

# *Ricardian Register*



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## King Richard III



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# Margaret of Anjou—A Medieval Woman

Judith Arnopp

Forget, if you can, what it means to be a woman today. Imagine a different world where women are controlled by parameters. Imagine you are a medieval woman governed by men, hampered by guidelines. An unmarried woman was answerable to her father or guardian, and a married woman to her husband; even in widowhood, the relative freedom of a woman was subject to the authority of her lord or king. Early Christian doctrine, that appears to hold all women to account for the expulsion from Paradise, endorsed implicit obedience as an ideal of marriage. Gradually this attitude became manifest throughout society.

Women were viewed as the descendants of Eve; irresponsible, inferior and sexually promiscuous, and at the same time were expected to aspire to the chastity of the Virgin Mary. Wives were subordinate to their husbands and required to maintain the household, providing support and tempering the stern rule of their husbands with compassion. Manuals were published instructing how a woman should think and act; some of these were directed at queens. Christine de Pisan, one of the few women who successfully stepped from such boundaries, wrote:

This is the proper duty of the wise queen or princess; to be the means of peace and concord, to work for the avoidance of war because of the trouble that can come of it. Ladies in particular ought to attend to this business because men are by nature more courageous and more hot-headed, and the great desire they have to avenge themselves prevents their considering either the perils or the evils that can result from war.<sup>1</sup>

The key words here are '*by nature*' suggesting that any queen who acted outside these parameters could be regarded as acting *unnaturally*. It was permissible for lower class women to work alongside their men in a supplementary role. There are few periods of history where the incidence of male absence is higher, whether away on business, fighting in the baronial wars or on crusade. In many instances, in the absence of the husband, the wife was left in the authoritative role and assumed the running of the estate or business.

Margaret Paston's defence of her home against attack in the absence of her husband was well documented. Her actions were applauded and she is still regarded as a competent, shrewd woman and a dutiful wife. She was not alone in taking arms against a husband's enemy. Berwick Castle was unsuccessfully defended against Edward I by the Countess of Buchan, and Dunbar Castle against Edward III by the Countess of Dunbar in 1338. However, later in the period, when a queen of England fought for her son's right to the crown, her actions were not so well received. She defended what she saw as the rights of her husband and son when faced with the most acute political turmoil, yet she endured hostility and suspicion.

During the Wars of the Roses, Margaret of Anjou, Queen to Henry VI, led the Lancastrian campaign against the Yorkist faction in an attempt to regain the crown for her son, Edward of Lancaster. She has descended into popular history labelled variously as an '*unnatural*' '*vengeful*' '*she-wolf*.' These labels are not so much the consequence of her military *actions* but rather of the perceived threat of a woman stepping out of her allotted place. Since then the medieval prejudices against her have been adopted and embellished by each subsequent generation.

Henry VI was weak, indecisive and distracted by both prayer and an unspecified mental illness. His failure to rule adequately necessitated Queen Margaret to step from her allocated role and provide the strengths that the king lacked.

Henry is largely regarded as a misplaced soul better suited to a religious life; there is no virulent contemporary criticism of his failures, which were legion. For Margaret however the story is very different. Yorkist propaganda begins early in her story and continues to affect our perception of her to the present day.

Margaret has become, not a queen concerned to maintain her husband's throne and to secure the inheritance of her son a vile monster, spurred on only by blood-lust.

Margaret came from a line of determined women; both her paternal grandmother Yolande of Aragon and her mother, Isabelle of Lorraine, both championed the rights of their absent husbands, raised taxes and armies, administered the duchies and laid down policies. It is perhaps not surprising that she should have followed their example.

During her early career as Queen of England Margaret adhered to the teachings of Pisan and acted as a supporting, conciliatory presence behind the king. She confined her activities to matchmaking and obtaining positions at court for friends and servants. It was not until she used her influence to allow the jurisdiction of Maine to pass into the hands of the French that she began to lose the favour of the English nobility.

Margaret's first major intercession into politics at home was during the Jack Cade rebellion when at her instigation Henry agreed to show leniency and issue a pardon to the rebels. The lure of a pardon undermined Cade's force and Margaret's mediation allowed Henry to be merciful without appearing weak.

It is quite possible that had Henry not fallen ill, Margaret's nurturing supportive role would have continued. But as his condition worsened and the threat from the Yorkist faction grew stronger, Margaret moved into a more prominent and military role. Although she continued to represent herself as subordinate to the king's authority, the fluctuating nature of his health meant that for some time she governed beneath the cloak of Henry's kingship, supported by strong male advisers.

As long as Henry and Margaret remained childless the Duke of York was set to inherit the throne. He was understandably disappointed in the arrival of a prince. Increasingly he was excluded from political decision, and favours were given instead to the royal favourite, the Duke of Somerset. When his attempts at reaching an amiable conclusion failed, York claimed he only wished to free the king from the influence of Somerset. He marched on London, swore fealty to the king and laid a bill of accusation against Somerset. The king's favourite was imprisoned and York assumed the Protectorship. In October 1453, during a lull in Henry's illness, Margaret produced an heir, Edward, Prince of Wales, providing an additional fillip to her ambition and a blow to the Duke of York's ambitions.

Around this time, propaganda against the queen began in earnest, standing today as evidence of York's perception of her influence and potential power.

In 1455 the Wars of the Roses began with the first battle of St Albans where Somerset was killed. With the king once more incapacitated, Margaret took action, and in the words of chronicler John Bocking became "a grete and strong laboured woman (who) spareth no peyne to sue hire thinges to an intent and conclusion to hir power."<sup>2</sup>

None of her male contemporaries, either ally or enemy, were subjected to the same degree of negative criticism. Contemporary reports include allegations of sexual misconduct and her son Edward is described as a 'changeling.' Rumour against her was rife and in February 1456 a man by the name of John Helton was hung, drawn, and quartered for producing bills that alleged the prince was 'not the queen's son.'<sup>3</sup>

The Battle of Towton saw the end of Henry's reign (and consequently Margaret's) and the beginning of a new Yorkist dynasty. With Edward IV firmly on the throne it may be

supposed that Margaret would fade into gentile retirement and that the Yorkist faction would cease their vendetta against the deposed queen. However, Margaret did not admit defeat and spent the next ten years plotting to reinstate her son on the English throne.

In 1462 even the celebration of Edward IV's accession to the throne included a slander of Margaret's character and actions.

woe be to that region  
where is a king unwise or innocent.'  
Moreover it is right a great abusion,  
A woman of a land to be a regent—  
Queen Margaret I mean, that ever hath meant  
To govern all England with might and power,  
And to destroy the right line was her intent,  
Wherefore she hath a fall, to her great languor.

And now she ne rough, so that she might attain,  
Though all England were brought to confusion;  
She and her wicked affinity certain  
Intend utterly to destroy this region;  
For with them is but death and destruction,  
Robbery and vengeance with all rigour,  
Therefore all that hold of that opinion,  
God send them a short end with much languor.<sup>4</sup>

When relations between Edward IV and Warwick broke down, desperation and a strong determination for victory forced Margaret to swallow her pride and form an alliance with her great enemy. The marriage of her son Edward to Warwick's youngest daughter, Anne (later Queen to Richard III) cemented the alliance. Poetry and pamphlets were circulated denigrating both Margaret and her claims to the throne; she was blamed for the failure of the Lancastrian faction and stereotyped as 'an angry woman driven by malice, spreading sorrow, disorder and confusion in her wake.'

Shakespeare's malevolent portrayal of the queen in his play, *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York and the Good King Henry the Sixth*.

She wolf of France but worse than the wolves of France,  
whose tongue more poisons than the adder's tooth!  
How ill be-seeming is it in thy sex  
To triumph like an Amazonian trull  
Upon their woes who Fortune captivates!  
But that thy face is vizard like, unchanging,  
Made impudent with use of evil deeds,  
I would assay, proud queen, to make thee blush.  
To tell thee whence thy cam'st, of whom derived,  
Were shame enough to shame thee, wert not shameless.(Act 1.4.112)<sup>5</sup>

Recent studies of Margaret of Anjou have tended to concentrate on her ambition but her historiography makes for fascinating study. Her contemporaries attacked her as a transgressive woman. Later Tudor writers were hostile, focusing upon her unwomanliness and castigating her as a *nonconforming female*.

A wide range of devices were used to defame Margaret, and it is now very difficult to obtain a clear view of her through the fog of propaganda. Later historians and, most

famously, the playwright William Shakespeare continued to dehumanise her, subverting her female instinct to nurture her son into an unnatural lust for murder.

By the time Shakespeare wrote his Wars of the Roses plays, Margaret's character had come to epitomise unrelieved lust for power, possessing a "tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide."<sup>6</sup> Her female flaws undermine her strengths, and she is not given credence for any noble qualities. Immorality and a masculine lust for vengeance tarnish her character.

Shakespeare's Margaret is an arch-villainess whose femininity is inverted to encompass the worst of human traits; her assumption of a male role and her lust for blood and revenge reverse the natural order and cause chaos in the realm. His Margaret is a marvellous authorial depiction of twisted humanity, and as a playwright Shakespeare remains unchallenged, but as a historian he is sadly lacking. Unfortunately, just as in the case of Richard III, Shakespeare's history plays came to be read not as literature, but as fact.

In the 1840s Agnes Strickland published her *Lives of the Queens of England* and saw Margaret's story as "...of more powerful of interest than are to be found in the imaginary career of any heroine of romance; for the creations of fiction, however forcibly they may appeal to our imagination, fade into insignificance before the simple majesty of truth."<sup>7</sup>

Like other Victorian moralists Strickland provides a highly romanticised picture of an unfortunate queen unwisely meddling in the concerns of men. Margaret becomes pitiful in her defeat but Strickland, by illustrating her utter personal defeat and regret, upholds the medieval opinion of a woman's proper place.

J. J. Bagley in his biography of Margaret written in 1948 provides a less romantic presentation. The queen is an unwise woman whose determined nature is her downfall. Bagley admits that Margaret did not cause the Wars of the Roses but blames her bitterness, her refusal to compromise and her intense obsession with her only son.

In Bagley's opinion the Lancastrian cause could not have wished for a braver leader, but perhaps one less swayed by dangerous female characteristics such as loyalty and a determination to maintain a hold on her son's birthright. Of course, the Duke of York was equally ambitious for his sons, and fought just as fiercely for what he saw as his own rights and, moreover, against an anointed king.

Margaret lived in harsh times. Terrible things were carried out in the squabble for the throne, but she pushed the boundaries of her engendered position. The insurmountable problem of an inefficient consort forced her to take unpopular actions and she has since been judged accordingly. Diana Dunn observes:

The key to understanding the unpopularity of Margaret of Anjou lies predominantly with her husband. She had the misfortune to be married to one of the weakest and most incompetent medieval kings of England who eventually lost his throne. It is largely through association with the last Lancastrian king's failures that Margaret's reputation has suffered.<sup>8</sup>

The threat of a discordant kingdom strengthened York's cause, and under Yorkist propaganda, Margaret and Henry's rule represented the disaster that occurs when the natural order is overthrown. The king in this case was the feminine, pitiful, weak human being while Margaret was warlike and domineering. Because of this Margaret was accused of impropriety. Instead of praise for loyalty to her husband and king, or respect for her valour in taking up arms, she is remembered with loathing. Margaret ultimately failed, the death of her son ending her ambition and leaving her to live out her life disempowered and alone.

In a man such determination would be seen as heroic, in a woman it is seen as negative. Despite her early efforts to adhere to the gendered expectations placed upon her sex, she is

remembered as a violent and vengeful woman, but she was no more violent and vengeful than the men around her. Others have campaigned for thrones, overthrown kings and taken power from weak or incompetent rulers and, with the exception of Richard III, have not been recorded historically as unnatural monsters; the only difference is that they were men.

In stepping out of her prescribed role and expanding her parameters Margaret posed a threat to male rule that the medieval world was unprepared to accept. Like Joan of Arc she was a woman out of her prescribed place. She was 'unnatural' and any divergence from the norm was considered suspect and therefore dangerous. Perhaps it can be argued that the attack is not so much against Margaret herself but against her 'unnatural' actions, it is only later historians that have made it personal.

The hostile propaganda surrounding Margaret has been perpetuated down the years by playwrights and Victorian moralists. It has infiltrated modern perceptions and become the favourite theme of modern novelists. Margaret may not always have been wise; she made mistakes, but so did her male counterparts. Surely it is time to dispel medieval misogyny and take another more objective view.

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Endnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> De Pisan, Christine, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* (London: Penguin Books, 2003)
- <sup>2</sup> Maurer, Helen E. *Margaret of Anjou*, p.128
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 45
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 201
- <sup>5</sup> Greenblatt, Stephen, ed., *The Norton Shakespeare: based on the Oxford edition.* (London: W. W. Norton, 1997)
- <sup>6</sup> Henry VI, Part 3, Act I, sc. iv
- <sup>7</sup> Strickland, A. *Lives of the Queens of England from the Norman Conquest* Vol.1 (London: 1886) p.162
- <sup>8</sup> Dunn, D. 'Margaret of Anjou: Monster Queen or Dutiful Wife?' *Medieval History* Vol. 4 (Oxford: Headstart History, 1994) pp 199 – 217

Editor's note: If you are interested in reading more from Judith Arnopp, see Myrna Smith's review of *A Song of Sixpence* in Ricardian Reviews.

~ToC~

## Even by Tudor and Stuart Standards, Edward IV's Marriage to Elizabeth Woodville was Invalid

Merlyn MacLeod

BARNABY: You really believe, don't you, that the normal rules of society don't apply to people like you.

COLQUHON: We are the old families of England. We own most of the country's land and its wealth and have done for generations. And we make up our own rules.

BARNABY: But not the rule of law, sir.

—*Midsomer Murders, Blood Wedding*

I've discovered a wonderfully detailed monograph written by a 21st-century professor of history (whose specialty is the social history of early modern England), parts of which illustrate very nicely that the medieval canon laws governing pre-contracted marriages—which resulted in the dissolution of Edward IV's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville—survived without alteration beyond the Reformation.

The book is David Cressy's *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*, published by Oxford University Press in 1997, when Cressy was Professor of History at California State University in Long Beach. An extensive preview is available for viewing at Google Books.<sup>1</sup>

Cressy's specialty is the social history of early modern England. For those who do not know, "early modern England" roughly corresponds to the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. On his current faculty page at Ohio State University, Cressy shares a few of his credentials:

"I was born and educated in England, and received four degrees from the University of Cambridge. I came to the United States on a two-year teaching contract, before I finished my Ph. D., and have been here ever since. I am a naturalized U.S. citizen. I taught at liberal arts colleges in California, and at California State University, Long Beach, before joining the Ohio State University History Department in 1998. I am currently Humanities Distinguished Professor of History and George III Professor of British History."<sup>2</sup>

Though it wasn't Cressy's intent, his monograph proves that pre-contract law and the consequences of an irregular marriage weren't something Richard of Gloucester invented to make a grab for the throne in May-June 1483, nor were they anything new to the bishops and archbishops sitting on Edward V's council. From the Middle Ages to the 1700s, marriages could be invalidated and children could be bastardized if a parent's pre-contract could be proven.

Cressy does an excellent job explaining what pre-contracts were, how they occurred, why they blocked couples from marrying, and why they resulted in the dissolution of planned and subsequent marriages. His uncomplicated explanations and contemporary examples make it clear why the consequence of a proven pre-contract was *always* the dissolution of a second marriage and *sometimes* the bastardization of any children of that marriage.

The marriage laws of the Church<sup>3</sup> and the inheritance laws of the land were entirely separate things, though they worked in concert with each other. Such laws aren't new to those who have taken the time to study the pre-contract allegation leveled against Edward IV. What is new is the difficulty denialists of the pre-contract may have refuting a Tudor/Stuart scholar's detailed explanation of the Church's laws by which Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville's marriage was dissolved and their children declared illegitimate.

Although Cressy doesn't mention Edward IV specifically, readers can use his monograph to trace the perfect "irregular marriage" storm Edward's bigamy created and the exact medieval laws whereby Edward's actions came back to haunt his surviving family. What Cressy's monograph does is help put the responsibility for the events of May-June 1483 squarely on Edward IV's shoulders. The chaos and crisis of 1483 would never have happened if he had followed the Church's rules (which existed to protect spouses and children), if he had made an honorable, regular Church marriage. The Three Estates wouldn't have offered Richard of Gloucester the throne, and Edward V would have been crowned as planned.

It is regrettable that we do not know what Bishop Robert Stillington and his witnesses presented to Edward V's council to prove the pre-contract. What we do know, because medieval canon laws governing marriage law tells us, is if sufficient evidence hadn't been offered to prove the pre-contract allegation, the clergymen on the young king's council would not have dissolved his parents' marriage. Those who blame Richard of Gloucester for the pre-contract mess might want to look a little more closely at Edward IV's

recklessness, and at the medieval Church's sole right to dissolve marriages—the same right Henry VIII encountered approximately forty years later.

### **What Constituted a Legal and/or Church-Approved Marriage in the Middle Ages Through Stuart Times?**

The Church's "obligations" for persons seeking to be married involved asking for marriage banns, obtaining licenses to marry in special situations, and confronting challenges to the legitimacy of marriages due to pre-contracts. These same obligations were inserted into the original 1549 edition of the Anglican church's *Book of Common Prayer*, and into subsequent editions as well. These same obligations were in force in England from the Middle Ages to the 1700s. What this means is that anyone in denial regarding:

Why Edward IV's previously contracted marriage to Eleanor Butler (née Talbot) made his marriage to Elizabeth Woodville invalid;

What contemporary evidence was required by the bishops on Edward V's council to declare his parents' marriage invalid;

What right the bishops on Edward V's council had to declare him and his siblings illegitimate;

can consult Cressy's detailed monograph which was written by an acknowledged, respected Tudor and Stuart historian. The book includes extensive notes for each chapter and cites a multitude of contemporary sources, so the reader comes to understand precisely why the Church would have declared Edward IV's second marriage invalid and the children of his marriage illegitimate. Illegitimate children were known as bastards, and by law bastards could not inherit anything. This included their parents' lands, wealth, titles, and thrones.

Readers of Cressy's monograph will also discern that unless Richard of Gloucester had been a first-hand witness when his brother had married Eleanor Butler (meaning, unless Richard could testify, "I was there...I saw...I heard..."), he could not testify before Edward V's council regarding the pre-contract. Additionally, neither the Constable of England nor the Protector of the Realm had any power to influence the outcome of a pre-contract challenge, nor was he able to declare any marriage invalid or declare the children of any marriage illegitimate. Both churches reserved the exclusive right to dissolve marriages, and their decisions were based solely upon eyewitness evidence brought before medieval Church/Anglican church officials.

### **What Was Necessary for Edward IV to Have Done, to Have Married Eleanor Butler?**

Cressy devotes an entire chapter to clandestine and irregular marriages<sup>4</sup>. Both terms apply to Edward IV since as king he married twice in secret, without the asking of banns at mass. Cressy's summary of the "problem of 'clandestine' marriages in Tudor and Stuart England" can be applied whole cloth to the problem of Edward IV's clandestine marriages.

Please read the following carefully—especially the second paragraph quoted—for at first glance it may seem that medieval law and early modern social practice were at odds when they were not. Cressy writes:

"Confusion has set in because some scholars have failed to differentiate late medieval legal principle from early modern social practice, and have mistaken 'clandestine' and irregular marriages for informal unions that rested on mere consent. This chapter sets out to review the problem of 'clandestine' marriage in Tudor and Stuart England, and to show that despite obvious technical defects they were, for the most part, conformable to social and legal expectations.

"In principle, a marriage existed if the man and the woman committed themselves to each other by words of consent expressed in the present tense. It

would be enough to say, ‘I N. **do** take thee, N, to be my wedded wife/husband.’ A marriage was technically made valid in law by this contract or *spousals per verba de presenti* [words in the present tense], providing there were no overriding impediments. A contract *de future*, made in the future tense (such as ‘I **will** marry you’) **became immediately binding if followed by sexual intercourse. Such was the core of medieval law, that was not changed in England until Lord Hardwicke’s Marriage Act of 1753.**<sup>5</sup> [Bold mine.]

It should be noted that no priest was needed to make such a marriage legal and binding, though Eleanor may have told her family afterward, wanted to consult a priest and confine herself to a nunnery once she heard King Edward had subsequently married Lady Elizabeth Grey.

This means that if, while Edward was laying siege to Eleanor, she whispered, “I, Eleanor, do take thee, Ned, to be my wedded husband,” and Edward wasn’t paying attention and answered with something as innocuous as, “Hmm? Yes, of course, Eleanor”, or if she pressed him as to his true intentions while he was breathing down her neck, and he offhandedly said, “Of course I will marry you,” and sexual intercourse followed, then voila! The two of them were married.

Do we have any contemporary evidence that Edward IV either married or promised marriage to any woman before he married Elizabeth Woodville? We have three items of evidence:

1. The official January 1484 roll of Richard III’s only Parliament which incorporates Titulus Regius and somehow was not destroyed, despite Henry VII’s intentions and best efforts to do so. The roll consists of twenty-one sewn parchment membranes; Titulus Regius covers the bottom two-thirds of membrane three and all of membrane four.<sup>6</sup> In part, Titulus Regius reads: “And how also, that at the time of contract of the same pretended Marriage, and before and long time after, the said King Edward was and **stood married and troth-plight** to one Dame Eleanor Butler, Daughter of the old Earl of Shrewsbury, with whom the same King Edward had made a precontract of Matrimony, long time before he made the said pretended Marriage with the said Elizabeth [Woodville] Grey, in manner and form above-said.” [Bold mine.]
2. A separate, transcribed copy of Titulus Regius said to have been found by Sir George Buck tucked into the Croyland Chronicle in the 17th century.<sup>7</sup>
3. The words of a contemporary chronicler (but not a first-hand witness) who never met and was not a friend of Richard of Gloucester, who wrote that Edward had promised marriage to a “beautiful young lady.”

French chronicler Philippe de Commines deserted Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy in the dead of night in favor of serving Louis XI and later Charles VIII. He likely never visited England, so that all he knew and wrote of English politics and players was through his meetings with Yorkist and Lancastrian exiles, who included Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick (the Kingmaker) and Henry Tudor. De Commines also met Edward IV when the king was in exile in Burgundy and later described his appearance and character. What interests us here is what de Commines recorded, from unknown sources, about Edward’s marrying another woman before he married Elizabeth Woodville. De Commines wrote:

“[Robert Stillington, Bishop of Bath and Wells] discovered to the Duke of Gloucester that his brother king Edward had been formerly in love with a beautiful young lady, and had promised her marriage, upon condition that he might lie with

her; the lady consented, and, as the bishop affirmed, he married them when nobody was present but they two and himself. His fortune depending on the court, he did not discover it, and persuaded the lady likewise to conceal it, which she did, and the matter remained a secret. After this the King married the daughter of an English gentleman, called the Lord Rivers; this lady was a widow and had two sons.<sup>8</sup>

### **What, Exactly, Does “Pre-Contract” Mean?**

Many people who haven’t taken the time to research medieval, Tudor, or Stuart marriage laws don’t understand what “pre-contract” means, and why it was such a serious accusation with serious consequences in 1483. The uninformed seem to assume that the term means what it might mean in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century—that Edward IV had merely been engaged to Eleanor Butler and only a broken engagement was revealed in 1483. That’s no big deal in our time, so why were Edward’s children declared bastards and disinherited over such a small thing?

A “pre-contract” is not an engagement. The term means a *previous marriage*. It means a previous marriage took place, one which invalidates a second marriage or a man or woman’s intent to make a second marriage.

Edward IV stood accused of having *previously married* Eleanor Butler. Such an accusation could only be assessed by the bishops on the king’s council in May-June 1483. Not only was there no time during this royal succession crisis to refer the matter to a Church court because Rome never hurries, there was no need.<sup>9</sup> Multiple bishops—canon law experts—were members of Edward V’s council. They knew well enough what evidence was required to prove or disprove the allegation of a pre-contract. Subsequent events, including Parliament’s statute of January 1484, prove the bishops found the allegation to be true, which meant Edward IV’s marriage to Elizabeth Woodville had never been valid because by both medieval Church and later Anglican law (and even by modern law), no man can have more than one living wife, nor any woman more than one living husband.

- Edward married Eleanor Butler sometime between 4 March 1461 and 1 May 1464. She was 25-28 to his 19-22.
- Edward married Elizabeth Woodville on 1 May 1464. She was 27 to his 22.
- Eleanor Butler did not die until 30 June 1468. She was 32. By then, Edward had fathered Elizabeth and Mary who were both under three years old. Richard of Gloucester was 16 and about to join, or had just joined, his brother’s court.

### **Even if the Bishops Had to Dissolve Edward and Elizabeth’s Marriage, Why Didn’t They Protect Edward V’s Right to the Throne?**

This is where it gets complicated, unless you think in terms of what Edward IV *should* have done but did *not* do, at the very least, to secure the rights of his heir to inherit Edward IV’s hard-won throne.

So convoluted was Church marriage law, it likely wouldn’t have solved anything if Edward had confessed his bigamy and tried to remarry Elizabeth publicly after Eleanor Butler’s death in an effort to make all marital things new again and ensure the legitimacy of the children born after Eleanor’s death. As far as the Church was concerned, when Edward and Elizabeth’s adultery was combined with Edward’s marriage to Eleanor Butler, it so polluted Edward’s relationship with Elizabeth that he and Elizabeth could never marry *unless* Elizabeth could show she had never known of Edward’s prior marriage to Eleanor. All of this was dependent upon Edward taking the shameful, humiliating step of acknowledging the pre-contract and confessing his adultery once Eleanor had died, which didn’t happen. He would also have had to accept that the children born to him and Elizabeth

before marriage reparations would still have been bastards. The irony is if Edward IV had taken steps to make Elizabeth his legal wife before Edward V and Richard of Shrewsbury were born, they would have been securely legitimate.

In medieval, Tudor, and Stuart England, [the churches] required that on three separate Sundays or holy-days, during the mass and in the presence of all the people attending mass, the priest had to “ask the banns.” That is, he had to ask the congregation whether anyone could give a reason why a couple could not *lawfully* be married.

“The banns,” writes Cressy, “were a safety device to prevent those who were ineligible from attempting the passage into matrimony”. Further on, Cressy says, “Church court records capture some of the drama of a challenge to the banns of marriage, though they barely hint at the heartbreak and embarrassment that some irregularities entailed. William Mead and Margaret Rame were ready to be married at Great Waltham, Essex, in 1577 after the banns were asked openly in church on two successive Sundays. But on the third Sunday ‘they were forbidden by Nicholas Satch, who claimed marriage’ to Margaret by virtue of an alleged pre-contract.

**“Legally, a pre-contract was a fatal impediment to marriage. If one intending partner was already contracted to another the wedding was not supposed to proceed. And if such a person forgot or concealed a pre-existing contract, the marriage, if solemnized, could be declared invalid.”**<sup>10</sup> [Bold mine.]

If Edward IV had followed Church law and let the banns be asked for his marriage to Elizabeth Woodville, he wouldn’t have saved his marriage when Stillington or other witnesses came forward all those years later, but Edward would have prevented Edward V and his siblings being declared bastards. This, because medieval and Anglican canon law both dictated:

4. If banns were asked by a priest three times in public as [the churches] dictated; and,
5. If no one came forward at that time with reason(s) why a couple should not be married; but,
6. If someone came forward at a later time with valid reason(s) why the marriage was unlawful and should be dissolved; then,
7. Regardless [the churches] dissolved the marriage, any children of the marriage were not and could not be declared illegitimate because their parents had followed the dictates of [the churches].
8. In that case, [the churches] could and would extend [their] protection to the children to ensure their legitimacy and ability to inherit under English law.
9. However, if banns had *not* been asked, if [the churches] had not been involved in the run-up to the marriage, if [church] procedure had not been followed, then the children of a dissolved marriage could not and would not be protected by [either church]. They would be declared bastards.

Stillington revealed the pre-contract between Edward IV and Eleanor Butler in May 1483. At that time, Elizabeth Woodville, her son Richard of Shrewsbury, and all her daughters were in sanctuary within Westminster Abbey. Elizabeth had easy access to multiple canon-law experts who would have defended her marriage before Edward V’s council. These experts knew how to challenge and negate the testimony of witnesses appearing before the council.

Likewise, Elizabeth had access to canon-law experts who would have told her it was impossible to negate the testimony offered, or to correct the grave mistakes Edward IV had

made by marrying twice in secret.

The historical events of June 1483 indicate that Elizabeth Woodville prepared no defense against the dissolution of her marriage. Neither did she offer any protest against Edward V's council declaring her children bastards, nor against the council's removing Edward V's right to succeed his father.

Elizabeth appears to have sat silent in sanctuary while witnesses were called and testified before the council, while the council's bishops debated, and while her marriage to Edward IV was dissolved due to his previous marriage to another woman.

There is much more in Cressy's monograph of interest to anyone interested in digging through medieval laws and traditions that carried over into Tudor and Stuart times. It would serve anyone in denial about the marital errors Edward IV made that resulted in Edward V's being barred from the throne to consult this book. It does much to explain exactly why Richard of Gloucester had no power to control the ultimate consequences of bigamist Edward IV's secret marriages to Eleanor Butler and Elizabeth Woodville.

### **Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> Cressy, David. *Birth, Marriage, and Death : Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*. Oxford University Press. 1997 ([tinyurl.com/birth-marriage](http://tinyurl.com/birth-marriage))

<sup>2</sup> [tinyurl.com/o9esozc](http://tinyurl.com/o9esozc)

<sup>3</sup> Please note that before the Reformation there was but one church in the Western world, with people referring to it only as "the Church." I've followed that tradition here.

<sup>4</sup> Chapter 11: Clandestine and Irregular Marriages

<sup>5</sup> *Statutes of the Realm*, 26 Geo. II, c. 33; Outhwaite, *Clandestine Marriage in England*, 75-97.

<sup>6</sup> "Richard III: January 1484", in *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, ed. Chris Given-Wilson, Paul Brand, Seymour Phillips, Mark Ormrod, Geoffrey Martin, Anne Curry and Rosemary Horrox (Woodbridge, 2005), available by subscription here: [tinyurl.com/pu9I9ap](http://tinyurl.com/pu9I9ap)

<sup>7</sup> In his article, "Jacobean Historiography and the Election of Richard III" (*Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, Vol. 70, No. 3, September 2007), D.W. Baker states that the single copy of Titulus Regius was not found tucked into the Croyland Chronicle, but was misfiled among the Parliamentary records in the Tower. He claims that Buck didn't personally find it; he only used it in his *History of King Richard III*.

<sup>8</sup> De Commynes, Philippe. *The Memoirs of Philip de Commynes, lord of Argenton*, Vol. 1, H.G. Bohn, London, 1855. pp.395-6. Available for free download at: [tinyurl.com/ne9qpn9](http://tinyurl.com/ne9qpn9)

<sup>9</sup> "Rome never hurries" is a traditional saying of Catholic church members that refers to trying to obtain a divorce (yes, even today). Its first print usage traces to American Catholic priest and author, Rev. Reuben Parsons D.D. (1841–1906) in his *Studies of Church History*, Vol. III, Fr. Pustet & Company, New York, 1897, p. 354. Ironically enough, Fr. Parsons was referring to Henry VIII's attempt to get a divorce from Pope Clement VII. The full quote is, "Rome never hurries on important decisions." Parson's book is available for free download at: [tinyurl.com/ophg9oe](http://tinyurl.com/ophg9oe)

<sup>10</sup> Cressy, David. *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 306-307.

# To Bury a King: Richard III's Re-interment—A Re-enactor's Perspective

Edited by Frances Perry

In a carpark in September 2012, a team of archaeologists from Leicester University uncovered a body believed by some to be the remains of Richard III. The skeleton was uncovered at the former site of the Grey Friars church in Leicester (destroyed in the 1530s) where Richard III, who reigned over England for just over 2 years, was reportedly buried. In February 2013 the DNA results confirmed that the remains were, indeed, that of the king slain at the Battle of Bosworth in Leicestershire over 500 years ago. An individual who has been in equal measures venerated and despised through history remains an enigmatic figure even now having more biographies written about him than any other pre-Tudor monarch.

In a culmination of months of planning, on Sunday 22 March in the year 2015, the bones of an anointed King of England began their 7 day journey of re-interment to a tomb in Leicester Cathedral. It was as if all the eyes of the world were focused on the unusual and unique event, with thousands of spectators arriving in Leicestershire from all over the world, and press coverage by many newspapers and media companies. On this Sunday, the day had been prepared into a set of timed events which would reflect both the modern practices of both the Church of England and Royal funeral rites, but also to pay homage to the rites of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. I have written this article to bring together the perspectives of several different re-enactors who were lucky enough to be asked to participate in this set of events, in order to document their perspective on the re-burial of a King of England—lost and found so dramatically. This is also an article to denounce those who felt the medieval element to the day was a mere “pantomime”, and provides an insight into why we were there.

**Frances Perry**  
**Sir John Savile's Household**  
**Market Bosworth—Market Square**

He has almost a mythical quality. Richard III. A name that, at least in the circles I travel in, can cause a passionate reaction in many people I talk to. I am not a staunch ‘supporter’ or ‘opponent’ of Richard, but rather I was intrigued that such a figure could reign for just over 2 years and still become such a figure of intrigue throughout English history. I also respected him for being the last King to lead a cavalry charge in battle. To say that archaeologists found his bones. That they held them and popped them into a box for DNA analysis is very strange indeed - like it didn't really happen. But it did indeed happen, and Leicestershire prepared to inter his bones into its Cathedral. I didn't really know what to expect—would there be people weeping? Would there be foreign dignitaries? Would the general public notice that it was happening at all? How do you bury a five-hundred-year-old King, anyway? Hell, how do you go about bury a King?

So when our Petty Captain, Tim Kearney, said that our re-enactment group had been selected to attend the re-interment events going on at Market Bosworth on that Sunday I was heartened. Not only was I proud that our group had been selected, but keenly aware that we were representing the period of history that Richard would have recognised in the midst of all this modern ceremony, and which the general public would also see. Our duty was to provide ‘living history’ to the public during the Sunday—in the form of military and clothing talks and displays of crafts and information—and then to form a marching column of soldiers into the market square to line the route prior to the funeral cortege travelling through Market Bosworth on its way through the villages. How do you prepare for



something like that? I made sure my kit was up to scratch and had no tears, polished my armour and weaponry until it shone, and did careful research on the biography of Richard III to prepare for questions by members of the public.

It wasn't until the day of the event, when we were all set up and waiting for the first people to arrive, that it hit me that this text-based historical 'figure' had actually stepped out of the pages and into a real person. A King who ruled England and actually wore the armour, and the clothing and used the weaponry I was talking about. That no-one alive in 2015 knew him, or saw him, or (let's face it) really knew what it was truly like to 'live' in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.



The march out into the square was other-worldly for me. So. Many. People. Kids up lamp-posts; the mayor and other important local persons sat with a choir; church representatives; shop-fronts kitted out with pseudo-medieval displays and bunting; hand-made banners and hats and outfits; cameras and media crew running this way and that; people holding white roses and flags. A very, very strange experience indeed, and I was so nervous I was sweating under my jack and felt like I was staggering rather than marching! We stopped and lined the route and waited for what seemed like an age, and then there was a ripple from the crowd and the Police bikes cruised past. People threw white roses and we knelt while it drove past us on its journey.

Our day was not finished there. We talked to more public about our displays and 15<sup>th</sup> century life. Children knew who we were talking about and had obviously been taught about Richard III in school that week. We learnt later that the crowds of people had been waiting up to 4 hours prior to the cortege drive-past in order to get a good view-point. We were inundated with public all day, and had a fantastic if tiring day talking to people that were very interested in everything we had to say. Feels stupid to write it but I felt we were helping people to make that connection to this person from 500 years ago—bridging the gap in time, so to speak.

**Peter Griffiths**

**21 Gun Salute Gun Crew**

**Sir John Savile's Household**

**Bosworth Visitors Centre**

Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> March marked the culmination of a remarkable week for some friends and I when our cannon fired for the very first time as King Richard's coffin came up Ambion Hill towards the sundial at its apex. Robin Edge, a friend of mine and fellow member of Sir John Savile's Household, had worked every night of the two weeks prior - from morning until late evening - building and assembling a replica 15<sup>th</sup> century cannon and making a purpose-built trailer in time to be ready for the great day. Robin and I must at this point personally thank Dr. Philip Stone who contacted the Birmingham Proofing House in order to speed up the proofing of the cannon barrel to be in time for the day.

And what a day it was!

We arrived at the battlefield centre at Ambion Hill and took the cannon in its trailer up to the top of Ambion Hill to be chained together with the rest of the cannons ready to be fired on the Sunday. On Saturday morning all the cannons and gun crews assembled and had a talk-through of the order of service followed by a practice firing session including

the procedure in the unfortunate event of a misfire (which is a gun crews worse nightmare!). At the conclusion of the practice session we were issued with a pewter badge that had been commissioned especially for the gun crews who were to take part in the gun salute. The pewter badge was a boar standing on a cannon barrel.

I awoke on the Sunday morning with a feeling of excitement, apprehension and nervousness about the historic and unique event that we had been chosen to take part in. It began to dawn on us all just the significance of the day which was to be a once in a lifetime experience and never be repeated in our lives. We got into position by 11am ready to move the guns forward to the firing line by 1pm. In the meantime we talked about the cannon, our re-enactment experiences and about our part in the funeral events to the many members of the public as the afternoon progressed. Our wives and Robin's daughter had placed two white roses on our cannon during the morning so I think nobody had any doubt whatsoever during the day where our allegiance lay! Visitors from all over the world came to speak to us but the one that stood out to me was a lady from Northern Ireland who was partially sighted and in a wheelchair pushed by her daughter. She was dressed in a beautiful murrey and blue dress with a white rose and the words '*Loyalty Me Lie*' embroidered on her sash. When I told her I was from Yorkshire and the story of our cannon she insisted on having a photo taken with "*King Richard's cannon*"! Gosh! I felt humbled, but proud!

Eventually, the call came to move the guns up to the firing line, so we moved our cannon - who we had named Esther after the wife of its builder and an ancient queen of Egypt known for having a fiery temperament (it is the owner of the gun tradition to give it a name) - into the firing position. By now all of our gun crew were getting excited and I am sure hoping that all would run smoothly and that our cannon would not misfire, even though we had been through the firing procedure hundreds of times on previous guns. We had heard King Richard III was on his way and like all the people present that day, we strained to see the cortege come into view.

We were told by the Master Gunner what the procedure would be - after the minute's silence that would be the time to start the 21 gun salute. But as the coffin carrying King Richard's remains came into view on the gun carriage drawn by the army cadets I felt choked with emotion. I had to hold back the tears as I listened to Dr Stone talk about the life of the King and the various clerical figures as they said prayers for both the King and all who fell at the Battle of Bosworth. As a re-enactor I have taken part in encampments and the battle re-enactment at Ambion Hill for 20 years as a Yorkist supporter but nothing has come close to being in the presence of our King who took part in and died in the actual battle.

Then it came our turn to fire. Our thoughts refocused on the task in hand and the gun salute commenced. Working as calmly as our excitement would allow, we loaded the gun and when the signal was given we fired Esther. She fired beautifully and now we, the gun crew, leapt into action to prepare her to fire again. We fired a second time and that was it - all too soon our part in the 21 gun salute was over. Now I was able to be a spectator as the coffin of the King left as we could hear the King's flag fluttered in the breeze. Leaving the gun line we walked the short distance to the sundial and placed our white roses on the grass followed by other members of the public present that glorious day. We were relieved and pleased that all had gone to plan in the gun salute in honour of King Richard. Soon after the crowds started to disperse and we started to pack the gun and camp away feeling happy and



privileged to have taken part in such an historic, once in a lifetime occasion and one I shall never forget.

It was the best day I have ever experienced in many years as a re-enactor and Ricardian, and I was so glad to see how proud Robin was of his cannon and the way it performed on the day after all the hard work he put into building it especially for King Richard's re-interment. Even though I knew his answer, I asked Robin whether all the effort he had put into building his cannon was worth it, and he answered with a resounding "Definitely!"

Alex Kay

### **King's Champion of the Funeral Procession**

#### **Sir John Paston's Household**

#### **Bosworth Visitors Centre**

Late last year, I was approached regarding an ambitious project that was, frankly, mind blowing... It all started with a message asking for my background, and what motivates me in the world of re-enactment, coupled with asking if I was interested in doing some historical interpretation. I responded with a little curiosity and caution, outlining my interpretation CV but mostly talking about what grabs my interest in regards to pushing my boundaries on trying to achieve something truly medieval. About 2 to 3 weeks later I then had a phone call, and the true significance of the project was revealed... to escort Richard III's remains to the Memorial Service held at the Bosworth Battlefield Centre.

Now this obviously initiated a mix of feelings, ranging from pride and honour to be asked to be involved in such an undertaking, to humble disbelief that a 'joe public' like myself could take part in something that could only be described as a royal funeral. Mixed with this, I was extremely conscious that this was the funeral of a human, who should be treated with great respect. Now, normally with funerals you are celebrating the living memory of the individual, but in Richard's case, our 'living memory' is somewhat remote and skewed by history and rumour that followed his death. To make it more complex, there was the whole Catholic v Church of England, debate that was beginning to rise up in strength in the public forums. This was possibly one of the most complex and controversial undertakings I have ever been part of. However, I had been approached to undertake the role of 'King's Champion' - for a man who defended his beliefs in battle and showed great bravery in his final moments, a life with an end that I cannot relate to - but one that I respect greatly. I was going to make sure that I did everything I possibly could do to make sure that this role was carried out to the very best of my ability.

#### **The role of King's Champion**

My colleague, Tim, had outlined some of the research they had done up to that point, and I started looking into what I could find on the subject. The role of King's Champion was held by the Dymoke [Dymmok] family. From what little research could be done it appears the Dymoke family have been champion of the royal family for generations - in fact, it is a hereditary title. Logical expectation would be that you earn the right to a title like this through skills and attributes and that a new King's Champion could be created during a reign of each new King. But this was not the case. It appears the King has no say in who is the Champion, nor is there any test of skills or stamina. It is purely handed down from father to son. So Robert Dymoke - who was the King's Champion from 1470 onwards in fact championed 3 kings: Richard III, Henry VII, and Henry VIII. He must have made an extremely senior Champion by the end of his life! The other interesting point around the hereditary title of King's Champion is associated with Robert's father, Thomas who was executed in 1470 following his involvement in a Lancastrian uprising in 1469. Thomas, among others, had taken Sanctuary at Westminster Abbey but was enticed to leave Sanctuary

and was swiftly beheaded by the order of Edward IV. However, this did not prevent the next in line becoming the King's Champion for Richard, 13 years later.

### The Sword

Research pointed to the role involving the King's Champion walking in front of the procession wearing full plate harness and carrying the State Sword. A high quality harness was needed, with a sword and scabbard of significance. It turned out that in the previous year, I had worked with Matt Bayley of Heritage Castings to recreate a sword harness and scabbard suitable for a high status individual. The belt pattern, copied from that seen on the effigy of Ralph Fitzherbert, was fitted with 18 large bronze cast mounts together with 2 lockets (rather than the single one on the effigy), with enamels mounted into the centre of each (a slight deviation from the original), and a finely cast chape in keeping with the scale of the rest of the scabbard. This would fit the role nicely.

### The Harness

My older harness - that had been put together at the end of the previous year - was missing a back-plate (due to being used with an 'arming jack' - an experiment based around the surviving 'lubeck jack' from Germany). However, I felt that I should be in full harness, and not partial plate for such an occasion. It just so happened I had started to integrate components of a harness based around a cuirass I had commissioned from Mark Vickers of St George Armouries. I already had a leg harness, with sabatons to match, and was only missing the tassets, cutlet, and the arms. So this was the focus for the next 2 or 3 months. Slowly with a couple of purchases and also a lot of hard work constructing the pauldrons, tassets and demi-tassets, the harness was complete!



### The Day Dawns

On the big day it was found there had been some changes. This was a result of the Planning Committee who were coordinating the entire event, rather than the local team based at Bosworth. This meant that certain aspects of the procession would be compromised resulting in a slightly diluted representation. However, following 4 or 5 rehearsals early in the morning, everyone was ready to do their best. When the procession time came there was no room left for nerves, and I remember taking every step - remembering to be sure footed, and also maintaining a respectful pace, something that had been drilled into me during my time in the Army. We finally made it around the memorial and then stood in front of Richard's throne at Bosworth. Then came 30 - 45 minutes of motionless standing whilst the service took place. When Richard's body was wheeled around the memorial, a realisation of what was happening finally hit home. I had been working to the deadline so hard, that I had not really had a chance to take stock of what was happening up to that point. A feeling of pride, and honour, heavily mixed with thoughts of Richard, and some of the situations he must have faced with his journey to the ultimate end. Then thinking about his final decisive decision to launch the charge that would decide his fate. This was quite a location to reflect upon what I know of his reign, and thoughts of the events of that day were at the forefront of my mind.



Following the memorial and once the blood had recirculated in my feet the rest of the day was taken up with talking to members of the public and VIPs about the day, and how special it was. For me it was a glorious day celebrating our heritage, and it is my opinion it is only fitting that we, along with many others - those

who feel passion for the period, not just lords, or ladies, barons, or dukes - who dedicate their time to developing our understanding of the period, had the opportunity to respectfully be involved in the day. Paying respects for a brave King of England who died fighting on the battlefield defending his family's right to lead the nation, and writing the final chapter in the history of his story.

James Green

### **Master Gunner of the 21 Gun Salute**

#### **Buckingham's Retinue and Wars of the Roses Federation Master Gunner Bosworth Visitors Centre**

As Sunday dawned I awoke to the morning I had been planning for since late October 2014. I personally was a tad nervous. I had overseen the practice 21 gun salute the day before trying to anticipate problems, including working out the misfire routine we were going to use, delegating posts to various people, arranging spare match holders and having a safety look-out, etc. but still wondering if I had covered all the bases.

As I gave the final briefing I knew I could trust the gunners I had chosen to perform safely. I knew they all felt very honoured and the take up of the special badge we had commissioned was 100% - everyone was wearing it with pride. I ran through the plan for the day: what time powder would be issued, where we would store it, when and how we would move the guns. Everyone was attentive but with a happy, jocular banter happening. Everyone was ready for the show.



My greatest moment of pride was when we lined the guns up in the morning, and we had the public and reporters coming along asking questions. I stood there looking along the line thinking, what a great display we as Wars of the Roses Federation gunners were putting on!

We lined our guns up ready for the display, ensuring safe and clear lines for the shooting of the cannons, the crews getting ready for Richard's carriage. Once the cadets drawing the coffin came abreast I gave the command for gunners to take a knee to honour him. As he passed it left a lump in my throat as we all knelt as one.

Waiting for the moment starting the minute of silence with a single hand gun shot. Waiting as my timer counted down. As I raised my hand for the first shot of the 21 gun salute the Gun Captain - Kaylea Farquhar (whom I had placed in charge of my cannon) - turned towards me waiting for the signal to shoot. The tension rose. Then I gave the command and the first shot went off. My focus went down to giving commands to fire every 10 seconds. Even dealing with a misfire and redirecting other guns to cover just happened on automatic. Suddenly the 21 gun salute was over, and all that was left was ensuring the guns were cleared ready for the public to pass between them and place their white roses at the sundial.

To stand there and realise that we had given Richard the Royal Salute to send him on his way to his final resting place! What an honour to have commanded such fine gunners at such a time! I will hold that day in my memory for the rest of my life.

Tim Lambon

### **The Kynge's Guard—how it came about**

#### **The Beaufort Companye**

#### **Bosworth Visitors Centre**

#### Dignity & Honour



I never knew that my motivation to be part of the Kynges Guard could be summed up so beautifully. As I watched the big screen that rainy Thursday morning in Jubilee Square, Leicester, and Richard's remains were placed in his new grave, the words of the Poet Laureate's poem for the King brought me to tears...

"Or I once dreamed of this, your future breath  
In prayer for me, lost long, forever found;  
Or sensed you from the backstage of my death,  
As kings glimpse shadows on a battleground."

It's why three of us, Fiona Boyle, Ian Flint and I worked so hard to see that our King got the pageantry he deserved. There were not many things I agreed with in how the whole discovery, exploitation and burial of Richard III took place, but I did agree with the overarching aims of reburying this anointed King of England with "Dignity and Honour".

In the closing months of 2014 we approached Richard Mackinder of the Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre and asked if he knew how we might become involved in Richard's re-interment. We were amazed when he said they were looking for something special and suggested we put together a proposal of what we might do at the site on the day the King's remains would leave Bosworth for the last time. Knowing how important care of the souls, as well as the remains of the dead were to the people of his time, I set to work immediately researching what a funeral for a medieval king would have looked like. Without knowing the declared aims of the project had already been adopted, I sought to devise a spectacle that our King would himself have recognised and appreciated.

Dragged as a bloody naked corpse from the field of battle, Richard was slung across a mule and taken in humiliation back to Leicester. There his body was displayed for three days before being hurriedly bundled into the grave so lately excavated in the Grey Friar's church.

His father, Richard Duke of York and his elder brother, Edmund Earl of Rutland had suffered a similar fate at the hands of Somerset and Clifford. After they'd been slaughtered at Wakefield in 1460, their heads were displayed along with that of Warwick's father, Salisbury, on spikes above Micklegate Bar in York. Their bodies did not remain as long in their temporary graves as Richard's later did, for in 1476, with Richard as the Chief Mourner, York and Rutland were taken from Pontefract to the family mausoleum at Fotheringhay.

It was a time of great record keeping and of course many original sources exist, describing the procession, procedures, provisions and procurements. Luckily I did not have to go all the way back to these fragile documents as they have been very ably described by Anne Sutton, Livia Visser-Fuchs, Peter Hammond and Ralph Griffiths in various Richardian journals. I very quickly became familiar with what Richard, as Duke of Gloucester, would have taken for granted and put together a proposal for the Battlefield Heritage Centre.

It was already mid-February when the three of us drove up to Bosworth and presented the project to Richard Mackinder and Richard Knox, the Centre's re-interment project director. It was a great meeting as they absorbed just what we were proposing. They immediately saw the potential and loved the ideas. And that we had designed it all to work within their budget made it even more attractive. Fiona, Ian and I drove away elated that we would be able to participate in some small part in making the King's departure from the battlefield for the final time an event to remember.

A few days later a phone call said the signs were encouraging. All it needed was sign off by the Dean of the Cathedral who was running the whole project. We set to work fashioning funerary escutcheons, pennons, and badges. I sourced the materials and began



constructing the canopy of state to be carried over the coffin, and to make the torches to be carried alongside. We commissioned the banners of Richard's favoured saints and a "majesty cloth" to line the underside of the funeral canopy. A roll of deep blue velvet was purchased to make a silver crossed pall and to dress the funerary cart. It was all happening.

And then came the call to say it was all off.

The Dean, apparently running the whole thing like a dictator, had very definite ideas and said something to the effect that he was having nothing to do with pantomime theatricality, and why did these people want to dress up like "dead people" anyway? As a Northern Irish protestant and evangelical to boot, he was having no vestiges of popery. Richard's time was Roman Catholic, so Richard's time was to be ignored and the re-interment of his remains was to be a thoroughly modern civic event designed to reinvestigate the flagging fortunes of a post-industrial Leicester.

We were devastated and out of pocket. We thought of quitting in disgust, of launching a Twitter and social media campaign against the Dean, of all sorts of things. The bottom line was, as the "Looking For Richard" team, who had started and financed the whole thing in the first place had found, the University and the Cathedral had taken possession of the King's bones and the event, and there wasn't a blind thing any of us could do about it.

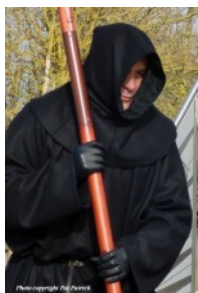
Of course the same theme winds its way throughout the Wars of the Roses, starting with the magnates of the time fighting for control of Henry VI, through to the death of Edward IV and the struggle over who controlled his all too young sons. It seemed to us that it was still all about "possession of the king's body" and those who had Richard's remains were calling the shots, so we shouldn't have been surprised!

At the time I wrote to Annette Carson of the "Looking For Richard" project:

"Despite having the support (we are told) of everyone including the University folk, the Sheriff, even members of the Cathedral Board, the Dean put his foot down and for unexplained reasons told them that there would be no medieval involvement in any moving part of the week's ceremony. Flat. No explanation. No argument. Just forget it. ... What can you do? The decision is extraordinary and all we can think is that this is the Reformation come back to haunt us..."

However, understanding the value of what we had proposed, the two Richards at the Bosworth Centre, like Richard the King, charged into battle and with diplomacy and tact, rather than lance and battle axe, and managed to salvage a vestige of the original plan. After a tense week, Richard Knox wrote to say that they had managed to arrive at a compromise. There was to be a separate procession by the "Kynge's Guard" which still allowed the pageantry but, whilst apparently being dissociated from the actual funerary procession, in fact led the whole thing in medieval splendour.

From then on it was all hands on deck as the time until the event was short. I had just had a total knee replacement and was somewhat incapacitated, but I was off work so I threw myself into the manufacture of the badges, torches, flag poles and the other things required to make the event as authentic as possible. Despite holding down their day jobs, Fiona and Ian also ran themselves ragged putting together lists, arranging schedules and securing things like 25 medieval funeral cloaks and hoods!



It was with some trepidation that everyone watched the unfolding weather. It was the end of March in the Midlands and we were aware of just how bitterly the wind can blow over the exposed dome of Ambion Hill. I bought a tent heater and no-one for once was the slightest bit worried about wearing multiple layers of wool.

Arriving on the Friday afternoon we pitched camp and the wind howled all night. And all through the next day as the company arrived and set up. That night there was concern as everyone stoically gathered round the fire in the Boyle's canvas lean-to. The wind continued to blow a dark overcast through.

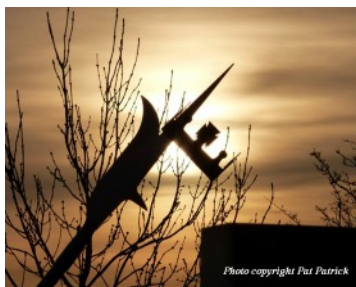
I awoke the next morning and listened. Nothing. The wind had dropped completely and a slight mistiness shrouded the early morning. As a former pilot, I knew that was a good sign.... mist means no wind, and will burn off. And so it did, bringing glorious sunshine and the best temperatures we could possibly have hoped for. It was the beginning of almost a full week of wonderful weather.

Some say that God shone on Richard as he was conveyed to his new resting place with Dignity and Honour.

My thanks go to everyone who took the time out to contributed to this article, to those that came to the event and to all those who worked behind the scenes to give Richard III a respectful funeral. My thanks also to Pat Patrick for letting me use his wonderful photos of the day.

Frances Perry

Loyaulte Me Lie



~ToC~

## Buried Secrets: The Middleham Jewel—and an interview with George Easton, maker of historic jewelry reproductions

Susan Troxell

On the occasion of our eighteenth wedding anniversary, my husband presented me with a very special gift shown here, from the front and reverse sides:





This is known as the “Middleham Jewel”, a large gold pendant with a sapphire that would have been worn around a very fashionable lady’s neck in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. I was utterly flabbergasted that I was holding it in the palm of my hand.

“What, did you steal this from the Yorkshire Museum?” I said in stunned disbelief.

“No, you silly woman, this is a replica of the real jewel that I commissioned from George Easton. He is the same jeweler who made the Richard III crown for John Ashdown-Hill.”

The gift of the Middleham Jewel inspired me to look into the history of this fascinating object, the amazing story of its discovery, the twists and turns of how it became re-appropriated to the United Kingdom. And it brought me into contact with the very talented jeweler who fashions 15th century badges, livery collars, rings, sword hilts, brooches and pendants from his workshop in Sussex, England.

### **Part One: September, 1985.**

Ted Seaton, a metal-detecting enthusiast and antiques dealer who lived in Castle Barnard, asked a farmer, Edmund Tennant, if he could bring a couple of friends with him to detect on one of the farm’s grassy fields near Middleham Castle in North Yorkshire. The endeavor proved fruitless at first, but Mr. Seaton felt compelled to persist, and as he was metal detecting along an ancient path wending from Jervaulx Abbey to Middleham Castle to Coverham Abbey, his equipment emitted a faint signal and he started to dig. He was about 200 yards from the castle that was known to be Richard, duke of Gloucester’s principle home in the last decade of Edward IV’s reign.

As reported by Trevor Brookes in the Teesdale Mercury, “[e]ventually at a depth of more than 10 inches he found something. He saw a glint of metal and put it in the cloth finds bag”.<sup>1</sup> At first he thought it was a non-descript ladies’ compact for powder. Mrs. Vera Seaton, later that evening, “washed it under the tap to reveal a beautifully engraved double-sided pendant of gold set with a carbuncle sapphire. The item was engraved and there was a Latin inscription.”<sup>2</sup>

“For a few minutes,” Mrs. Seaton told the reporter, “I was speechless. I eventually recovered and spoke. ‘Ted, look at this.’ Having sold jewelry in our shop for a few years, I knew instinctively that this was something very special. We looked at one another in disbelief. It was a moment in our lives that we would never forget.”<sup>3</sup>

The piece was heavy, 62.7 grams in weight, suggesting it was solid gold. And rather large: 6.5 cm in height, 4.8 cm in width and 1.0 cm in depth. The front side was engraved with a Trinity, showing God the Father holding his Son to the Cross, with the Dove of the Holy Spirit acting as intermediary. An inscription surrounded the scene: *Ecce agnus dei qui tollis peccata mundi / Miserere nobis / tetragrammaton ananizapta*. Microscopic traces of pigment suggested the words were originally done in blue enamel. The reverse side showed an engraved Nativity scene above the Lamb of God, done in very fine detail, with an ox and an ass peering out of a manger as Mary kneels in adoration of Christ, and Joseph clutches his staff and raises a clenched hand, as if in worry or in defense of the precious child. The Star of Bethlehem beckons in the sky, and God the Father appears at the pinnacle of the scene, giving a blessing to what is depicted below. Fifteen saints are shown in the surrounding frame.

As required by British law, Mr. Seaton reported his find to the authorities, and the Coroner at Thirsk performed an inquest. It was determined not to be treasure trove, and only worth a few hundred pounds. The Coroner’s court was actually more concerned with the discovery of 1,500 silver and gold coins. So Mr. Seaton was permitted to keep the jewel,

and sell it on the open marketplace, sharing the proceeds with the owner of the land and his metal-detecting partners.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the buzz in the press about the discovery, “York Museum remained unmoved, as did The British Museum which said the jewel was rather primitive.”<sup>5</sup> Dave Stewart, from the band Eurythmics, visited their shop in Barnard Castle expressing an interest in buying it. Legal disputes sprang up, one over the find spot being on English Heritage ground at the castle, and another by one of Mr. Seaton’s metal-detecting friends. Even more dramatically, almost like a scene out of a movie, the Seatons received a knock on their door at their house in Barnard Castle, and “a mystery bidder” offered them £500,000.<sup>6</sup>

According to the *Teesdale Mercury*, the mystery man said that “no questions are to be asked and you must also leave the country and never return. The money will be paid into a numbered bank account outside of this country so that you will not have to declare it”.<sup>7</sup> Mrs. Seaton, wisely alarmed by such stipulations, told the reporter that she and her husband “were not interested ‘in doing a disappearing act’.”<sup>8</sup> Mrs. Seaton has since written a full account called *The Saga of The Middleham Jewel* which is available for purchase on Amazon.co.uk.

## **Part Two: December 5, 1986**

Every season, the New York Times publishes a feature in its Arts section that is sure to provoke interest in folks who follow auctions and the art world in general. Sometimes great masterpieces are presented for sale, and rumors gather like storm clouds over such turbulent questions as “*What will it sell for?*” - and—“*Is it right that a buyer from some far-off place will take that work to their private residence in Japan or casino in Macao?*”

True to form, the New York Times, on December 5, 1986, more than a year after Ted Seaton’s discovery, ran a feature about auctions that were to occur at the venerable Sotheby’s in London and Christie’s in New York City.<sup>9</sup> They reported on two items in particular. One was the Middleham Jewel, which was to be auctioned off at Sotheby’s the following Thursday. The other was Joseph Stella’s painting “Tree of My Life”, a futurist work from 1919 - 20 that is rich in floral and spiritual imagery, which was to be auctioned off at Christie’s.

According to the New York Times reporter, “Richard Camber, a former assistant keeper in medieval art at the British Museum, who is Sotheby’s medieval specialist in London, said this week that the jewel is acknowledged by scholars to be the most important addition to the surviving body of English medieval jewelry uncovered since World War II.”<sup>10</sup> The estimate was that it would sell for \$280,000 to \$430,000—well short of the £500,000 offered by the mystery man who knocked on Seaton’s door one night.

However, this estimate was dwarfed by the one given to the Stella painting. It was roundly considered one of his masterpieces, and it is moving to hear Stella’s own description of what inspired him to paint it, as he told the magazine *Art News* in 1960: “And one morning of April, to my amazement, against the infernal turmoil of a huge factory raging just in front of my house emitting in continual ebullition smoke and flame, a towering tree arose up to the sky with the glorious ascending vehemence of the rainbow after the tempest.”<sup>11</sup> He went on to describe the painting, at the top of which are flowers “symbolic of the daring flights of our spiritual life.” The middle, he wrote, depicts scenes of his youth in Italy that are transfigured, “exalted by the nostalgic remoteness.”<sup>12</sup> Notwithstanding that this work was a profound commentary of a 20<sup>th</sup>-century painter’s spiritual reflections in a modern industrial era, the estimate of what it would fetch at auction was in the vicinity of up to \$1,000,000.

Both the Middleham Jewel and Stella's "Tree of My Life" far surpassed both estimates. The jewel ultimately sold for £1,300,000 to an undisclosed buyer outside the United Kingdom.<sup>13</sup> It took six seconds to reach that enormous amount. The Stella painting sold for a record-breaking \$2,200,000, similarly to an anonymous buyer.<sup>14</sup> When news reached Mr. and Mrs. Seaton, he was out metal-detecting—this time on a sandy beach in Spain, where the couple had moved. Reflecting on the rumors, the lawsuits, and the disruptions to their lives caused by Mr. Seaton's discovery, Mrs. Seaton said to the Teesdale Mercury reporter: "The roller-coaster ride we were on made us stronger as a couple".<sup>15</sup>

On some levels, the Stella painting and the Middleham Jewel have connections. The 1994 exhibition catalogue to the Stella painting, when it was shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art, describes it as follows: "*Tree of Life* (1920), like many later Stella works, is 'baroque and operatic', a garden scene out of Bosch (1450-1516). His figure studies feature Madonna-like females, extravagantly embellished. His numerous floral works border on the surreal but, in their lushness and excess, could not accurately be characterized as a part of the Surrealist movement. Critic Lewis Mumford called him a 'puzzling painter' at that point, commenting, 'I have seen the fissure between his realism and his fantasy widen into an abyss'."<sup>16</sup>

When you study the images engraved on the Middleham jewel, there is almost a baroque operatic quality behind them. The symmetry, a feature of Baroque art, cannot be denied. The front depicts the trinity of man's path to salvation with Christ on a brutal tree of crucifixion. The reverse shows the same triumvirate but in different form, one that depicts landscape and floral elements, atmosphere and adulation. Stella's painting is very much similar but in the context of how he was reacting to a remembrance of his own past, and how he felt about industrialization. It's almost like he created a reliquary, in painted form, for what used to be considered the paramount forces of life: Nature and remembrance, history and nostalgia, very powerful forces that inflect a lot of art, and still influence us today.

### **Part Three: Sometime between 1450-1500**

Scholars believe the Middleham Jewel was produced by an English goldsmith, working in London, sometime in the third-fourth quarters of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, based on comparisons to Flemish portrayals of the Nativity. It is also believed to have been originally set with pearls on its outer edge, consistent with similar pendants produced and worn by ladies during the period. The ravages of age have caused the outer settings to become lost.<sup>17</sup>

What was entirely unknown to Mr. Seaton and to many in the art world in 1985-1986, is that the Middleham Jewel contained secrets of its own. As it was later discovered, it, too, was a reliquary for someone who wanted to maintain a connection to some greater spiritual element that was entirely personal, meaningful and magical. In other words, like the Stella painting, it exemplified the fissure between realism and fantasy, but in a special place that we call religion.

One of the more fascinating features of the Middleham Jewel is that the backplate slides off to reveal a storage chamber, most likely a space to store relics or objects that were important to its owner.

This was not immediately apparent to Mr. Seaton or others who had initially examined the jewel in 1985-1986



because the fitting of the sliding plate was so tight. There was what appeared to be a “lock” on its outer edge. When the jewel was finally opened, pieces of small roundels of silk embroidered with gold thread were discovered along with roots and soil. According to John Cherry’s text *The Middleham Jewel and Ring*, the base of the material was a stout textile, like linen, with the type of embroidery (“underside couching”) that was common in England in the 11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>18</sup> From whence these small pieces of textile originated is still something of a mystery.

Mr. Cherry believes that the Middleham Jewel was meant by its original owner to contain an Agnus Dei medallion, because the inscription *Ecce agnus dei qui tollis peccata mundi* (“behold the lamb of god who takest away the sins of the world”—from John 1: 29) features prominently in “Agnus Dei” reliquaries. Such were common in the medieval period, usually round or heart-shaped, and of the same size as the Middleham Jewel.<sup>19</sup>

Starting in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Pope would bless and distribute medallions made of virgin wax, balsam and chrism on Easter Sunday, while the choir sang the *Agnus Dei* portion of the Mass. Recipients would be the distinguished personnel - cardinals, clerics or prominent laymen - attending the Pope’s Easter mass.<sup>20</sup> They would also be given as special gifts. In 1366, Pope Urban sent three medallions to Byzantine Emperor John Palaeologus. Agnus Dei medallions were highly desirable objects of piety; they were so highly sought after that illicit trade sprang up all over England in the 15<sup>th</sup> century to make unofficial copies.<sup>21</sup> Whether the Middleham Jewel ever contained such a precious relic is unknown; perhaps the original owner desired to obtain one, but fell short in achieving that goal.

Aside from its potential use as an Agnus Dei reliquary, other mystical and religious implications are worth mentioning. The large sapphire that is mounted on the original (mine is iolite) was believed to have an “amuletic” and medicinal purpose. John Cherry references the *Liber de Lapidum* (Book of Stone) by Marbodius, bishop of Rennes from 1067-81. In that ancient text, sapphires are said to be protective of the body, capable of arresting internal heat and excessive sweating, and were good for ulcers, eyes and headaches. A sapphire could cure a stammer. They were very suitable for kings and prelates as they promoted peace and reconciliation, could assist in the release of captives from prison, and inclined God to hear the owner’s prayers.<sup>22</sup>

The inscription *tetragrammaton annizapta* which is engraved on the frontpiece is especially curious, and frequently appeared on medieval rings. Tetragrammaton is the Latin word for the four Hebrew letters than represent God’s name (YHWH). Annizapta was a magical word in and of itself, often invoked as a charm against drunkenness or the “falling disease” (epilepsy). Mr. Cherry believes that the totality of the Middleham Jewel’s imagery suggests a desire by its wearer to obtain protection against illness and death, and to promote safe childbirth. Notably, Isabel Neville, as duchess of Clarence, is depicted in the Rous Roll as wearing a lozenge-shaped pendant of a very similar style.<sup>23</sup>

On the back piece’s frame, the amuletic purpose for safe child-birth is supported by the depiction of St. Margaret and St. Dorothy, two saints associated with giving help during labor. Very close examination of the fifteen saints reveals they can be identified by objects they are holding or are shown with. For instance, St. Peter is depicted holding a key, St. Paul with a sword, St. Barbara with a tower, St. Catherine with a sword and wheel, St. George slaying a dragon, and St. Anne teaching her daughter, Mary, to read. Also depicted are a bishop (possibly St. Augustine of Hippo) and a cardinal (St. Jerome). John Cherry notes the lack of “northern saints” such as St. Ninian or St. Cuthbert, leading him to conclude that there is no expression of a particularly northern devotional sentiment.<sup>24</sup>

To this day, it is still unknown precisely who owned the Middleham Jewel or how it became lost in a grassy field near Middleham Castle. Some speculate Anne Beauchamp might have owned it, as she lived at Middleham in 1473, when Edward of Middleham -- Richard III's prince of Wales -- was born. Other speculate that Richard III's wife Anne Neville or his mother Cecily, duchess of York, were owners.<sup>25</sup>

The story of who owned the Middleham Jewel in the 20<sup>th</sup> century does not end at the 1986 Sotheby's auction. The owner who had purchased it for £1,300,000 later applied in 1991 for a license to export it. The United Kingdom's Reviewing Committee for the Export of Works of Art deemed the piece to be of outstanding importance under the "Waverley criteria" and suspended the license, to allow a British entity to purchase it.<sup>26</sup> This prompted the Yorkshire Museum to start a campaign to raise funds to purchase it, and they succeeded in obtaining £2,500,000 from a variety of individuals, foundations and governmental agencies. Today, it is still owned by the museum and is currently displayed there, where it has been seen by thousands of schoolchildren, tourists, local citizens and people like me with a passion for Ricardian history.

### **Epilogue: February, 2015**

As I began to research the history of the Middleham Jewel, I also thought it would be important to mention the man who created my replica. His name is George Easton, and he is a very skilled jeweler whose works can be viewed on his Danegeld business website: [tinyurl.com/pdj7jex](http://tinyurl.com/pdj7jex)

Mr. Easton was kind enough to grant me an interview in February, as I was making plans to visit Leicester in the buildup to Richard III's reinterment there. Here is the text of my interview.

\* \* \* \* \*



First, let me thank you for making my Middleham Jewel. It is one of my most treasured pieces of jewelry, and I'm impressed by its detail and the beauty of its design. I can't wait to wear it during the re-interment ceremonies of Richard III this coming March. I'm sure some people will recognize it, and will want to know more.

ST: I see that, not only creating contemporary pieces for cutting-edge designers like Vivienne Westwood, you also design jewelry from the Roman, Saxon, Viking, Medieval and Renaissance periods. How did you become interested in making jewelry from the past?

GE: I had been making modern pieces for a while when some of my friends asked me to make some Viking age replicas for their re-enactments. I always had an interest in history, so was quite happy to do it. Before I knew it I had a regular client base and didn't have any time for my modern pieces. The historical time period that I recreate has expanded over the years as every age has different tastes and fashions, which gives me a new set of challenges with every job.

ST: In making historic jewelry, did you have to learn any special skills or techniques? Do you have to use any special materials? How is today's jeweler different from one in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in terms of techniques, materials, etc.—if you know? Is it harder/more complicated/time consuming to make a historical

reproduction than, say, a modern piece like a diamond engagement ring?

GE: There isn't really that much difference between a modern jeweler and one from the 15th century - either one could swap places and recognize most of the tools. The main advantages we have today are good lighting, an easily controlled heat source and a good range of suppliers, but to be fair it's all subjective, a 15th century jeweler would be so used to his equipment, he'd have no trouble making the things we do today. Tastes and styles change but the basic techniques remain the same. Certain techniques are mostly confined to history, mercury gilding for example, mainly from a health and safety perspective. The challenges of making a historic reproduction are generally getting the measurements, etc., of the original and then figuring out how to replicate the way it was made but in a modern context. We have the advantage today (in the west) of being able to go to a bullion dealer and ask for a piece of metal the exact size and thickness we require, whereas a medieval jeweler would be melting it to an ingot, hammering it flat, or drawing out the wire, much like the jewelers in Africa or Asia still do today.

ST: I see that you've supplied costume jewelry for TV and movies like the Harry Potter series, Thor, Ridley Scott's Robin Hood and the Hobbit. Very cool! But aside from those looking for pieces for a theatrical "costume", what type of customers are making requests for replicas or jewelry inspired by history? Are they usually English?

GE: My main customers outside of stage and screen are reenactors and collectors. I send things all over the world, mostly to Britain and the USA. I do have a lot of customers in Australia too and have also sent Saxon items to Fiji.

ST: How many Middleham Jewel replicas have you produced, and for whom? Are there any unique challenges—or pleasures—that come with the task of replicating it in particular? How long does it take for you to create it?

GE: I made five of the Middleham jewel. The first was for a customer in England, also Switzerland, the US and most recently for the BBC's "Hollow Crown" production (due out next year) . I think it's going to be worn by the actress playing Anne Neville. The jewel was a massive challenge, all of the engraving was done under a microscope and the first one took me about three weeks. The only thing that still bothers me is that I haven't made a version with the enameling. It's still one of my favorite pieces!

ST: Did you have access to the original Middleham Jewel in designing your replica? If not, how did you come up with the design specifications? Did you have to do any research into how the jewel would have appeared in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, as obviously the original was buried in the ground for centuries, and it seems to have lost some bits, such as the pearls that are set on the outer frame.

GE: I did go and see the original, but didn't ask for access to it. There is a book by John Cherry (Middleham Jewel and Ring) that provided all of the measurements and very good photographs. There are also a couple of 15th century depictions of people wearing similar pendants.

ST: Do you have any sense about the meaning of the Middleham Jewel, or the type of Medieval lady that would have worn it?

GE: It's definitely a statement piece that must have been worn by a very wealthy woman. The workmanship is superb, the amount of gold and the large sapphire

say it all, but ultimately it's a reliquary, so the contents are the important part, which I believe were English-made silk discs that may have been from a bishop's robe?

ST: Have you noticed an uptick in requests for "Ricardian" or Medieval-inspired jewelry since they discovered the skeleton of Richard III? What is the most frequently requested item? Any boar badges - Richard's personal cognizance?

GE: Yes, there has definitely been an increase in interest in the medieval period as a whole since the discovery. The boar badge is probably my most popular medieval piece and orders have increased in the last year.

ST: I understand that you were commissioned by John Ashdown-Hill to create the crown for Richard III. What was the design and production process?

GE: John contacted me with some ideas and a range of pictures of crowns of the time. The design process took a long time, but between the two of us we flushed out a design based on pieces from the other crowns. We wanted to avoid an elaborate crown of state and were keen on having a "fairly" basic crown that could have been worn in battle. The crown is made from gilded brass with lab-created sapphires and rubies. The stones in the crosses are natural turquoise and emeralds. John was very keen on having emeralds in the crown.

ST: What do you think about Richard III, the man and the king? Did you have any interest in him before his remains were discovered under a car park in Leicester? Be careful, we Ricardians are a sensitive lot!

GE: History is always written by the winners. I've always thought he had a bit of a raw deal, if you look past the obvious and focus on what we really know, he was quite a guy! I've had a strong interest in the Wars of the Roses for a long time and so in turn have been very curious about Richard, in a time of so much change and controversy in the country, there is bound to be a lot of misinformation and bad PR put on to the old regime.

ST: Is there any piece of historic jewelry you've made that you are especially proud of? Why?

GE: As unlikely as it may sound, it is still the Middleham jewel that I am most proud of! The reasons are numerous: it was a good challenge to make; John Ashdown-Hill first contacted me in relation to it, so I wouldn't have been involved with the crown for Richard without it. In the summer I also happened to be doing fight scenes on the "Hollow Crown" production. During filming the costume designers discovered that I had made the Middleham Jewel replica and commissioned me to make another one for their production. So all in all it's been a very good piece for me.

ST: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

GE: I'm really pleased that there are so many people out there with a passion for history. The discovery of Richard has generated a renewed media interest, which in turn makes people curious to find out more. Groups and societies like yours play an important part in keeping the public's interest alive. Without that interest, I would not get the chance to bring these artifacts out from behind their glass cabinets and back to life for history enthusiasts everywhere!

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Easton is available via his Danegeld website (noted above) to accept inquiries

about his historic reproductions and contemporary jewelry designs. He also maintains a Facebook page—Danegeld Historic Jewelry—for those who desire to follow him there.

*Author's Note:* This essay first appeared in the Murrey & Blue Ricardian web-blog: <https://murreyandblue.wordpress.com>. Photograph of George Easton copied with permission by the owner. All other photographs copyrighted by Susan Troxell, February 2015.

Endnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> Brookes, Trevor. "New Chapter in the Saga of the Enigmatic Middleham Jewel." *Teesdale Mercury* 23 May 2014.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid. A lawsuit was filed by one of Mr. Seaton's metal-detecting friends who did not show up that day. His argument was based on the premise that he still deserved a share of the proceeds notwithstanding his inability to be physically present during the discovery. It was a creative "implied contract" argument that, nonetheless, did not prevail.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Reif, Rita. "Auctions" in Arts Section. *The New York Times* 5 December 1986.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Brookes, Trevor, see footnote 1.
- <sup>14</sup> "Joseph Stella's 'Tree' Sells for a Record Price" in Arts Section, *The New York Times* 6 December 1986.
- <sup>15</sup> Brookes, Trevor, see footnote 1.
- <sup>16</sup> Haskell, Barbara. *Joseph Stella*. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art (exhibition catalogue), 1994, pp. 110, 170.
- <sup>17</sup> Cherry, John. *The Middleham Jewel and Ring* (Yorkshire Museum, 1994).
- <sup>18</sup> Cherry, John, pp. 29-31.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> For additional history, see [tinyurl.com/pk9t6au](https://tinyurl.com/pk9t6au)
- <sup>21</sup> Cherry, John, pp. 29-31.
- <sup>22</sup> Cherry, John, pp. 24-28.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 32-34.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 4.



# Historical Crossover: a King, a President, and a Painter

Marie Waite

It is well known that the first attempted Presidential assassination was against Andrew Jackson. It may be less well known that the assailant, Richard Lawrence, believed himself to be King Richard III. We now have one more legend to lay at Richard's door! The famous event took place on January 30, 1835 outside the U.S. Capitol as Jackson departed after the funeral of a U.S. Congressman. Lawrence fired two pistols at the President. Both misfired allowing the President to counterattack with his cane. Lawrence was subdued and taken into custody.

Richard Lawrence was born in England to an impoverished family with a history of mental illness. In 1812 the family emigrated to Washington D.C. where they encountered anti-British sentiment. As a young man Lawrence established a successful career as a house painter. Over the years his mental state deteriorated and he became aware of Jackson's tendency to make political enemies. He declared himself king and dressed like royalty. Eventually he believed Jackson had killed his father and prevented his royal inheritance of land and money from the government. He "reasoned" the President's death would allow Congress to authorize payment, hence the fateful confrontation.

At trial, prosecuted by Francis Scott Key, Lawrence was found not guilty by reason of insanity and confined to a mental institution until his death in 1861. His deluded claim to be King Richard III never wavered. Why Richard Lawrence chose Richard III of all English monarchs as his alter ego is not known. They shared a first given name, but there were two other King Richards. The mystery must remain an interesting historical anomaly.

Source:

Folsom, Brad. *Historo*. n.p., n.d. Web. 11 Jun 2015.

~ToC~

## Ricardian Review

Myrna Smith

### Once and future king...

***Dragons at Crumbling Castle and Other Tales***—Terry Prachett, Clarion Books, Boston, NY, 2014

In the days of King Arthur there were no newspapers, only town criers, who went around shouting the news at the top of their voices.

King Arthur was sitting up in bed one Sunday, eating an egg, when the Sunday town crier trooped in. Actually, there were several of them, including a man to draw the pictures, a jester for the jokes, and a small man in tights and soccer cleats who was called the Sports Page.

If this sort of thing appeals to you, then you must, like me, have a rather juvenile sense of humor, and this bit of juvenilia should be right up your alley. Terry Prachett, author of the Discworld novels, and many other excursions into fantasy, had to get his start somewhere. He started as a junior reporter for the *Bucks Free Press*, where he not only covered local news, but 'taught himself to write,' by copious reading and by writing these stories for young readers that were published by that newspaper. Important (except to Mr. Prachett)? No. Punny? Yes. And funny.

***Lady Ileana: Way of the Warrior***—Patricia Malone, Deacorte Press, NY, 2005

A rather more serious treatment of the King Arthur story, in which we are asked to envision a court in which there were warriors of both sexes. Pretty far-fetched? Maybe, maybe not. “In the North of Britain women were warriors, chiefs, Druids, and ...heiresses to land and fortresses. One indication of the widespread participation of women in war bands is that Adomnan, abbot of Iona...felt it necessary to make a law in AD 697 ordering that women not go into battle.” Why make a law against something that did not happen? This is the story of one such heiress, her suitors, one requited, the other not, her training, her failure as a warrior, and her redemption. The fortresses of the time are not to be confused with the castles of the later Middle Ages, but more akin to a frontier fortress in the early West. Ms. Malone vividly depicts daily life in such a community, as well as the battles that disrupted it from time to time. In some ways, the Dark Ages may not have been that dark after all.

**I love 6d better than my life...**

*A Song of Sixpence*—Judith Arnopp, Lighting Source UK Ltd, Milton Keynes, 2015

This is subtitled “The story of Elizabeth of York and Perkin Warbeck, “and that is exactly what it is, told in alternate chapters. And yes, they are siblings. Elizabeth narrates her own story. The danger in that is that in the course of a cradle-to-grave history of an adventurous and sometimes tragic life, the narrator may come off as self-pitying and whiney. This is avoided here by a combination of methods. Elizabeth recounts the happier times as well as the sad ones, the quiet times (for instance, when she reads to her children) as well as the pageantry. She voices some minor complaints (swollen ankles, for one) which should make her seem even whinier, but instead give her a common touch. Thanks to modern medicine, or good genes, or just good luck, I never had that problem during pregnancy, but I know many women who did, and we can all sympathize with Elizabeth. Finally, without being Pollyannaish, Elizabeth does try to maintain a positive attitude. She comes to love her ‘difficult and demanding’ husband, and even (very) occasionally think that her mother-in-law is ‘not so bad after all.’ But not when she is awkwardly barging into intimate conversations. One can see how that would be trying.

Being a critic, I have to sandwich in a bit of criticism. No book can be completely free of typos and lapses of memory or attention. They just underscores the need for a good proof-reader (me, for instance), or better, more than one. The more pairs of eyes, the better. To wit: Henry VII could declare someone a traitor, but not “excommunicate” him. That was another Tudor. “Petticoats” in the plural, and in the sense we use the word today, are anachronisms in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but another reference that seems anachronistic may not be. Arnopp’s Elizabeth breast-feeds her babies for at least a few weeks, which makes weaning all the more emotionally difficult. Great ladies always had wet-nurses, but since a new mother had to be incommunicado until she was church-ed, she might as well nurse the baby for a month or so. The timing of the Tudor children suggests Elizabeth may have done so for longer than that.

The story of ‘Perkin’ is even more dramatic and tragic than Elizabeth’s, but it is filtered through third-person narration, thankfully. There is an uncommon but quite plausible explanation of what happened to big brother Edward. Richard III was not guilty, of course, but hardly appears as a character in the book at all. Elizabeth has come to accept that her feelings for him were just childish infatuation, but she still admires him. Not being a fool, she mostly keeps this opinion to herself in the Tudor court.

Ms. Arnopp has written other novels, some on Tudor subjects (e.g. **The Kiss of the Concubine**, about Anne Boleyn), and has a series planned about Margaret Beaufort. It will be interesting to see how she goes about making Margaret R (as she signed herself) a

sympathetic character, or if she does. When I read it—and I hope to—I’m sure I will be caught up in the story and the characters, as I was with this one. This is no mean accomplishment when you already know pretty much what is going to happen.

### **Fifty Shades of Tudor....**

*Cicely’s King Richard*—Sandra Heath Wilson, Robert Hale, UK, 2014

*Cicely’s Second King*—Sandra Heath Wilson, Robert Hale, UK, 2014

*Cicely’s Lord Lincoln*—Sandra Heath Wilson, Robert Hale, UK, 2014

Princess Cicely (an alternative spelling of Cecily) is 16 as this trilogy opens, 18 at the end of the third book. During that time, she has cut quite a swath at the English court, with two kings and three jacks. That is, three men named John, whom she differentiates by calling John of Gloucester John, John of Lincoln Jack, and John, Lord Welles, Jon. At the end of the third book, she has also met her last husband, Thomas Kymbe, but so far their relationship is still platonic. I’m sure he will wind up being aces with Cicely.

Cicely explains herself: “I am the way Almighty God made me.” Well, her creator (small c) has put plenty of spice in the mixture. The men in her life each have a signature scent: Richard’s is costmary, Henry’s cloves, Jack’s thyme. We are not told what Cicely’s perfume is, but it must be pretty heady. “I cannot help it that men seem to find me so desirable, but they do...” No wonder her older sister wants to hit her upside the head, and does, once. And she is not the only one. Not only that, but both men and women confide in her, and she rather wishes they wouldn’t.

Is this just a picaresque and picturesque recital of Cicely’s bedroom adventures, a bodice-ripper verging on soft porn? More than that, I think. There is a lot of action and derring-do, as well as many quieter and more poignant scenes, such as Henry VII unknowingly holding Richard’s unacknowledged son, and letting the child chew on his finger, as teething babies will. There is witty dialogue. And there is adept characterization, although some may be controversial. Particularly that of Henry Tudor. He admits that he is “not virtuous,” but damn, he’s sexy! Says the author: “This aspect of Henry’s character is yet more invention. He may have been a great lover, or he may have been very dull between the sheets...So, I have fashioned him as I wish. Such is the power of a writer of fiction.” Not to mention that without this invention, the trilogy would hardly be a trilogy.

Another way of stretching out the story (but not unduly) is having Richard III appear after he is dead. This is nothing paranormal, Ms. Wilson assures us. He is just a figment of Cicely’s imagination. “Through him she can talk of things that she already knows or thinks for herself.” Or would think, if she were using the organ intended for that purpose. At times, he can be a very real figment. He has to remind Cicely. “I am not real...I am within you....I made a mess of a lot of things. And look where it got me. In my makeshift grave at thirty-two. Please allow me down from the pedestal upon which you are so determined to place me.”

Ms. Wilson even pokes gentle fun at Ricardian hagiography in the words she puts in Lord Welles’ mouth: “How can anyone compete with him, hmm? Young, handsome, tragic, brave, betrayed, bereaved, beloved, cultured, powerful, just, loyal, intelligent, sensitive....endowed with more attraction in his big toe than I have in my entire body...he could fight like a warrior, converse like an archangel, negotiate like a king, and dance like a courtier....He did not only wear a crown, he wore a damned halo!”

A small quibble before I get to the summing-up: Henry employs a spy who is deaf (“not from birth”) and reads lips. I have reason to know that the art of lip-reading depends a lot on educated guesswork and knowing what the conversation is about, is increasingly

difficult with greater distance, and is complicated by the fact that the person being ‘read’ has to be facing the lip-reader..

The test of any multi-book series is, does the reader look forward to the next book? I do. In the next, *Cicely’s Sovereign Secret*, we will learn the identity of the woman who taught Henry Tudor the art of lovemaking. We will possibly learn the significance of Richard of York’s (Cecily’s little brother) small scar, and Edward of Warwick’s birthmark. And although Henry tells Cicely, “I can no longer hoist anything with [Elizabeth],” they will eventually have six more children. Apparently someone was doing some hoisting. Maybe they will be reconciled in a future book. I just hope my eyes will hold out until Cicely gets to the Kymbe chapter in her life.

I always try to review books in the spirit in which they are written. Sandra Heath Wilson gives a clue to her spirit in the last line of one of the books: “Historical fiction is for entertainment; history itself is for serious study. Never mix the two.” Entertaining it most certainly is!

***Jasper Tudor, Godfather of the Tudor Dynasty***—Debra Bayani, MadeGlobal Publishing, UK, 2014, 2015

***Jasper Tudor: Dynasty Maker***—Terry Breverton, Amberley Publishing, Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK, 2014

Ms. Bayani’s book advertises itself as the “first ever written full biography” of Jasper Tudor. Not by much, as Mr. Breverton’s was written the same year. Bayani felt so strongly about her subject that she self-published at first, though the re-issue now seems to have a publisher. Breverton had a publisher from the get-go, our old friend Amberley, but his effort is not necessarily better because of that. It does have larger print and better illustrations. The illustrations in Bayani’s are small, black and white, and rather muddy. In addition, the captions and footnotes in quite small print. There *are* footnotes, though. Ms. Bayani does have an index, of somewhat erratic nature. For instance, two or three William Herberts seem to be listed together, without differentiation. This is probably the fault of the indexer, not the author, unless the two are one and the same. Breverton has no index, but does have notes in an afterword, principally brief biographies of the principal characters, such as Henry Tudor’s fractional uncle, David Owen, who was two years younger than Henry. David was one of the marrying Tudors. Someone who was not a marrying Tudor was Jasper himself. Here is Bayani on that subject:

The fact that the king (Henry VI) defended his half-brother and did not...take steps to arrange a marriage for him, seems to prove that Jasper did not wish to get married and that he asserted his own wishes in this matter. ...It is unclear why Jasper had so far remained unmarried as, given his situation, it would have been easy for the king to find him a suitable bride...Perhaps the king’s illness could have hindered the process. Or perhaps Jasper preferred to devote himself to the Lancastrian cause and did not fancy a marriage at all.

A possible, if post-mortem, reason for Jasper’s preference is recounted by Breverton:

It seems that Jasper is unhappy that today’s office ladies have invaded his space, and makes his presence felt. He turns on the photocopier and pushes objects off shelves...A clairvoyant who visited the offices claimed she could see Jasper Tudor, dressed in a long dark coat and a pointed hat, indicating to her to keep her distance...a quitter time was enjoyed by all when there was a man working in the office...Now and again, guests report noticing people in their rooms in the middle of the night.

It's only fair to note that Jasper did have mistresses and a couple of illegitimate daughters. But this lays Breverton open to another criticism. While the above anecdote is interesting and amusing, if it finds a place in a biography at all it should be in the afternotes, along with the Blackadders.

Both authors make much of the reuniting of the adolescent Henry Tudor with his uncle. But was it an altogether joyous one? Henry had seen his mother at least occasionally during his childhood, when she visited the Herbert household, but his uncle not at all, as far as we know, from the time he was four years old to the time he was thirteen. The thirteen-year-old, who had been torn from the only home he had known for nearly a decade, cannot have had many memories of his uncle. There can be no denying that Jasper was devoted to his nephew, and vice versa, but on Henry's part that devotion may have had a little of the Stockholm Syndrome to it.

Both authors carefully delineate the various residences-in-exile of the uncle and nephew, with Breverton also giving their hidey-holes in Wales, complete with pictures. Bayani stresses Jasper's close ties with the royal family of France (first cousins) and the ducal house of Brittany (second cousins).

Breverton is especially strong on military matters:

It is amazing how quickly medieval armies could move...despite there being no paved roads. Most people were on foot, and they did not possess the excellent boots, specially designed for the purpose, worn by Roman soldiers and the armies of today. They were often carrying their own weapons and armor. A Roman legion...was expected to march 40 Roman miles a day, which would equate to about 37 miles a day, with lighter armor, in good footwear on good roads. Foreign observers attending the maneuvers of the German army just before WWI noted that the troops regularly marched 35 miles a day. During WWII, commando and parachute regiment training required 40 miles in nine hours, and today the Royal Marines aim to cover 30 miles in seven hours. Compared with these times, the standard march of 20-30 miles a day in a 15<sup>th</sup> century army, on a poor and intermittent diet, compares favorably.

Both authors sometimes indulge in speculation. Debra Bayani thinks that if Henry VII had another son, he might have named him Jasper. Here's a bit of fanciful speculation of my own: Possibly he did want to name a son Jasper, but his wife and his mother, Englishwomen to the core, protested against the name as too Frenchified. High-handed as he was, Henry knew when to retreat in the face of a united front, and that is why we have never heard of Jasper I and his six wives!

More seriously, Bayani deals with the question of whether the Tudors were Tudors at all:

Some modern historians have suggested that Edmund was actually Beaufort's son...the choice of Edmund as the baby's name, as there were no Edmunds in either Katherine's or Owen's family, may simply have been that Edmund Beaufort was his godfather...The Tudor brothers' coats of arms do not look in any way like Owen's, but they did not receive them until after they were knighted by their half-brother, so they look very similar to those of Henry VI.

Breverton heaps scorn on 'today's Yorkists' for daring to suggest that the marriage of Katherine and Owen was irregular in any way at all, even though any marriage was expressly forbidden. This does not mean that they could not have been married by common law, though it is questionable if the common law applied to royals.

Ms. Bayani lives in the Netherlands and is married to an Indian, but her ethnic background is not revealed. She naturally has a slant towards the subject of her biography, but tries to be balanced, not hesitating to call out the Tudors when she thinks they deserve it. Mr. Breverton, his own bio tells us, was “born in Birmingham of Welsh parents,” (I didn’t know ‘Breverton’ was a Welsh name.) He frequently lets his anti-English prejudice show through on. Correction: it doesn’t ‘show through,’ it’s right up front. He sometimes uses the term ‘British,’ but that means Welsh, not English. He seems to hate Richard III more because of his Englishness than because he believes him to be a child-murderer. (He does admit that there were risings against Richard within days of his coronation, before any rumors of the death of the Princes could have spread.) He constantly berates ‘Yorkist propaganda’ and the ‘English occupation’ of Wales. Both Breverton and Bayani quote liberally from the Welsh bards, and Breverton especially stresses the Cymric desire for a leader against the English—any leader. Tudor or Herbert or ap Thomas—made no difference. In fact, Jasper actually supported Richard Duke of York for a time. It is for that reason, no doubt, that Breverton has some sympathy for the Duke. Breverton admits that Henry VII did show “some favour” for the people and principality of Wales, but not enough. Probably he did not wish to be accused of bias in their favor, or maybe he was just disappointed in Wales and the Welsh. Ever notice how, when you return to the scenes of your childhood, everything seems so much smaller?

Conclusion: both books have their strengths and weaknesses. Terry Breverton’s offering gets a little wearing to someone who is a ‘son (or daughter) of Horsa’ (English), never mind a ‘son of Hermann’ (German) or a scion of someone named Sven. Debra Bayani’s is wearing to the eyes, a consideration at my age.

(Some may feel that I have been too easy on Terry Breverton. My reason is three-fold: (1) I am a gentle, mild-mannered sort of person—insert eye-roll here; (2) I have given Ms. Bayani the benefit of the doubt for having a natural bias toward the subject of this biography, so it is only fair that I extend the same courtesy to Mr. Breverton; and (3) since this is about Jasper Tudor, Breverton is not quite as scathing toward Richard III nor as fawning toward Henry VII as he is in his biography of the former. Or so I am told, as I have not yet read it. I am saving my own scorn for that. Unless some Gentle Reader wishes to save me the trouble. Anyone?)

Just one more on the Tudors, and I will be done with the subject, I promise.

***Tudor: Passion, Manipulation, Murder***—Leadnra de Lisle, Chatton & Windus, London, 2013

Leandra de Lisle has written profusely of the later Tudor period from a feminist point of view. Her grasp of earlier Tudor history is not quite as good. Herewith, a few comments, in no particular order.

- ...since no doubt was ever expressed that the children [of Owen and Katherine] were legitimate, it is likely [the council] knew of the marriage before Edmund was born, but ...had decided the marriage should remain outside the public domain until Henry VI was old enough to decide what to do about it.” This rather reminds one of the joke about the existential baseball umpire: “They ain’t nothing until I call ‘em.”
- A bit of sympathy for Richard? “If one royal duke was easily disposed of, so might another be...It made sense for Richard to take the role of Protector long enough to destroy the Woodvilles and gain the king’s trust.” She describes Richard as “about 5’8”, with a wiry build, slender limbs, fine bones and dark features.” In fact, he would have been 5’8” if not for the scoliosis. She adds

that the 16<sup>th</sup> century Tudor king Edward VI also had one shoulder higher than the other. Katherine of Valois' effigy, incidentally, shows her to have been about 5'4".

- The caption to a portrait of Henry Tudor at about 19 or 20 reads: "Henry Tudor took on the mantle of the 'fair unknown, a stock character from romantic chivalric myth who returns from obscurity to reclaim his rightful crown, as the legendary King Arthur had done." However, de Lisle is not overly enchanted with the male Tudors. She believes Henry VII was looking for an escape route when he "got lost" on the night before the night before Bosworth, though it would have been easy to genuinely get lost in unfamiliar territory. And she refers to Henry VIII in his later years as "looking like a hippopotamus in scarlet hose."
- "...if it was Buckingham who gave his sister-in-law Elizabeth Woodville the details of the killings, then no wonder he was said to have been involved, for how could he have known them if he were not?" Circular reasoning. Besides, when would he have a chance to tell her except when he was still in good odor with Richard, and would she have believed him then? Ms. De Lisle is on firmer ground when she speculates that Bucking may have just had ambitions to be a Kingmaker, not a king.
- Elizabeth Woodville agreed to come out of Sanctuary because she believed Richard had not killed her sons? Nonsense, says the author. "...this document spells out pretty clearly what she feared for her daughters...without a written agreement. [Would she have felt she could trust him even with an iron-clad written document?] And if the princes' fate was unknown, Richard's execution of her other son Richard Grey, and her brother, Lord Rivers was acknowledged. She was simply doing the best she could for her daughters just as Frances, Duchess of Suffolk would do in the next century when she and her younger daughters served as ladies-in-waiting to Mary I, after the queen had executed her husband and elder daughter." A good argument, as far as it goes. Tudor and pre-Tudor nobles might have regarded an execution for treason now and then as a 'fair cop,' but it is hardly believable that Frances would have acted this way if Mary had been known to order personal, non-legalized, murders.
- Why did neither Richard III nor Henry VII make any announcement of the boys' deaths, while effectively blaming them on someone else? Because neither wanted a cult of miracles to grow up around their burial places, as with "little Sir Hugh of Lincoln" or Henry VI. So rather than risk that—which never actually happened—Richard preferred to be considered a monster, and Henry preferred to have hot and cold running Pretenders!
- "There is a story that Lincoln and the other rebel commanders at East Stoke had been buried with green willow staves plunged into their hearts, to prevent them rising up once more to trouble the living." Shades of Bram Stoker!
- "Henry chose Perkin to act as his agent provocateur" (to bring down the Earl of Warwick) and then had him executed? A lot of us wouldn't put it past Henry, but it would seem more likely that he used their jailors, men already in his employ.

**Dynamic duo...**

***The Princes in the Tower: Did Richard III Murder His Nephews, Edward V & Richard of York?***—Josephine Wilkinson, Amberley, UK, 2014

Dr. Josepha Josephine Wilkinson (had her parents no imagination?), author of the acclaimed *Richard: The Young King-To-Be*, had started on her history of the king who was, covering Richard's reign, when she found that the mystery of the princes was 'hijacking' the biography. She could not ignore it, but didn't want to be bogged down by it. So she resolved to take her years of research and incorporate them into a series of essays. These have been put into this fairly brief paperback (190 pages, including the index.)

After necessarily brief lives of the Princes, she then considers the principal suspects. The chapter on Richard III is a concise summary of Richard's campaign for the throne and the legal case on which it depended. The one weakness here is that too much is made of More's story of the infamous council meeting. Granted that Richard might have—probably did—believe in witchcraft, would he have claimed that Elizabeth Woodville and her cohorts had withered his arm by that means, when he did not have a withered arm? It's a highly dramatic story, but at least 95% fiction.

John Howard, next in the lineup, is not taken seriously as a villain, by the author or by anyone else. The duke of Buckingham is a more likely one, accepted by sources such as Commynes and the Divisie Chronicle as at least an accessory. The author speculates: "Perhaps, then, Buckingham's motive was unbridled ambition? It is, perhaps, no coincidence that he made an effort to associate himself with Richard...as soon as possible..." She concludes that: "Rebellion served no purpose for Buckingham. It brought him no reward; it did not advance his claim to the throne...Perhaps it is most telling that Richard, upon ordering Buckingham's execution, could have added the deaths of the Princes to the list of charges...." Yet he did not, and Buckingham did rebel. Maybe he saw himself as Kingmaker, seating and unseating rulers at will? Maybe Dr. Wilkinson passes over Buckingham as suspect a little too quickly.

She is on firmer ground in clearing Henry VII, on the grounds that he 'had no idea' what had happened to the boys. She even clears him of sending his mother-in-law to a convent. "It is not impossible that her withdrawal...was voluntary....That she had recently taken out a forty-year lease on the manor of Cheyne-gates could be seen as an argument against this, but not if Henry felt she was spending too much money on herself that could have been better spent on the maintenance of his queen." Somehow that doesn't make Henry look much better!

In the chapter on James Tyrell, she shows that the evidence against him is purely speculative, a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* argument. "The theory of James Tyrell as the murderer of the Princes has little to support it; James Tyrell, the savior of the Princes, remains a tantalizing possibility."

There is a lengthy chapter on "The Rumour" (note British spelling), with multiple sources, and a summing-up in "Were the Princes Dead?" The author, no doubt wisely, comes to no definite conclusion; who knows what discoveries remain to be made? But she does leave us with some very strong hints. You won't find a spoiler in this review, however. Dr. Wilkinson lays out the evidence carefully and concisely, and this book deserves a place on every Ricardian's bookshelf, next to Annette Carson's *Small Guide to the Great Debate*.

Now that the author is able to get back to writing about Richard's reign with a clear conscience and mind, giving him 'leading man' status instead of just that of a supporting actor, we should see that book out before too long. The present reviewer is looking forward to it.



(This is published in England by Amberley, and distributed in the U.S. by Casemate Publishers, 908 Derby Road, Havertown, PA, 19083)

### **A couple of swells....**

***Richard III: The Road to Leicester***—Amy Licence, Amberly Publishing, Gloucestershire, 2014

***Cecily Neville: Mother of Kings***—Amy Licence, Amberly Publishing, Gloucestershire, 2014

There is necessarily some overlap and duplication in these two books. The *Richard III* one is shorter, less than 100 pages, and goes into less detail. Both cover, for instance, the rumors of Edward IV's illegitimacy. Did Cecily have a history of delivering before her due date, or after? (Even today, this is not an exact science.) Could Richard have been two or three weeks overdue, leading to rumors, believed by his enemies without too much difficulty, that he was two years in the womb? I can testify that it can seem like two years!

Cecily's obstetric history features largely here, especially in her biography. Was there a reason that there were no children for several years after her marriage to Richard, Duke of York, a gap that would cause worries for a modern couple who were trying for a child? If there was a problem, it was solved, or solved itself. As a woman, Amy Licence is naturally concerned with maternal and child mortality. "Between 1330 and 1479, 36% of male babies and 29% of female died before their fifth birthday....The average family had 4.5 surviving children." Her female-oriented point of view is also seen in her treatment of other women, such as Anne Neville and Margaret Beaufort. Did Anne have tubercular endometriosis? Was Margaret Beaufort physically immature? If she were sexually immature, she would not have been able to conceive a child, but it is doubtless true that bearing one at the age of 13 did her body no good. Modern pediatrics holds it may also have contributed to her son's ill health, and the fact that he died relatively young. She, in fact, outlived him. Not that that was very unusual. Cecily Neville outlived all but two of her children and some of her grandchildren.

Ms. Licence gets rather muddled in all the begats, which is understandable. Ralph Neville made Richard Woodville and Edward IV look like non-starters in that category. Cecily's sister Eleanor, for example, was old enough to be her mother. It didn't help that a limited number of Christian names was used over and over. This may be why she credits Elizabeth Woodville with a son named John Grey, either confusing him with her first husband, who bore that name, or with her brother, John Woodville.

The author does answer a number of questions in both books. Why couldn't Richard III be reburied in Westminster Abbey? Because it's full up. How tall was Richard? Her guess is about 5'4", which seems reasonable. If he was no taller than 4'10", as some have suggested, the height of a 12-year-old boy, it seems unlikely he could have 'gone for a soldier.' Henry V was 6'3", she tells us, but no source is given. If true, the Plantagenets certainly ran to height—except when they didn't.

On a major question, however, Ms. Licence hedges. Did Cecily really impugn her own reputation by offering to name her oldest son a bastard? "...it has the feel of an emotional truth, a betrayed mother lashing out to try to hurt her son in the only way she could....Of course, there is also the possibility that she said no such thing. She probably did object to the marriage, but her dislike may have been molded into certain emotive phrases by writers over the ages....Edward's possible bigamy is another question entirely."

Both books contain many clear and colorful illustrations, including one on the back cover of the *Richard III* book of modern visitors in casual summer clothes viewing Richard's empty grave.

All in all, a rather sympathetic treatment of Richard, and a definitely sympathetic one of his mother, if one can overlook a few niggling details. But some details ring absolutely true, such as Cecily's Last Will, in which she meticulously doles out her possessions to friends and servants—and leaves two gold cups and a sum of money to her grandson-in-law, Henry VII. The money was part of some custom duties which had been allotted to her, and which would probably have reverted to the Crown anyway.

***Loyalty: Father, Husband, Brother, King***—Mathew Lewis, CreateSpace Independent Publishing, Lexington, KY, 2012

Mathew Lewis' novel concentrates mostly on Richard III as King, and shows us a different side of his personality: Richard as comedian. Not a knock-about visual comedian, though he has his moments. When he is rescuing Anne Neville, using a variety of street-fighting moves, he may remind the reader of a combination of the athletic Bruce Lee and the lithe Donald O'Connor. His verbal sparring with his friends and followers is reminiscent of the Britcom sketch artists *The Two Ronnies*, with Richard as the diminutive Ronnie Corbett.

"Can we still..." Buckingham began excitedly.

"No." Richard cut him off.

"Then could we just..."

"No!" Richard shouted, amused.

"Oh, but we can surely still..."

"No!" Gloucester suppressed a smile.

But if I am giving the impression that this is a laugh riot, it most definitely is not. It is very serious, especially when showing the relationship between Richard and his brothers, Edward and George. For an example, Richard speaks to Francis Lovell just before the battle of Bosworth:

"One thing I have resolved is that whilst kings need men like me, men like me make poor kings...My vision of empowering people is naïve, I see that now. The many do not rule this land and the few who do have too much to lose to allow the status quo to change, and so they will not let me change it...Perhaps one day it will have to change" He looked at the ranks of men before him and bit his lip. "I miss my wife and son so much." The king looked down at his gauntlet under which he felt his wedding band. He reached a hand out to Lovell. "God be with you this day, Francis, and may it always be so."

Is this an anachronism, similar to verbal slips like 'cut to the chase'? Perhaps, but it is consistent with the character of Richard as depicted by Mr. Lewis throughout. There are many dramatic and powerful scenes, particularly of battles, but it is poignant to overhear Richard joking with his friends in between the grimness. The novel is framed (word chosen advisedly) by a scene in which Sir Thomas More and a mysterious gentleman explain the riddle of the Princes to Hans Holbein.

There are, unfortunately a number of glitches and typos. For example, he has Elizabeth of York dancing at Richard's court, along with her two teen-age sisters, Mary and Cecily. Mary had died several years earlier. Please, people, get an editor, I mean a *good* one. With electronic media to help, it shouldn't even be necessary to schlep the manuscript around. Mr. Lewis has now published a sequel, *Honour*, which I hope is more accurately proof-read. Even if not, it is sure to be interesting reading.

**Sixth Circle of Hell: The Heretics**

***Dante's Infernal Puzzle Collection***—Tim Dedopulos, Carlton Books, London, 2013

The subtitle is “100 hellishly difficult riddles, cryptic conundrums and merciless enigmas.” This is a sample, under the title of *Entrata*:

As we passed within, my dear guide looked at me with a visage kind and wise...”Mysteries on life there are,” said he, “so many of them deep and filled with woe. Yet this, I think, is of a lighter cast. Two days before his death, Santino had possessed just five and thirty years of age. Yet when he passed, ‘twas plain for all to see that the next year would have seen him thirty-eight. How could this odd situation be?”

If any Gentle Reader is stumped, write or e-mail me for the answer. Or get a copy of the book.

And now we have circled back to the lighter side of life and literature, and I bid you a welcome adieu.

~ToC~

## Errata

In the December 2014 issue of the *Ricardian Register* in *Were They Really Called That*, Tamara Baker stated on p. 8:

Continuing on the subject of Cicely Neville, the earliest time that “Rose of Raby” was in use (the earliest I can find, anyhow) is 1795, as Cicely; or, the Rose of Raby was the title of a rather soppy novel by Agnes Musgrave.

To this I left an editor’s note on p. 9 offering a possible source that Cicely Neville may have been known as *Rose of Raby* in her own time. Subsequently, Ms. Baker located a definitive reference showing *Rose of Raby* was not used until the 18<sup>th</sup>-century:

On page 53 of the June 2015 issue of the *Ricardian Bulletin*, Joanna Laynesmith shows once and for all that Cecily Neville was never called “the Rose of Raby”. Futhermore, she states that she has no evidence to show that the epithet existed before it was used by (and apparently invented by) Agnes Musgrave. This is exactly what I stated in my piece *Were They Really Called That?*, which appeared in the December 2014 issue of the *Ricardian Register*.



## From the Editor:

We can no longer moderate the American Branch Yahoo discussion group at [groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/richard3/info](http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/richard3/info) and that means that we can’t add anyone new or delete spam. There is another Yahoo discussion group that many of our members are current participants. The address of the Richard III Society Yahoo Discussion Group is [groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/richardiiisocietyforum/info](http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/richardiiisocietyforum/info) and the group description opens with the statement:

This Club is sponsored by the Richard III Society but it is an open forum for anybody interested in Richard III, The Wars of Roses and the later Medieval period generally.

It’s a closed group, so you do have to be approved for membership by a moderator. The group currently has close to 900 members worldwide.

The American Branch Yahoo discussion group will continue to exist, so you don’t have to leave the group.

# American Branch Member Portal

Sally Keil  
Membership Chair

## Online Portal to Membership Management:

Starting this past July, we have moved all of our membership records over to a new system that enables us to give you on line access. Now, you can log on to our web site and see all of the contact information we have for you, including email address, postal mailing address, date your membership will expire, the dues and/or donations you have made, etc.

All members of The American Branch of the Richard III Society who have email addresses registered with us should have received an email with a link to our new membership management system. If you have not updated your membership information or have not received this email, please contact me at [membership@r3.org](mailto:membership@r3.org) and I will email the link to you with instructions. You will be required to select a user id and password.

## Security first!

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Once you have created your user ID and password, you may access your membership information via our web site—[r3.org](http://r3.org)—by selecting **Members Only** from the navigation bar—don't forget, the password for the members only page is not the same as your user id and password for the new membership portal. Contact me if you have lost this information. Once there you can update your contact information, renew your membership, make a donation, offer to volunteer, and lots more by clicking on the drop-down menu.

The American Branch can now accept credit cards. While the option to mail a check is still available, we hope that everyone will find using a credit card to be a much easier way to renew. The credit card processing company we have chosen manages all of this for us under their tight, industry standard security measures. Please know that the Society does *not* retain any credit card information in our membership system.

As ever, if you have any questions or concerns about this new system please let me know.

~ToC~



## ex libris

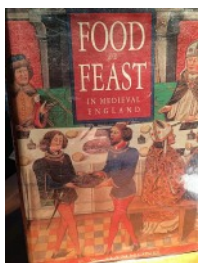
### New Research Library Acquisitions:

- Dragon's Blood & Willow Bark: The Mysteries of Medieval Medicine, by Toni Mount (2015).
- Richard III - The Road to Leceister, by Amy License (2014).
- Cecily Neville - Mother of Kings, by Amy License (2014).
- The King's Grave: The Discovery of Richard III's Lost Burial, by Philippa Langley and Michael Jones (2013).
- Royal Marriage Secrets: Consorts & Concubines, Bigamists & Bastards, by John Ashdown-Hill (2013)
- The Third Plantagenet - George Duke of Clarence, by John Ashdown-Hill (2014).
- Jasper Tudor: Godfather of the Tudor Dynasty, by Debra Bayani (2014).
- Jasper Tudor: Dynasty Maker, by Terry Breverton (2014).
- Richard III - King in the Car Park, by Terry Breverton (2014).
- Women of the Wars of the Roses, by Alicia Carter (2013).
- Richard III from Contemporary Chronicles, Letters & Records, by Keith Dockray & P. W. Hammond (2013)
- Blood Sisters: The Women Behind the Wars of the Roses, by Sarah Gristwood (2013)
- The Battle of Bosworth by Stephen Lark (2014).
- Richard III - A Small Guide to the Great Debate, by Annette Carson (2013).
- The Woodvilles - The Wars of the Roses' and England's Most Infamous Family, by Susan Higginbotham (2013)
- The Wars of the Roses - Fall of the Plantagenets, Rise of the Tudors - by Dan C. Jones (2014)
- Elizabeth Woodville - Her Life and Times by David MacGibbon (2013)
- The Rise of the Tudors - The Family that Changed English History, by Chris Skidmore (2013)

~ToC~

### Review: Rare and Delightful Books from the Non-Fiction Library

Susan Troxell, Research Librarian



***Food and Feast in Medieval England*, P. W. Hammond, 1993, Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, Hardback, 176 pp, including 11 color plates.**

In every era of human history, there is one certain thing. Everyone needs to eat food and find sustenance. Books are the metaphorical food for the mind and soul, feeding our curiosity, satisfying our need to know about the grandiose and mundane, and whetting our appetite to imagine the past. What was it like in Richard III's day when he sat down at table to eat? What did his servants eat? What did people in rural areas and in

towns do during the 15<sup>th</sup> century to feed themselves, and perhaps engage in a community meal? What would happen to old people who could no longer work—how would they obtain food? How much food was produced in medieval England and was it nutritious enough to be a sustainable diet? Did food taste good then? And was it ever regulated, or did people

resort to eating questionable products because no one knew about sanitation or food-borne illnesses? All these questions are answered in Hammond's "Food and Feast"—a fascinating and multifaceted exploration of the world of food and drink in medieval England (1250-1550), supplemented with an extensive bibliography and illustrations from medieval manuscripts and books.

"Food and Feast" catalogues the vast variety of foods and beverages that were produced domestically, imported into England and consumed regularly. Bread and ale was the staple for all classes, and one's economic class determined how that was supplemented. Wealthy gentry, of course, enjoyed a great variety of meats and fish, exotic spices and wine. Urban dwellers tended to eat at taverns or to "order takeaway" from local purveyors of meat pies and prepared food. Peasants living in rural areas subsisted on a diet rich in carbohydrates (grains in the form of bread made from barley and oats), vegetable-based proteins like beans, lots of cabbage and leeks, and the occasional egg, fresh cheese or rabbit poached from the local lord's supply. Because of religious restrictions on eating meat during the week, an enormous amount of fish was consumed, mostly salted or dried, but people could buy fresh marine fish even at markets in Coventry. In 1265, the Countess of Leicester's household consumed up to 1,000 herrings per day during Lent.

The medieval fondness for highly-spiced food is well known. Turns out it wasn't done to cover up the taste of putrid or rotten food, so much as to counteract the strong flavor of dried and salted meats. Dishes seem to have a strong tendency towards "sweet and sour" flavors—with meats being cooked in wine or vinegary "verjuice" (unfermented grape juice), to which were added aromatics like black pepper, ginger, clove and cinnamon. These flavorings are very similar to what we would nowadays taste in Moroccan food, and, like their northern African/middle eastern counterparts, medieval dishes often incorporated almonds, raisins and dates. Oranges were especially treasured and graced a kingly table. The evolution of cuisine towards the more aromatic, spicier, sweeter and more complicated preparations caused John Russell in his *Boke of Nurture* (c. 1430) to complain of "cookes with there newe conceytes, choppynge, stampyng and gryndyng".

Hammond also examines the many systems of regulation that governed the sale of food and drink, from Edward III's Assize of Bread which determined the cost, quality and quantities of loaves that could be lawfully sold in the markets (at the peril of being pilloried, heavily fined and/or thrown in jail for its violation), to Richard III's Act on Contents of Vessels of Wine and Oil, to the byzantine regulations and inspections on imported wine. Marketplaces were heavily regulated by local guilds and government as to what could be sold, by whom, by what weights/measures, and where. Clearly, the concept of *caveat emptor* was being eroded and there was an effort to protect purchasers against unethical vendors who sold dyed water as "wine", substandard or stale ales, or adulterated foodstuffs. Similarly, medieval society recognized a type of welfare system whereby "boon work" would be offered to peasants to supplement their wages and provide free meals, the right to glean fields of grain would be permitted to the elderly and infirm, and parish churches would feed the impoverished during religious holidays and feast days. Alms-giving was a feature of every lavish feast and lords made a great show of giving "dole" in the form of bread and food to the poor.

No book on medieval food would be complete without a chapter on the tradition of "feasting"—celebrations involving food and drink in observance of holy days, marriages, diplomatic visits, and other occasions demanding conviviality. Hammond describes the lengthy preparations, table settings, manners and service of courses during those elaborate events. He describes the food served at Richard III's coronation in 1483, and also provides information about the types of entertainment and other activities that occurred during feasts.

For those who desire to cook medieval food in their kitchens today, Hammond's *Food and Feast* does not supply recipes. The Society's Non-Fiction Library, however, contains three medieval cook books: *Fabulous Feasts: Medieval Cookery and Ceremony* by Madeleine Pelner Cosman; *To the King's Taste: Richard II's Book of Feasts and Recipes Adapted for Modern Cooking* by Lorna J. Sass of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and *Food and Cooking in Medieval Britain—History and Recipes* by Maggie Black. Another intriguing text about food is *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Significance of Food to Medieval Women* by Caroline Walker Bynum.



All these texts are available to members of the American Branch of the Richard III Society by contacting its Research Librarian, Susan Troxell, at [researchlibrary@r3.org](mailto:researchlibrary@r3.org).

~ToC~

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- Use standard fonts such as Times New Roman, Calibri, or Verdana. Avoid fonts that you had to purchase. I use Times New Roman throughout the publication.
- Images that are in the public domain should be stated as such, those that are not require permissions and attributions
- Image size should be at least 300 dpi, which means a 1" X 2" image at a minimum should be 300 pxls X 600 pxls
- Paper must have references in the form of endnotes or footnotes (which I'll convert to endnotes) and/or Bibliography. Papers that do not require references are travel notes (e.g. report on a Ricardian tour), review of a lecture, and essays.

Inside back cover  
(not printed)

**Front cover:**

***King Richard III* by Jamal Mustafa**

Stained Glassic Studio, Birmingham UK , stainedglassic.com, email: theportraitartist@gmail.com

**Richard III**

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

***Richard III Forever***



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