



# RICARDIAN CHRONICLE

Vol. 6 No. 2

Dec., 2020

Newsletter by and about members of the American Branch of the Richard III Society

Note from the Editor: My sincerest apologies for being so late in publishing the December newsletter. I wasn't sick or had any emergency that I needed to attend to, I just let the time slip away. One positive result of the delay in publication is includes a column about the 2021-2022 Schallek Fellowship Awardee.

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### Publication schedule and submission deadlines:

The *Ricardian Chronicle* is published semi-annually, June and December. Submission deadlines are: May 15<sup>th</sup> for the June issue and November 15<sup>th</sup> for the December issue.

### What type of article will be published in the *Chronicle*?

The *Ricardian Chronicle* is a newsletter by and about members and chapters of the American Branch of the Richard III Society. This is the publication to share your stories about Ricardian and related trips and events.

### Submission guidelines:

Text: 12 pt Times New Roman, Calibri, or Arial font, document file type can be rtf, doc, docx, or odt. (Sorry, I cannot accept pdf document type or non-standard fonts.)

Please contact me at [info@r3.org](mailto:info@r3.org)

## 2020 Virtual GMM

Due to this dreadful COVID-19 pandemic, we had to cancel the in person GMM that was to have been held in Philadelphia and replaced it with a Virtual GMM on the dates originally planned (October 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>).

October 17: two sessions

Session 1: General Membership Meeting: After the welcome the Executive board was unanimously approved. At the conclusion of the business meeting, Sally Keil gave a Power Point presentation detailing American Branch participation in Philippa Langley's Missing Princes Project. Click [here](#) to retrieve presentation.



Session 2: Matthew Lewis: Keynote speaker gave a live Zoom presentation on the *Survival of the Princes in the Tower*, where through analysis of primary and secondary sources he revealed why the princes were not murdered and probably survived their uncle.



October 18: two sessions

Session 1: Peter Hammond: Pre-recorded Zoom presentation of "The Children of Richard III." Click [here](#) to retrieve the transcript of Peter Hammond's presentation, which was followed by Peter and Carolyn Hammond: The founding and evolution of the Parent Richard III Library.

Session 2: Sally Keil: Marriage in Medieval England: In addition to the status report on the Missing Princes project, Sally also presented the evolution of marriage customs in Medieval England from families arranging of marriage between the sons and daughters, to consent of each party required to codifying in Canon Law, including means by which a marriage could be dissolved (annulment only). Click [here](#) to view the Power Point slide of her presentation.



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The Schallek Fellowship provides a one-year grant of \$30,000 to support Ph.D. dissertation research in any relevant discipline dealing with late-medieval Britain (ca. 1350-1500). The Fellowship is offered by the Medieval Academy in collaboration with the Richard III Society-American Branch and is supported by a generous gift to the Richard III Society from William B. and Maryloo Spooner.

### 2021-2022 Schallek Fellowship Awardee: Alicia Cannizzo

The Medieval Academy of America is very pleased to announce that the 2021-2022 Schallek Fellowship has been awarded to Alicia Cannizzo (Graduate Center, City University of New York) to support her thesis project, "Matter En Transir: The Transi Tomb and Theories of Matter in the Late Middle Ages." Her dissertation, which is being completed under the supervision of Dr. Cynthia Hahn, focuses on early transi tombs and brings together methods from both art history and the history of science. A summary of her topic follows:

Alicia Cannizzo's thesis investigates the earliest transi tombs from France to England and identifies the cultural contexts beyond the thoroughly explored *memento mori* tradition that gave rise to these odd and affecting tombs. She proposes that the concept of *memento mori*, which reached its full popularity after the earliest transi tombs were created, clouds the interpretation of these objects. Other concurrent concepts regarding the body and its behavior are explored, including theories of matter and medical practice. The behavior of matter in both living and dead bodies was a subject of intense discussion at the university level, exploring questions about how and why the body was reduced to basic components after death and the implications this process might have on an eventual resurrection. Using biographical information from the earliest tombs she explores links between the commemorated dead and the intellectual culture of the university in a study that hopes to broaden the understanding of the visual culture of death as a whole.



Cannizzo holds a Master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she studied death in the medieval period under Dr. Thomas E. A. Dale and the history of science under Dr. Micheal H. Shank.

## What did I do during the Lockdown? I learned Latin!

Susan Troxell, Vice-Chair and Librarian of the Research Library

I've never been good at learning languages. Four years of taking French in high school almost killed me with boredom, but they allowed me to skip the required foreign language credits for my undergraduate degree. Going abroad, I confess it's been a great relief that most people now speak English as their second language. I've been spared the embarrassment of making humiliating attempts at someone else's mother tongue.

When I became interested in Ricardian history, my struggle with language resurfaced, and I found myself flummoxed in doing some of my research. I discovered that many of the primary sources in archives still remain untranscribed from their original, handwritten manuscripts. Even if they had been transcribed into modern typeface, I still couldn't read the Latin. It felt like there was an impenetrable veil surrounding these sources, and the people who wrote them, making the chasm of five centuries so much wider and difficult to cross.

In 2019, with a lot of trepidation, I decided to confront my nemesis and I set about to learn Latin, including its bastard child—Medieval Latin. I consulted many friends who'd learned Italian or Spanish as middle-aged adults, asking them how they were so successful at it. They unanimously said to take a course which emphasized conversational skills, particularly those where you were forced to learn the language by mimicry and verbal repetition. The problem is that no one teaches a course in Conversational Latin, and a search of the local community college's offerings only turned up classes in Latin American culture. It seemed Classical Latin for an adult student was truly a "dead language". Or was it?

One friend in particular, a man of similar age to me, sent me an urgent message. I noticed that on Facebook he could switch back and forth between English and Italian, he'd recently opened up an Italian restaurant in Philadelphia which specialized in the cuisine of the Abruzzo region, and made frequent trips there. He told me he had learned to speak and write fluent Italian by using a private tutor for one-on-one instruction. Classes attended by multiple students were okay, he said, but you could only really accelerate your own skills by having this type of personal guidance. It was admittedly more expensive, he said, but the payoff would be much greater.

So, I set about finding a private Latin tutor. Fortunately, I discovered that in Philadelphia, where I live, there are a variety of private tutoring businesses, most of which focused on helping high school kids score high on AP tests or do well in their college admissions. After some Internet research, I found one (Varsity Tutors) which promised they could connect me with a tutor to teach me Latin, from the beginner level all the way up to college level. First, I had to tell them what my objectives were. I told them that I hadn't taken any Latin at all, hadn't even taken a foreign language class in over 40 years, and was primarily interested in reading and interpreting Medieval Latin for my own enjoyment, not to pass any sort of standardized test. To my surprise, they had a number of tutors they thought qualified, and I thus began a course of weekly 90-minute, one-on-one sessions. The tutors even came to my home for this purpose, but options for remote learning (video conferencing on the computer, amongst others) were also available.

My first tutor was Scot, a PhD student in Medieval History at the University of Pennsylvania. A strapping, swarthy and good-looking young man, who seemed 7-foot tall, Scot set me up with the basics of Latin nouns and their declensions, and verbs and their conjugations. He introduced me to the textbooks and exercises that he found most useful for beginners. (See the list below.) We also looked at a few texts from the medieval period, and translated them together to learn some of the funky, odd "rules" from that epoch. After a few months, I was getting the hang of nouns, and making early forays into verbs and past participles, when Scot announced that he could no longer be a tutor, he was off to do research for his dissertation in Salamanca, Spain.

My text tutor was James, a native of New Orleans, who was in every physical way the opposite of Scot. James was ascetic, with delicate features and a soft voice, and told me he had originally intended to study at seminary but wound up at Tulane where he received a degree in classical languages. James and I continued working with Latin grammar and building my vocabulary; he told me that he and a group of friends would gather at his house every week to translate Greek and Latin poetry—"just for the fun of it". I wasn't alone, then! But, like Scot, his life circumstances suddenly changed: his domestic partner was a journalist for NPR Radio, and was being re-assigned to Nebraska, so he was moving there with him in only a week or two. I hope James has found a circle of fellow Greek and Latin enthusiasts in the vigorous cornfields of the prairie.

Jetta was my last, and longest, tutor. A native of Virginia, with a Medusa-like crown of dark blonde hair, she spoke with a genteel Southern drawl but had a most infectious sense of humor and a boisterous laugh. Her degree was also in classical languages, from the University of Virginia, where her father was a prominent philosophy professor (“He hates Plato! Don’t even bring up the name around him! Hahahaha!!”). Jetta introduced me to pluperfect, imperfect, and future tenses of verbs, in both active and passive voice, and then we dived into the areas that have often defeated the student of Latin: subjunctive mood, conditional phrases, indirect statements, and the Dreaded Participles of the present, perfect, future, and passive periphrastic. In one lesson, Jetta pulled out her father’s own copy of Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica*, and together we translated the first page or two, laughing along the way. Jetta could even make Thomas Aquinas funny.

I write about these tutors as people, because I could have easily just focused on the process of learning. Getting to know them, their stories and backgrounds, was just as educational as learning Latin. Jetta, for instance, worked in an optometrist’s office as a sales-clerk, while her husband worked as a PhD Research Fellow at the Veterinary School of the University of Pennsylvania doing experimental surgery on animals (“No, he’s not creating Pig-Men!! Hahaha!!”).

All of this in-person tutoring came to a screeching halt when the novel coronavirus came to the United States. After 12 months of private tutoring, I had learned most of the basics of Latin grammar, as well as some of the oddball rules of Medieval Latin’s spelling and grammar, but my education was far from complete. It’s one thing to know grammatical rules, and to identify individual words, but it’s entirely another thing to take a text, or even a sentence, and make sense of it. Jetta and I remained in touch, by email, and she recommended some Internet sources for me to practice with sentences and engage with Medieval Latin. I purchased a copy of Sidwell’s standard textbook on Medieval Latin and have started translating parts of the Rule of Saint Benedict and Cassiodorus’s *Institutiones*. I’ve even taken a crack at John Fortescue’s *De Laudibus Legum Angliae*, especially the parts that are relevant to my current research project. However, I only choose texts that have previously been translated by other experts, because I’m still too green as a Latinist to trust my inexperienced attempts, and I find it necessary to compare my translations with theirs. A search of the internet has led me to those expert translations, such as Georgetown University’s online translation of the Cassiodorus. Fortunately, the Order of St Benedict still exists, and their website contains their English translation of the original Latin rules.

I’ve been living in lockdown since March 10, 2020, and my sanity has been maintained by keeping my mind engaged in the pursuit of Latin. Now, I am no longer afraid of learning a new language, I actually find it absolutely delightful and engaging—if not challenging, at times. Each morning, I try my hand at interpreting some Latin sentences, on- and off-line. Some people compare it to doing the daily New York Times crossword puzzle, and I do think it’s a good analogy.

I can now say *Veni, vidi, vici!*, and I would heartily exhort any Ricardian to similarly pick up the challenge. Here’s a list of helpful texts and internet resources, recommended by my tutors and others:

#### Private Latin Tutoring:

I used *Varsity Tutors*, which is national in scope, but there are others. Remote learning is also offered. If you live near a college that has a medieval history program requiring its students to know Latin, then you could contact the department head and see if they can refer you to a tutor, possibly even an advanced-degree student who needs a small source of income. The benefit of organizations like Varsity Tutors, however, is that they pre-screen their tutors and require them to demonstrate a minimum level of teaching ability.

#### Textbooks:

Peter Jones and Keith Sidwell, *Reading Latin: Grammar, Vocabulary & Exercises* (Cambridge University Press).

This is a multi-part, total Latin course for adult learners. It is principally designed for college/university learners, and adult beginners, and for those who may have learned Latin many years ago. It is necessary to read this series before moving on to Keith Sidwell’s *Reading Medieval Latin*.

Keith Sidwell, *Reading Medieval Latin* (Cambridge University Press). This is pretty much considered “the standard” text on medieval Latin, but it assumes you’ve already learned the basic classical Latin morphology. Some very good historical background information, about the use and development of Latin in the medieval era, is included.

G.D.A. Sharpley, *The Complete Latin Course* (Routledge, Taylor & Francis). A comprehensive introduction to Latin for students and armchair enthusiasts, the text offers a series of history lessons into the world of ancient Rome, and sets the reader up to tackle Virgil, Cicero, Julius Caesar, Tacitus, and Juvenal. It also includes plenty of exercises. Answer keys are provided on-line at [www.lingua.co.uk/latin/materials/complete-latin](http://www.lingua.co.uk/latin/materials/complete-latin).

Hans Ørberg, *Lingua Latina—Multiple Volumes*. This is a series of little books that provide a total Latin course. It consists of two parts, *FAMILIA ROMANA*, the fundamental course, and *ROMA AETERNA*, the advanced course, with a volume of *INDICIES*. The course is available both in book form, also audio and electronically. Because it is written entirely in Latin, it is as close to a conversational Latin course as one can get. It is good mostly for practice.

James Morwood, *A Latin Grammar* (Oxford University Press). This is the go-to paperback reference book that lays out every aspect of Latin grammar, clearly and concisely, and it is small enough to carry in handbag.

Eileen Gooder, *Latin for Local History: An Introduction*: It's my "go-to" source for learning how to read the Medieval Latin used in various archival records such as deeds, charters, manor and borough court rolls, estate accounts, bishops' registers, court session rolls and writs, etc.

*Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (Oxford University Press). This is a massive, 3-volume project from The British Academy that seeks to collect all British uses of medieval words, much like the OED. It is very expensive to purchase, and probably only needed for researchers who are deeply engaged with interpreting medieval primary sources.

#### On-Line Medieval Latin Education:

The National Archives Tutorial on Medieval Latin —[nationalarchives.gov.uk/latin/](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/latin/)— this is a systematic walk through the basics of Latin grammar, in 24 lessons, with practice exercises and historical examples taken from the National Archives.

#### On-Line Latin Practice Exercises:

[magistrula.com/latin](http://magistrula.com/latin)—This is geared mostly to young learners, but I found their sentence generator to be really good practice. Sometimes they use anachronistic words (like the Latin word for “vampire”, which I doubt was used at all in the medieval era) and sometimes unusual interpretations for certain verbs, but these are all easily taken in stride. Good practice material.

#### On-Line Latin Dictionaries:

William Whitaker's Words ([latin.ucant.org/](http://latin.ucant.org/))- This program, especially the online version, has gained popularity among Latinists because of its simple interface, high coverage of the Latin lexicon (39,000 words) and mostly accurate results.

[perseus.tufts.edu](http://perseus.tufts.edu)—This is a very useful Latin dictionary. Type in a word, and they retrieve translations from your chosen reference, the default being Lewis & Short's Elementary Latin dictionary.

Logeion—This is an open-access database of Latin and Greek dictionaries, hosted by the University of Chicago. Apart from simultaneous search capabilities across different dictionaries and reference works, Logeion offers access to frequency and collocation data from the Perseus Project.

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# A Voice for Richard

Wendy McGarvey

“A Voice for Richard” was the topic of a lively Zoom lecture given by Yvonne Morley-Chisolm on February 5, 2021 and hosted by the UK Richard III Society. Yvonne has been a voice teacher and vocal instructor for over 30 years, often working with actors to match their voice with the character they are playing.

Her project seeks to reconstruct Richard’s voice based on scientific evidence such as facial and skeletal characteristics, regional accents, dialect and articulation patterns. Yvonne also believes that intangible evidence such as letters he wrote and his Book of Hours give clues to his voice. She explained that determining speech patterns is complex- how someone spoke in the England of 1600 was not at all how someone spoke 200 years earlier. Originally a skeptic, through her research she has become a confirmed Ricardian and believes that his character as a good and just nobleman influenced his speech and that it did not sound like that of Shakespeare’s villainous Richard.

In the course of her research, she has called upon the expertise of Philippa Langley and Dominick Smee, along with a range of archeologists, forensic and genetic experts to determine Richard’s “back story” and bring his voice to life.

150 people from across the world attended the lecture and there were numerous audience questions. For further information on “A Voice for Richard”, please see Yvonne’s website, [yourvoicebox.co.uk](http://yourvoicebox.co.uk).

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### Ricardian Review

Myrna Smith

#### **KINGS’ GAMES, Or the Tragedy of Richard III Once More—Al Karon (unpublished as of July 31,2020)**

This play opens when the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester receive the news of King Edward IV’s death, brought by one Brandao de Bojador, a servant of William Lord Hastings, who calls him Brand, as the Duke does. History knows him as Sir Edward Brampton. The story then follows the major events of Richard’s Protectorship and reign. We see him struggling with his conscience and reasoning with his councilors. It does, however, sometimes deviate to another point of view, first to Henry Tudor in Brittany, then to Queen Elizabeth Widvile in sanctuary. Henry is not, at this stage, sure if he wants to be king or just to have his estates in Wales restored. Elizabeth is very sure about what she wants, although she blames the Duke of Buckingham as much as Richard.

These changing POVs are a weakness in the play. In my opinion, it would have been better to pick one character and make him or her the focus, even a villainous character like Buckingham. Even the characters who are antagonistic to Richard think Buckingham is a bad guy, (Queen Elizabeth even thinks he may have murdered her sons) and the author obviously agrees with them. But a villain can make a fine protagonist. Even a minor character, like Brand, could serve that purpose. He will show up at several significant times (for example, as King of Misrule at Richard’s 1483 Christmas festivities.) He provides some comic relief, e.g. in this scene where Catsby (the author spells the name without the e) and Francis Lovell try to explain English royal genealogy to the foreign-born Brand.

Francis: The pretender Tudor claims to be a descendant of Edward III as does our royal Richard. However, our Richard is a great-great-grandson of Edward III, but Tudor is a great-great-great grandson, one great greater. So Richard is clearly the greater grandson.

Brand: Ah, yes, great.

Catsby: Tudor is clearly the lesser scion...It is simple. Edward III had eight sons, three of whom had sons legitimate whose male lines concern us now ...etc, etc. for several begats]

Brand nods and agrees, but later says to Francis Lovell:

Brand: Francis, I am sorry, but I really don’t understand very well about the succession of Edward III.

Francis: Neither does any other Englishman.

It will be noted that Brand, being a commoner, speaks in common, everyday English, and is someone that modern readers/viewers could relate to.

There is too little action and too much talk. The leading character rivals Hamlet in the amount of time and dialogue he spends soliloquizing. Where Hamlet suffers from inertia, Richard is a slave to conscience. He wrestles with it, and conscience wins—usually. He regrets not listening to it in the matter of Buckingham, but too late. Now and then, Al Karon takes a leaf from Shakespeare’s playbook and brings on a bit of pageantry, which is fine for reading purposes, but in actual production would require an army of extras. And if the producer has an army of extras, he or she can afford to add some action scenes.

Speaking of armies, at Bosworth King Richard instructs Brand to return to Leicester and stay there, without giving a reason why. Brand protests, but reluctantly agrees. We don’t know the reason either, but can speculate

A nit to pick: Richard states that he had never broken Sanctuary, but he had, at Tewkesbury, when Duke of Gloucester. There was some ambiguity in the matter, but someone as conscientious as the author depicts Richard would not simply ignore it. And a side-note. The king jokes with Francis Lovell about being unhorsed by the ‘sandman,’ the sand-filled dummy that helped to train young squires when ‘tilting at the quintain.’ Could this have been the origin of equating this phrase with sleep? They also mention ‘strawman,’ obviously weaker. Perhaps the usage of this word has a similar origin?

### **LOVELL OUR DOGGE: The Life of Viscount Lovell, Closest Friend of Richard III and Failed Regicide—**

Michelle Schindler, Amberley, Stroud, Glos, 2019

The author has certainly taken on a daunting task here, attempting to write a book-length biography about someone whose life is so little known. Like the purebred wolfhound of his badge, Francis Lovell had a pedigree as long as your arm, but where he was or what he was doing at any particular time is problematic. He was connected with many of the great families of England, including the Nevilles, and William Stanley was his step-father, if briefly.

We do know some things, and can safely assume others. Francis Lovell was a fraternal twin. He and his sister Joan were born on or about September 17, 1456. They do appear to have been close throughout life, as Joan seems to have been educated in the same household that Francis was in many cases, though of course their educations were different. The twins had a sister, several years younger, who was christened Frideswide. I assume this was a saint’s name, related to Fevrise, or so I have heard. Did she have a nickname, I wonder? In any case, more about her later.

All three children were left orphans at an early age. One of Schindler’s speculations has to do with the character of Francis’ father, John Lovell. She suggests he may have been abusive to his children. This is based not only on the fact that Joan did not name either of her two sons after her father, as was customary in the family, and, more plausibly, on the fact that Francis seems to have refused to have prayers said for him. In the past, I have argued that the fact that no masses were said for the souls of Edward V and Richard of York meant that it was not known if they were dead. There was no question about the death of John Lovell, yet nobody seems to have commented on this dereliction by his only son. Was Francis a closet Lollard? Was the bad character of John so widely known that his son might seem to be justified? Or is it all coincidence? Ms. Schindler does admit that parents often just chose a name that they liked; or, perhaps, avoided one that was overused. Frideswide did name one of her sons John, but she was just a baby when her father died.

The friendship of Francis and Richard of Gloucester seems to have begun when both were wards of the Earl of Warwick. Richard was apparently a sort of semi-mentor to the younger boy, as Francis’ handwriting resembles Richard’s. This does not mean that Francis’ education had been so neglected that he was not taught to write earlier, since it was common at that time for children to be taught writing only after they learned to read, not more or less at the same time, as now. Many men and (especially) women could not write much more than their names, but they might still be literate. (i.e. could read).

Schindler follows Lovell’s career moves where they can be traced, as in the Scottish campaign, and tries to find an explanation for his absence on other occasions. It is possible, as the author points out, that as twins both Francis and Joan were premature and low birth-weight babies, perhaps with poorly developed lungs troubling them intermittently. (Not all the time, though, at least in Francis’ case.) It may or may not be significant that Joan died in her early twenties.

One of the author’s speculations concerns grants to Frideswide Norris (nee Lovell) totalling 200 marks—a great sum at that time. Frideswide had a daughter Anne about this time (summer 1484). Was this a christening

gift? Or can there be another explanation? Was Anne Richard's child? Was Lovell so devoted to Richard that he was complacent with anything the latter chose to do? Or did Francis know that there was true affection between the two? At any rate, it *could* have happened. Francis appears to have been quite close to his baby sister, possibly raising Anne as well as taking in Joan's orphaned sons. (Francis and his wife, Anne Fitzhugh, were childless.) Frideswide was reconciled with her husband, but her husband and father-in-law both supported Henry Tudor. Her husband died shortly after Bosworth (of his wounds?) and Frideswide died in her 40s, not having remarried. One of her Stapleton great-nieces (Joan's descendants) was also named Frideswide, so this may have been a family name.

Francis Lovell's post-Bosworth peregrinations are better detailed, in a way, and even more murky, in other ways. More about that (Lambert Simnel, et al) in my review of the next book.—M.S.

**LAST CHAMPION OF YORK; Francis Lovell, Richard III's Truest Friend**, Stephen David, Robert Hale, Wilshire, 2019

The moment I opened this book, I was disappointed. The print was so small! But I persevered under difficulties. Did I find anything to make me change my mind? Very little. That little does include a list of Francis Lovell's land holdings, contained in an appendix, and very impressive it is. Mr. David also gives a detailed account of the tactics of the Battle of Stoke Field. On the other hand, he refers to Edward IV's illegitimate son, Arthur, as "Lord Lisle," which he was, but only at a much later period than the 1480s, and to Thomas Howard as "Lord Admiral," which he never was. That was his father John.

All right, let's be fair. The font size is more likely the responsibility of the publisher than the author, and these misidentifications simply slips of the keyboard which the eagle-eyed proofreader failed to catch. It happens. Much more serious are David's omissions and misinterpretations. For example, except for tiny boxes in the Lovell family tree (in another appendix) you would never know from this book that Francis had any siblings at all, much less in-laws or nieces. (He does mention, in passing, an Edward Norris as Francis' nephew, but provides no further information.) He may think he is making a feminist point when he opines that Elizabeth, Duchess of Suffolk, Edward IV's sister, may have been a dominant political personality. This may be true: certainly, her sister Margaret was, and certainly her husband, Duke John, was not. (Let's be kind and call him 'easy-going.'). But 'may have been' does not equal 'was.'

The author refers to supporters of the Pretender/Boy King as, not Yorkists, but Ricardians, thereby conflating them with modern-day members of the Richard III Society. He no doubt believes it makes those 15<sup>th</sup>-century gentlemen look like nutcases, and modern-day supporters appear morally suspect.

I could go on and on, but let a few examples suffice. This is less a 'Life and Times of Lord Lovell' than a biography of Richard III, and David's bias is betrayed in, among other things, his caption to a portrait of Richard: "This intriguing portrait seems to capture some of Richard's character traits: the outward appearance of an open face is belied by the nervous tension revealed in the self-conscious fidgeting with his rings. The portrait seems to convey the anxieties that beset Richard when he assumed the crown." Just as likely it represents a problem faced by the portraitist from the days of cave-painting to those of digital photography—what to do with the subject's hands. The obvious answer is to have him or her hold something: a weapon, a book, a flower, jewels? The latter would not only give the sitter something to do, but also display his wealth. In any case, it says as much about the painter as the subject.

The author also seems to find something nefarious in the fact that the younger Lovell was in the household of several different nobles (e.g. Nevilles, Fitzhughs, de la Poles), something that he, as a minor, would have no control over. In short, while David rarely says anything that is directly counter-factual, he usually manages to spin his facts to the disadvantage of King Richard and Viscount Lovell.

Which brings me to another question. Who was Lambert Simnel? Mr. David cites the Croyland Chronicler as saying his name 'was really John \_\_\_\_\_,' and believes that 'Simnel' was a sort of placeholder name given him by the 'Ricardians.' But why would they not stick with the anodyne name of 'John Somethingorother' instead of making up a ridiculous-sounding one like 'Lambert Simnel?' Many Ricardians think the boy at the battle of Stoke was really 'Edward V,' (not VI, as David calls him in snark quotes) or Edward Earl of Warwick. Unprovable, but believable. But further claiming that 'Lambert Simnel' was a name selected by Tudor minions and given to a random lower-class 9-year-old boy, who was expected to answer to it for the rest of his life, and to regurgitate the



‘accepted’ story repeatedly over the years? Can one actually think those years could have lasted very long? My opinion, FWIW, is that ‘Lambert Simnel,’ was really Lambert Simnel (a lot of real people have funny-sounding names), that he really was on the battlefield, as a figurehead, that he kept the name for the rest of his life and gave it to his children because it was his. And he lived into his 50s, outliving Henry VII and most of his contemporaries by many years, when it would have been to their advantage for him to be, er, erased before he could accidentally blab the truth.

**THE QUEEN OF LAST HOPES: The Story of Margaret of Anjou**—Susan Higginbotham, Sourcebooks, Naperville, IL, 2011

At first, I read the title of this book as “The queen of lost hopes,” but that was a mistake. Margaret of Anjou never gave up hope, until she had nothing left to fight for. And Susan Higginbotham as her advocate, does not give up on her. The author makes it clear where her sympathies stand in her afterword, where she argues that the tales of Lancastrians running amok are mostly Yorkist propaganda, and anyhow the Yorkists were just as bad. That is a flawed argument, since it tacitly admits that ‘our side’ is also bad. It’s hard to blame the author too much, though. It saves a lot of trouble and angst to pick a side and stick with it 150%.

‘Her side’ is made clear, not only in the Author’s Notes, but in the story itself, and in the vocabulary she chooses. While Margaret is prepared to like Duchess Cecily on their first meeting, when they share obstetric gossip, that won’t last, and it never extends to the Duchess’ children, who are bad seeds almost from infancy, nor to the menfolk. Richard of York; for example, is not just short, he is ‘squat.’ A similar bias is shown in the choice of adjectives, adverbs, and nouns. You know how that works: I have friends and allies. You have cohorts. He has accomplices/cronies Yorkists are lewd, crude, rude, and can’t dance either.

The novel has a number of pluses. For example, Margaret and Henry VI do have a normal marital life. One key scene results when a couple of adolescent practical jokers release 16 mice into the Queen’s bedchamber—and she is deathly afraid of mice. (I am not, but even to me, 16 are a bit much.) Only 14 are discovered and ejected, and Margaret fears that the missing rodents might be lurking in her night attire. Her husband gallantly offers to search for them. This depiction of Henry is refreshing, when most fiction and non-fiction of the period depicts him as weak and impotent, or pious beyond belief. And the comic scene is memorable in itself.

Much more serious but equally memorable is the scene where Henry Beaufort comforts the thief Black Jack, who had helped Margaret, with these words: “If you had kept up your old life, you would have died for a sheep, or a horse, or a jewel. But today you die for a king. And for a queen...A very great lady.” I’m sure Jack took that to heart!

Ms. Higginbotham does give Margaret a lover, whose identity you will not learn in this review. As she depicts him, Margaret’s straying from the marital bed (even mouse-free) is understandable. He is charming, and, alas, comes to a bad and traitorous end.

And that brings up my chief criticism Susan Higginbotham has chosen to use the device of multiple narrators. The mortality rate in the Wars of the Roses being what it was, this means that some of them, implicitly or explicitly, have to continue their stories after their death. Henry VI says that Richard of Gloucester “...made the common mistake of thinking that the dead cannot hear, and that God is not watching all.” Well, in some genres, the dead may be able to hear, and even speak, but they should not narrate. This could have been avoided by using third-person narration, the all-knowing author POV.

Margaret herself does not continue her story after death, but her lady-in-waiting and companion, Katherine Vaux, does. This seems to be the main reason for having Katherine in the cast, as she is otherwise only an extra or ‘gofer.’ With a little more attention, the author could have made Ms. Vaux as memorable as some of the male characters, such as Pierre de Brèzè, the Queen’s friend.

Higginbotham is that oddity, an anti-Ricardian Ricardian, that can write a gripping story.—M.S.

**DESOLUTION: A NOVEL OF TUDOR ENGLAND (Matthew Shardlake Series #1)**—CJ. Samson, Gardners Books, 2004

The year is 1537, shortly after Henry VIII divorced and executed Anne Boleyn. Henry is now the head of the new Anglican Church, and is in the process of dissolving Roman Catholic monasteries. His Vicar General, Thomas Cromwell, sends Matthew Shardlake and an assistant, Mark Poer, to a monastery in southern England, in the town of Swansea. His job is to investigate the murder of the first Commissioner, who was to evaluate the possessions

of the monastery. As Matthew discovers quickly, something very strange is happening. A black cockerel is found slaughtered and placed on the monastery altar, and one of its relics, the hand of a saint attached to a piece of a cross, has been stolen. Several other murders follow.

While this is a fine mystery, the strength of this novel lies in the exposure of characters who represent prevailing attitudes towards the religious changes happening across the Kingdom. The monks state they have a reformist mentality, but facts and snippets of dialogue belie required changes. They have a black and white point of view about good and evil, but are still very much attached to the belief in Purgatory. They are as sinful as any secular person, being accused of sexually attacking a female former servant, confessing to sexual relationships with fellow monks, and being either overly strict or lax with monastic rules and regulations and penalties after confession.

Add to all this the fact that the weather in Swansea is brutally cold and snowy. There are many scenes where Shardlake and Mark are wading through snow, slush and ice. Even Shardlake is tempted by one female servant, who falls in love with Mark. Mark's loyalty to reform and Shardlake becomes fraught with suspicion and rejection. The psychological characteristics of all characters are carefully and comprehensively revealed, to the delight of readers.

The murders will be resolved, but the road to dissolution of this troubled monastery is complicated by the violence and controversy expressed in these pages. C.J. Sampson is obviously a highly skilled, adept writer of mysteries and historical fiction. Enjoy!—V.C.

**WHITE ROSE BLOSSOMS**—Phil Syphe, Independently published, 2019

Alternate history—nice fantasy? Not quite. Herein we discover that at the last moment King Richard retreated at Bosworth and lost the battle, and is still alive but not well. He is severely wounded and is being hidden by his peers while he recovers. However, the heavy focus of this novel belongs to Sir John Gloucester and Lady Katherine, Richard's illegitimate children. Katherine was married to the Earl of Huntingdon, who was cutting off all connection to the king while killing Katherine with poison, until she was rescued by her brother. Sir John and Lady Katherine disguise themselves as lowly peasants. They receive tremendous assistance from two women in particular, who are healers, but with questionable reputations in their neighborhoods. The Earl of Huntingdon is the real villain of this tale. He winds up being defeated but not until he has caused Katherine much fear and suffering.

These are highly engaging characters with their own unique personalities. King Richard's children are decent human beings. Sir John Gloucester is learning to apply his fighting skills, and is determined to make his stand as a soldier, not just the son of a King. John's role at the end of the novel proves he cares more for sincere love than the chance of perhaps inheriting a throne. Their plan is for Richard to recover and gather enough supporters to fight another battle—hopefully more successful—against Henry VII.

Those who love adventure will find plenty of it within these pages, which are rife with both individual and group battles. A fascinating epilogue follows, with the account of what really happened at the Battle of Bosworth, showing how the inaction of traitors led to Richard's downfall

This is certainly a memorable piece of alternative history. The facts behind its characters are certainly true to form interesting history indeed!—V.C.

**RIGHT TRUSTY & WELL-BELOVED: A Collection of Short Fiction Inspired by Richard III**—Ed. Alex Marchant, Marchant Ventures, 2019

Since the discovery of the remains of Richard III and their re-internment, scholars and writers have been asking questions—and providing answers—about the true mind, heart, and spirit of their beloved King Richard III. This second collection of short stories is sold in support of the Scoliosis Association UK, dedicated to helping those who suffer from the condition that plagued King Richard's 33 years of life.

The majority of these stories are clearly focused on debunking the works of Shakespeare and Thomas More, and on giving Richard's memory a place of integrity, compassion, and intelligent reflection. Meet the man whose brother, King Edward, chose to give positions of great authority, because he could be trusted and was dependable. This despite all the positions and rewards that were granted to his brother George. Relish how Thomas More is tortured by his own musings and writings about Richard, knowing that they do not reflect the true man. Be warmed by the open generosity of King Richard to the woman waiting for and trusting in his compassion to those in dire financial and emotional need. Stand with soldiers about to march with the remains of the King to his new burial

place, and share their respect and honor. Be wary as we visit Edward IV's court, and listen to the Woodvilles and their supporters as they plot to improve their status and their influence over the innocent King. Feel fear as we learn of Edward's earlier marriage, which will cause so much consternation and fear, as history changes in England which will weaken the Plantagenet dynasty. Relish the revenge Richard has planned, 500 years after the fact, for Shakespeare so clever and as we now know, so apt, and we will also understand the playwright's trepidation and his partial acceptance of such justice. Share with Richard the poem mourning his beloved son, though he realistically knows that his rule must go on despite his personal devastation. Ponder the change in a young man's life as he takes his ordinary place as a husband despite his secret royal background, and enjoy his reasonable and tender words to his wife, scorched by the unexpected end to the story. Mourn with Richard's mistress, who deeply loved, but never considered a future without her love. Admire the wild horse given to Richard, one who would be trained by strict discipline and tasty apples. Mull over the verbal contest between Henry and Richard about the cruel and unjust legacy for the latter. Finally, in Joanne Lerner's words... "*So, my new army must be wordsmiths, not soldiers; artists, not knights; musicians, not warriors....*"

I read this collection three times and decided these writers are the skilled and the skilled and worthy wordsmiths, artists, and musicians, each the "best" account or poem to celebrate the glory and honor of our "Right Truly & Well-Beloved" King Richard III. Not only that, but links are added after each story so we can further explore the authors' works and interests.

Highly recommended historical fiction!—V.C.

Some additional comments:

All of the contributions are of a high standard, though not all are actually 'stories,' short or otherwise. Three are poems, and *THE LIFE, THE DEATH, THE LIFE*, by Elizabeth Ottosson, is a sort of prose poem, unusually written in the second person. That is, it is addressed to 'you,' the 'you' obviously being the deceased Richard III.

*RICHARD THE THIRD, BY THOMAS MORE*, by Susan Grant-Mackie, starts this way: "Thomas More had writer's block. He had a headache. He had writer's cramp." These are not the only reasons he throws his unfinished *History of Richard III* into a bottom drawer, in frustration and disgust.

*THE PLAY'S THE THING* (by Kit Mareska) is set in Westminster Abbey in 1845, when both Richard III and his nemesis are obviously non-corporeal, and are just hanging around in the Abbey to eavesdrop on what is being said about them. William Shakespeare is generally pleased with what he hears, but Richard is not, and he blames Will. "You may not have been the first, but you were the worst." He will get revenge in a subtle but very suitable way.

*THE WIFE BESIDE DONCASTER* (Wendy Johnson) is based on an entry in the British Library Harleian MS #133, recounting Richard's giving alms to the impoverished woman of the title, a small incident and a small amount, (to him) which must have made a not inconsiderable impact on her and her family

*THE SILENT BOY* is a chapter from a novel, *THE HOUSE AT LADYDALE*, by Nicola Shade. Dickon Wellman is a striving yeoman during the Dissolution of the Monasteries. He still has a certain sympathy to the House of York, but is practical enough to snap up an ancient priory, with ancient monks in residence, when he sees a good bargain. He will proceed to build himself a nice house, with the aid of his daughter and an ex-monk and Renaissance Jack-of-all-trades and master of several. In the process, he will inform them of the story of his family, the boy of the title—his grandfather—and the mystery (?) of his background. Of course, there will be a wedding, and all will live happily ever after.

In *THE MEN AND THE MONUMENT*, by Liz Orwin, two men (actually ex-men, but not X-men) critique the Leicester tomb of Richard III on artistic and other terms. They are Henry Tudor and Richard himself, and—of course—this is another ghost story, somewhat along the lines of Jennifer Wilson's *KINDRED SPIRITS* series. At one point, Richard says, "I didn't ask you here simply to trade insults," but they both get in some zingers. Richard criticizes Henry for his lack of sartorial taste. Richard dresses in the latest styles, and has an iPhone, while Henry goes around in threadbare 15th century garb. If he just weren't so stingy... But where would a spook get the money to replenish his wardrobe? Can you really take it with you? Why has nobody told me?

They spend a fair amount of time arguing about the size of their respective Societies, all of which makes both of them seem rather petty. I suppose that after one has been dead for 500 years, there is not much else to occupy one's no-longer-existent mind with. Their squabbling attracts the attention of, and a scolding from, the late Queen

Mum, a spirited sprite with an educated taste for spirits. Richard relents, the two kings shake hands. (Henry is not enthusiastic, but he is sad about being left out of parties, and Richard takes pity on him.) All go off to a post-mortem buffet.—M.S.

**DISTANT ECHOES: RICHARD III SPEAKS**—Joanne R. Larnier, Amazon Services, 2019

Fiction that mixes the past—of over 500 years ago—with the present. It is a time-travel story, but not in the usual sense. It involves a mix of King Richard's DNA and a machine called Fly On The Wall. The machine enables the 21st century observer to travel to any time and hear the person under observation speak, through capturing the voice vibrations of the object being sought. So they have a piece of DNA from Richard's tooth, and that's all they need to hear Richard at various moments of his life.

Add to this mixture the fact that the Assistant Director of Technology, Eve, has the particular gift of being psychic. That means she can not only hear Richard, but also see him, and all those around him, at whatever time period they are searching. By means of the machine and Eve's psychometry skills, we are able to travel to different times in Richard's life. It's as if the reader is there, the accounts are so vividly described. We are told that they (the scientists) will explore—and perhaps discover that really happened to the Princes, but that mystery remains unsolved, as the information about moving the Princes to different locations doesn't go much further. We also find out, inadvertently, about a one-night fling that the King has with a woman named Frideswide, and another baseborn child.

While all this occurring, the other characters, David (the boss of the project), Stellan Andresson (the Creator of the time-travel machine), and Rupert Williams (a programming whiz-kid) can't see what Eve can. This leads to high drama, especially when the time machine is destroyed and has to be rebuilt.

In spite of the fact that the mystery of the Princes remains a mystery, this is an exciting read, taking the reader to the pivotal moments of Richard's life. Complications in Eve's personal desires and relationships thicken the plot for a brief while, but that only adds a bit of spice to the story, though it somewhat mars her credibility. The depth of feeling in Richard and his family are what moved the story to its tragic end, providing a personal touch that all Ricardians will love as they share the journey.—V.C.

**THE MISTLETOE BRIDE OF MINSTER LOVELL**—J.P. Reedman, Herne's Cave, Middleton, DE, 2020

This book is more of a booklet, really. At only 40 pages of text, it is actually a short story telling of a visit by Richard of Gloucester and his Duchess to the home of his friend Viscount Lovell. Along with Richard and the other guests, we get a tour of the building and a sampling of the celebrations of the 11th night of Twelfth Night ceremonies. We overhear the lighthearted conversation of the protagonists: Richard: "Do they say money is the root of all evil? Well, it's true. I find it very evil to be short of money" We chuckle at the antics of the Hobby Horse and the Saracen Knight, and wonder who the mysterious Green Knight may be, as he is seemingly not one of the mummers. He gives his name as Jack Rhymer, but that is surely a pseudonym.

As the entertainment turns to the recounting of ghost stories (one would think this would be more appropriate for All Hollows' Eve, but it happens at Christmastide as well) someone brings up the old story of the Bride in the Chest, old even then, and associated with a previous castle at the same site. It is part of the folklore of many countries, an 'urban legend' long before there were any 'urbs' All would have been well if the foolish Lord of Misrule had not taken it on himself to order a re-enactment of the hide-and-seek episode in the original ghost story. The nobles have no choice but to obey. But they did not have to enter into the spirit of the game, as the two high-born ladies did

We know, of course, that there will be no tragic outcome. Anne would live to become queen, and Nan Lovell would survive her husband. There will still be some cold chills running up and down our spines before the end is reached.—M.S.

J.P. Reedman has written many stories with a Medieval setting, many of which have been reviewed in these pages. Here are a few:

The Medieval Babes Series:

*My Fair Lady*—re: Eleanor of Provence

*The Captive Princess*—Eleanor of Brittany, captive of King John, sister of Arthur

*Mistress of the Maze*—Rosamund Clifford.

*The White Rose Rent*—Richard III's illegitimate daughter

*The Princess Nun*—Mary, daughter of Edward I, “the nun who liked fun.”

*My Father, My Enemy*—Julienne, someone’s love-child.

Richard III and Wars of the Roses series:

*I, Richard Plantagenet I: Tante Le Deseree*

*I, Richard Plantagenet II: Loyualtie Me Lie*

*A Man Who Would be King*—about Buckingham

*Sacred King*—Richard in the afterlife

*White Roses, Golden Sunnes*—short stories

*Secret Marriages*—Edward IV’s of course

*Blood of Roses*—Mortimer’s Cross and Towton

*Ring of White Roses*—short stories

*Avous Me Lie*—childhood and youth of Richard III, soon to be published

Robin Hood series:

*The Hood Game: Rise of the Greenwood King*

*The Hood Game: Shadow of the Brazen Head*

Stonehenge:

*The Stonehenge Saga*—“a sort of prehistoric Game of Stones.” Was that a typo for *Game of Thrones*, or was it deliberate?

Others:

*My Name is not Midnight*—fantasy about an alternate world Canada

*A Dance Through Time*—time travel

*The Irish Immigrant Girl*—“based on a true story”

*Endelienta, Kinswoman of King Arthur*—“story of the mysterious Cornish Saint and her magical White Cow”

**RICHARD III: BLACKGUARD HALL, Book One**—P.A. Kidd, New Generation Publishing, 2015

P.A. (Penelope) Kidd writes of eleven-year-old, mixed-race Hansy Igondi, the boy next door, Guy, and the dog Oscar, and their adventures in Yorkshire of today and 500 years ago. You can tell by looking at the cover that this is a children’s book, aimed at those of the approximate ages of 9-11. The story and the illustrations are rather reminiscent of the stories of Edward Eager, especially *Knight’s Castle*. I read these as a teen-ager, if not exactly a child, and my children and grandchildren (and now greats) read them. In turn, Eager’s novels are reminiscent of E. Nesbit’s children’s stories, which my parents may have read in the early 20th century. As in these previous series, the illustrations (by Berne Williams) add to the charm of the book.

The children, and dog, of this story, try to chase a rainbow down to its end (hence the reference to Roy G. Biv on the title page) to search for the pot of gold. What they find instead is a kidnapper, a black-hearted blackguard, and his equally evil henchmen. When they are thrown into a dungeon, they discover another abductee, who tells them that his name is ‘Mortimer.’ We can tell from the illustrations who he is supposed to be, though. ‘Mortimer’ gives us—and Hansy and Guy—a clue when he tells us that his father did ‘give battle in vain.’ Later, they rise in the world, by six stories, to a tower room. How they fight their way to freedom is the balance of the story.

The modern kids can accept that Mortimer is actually Richard of Gloucester, but Richard finds it difficult to believe in the idea of time travel and scientific inventions, such as timepieces. This may be a bit doubtful. Wrist watches might be a bridge almost too far, but Richard’s contemporaries surely understood the principle of mechanical clocks. A small parish church might not have a belfry clock, but there must have been one in York Minster. Although he may not really understand, he does make common cause with Hansy and Guy. In fact, he seems to be a little sweet on Hansy, and vice-versa. The children also meet a mysterious ‘old hag’ who will turn up, in another guise, in later times.

At first, it may seem that Hansy is in the story mainly to fill the role of damsel in distress, and she does her share of screaming, but only her share. The boys do some too. In the end, however, she does save the life of her male companions. The modern children do get back, with the dog, to their own times, but the fact that this is named as Book One indicates that this is not the end of the story. Surely the young Augustinian friar, William of Berwyck,

who befriends Richard and the others, will turn up in Book Two. Maybe Hansy and Guy, as well. After all, the villains have not been completely wiped out either. Who knows?

My chief criticism of the book is the punctuation. Please, commas and apostrophes don't bite, and even semi-colons are not poison. Do not be afraid to use them. Better yet, get a good—or even indifferent—style book, and follow it consistently. If the reader can overlook that, and has enjoyed Eager and Nesbit, this is worth a try.—M.S.

#### **RING OF WHITE ROSES**—J.P. Reedman. Herne's Cave. 2019

This is a pair of short stories, one short, one long. The first and longer one is titled *Port in a Storm: A Ricardian Timeslip Story*, and is just what that title suggests. Arianne is stranded in a small Dorset village by the breakdown of her car. As she is exploring the town, a fog comes in, and things grow eerily quiet. She stumbles into a Masonic Hall that isn't, or rather wasn't, and thinks she has happened on a troupe of re-enactors. Gradually, she realizes that this is not the case. She also realizes she has some 'splainin' to do. Why is she going about in (not exactly) men's attire? Is she a witch, or—more to the point—a spy? Richard takes her at face value, or actually more than face value. He regards her as a possibly heavenly messenger, his Angel of Hope Arianne, not particularly religious, is rather embarrassed by this, but she does promise to spread the word about his innocence, which he has proved to her satisfaction, and his good intent.

A small point: Arianne notes that the 'reenactors' have banners with the old arms of England, not including the harp of Wales and the Lion of Scotland. I was under the impression that the harp was for Ireland and the dragon for Wales, which was regarded as part of the realm of England in Richard's time.

The second story was part of one of Ms. Reedman's novels which was edited out, but will not go to waste. It concerns *The Legend of Anne Hopper*. When the Duke of Gloucester gropes the limbs of a young woman in his Edenborough quarters, his motives are clearly defensive. He is looking for weapons, and finds one. Discovering she has been hired by Bell-the-Cat Douglas, he puts the fear of God—or of the English army—into her, then recruits her as a double agent. The ring of the legend seals the bargain. Richard gets more than he bargained for, as she later turns up in England, claiming she is carrying Richard's child. As she is married and safely retired from espionage, he wisely decides to let matters be.—M.S.

#### **DARK QUEEN WAITING: A Margaret Beaufort Tudor Mystery**—Paul Doherty, Severn House Publishing 2019

King Edward is now king. The Tudor presence is very real and an effort is being made to save them. So many are hoping that Tudor followers will be around to support the inevitable court-in-hiding. Edward is determined that none of them will live, and methodically goes about eliminating them. The Countess, however, is alive and acting on behalf of the family.

Her husband, the Duke [Earl, actually] of Stafford, is ill, but the power behind the Yorkist regime. Her group is called the Red Dragon Battle Group, and the campaign plans they have set down on paper is called the Dragon Cipher. This paper holds all that was in power and weapons. But the plan is complete, and the list of those who are part of it includes the Earl of Pembroke, Jasper, Henry, Conway, Vavasour, Ziegler, and others. They will all die

For the men who are to find them, such as Master Bray, are astute and adept in their mission. They are knowledgeable about those who are hiding and those who are hiding them, be they loyal Englishmen, or foreigners who run ships like *The Sea Hawk Galacia*, and *The Gryphon*.

There is an interesting segment within the text. The blame for the kidnapping of Anne Neville is placed elsewhere. Clarence swears he knows nothing of it, but the reader knows different. Even when she is found the story still sticks.

The full story is given play by Pembroke before he dies. It is full of violence on every page; almost too much, yet we *must* believe! "Good King Richard" is absent in this novel. He approves of all that happens. But those were times of violence, and the Countess' plans are very dark and very real.—V.C.

(Is this an Alternate Universe story? M.S.)

**THE KING'S MAN: BOOK 2 OF THE ORDER OF THE WHITE BOAR**, Alex Marchant, Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2018

The second book of this series plots the journey of Matthew Wansford, who serves Duke Richard of Gloucester as page, and is the close friend of his son Edward. The two boys and their friends Alys, Roger and Elen, have formed their own group—The Order of the White Boar—a secret society, which they will honor to the demise of the king.

Matthew's enemy is Hugh Soulsby, a boy who at first sneers and criticizes Richard at every opportunity. Because of his fights with Matthew, he loses his place as page and singer at Richard's court. Matthew, who has never lost sight of his first loyalty to the Duke, goes on to communicate with his friends, and it is clear that Edward values his friendship. The sadness Matthew feels on learning of the deaths of Edward and the Queen is shared by the reader.

He remains close to King Richard and actually takes part in the Battle of Bosworth, though not in battle. The book follows the king through his entire history, and also introduces us to the King's son, Ed and Richard, suggesting that it was his friend, Master Ashley, who sheltered them for the King. It is this message, and the ending, that is different from what we know. The Princes in the Tower are not dead; King Richard has sheltered them all those years. It is Matthew who will guide them to Flanders at the end of the story, after the King's death. Is this true? You must decide. History has said they died, but there is no proof.

The story is about loyalty and true friendship, and honors the memory of Richard's life and death. It is highly recommended!—V.C.

**A MAN WHO WOULD BE KING: The Duke of Buckingham and Richard III**, J.P. Reedman, Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2017,

Dissatisfaction reigned in Henry Stafford's heart, entranced by the glitter, "the glamor of Edward the Confessor's holy Crown." He grew up caught in the war of the cousins, Lancasters v Yorkists. His father died from wounds suffered in these battles. His earliest memories are of the Roo, the place where his father spent his last days, a room reeking with sickness, bad odors, and death. A vain and pompous child, Henry insisted that he be treated as a Duke, which only earned him laughter and derision. Rage, rage, rage filled his days. After a while he was sent to Exeter, to the home of King Edward's sister Anne, for training as a page, in part because of his rude behavior toward everyone who did not treat him royalty. There he learned to perform with some measure of decorum, but he still always dreamed of a crown.

Henry Stafford married Catherine, sister of the Queen, and he is faithful to her as long as he has several children. He is present at Clarence's betrayal, trial and death—all of which fills him with greater scorn for King Ned. He cannot fully understand it, yet wonders about it. Later, after Edward dies, he does everything within his power to get closer to Richard.

Buckingham is obsessed with getting more power. Richard lavishes powerful roles on Henry, indeed making him the second most powerful man in the kingdom. He plots to kill the Princes and carries it out; they are cruelly buried alive in one of Henry's broken-down castles. These scenes are difficult to read. He does not tell Richard of, but puts him off with clever conversation. After this, he loses it and begins planning a rebelling, believing he should be ruling England. He is caught, tried, and declared guilty.

Buckingham spent his whole life plotting and planning. I am not sure whether to feel sad or otherwise at such a wasted life. His wife was also a planner and schemer, no less than he was. He had so much, yet wasted more, more, and that was his undoing. Although it is fiction, this works remarkably as a biography. It is worth the read to get to know—as much as we can—the truth about the Duke of Buckingham.—V.C.

## Contents

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[research\\_officer@r3.org](mailto:research_officer@r3.org)

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER: **Wayne Ingalls**

[public\\_relations\\_officer@r3.org](mailto:public_relations_officer@r3.org)

SALES OFFICER: **Bob Pfile**

[sales@r3.org](mailto:sales@r3.org)

WEB CONTENT MANAGER: Open

[webcontentmanager@r3.org](mailto:webcontentmanager@r3.org)

WEBMASTER: **Lisa Holt-Jones**

[webmaster@r3.org](mailto:webmaster@r3.org)

### REGISTER STAFF

EDITOR: **Joan Szechtman**

[info@r3.org](mailto:info@r3.org)

ASSISTANT EDITOR: **Diana Rubino**

[assistant\\_editor@r3.org](mailto:assistant_editor@r3.org)

COPY EDITOR: **Ruth Roberts**

[copy\\_editor@r3.org](mailto:copy_editor@r3.org)

RICARDIAN READING EDITORS:

**Myrna Smith & Viviane Crystal**

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### CHAPTER CONTACTS \*

FLORIDA: **William Gouveia**

[wgouveia@cfl.rr.com](mailto:wgouveia@cfl.rr.com)

ILLINOIS: **Janice Weiner**

[jlweiner@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jlweiner@sbcglobal.net)

MICHIGAN AREA: **Larry Irwin**

[fkatycdc@yahoo.com](mailto:fkatycdc@yahoo.com)

NORTHWEST: **Jim Mitchell**

[ayorkist@yahoo.com](mailto:ayorkist@yahoo.com)

NEW YORK-METRO AREA: **Maria Elena Torres**

[ejbronte@gmail.com](mailto:ejbronte@gmail.com)

TIDEWATER (VA): **Bob Pfile**

[rpfile43@gmail.com](mailto:rpfile43@gmail.com)

ARIZONA: **Marion Low**

[dickon3@cox.net](mailto:dickon3@cox.net)

ROCKY MOUNTAIN (CO): **Dawn Shafer**

[dawn\\_alicia\\_shafer@yahoo.com](mailto:dawn_alicia_shafer@yahoo.com)

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