling, (Oxford: University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1990), 80-81.

Edward IV King of England 1461-83, the original type two diabetic?

Peter Stride

*Then you conclude, my grandma, he is dead.
The King mine uncle is to blame for it.*

King Richard 111, II, ii 12-131

Abstract:

Edward IV, second son of Richard, Duke of York and Cecily Neville, was born on 22nd April 1442. Edward IV was renowned for his radiant good looks on ascending the English throne. He was the epitome of youthful vigour and health. Why did the warrior king with an exuberant lifestyle die of natural causes at forty? The new hypothesis of diabetes is suggested.

Introduction:

The death of Edward IV was a pivotal point in history. The good aspects of the following Tudor and Stuart dynasties are currently the dominant English perception, but these two tragic centuries included a widespread civil war, regicide, religious schism and genocide, torture and execution of women, the risk of foreign invasion and the destruction of England's architectural heritage.

The Young King:

Edward was a huge man. His skeleton, exhumed in 1789, measured 6 feet 3-3/4 inches, thus in 15th-century England he was nearly a foot taller than average. Contemporary writers described Edward in superlatives, "the tallest", "the fairest", "the strongest", and was well renowned for his fair complexion and good looks. The Croyland Chronicles² described Edward as "a person of most elegant appearance and remarkable beyond all others for the attractions of his person." Thomas More,³ a Tudor supporter, described his appearance:

"He was of visage lovely; of body mighty, strong and clean made; howbeit in his latter days, with over liberal diet, somewhat corpulent and burly but nevertheless not uncomely."

Ross described Edward as neither scholar nor saint, but noted his charm, courage, affability, leadership and especially his retentive memory.⁴

Edward's Martial Prowess and Victories on the Battlefield:

Edward first fought in battle at nineteen, exhibiting a mature and calm control beyond his years, and beyond that of his opponents. Edward destroyed the House of Lancaster in a brilliant series of spectacular military victories. Friend and foe could see his inspiring leadership in the front line of battle, using his great height to advantage, and smashing his battle-axe at the nearest enemy.

Edward was also an outstanding battlefield commander. Edward's knowledge of flanking movements and feints gained tactical battlefield advantages. Edward could 'read' a battleground and position his forces favourably. He manoeuvred his forces, at both Barnet and Tewkesbury in the dark, such that Lancastrian commanders found themselves in unfavourable situations by dawn.

Edward also had Napoleon's favourite characteristic, luck, winning decisive battles when nature and fortune intervened. A snowstorm at Towton and heavy fog at Barnet helped turn those battles into decisive Yorkist victories. Edward fought and won seven battles, though twice he fled rather than risk a battle on unfavourable terms. Paul Murray Kendall, described Edward as "The mightiest warrior in Europe."⁵

Health Issues:

Edward enjoyed excellent health for many years. He had an acute illness, “the sickness of the pockys,”⁶ perhaps measles, in 1462, but recovered uneventfully.⁷ Edward escaped the plague, though this disease claimed his son George in 1479. Edward’s control over his destiny and his instinctive mastery of events deserted him in the 1469 rebellion, before he regained his throne, following the battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury. Falkus theorized that Edward had a nervous breakdown. Speculation draws parallels to Henry VI’s periodic insanity, and perhaps porphyria, present three centuries later in the Royal Family.⁷

Declining Health:

On regaining the throne, he ate and drank excessively. Mancini reported that he used emetics ⁶, but still appeared grand and regal. Commynes saw Edward in 1475 during the French Campaign and noted Edward was “beginning to get fat and I had seen him on previous occasions looking more handsome.”⁴ Household records in 1478 state that Edward had health officers “including the doctor of phisic, who held consultation with the cook and stood much in the kings presence at his meals, counseling or answering to the king’s grace which diet is best according, and to tell the nature and operations of all the meats.”⁸ Doctor’s advice clearly fell on deaf ears in the 15th century as it does today!

Edward’s health began to fail, with increasing ailments. Between 1480 and 1482, England and Scotland engaged in warfare. Edward planned to join Richard, Duke of Gloucester in both 1481 and 1482 on Scottish campaigns. He ordered eighty butts of wine for his 1481 campaign.³ Edward reached Fotheringhay Castle to plan strategy with Gloucester in 1482, but returned to London, perhaps with failing health and energy,⁷ never joining the campaign. A reluctance to campaign in Scotland could reflect intolerance to cold, a symptom of hypothyroidism or alternatively as common sense.

After Richard’s army captured Edinburgh, Edward granted Gloucester extensive land, income and power in the north of England in January 1483. Scofield⁷ described this as extravagant and ill-advised, and that “the fatal illness now fast creeping upon him had so weakened his judgement and understanding that he did not realize what he was doing.” Scofield is an acknowledged Edward IV expert. She wrote a two-volume history of Edward, and read extremely widely among primary and secondary sources about him. She did not offer any medical evidence, but believed Edward had an underlying disease.

Death:

Edward fell fatally ill at Easter 1483, initially collapsing while fishing on 30th March, and improved transiently, but weakened daily. He improved to add codicils to his will, naming his brother Richard as Protector. He then died on 9th April. The king’s barber-surgeon and physician present at his death were Jacques Freis and William Hobbes. Hobbes was appointed Serjeant Surgeon to Edward in 1461, being the first holder of this eminent office persistent today with a current appointee.⁹ Hobbes received a salary of 40 marks, with a meat and drink allowance. The key to this analysis is the medical knowledge base of the time, plus the experience and skills of Hobbes.

Scofield, Falkus, Hicks¹⁰ and Ross give accounts of his death, quoting the primary sources of Edward’s last days. Suggested causes include apoplexy, indigestion, typhoid, appendicitis, cirrhosis and even poisoning. The Croyland Chronicle, so often accurate, reports that the court was baffled, and gave a cryptic comment.²

“The king took to his bed neither worn out with old age nor yet seized with any known kind of malady, the cure of which would not have appeared easy in the case of a person of more humble rank.”

Mancini wrote that Edward was depressed when his treaty with the Flemings unravelled, that splendid Royal theatrical performances hid his sorrow, and that a cold was the terminal event.⁸

“Edward fell into the greatest melancholy, lamenting that by his inactivity the Flemings, ancient friends, had been permanently estranged from him.

“...so as to mitigate or disguise this sorrow, yet was he never able altogether to hide it.

“...they say there was another reason for his death was, that he being a tall man and very fat though not to the point of deformity allowed the cold damp to strike his vitals, when one day he was taken in a small boat, with those whom he had bidden go fishing and watched their sport too eagerly. He there contracted the illness from which he never recovered.”

Mancini said the reconciliation between the Woodvilles and Lord Hastings occurred two days before death, though More stated this was a few hours before death.⁸ Commynes thought he was depressed following the Treaty of Arras, and twice states that apoplexy caused death.¹¹ Vergil said the cause was unknown, but hinted at poison.¹² Tudor historian Edward Hall suggested the malaria Edward caught in France in 1475 had “suddenly turned into an incurable quarten fever.” Thomas Basin, a French historian, said that a too-hearty dinner on Good Friday killed him.⁸

After Edward’s death his body was “laid upon a board all naked, saving he was covered from the navel to the knees” for public display for 10-12 hours.⁷ No visible abnormality was recorded.

Exhumation:

David Hughson detailed Edward’s exhumation. His skeletal measurements provided little medical information beyond the height and apparent lack of skeletal trauma.¹³

“The body, enclosed in a leaden and trooden coffin, measuring six feet three inches in length, appeared reduced to a skeleton.”

Possible causes of death:

There are no recorded clinical features of Edward’s terminal illness; hence his cause of death remains undiagnosed. His character fluctuations with periods of immense physical prowess, vigorous leadership and initiative, alternating with periods of inertia and poor insight impose problems in detecting developing medical problems between 1480 and 1483. Most historians believe Edward’s obesity and inactivity contributed to his ailments, and eventually to his death. His demise from an apparently minor infection suggests an underlying, undetected ailment exacerbating the acute condition. Edward fell ill after catching a cold on a fishing trip, rallied briefly, then deteriorated and died, probably of pneumonia.

Rosemary Hawley Jarman’s novel, *We speak No Treason*, places William Hobbes, Edward’s physician, at the bedside, setting “blood irons to the royal veins and vainly all but drained that vast body.”¹⁴ Though fictional, this is a possible contributing factor to the king’s demise. Seven generations later, excessive bleeding by equally enthusiastic but ignorant physicians contributed to the demise of Charles II.

Edward was a mediaeval sex addict, his legendary sexual activities and numerous partners suggesting a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Mancini wrote “he was licentious in the extreme...he pursued with no discrimination the married and the unmarried, the noble and the lowly: however he took none by force.”⁸ Edward IV had ten children with his queen, Elizabeth Woodville, and perhaps five illegitimate children, between 1466 and 1480, and

then no more, suggesting secondary infertility or erectile dysfunction, though Jane Shore appeared happy with his company until his death. However, syphilis, the most severe venereal disease, was not endemic in Europe for another decade¹⁵, and the genital symptoms of other STDs were not recorded in his partners, nor his partners' other sexual contacts. Edward's intact cognitive function on his deathbed excluded the dementia of tertiary syphilis. Henry VIII probably was the first English monarch with syphilis, though he may also have been diabetic.

All Edward's reports indicate progressive weight gain, not terminal wasting or internal bleeding, making cancer or tuberculosis improbable. Mancini's implication of a stroke is unlikely with intact speech, cognitive and motor functions during the deathbed scene. Increasing weight and lethargy suggest endocrine disease, with diabetes and hypothyroidism possible. Cushing's disease and gigantism are feasible but very rare diseases of the pituitary gland, which will not be further explored in this article.¹⁶

Hypothyroidism, a deficiency of thyroid hormone, causes fatigue, weakness, weight gain, intolerance to cold, depression, constipation, impaired memory and cognitive function and decreased libido, then ultimately life-threatening depression, heart failure or coma. The Greeks were aware of goitres, but in mediaeval days diagnosis and treatment of hypothyroidism were several centuries away. Hypothyroidism in England was found in Derbyshire, the only landlocked county, from deficient iodine in the diet, hence the term *Derbyshire Neck*, a synonym for goitre. Edward clearly enjoyed a diet of quantity, quality and variety, including fish, excluding dietary iodine deficiency.

Annette Carson in *Richard III: the Maligned King*¹⁷ suggested arsenic poisoning causing Edward's death. She reviewed many original documents, but accepts Collins'¹⁸ recent flawed medical analysis that arsenic poisoning caused Edward's death. However, arsenic causes severe abdominal pain, diarrhoea and vomiting, thirst and excessive salivation; dryness in the throat with a hoarse voice, difficulty of speech, then convulsions, circulatory collapse, delirium and death. Arsenic is an improbable cause of Edward's death, as these severe symptoms were not recorded.

Collins excludes diabetes in Edward IV as a wasting disease. He does not differentiate the improbable juvenile type 1 diabetes with weight loss from the possible type 2 diabetes associated with obesity. Collins incorrectly excludes "...proposed mycoplasmosis (sic) pneumoniae, an amoebic(sic) disease contracted from stagnant water" believing that pneumonia always causes death within hours, not days. *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* are small bacteria lacking a cell wall found in animal hosts.

Diabetes:

Polyuria or excess urine output, a symptom of diabetes, was first described three and a half millennia ago by the ancient Egyptian physician Hesy-Ra in the Ebers Papyrus, and named *diabetes* by the Greek Aretaeus of Cappadocia in 250 BC. The attraction of ants to diabetics' urine was noted in India at about the same time.

The Persian physician, Avicenna, (980-1037) noted the sweet taste of diabetic urine, the abnormal appetite and erectile dysfunction in his textbook, *The Canon of Medicine*¹⁹, still used in 15th century England, and European Universities as late as 1650 suggesting little medical advance for six centuries. In Edward's time medical knowledge was probably less than in the Middle East four hundred years previously. Gaddesden's authoritative text *Rosa Medicinae* 2 written between 1307 and 1314, and possessed by many doctors, refers to diabetes, but omits the taste of urine.²⁰

Getz does not mention diabetes in her Mediaeval Medicine text.²¹ Gilbertus Anglicus's translation of *Compendium Medicinae*²² around 1240 was often used by 15th century English doctors. Anglicus stated "diabetes is an vnmesurable pissing of vrin" and considers it is

caused by “moche medling with wymen” and “it cometh of drinking of stronge wyne.” Anglicus appears to be ‘on to something’ lost in today’s texts perhaps relevant to Edward! However he does not mention sweet urine. It is unknown whether William Hobbes and Jacques Freis were aware of this condition, but the available texts cast doubt on the ability of 15th century physicians to diagnose diabetes.

The English physician Thomas Willis revived the tasting of sweet urine, and in 1675 added the word *mellitus*. Matthew Dobson discovered sugar to cause the sweet taste of diabetic urine in 1776. William Heberden, a forefather of English medicine, wrote his celebrated text in 1802²³. He considered diabetes a rare wasting disease, typical of insulin dependent type 1 diabetes, having seen 20 or less cases. He omits the current common type 2 diabetes of obesity, Edward’s postulated condition.

Sir Harold Himsworth’s publication in January 1936, 543 years after Edward’s death, clarified the distinction between juvenile type 1 diabetes and the maturity onset type 2 diabetes with obesity and insulin resistance.²⁴ Today the association between obesity and type 2 diabetes is well understood. 20% of the Australian population are obese, 50% are overweight, 10% have diabetes or pre-diabetes, and diabetes is four times more common in the obese.

Maria de Medici, Queen of France, is also hypothesized to have been diabetic. She died in 1642, one hundred and fifty-nine years after Edward IV, still in a medical period when type 2 diabetes was unknown and when testing for sweet urine was not practised. Maria became grossly obese with overeating, died with gangrene of her right leg and skin infections. Her autopsy revealed both hardening of the arteries (arteriosclerosis) and pancreatic atrophy, both features of diabetes²⁵. Maria’s autopsy information is not available for Edward, but both became grossly obese with overeating, and died of infections, suggestive of type 2 diabetes.

Conclusion:

- Edward clearly suffered from obesity and lethargy
- He may have been depressed by his failed foreign policy, and appears uncharacteristically unmotivated in his last year of life.
- He may have suffered a terminal pneumonia.
- Some underlying but undiagnosed disease may have been present. Diabetes and hypothyroidism are possible explanations of increasing obesity and lethargy, which could exacerbate a mild infection, contributing to death. Diabetes is the more likely.

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Duchess of York—Cecily Neville: 1415-1495

“Queen of Right”

Elizabeth Dorsey Hatle

Editor's note: This article is reprinted in full because the endnote numbers were missing in the article's text (thanks to Geoffrey Wheeler for bringing it to my attention). A postscript by the author is included after the endnotes.

Cecily Neville, duchess of York, was born in the castle of Raby in County Durham in North East England. During her childhood there, she became famed for her beauty, acquiring the name of ‘The Rose of Raby.’ Later she was given another name, ‘Proud Cis’. Cecily’s

grandmother was Katherine Swynford, the third wife of Duke John of Gaunt. It was said that Cecily bore a striking resemblance to her grandmother; considered one of the loveliest women in England. Katherine Swynford bore Duke John four bastard children before he married her and had her children declared legitimate under the surname of Beaufort. Only this legitimizing made it possible for Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland, to make Cecily's mother, Joan Beaufort, his second wife. Cecily was the twenty-second of the Earl's twenty-three children, the thirteenth by Joan Beaufort.¹

Cecily was betrothed to Richard Plantagenet, Earl of Cambridge, of March and of Ulster, and Duke of York. Richard of York had a double royal descent from King Edward III. "Edward III headed a very large family. He sired more legitimate sons than any other king before George III."² Richard's mother, Anne de Mortimer, was the senior heiress of Edward's second son, Lionel, Duke of Clarence. On his parental side, Richard's grandfather was Edmund, Duke of York and Edward III's fourth son. When his parental uncle, his father's older brother, died at Agincourt childless, Richard was the sole heir and was granted the Dukedom of York by King Henry V. Richard of York was powerful, popular and outspoken. Queen Margaret, Henry VI's wife, saw him as a real threat to her mentally unstable husband's throne.

When Richard of York was appointed Governor of France, Cecily followed him there to serve Queen Margaret. After their marriage, the relationship apparently remained a close one. Cecily traveled with her husband on his overseas assignments in the French territories and in Ireland.³ Richard had been kept short of funds with which to pay the army and used his own money to pay England's war expenses in France. Edward IV was born in France and "Edward's low-key christening may have been due to a premature birth, as suggested, but might also have had something to do with the state of his father's finances at the time."⁴ Richard, Duke of York, was then appointed to be Lieutenant General in Ireland for a period of ten years. It was politically expedient for the Queen to have Richard out of England. Richard was 36 and Cecily 32 when they went to Ireland with their children.

After Richard, Duke of York returned from Ireland with Cecily and their children, he had concluded he must claim the crown in his own right or be doomed to fight an unending series of battles with Queen Margaret of Anjou. Cecily seems to have taken a brief rest from the exhausting business of childbearing until she produced Richard, her last surviving child, at Fotheringhay on October 2, 1452. Richard was too young to enjoy the sort of separate establishment with household governors and tutors, which Duke Richard provided for his two eldest sons, Edward of March and Edmund of Rutland, at Ludlow Castle. "As a small boy he was probably brought up, along with George, at Fotheringhay under the direct care of a mother renowned for her unostentatious piety."⁵

The ambitious Queen Margaret called a council of Lancastrians and their supporters in 1455 to guard against the 'enemies' of the king. York and his supporters realized their danger, and soon the dynastic war began in earnest, with a Yorkist victory at the battle of St. Albans. Edmund Beaufort, Cecily's cousin and the Queen's favorite, was killed. The crown confiscated Richard's estates and many of his followers' estates. Proclaimed an outlaw, he was forced to flee. The duchess of York stayed behind and contemporary chronicles report Cecily made her way to King Henry VI and interceded for many of the duke's people. The duchess was placed under the protective custody of her sister, Anne Neville, duchess of Buckingham, whose husband was one of Henry VI's principal supporters.

York was regarded with suspicion on various fronts after St. Albans. His double royal descent threatened young Prince of Wales's acquisition of the throne; he was negotiating for the marriage of his son Edward into the Burgundian ruling family and as a supporter of the Nevilles, supporting the Nevilles in their feud with the Percys. In December, 1460, York

went to Sandal Castle with an army. On December 30 he was outnumbered and outmaneuvered by Queen Margaret's army, suffering a crushing defeat. The Battle of Wakefield took from Cecily a husband, son, brother and nephew. Concerned for their physical safety, she had George and Richard leave England later. Other countries weren't wracked by the same dynastic instability as England. England was a far more violent society. In the fifteenth century, no fewer than five English kings were deposed, three of them in just thirty years.

"It was of no consequence that York's claim came through the female line: in England, unlike France at this time, transmission through females was allowed. Technically, the Yorkist line enjoyed precedence over the Lancastrian."⁶ Edward IV inherited his father's claim to the throne of England. His cousin, Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, took control of London. Edward then had a decisive victory at the Battle of Towton in 1461 where the Lancastrian army was virtually wiped out. In the early years of Edward IV's reign, Cecily's role as king's mother was important and influential. It is said that she could 'rule the king as she pleases.'⁷ A bride for Edward IV seemed the next step for Cecily's close family to attend to, but on May 1, 1464, the king secretly married a commoner, Elizabeth Woodville (or Wydville), an act that had a profound effect on many fifteenth century lives.⁸

When Edward married Elizabeth Woodville, Edward's mother, like everyone else, was unaware of his secret marriage until months after it occurred. Elizabeth, widowed daughter of Richard Woodville and Jacquetta, Duchess of Bedford, had five brothers and six unmarried sisters. Elizabeth's two sons and her siblings, along with their spouses and friends, formed an acquisitive group. Cecily and her husband's brood had been given a vast network of kindred, and few English kings have ever been as widely and closely related to the aristocracy as their children were. Elizabeth's lineage wasn't probably what Cecily had in mind as a wife for her son. When she heard of the marriage the Duchess of York threatened to denounce the King as a bastard. (Richard always remembered the threat). She told him that a monarch must be all but priestlike and could not be 'defiled with bigamy.'⁹ Some historians have suggested that the comment Edward was a bastard didn't arise from Cecily being unfaithful to her husband but rather Cecily's response to Edward's furtive marriage to Elizabeth.

George, Duke of Clarence, following his marriage to the Earl of Warwick's daughter Isobell, allied himself with Warwick and Queen Margaret to overthrow Edward IV. "Duchess Cicely no doubt gave them disturbing news of their brother George. She had recently seen him at Warwick's castle of Sandwich in Kent, where a threateningly large contingent of Nevilles were gathering, including the Archbishop of York. Clarence had gone there on 7 June (1469). He must have been painfully embarrassed by the unexpected arrival of his mother a week later—clearly she had learnt of a plot and hoped to dissuade him from taking part in it. She probably guessed that she had been unsuccessful and hastened to the Midlands to warn Edward."¹⁰ George realized his mistake after he was in France and was restored to favor. But Clarence couldn't stop plotting against his brother in his greed for more land and possibly also wanting the throne. "Most modern authorities believe that Clarence's death came at the vehement urging of the Woodvilles. They were his staunch enemies and the queen's brother, Lord Rivers, was considerably enriched by Clarence's death, receiving control of his vast estates."¹¹ George was privately executed at the Tower in 1478.

Cecily did not cut off contact with Edward after George's death. She was godmother to Edward's and Elizabeth last child, Bridget.¹² Richard, though, had a harder time. Richard well knew Clarence's failings, but despite them, George was the companion of his childhood. Even writers hostile to Richard describe him as being extremely upset with Edward over the order to execute Clarence. Edward fell fatally ill at Easter, 1483, but he

lingered long enough to add to his will brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester as Protector after his death. Richard was not present when Edward died on April 9th; he was at Middleham Castle in North Yorkshire when he received the news of his brother's death. The news didn't reach him until mid-April. Word of Edward's death appears to have been delayed by the Woodvilles.

Richard arrived in London and took Edward V and his younger brother to the Tower of London. Richard insisted on public oaths proclaiming Prince Edward's rule and he took the oath himself. On arriving in London, Richard moved in with his mother at Baynard's Castle, her splendid home on the River Thames, just west of St. Paul's Cathedral. He continued on good terms with his mother, holding important meetings in her home even after he no longer resided there.¹³ News came forward that Edward and Elizabeth's secret marriage wasn't legal. It was possible there was a pre-contract between Edward and Lady Eleanor Butler. Not calling banns as Elizabeth and Edward did, thus not asking if someone knew cause why this couple could not be married, implies there were legal impediments to their marriage. Parliament's *Titulus Regius* ruled that Edward and his brother Richard could not be rightful heirs to the throne because their parents' marriage was invalid.

Once Richard learned about Lady Eleanor Butler and the troth, it was inevitable that he would take the crown; to have done otherwise would have been to deny not only his own right but that of his son. Cecily held a commanding behind-the-scenes influence within the Yorkist party, and Edward IV and his brother Richard duke of Gloucester regularly discussed matters of state with her.¹⁴ Cecily wouldn't expect Richard to put his brother's children before his own son. Again, Cecily supported a son's decisions on what he felt he had to do. On June 22, 1483, outside of St. Paul's Cathedral, a statement was read by Doctor Shaa, on behalf of Richard declaring for the first time that he was taking the throne for himself on the grounds that Edward IV's marriage to Elizabeth was invalid due to Eleanor Butler still being alive when Edward and Elizabeth married, and that Richard was the true heir to the throne, not his nephew Edward V. "Every indication is that Richard and his mother were on the best of terms and continued so even after Shaa's oration."¹⁵

Edward V and his brother Richard were still alive and in the Tower when Richard III left on his progress in late July. Some sources claim that the princes were killed three months after Richard took control of the young king. This would place their death at the end of July, after Richard had left London on his royal progress. Cecily, during Richard's reign as king, lived the life of a Benedictine nun, "was noted for piety, something of a mystic who read the works of Walter Hilton, St. Catherine of Siena and St. Bridget of Sweden."¹⁶ Whether Cecily believed the rumors of her grandsons being put to death by her son, we'll never know. She and Richard were close; possibly exchanging reading materials. "He must have absorbed something of his mother's piety to judge from his spiritual reading."¹⁷ Cecily continued to have contact with him until his death at the Battle of Bosworth. "A rare survival is a letter Richard wrote to his mother from Pontefract, dated 3rd June, 1484. In this letter Richard beseeches his mother "to be a good and gracious lady" to his friend, Francis Lovell, who would look after her estates in Wiltshire. He signed the letter "Your most humble son, Richard rex."¹⁸

A miniature from the Luton Guild Book shows Edward IV and his queen, Elizabeth Woodville, kneeling before an image of the Trinity. Cecily, in royal robes, displaying the quarterings of England and France, enjoyed particular precedence, being placed immediately behind the queen. The difference, and it was an important one, was that Cecily had by then been posthumously recognized as 'queen of right': her late husband honored as 'rightful king of England.'¹⁹ 'Proud Cis' borne twelve children, outliving all but one of them, and lost a much beloved husband whose claim to the throne she supported wholeheartedly. One of her sons ordered the execution of another son. Two grandsons died under mysterious

circumstances. Dynastic struggles were a part of her long life and she was a consummate pragmatist to endure her family tragedies. Cecily Neville, Duchess of York, died at Berkhamsted Castle at age eighty and at her request, was buried at Fotheringhay beside her husband and son Edmund.

Notes:

1. *Richard III England's Black Legend*. Seward, Desmond. Franklin Watts Inc. New York, New York. 1983. Pg. 23
2. *The Three Richards*. Saul, Nigel. Hambledon and London Publishing. London, England. 2005. Pg. 153
3. *Royal Blood. Richard III and the Mystery of the Princes*. Fields, Bertram. Regan Books. New York, New York. 1998. Pg. 26.
4. *The Debate: Was Edward IV Illegitimate?* Withey, Valerie. Ricardian Bulletin. Autumn, 2004. Pg. 28-29.
5. *Richard III*. Ross, Charles. University of California Press. Los Angeles, California. 1981. Pg. 3
6. *The Three Richards*. Saul, Nigel. Hambledon and London Publishing. London, England. 2005. Pg. 216.
7. *The King's Mother*. Jones, Michael and Underwood, Malcolm. Cambridge University Press. New York, New York. 1992. Pg. 67.
8. *Royal Blood. Richard III and the Mystery of the Princes*. Fields, Bertram. Regan Books. New York. 1998. Pg. 32.
9. *Richard III England's Black Legend*. Seward, Desmond. Franklin Watts Inc. New York, New York. 1983. Pg. 39.
10. *Richard III*. Ross, Charles. University of California Press. Los Angeles, California. 1981. Pg. 43.
11. *Royal Blood. Richard III and the Mystery of the Princes*. Fields, Bertram. Regan Books. New York, New York. 1998. Pg. 58.
12. *Fair Neville's Woe, Cicely Duchess of York and Fotheringhay*. Wilson, Juliet. Chapel House. Wansford, England. 2007. Pg. 7.
13. *Royal Blood. Richard III and the Mystery of the Princes*. Fields, Bertram. Regan Books. New York, New York. 1998. Pg. 78.
14. *The King's Mother*. Jones, Michael and Underwood, Malcolm. Cambridge University Press. New York, New York. 1992. Pg. 255.
15. *Royal Blood. Richard III and the Mystery of the Princes*. Fields, Bertram. Regan Books. New York, New York. 1998. Pg. 98.
16. *Richard III. England's Black Legend*. Seward, Desmond. Franklin Watts Inc. New York, New York. 1983. Pg. 36.
17. *Richard III. England's Black Legend*. Seward, Desmond. Franklin Watts Inc. New York, New York. 1983. Pg. 87.
18. *Fair Neville's Woe. Cicely, Duchess of York and Fotheringhay*. Wilson, Juliet. Chapel House. Wansford, England. 2007. Pg. 11.
19. *The King's Mother*. Jones, Michael and Underwood, Malcolm. Cambridge University Press. New York, New York. 1992. Pg. 70.

Postscript:

In his note to the editor, Geoffrey Wheeler, Librarian, A-V & Press Records of the British Richard III Society recommends two articles by Dr. Joanna Laynesmith for additional research of Cecily Neville:

A Paper Crown: The Titles and Seals of Cecily Neville, Duchess of York, The Ricardian Vol. X, No. 133, June 1996, pgs. 429-435; and

The King's Mother: Cecily Neville, History Today, Vol. 56 Issue 3, March, 2006.

In her article Dr. Laynesmith examines claims that Edward IV was a bastard. Dr. Laynesmith personally told Mr. Wheeler that 'The Rose of Raby' and 'Proud Cis,' are myths, names for Cecily not verified by any written historical records of that time used in reference to Cecily Neville.

Elizabeth Dorsey Hatle's reply to Geoffrey Wheeler: nicknames are usually awarded to and not chosen by the recipients; based on a person's name or attributes. 'The Rose of Raby' and 'Proud Cis,' may not be historically documented, but 'Proud Cis' and 'The Rose of Raby' are apt and descriptive nicknames applicable to Cecily Neville from what we can verify about her life.



Errata

I want to thank Geoffrey Wheeler for pointing out the missing endnote numbers in the text of Hatle's article. Because this omission was not localized, but spread throughout the document, I felt the only sane thing to do was to reprint the entire article. In addition to the omission, Wheeler also questioned the contemporary use of "Rose of Raby" and "Proud Cis." Instead of transcribing Wheeler's hand written script and potentially introducing yet more errors, I opted to scan the letter and email it to Elizabeth Hatle, thus giving her the opportunity to respond as a postscript to the reprinted article.



Scattered Standards

New England Chapter Outreach

Sally Keil

One of the most important goals of the New England branch of the Richard III Society is 'outreach': educating others in the non-Shakespearian (!) view of the history of Richard III and his reign. It is further hoped that, by sufficiently engaging their interest, we may entice them to join our merry band. To that end we created a set of 4 color poster boards designed for public display that seek to draw people's attention with the headline of the 'Mystery of the Princes in the Tower'. Referred to as 'the library display', it is shown on our web site (www.r3ne.org).

Our display has been shown in the Portland (ME) Public Library, the Cheshire (CT) Public library, and other venues. As moderator of our branch I have been active in seeking to place this display in additional locations around the southern New England area.

When setting the display up in the Putnam (CT) Public Library, the librarian asked if we might wish to participate in their Saturday morning speaker series to talk about Richard III. I was happy to oblige and prepared a 2 hour lecture on Richard Plantegenet: his life and times. Accompanied by color slides the lecture was intended to introduce Richard as a person, not a dry historical figure. For example all references to others were given from Richard's perspective, i.e. the Duke of York is 'Father', Edward IV is 'brother Ned', etc.

Last year the Pomfret School in Pomfret CT set up the display for their students and also asked if we might give a lecture. The 2 hour presentation was cut down to 45 minutes (!) and given last spring.

Reviews

Ricardian Reading

Myrna Smith

I've a grand memory for forgetting. – Robert Louis Stevenson

Memory is the thing you forget with. – Alexander Chase

MOONWALKING WITH EINSTEIN: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything – Joshua Foer, Penguin Press, NY, 2011

I'm the first to admit that I enjoy an erratic memory. It works like Velcro on irrelevant and trivial information, but I have been known to get almost halfway through a book before recognizing that I have read it before. Since I usually don't remember how it came out in that case, I will go ahead and finish it.

Could I improve my memory? Josh Foer says that if he could do it, anybody can. After consulting with memory experts (many of whom, though they might not be autistic, definitely seem rather odd) he undertook to learn a system that helped him to win at the U.S. Memory Championship. It's nothing new; it was first promoted by Simonides of Ceos in the 5th century B.C.E., and popularized in the 15th century C.E. by Peter of Ravenna. It consists of associating whatever you want to remember with images that are ludicrous (as in the title), risqué or even obscene, and placing them in a Memory Palace, or loci, or your own front room. Although this might help in remembering random numbers, for example, and grocery lists, it is less obvious that it could remind one to put an item on the list in the first place, or deter brain frostbite: standing in front of an open refrigerator trying to remember what one was there for. But the technique can be used to remember a variety of facts. Peter of Ravenna, his contemporaries and predecessors, did it in a largely pre-literate society. It certainly helped Foer with the events in his Memory Olympics – memorizing a poem, the order of a deck of cards, etc.

Every development that has made reading easier – from the spacing of words, in about the 11th century, to indexing in the 14th, to the invention of movable type in the 15th, has had its critics, who decried the drying up of memory. Still, we wouldn't have these things undone, and we can take comfort in the fact that our memories, if patchy, may be better than we think: “(W)e forget how rarely we forget.” Feel free to use the simple tricks outlined in this book to help you remember, but it is more than a how-to book. You will meet some fascinating memories, both good and bad, as well as students at the Zen Nippon Chick Sexing School. What does memory have to do with determining the gender of baby chickens? Plenty, as it turns out.

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought/I summon up remembrance of things past,/I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,/And with old woes new wail my dear times' waste. – William Shakespeare

HOW SHAKESPEARE CHANGED EVERYTHING – Stephen Marche, Harper, NY, 2011

Stephen Marche starts this book with a sweeping statement: “William Shakespeare was the most influential person who ever lived. He shaped our world more than any political or religious leader, more than any explorer or engineer.” Really? More than Martin Luther, Mohammad, Lincoln? Well, he was indirectly responsible for the introduction of the feathered pests known as starlings into the United States. Could Martin Luther say that? As for Lincoln, Marche fingers Shakespeare as an (unwitting) accomplice in his assassination. That the Bard has changed the way we think about sex is open to doubt – that activity no more began in the 1590s than it did in the 1960s. But he has certainly influenced the way

we speak, although “there’s no way to tell whether Shakespeare plucked a word out of his head or off the street.” But, he goes on, quoting journalist Bernard Levin:

“...if you claim to be more sinned against than sinning, you are quoting Shakespeare; ...if you act more in sorrow than in anger, ...if your lost property has vanished into thin air, if you have ever refused to budge an inch or suffered from green-eyed jealousy, if you have played fast and loose,...been tongue tied, hoodwinked or in a pickle, if you have knitted your brows, made a virtue of necessity, insisted on fair play, slept not one wink...laughed yourself into stitches, had short shrift, cold comfort or too much of a good thing, if you have seen better days or lived in a fool’s paradise...you are quoting Shakespeare.”

And much, much more. This is not a one-man show, however. There is an interesting supporting cast, including the Booth brothers and the Bowdler siblings, who have gotten a somewhat undeserved reputation for Victoianizing the plays. In fact, they were from the Regency era, and restored more than they cut. The author adds a personal touch or two: he finds the best place for reading the Master is in mall food courts. Does he maybe carry his Bardolatry too far? He backtracks a little, calling it “an incontestable fact that Shakespeare, while the highest of high poets, was also the most two-bit of hustlers.” So he gives Bardophobes such as Tolstoy, if not equal time, at least a venue. And yes, Shakespeare was Shakespeare.

You may not agree with all Mr. Marche’s conclusions, but they make for an enjoyable read, in food courts or anywhere else.

It’s a poor sort of memory that only works backwards. – Lewis Carroll

The proper memory for a politician is one knows what to remember and what to forget. – John Morley

THEN EVERYTHING CHANGED; Stunning Alternate Histories of American Politics: JFK, RFK, Carter, Ford, Reagan – Jeff Greenfield, G.P. Putnam’s Sons, NY, 2011

Ricardians often enjoy playing around with the idea of alternate histories: What if Richard had won at Bosworth? If you would like to apply the same technique to more recent happenings, take a look at this book, by a Washington insider. John Kennedy is killed after the election, but before his inauguration. RFK survives, is elected, and sounds, surprisingly, pretty conservative. It should be noted that each “history” stands on its own, and is not related to any other in the book. Can you imagine a President Hart? Greenfield does. He includes a lengthy afterword, explaining how, for example, the things that he has people say in the pages of this book were actually said for them in other contexts. Occasionally he breaks this rule, as when he has LBJ utter an earthy remark that actually came from the potty mouth of Joe Biden.(Adjective chosen advisedly.) And of course, since he, and we, know how it all came out, the author can’t resist the occasional tongue-in-cheek remark. Interesting to read, no matter what your politics are.

On the subject of “what-ifs”, David Baldwin, in **STOKE FIELD** (Pen & Sword, Barnsley, Yorkshire, 2006) gives us this to think about:

“It follows that if Henry VII had not become king there would have been no divorce from Queen Catherine and no bitter and dramatic rejection of papal authority. But it is likely that the Pope’s influence would have diminished in the 16th century...as more Englishmen espoused Protestantism. ...Change, therefore, there would have been, but it would have formed part of a gradual, perhaps almost imperceptible process, which would have been apparent only with hindsight. It is impossible to know how long a resurgent Yorkist dynasty would have lasted or what its kings would have done that the Tudors did not do; but it may be worth reflecting that the Stuarts would not have become rulers of England (unless another

princess had married into the House of Stuart and the royal line had still died out in England) and there would have been no English civil War. Parliament and the middle classes generally would have continued to grow in authority, but there is no reason to suppose that there would have been a revolution in the 17th century...It is, of course, possible that worse misfortunes would have been visited on England if the rivalry between the several Yorkist claimants had continued, and if the Wars of the Roses had been fought into an unknown future. Henry VII's victory may not have been an unmixed blessing for his countrymen, but the alternatives...were arguably potentially worse."

In other words, we just don't know. But this is a useful, scholarly but readable consideration of this "least-known" of the battles of the Wars of the Roses.

It's sweet to be remembered, but it's often cheaper to be forgotten. – Kin Hubbard

For an alternate view of real history, as opposed to "alternate history," read Barbara Holland's **HAIL TO THE CHIEFS: How to Tell Your Polks from your Tylers** (Ballantine Books, NY, 1989, 1993) In her preface, Ms. Holland says "No American President ever smothered his nephews in the Tower or clutched an asp to his bosom," but never mind. It's all good clean fun, and I forgive her. The author died in 2010 without issuing an update, but she did write several books about cats (among other things). These may be found in libraries or used bookstores.

Women and elephants never forget. – Dorothy Parker

SHE-WOLVES: The Women Who Ruled England Before Elizabeth – Helen Castor, HarperCollins, NY, 2011

Helen Castor, who has dealt with the Paston family in **BLOOD AND ROSES**, reviewed here recently, turns her attention to the royal family, specifically the ladies, although many of their male contemporaries would have said they were no ladies. They include Matilda, the mother of Henry II, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Queen Isabella, the wife of Edward II, and Margaret of Anjou. The latter especially opened herself to criticism. Matilda, a single woman, fought for her rights of inheritance to the throne; Eleanor and Isabella considered themselves wronged women, justified in attacking their menfolk. Although they were not acting as the ideal noblewoman would have, many men thought they had a good case, and supported them. Henry VI was alive and could not be held culpable of any fault. Margaret was fighting for him and her son just as a male genera would, though with a more personal interest.

The author also includes biographical sketches of the two Tudor queens. An amusing sidelight is John Knox hastening to assure Elizabeth I that when he thundered about the "monstrous regiment of women" he didn't mean *her*, only the regiment (rule) of Catholic women.

One distracting note: Ms. Castor names Richard III outright as a murderer. In the same paragraph, she says that Edward IV died of a stroke.. His contemporaries said he had caught "a chill." Modern authorities think it might have been appendicitis. None of his reported symptoms suggest a stroke.

Taken with a generous seasoning of salt, this is an interesting psychological portrait of these six powerful women, including Mary I and Elizabeth, whose picture adorns the cover.

Memory is the diary that we all carry around with us. – Oscar Wilde

QUEEN DEFIANT – Anne O'Brien, New American Library, NY, 2001

After thoroughly enjoying her first novel, **THE VIRGIN WIDOW**, I was thrilled to see that Anne O'Brien had a new book out this summer, on the early life of Eleanor of Aquitaine. It's called **QUEEN DEFIANT**. I have heard it said that this is the year for Eleanor, as there is an abundance of books about her being published, but I have to say I

have been very picky in which ones I have actually read. Since Ms. O'Brien showed us she has a talent for making her women strong and vibrant, with her portrayal of Queen Anne Neville in **THE VIRGIN WIDOW**, I was very excited to meet "her" Eleanor. Well, of course I wasn't disappointed.

Because the book is based on Eleanor's early life, the reader really feels transported to glorious Aquitaine, a place where chivalry is alive, love flows and troubadours sing. You can support the disappointment Eleanor must have felt to have to leave her home and be forced to marry Louis, Dauphin of France. The reader can see the black and white of Paris, in contrast to the fresh air and colors of Aquitaine. You are privy to Eleanor's frustration when Louis ends up caring more for religion than for making her comfortable, and you can taste her love for her uncle Raymond of Antioch. She is a character that we feel the realness of; we can BE Eleanor for the time we read.

Ms. O'Brien's Henry II is brilliant. I cannot begin to put words to the accurate portrayal she paints of Henry except to say it is just astonishing. In the back of the novel is a "question and answer" session with the author. The interviewer asks the question like this: "Was Henry as brilliant, mercurial, dynamic, and ambitious as he was portrayed? Ms. O'Brien's answer is "yes" and she goes on to say how much energy he had, how he was known for being intelligent and well-read, as well as formidable and forceful, with an ungovernable temper. This is the Henry that she hands us, and her skill at showing us the conversational exchanges between this brilliant and fair ruler and the intelligent, competent, vibrant Eleanor, was wonderful.

On a final note, one of the things I really appreciate about any novel is the historical research that has been done to prepare it. Ms. O'Brien has done this. She provides an ancestry chart and maps in the front of both her novels. Even for seasoned readers of historical fiction, it is still nice to visually be able to refer to it if necessary.

QUEEN DEFIANT will captivate the reader who has never read about Eleanor of Aquitaine and still engross the reader who has. I recommend diving immediately into this stunning and passionate page turner! –Lori J. Braunhardt

I divide all readers into two classes: those who read to remember and those who read to forget. – William Lyon Phelps

ENGLAND IN THE AGE OF CAXTON – Geoffrey Hindley, St. Martin's Press, NY, c 1979

When William Caxton began his career with the Merchant Adventurers in 1441, Henry VI was king of England. Englishmen were competing with Burgundians, Bretons, the Hanseatic League, Scandinavians, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italians for luxury goods, cod, herring, salt and spices. Foreign merchants in London faced English prejudice and protectionist laws. English merchants in continental cities faced similar obstacles. Storms and pirates threatened merchant ships of all nations. In 1441, the wine trade between England and Gascony was still thriving, but the French victory in 1453 ended that prosperity. More than twenty years of evasive action and a treaty with Brittany were needed to restore this trade to pre- 1453 levels.

During these ups and downs, William Caxton's career advanced. By the time he was governor of the Merchant Adventurers at Bruges, Edward IV was king. Caxton's position involved him in diplomacy as well as trade administration. He took part in trade negotiations with Burgundy. He was among the officials who welcomed Margaret of York to Burgundy when her wedding escort arrived in June 1468. During the wedding festivities, Caxton met Anthony, Earl Rivers. The Earl shared Caxton's interest in literature; in 1477, Caxton would publish Rivers' book, *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers*, making Rivers the first European layman to see his book in print.

In 1469, Caxton retired from retired from the Merchant Adventurers and joined Margaret of York's household. She encouraged Caxton to complete his translation of *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* into English. This was no easy task. Despite his self-critical disclaimers, Caxton's translation problems resulted from variations in manuscripts available to him rather than his limitations as a translator. When an opportunity to correct mistakes in his first edition of the *Canterbury Tales* appeared, Caxton took it.

After completing the translation of the *Recuyell*, Caxton studied printing in Cologne, so that he could print his own work. He may have met his long-term assistant, Wynkyn de Worde, there. After returning to Bruges, Caxton formed a business partnership with Colard Mansion, an influential bookseller and scrivener. While Edward IV was re-establishing his reign and invading France, Caxton was publishing two editions of *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, two devotional treatises, *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, and a French translation of *Jason and the Golden Fleece*, and teaching Mansion how to operate a printing press. By 1476, printing was established in Bruges, and Caxton was prepared to take a press to England.

In late 1476 or early 1477, Caxton and de Worde set up the first English printing press "at the sign of the Red Pale in the Almonry of Westminster Abbey." Caxton's advertisement for his shop is the oldest surviving English advertisement in print. Among the titles Caxton published in the next ten years were Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*, two editions of *Canterbury Tales*, *House of Tame*, and *Triolus and Creseyde*, Boethius' *Consolations of Philosophy*, and more.

While Caxton was pursuing his various careers, many aspects of English life were changing. Even the language was changing, and Caxton would influence this. In the fifteenth century, regional dialect variations caused communications difficulties among Englishmen. Because his books contributed to the emergence of a commonly understood version of the language, his admirers in later centuries considered him the founder of modern English.

This review has focused mainly on William Caxton's life, although not much is known about his early life. (His translation skills and success as a mercer and publisher suggest that he may have studied at one of the independent grammar schools that were springing up in England.) But the reader will find chapters about changing economic and social conditions, as well as the happenings that make it into the history books. Hindley's assessment of Richard III's reign is respectful:

"In his brief two-year reign, Richard III demonstrated the considerable abilities he had loyally devoted to his brother's service. In August 1485 King Richard died on the field of Bosworth. The outcome was decided by treachery but the king died heroically spurring his horse into the enemy line in defiance when he could easily have withdrawn and regrouped to fight another day....Now the crown had been tumbled in the mud of battle by an adventurer supported by French money, an army barely 5000 strong, and by treachery, at a time when the monarchy was effective and England was well and peacefully ruled. Bosworth was a frightening precedent for a new and still more unprincipled round in the wars which now seemed endemic...Before William Caxton died he saw three rebellions against the usurper. As late as 1495, Henry VII, who had cynically dated his own reign from the day before his victory and so put all the loyal supporters of King Richard at his mercy, was so insecure that parliament passed an act pardoning in advance any who assisted the reigning monarch, against possible future impeachment or attainder."

ENGLAND IN THE AGE OF CAXTON is a good companion to Paul Murray Kendall's **YORKIST AGE**. Although it covers similar topics, its coverage extends fifty years before and ten years after that of *The Yorkist Age*. Hindley's organization and emphasis differ from Kendall's. Reading Hindley's view of fifteenth century England can enhance understanding of Richard III's world and his contribution to it. **ENGLAND IN**

THE AGE OF CAXTON and **THE YORKIST AGE** can amicably share a Ricardian's bookshelf. – Marion Davis

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. – George Santayana

In the absence of any new Sedley or Frazz mystery, Lori Braunhardt has come up with another worthy contribution to historical detection, though in this case more Renaissance than Medieval.

THE SECOND DUCHESS – Elizabeth Loupas, New American Library, NY, 2011

THE SECOND DUCHESS was one of my favorite books of the summer. I knew I had to purchase it when I saw it was set in the Italian Renaissance, a particular favorite of mine, and was amazed to find this was the author's debut novel. You would think she had been writing historical fiction for years!

Ms. Loupas introduces us to Barbara of Austria, daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor, on her wedding day in 1565. She has accepted the hand of Duke Alfonso d'Este to escape a life in the convent, even though rumors that he murdered his last Duchess run rampant. Familiar with such gossip, Barbara is still willing to enter into the marriage knowing "...the Duke of Ferrera did not want me for my personal charms...but I did not care...with Alfonso d'Este came the magnificent court at Ferrera, the sun, the stars, the court of my own I had coveted for so long." But his personality seems to give credence to the gossip rather than to dispel it. He is arrogant and presumptuous, just the sort of man who might stop at nothing to dispense with a promiscuous, frivolous, unwanted young wife. Determined and strong-willed, Barbara makes it her mission to find out what really happened to the first duchess, at first without her husband's consent, then working with him.

As with any good mystery, the author gives us a handful of people who could be the "who-donel-it." Against Alfonso's express command, Barbara begins to meddle into the circumstances surrounding Lucrezia's death, and discovers that no one is above suspicion: the Duke himself; his brother the Cardinal; his spiteful sister, displaced as first lady of Ferrera; Lucrezia's powerful father, Duke Cosimo I of Florence: Alfonso's aunt, the Abbes of the convent where Lucrezia was either murdered, took her own life, or died of "an imbalance of humors." Barbara is impelled to find out the truth, as the same reasons for her predecessor's death might also inspire death for her.

The plot was engaging, enhanced by the mystery that really keeps the reader turning the pages. It was nice to read a novel that focuses on a time period and family that have not been done many times.

I love good dialogue, and boy do we get it here! A Barbara learns that her dark and mysterious husband is not to be crossed or trifled with. Her conversation and exchanges with the Duke are engaging and intelligent. I also enjoyed how the reader is revealed information from second-party sources, for example the serving maid gossiping about Lucrezia's murder on Barbara's wedding day. Another favorite author attribute is employed by Ms. Loupas, that of having two narrators. Barbara tells her story, then at the end of each chapter Lucrezia comments on Barbara's actions and gives added insight into her own demise. Although this can be problematic in some stories, Loupas, like Sharon Kay Penman, does a great job with it.

Barbara's determination to find out how Lucrezia died nearly costs her her marriage and her own life, and does causes the downfall of many influential courtiers. She is such a strong character, persistent, engaging, and charming, that the reader cannot help but love her and "root" for her.

My final kudos for this novel is for the historical research that has gone into it. Ms. Loupas supplies the reader with a map of Ferrera and select ancestral trees. She stays true

to the history and beautifully crafted life into long-ago persons. The characters are well-developed. Barbara and Alfonso are well matched and believable, and the flow of the story makes it a joy to read. In a plot full of engrossing twists and revelations, **THE SECOND DUCHESS** is a fascinating tale of history, love, passion, human character and murder. I look forward to many more books from this talented author. – Lori J. Braunhardt

“The memory of that moment,” the King went on, “I shall never, never forget.”

“You will, though,” the Queen said, “if you don’t make a memorandum of it.”

– Louis Carroll

Next time, I hope to have one or more reviews of Anne Easter Smith’s new novel about Cecily of York, **QUEEN BY RIGHT**. If you have read it, send your comments, please. And make a memorandum to send me reviews, as long or as short as you wish, on whatever medieval or semi-medieval subject strikes your fancy. Just remember your poor reading editor. Or as Josh Billings put it:

Remember the poor – it costs nothing.



Video Game Review: “*The Sims Medieval*”

Mary Retallick

In 2000, the computer game company Electronic Arts released “The Sims.” In the game’s whimsical world, you control the day-to-day activities of one or more simulated persons: everything from going to work to going to the bathroom. The game was a smash hit, spawning two sequels and multiple expansion packs. In March of 2011, Electronic Arts released a stand-alone game called “The Sims Medieval,” based on “The Sims 3.”

The first thing that needs to be said about “The Sims Medieval” is that it is designed for fans of the Sims, not students of medieval history. All of the persons and places in the game have fictitious names, except for the ones that you create. The short prologue read by actor Sir Patrick Stewart sets up the storyline. You are the Watcher, a deity who created the world of “The Sims Medieval” and its people, but the people you created began to fight amongst themselves, so you created Heroes to help them seek the way of the Watcher and find peace.

The first Sim Hero that you get to create is the Sim Monarch. You can choose to have a king or a queen, and you can choose to name your Sim Monarch and your Sim Kingdom whatever you want. You then get to dress them and pick their personality traits: two positive qualities and one fatal flaw. After you create your Sim Monarch, you begin a series of quests to unlock the other Sim Heroes in the game. The other types of Sim Heroes are: bard, blacksmith, two types of priests, knight, merchant, physician, spy, and wizard. Every time you unlock a new Sim Hero you have the opportunity to create your own Sim Hero by choosing a name and personality traits or you can choose from two Sim Heroes already created in the game.

Your Sim Hero has two basic needs: food and sleep. You tell your Sim Hero when to eat and when to sleep. If these basic needs are not met, your Sim Hero will begin to lose focus on the quest he is working on and the quest will become harder. There are over 60 different quests and some quests will involve multiple Sim Heroes, so you will need to keep your Sim Heroes fed, rested, and focused on their quests. In addition to the quests, there are two tasks your Sim Hero must fulfill every day. These are assigned each day at 9:00

AM game time and they have a deadline. Completing the tasks makes your Sim Hero happy. Neglecting them makes your Sim Hero lose focus on his quests.

Time in the game is flexible; you can choose to speed it up or slow it down. For example, you can speed time up when your Sim Hero is asleep, or while he is walking from place to place. Walking is the only form of transportation, and by the time you finish walking all over your kingdom, you really would want to trade it for a horse!

As you unlock more Sim Heroes, it is possible for them to have interactions with each other. You can make friends with another Sim Hero by doing things such as telling jokes and gossiping; you can make enemies by having swordfights and trading insults. You can also court another Sim Hero and get married to them. Courtship is rather involved, taking many romantic actions such as giving flowers and kissing. Eventually popping the question becomes one of the action choices, after which you can get married. Starting a family is also complicated as it requires that you seduce your spouse into doing what the game euphemistically calls “WooHoo.” Several “WooHoo” attempts may be needed to get the female Sim Hero pregnant, after which she will start having morning sickness. After the birth, they are babies for three days and then become children. Children can be assigned to do chores and if a Sim Hero dies, his or her child will inherit his/her occupation and assets.

The official “The Sims Medieval” game guide from Prima has 287 pages, detailing how you can do quests, furnish your Sim Hero’s home, purchase other buildings, conquer neighboring kingdoms, and many other things. There is certainly enough game play to occupy your time. The only negative I would say about the game is that it is somewhat repetitive (your Sim Hero will often receive the same daily tasks multiple times) and that it is not truly a picture of the medieval world, but a superficial depiction with a lot of modern in-jokes. For what it tries to be, “The Sims Medieval” is a good addition to the Sims family of games, but Ricardians might find it not to be their cup of tea because of the lack of real medieval history in the game. The game is available from Amazon.com for \$44.84, and a new expansion pack called “The Sims Medieval: Pirates and Nobles,” with a whole new set of quests and other new items, was released on August 30th for \$29.99.



Behind the Scenes

New to the Register—Authors interviewed to discuss some of their research that's not seen in the resulting historical novels. For our first interview, Anne Easter Smith has shared with us some of the research she uncovered for *Queen by Right*, her novel about Cecily Neville.

In the first article, Anne tells us why she was drawn to the Plantagenets.

Why I think the Plantagenets trump the Tudors

Aren't we sick of the Tudors yet? Of course, when I say that I run the risk of offending many readers and author colleagues, including my friend C.W. Gortner! But, let's face it, how many versions of Henry VIII and his wives, beheadings and burning of the monasteries, or the Virgin Queen's penchant for handsome young earls, naval heroes and white powder does it take to say “Enough, already!” I know I said it long before Philippa Gregory saw the error of her ways. Much to my dismay, she cast her eye upon the 15th century Plantagenets, whose crown the first Tudor king snatched from Richard III's head, and when she got a contract to write about a series about “my” characters, including Queen Elizabeth Woodville, Margaret Beaufort and Jacquetta of Bedford, I found myself whinging: “What a cheek, she's coming into *my* period.” When I complained to our mutual editor at Simon & Schuster, Trish Todd, she wisely admonished me: “A rising tide floats all boats, Anne.

If Philippa’s readers fall in love with your period through her, they’ll find your books, too.” So, thank you Philippa for joining our 15th century ranks: Sandra Worth, Vanora Bennett, Susan Higginbotham take heart!

From the political machinations that made up Henry II’s reign (the first Plantagenet) and his life with his always readable Eleanor of Aquitaine (see Sharon Kay Penman’s masterful *Time and Chance*), to Edward II, whose fling with Piers Gaveston almost brought down the monarchy and did cause his untimely and rather grisly end (Susan Higginbotham’s *The Traitor’s Wife*), and Edward III whose mistress, Alice Perrers, has been the subject of many a novel (Emma Campion’s comes to mind), and on to flamboyant Richard II, who almost went the same way as his ancestor Ted II, and not forgetting Harry V of Agincourt fame, and on to Richard III who did *not* murder those adorable little nephews in the Tower (IMHO—see my *A Rose for the Crown*), the Plantagenets have given us 330 years of fascinating stuff to write and read about. The Tudors? A paltry 118 (and really only 100, because who wants to read about boring Henry VII?)

When I set out to tell Richard III’s story, I thought it would be my one and only book, but once I began researching the Wars of the Roses (the cousins’ war between Lancaster and York, two branches of the Plantagenet family who each thought their claim to the throne better), I became totally engrossed in the period and knew I could not resist telling the whole of the York story once I got started.

My fourth book, which I hope you will consider, is *Queen By Right* and takes us back to the end of the Hundred Years War (don’t ask!) and right into the Wars of the Roses. Cecily Neville married Richard, duke of York, and bore thirteen children—two of whom became king: Edward IV and Richard III; and a daughter, Margaret, who became the most powerful woman in Europe at the time when she married the duke of Burgundy. One of the most compelling episodes in Cecily’s long life (she lived three weeks past her 80th birthday) was the trial and execution of Joan of Arc. Richard and Cecily of York were in Rouen with King Henry VI’s entourage during the four-month trial. It is probable that Cecily was one of the noble ladies present in the Old Market Place of the Norman capital on May 30, 1431, when Joan was burned at the stake. As the two women were housed in the same castle during the ordeal, I could not resist having them meet briefly. A little dramatic licence is allowed in fiction, isn’t it?

And we must not forget one of the most intriguing of all the Plantagenets: Richard the Lionheart, Henry II and Eleanor’s crusading son, and the subject of Sharon Penman’s next book. I can’t wait!

The following is an excerpt from a presentation given to the Richard III Society Branch in Australia.

Cecily Neville’s “So-called Affair”

I was drawn to writing about Cecily Neville as soon as I began researching my first—and what I thought would be my only—book “A Rose for the Crown.” I could not write Richard III’s story without knowing a lot about his parents and his siblings. Oddly, Cecily did not appear at all in that book, but in a few scenes her absence hung over the brothers Edward and Richard and you feel she is an indomitable presence in their lives. Indeed, I think one of the reasons Edward chose not to reveal his secret marriage to Elizabeth Woodville for so long was because he feared a slap upside the head from Proud Cis. And boy, did she give him one when the marriage was finally outed, and, according to the Italian visitor Dominic Mancini who was in London in 1484—twenty years after the fact—and was the first to write about the rumor, Cecily “fell into a frenzy.” It was partly because of the scorn she had for this upstart nobody Woodville woman who must now be called queen that she began

to style herself, “Cecily, the king’s mother, and late wife unto Richard, *by right* king of England and of France and lord of Ireland.” Or as my title infers, “Queen by Right.” One of the stories about Cecily that I was determined to get to the bottom of was the one about her having an affair with an archer in the garrison at Rouen named John Blaybourne that allegedly produced a son, our Edward IV, on April 22, 1442. Here’s what we know:

Although no proof exists of her statement, according to Mancini she is supposed to have retorted in anger at the Woodville-marriage time that Edward shouldn’t even be on the throne because he was a bastard. But the rumor must have reached other ears before Mancini wrote it down because in 1477, when her son, George of Clarence, finally aroused his brother Edward’s anger enough to be imprisoned for treasonous activity, he blurted out that Edward was a bastard. That was a final straw for Edward, and George was clapped in the Tower. Even then, the devoted mother Cecily found Edward on a pilgrimage to Thomas Becket’s shrine in Canterbury and went down on her knees to beg her oldest son to spare George. Her pleas went unheeded and George was eventually executed.

It was said that Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy and husband of Cecily’s daughter Margaret, would often refer to Edward as “Blaybourne” in fits of rage, and he died in 1477 long before Mancini’s visit.

And then there is the time in 1483 when all hell broke loose following Edward’s unexpected death and Richard of Gloucester was made Protector (and some would say—but not me—that he was actively seeking the crown). The preacher Dr. Shaw is supposed to have proclaimed from Paul’s Cross to a crowd of Londoners that Richard should wear the crown because he was the legitimate son of his father, Richard, duke of York, and that the sons of Edward were illegitimate on two counts: one is that Edward had been previously secretly contracted to a woman before he secretly wed Elizabeth, and the second is that Edward himself was a bastard. “He didn’t look at bit like his father, whereas Richard of Gloucester does,” Dr. Show posited. But if he did slight Cecily in public, it is very doubtful that Richard would have sanctioned such a slander of his mother. And if he had, you would think Cecily would have denounced her son and not supported his accession, but the fact is they remained on good terms until Richard’s death.

There has been a recent calculation done as to the whereabouts of Duke Richard at the alleged time of Edward’s conception, and it is true that he was in Pontoise at the exact time modern calculations for gestation would have him, and Cecily was in Rouen. Look it up, everyone, it’s 52 miles from Pontoise to Rouen, and Richard was known to be a fast rider. But why did conception have to have taken place in Rouen. May I suggest that during a break in the fighting (and there was one), could Richard not have met Cecily somewhere between the two cities? A horse and rider can cover 20-30 miles a day easily—and 100 if you want to kill the animal! But there is no record of Richard being in Rouen on that fateful day of conception, so I came up with the meeting in the middle solution. I have them meet at a shrine to St. Clothilde in Les Andelys—a popular pilgrimage site, 33 miles from Pontoise, and voila! a romantic tryst in secret. Certainly plausible and certainly doable.

So I say phooey to the affair! Cecily knew and liked her place far too well on the social scale to stoop so low as to have given herself to an archer and soil her reputation. As for six-foot-three-inch Edward not looking like his father, he could just as easily have inherited his stature and golden hair from his Neville blood. His sister Margaret is known to have been very tall for her time and golden haired and no one thought she wasn’t York’s.

Those are the facts, and I think Cecily is just another of us who has been hurt by rumors and gossip.

Joan of Arc in Queen By Right

Cecily Neville, my protagonist in *Queen By Right*, was in Rouen with her husband, Richard, duke of York, and King Henry's entourage at the time of Joan of Arc's imprisonment, trial and execution there. Both women were housed—in very different circumstances—in the castle built by Philippe-Auguste and named Chateau Bouvreuil. I retell this monumental drama as accurately as possible, with the exception being that I have Cecily and Joan cross paths briefly in the prison, which meeting affects Cecily throughout the book.

We are in the Hundred Years War, the conflict between England and France over sovereign territories in what we now call France. England's kings had held lands in France since William the Conqueror joined his duchy of Normandy to the English crown. And Eleanor of Aquitaine brought the province of Guyenne as her dowry when she married Henry II.

The war began in the 1330s and ended—with a slight pause while the Black Death was raging—in the 1450s, when England relinquished all its lands except for Calais and its Pale. In 1412, when Jeanne d'Arc was born to peasants in a tiny village on the border of Champagne and Lorraine, the French owned only the land that bordered south and west of the River Loire, and its capital was Bourges. The English owned or dominated the lands north of the Loire, including Normandy and Brittany, Ile de France—including Paris—and north to Calais. The duke of Burgundy was the third player in this scenario, and his lands included what we now know as Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and the duchy of Burgundy (where the wine grows).

By 1429, there was no king on the French throne as the Dauphin Charles was thought to be illegitimate, and there was much in-fighting among the French nobility, which I won't go into here. Things looked bleak for the French, as the English began clawing their way along the Loire and were besieging the city of Orléans.

A few years before, however, the teenaged Joan was beginning to hear voices. She claimed they were the Archangel Michael and the saints Catherine and Margaret. Her piety and devotion became known to an ailing duke of Lorraine, who called for her. Joan was brave enough to deny she could help him, but recommended he do more praying, go back to his wife and send his mistress packing. By this time, Joan's voices were telling her she must find the Dauphin Charles and pass on God's message that he was the rightful king of France.

With the help of a noble captain of Vaucouleurs, she succeeded in reaching Charles at Chinon on February 23rd, 1429. After making her wait for two days, Charles tried to trick Joan by dressing down to the level of courtier and standing among his retainers. But Joan walked straight up to him and addressed him as the Dauphin, telling him she would crown him herself at the cathedral in Rheims very soon. Charles had good reason to be skeptical, however, and put her through her piety paces with his bishops and had his mother-in-law verify the maid was indeed a maid.

Joan's next stop was Orléans, and carrying a white banner and wearing a full suit of armor, she rode to the besieged city and so captivated the starving troops and citizens inside that they rallied and drove the English away on May 8, not before Joan had been wounded by an arrow in her shoulder. In June, she was injured again at the Battle of Patay when she climbed a ladder up the wall of the city, was struck by a large stone and fell.

On July 17, Joan's prediction of February came true when she put the crown on Charles's head in Rheims, after chasing the occupying Burgundians from the city. Now that France had a king and this saintly young woman to lead them, the army began to win victories and demoralize the English soldiers. Joan was again wounded at the siege of Paris in September.

During that winter, Joan's humble family elevated to the gentry, and it seemed there was no limit to the young woman's sway with Charles. But soon, the new king's jealous councilors began to assert their influence and soon she was sent out campaigning in the field again.

At Compiègne, northeast of Paris, her luck ran out. She was captured on May 3, 1430 by the Burgundians during a sortie from the besieged city and was seriously hurt in an attempt to jump from a window and escape. She was put in the duke of Luxembourg's hands, who placed her in the custody of a priest named Pierre Cauchon at his castle of Beurevoir, where she was badly treated. In the meantime, a joyful Te Deum was heard in hundreds of churches in England and English France. As heinous as it sounds, Joan was sold like a piece of meat for 10,000 pounds to the English in November 1430, and from Beurevoir she was moved from place to place until she arrived in Rouen at Chateau Bouvreuil at the beginning of January 1431.

Her trial was to be conducted by none other than her warder from Beurevoir, Pierre Cauchon, temporarily given the title of vice-inquisitor. He was determined to prove her guilty, it seems, but he would not condemn her if she was innocent; he had that degree of respect for ecclesiastical justice. In theory, she was England's prisoner, but John, duke of Bedford, who was regent and governor of Normandy recognized what a great threat she was for England and was determined, we think, to have her life terminated once and for all and thus allowed the English-influenced clergy to try her for heresy—and subsequent burning. Otherwise, politically, Joan merely fell into the category of prisoner of war, and could—even from her prison cell—be a rallying call for her countrymen. No, she had to go.

Upon reading the transcripts of the trial, it is apparent the young woman confounded the church intellectuals who were ranged around her every day for three months. They plied her with complicated theological questions and she answered every one calmly and with equal knowledge, citing her responses as heaven-sent. So hard did they push to declare her a messenger of Satan, even showing her instruments of torture, that Joan became ill and John of Bedford is said to have sent his own physician to care for her. (They didn't want her dying quietly of an illness behind bars; that would indeed incense the French to accuse the English of murder; and a martyr would be born.)

Week after week she faced the clerics—canons, abbots, priests, doctors of theology—and it seemed the one thing that disgusted them the most was her refusal to take off her man's clothing. This was an abomination of Scripture, and in the end, after all the trick questions and bringing of declarations about her voices and possible miracles from various witnesses from all over France, it was this defiling of God's holy law that undid Joan.

May 24 was the designated day of her sentencing, and a great crowd trampled the ground of the cemetery of St. Ouen church to witness it. The audience included her judges, Cardinal Henry Beaufort, Louis of Luxembourg, English bishops, the earl of Warwick, other English nobles, captains and the English and French townspeople of Rouen. Among them was undoubtedly Cecily Neville, duchess of York.

Joan was exhorted to submit her guilt to mother church and be saved. They told her the executioner was at hand to take her to the stake and although Joan had relied on her voices to speak boldly back, it was the mention of being burned within the hour that finally broke her resolve, and she recanted. Surrounding and confusing her, waving a confession at her, she finally put her mark to an abjuration, and the priests rejoiced at their victory. But on the English side of the platform, the lords were not pleased: Cauchon sentenced her to be sent back to the English prison, where she might well continue to stir up trouble, they knew.

She agreed to put on women's clothing and she was trundled in the cart back to Bouvreuil. But whether it was because her former clothes were kept near her and her guards

abused her now she was unhindered in a shift or some other reason, it is not known, but within a few days word came that Joan had relapsed and resumed wearing her manly garb and she was immediately condemned.

On May 30, 1431 Joan of Arc, known as La Pucelle or The Maid, was taken to the place of execution at the old market square and heard her sentence: “You are a heretic, idolater, apostate and have relapsed and you are condemned to die at the stake.” A great crowd had gathered and many were moved by her humility as she was led behind a wall of wood that encircled the stake where she was put in chains. The English way of burning at the stake meant the prisoner would die first from inhalation and not from the flames, and so many onlookers could only hear her pleas from within of “*Jésu, Jésus*” that gradually faded as her lungs filled with smoke as she gave up her life to the God she had so trusted.

In 1449, when England had been finally chased from France, King Charles—who owed his crown to the Maid and yet did nothing to try and save her—ordered an enquiry into her trial, and in 1456 a papal pardon was given to her and her reputation as a true believer was restored. But it wasn’t until 1920 that she was canonized, even though the French had



A Few Words from the Editor

Joan Szechtman

I wish to thank everyone who contributed to this publication. Please keep sending those articles to me—if I can’t get them in the next issue, they will be slated for the one after.


If you have been reading this issue from the beginning, you will have noticed that there are two new and somewhat experimental entries: review of a video game and one of our historical fiction author’s talking about her thoughts and research on her subject matter. Please consider reviewing movies, TV series, and video games that has a relationship to the Wars of the Roses, and the period surrounding Richard III. I also welcome submissions from authors sharing their insights and research that took place “behind the scenes.”

Because of printer lead times and distribution requirements, I have had to move the deadlines for submissions up to six weeks prior to that month’s publication. The long lead time is mainly a function of the printer scheduling. The Registers are scheduled to come out March, June, September, and December. So far, it has taken me many hours to put each register tighter, partly because of my learning curve, but also because I’ve had to reformat the articles to conform with how the publication software works. Basically, I need a Word document with the file type DOC (not DOCX). If you have a newer version of Microsoft Office please save it out compatible to Word 2003-97 DOC. Please send articles to and contact me at u2nohoo@gmail.com with any formatting questions.

Our current webmaster, William McVey, is resigning. We are splitting the position into two functions: web content manager and webmaster. The webmaster is solely a technical position and will take direction from the web content manager. Please contact Nita Musgrave at bnm@wowway.com for details.

Sales Catalog–September, 2011
Richard III Society, American Branch

Merchandize

Item Description	Item #	Price (USD)	Shipping (USD)	Image (where available)
"Leaves of Gold" CD. This is the CD-ROM that accompanied the exhibition in Spring, 2001, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, suitable for viewing on Windows or Mac computers. This exhibition included the Lewis Ms. genealogy of Edward IV, the conservation of which was financed by the American Branch of the Society.	1	\$10.00	\$1.00	
Sweater. Blue with embroidered boar logo. UK size 34 or 36. Acrylic. (UK 34 = US "Very Small; UK 36 = US "Small".) <i>Only 1 of each size available.</i>	2	\$10.00	\$5.00	
Sweater. Black with embroidered boar logo. UK size 34 only. Acrylic. (UK 34 = US "Very Small".) <i>Only 1 available.</i>	4	\$10.00	\$5.00	
Carry bag, cloth. Cream color with red imprint of Richard's face and UK web site on reverse side. 17" high by 14" wide.	152-1	\$5.00	\$2.75	
Boar badge (pin). Made from lead-free pewter each board badge is approximately 1 5/16" long and 5/8" inch high.	156-1	\$11.00	\$3.75	
"Loyalty - standard" postcard. Postcard 4 1/4 x 6" (set of 5)	56-1	\$2.50 per set	\$1.00	

Item Description	Item #	Price (USD)	Shipping (USD)	Image (where available)
Window sticker. Blue background with white boar logo; 3" diameter. Apply on window facing out.	54-1	\$2.50	\$1.00	
"Loyalty - coat of arms" postcard. Postcard 4 1/4 x 6" (set of 5)	55-1	\$2.50 per set	\$1.00	
Pendant, black. Black background with enameled boar logo. 1" diameter. Has loop for chain (not included).	63-1	\$5.00	\$1.00	
Pendant, blue. Blue background with enameled boar logo. 1" diameter. Has loop for chain (not included.)	67-1	\$5.00	\$1.00	
Scarf. 25" x 27" blue background with boar logos patterned on scarf. Polyester. <i>Very limited quantities.</i>	65-1	\$7.50	\$1.00	

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Inside back cover

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Portrait of Richard III at National Portrait Gallery, London

photograph by *Joan Szechtman*

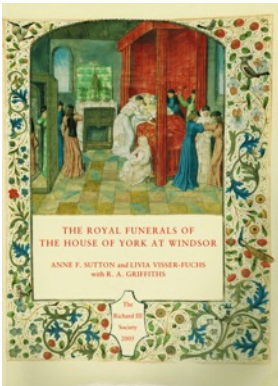


Front cover: *Challenge in the Mist* by Graham Turner

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York Minster stained glass of Richard III's coat of arms.

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