

Ricardian Register



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Richard III Forever

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The Scoliosis of King Richard III: did he suffer pain or lung trouble during his lifetime and how would he be treated today?

A comparison of therapy during Richard III's lifetime in the fifteenth century, in the twentieth century during the career of Dr S. Saxton Barton, obstetrician and founder of the White Boar Society in 1924, and the present day.

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Abstract

The discovery of Richard III's skeletal remains revealed a severe scoliosis, somewhat surprisingly considering his martial prowess,. This paper discusses Richard's disability, and contrasts the available management of scoliosis at three points in history, the time of Richard III, the time of Dr Saxton Barton ¹, the founder of the first Richard III society, and the current period.

Introduction

The Skeleton discovered under the car park at the site of the previous Greyfriars Church in 2012 was confirmed to be that of King Richard III. The spine had a severe scoliosis for which there are many therapeutic options today, including the surgery performed on a current member of the House of York. Ricardians ask if Richard suffered pain or disability because of this abnormality.

Before the Plantagenet Monarchs

The ancient Hindu epics first described spinal deformities and the use of axial traction as therapy five millennia ago. Hippocrates (460-370 BC) used the term scoliosis, meaning bending, to describe any spinal deformity including those caused by injury. Galen (130-200 AD) used the term as we do today to describe lateral curvatures only. The ancient Greeks utilised traction, either on a rack, or by suspending the body vertically, either feet down or head down, utilising the body's weight, or spinal compression while lying on a hard board as therapies. Diets, massage and herbal therapy were also prescribed with little progress over the next fifteen hundred years. ^{2,3}

Fifteenth century – the man himself

Richard's scoliosis

Although no physical abnormalities were recorded during Richard's lifetime, nor when his naked corpse was displayed after he was betrayed and murdered at the Battle of Bosworth, in the years after death there were allegations of skeletal abnormalities. Rous stated that his right shoulder was higher than the left, Thomas More stated that the left was

higher than the right, and Vergil stated that one was higher than the other. Sceptics attributed such ambiguous but malicious statements to Henry Tudor, who was far down the line of succession and needed to denigrate his predecessor.

However Richard's skeleton revealed a severe scoliosis ⁴ (Figure 1) which probably developed during adolescence and may well have been visible to those close to him. Scoliosis is detected in children today by simply observing the spine from behind when the child bends over as shown in Figure 2. It is hard to believe that the 'knights of the body' who would have assisted in dressing the monarch could not have seen such an abnormality, but no record exists of any abnormality being detected by his adherents during his lifetime.

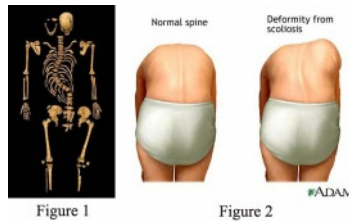


Figure 1: Richard's skeleton

Figure 2: Adam's forward bend test performed by (left) a patient without scoliosis, and (right) a patient with scoliosis showing a rib prominence

Diagnosis, definition and measurement of severity

Scoliosis is defined as a 10 degrees (10°) or greater lateral curvature of the spine on a coronal radiographic image while standing erect. A simple spinal X-Ray remains the gold standard of imaging for the evaluation of scoliosis. ^{5,6}

The degree of severity or curvature is measured by the Cobb angle, named after the American orthopedic surgeon John Robert Cobb (1903-1967). The top and bottom vertebrae of the curved section with the most tilt are identified; parallel lines are drawn along the top of the upper vertebra and along the bottom of the lower vertebra to the point at which they intersect. The angle at which they intersect is the Cobb angle (Figure 3). Richard had a Cobb angle of 85 degrees (85°) when measured from the pictures released by Leicester University indicating a severe scoliosis.

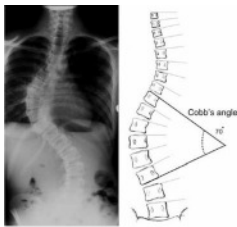


Figure 3

Scoliosis may be seen associated with a variety of neurological syndromes and other diseases such as muscular dystrophy and neurofibromatosis and is known as syndromic scoliosis. There is no evidence of Richard having any associated disease. Congenital scoliosis can be seen in neo-natal infants; however, the cause of scoliosis is unknown in most cases, though there is a mild genetic association. Scoliosis is more concordant in monozygotic (identical) twins than dizygotic (non-identical) twins, and certain genetic protein mutations are imputed as possible causes. However, research is ongoing and the known or believed remains of Richard's father, the Duke of York, and of his brothers, Edward, Edmund and George, at burial, reinterment or coffin opening, have no documentation of scoliosis. It is then known as idiopathic scoliosis, which is sub classified as infantile between birth and the age of 3 years, juvenile between 3 and 10 years of age,

and adolescent, the more common form that is suspected in Richard, after the age of 10 years. This is found in some 2% of adolescents, but only a fifth of these require any treatment.

How does adolescent idiopathic scoliosis present?

Most people with scoliosis are identified by an observer, perhaps a relative, doctor, school nurse or knight of the body or the individual themselves, noting some skeletal abnormality such as unlevel shoulders, or prominence of one hip or some ribs. (Figure 2) Few present with pain. The incidence of backache is slightly more than general population but is never disabling.

The natural history of scoliosis and the risk factors for curve progression.

The two or three year adolescent growth spurt strikingly increases progression of scoliosis curves, then by the time growth is completed, progress slows or ceases. There is a tendency for minor scoliosis, 10-20°, not to progress after the second decade of life, but more severe scoliosis, 40-50° progresses throughout adult life. Bone maturity and severity of curvature are therefore the major factors when considering spinal surgery. In one series of 205 cases, 16% of those with a curvature of 20° at the onset of puberty eventually required surgery, but all those with a curvature greater than 30° at the same stage required surgery.⁴

In another series of 133 patients followed for 40 years, 68% showed deteriorating scoliosis after skeletal maturity. However, those with a scoliosis less than 30° did not get worse, while those with curvatures worse than 50° progressed at 1% per year.

Infantile and syndromic scoliosis are associated with an increased risk of heart and lung disease, but there is no clear evidence that this is also true of mild idiopathic adolescent scoliosis.

Pain and disability

Speculation has arisen about any symptoms Richard may have experienced, particularly pain, reduced life expectancy or respiratory difficulties. Twentieth century research answers some of those questions.

A study of 2442 individuals with scoliosis found that only 23% had pain when scoliosis was first detected, and 9% developed pain later, leaving 68% with no pain.^{5, 6, 7} A third of those with pain also had additional spinal problems including osteoarthritis, posterior vertebral displacement or a spinal tumour, which Richard did not. Many have suggested that Richard would have been in constant severe pain, but this may not be correct. Pain is not a common feature of scoliosis alone and not disabling. Pain from scoliosis is more severe at the end of the day and gets better with rest.

An alternative perspective on the possibility of Richard suffering severe pain is obtained from a self-selected group of 101 adult patients analysed by Jackson⁸ who actually presented with back pain. In this group aged between 20 and 63, the average age for developing pain was 28, late in Richard's life. The severity of pain correlated with the severity of the scoliosis, those with a 40° curvature had infrequent mild pain, while those like Richard with a scoliosis over 70° mostly had severe daily disabling pain. Scoliosis involving the lumbar spine caused more pain than thoracic deformity. Richard's scoliosis extended from the fourth thoracic vertebra to the second lumbar vertebra. The extent and severity of Richard's curvature suggest serious discomfort would have developed had he lived longer.

The other question about reduced health, respiratory problems and shortened life expectancy can only be answered by studies that observe only adolescent idiopathic scoliosis cases over several decades, with cases of infantile scoliosis and scoliosis due to other diseases eliminated from the analysis. A study from Sweden⁹ recruited 130 patients with scoliosis between 1927 and 1937 and reported a follow up study in 1992 of 115 of them,

thus some had been followed for nearly 60 years. An increased mortality was found in post poliomyelitis, infantile and juvenile scoliosis, but not in the 52 individuals with adolescent scoliosis. However, when the cases were subdivided by severity, there was an increase in the death rate, particularly from respiratory disease for those with severe scoliosis, defined as a curvature greater than 70°. The volume of the lungs and the chest doubles during adolescence, hence normal thoracic spinal growth is necessary. Jackson ⁸ in his series of adults with back pain also found that lung capacity decreased with increasing curvature. A pubertal male with a thoracic scoliosis of greater than 50° will have diminished lung volumes and a fifteen fold increased risk for shortness of breath by the age of 30.

Fifteenth century therapy

Little progress in medicine followed for a millennium and a half to the fifteenth century. Lund ⁴ suggests he could have been treated with massage, herbal applications, traction and a metal or wooded board to wear, little different from Hippocrates's time. No effective therapy was available to Richard.

Twentieth Century

The Richard III Society was founded in 1924 by the Liverpool consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, S. Saxon Barton M.R.C.O.G (1892–1957), as The Fellowship of the White Boar. Its membership was originally a small group of interested amateur historians whose aim was to bring about a re-assessment of the reputation of Richard III. Saxon Barton was a recognized authority on King Richard III and, as president of the society in 1934, erected a stained-glass window in Middleham Church, Yorkshire, to commemorate Richard III. Barton died following a motor accident in Wales, apparently an unhappy place for Ricardians.



Figure 4

Saxon Barton is relevant also because his lifetime encompassed both the initial development of X-Rays by Wilhelm Röntgen to the widespread use of radiology in clinical practice including evaluation of scoliosis, and the description of the Cobb angle to assess severity of scolioses. Robert Lovett was the acknowledged expert in the early 20th century and recommended forcible correction of scoliosis with the use of plaster of Paris jackets ¹⁰. Early attempts at bone surgery in the early decades of the 20th century were largely unsuccessful because of recurrence and progress of the curvature.

Twenty-first Century

February 4th 2013 was a monumentally important day for Ricardians, the Richard III Society and the University of Leicester archaeology team at a combined press conference confirming the identity of the Greyfriars car park skeleton as Richard III. Two of the world's leading medical journals published articles about idiopathic adult scoliosis very shortly afterwards: the New England Journal of Medicine only twenty-four days later ⁵, and the British Medical Journal on April 30th ⁶. Curiously there was no editorial comment on Richard III, but these publications scarcely seem a coincidence. Subsequent clinical information in this article is taken from these two up-to-date and relevant articles.

How is adolescent idiopathic scoliosis managed?

None of the treatments, such as traction or compression, available during Richard's life time have any proven benefit in the treatment of scoliosis, and the same is true of many more modern therapies, whether evidence based such as physiotherapy and dietetics, or the many therapies 'du jour' that lack scientific data.

Casts and Bracing

Medical convention recommends plaster casts only for infantile scoliosis. They may reduce curvature progression and delay the need for surgery. It is mostly indicated for flexible curve of 20 to 30° in growing child with documented progression of 5° or more, and also some cosmetically acceptable curves with of up to 45°. Surgery is indicated in patients with curves of more than 50°.

In pre-pubertal individuals bracing may be beneficial for those with a moderate scoliosis of less than 35°. A brace is usually more beneficial if worn for 23 hours, but part time protocols are instituted due to compliance issues.

In today's world, Richard would have been treated with bracing or surgery during his knightly training, depending on severity of his disease and progression. Richard became involved in the rough politics of the Wars of the Roses at an early age, and became sole commander at age 17. Given difficult circumstances and the fact that scoliosis is commonly a pain free condition, he may have ignored it totally.

However, medical knowledge progresses rapidly. A randomised trial comparing bracing with observation for idiopathic scoliosis, published online in the New England Journal of Medicine on September 19, 2013, enrolled 242 adolescents with moderate scoliosis defined as a Cobb angle of 20-40°¹¹. The brace was a rigid device extending from the chest to the hips. After an average of nearly two years, fifty-two per cent of the untreated group had progressed to a 50° scoliosis, the point at which surgery is considered as a treatment option, but only twenty-eight per cent of the group wearing a brace deteriorated to this point. The success rate depended on the hours during which the brace was worn. Those wearing the brace for six or less hours per day had a forty per cent success rate, while those wearing it for twelve or more hours a day had a ninety per cent success rate. Richard would have benefited from such a device; perhaps he should have worn his suit of armour for longer periods!

When should surgery be considered?

Surgery is the only proven effective therapy for severe scoliosis in adolescents, originally introduced in the 1960s, involving surgical fusion of the spine with internal fixation with a stainless-steel rod, known as the Harrington rod, to maintain the spine in a straighter position. Surgery is mostly indicated in patients with a Cobb angle more than 50°, increasing curve or significant cosmetic deformity in a growing child. In the modern era, given the above indications, Richard would definitely have surgery well before the age at which he died.

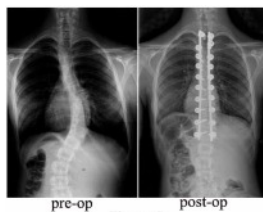


Figure 5

(showing pre and post operative spinal X-rays with correction of the scoliosis)

Harrington described his new technique inserting stainless steel rods attached to the outside of the vertebrae which could exert pressure on the spine during surgery to correct the misalignment and maintain that correction¹². Harrington rods were used for about 30 years, but more modern designs are composed of titanium. Spinal curves greater than 50° tend to progress slowly after maturity. Therefore a solid surgical spinal fusion is considered

for the 10% of adolescents with severe scoliosis, characterised by a Cobb angle curve that has greater than 45°-50°, to not only prevent curve progression, but to improve the cosmetic appearance by correcting the deformity.

Unfortunately surgery has not yet been proven to cure back pain, or improve functional status.

Other known cases of scoliosis

Scoliosis appears to be no barrier to physical prowess and reproductive success. Athletes known to have scoliosis include the sprinter Usain Bolt, winner of six Olympic gold medals, and the swimmer Janet Evans, winner of four Olympic gold medals and mother of two children. Elizabeth Taylor, the actress, had eight marriages, seven husbands, and four children and was a grandmother by the age of 39. A Princess of York, nineteen generations and over 500 years after Richard, Princess Eugenie also had a scoliosis for which she had insertion of two titanium rods in 2002 with no reported residual disability.

Conclusion

Current medical opinion indicates that Richard did not have severe back pain, or any major limitation of activity up to the time of his death. However he may well have developed increasing respiratory problems during his fourth and fifth decades with a reduced life span. Today Richard's scoliosis would be regarded as severe, perhaps necessitating a spinal fusion and insertion of titanium rods prior to his involvement in the Battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury.

One wonders if Richard would have preferred a valiant death after a glorious cavalry charge than to suffer a miserable death with increasing pain, disability and breathlessness.

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Permissions:

Figure 1: Richard’s Skeleton—Richard III Society

Figure 2: Adam’s forward bend test— Dr. Brett Diaz, D.C., Scoliosis Treatment Alternatives

Figure 3: Cobb Angle—Leicester University

Figure 4: Portrait of Dr. Saxton Barton painted by Mavis Blackburn—Permission held by Richard III Society

Figure 5: Harrington Rods, pre-op/post-op—Mr Alexander Gibson FRCS, Consultant Surgeon, Spinal Deformity Unit, Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital.

[ToC](#)



2014 AGM

Save the Date: September 19 - 21, 2014

The 2014 American Branch AGM will be held in Portland, OR, September 19-21. We do not have a hotel location, program or final registration fee cost at this time. Watch your email and the American Branch Website for details as they become available.

Sites to see in and around Portland, OR (Thank you Starla Roels for the following suggestions.)

Powell’s Books (powells.com)—the main store, Powell’s City of Books is located downtown Portland at 1005 W. Burnside St.

Forest Park (shortened link to Wikipedia article: tinyurl.com/m5jfu98), which is one of the country’s largest urban forest parks, includes over 70 miles of hiking, walking and biking trails.

Portland also has the world’s smallest designated city park: Mills End Park (shortened link to Wikipedia article: tinyurl.com/c5k4f2t), at 24 inches in diameter. It can be found at SW Naito Parkway and Taylor. (

Voodoo Doughnut (voodoodoughnut.com): many people have heard about our quirky doughnut shop with strange but tasty doughnuts through various travel shows, such as “Man v. Food.” and Anthony Bourdain’s “No Reservations.”

Similarly, Portland has an abundance of food carts, and many of those have also been featured on various travel shows.

According to Oregon Craft Beer, Portland has more craft beer breweries than any other city in the world. (Denver/Colorado is in competition with us and sometimes pulls ahead). At last count, I think we have 72 breweries within the Portland Metro Area.

Portland is also a mecca for coffee lovers, as we have several excellent espresso shops and micro-roasters. Some of my favorites are Stumptown, Water Avenue, Case Study, Barista, and Extracto. These are not just typical coffee shops—many of them make pour over coffee, cold brew, chemex, clover and siphon/vacuum, to name a few—so it’s an adventure just going out for coffee! Some places offer “cuppings,” which is like wine tasting but for coffee.

Portland’s Japanese Garden (japanesegarden.com), which is located in Washington Park (which also contains our zoo and the International Rose Test Garden), is considered by many to be the most authentic Japanese garden outside of Japan. We also have a terrific Chinese garden and teahouse.

For folks who might be staying over for a few days to enjoy Oregon, Portland is about an hour or so away from a number of other terrific attractions, such as—

- Columbia River Gorge and waterfalls
- Oregon coast
- Wine tasting at wineries and vineyards, primarily producers of Pinot Noir, though some of the wineries from the Walla Walla region, which grow hotter-weather grapes, also have tasting rooms in our wine country.
- Mount Hood hiking and Timberline Lodge (a historic ski lodge built by the Works Progress Administration during the Depression; was also used as the exterior of the hotel in *The Shining*)

For more information about Portland, check out *Secret Portland Oregon* by Ann Carroll Burgess with photographs by Linda Rutenberg and *Walking Portland* by Sybilla Avery Cook..

ToC



Letter to the Editor:

Richard III—using the wrong PR

T. Kleanthous

Over the last year or so, I've watched and heard with growing interest the attempts to accelerate the transformation of this poor guy's reputation. I have to point out, I envy your nations' republican status and wish a speedy end to all forms hereditary power and influence. However there is something extraordinarily tragic about Richard III's predicament. I have not read much about him, but believe the wrong tone of analysis has been applied to correcting his bad pr.

While his recent exhumation has stirred interest in his character, the event itself seemed the focal point and wasn't helped by an unseemly scramble to tender for his new resting place, irrespective of it involving the county of his birth.

If I can suggest, I think you should look at him as someone wronged by an appalling injustice, powered by a disparate conspiracy of self-interest and political brutality. As an outsider there are a number aspects that already work in Richard's favour:

- 1) There were attempts to rest power away from him and the house of York, before the prince's disappearance
- 2) Richard didn't grab power via a coup d'etat, it was offered via parliament as it stood.
- 3) Thanks to Henry VIII's obsession with succession, it's remarkable that this aspect has been completely overlooked. Here I'm referring to the priest's doubt of Edward IV's marriage legitimacy and therefore the legitimacy of the marriage's offspring.
- 4) Examples like the Duke of Buckingham show the fluid loyalty of the aristocrats, I dare say there are many more, especially if they hopped to another bandwagon after and were keen to show their loyalty.
- 5) Up till the princes, Richard III only seems to have done the right thing to maintain stability against regime change for the sake of it. Remember Richard II was still in living memory and the English crown was on a merry go round. Richard III, may have been got rid of because he was bringing stability to country.

Those who floated to the top after his death will still have descendants lording it over the estates of England. If they haven't got archives to help your case, places like the tower of London will still have records of which cousin or brother looked after the gate or toilet, as they never stop bleating about their family heritage and how far back their stench goes. Use their vanity to locate the people at the scene of the crime. You may not find the killer, but I'd say enough of them were somewhere close and probably a lot closer than Richard. Then find their status during the following regime. It was an interesting catalogue that showed how many of the "radicals" during the English civil wars took Charles II's penny after the restoration.

In summary, poor old Richard may have been a nice guy in the wrong place at the wrong time. The things I've heard about him, suggest he couldn't have killed the two boys. But it helps an awful lot of folks to have the world believe he did.

You need a few Columbos to get to the facts. I'd say there all there under the rocks, where no one's really looked yet. I think your gaze has been diverted to the glare of their lordships. From what I've heard about all you admirers of this poor guy, you have means and energy. Perhaps you're looking in the wrong direction. Look at timelines, what was possible to do, by whom and when, etc. [*Even though the chronology has been examined, a fresh review may expose new extant evidence.*—Ed.]

Long live the spirit of Bernstein and Woodward.

Editor's note: Although T. Kleanthous is not currently a member of any branch of the Richard III Society, I think the points raised are worthy of consideration.

T. Kleanthous submitted the following poem, which I think beautifully expresses the author's feelings when the world learned that Richard III's remains had been found.

Can rain be tears of welcome love
From spirits lost in myth and death,
sighing centuries to be re-found
And loved again by newer souls,
Cleansed of forbear's bile and spite.
Come find me in some muddy grave
The bones that held my flesh are there
But cannot anchor spirits forged in birth
Which sense and feel your coming.
Death is not aware of time
And past my living breath,
Is now to me, whatever age you live in
So use your skills and senses,
to find me where I am,
For bones are not my home,
But knowing me is your true search
And finding me your world and mine.



Errata

The Research Officer position in the December 2013 Ricardian Register issue was mistakenly listed as open. It should have shown that Pamela Garrett is currently Research Officer for the American Branch.

[ToC](#)

Ricardian Review

Myrna Smith

Truth will rise above falsehood as oil above water. —Cervantes

Patience, and shuffle the cards. —Cervantes

THE SPANISH QUEEN. Carolly Erickson, St. Martin's Press, NY, 2013

Carolly Erickson is a recognized historian, specializing in Royal history and biography from the Medieval period to the present. She has now added a new string to her bow by writing novels, or as she calls them, historical entertainments. Better she should still be playing the same old tune. This book covers the same ground as **GREAT HARRY**, her biography of Henry VIII, and the latter is much more entertaining.

In **GREAT HARRY**, much interest in the early part of the book is engendered by the interplay between Catherine of Aragon and the Spanish ambassadors, de Puebla and de Alaya, culminating in Catherine being accredited as a Spanish Ambassador herself. This is ignored here, probably to make Catherine seem even more isolated and victimized than she was. Catherine loves her parents, but her mother makes a confidant of her, which means that she pours out her marital troubles to her daughter. Her father, on the other hand, forces Catherine to take his 'marital troubles'—his mistress and bastard daughter—to England as ladies-in-waiting. Arthur is a sweet boy (emphasis on 'boy'). He even writes romances, but, alas, that's all he does.

For an historian, the author makes some odd errors. Though Henry vetoes the idea, Catherine wants to call her daughter Mary Isabella, reasoning that "royal and highborn children were always given a long list of names." Not at this period, and not in England, not for a couple of centuries. Less an offense against historical fact than against common sense is the scenario that has Catherine, as ex-wife and ex-queen, in the same palace as Anne Boleyn, and even close enough to hear Anne screaming in labor.

But the biggest fault of the book is that there is no really sympathetic main character with whom the reader can identify, and only a few minor characters. Margaret Beaufort is kind to Catherine when the girl comes to her complaining of a painful deflowering. She gives her granddaughter-in-law an ointment and her grandson a talking-to. Although Lady Margaret must have died almost immediately after this, Catherine as narrator never mourns her only friend, nor even mentions her again.

Henry VII is a bush-league ogre, but his son is a brute. One can't understand why Catherine wouldn't take any excuse to get shed of him. Catherine herself is always ready to listen to salacious gossip about her rivals, and suspects a sizeable number of people of plotting against her life. She would like to murder Henry's mistresses and his illegitimate son, but doesn't because it would be a sin. But she doesn't hesitate to give Anne Boleyn an ointment that will ruin her looks.

My verdict: Shoemaker, stick to your last.

Knowledge without sense is twofold folly. —Spanish proverb

THE DEVIL IN ERMINE—Isolde Martyn, ISBN 0-9873-8460-0

Isolde Martyn, who has written a number of romantic novels (**THE MAIDEN AND THE UNICORN** has been reviewed in these pages) tries something different here—something rather more difficult. She writes in the persona of someone who is not very sympathetic, delineates his character flaws, even though he does not recognize them as such, and still makes the reader understand him to a degree, and even, yes, sympathize with him.

Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, does have some good qualities. He is devoted to his children and his Uncle Knyvett, and he loves nature and gardens—today he would be called a tree-hugger. On the other hand, he is a snob, a liar, a supreme egoist, and very manipulative, until he meets a pair who can out-manipulate him. In the meantime, he plays on Richard, as well as the commons (both small-c and capital-c as on his own chamber orchestra. One can't help but think that Richard deserved some of the responsibility, or blame, for the events of 1483, just for being so easily led. But we must remember, Richard did not have the advantage we possess, of having his cousin confide what he was up to. Tellingly, he almost always refers to Richard III as 'my cousin,' rarely "Richard" or "the King."

Ms. Martyn sets the scene very fully (Henry is interested in clothes, too, so we get word pictures of our cast of characters.) Without *theeing* and *thouing* she uses both medieval words and modern speech. I think she may sometimes use anachronisms, or near-anachronisms deliberately, to lighten the mood:

"Follow that boat!"

"I don't do dogs!" (Buckingham's servant, on being ordered to wash a dog that has followed the Duke home. There has to be some good in a man that dogs like!)

The mood does need lightening. There is a fair amount of sex in this novel, but very little romance. Henry Buckingham ignores his wife and manipulates his mistress as much as anybody else. But even though I know what deservedly happened to him, I couldn't help but choke up a little as I finished the book. I had to remind myself that the anti-hero of this novel is just that—a fictional character. Could Buckingham have been something like the bipolar individual depicted here? His meteoric rise and rapid fall suggests that he may well have been. It is possible to feel a great pity for the man, for a life troubled by what he calls the "black dog" of depression, a life in the end just thrown away.

This book is available in the US as an e-book. I was old-fashioned enough to prefer paper and ink, but I recommend it in whatever form. Contact Ms. Martyn by e-mail for more details Her address is isolde@isoldemartyn.com

He loses all who loses the right moment. —Spanish proverb

Dale Summers has some feedback to offer on John Ashdown-Hill's **THE LAST DAYS OF RICHARD III AND THE FATE OF HIS DNA** (The History Press, Gloucestershire, 2010) and more specifically, on his marital history

The author points out that there was real affection between Richard and Anne. They shared a bed until the doctors advised against it...Richard had faced the inevitability of Anne's death and realized that he would be a king without an heir. He sought a descendant of John of Gaunt. There were two, one of Portugal, close to his age and with a religious bent. The other was Spanish princess, age 16, and more likely to give him heirs. He began negotiations with both but preferred the Portuguese alliance because it was closer in the Lancastrian line. Also in the Portuguese alliance was a royal duke for Elizabeth of York.

Though Anne Neville still lived, Richard had his portrait painted for use in the negotiations. It is now known as the round-topped portrait. Though there was no doubt of his love for Anne, he was, as a practical matter, seeking to secure his future. These negotiations were still continuing when Henry Tudor, who had presented himself as the son of Henry VI, invaded. [*But surely only in France and Brittany. The English knew their genealogy better than that!*—Editor]

Ashdown-Hill describes the royal army as very large. His description of Richard's death is graphic and ghastly. He blames looters for stripping Richard's body, and believes the halter around the King's neck was a means of transporting the body, which conjures up

an even worse picture. He also claims that Ashdown-Hill describes the royal army as very large. His description of Richard's death is graphic and ghastly. He blames looters for stripping Richard's body, and believes the halter around the King's neck was a means of transporting the body, which conjures up an even worse picture. He also claims that Henry, newly crowned on the battlefield, honored Richard by bringing his corpse to Leicester. A more logical reason was to display the body so that no one could, in the future, claim to be Richard.

Richard was buried in the Greyfriars church by the friars and/or Henry's henchmen. When Perkin Warbeck came on the scene, Henry erected a royal tomb for the last Plantagenet and cleared Richard's reputation. [*for at least acknowledged his right to rule—Ed.*] But with Perkin gone and the "confession" of James Tyrell publicized, Richard's reputation was blackened again.

As a scholarly work, the book includes photographs, appendices, notes, acknowledgments and a bibliography. Informative and well-written, it is a very readable book. —Dale Summers

He who fears death enjoys not life.—Spanish proverb

THE KING'S GRAVE: the discovery of Richard III's lost burial place and the clues it holds. —Philippa Langley and Michael Jones, NY, St. Martin's Press, 2013

Philippa Langley cooperated with a variety of professionals during her Looking for Richard project. Historian John Ashdown-Hill, author Anette Carson, founding project members Dr. David and Wendy Johnson, Leicester City Council members, University of Leicester Archaeological Services staff and administrative Leicester Cathedral deans, production teams at Darlow Smithson and Channel 4, public relations and adult education professionals, Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce, Leicestershire County Council and Leicestershire Civic Society members, Richard III Society members—all contributed to the project's success.

Langley's coauthor, Michael Jones, acknowledges help from fellow scholars, archivists, Richard III society librarians, Peter and Carolyn Hammond, curators of weapons and furniture collections, an orthopedic surgeon, and an illustrator. Among the scholars are two of Richard III's harshest critics. Jones' cooperation with these critics suggests that some scholars can moderate differences of opinion in support of a worthy goal. Such moderation offers a welcome contrast to the conflicts emphasized in mass media reports about the king in the car park.

Langley and Jones have dedicated their book "To all those who saved the Dig, and to all whose researches have illuminated Richard III as man and king." This dedication emphasizes the fact that a lot of cooperation went into Richard III's identification. Despite this essential cooperation, the coauthors had to work around a significant disagreement. In Appendix I, *The Fate of the Princes in the Tower*, they explain their positions. Langley believes that killing the princes was against Richard III's best interests, and that the July 1483 attempt to remove them from the Tower wasn't threatening enough to cause Richard to order their deaths; Jones believes the July plot convinced Richard that his nephews had to die to restore the peace most English people desired, but that he ordered their deaths with the "utmost reluctance and with the deepest regret." Despite this basic disagreement, Langley and Jones both feel that Richard III did not believe his right to the throne *depended* on his nephews' deaths. They also agree that re-evaluation of Richard III's life and reign should continue, whether or not he ordered the princes' deaths. Both "recognize that the state of existing evidence only allows conclusions based on the balance of probability and does not permit a definite statement—one way or the other."

Fortunately, the results of DNA testing did permit definite identification of Richard's remains. *The King's Grave* alternates Langley's chapters about the Looking for Richard project with Jones' chapters about Richard III's life and the aftermath of Bosworth. Appendix II summarizes M. Lansdale's and J. Boon's psychological evaluation of Richard III. Color and black & white reproductions illustrate the Dig, Richard III's book of hours, castles, churches, memorial brasses, tombs, portraits, weapons, a boar badge found on the battlefield. A carving on Rhys ap Thomas's bed lintel depicts Rhys confronting Richard III on horseback. This unfamiliar image deserves widespread consideration. Its unfamiliarity raises questions about what the traditional version of Richard III's life has left out. Notes and bibliography encourage readers to learn more about Richard's life and times. *The King's Grave* offers its readers an evolving portrait of a complex human being in place of outdated caricatures that resemble Henry VII more than Richard III. The day when most people distinguish history—with all its uncertainties—from Shakespeare's melodrama and More's fiction can't come too soon. The Looking for Richard project has been a valuable contribution to bringing that day closer. —Marion Davis

Having stuck my editorial nose in on Dale's review, I will now do the same for Marion's review of **THE KING'S GRAVE**, or rather, my impression of the book itself. Overall, I found it very interesting and well-crafted.

A work of fiction can be purely entertainment, but a non-fiction book should cause the reader to at least occasionally to say to himself "Hmm, I didn't think of that." Langley & Jones do this. An example: Langley speaks of Richard "walking the streets of Edinburgh." Any ternary of Richard will tell us this, but it's something we seldom think about. Wonder what he thought of the city?

Other points:

- Jones (I think) claims that the marriage of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville was illegal because it was celebrated secretly. But so was his marriage to Eleanor Butler. Did they cancel each other out? Just askin', or just nitpicking.
- On the one hand, Langley clears Richard of any complicity in the death of the Princes, even using the quasi-science of graphology to support her argument. On the other hand, Jones believes that Richard done it, all right, but he had to- had no choice. Isn't this moral relativism? And can we imagine, without mental summersaulting, someone who could commit murder, but be too moral to think up a plausible lie?
- Did Richard Buckley, of the LIAS, eat his hat, as he promised to do if the remains turned out to be those of Richard III? Again, just nitpicking—but I'm dying to know!

While on the subject of bones, an older book, **WRITTEN IN BONES: How human remains unlock the secrets of the dead** (Paul Bahn, ed., Firefly Books, Toronto, 2002) has a section on the bones of the Princes in the Tower, and identifies them as such. As no DNA evidence was available, this is based mainly on similar characteristics in the skeletons of the boys and their 2nd or 3rd cousin, Anne Mowbray: missing teeth and the fact that all three were small for their ages. While Anne's age at death is known, that of the boys is simply assumed, otherwise we can't say they were small for their ages!

This is only a small part of this lavishly, but somewhat gruesomely, illustrated book. Other skeletons and mummies are featured, for instance the Iceman and the Bogman, but not my favorite, "Dave" of Urmanchi. (I know, I know—the fact that I have a favorite mummy makes me some kind of nutjob.)

What one does, one becomes. —Spanish proverb

THE ADVENTURE OF THE BLOODY TOWER: Dr. John H. Watson's first case—Donald MacLachlan, The Irregular Special Press, Cambridge, UK, 2012

If you are a Conan Doyle fan, you may have noticed how Dr. Watson was always ready to drop everything and go off with Holmes whenever the game was afoot. Did he never say “Not today, Holmes; I’m tired.” Well, in this novel, he does. Perhaps in his surprise that his housemate does have a temper, Sherlock Holmes agrees to a little holiday, and they wind up at Magdalen college, Cambridge. (Not exactly the seaside, which was what Watson had in mind, but at least a change.) The occasion is the 400th anniversary of Richard III’s visit to the college. Why is an event connected with such an evil person being celebrated? One thing leads to another, and Watson is maneuvered into volunteering himself to do some detective work on the fate of the Little Princes. He thinks—hopes- that Holmes will help him, or at least help him get out of it, but the World’s First Consulting Detective refuses. The good doctor has no choice but to tackle the job himself. He consults with the primary experts on Richards’s life and reign, Clements Markham (pro-Richard) and James Gairdner (con), along with the Yeoman Warder of the Tower, and others. Among those others is a young female scholar, Callie Rivas, who is, alas, fictional. Most of the people Watson mentions, however, are real people whom Watson might have met.

Finally, Watson gets all the data ready for his presentation, and does a good job of delivering it, in spite of his nerves. He lists 10 different possibilities for what might have happened to the Princes. I can think of two or three more, off the top of my head. But he makes a good case for his selected solution, though one can still argue with it, and I do. Along the way, he manages to give Holmes a hint that aids him to solve his current case, one of embezzlement.

The author has tried to write as much as possible in the spirit and style of Dr. Watson’s chronicles, even using the same punctuation that was in use in 1880’s Britain. This is not really necessary to our enjoyment of the story, but it’s a sign of how much he has immersed himself in the story. Mr. MacLachlan plans another Holmes and Watson adventure, involving them in “another real-life murder case.” Jack the Ripper, maybe? Worth looking into.

Speaking of pastiches, Sebastian Faulks has tried his hand at writing a non-canonical Jeeves and Wooster novel, **JEEVES AND THE WEDDING BELLS** (St Martins Press, NY, 2013), and does a pretty good job of this. My chief complaint is that the book has a real life setting, during the General Strike of 1926. With very few exceptions, Wodehouse’s stories take place in a sort of Brigadoon, outside of and irrelevant to history. Faulks has also written neo-James Bond, so even the purists would agree that he has what Wodehouse himself would call ‘the gall of an Army mule.’

From long journeys, long lies. —Spanish proverb

Finally, some odds and ends, mostly of a Tudor variety:

A JOURNEY THROUGH TUDOR ENGLAND—Suzannah Lipscomb, Pegasus Books, NY and London, 2013

This is mostly a guidebook to homes, churches, and other places of importance in the Tudor period, including a couple of battlefields. It mostly takes the traditional Tudor viewpoint, except in a few isolated cases among the later Tudor (e.g. Lady Jane Grey). Ms. Lipscomb lists not only the where, but also the why—why the tourist would want to visit these places, and this involves recounting interesting stories. Even as a popular history, there are a few errors. For instance, the author reports that Henry VIII never saw his sister Margaret again after she left home to marry the King of Scots. In fact, he did, after she was widowed.

There are sketches of the various travelers' attractions, but no photographs. On the plus side, there are copious sidebars about various aspects of Tudor life: costuming, building, plumbing, etc. the book also contains a section of 'further reading', and a more 'guide-booky' section, setting out times of opening, nearby hotels, and the like. Since many so-called 'Tudor' landmarks were actually built before 1485, the historical-minded tourist might find this book a helpful adjunct to his/her itinerary, but not the only one to be consulted.

THE TUDOR CHRONICLES—Susan Doran, Metro Books, NY, 2008

A very handsomely produced coffee-table book, with Elizabeth I on the cover. It does have more serious aspirations. It provides a year-by-year timeline of the dynasty, and more than that, puts the Whatstheirname's—by the author's own admission, calling them 'Tudors' is anachronistic—puts the family, let's say, in context with what was going on and who was ruling in other countries.

2013 was the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Flodden Field, which was less a victory for Henry VIII than it was for the former Yorkist, Thomas Howard, the redoubtable Earl of Surry. I hope to be able to review one or more items concerning that battle.

The habit does not make the friar. —Spanish proverb

Finally, I will leave you with this thought.

A while back in these pages, I was inspired to doggerel poetry, to wit:

Tudor's soak-the rich policy

Made him the first liberal, you see, (and so on...)

I was half or three-quarters joking, but Kevin Williamson is 100% serious, as expressed in **THE END IS NEAR AND IT'S GOING TO BE AWESOME: How going broke will leave America richer**... and so on, for about a paragraph. (Broadside Books, 2013) Mr. Williamson, an historian and economist, has no great opinion of The Past, nor The Present either: "I am unaware of any romantic fantasy literature set in contemporary Rwanda.." He is especially critical of the Tudors. While maybe not altogether 'liberal' in the modern sense of the word, they have some claim to be the first 'moderns,' and certainly the first monopolists. You may not agree with all of Williamson's conclusions, but pages 46-51 of this book will bear looking into.

Hasta la vista!

ToC

From the Editor

The quality of this publication depends on the members of the Richard III society. I am not always able to seek out articles for publication, and in this instance, I am truly grateful to have the one article leading this publication. Please send your submissions to me at info@r3.org. The submission deadlines for articles are:

March • January 2 / June • April 1 / September • July 1 / December • October 1

Any article submitted after the first of the month, but by the 15th of that month, may still be published. This will depend on the need for research.

The deadlines for everything else remains:

March • January 15 / June • April 15 / September • July 15 / December • October 15

We are still in need of a treasurer. Diane Hoffman is now entering her seventh year serving in this capacity. Although Diane has greatly simplified the process, this position does require a certain amount of skill as there are tax forms that need to be filled out, and funds that need to be maintained. During her tenure as treasurer, Diane has organized the funds and streamlined the duties and will be available to bring whoever volunteers up to speed. If you do have some knowledge in these areas, please contact Diane at treasurer@r3.org.

In addition to Pamela Garrett being our new Research Officer, A. Compton Reeves has graciously volunteered to be her backup, should there be an avalanche of articles (I can only hope) instead of the current trickle.

Recently, Jonathan Hayes shared a photo of a “sunne in splendour” over Moscow he had found online. This was the first time I had seen such an image, so I located one in the public domain and placed it on the back cover of this publication. This photo is really worth a thousand words.

ToC



Announcing New Chapter—Virginia

The Virginia Area Chapter held its first meeting in Richmond on Saturday, March 22. Dr. Leigh-Ann Craig was our speaker. She is a professor of Medieval History at Virginia Commonwealth University. Some information about Dr. Craig follows: "Leigh Ann Craig studies the history of medieval European religion, gender, and culture. Her present research focuses on the ways in which people from differing walks of life diagnosed and coped with disabilities, which modern people would refer to as mental illness. On this topic, she is the author of ‘The Spirit of Madness: Doubt and the Miraculous Restoration of Sanity in the Miracles of Henry VI.’"

Although our first meeting was in Richmond, we expect to meet in various locations throughout the region in the future.

For further information please contact Bob Pfile at rpfile43@gmail.com.

Ed. note: I received this information about the new chapter the first week of February. However, by the time members receive their print copy of the *Register*, the meeting most likely will have occurred. If you are reading the digital edition, and live near Richmond, VA and are interested in attending, it may not be too late to contact Bob Pfile at the email address listed above.

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ToC

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Front cover: *Richard III Forever* by Mary Kelly

Richard III and Wars of the Roses memorabilia, including prints are available at [Boar and Banner Shoppe](#)

Richard III

Photo of reconstruction from skeleton taken by Joan Szechtman from display at York Museum

Reminder:

Save the Date: September 19 - 21, 2014

For the

2014 American Branch AGM

Where:Portland, Oregon

We do not have a hotel location, program or final registration fee cost at this time. Watch your email and the American Branch Website for details as they become available.

[See [p8](#) for more information on Portland, Oregon.]