

# RICARDIAN CHRONICLE



Vol. 7 No. 2

Dec., 2021

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

## Unfurling Our New Website

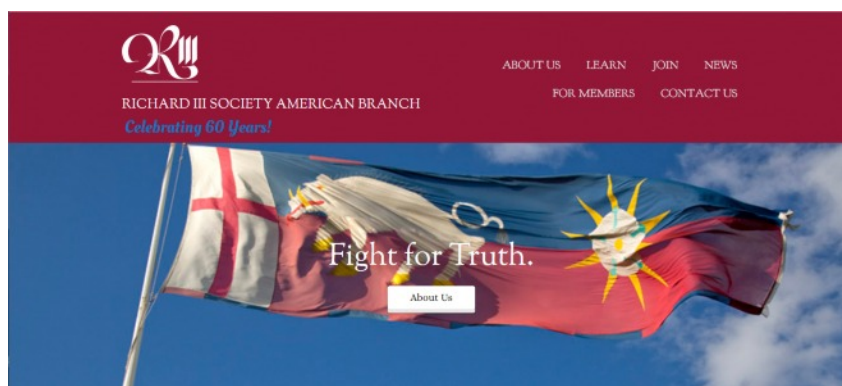
Cheryl Greer

We are excited to announce that a new website for the American Branch will be unveiled in the coming months. Earlier this year, the Board engaged former Membership Chair Cheryl Greer to begin construction of a new site. The planning and design process is supported by a Website Working Group composed of Susan Troxell, Wayne Ingalls, Joan Szechtman, and Colleen Goos.

The new site will be a slimmed-down, but still informative, resource for members and casual browsers alike. It will reflect current web design trends, be easier to navigate, and more importantly, be functional on mobile and tablet devices as well as desktop computers. Keeping up with the latest Branch news and announcements will be easier too, as our new website will feature a News section right on the main page, where we also hope to publish recurring features like Ricardian media updates and reviews.

As always, the website will serve as a repository for the Branch's many publications. The final phase of the new site's development will see the website team uploading our archived Registers, Bylaws, Board meeting minutes, and other documents unique to the American Branch into an online library that will be searchable and (we hope) allow you to find information more easily.

Note: visitors to our new website will be greeted with the banner shown below.



# CONTENTS

<b>FROM THE CHAIR</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>WELCOME NEW MEMBERS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>RICARDIAN ENCOUNTERS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>THE MISSING PRINCES IN AMERICA PROJECT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>RICHARD III IN THE MEDIA</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>RICARDIAN REVIEW</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CARSON'S TRANSLATION OF MANCINI</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>EX LIBRIS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>COLLECTING SHARON KAY PENMAN'S LEGACY</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>FROM THE EDITOR</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>BOARD, STAFF, AND CHAPTER CONTACTS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL DUES</b>	<b>26</b>

## 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)



GREETINGS RICARDIANS! I recently became Interim Chair of the American Branch, and as such, I want to keep you informed of all the things that are happening in our society. I hope to give you regular updates like this in our *Ricardian Chronicle*.

It was WONDERFUL to see so many American Branch members attend the Richard III Society-UK's Annual General Membership meeting October 2 (the king's birthday) via Zoom. Those who could attend in person met York. According to my unofficial memory, it may have been the largest contingent of Yanks who have ever participated in their AGM. I truly believe that the Ricardian community is a global one, hopefully one that modern technology will help strengthen, and it is important that overseas members feel that they can participate in it. I hope you enjoyed the talk about the Middleham Jewel and the presentations given by Matt Lewis, chair of the UK Society, as well as other officers such as Iain Farrell, the new UK education officer. Please look for a complete report on the AGM in your December *Ricardian Bulletin*, which will describe the many exciting projects that are planned and are underway.

In terms of what the American Branch is doing right now, I am thrilled to report that NINE NEW MEMBERS joined our Branch since the UK AGM, to whom I would like to extend a very warm welcome! New members should expect to receive the *Ricardian Bulletin* every March, June, September, and December; *The Ricardian* academic journal every June; and the American Branch *Ricardian Register* journal every March and September. Our membership chair, Wayne Ingalls, stands ready to trouble-shoot any issues in receiving them, so please make sure you let him know if that happens. You are also able to sign up for the Zoom lecture series that have been a tremendous success, and it is advisable that you do not delay RSVP'ing your spot as they do fill up very quickly.

Our Executive Board is now overseeing the new American Branch website being designed by Cheryl Greer, and I hope you will be very pleased with the final product which will streamline the content, make it more visually appealing, provide membership support, and offer helpful research tools. This work has been assisted by a new Branch member, Colleen Goos, who holds an advanced degree in library science; she has been invaluable in supporting Cheryl with re-organizing our extensive on-line resource library. Our huge library of historical fiction books has now been fully catalogued by librarian Pauline Calkin, and we invite all members to take a look at the list and enjoy the panoply of literature held there. Looking for an entertaining book to carry you through the Winter? Ask Pauline for some recommendations!

The Executive Board is also undertaking a full review of the American Branch Bylaws, which are in need of updating in the wake of a global pandemic, the formation of the new UK CLG, and in the ordinary course of evolving best practices. The Revised Bylaws will be distributed to all members in advance of their vote at our next General Membership Meeting in the Autumn of 2022 (date and location TBA).

Speaking of the GMM, the Executive Board has tentatively decided that we will try to do a "hybrid" conference, which offers both an in-person meeting along with the ability to participate by Zoom for those who still don't feel safe traveling. We're looking for a local chapter to host the in-person side of things, so if your local chapter is interested, please do let me know!

Some of you have probably heard about the new feature film called *The Lost King* that's now in production which dramatizes Philippa Langley's search for and discovery of the remains of Richard III. It is being directed by Stephen Frears, who directed *The Queen* and many other award-winning films, and stars Oscar-nominee Sally Hawkins in the role of Philippa, and Steve Coogan of *The Trip* movie series playing her husband. Here's a neat article in The Guardian ([theguardian.com/film/2021/nov/12/inside-the-world-of-foley-artists-watermelons-are-brilliant-for-the-sound-of-brains-hitting-the-floor](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2021/nov/12/inside-the-world-of-foley-artists-watermelons-are-brilliant-for-the-sound-of-brains-hitting-the-floor)) describing the Foley artists who are creating the sound effects for the movie, and no – they aren't using coconut shells for the sound of horses' hooves!

Finally, let me wish all of you Happy Holidays. I hope you are able to spend time appreciating the seasonal changes in our landscapes, stave off the cooler temperatures with a “warm cuppa”, and gather with your loved ones safely and happily. For your reading pleasure, be sure to take a look at how Richard III celebrated his Christmas in 1483-84, in this article from the Society’s research blog:

<https://riiresearch.blogspot.com/2021/01/richard-iiis-lavish-christmas.html>



From *The Lancelot romance*, France, 15th century. In the public domain. Wikimedia Commons.

~Contents~

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Since December 1, 2020, the American Branch of the Richard III Society grew by 57 members, representing 28 states. Some members have rejoined and some are new to the society.

AK: Lisl Zlitni

AZ: Alyssa Erin Morales, Laura Catanese, Marylouise Cox

CA: Jane L. Whiting, Janet L O'Donnell, Kathryn Colvin, Lawrence S Wright

CO: Adam Moore

CT: June-Ann T Greeley, Edwin Farrington

FL: Candy L Thames, Edith S Rosen, James V Ebbs, Joseph S White, Marta C Christjansen

GA: Peter E Campos

IL: Jane A. Munsie

IN: Ellie E Neff

KS: Gabi Raney

KY: Cynthia M Klopp

LA: Blaine Butaud

MA: Kate K. Lee-DuBon, Linda O. Blood

MD: Anita M. Wills

ME: Barry K Mills, Bryan A Russell

MI: Janna Kern, G. J. Larouche

MN: Sharon K. Anderson

MS: Dawn Garza

NC: Ashia Terrell

NJ: Roslyn R Brown, Thomas Westfield

NM: Susan McCosker, Ph.D

NY: Felix W Klempka, Gerald C Post, Hoffer Kaback, Matthew Gregory Pecorino

OH: Jay Jon Leonhart, Joanne Hornak, Robert E. Rich

PA: Jessica Stefanow, Kathleen M Budacki, Margaret Holland, Rachel June Clark

SC: Lark Williams

TX: Dawne A Meijer, John L Parramore

VA: CB Wilson, Elizabeth Hellman, Elizabeth Riedel Bateman, Richard T Willing

WA: April Joann Goldsmith, Colleen R Goos, James P Green, Jr., Lori F Popejoy



## RICARDIAN ENCOUNTERS

### My Bosworth Experience

Diana Rubino, Assistant Editor  
assistant\_editor@r3.org

I enjoyed a ‘Ricardian Pilgrims’ article in our Ricardian Register several years ago, and decided to share my Bosworth experience in a letter to the Register, which I will copy here. I felt better knowing I’m not the only one who cried there.

My first visit to Bosworth was with the Ricardian group on the anniversary of the battle, 1992. The mass at Sutton Cheney church where we laid a wreath and sang the ‘Loyalty’ hymn was very moving. The tea under the tent with my fellow Ricardians was delightful and comforting, but for a few days afterwards, the memory of my pilgrimage to the field lingered.

I’d just started writing a novel with Richard as a central character, and read Kendall’s stark description of his last moments, but I hadn’t yet written about his death. So, strange as this sounds, he was still alive to me up till then, with visits to York, Middleham, Warwick Castle, all his favorite places. But standing on the spot where he’d fallen smacked me with finality—this really was once a living, breathing man who’d lost his kingdom and his life to an undeserving foreigner.

As I slogged through the mud on that chilly rainy day, the gloom of my surroundings contributed to my increasing sadness. Walking the same ground where he’d charged with his army and taken his last breath gave me a strong link to him, because I felt a charge of energy in the air and coming out of the earth. I just knew that some spirits were still lurking, one of whom might’ve been Richard, but I doubt he’d linger there.

I’m convinced that Bosworth isn’t an empty field—it’s still very much alive, and I’m very glad to hear others felt the same way!

My second pilgrimage to the field in 1999 was at dusk, and I was disappointed that Sutton Cheney church was locked. Unfortunately, I had no way of finding out who held the key.

As an aside, I thought the bumper sticker I saw at the parking lot in Stow-on-the-Wold, “So Few Richards, So Many Dicks,” was clever. Only a Ricardian could recognize that as an obscure reference to Taffy Harry. I’d like to see some for sale in York Minster’s gift shop!

If you have a Bosworth experience to share, please send it to me and I’ll have it published in a future newsletter.

~Contents~



## THE MISSING PRINCES IN AMERICA PROJECT

Sally Keil



September 2021

Dear Team Members,

Pretty quiet month; we turned up more (and more!) Books of Hours and religious texts but nothing that might be a clue to the whereabouts of Edward and Richard. We continue on undaunted however, and note that as of the end of September 2021 **we have researched 75%** of the institutions in the US and Canada that hold items in their collections that pre-date 1600. About 122 more institutions to go!!!

I am re-printing Philippa's email to me of last month, with her request for some help. I haven't heard back from anyone: are we able to provide our counterparts over in England with any genealogical assistance? I have no particular expertise in that area and, other than simply going to [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) (which anyone can do), I have no help to offer. Does anyone?

"Dear Sally

**TMPP - Richard Percy (Peirse) (name change to Pearce, Pierce) emigrated to USA**

Please can you help with the above query. Is one of your team in the US a genealogist, or might you know one possibly? If not, no worries and just let me know as per ... all good.

This Percy / Peirse family is a key line of investigation for the project. There seems to be some confusion over this Richard (de Percy) (c.1500-1553) and his descendants but it seems very likely that his son or grandson (also Richard, c.1639) may have emigrated to the US and begun the famous Pierce line in America (please see link below).

Interestingly this might be the same family of Peter Peirse, the standard bearer for King Richard at Bosworth (or one of the king's standard bearers ...). [wikitree.com/wiki/Percy-425](https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Percy-425)

Look forward to hearing from you as ever, and with all fingers crossed. Current genealogical info online for this Richard Percy seems to be all over the place, sigh ..."

Philippa

Is there any one on our Missing Princes Project in America Team in a position to help? Replies appreciated!!

**Date: September 2021**

**Institutions contacted this month: 17**

**Total # institutions contacted to date: 368      Project Completion: 75%**

**'Hits' this month with description:**

No new 'hits' this month.

**Status of previous 'hits':**

**Falconer Statue in the Denver Art Museum.** No new news.

**Henry VII Account Book of 1500:**

Has been reassigned to Compton Reeves.

**Diplomatic documents at Stanford U:**

Are in the hands of team member Justin Smith for review.

**1484 Deed of Sale in Pluckley, Personally Authored by Richard III**

Suzanne Sage is following this thread. Susan Troxell has highly recommended PW Hammond's recent book, *The Children of Richard III*, for Suzanne's research on any possible "Richard of Eastwell" connection.

October 2021

Dear Team Members,

Very busy month: we conducted 16 searches and, while we didn't turn up any clues, we found some fun stuff.

First, I have to confess what would have been an embarrassing error on my part: I thought I might have turned up a clue!! I got all excited. I was searching a web site using their 'advanced search' option. I was searching 'manuscripts' and used the term 'bastard' with a date range of 1483-1509. I got a great hit: the awarding of a coat

of arms to Hugh Vaughn by H7 in 1492. “What does this have to do with ‘bastard’?” I said to myself, quickly spinning conspiracy theories. Perhaps Hugh was awarded his arms as a ‘thank you’ for getting rid of the bastard princes?!? Hugh had built close ties with H7 while he was in exile in Brittany; Hugh fought at Bosworth; Hugh’s father-in-law had influence with H7; Hugh was named forester of Kidwelly following Bosworth. Kidwelly has a crenellated castle and is deep into Wales, near the coast. About 100 miles from Ludlow. Maybe a good place to dispatch two kids...? Then I read down through the entire footnote and saw the source of my ‘red herring’: there is a font called ‘*bastarda*’. Darn!

In her searching, team member Linda McLatchie saw that H7 didn’t crown his queen until November 25, 1487. Linda posed an interesting question: why did Henry wait? She surmised it might have had something to do with the Battle of Stoke which took place 5 months earlier. I thought it might be because first born son Arthur had survived birth and immediate infancy. Team: any other theories you’d like to share?

Team member Bobbie Franks found a neat site everyone might want to peruse just for the fun of it. She writes

Hi Sally,

Went to the Western Michigan Special Collections and Rare Books site [libguides.wmich.edu/speccoll](http://libguides.wmich.edu/speccoll) and this site is by far the most amazing and easiest to navigate that I have come across so far. Totally cool! Just click on “Medieval and Early Modern Collections”, then “Digitized Medieval Collections” and ta-da! Everything is pictured with the description of what it is (manuscripts, books, leaves) the title, the year (or approximation) and country of origin. There are 32 items that fall into our time frame, 31 of them religious from Germany, Spain, Italy, France and Greece. Then there is a receipt for the final payment of a settlement of the Late King Louis XI of what appears to be for the benefit of ancient family feudal lords in the Burgundy region. My medieval French is a little rusty but the site did offer a partial translation.

Let’s all head off to Western Michigan’s Special Collections for a fun afternoon!

Team member Julie Stafford turned up the following web sites that **sell** medieval manuscripts, art, jewelry, etc. What fun to look at things you could actually own!! (Presuming, of course, money was no object.)

[textmanuscripts.com](http://textmanuscripts.com)

[lesenluminures.com](http://lesenluminures.com)

Finally, on a very sad note, team member Jim Minor writes:

I am sad to report that my wife, Darla, my wife of 49 years and 10 months, died of COVID on Thursday, Oct. 14, 2021. It is going to take me a while but I will be back with your search if my life settles down again.

Jim,

I know that I speak for the entire team here in America as well as the Missing Princes team in the UK in expressing our sorrow and heartfelt condolences to you and your family at this most difficult time. Please know that our thoughts are with you.

Sally

**Date: October 2021**

**Institutions contacted this month: 16**

**Total # institutions contacted to date: 384 Project Completion: 79%**

**‘Hits’ this month with description:**

No new ‘hits’ this month.

**Status of previous ‘hits’:**

**Falconer Statue in the Denver Art Museum.** Julie Stafford is bird-dogging this one. She writes on Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>:  
Good morning, all –

Just wanted you to know that I sent an email to Emily on October 3. No word yet. I don’t think Kris, my contact in Colorado, is going to be able to help. I did ask several months ago (my last recollection), but was only told that, at the time, the weather was preventing any travel.

Here's hoping I hear from Emily soon.

**Henry VII Account Book of 1500:**

Has been reassigned to Compton Reeves. No word yet on his progress. Compton?

**Diplomatic documents at Stanford U:**

Are in the hands of team member Justin Smith for review. No word on his progress. Justin?

**1484 Deed of Sale in Pluckley, Personally Authored by Richard III**

Suzanne Sage is following this thread. No updates this month.

November 2021

Dear Team Members,

Following the flurry of hunting results reported to me in October, November has been a pretty quiet month. I think we're all turning our eyes towards the holidays. I hope everyone had a Happy Thanksgiving, and will have a happy Hanukkah or Christmas holiday!

**Date: November 2021****Institutions contacted this month: 8**

**Total # institutions contacted to date: 392      Project Completion: 80%**

**'Hits' this month with description:**

No new 'hits' this month.

**Status of previous 'hits':**

**Falconer Statue in the Denver Art Museum.** Julie Stafford is bird-dogging this one. No new news.

**Henry VII Account Book of 1500:**

Was assigned to Compton Reeves. No word from Compton. Is there anyone on the team that might be able to take a look at and decipher a medieval book of accounts? I ordered a digital copy from Harvard U. and can email it to you.

**Diplomatic documents at Stanford U:**

Are in the hands of team member Justin Smith for review. No word from Justin. Is there anyone on the team that might be able to take a swing at reading medieval French and Italian? They are online at Stanford U. I can send the citations.

**1484 Deed of Sale in Pluckley, Personally Authored by Richard III**

Suzanne Sage is following this thread. No updates this month.

~Contents~

**RICHARD III IN THE MEDIA**

Diana Rubino, Assistant Editor

As a longtime Ricardian, I enjoy music from his era, but The Legendary Ten Seconds, led by balladeer Ian Churchward, who writes the music and lyrics, writes songs of Richard III's life. They each tell a story about different times and events in Richard's life before and during his reign, and the music will transport you right back to medieval times. The accompanying flute, as well as Ian's singing voice, instantly made me think of one of my favorite bands of all time, Jethro Tull, with flute virtuoso Ian Anderson's lively melodies and smooth voice. It's folksy, yet some of the songs have a faster tempo, as the folk-rock of Tull, and you'll find yourself tapping your foot as you listen to the livelier songs. Richard, who appreciated music and was reportedly a great dancer, would have thoroughly enjoyed these songs.

The CD covers are works of art. The CD Loyaulte Me Lie, (Richard's motto "Loyalty Binds Me"), released the year after his remains were discovered under a Leicester car park in 2012, features an image of Richard based on the facial reconstruction that shows us what Richard looked like.

If you're not a Ricardian (yet), you will learn much about Richard from these stories put to beautiful music.

I just purchased Loyaulte Me Lie from Amazon and will undoubtedly purchase more from this multi-talented group of musicians, who, incidentally, donate profits to a UK scoliosis charity.



## RICARDIAN REVIEW

Myrna Smith, Pauline Caulkin, Kathleen Jones

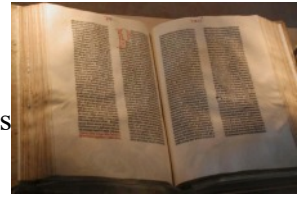


Image attribution: Raul654 -- This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license. [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gutenberg\\_Bible.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gutenberg_Bible.jpg)

### Cecily—Anne Garthwaite, Viking, 2021

It is not pleasant to watch the burning of a woman, but sixteen-year-old Cecily believes it is her duty to stand beside her husband during the execution of Joan of Arc, in order to show English strength and resolve. What is Cecily's take-away from this experience? If a woman takes up arms, she must be very sure of winning. So begins this biographical novel of Cecily Neville, which follows her and the fortunes of the House of York for 30 years.

This Cecily Neville is a political animal first and foremost. She and her husband, Richard, third Duke of York, are a well-matched pair, equal partners in love, politics and war. Their pillow talk is dominated by their political plans. They will establish two administrative centers: Ludlow in the west and Fotheringhay in the east, to manage their English Holdings. Cecily's duty is to bear children—the coins of her purse—to build the House.

Because Richard is a traitor's son, they must first establish his loyalty and competence before the crown will formally grant him the estates. This task is not an easy one when the king is weak and listens to the last voice he hears. These voices belong to a tight circle of favorites who jealously guard access to the king, and who are hostile to the Yorks. The book is very effective in portraying the escalation of tensions between the king's favorites and York.

Where Cecily is fierce and combative, Richard is conciliatory and calm, reluctant to show open defiance. He accepts the lieutenancy of Ireland philosophically telling Cecily: "Let's live as your brother does [in the north]. As your father did. Doing good work for the king, far from court, in our own lands."

Richard returns from Ireland in the wake of the Jack Cade rebellion, and attempts to show his continued loyalty, but is met with a charge of treason engineered by Edmund Beaufort and Queen Marguerite. Although he manages to persuade the king otherwise, Cecily knows this is only a temporary respite. She is the one who presses Richard to rule in the place of an unfit king. Afterwards, when Richard is held as a prisoner, Cecily's first instinct is to lead an army, along with her 10-year-old son, Edward, to gain his freedom, and "show the barren queen of bitches that I have a son." Her children's nurse, Annette, (who seems to serve as Cecily's maternal conscience) persuades her that she must not risk the lives of her children, for if Richard dies all they have built together—titles, estates, and children—will be divided among grasping men of ambition, men like Edmund Beaufort. In the end, she decides to go to the king to plead for her husband's life, and if it is too late for that, for her children's and her own. She realizes that she may be forced to denounce him. "She had never betrayed him. His cause has been hers, always. But the thought of her children, the rich coin of them, in other men's purses, is unbearable. She will save him if she can, denounce him if she must."

After Richard is released without Cecily's intervention, the next few years sees open warfare break out between Lancaster and York. As the royal army is about to descend on York's stronghold at Ludlow, it is Cecily who tells a reluctant husband and sons that they must flee. Again, it is Cecily who points out the obvious that both York's heirs must not stay with Richard. The choice of which one must be hers. "She thinks of her brother outwitting the queen's army not a month ago at Blore Heath, first to enter the streets at St. Albans, holding the North and always winning. She looks from him to Richard, and knows. She clenches her fists against her sons' leather gambesons and pushes them both away. 'Edward, go with your uncle.'" (Really—is Richard so completely witless? The obvious move is that Richard and his immediate heir, Edward, split up.)

When Richard returns from his second exile in Ireland, he seems a spent force, and in a not-too-subtle bit of symbolism, he is impotent when they make love for the first time after his return. Cecily senses the power has passed from her brother Salisbury to his swaggering son, Warwick. So too, their son Edward has become the dominant force of the House of York, and Cecily is his "Captain Mother." After the deaths of Richard, Edmund, and Salisbury at Wakefield, Cecily knows London must close its gates to Queen Marguerite's army until Edward's Army can arrive. Day after day, she cajoles and wheedles its mayor and aldermen, and they delay long enough

that Marguerite is forced to return north. Edward enters London, saluting his Captain Mother, and she gives her “sun in splendor” over to the cheers of the crowd.

Solid research underlies the story, and the prominent role the couple played in the history of the period is deftly conveyed. Talk predominates in the first part of the book, but as York mounts direct challenges to Marguerite and the king’s favorites, the action increases and the story is told with some wonderful scenes. Cecily’s role in these events may be overplayed, but perhaps not by much. Marguerite is often portrayed as Lancaster’s warrior queen; why couldn’t Cecily have played a similar role for York.

Cecily is cerebral and calculating rather than emotional. She appears to face the deaths of her husband and son with stoicism. Only when her daughter Anne tells her that she doubts that she misses her father at all does Cecily reveal the bitterness of her loss: “...the missing of Richard that will never be done.” Romance is very definitely downplayed. At age 13, Cecily decides she is content with her husband. She had studied him and seen her own nature mirrored in his. She trusted “his careful watchfulness, admired his certain actions.” Cecily despises unequal marriages and feels nothing but scorn when Jacquetta, the widow of the duke of Bedford, marries the pretty golden boy Woodville; a marriage to which the groom can only bring his good looks. At least, we are spared any mention of a certain archer. No way would this Cecily lower herself. (Well, maybe, but only if said archer agrees to killing off the entire House of Lancaster in one fell swoop.)

Despite Cecily’s unsentimental attitude, the book is filled with many scenes of tender and sometimes playful family interactions: Richard bringing Cecily the Virgin’s girdle, borrowed from Westminster Abbey, for her first confinement; Dickon falling asleep leaning against his father as he rides toward Ludlow.

Altogether, this is a satisfying novel, told with fidelity to history, presenting the reader with a believable and insightful portrait of a remarkable woman. Is there a Part Two in the offing; I hope so. I want to see Cecily having to deal with her golden son of York when he stoops to marry the daughter of the vacuous Jacquetta and her golden Woodville.—P.C.

*And from Downton Abbey we have this view of royalty: Lady Violet: The monarchy has thrived on magic and mystery. Strip that away and people may think the royal family is just like us.*

**The Queen’s Rival.**—Anne O’Brien, Harper Collins Publishing, London, Dublin, 2020

The story of the same person from a slightly different angle, and a remarkably successful attempt to revive a genre not much found over the last two centuries—the epistolary novel. Not that it is told entirely in the form of letters. Some is straight narrative, some is filtered through the viewpoint of the anonymous and usually pessimistic author of the ‘London Chronicle,’ some is prayers offered or lists jotted down by the main character (such as the names of her 13 children, living and dead, born over a 16-year span—egad!) But the most interesting parts are the ones committed to the mail, such as it was in the fifteenth century. There is the protagonist herself, indulging in some sisterly snark with her sisters Katherine and Anne. There is My Lady the King’s Mother writing tersely to her royal son, and him replying even more tersely, which leads to her blowing off steam with a heated response: “I swear you are not your father’s son.” (Of course, that is temper speaking; she didn’t mean it literally.) These are the Duchesses’ younger sons, writing dutiful but revealing thank-you notes for their Christmas presents, and rather less dutiful notes in other situations as they grow older.

The characters are well-etched, a word chosen advisedly, as etching is done with acid, isn’t it? But the three sisters can close ranks and commiserate with each other in times of tragedy and widowhood. Blood is, after all, thicker. Cecily’s relationship with her rival, Marguerite of Anjou, is acid on both sides, particularly that of Marguerite when she has the upper hand. As you can see, the story emphasizes Cecily’s own intra-family relationships, more than her interactions with her husband and children, but these are not ignored.

The writing is not at all old-fashioned, but standard modern English. The only possibly jarring note is when one of the sisters refers to ‘a horse of a different colour.’ This may or may not be an anachronism. The flip side, ‘a horse of the same colour,’ was used by Shakespeare, and may well have been in common speech before the Bard picked it up.

The author, though obviously feeling that Cecily’s youngest son was less than filial toward his aged mother, takes no side on the question that Cecily herself must have had questions about (at least), the disappearance of her grandsons. That is, well, a horse of a different color. But she does justice to a woman who must have been

formidable. Even Henry VII seems to have been afraid of her. He does not appear in this story, though Cecily lived several years into his reign.—M.S.

Comments by P. C.—These two novels paint a very different picture of Cicely Neville. In Garthwaite’s book, Cecily is an active participant in events; in O’Brien’s, she is a more passive observer who has little influence over her husband’s decisions. Indeed, with little historical background given of events prior to October 1459, she is blindsided by her husband’s decision to seek the crown. After her son Edward takes the throne, she tries—mostly ineffectively—to control her sons.

For me the jarring modern note was struck when sister Anne signs a letter to Cecily as “your *judgmental* sister.” The combination of the letters, straight narrative, and particularly the tabloid-style, bombastic England’s Chronicle did not work for me, but made for a clumsy and simplistic telling of history of the period. For example, we have to wade through pages of letters discussing whether Elizabeth Woodville is pregnant followed by a royal proclamation of the birth of Elizabeth of York, and then England’s Chronicle discussing her baptism. At times, the book was a real page turner, but not in a good sense as I flipped through the pages to skip this pedestrian recitation of history. As for Cecily’s failure to question Richard about the disappearance of her nephews, the novel ends as he is about to assume the throne—before the nephews had disappeared. When questioned, Richard does assure Cecily that all three of his nephews (Warwick included) will be gently raised.

*Lady Violet: I haven’t been in the kitchens here for at least, oh, 20 years.*

*Isobel: Did you bring your passport?*

***The Cheshire Cheese Cat: A Dickens of a Tale***—Carmen Agra Deedy & Randall Wright, illus. by Barry Moser, Peachtree Publishing, Atlanta, Ga, 2011

Being a cat person (non-practicing at the moment), I was intrigued by the title, and when I opened the book and read the first line, “He was the best of toms, he was the worst of toms,” I was hooked, and plunked down my dollar bill at the library book sale. Worth it for the charming illustrations and the typographic jokes, never mind the literary gamesmanship.

The tale is basically a pastiche, which, as you know, is (n) “an artistic work that imitates that of another work, artist, or period, or (adj) in the style of someone or some period.” It is very much as Dickens himself might have written it, with a little help from his friends and fellow diners at the Olde Cheshire Cheese Inn, Thackeray, Collins and Bulwer-Lytton, not to mention Lewis Carrol and even a bit of Poe.

The heroes of the tale are a cat with a deep, dark secret, and a mouse who also has a secret life. They intersect at the pub of the title when Skilly (the cat) takes up residence there. The pub itself has a secret hidden away in a garret, which is a sort of attic’s attic. There is, of course, a black-hearted villain, a feline Bill Sykes, and an evil plot that could bring down the Monarchy.

The only Ricardian connection, a tenuous one, is in the premises of the Tower, and of the Olde Cheshire Cheese itself. The inn was rebuilt after the Great Fire on the site of the previous inn, which was established in 1538. This, in turn, was built over the vaulted cellar of a 13th-century Carmelite monastery. So there has been imbibing going on there for a very long time. None of this matters, much to Mr. Dickens, who is undergoing a full-blown case of writer’s block. Our heroes, in the course of saving the Empire, will also take care of that.

If you ever get to London again, or for the first time, do look in on this famous pub, now owned by the Samuel Smith Brewery. (No relation that I know of.) It is in a secluded spot down a narrow alleyway, but will repay the search

“*Writers are a miserly sort, and to leave something as dear as a penny red (stamp) lying about was looked on by these artists with nothing short of horror.*” C.D. (You will note that one of the co-authors has the same first and last initials as Mr. Dickens. Coincidence?)—M.S.

***Dickon’s Diaries 3: A Yeare (and a Bitte) in the Lyff of King Richard the Third***, Joanne Larnar and Susan Lamb, Amazon, UK, 2021

I don’t think this is a pastiche; more like a take-off, or send-up, or burlesque. Not the Gypsy Rose Lee type of burlesque, but the farcical one. Which is not to say that the inhabitants of Muddleham do not find themselves at times *en dishable*. Muddleham is the Brigadoon-like village where our Dreade Lord lives with his ‘wyff Anne,’ his ‘goodly friend, Francis Lovell,’ Lovell’s questionable offspring, Lenny, boon companion to the Prince of

Wales, Billy Bott the blacksmith's son, various other villagers; and visitors from outside, such as Sir Nicolas von Poppyglow.

The villagers go about their lives as normal—well depending on your definition of normal. Ivan Norse fulfills his duties as Master of Horse. Mr. Getchergrub works as a grocery delivery manne, even during Lock-ye-downe. Love blossoms between Tilda Tittsup, the baker, and the archer, Sir Oliver Quiver. They marry and join their fortunes and business premises under the combined name of Titts-a-Quiver. Aside from the wordplay, there is plenty of old-fashioned farce, much of it at the expense of the aforesaid Dreade Lord. For instance, he goes 'over the bridge,' disguised in a flat cap and tweed jacket, to shop in modern-day Muddleham. There he encounters a garment which he takes for a slingshot, but is actually....ahem! His 'deare dames' who were escorting him (Dame Joanne, Dame Kokomo, et al) no doubt would heave a sigh of relief when he returned to base, what time they weren't swooning.

Also during the 'yeare and a bitte' a publick convenience is opened in Muddleham, with much fanfare, at the Royal command. A number of Jaffa cakes are consumed. What is a Jaffa cake, anyway? Never mind. To sum up (or summe uppe), low humour in high places, interspersed with Advice to the Lovelorn, writ down by the King himself, and many risible illustrations. There is even a Mappe of Muddleham on the endpapers. To be read and enjoyed, but not to be taken seriously for a moment.—M.S.

Enough silliness—back to more serious subjects.

### **He Who Plays the King**—Mary Hocking, Chatto & Windus, 1980

The lives of Henry Tudor and Richard from 1459 to Bosworth are interwoven in this tale told in episodic fashion, with alternating scenes: Richard's exile into Flanders with his brother George parallels Henry's flight into Wales after the battle of Mortimer's Cross, and so forth. Along the way, the reader is introduced to other characters. A wanderer, Robin Prithie, joins Henry in his exile and becomes a personal servant whose loyalty the latter has cause to suspect. Christopher Ormand plays a significant part in the story when he is recruited by Bishop Morton as an informer and is installed in the household of Anthony Woodville, becoming a tutor to the Prince of Wales.

The book approaches Henry and Richard in an even-handed manner: the characterization of each man is sophisticated and nuanced. Henry is patient, astute, careful, focused on his goal to return to England and become king. Richard has a volatile temper and is not an adaptable person who can quickly turn enemies into friends.

The inner workings of the characters are skillfully told. While riding among his men following the battle of Barnet, Richard overhears one old soldier say, "*I'll follow him; he has the look of his father,*" and realized that men would follow him as a mark of personal esteem unrelated with loyalty to the king.

Richard does have a vision for the welfare of the common people—as the Bishop of Durham sourly commented when Richard invited him to follow his example when he removed the fishgarths from rivers on his estates. Even this cynic had to concede in June 1482 that Richard had become very impressive.

*As he walked up the aisle [of York Minster], he looked over the heads of the people to some authority which lay beyond of whose judgment he appeared to have no fear. He was now balanced at the supreme moment of his life, utterly sure of himself and his purpose, equal to the tasks set for him which demanded sufficient of him to still ambition and discipline his restless energy."*

The writing is understated and at times poetic. There is the wonderful scene where Richard falls in love with Anne when he and Francis Lovell visit her, George, and Isabelle. Anne studiously avoids being drawn into conversation with Richard, but at last entices him by describing her Book of Hours. Anne is quiet but certainly not submissive. When the Princess Elizabeth arrives at her uncle's court, it comes as a surprise to her that the frail vessel that is her Aunt Anne contains so tough a spirit.

The mind, too was sharp as a pair of shears and even Richard was not safe from its snips. Once, when he talked passionately of a king needing the love of the people because he could only rule with their consent, [Anne] interrupted him to ask, "Is it marriage you are contemplating, or a love affair?" He was reduced to silence."

Despite its virtues, this novel does sometimes fall short in a couple of respects. The flow of the story slowed to a snail's pace in the last half of the book, and the Prithie and Ormond scenes became unwelcome interruptions

to the main plot. I also read far more than necessary about the inner thoughts of some characters, in particular the Duke of Buckingham. Because of the fine, insightful writing overall, however, I recommend this book.

*Isabel: Servants are human beings, too.*

*Lady Violet: Yes, but preferably only on their days off.*

**The Gods Were Sleeping**—C.E. Lawrence, John Murray, 1937

Meet Bart, a youth of uncertain parentage, beer-boy, turnspit, ostler and general drudge at the Boar's Head Tavern, near the Tower of London. His friends and fellow servants at the tavern are Nance—who to his horror proclaims her intention to marry him; and, the tapster, Legg, an old soldier and a veteran of Towton. Bart's everyday life may be dreary, but he is a dreamer and he dreams of riding as a knight in the service of King Edward IV. As the story opens, however, King Edward has just died and all London awaits the arrival of the new boy-king and his uncle, the Lord Protector. Bart's life changes forever when a soft-spoken knight stops at the tavern and takes an interest in him. The knight is Robert Brackenbury, and he takes Bart into service at the Tower, where he becomes a companion to the princes. Bart's life becomes intertwined with their fate, and his dreams and loyalties now belong to the noble Brackenbury and the Lord Protector, who will become King. During his service, Bart will also learn the secret of his own paternity.

As the author writes in the preface, the novel is based on the “conviction that neither in thought or deed was King Richard III guilty of the deaths of the young princes, his brother Edward's sons,” and the suggested solution to the mystery—one involving Bart—is as likely as any.

The writing is sentimental, and for the lack of a better term, ‘old-fashioned.’ e.g. “For—downfall of vision!—Bart (of surname unknown) was a beer-boy...etc.” But this added to the charm of Bart's story, which I found very appealing.—P.C.

**Confession of Richard Plantagenet**—Dora Greenwell McChesney, Smith Elder, 1913

This book seems to be one of the earliest novels that favorably portrays Richard III, and for that reason is noteworthy. The somber tone is set in the prologue in which Richard, fresh from the battle of Barnet, meets an anchoress who has visions of many souls who need her prayers as they seek their eternal homes. Feeling too weak to cope with so many, she prays to have just one soul that she “may know and travail thereof.” Her wish is granted when she is given Richard's soul to pray for. Although “[i]n living flesh flesh yet doth it dwell,” no soul was in sorer strait and more in need of her prayers. She tells him that he is “assigned grievous dolour and strange grace, for thou shalt bear the sins of thy House and pay ransom for guilt not thine.” Richard refuses her offer of sanctuary, believing he has a knight's duty to make justice and right prevail on earth. “Priests shall pray for the souls of my kin, while I fight their battles.”

Richard faces his first crisis of conscience after Tewksbury, when he hears his brother Edward swear to the abbot that he will pardon the Lancastrians who have sought sanctuary inside the abbey. When Edward finds out Somerset and other high-ranking lords are inside, he wants to renege on his promise. Richard will not let him break his vow, offering himself instead as the one to send these lords to their death, after trial. (By the way, Richard does kill the Prince of Wales, but it is in battle.) Later, he poisons his brother George because he thinks it would look bad for Edward to have his brother publicly executed.

Richard does a lot of soul searching throughout the novel, but especially before breaking his oath of fealty to his nephew. Eventually, he decides that he owes no loyalty to his brother Edward— not because the latter concealed his bigamy but because he once tried to ravish Anne. The novel ends rather abruptly before Bosworth, but this was apparently due to the author's death.

This is an important and interesting novel because of its age, but it is not light reading due to the flowery writing style and somber tone.

BEWARE the recent 2015 editions available as an e-book or in paperback. The digitalization from the original resulted in many errors. “March” becomes “imarch,” “he” is “lie”, and so forth. And that's not the worst problem, as whole pages of text are omitted. Apparently on occasion someone turned one too many pages. For example, we skip in mid-sentence from a scene where Richard is in the Tower with Henry VI, to his arriving at Warwick Castle to see Anne. You wouldn't know it from reading the modern editions, but Richard did not kill Henry VI. This is not the only such occurrence. The book is hard enough to follow as it is.

*If a member wants to borrow the original 1913 edition, it is available from the fiction library.*



Enough seriousness—back to the silly for a while. Or maybe not?

*Mrs. Pat more: Sympathy butters no parsnips.*

**The Astounding Broccoli Boy**—James Cotrell Boyce, HarperCollins, NY, 2015

The UK is in the midst of a pandemic, the Cat Flu (aka Killer Kittens). Three middle-school children, British but of mixed heritage, come down with an unusual variant. They turn a lovely dark green, as indicated by the title, and are confined to hospital for testing. Written in 2015, this sounds oddly prescient, no? The Runt, who is the narrator, compares their adventures to those of comic book superheroes and they begin to think they may have a similar mission and related powers. Indeed they do save Christmas and, arguably, the Empire, and are instrumental in finding a cure for the dread disease.

The kids are Types—the Bully, the Eternal Victim, the Mouthy One—but they are also real. They grow and change, and the reader, even an adult, can find himself/herself rooting for each one by turns. The adults are seen through the slightly skewed viewpoint of the children, but at least some of them, such as the Prime Minister, are sympathetic. There is a chorus line of penguins, along with a crowd of zoo escapees, and a cameo appearance by a Royal, plus a lot of fun along the way.

In his Afterword, the author points out a link to the past, as well as to what was, in '15, the future. In the reign of King Stephen, back in the 12th century, according to legend, two green children turned up in Woolpit. One of them survived to grow up and marry. Could it be that the green gene is still present, but recessive, in the British population? Anyway, that is also a Medieval connection that justifies reviewing the book here. There will be more kid-lit later. M.S.

I seem to have been reading a lot of children's books lately. Maybe an aftereffect of Covid? Or is it just that that is a way to be sure of good, straightforward writing, without too much 'kirtle-crushing,' as Larner and Lamb would term it.

**The Road Less Travelled: Alternative Tales of the Wars of the Roses**—Joanne Larner, ed., foreword by Matthew Lewis, Las Vegas, NV, 2021

On the cover of this trade paperback, the authors are credited as 'various,' and their approaches are also varied.

"The Unwritten Story" by Maria Grazia Liotta has a set-up similar to that of this volume, a contest or symposium organized by a Ricardian to depict how things could have been, or would have been, if history had taken a slightly different turn. There is a surprise entrant...

"York Ascendant" by Jennifer Bradley, opens in 1459 with a victorious Richard III, Richard Duke of York, ascending the throne after the Battle of Sandal. Richard, and even more his wife, Cecily, come to emphasize with the first Plantagenet, Henry II, for all-too-obvious reasons.

"If Only..." by Alex Marchant, is a reprint of a short story previously published in the anthology "Right Trusty and Well-Beloved" and as such has been reviewed and recommended in this column previously.

CJ Lock's "The Desmond Papers" are the papers Thomas Fitzgerald, Earl of Desmond might have written "if on 15 February 1468 his lips were not sealed for eternity." And if he had not fallen afoul of the Woodville family.

In "The Rose of Ireland" Toni Mount abandons London and the Foxleys to write of Plantagenet Ireland, with a different outcome to Bosworth and a different Queen.

"How George of Clarence Became King," by Brian Wainwright, is recounted in the voice of George himself. He apparently does not enjoy his reign for too long, due to natural causes (?) At the end, he looks forward to joining his beloved Isabelle, but just how is left undisclosed.

"April is the Cruellest Month," by J.P. Reedman, has its setting at the deathbed of Edward IV. In this story, as in Real Life, Richard has managed to capture Anthony Woodville. Only then does Elizabeth Woodville mention the name Eleanor Butler. Richard wonders who that could be. Could this be the teaser for another of Ms. Reedman's Ricardian novels?

'Of Cousins and Kings,' by Roslyn Ramona Brown, has the princes shipped off to the Duchess of Burgundy, together with their sisters. This is what many Ricardians think is what actually happened to them. But there is a twist here. The king crowned in 1483 is King Edmund.

“God’s Anointed,” Joanne Larner’s first contribution, has Edward V dying of his illness, and the Duke of Gloucester taking the oath of allegiance to young Richard of York. Although he learns that his nephews are technically bastards, he elects to remain as Protector of the Realm, for reasons that appear good and sufficient to him.

Sandra Heath Wilson’s “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” is about Buckingham, Morton, a falling-out among thieves, and a flood, as one might expect. “Most Untrue Creature Living,” by Bernadette Lyons, also features the Duke of Buckingham. Richard offers to spare him after his aborted rebellion if he leads Henry Tudor into a trap. He does this, only to discover that ‘life’ meant ‘life in the Tower.’

Another story by Joanne Larner, “King Henry VII,” opens with the coronation of that monarch, and ends four pages and thirteen years later when he is deposed by Richard IV (‘Perkin Warbeck’) He reflects “...even if I fail to regain my throne, I can say I was once King Henry VII of England.” But don’t jump to conclusions here.

Bernadette Lyons’ second contribution, “A Conspiracy Unmasked,” concerns a conspiracy among Elizabeth Woodville, Margaret Beaufort, and Dr. Lewis Caerlon, the latter being an (almost) innocent catspaw. It is his arrest that leads to the conspiracy being thwarted. Larner & Lamb’s “Just Desserts,” is about another conspiracy, to poison Richard’s son Edward, masterminded by someone the astute Ricardian can easily guess, and likewise thwarted.

“The Love Match” of Terri Beckett’s story is about Richard making such a match after the death of Queen Anne, “...whatever love means.” The woman in question is—well, that’s for you to find out.

“The Butterfly of Bosworth,” by Kit Mareska, illustrates the dangers of time travel, and of putting too much faith in modern technology.

The stories centered around the Battle of Bosworth fall into three categories: (1) Richard survives and continues to reign; (2) Henry survives, for a while at least; (3) both survive. “The Apothecaries’ Secret,” by Claire Anderson, is in Category #1. Forewarned of the invasion, Richard wins the battle because he took the necessary step of locking up Margaret Beaufort for life.

In category #2 is “The Real Story of the Battle of Stoke Field,” another one by Sandra Heath Wilson. This recounts how Henry is defeated by Richard of York (Richard IV) and how the narrating Sturdys, yeoman farmers, become land-owning gentry. There is an additional plot twist here, in that John of Lincoln has a look-alike double, not really necessary to the plot, in my opinion.

“By the Grace of God,” by the late Richard Teale, is in category #3, but with a touch of #1 as well. Henry Tudor is defeated, so badly injured that he retreats to France, unlikely to be able to mount another invasion. Richard, surviving to rule, finds the stress of being king finally wears him down. On his deathbed in 1490, he sends Francis Lovell to Portugal, to the court of Manuel de Beja and Elizabeth of York. There he picks up her two brothers with the news that Titulus Regis has been repealed.

Jennifer Wilson, the author of “The Thistle and the Rose,” has written ghost stories in her Kindred Spirits series, in which Richard III and Henry VII become frenemies in the afterlife. In this AU (alternate universe) story, the mortal Henry Tudor dies in 1509, as he did in the AU (actual universe). However, here both his sons predecease him, Arthur of illness and Henry in a jousting accident. His daughter Margaret and her husband, King James of Scotland, prepare to come to England. This may be a stand-alone, or the first chapter of a novel, but it leaves us with the prospect of a different Stuart dynasty, certainly a different James I, but perhaps not a King James Bible. This story is unique in this collection, in showing some sympathy for Henry.

In “The Birth of the Renaissance,” Joanne Larner uses an assignment at a fictional school to determine the exact date the Renaissance came to England, August 22, 1485. But why not 1483? Because the later date marks his decisive victory over Henry Tudor.

In Kathy Kingsbury’s “Richard Liveth Yet,” he does survive, but is seriously injured and in a coma. Henry visits his bedside and has the opportunity to smother him with a pillow. He does not, because he has a reluctant admiration for his rival. Later he changes his mind, sending word to the monks who are taking care of the former king, to ‘take care of’ the former king’ not suspecting that men of the cloth would disobey him or tell a lie. This is in Cat #3. Also in that category is Kingsbury’s sequel, “Baby Brother.” Richard Rutland, nee Richard Plantagenet, is dying in Yorkshire, surrounded by loving family and devoted friends. He is greeted from beyond the grave by

his brothers Edward and George, who address him thus, though he complains: “I’m 72 years old. I don’t feel much like anyone’s baby brother. ‘ This is the ghost story that Jennifer Wilson should, perhaps, have written.

“A Castle Summer,” by Joanna Kingswood Iddison, pictures the heirs of the house of York (Elizabeth Woodville’s sons and daughters, George’s son and daughter, Richard’s three children) spending the summer of 1485 in just such a safe house. All is sweetness and light, until they get word that Richard has been defeated. The older ones and their servants rush around trying to effect an escape—too late.

“Revenge” by Michelle Schlinder is also in that category. She has written both fact and fiction about Francis Lovell. Lovell, the hero of this story, survives Bosworth, along with Thomas Howard, Lord Surrey. Surrey slips Francis a dagger, which he uses to assassinate Henry Tudor, but at least Lovell dies heroically. If the reader knows that, after a few years cooling his heels in prison, Surrey became a loyal supporter of the House of Tudor, this story will require more than the usual suspension of disbelief.

Under the heading of Miscellaneous are the two final stories, Claire Anderson’s “Lady in Waiting,” about hypothetical modern-day descendants of Richard III, and Lisl Madieleinne’s “Episodes in the Life of King Richard III,” concerning the discovery of a new Shakespearan manuscript.

These are just brief glimpses of the variations on this theme. There should be something here for everyone.—M.S.

**The Word Snoop**—Ursula Dubosarsky, illustrated by Toby Riddle, Dial Books, N.Y., 2009

This is also a book for children, from about the level of advanced fourth-graders through middle school, although it can certainly be enjoyed by adolescents and adults. What does it say about me that I am reading so many kid’s books? Am I in my second or third childhood? Don’t answer that!

Be that as it may, if one is going to snoop around in language, any language, one first needs an alphabet. Our resident snoop devotes a chapter to the history of the alphabet, going back to Egypt and coming forward to modern attempts to ‘reform’ our alphabet. After inviting her readers to experiment with inventing their own alphabet, she gets down to her particular hobby-horse. Chapter Two is titled “Why is English so Strange?” Having explained this clearly and concisely, or at least as clearly and concisely as anything in our crazy language can be, she goes on to show how it can be made even stranger, with a little effort. In short, this is a safari with gun and camera (particularly camera) through our language, and all the weird and funny things that can be done with it. There are anagrams, lipograms, pangrams and palindromes, puns, rebuses, Spoonerisms and euphemisms, malapropisms and Pig Latin. She indulges in some gamesmanship of her own, setting coded messages for her readers to solve.

There is even some consideration given to what might only tangentially be considered ‘language,’ such as punctuation and emoticons (‘Smileys’). On the theory of “If you can’t fight ‘em, co-opt ‘em,” the author refers her young readers to sources like YouTube to look up things such as Victor Borge on oral punctuation, and Danny Kaye on Russian composers/authors. I intend to visit/revisit these soon. Borge’s routine on ‘verbal inflation’ also invites its share of a-eleven-tion. As he would often say, “It’s your language; I’m just doing the best I can with it.”

There are a few areas that Ms. Dubosarsky has left unsnooped. Lingua francas, or so-called ‘pidgin’ languages, for example. These may not be considered politically correct these days, but it is fitting that English has given birth to a number of them, since it is basically a pidgin language in origin, Anglo-Saxon + French + Celtic + whatever else might have been lying around unguarded.

But 246 pages can’t cover everything, and there is enough mental gymnastics here to be getting on with.—M.S.

*Lady Violet: War makes early risers of us all.*

**Meeting the Past**—Maryann Benbow, Bookvisuals, Las Vegas, NV, 2021

This is Part 2 of the Soldier series, with one more to go. At the end of the first book, the eponymous character, having regained some of his memories of his previous life as King Richard III of England, sets out to meet his destiny. In the England ruled by Henry Tudor, he must adopt a disguise, in this case as a priest. The disguise is almost blown when he meets his older sister, Elizabeth, along the way.

This novel is unique in giving Elizabeth, Duchess of Suffolk, a good deal of face time, and even here she plays a supporting role to her sister Margaret (Meg). There are too many Megs in this story. Not surprising, as Margaret was a very common name for girls in the period, but couldn’t at least one of them be called by a different nickname?

In spite of opposition from her husband, the Duke of Suffolk, (or let's say he would have opposed it if he had known) Elizabeth helps her brother make his way to Burgundy, where he will presumably mount an invasion against the Usurper. Along the way, Richard discovers his illegitimate daughter Katherine is being kept a prisoner by her Tudor-supporting husband, and rescues her. He is not able to do anything about his son, John of Gloucester. It appears these children are something of a surprise to our protagonist as well, and he also has to be told what happened to his nephews, all three of them.

In Burgundy, Richard takes on a new identity and a new name. Dykk de Koning is suggested but voted down. Robbie Percy offers; "So we drop de Koning and keep the Dykk. You don't have to be a king to be a Dykk.." Eventually Ritsert de Wetgever is settled on. The Healer, Honour, will travel to the Duchy to marry him under that name. A chapter is devoted to her preparations for the trip, packing clothes, herbs, her pet, Catkin, in a basket, and many remembrances from the villagers.

Another complication is introduced here. There are still gaps in Richard's memory. He has completely forgotten that he was engaged to Princess Joanna of Portugal. He feels obliged to go to her kingdom to straighten this out, so he can marry Honour. The engagement is cancelled by mutual consent, and Joanna reveals that there is a young boy in her wardship, who Richard has much interest in. Sister Meg, in turn, will reveal that the young Earl of Warwick, now a prisoner in the Tower, is a ringer.

At the denouement, Richard and Honour are married and renting a house, and Honour has set up in an apothecary's shop. The plot will not, of course, rest there. Richard has determined 'to avenge the deaths of his loyal followers, presumably by killing Henry Tudor, but what then? Will he retake the throne? Can't think that the Healer would be very happy with the idle life of a queen, or that Richard will be content to be a lawyer with just one client, his big sister. Will he return to being Soldier, a simple villager? Will he be protector for his nephew Richard, or his nephew Edward? All seem equally unlikely. Enough 'had-I-but-knowns' are scattered around that it might be assumed the outcome the author has in mind is none of the above.

My chief criticism of this novel is that the characters are too black-and-white. In a work of fiction, the author can make anyone he or she wishes the bad guys, but there should be some reason for their badness. Here, the only criteria is that they are not 200% pro-Yorkist, and they are that way simply because they are.

One of the most interesting chapters is one that does not contribute to the plot at all. It simply describes how the Healer goes about diagnosing and treating a heart condition without the aid of modern medical technology, such as EKG's, x-rays, even stethoscopes.

I am eagerly awaiting Book 3, which I assume is the end of the trilogy. According to actuarial tables, I may have seven or so more years left, but why leave it till the last minute? Come on, hustle a bit!—M.S.

*Lady Violet: Oh, good. Let's talk about money.*

**The History of Scotland**—Plantagenet and Fiona Somerset Fry, Barnes & Noble, US, 1995

Some British names seem to require a fanfare of trumpets to announce them, e.g. Hugh Montgomery-Massingbird, Plantagenet Somerset Fry. It is something of a disappointment to discover that the latter was not christened with that name. He was born Peter George Robin Fry, later adopting the 'Somerset' from the county of his birth and the 'Plantagenet' because of his advocacy of Richard III. This volume is credited to Peter Somerset Fry, writing in collaboration with his fourth wife, Fiona.

Fry, who died in 1996, was a renowned historian and the author of several books similar to this, each taking in centuries—or eons—of history.

*Kings and Queens of England and Scotland* is one, also *The Tower of London*, and *1000 Great Lives*. If I seem to be reviewing the author rather than his work here, my apologies, but Fry himself has set the pattern. According to the schoolboy verse, "Geography is about maps, but history is about chaps," and he prefers to write about individual chaps- and ladies—rather than the land and events that produced them. Certainly, they must have been more interesting, both to the writer and the reader. You will find the usual suspects, e.g. the Pretenders, Old and Young, Mary Queen of Scots, Cromwell, The Bruce, The Douglasses, even the Queen-Consort of James IV, Margaret Tudor. Fry is careful to list the contribution made by Scots of the Diaspora to science, education, politics, the arts, etc., leading to a wry conclusion that Scotland is a good place to be from. But negative influences, such as the 19th-century Highland Clearances, get only a few paragraphs, as an eventual outcome of The '45. (Though maybe this was not an altogether negative influence, since it resulted in the Diaspora.) The Declaration of Arbroath,

Scotland's equivalent of the Magna Carta and America's Declaration of Independence, and arguably a positive influence, rates only a very brief mention.

Which is as it should be, perhaps. While an historian should stick to facts, rather than writing fiction, or even special pleading on behalf of one faction or another, they are surely entitled to a unique viewpoint. With a few reservations, as given above, this is an excellent overview of Scottish history.—M.S.

### **How to Survive in Medieval England**—Toni Mount, Pen & Sword History, 2021

Your time machine is primed and ready to send you back to England during the time of the Plantagenets. Be advised before you go to read this fun and informative guide so you will know what to expect and how to survive once you get there. It covers the following topics: social structure, beliefs and religious ideas, clothing and appearance, food and shopping, health and medicine, work and leisure, family matters, warfare, and law and order.

What you will eat and wear and how you will live will depend on what your status is: serf or lord or something in between—and in what time period you find yourself. After the Great Pestilence in the 14th century, even a poor person might have better prospects as a tenant farmer, rather than as a serf. You might even be in the up-and-coming middle class of craftsmen or merchants.

This volume is chock-full of tips and interesting factoids. Poor people rarely eat meat, and the cheeses they have are really hard, stored in the rafters above the hearth where they are smoked. These cheeses last so long that they are sometimes bequeathed to the next generation. And forget about white bread unless you are a lord. Their Lordships claim they can't eat whole grain bread because it makes you fart, and that just shouldn't be done in polite society.

You will also discover the origins of many terms still in use today. "Loose" woman? A married woman was expected to cover her hair, hence any woman wearing her hair loose and uncovered is considered to be of easy virtue. "Strait-laced?" There are two methods of front-lacing on clothes. Criss-crossing the lacing from the bottom eyelets is the quickest way to get a gown on and off and is used by prostitutes. With the other method, one end of the lacing is passed through a top eyelet and the other is passed through the bottom eyelet and spiraled back up each pair of eyelets. Respectable women used the more time-consuming method and so are called 'strait-laced.'

Our tour guide has also interviewed several people, some prominent, some not. We hear from Eleanor de Montfort about living in a great castle and from Henry V about war (natch), also from a femme sole, a surgeon, and a coroner, among others. The interviewer also catches King Richard III on his way to Parliament, and asks him to discuss the various dispensations that were required for him to marry Anne Neville. (Richard says Anne was his second cousin once removed. She was the daughter of his first cousin, Warwick, so she was his first cousin once removed, and they were related in the 2nd and 3rd degrees. At least, that is what I remember from my days as a probate attorney.) Richard states that it was his brother Edward who wanted him to marry Anne, and who took care of the paperwork and money required to get the Papal dispensations. He assumes, but is not certain, that they received everything required, and warns the interviewer to secrecy—or else. Richard then rushes off, stating he has a realm to govern.

*We also learn about "naughty" Dr. Hobbys, the king's surgeon, who visited the Southwark brothels so often (and not in his professional capacity) that his wife was granted a divorce. Excuse me, I probably should not have said "naughty," which in medieval times meant 'being nothing, not even human,' and describes murderers and rapists—not mere lechers. And we have no reason to believe his wife was "nice," which meant "too fussy," and describes a "wife who nags and finds fault."*—P.C.

### *King in Waiting*—Alex Marchant, 2021

It has been a year since the young friends, Matthew, Roger, and Alys, who form the Order of the White Boar, joined together to carry out King Richard III's last request—to conduct his nephews, Edward and Richard, to safety in Burgundy. Since that time, their lives have taken different paths. Edward suffered a grievous wound during the escape and Matthew has stayed in Burgundy to nurse him back to health. Both Roger and Alys returned to England, Roger becoming a page to the Earl of Lincoln while Alys is residing at Gipping under the protective wing of Lady Tyrell in order to try to avoid a distasteful marriage.

When the story opens, Matthew has returned to England with two Burgundian emissaries in an attempt to persuade the Earl of Lincoln to join with Francis Lovell and other Yorkists and lead a rebellion to place Edward V on the throne of England. Matthew carries proof of Edward's identity as the son of Edward IV, and, although



Lincoln accepts the fact that Edward is the true king of England (i.e., Parliament has repealed the *Titulus Regius* making Edward the former king's legitimate son), he declines to take part in a scheme that might only benefit foreign interests who want to use England against their enemies.

This meeting with Lincoln takes place at Gipping where a brief reunion of the Order members takes place. Because it is suspected that they have been spotted by Tudor spies, Matthew accompanied by the Burgundian emissaries as well as Lord Lovell must make a hurried escape. Alys joins them, insisting that she cannot stay and risk being discovered by the retainers of her intended bridegroom who had arrived at Gipping.

Back in Burgundy, we meet Edward—proud, a bit haughty, but one who has been brought up to know how a king should conduct himself. It is he who must wrestle with the decision whether to fight for the throne. Even after traveling to Ireland to assert his claim, he continues to have doubts whether people will believe who he says he is and will follow him. Then he has an encounter with some old hag (or wise woman or witch, take your pick) who says she knew his grandfather and prophesizes that he will end up like him if he goes over the sea to claim a crown. But Tudor's disinformation campaign that the pretender is Edward of Warwick or some baker's son is too much for Lincoln who now backs him. Despite his doubts, Edward will bring the fight to Henry Tudor, and the novel ends with Edward's coronation in Dublin.

If I have to find some fault, I would opine that the opening section can be a little confusing. During his flight from Gipping, Matthew is remembering his meeting with his friends of the Order—but is it their first meeting or the second? And it stretches belief that Alys, a young noblewoman, is allowed to get away with what she does. However, I don't feel like finding fault, so I won't. Reading this book, I felt I was being reunited with some old, young friends and was able to accompany them on their new adventures.

The novel is premised upon a theory that has gained currency among some Ricardians—i.e., the Lambert Simnel affair was not actually a rebellion nominally to put Edward of Warwick on the throne, but Edward V. One may not give much credence to this theory, but it seems plausible and even seems unremarkable as the author tells it here. Both Lincoln's and especially Edward's thoughts and fears are well expressed. The members of the Order are gung-ho for battling Tudor, but knowing what we know, I almost wished that Edward decided to stay in Ireland. It is with some trepidation that I look forward to reading the next installment *Sons of York*. What will happen to members of the Order in the coming battle? And Edward, does he perish along with Lincoln or does he escape perhaps with Lovell?—P.C

Comments by M.S.: Well, I do have to find fault—it's my purpose in life—so I will. With the way Elizabeth of York is depicted here. She is 'unhappy' because she is still not queen? Didn't she become Queen Consort the moment she married? She might have liked to have the pageantry of a Coronation, and the people would surely have liked it, but that wasn't what made her Queen Consort. Though Elizabeth is offstage during this story, she gets word to our protagonists, through the servant girl Elen, that she is 'not unhappy' with Henry, who does not mistreat her, and she has a 'beautiful little son.' Yet she will welcome her brother back to England, and go along with anything he has planned.—including being made a dowerless widow, and the attainting and disinheritance of her 'darling baby boy,' and possibly being married off to someone who maybe would mistreat her. (Edward has to be reminded that Arthur is 'just a baby' and not responsible for his father's actions.) She may have been rather dim, but this passes belief.

I am going to play Devil's Advocate here. In his afterword, Marchant admits that neither Richard nor Henry may have known what happened to the boys. But Henry thought he did. Hearing rumors that an Edward had been crowned in Dublin, he knew it couldn't be the son of Edward IV, because his mother and his uncle Jasper told him that Edward Plantagenet was dead. He saw no reason to disbelieve them. He jumped to the conclusion that Edward of Warwick was intended, but he knew, and could prove, that that Edward was in the Tower. All this confusion could have been avoided if the family had been a little more original in naming their children. It may have been 'Tudor disinformation,' but it looks like at least some of the Tudors were the ones disinformed. As far as I am aware, nobody had heard of a 'Lambert Simnel,' until after the Battle of Stoke Field.

Acting on this supposition, the Duchess of Burgundy could truthfully claim that young King Edward is resident at her court. She does not add that he is sickly, perhaps suffering from TB, endemic in the royal family. A stand-in is brought on, boy of no importance, to substitute for him on occasions when he is too ill, or just to avoid stress. He looks enough like Edward to pass if not seen close-to, and can be taught upper-class manners. Don't know who was crowned in Dublin, but Edward was certainly too sickly or too valuable, or both, to be allowed to risk

himself on the battlefield, so the understudy also sits on the sidelines. Meanwhile, the real Edward V remains in Ireland, or returns to Burgundy, and eventually dies of his disease. Henry captures the impostor, who admits his imposture, and throws himself on his captor's mercy—because wouldn't Henry have executed the real Edward, if he wasn't already dead? Henry makes a show of leniency, but he has a hold over the young man ('Lambert Simnel'/John Doe) who is technically guilty of treason. Thus he retains a hold over his prisoner, and can allow him to work in the royal kitchens, and eventually to serve in other capacities. It's at least as plausible as the plot of this novel.

But I'm prepared to wait and find out how the author works out the plot-line he has chosen—in fact I am looking forward to it. Just soon, please.—M.S.

~Contents~

## CARSON'S TRANSLATION OF MANCINI

Compton Reeves

Annette Carson has produced a translation from Latin into English of Domenico Mancini's *De occupatione Regni Anglie* (Horstead: Imprimis Imprimatur, 2021). Since 1936 the readily available English translation has been that by Charles Arthur John Armstrong (1909-1994), published under the title *The Usurpation of Richard III* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936; revised 1969). It was John Armstrong who, while serving in the English diplomatic service, in 1934 found the manuscript of Mancini's work housed in the Bibliothèque municipale de Lille, and Armstrong provided a transcript of Mancini's Latin text together with an English translation. Carson has based her translation of Mancini on the Latin text Armstrong made from the Lille manuscript.

The purpose of this translation, as stated by Carson (for example, pp. 37-39), is to bring into more neutral and less judgmental language the narrative of Mancini. I agree with Matthew Lewis (*Ricardian Bulletin*, June 2021, p. 61) that Annette Carson has done excellent work in producing a fair, objective translation. Armstrong's translation was, as Carson points out in her notes, often colored by the overwhelmingly negative reputation of Richard III that prevailed in the 1930s when Armstrong carried out his work. It will be recalled that the bones of two youths that had been discovered by workmen at the Tower of London in 1674 and buried in Westminster Abbey were disinterred and examined in 1933. Speculation was rife that these were the bones of Edward IV's sons who, as Sir Thomas More had asserted (without evidence) in the sixteenth century, had been murdered by their uncle Duke Richard of Gloucester in his move to become King Richard III. Even the Latin word *occupatione* in the title, which Armstrong translated as 'usurpation', could as well be brought into English as 'taking' or 'taking possession of' or simply 'occupy'.

Domenico Mancini's *De occupatione Regni Anglie* is undeniably an important narrative source for the events in England of 1483 between the death of King Edward IV on 9 April, through the presumed succession of King Edward's older son as Edward V, to the actual accession of Edward IV's brother as King Richard III. Mancini was an Italian priest who enjoyed the patronage of Angelo Cato, archbishop of Vienne, a counselor of King Louis XI of France. It was a time of diplomatic tension between France and England when Mancini arrived in England, probably late in 1482, to gather intelligence for the French court. At the end of 1482, Louis XI renounced the Treaty of Picquigny that had followed upon Edward IV's invasion of France in 1475, and the renunciation ended the peace between France and England, unsettled European diplomacy, and terminated the substantial annual pension that Louis XI had been providing to King Edward. The French were anxious to know what the English reaction might be to the renunciation of the Picquigny treaty.

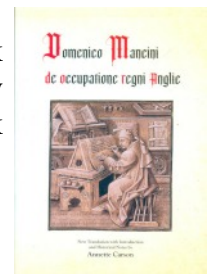
Mancini did not know the English language and was thus dependent for his information not upon his questioning of people at large, but rather upon informants such as those in England who could converse in Latin, Italian merchants, and speakers of French, presuming that Mancini was a francophone. Mancini was thus relying on hearsay evidence; he was not within the circle of English political decision-makers. Perennial questions like 'When and why did Richard decide to supplant his nephew?' find no answer in Mancini. Mancini's assumption that Richard had a long-standing plan to become king simply proves that there were conspiracy minded people in London in 1483, not that Richard had a grand scheme as opposed to his reacting to events. Carson points out that in matters like the position of Protector during a royal minority, Mancini did not understand the English legal legacy of that office and the function of its occupant, particularly as it had been defined during the unprecedented length of the minority of King Henry VI.

Dominico Mancini was telling a story that he had refined through repeated telling. He wrote at the opening of his *Occupatio* that he had repeatedly told the story of his time in England to his patron Archbishop Cato and that Cato had urged him to commit the story to writing. Mancini tells us at the end of *Occupatio* that he was recalled from England by Cato, and that he completed the writing of his account on 1 December 1483 in the city of Beaugency. It is worth considering the possibility that Mancini tailored his story to the sensibilities of his French listening audience.

How might we be best prepared to become part of Mancini's audience? Let me slip on my professor robe and suggest a study guide. The first step would be to read carefully Carson's Introduction, and giving some special thought to Carson's suggestive discussion of the influence of Mancini on the development of the Ricardian legend. The historiography of Mancini's *Occupatione* is essentially a blank page until the twentieth century. With Carson's Introduction tucked in our minds, we then progress to a reconnaissance-mission reading of Carson's translation of Mancini's text. Having gained a basic acquaintance with the text, we settle in for a truly careful reading. The extensive endnotes Carson has written are crucial to grasping the historical ramifications of Mancini's observations and his subsequent narrative of events, and to see the changes from Armstrong's translation to that of Carson. This means that at every note number in Mancini's text, turning to the back of the book to see the comments found there. The process is somewhat tedious, but very rewarding in coming to a full understanding of Mancini's story of the dramatic events of 1483.

The final chapter of Mancini's *Occupatione* is a description of London. Carson offers some suggestions for further reading on the subject. For the benefit of readers wanting to know more about fifteenth-century London, I would add three books to Carson's suggestions: Martha Carlin and Joel T. Rosenthal (eds.), *Medieval London: Collected Papers of Caroline M. Barron* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2017); Elizabeth A. New and Christian Steer (eds.), *Medieval Londoners: Essays to Mark the Eightieth Birthday of Caroline M. Barron* (London: University of London Press, 2019); and Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, *Prejudice and Promise in Fifteenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925). Kingsford's book is based on his 1923 Ford Lectures at Oxford, and one lecture is "London in the Fifteenth Century." At the back of the book is a fold-out map that allows the reader of the lecture to follow a tour around London.

The American Branch of the Richard III Society has about 15 copies of Carson's Mancini book available at our cost of \$15 (includes shipping). Member's who are interested in buying a copy please contact Wayne Ingalls at [Membership@r3.org](mailto:Membership@r3.org). (note, members may also purchase this book from the UK branch, but then it must be shipped from the UK instead.)



~Contents~

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Susan Troxell

New to the Non-Fiction Library: *Going to Church in Medieval England* by Nicholas Orme, Yale University Press, 2021

This book is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the people, the liturgy, and the material culture of English churches. Covering the millennium between St Augustine's arrival in England in 597 and the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558, Professor Orme digests an enormous amount of information and offers a general survey of exquisite clarity. After summarizing the Anglo-Saxon establishment of minsters, cathedrals, chapels, and monasteries, Orme settles his focus on the field church where a single priest resided and had the cure of souls for all Christians in his parish.

Almost everyone who lived in England during the medieval age would have had some interaction with a parish church -- whether that be at baptism, marriage, weekly religious devotion, the major liturgical cycles of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost, the festivals commemorating Biblical figures and saints, processions to bless crops, or the rite of burial for one's family, friends, and ultimately oneself. Rather than develop one over-arching theme, Orme instead divides his survey into chapters looking at the human staff of the church; the church building and its interior fabric; the congregation and how people behaved; daily, weekly, and seasonal liturgy; the six life events that required religious sacrament; and the emergence of the Reformed Church of England.

After reading this book you will know the difference between a rector, a priest, a vicar, a chaplain, a canon, and a prebend--terms that have always confused me! You will understand how a priest ordered his daily life around matins, mass, and vespers (evensong) and how he ministered to the sick and dying. You will learn how the rise of the doctrine of transubstantiation or Real Presence of Christ in the 12<sup>th</sup> century radically changed church architecture, leading to chancel screens and "squints". Every object inside the parish church had purpose and meaning and Orme tries to cover them all, even down to the heavy bronze bells gifted by wealthy patrons to the church which required a bishop to consecrate them with holy water and to say a prayer that their ringing would dispel ghosts, whirlwinds, lightning strikes, and tempests, and would induce all Christians "to hasten to the mother church to sing eternally the new song of the saints".

Medieval society was structured by social/economic class, and churches reflected this hierarchy too. Although originally restricted to the priest and other officiants, chancels (the easternmost part of the church with the high altar) gradually allowed people of high status to sit in them during mass and other events. In the side aisles, wealthy patrons spent large sums of money to memorialize their dead with elaborate chantry chapels, endowing them with funds to support the continuous prayers of chantry priests who were sadly treated as second-class officiants and often fell into poverty. Gradually, moveable seating in the nave led to fixed seating (pews) donated by rich parishioners. More than one amusing account is rendered of congregants arguing over precedence in who sat where, of ostentatious men bringing their falcons or hunting hounds to Sunday mass prompting complaints about the animals' noisy behavior, and of church fathers scolding women who dressed too extravagantly for Sunday service.

This volume provides detailed descriptions of how a mass was said, the movements of the priest and his fellow officiants, and how congregations participated (or not) in the ceremony of religious rituals such as baptism, confirmation, marriage, confession, communion, and important holy days. Orme plucks out intriguing details like the fact that in the medieval era, the wedding ring was placed on the right hand's ring finger, a tradition that was later changed by the Reformation-minded Archbishop Cranmer in the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the left hand. The liturgy of the Use of Sarum and the Use of York varied in their dictates, and Orme demonstrates through citations to primary sources that parishes often adapted and modified them to suit their own local customs. The English Reformation changed much of the medieval liturgy, but kept some of it quite intact due to its popularity and the stubbornness of custom.

In sum, this is a reference book that avoids being doctrinaire, and sticks to what can be gleaned from actual church records and historical accounts. A helpful List of Technical Terms is included along with an 11-page bibliography. A nice selection of images from contemporary medieval manuscripts illuminates the text. Researchers as well as writers of historical fiction will find this book to be incredibly useful, regardless of their level of knowledge.



Are you a member of the American Branch and want to read this book, or other books about Richard III and his time period? Our fiction and non-fiction libraries have over 1,000 volumes available to be lent to you for the modest cost of postage. Please contact our librarians at [researchlibrary@r3.org](mailto:researchlibrary@r3.org) and [fictionlibrary@r3.org](mailto:fictionlibrary@r3.org).

~Contents~

## COLLECTING SHARON KAY PENMAN’S LEGACY

Susan Troxell

I made several trips to Sharon Kay Penman’s house in Mays Landing, NJ, to collect the legacy left to the Richard III Society following her untimely death in January 2021. Sharon is well-known to Ricardians as the author of *The Sunne in Splendour* which tells the story of Richard III’s life in a positive way.

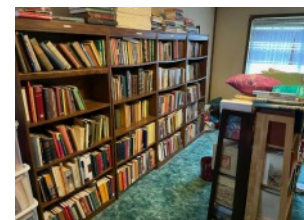
As reported in her New York Times obituary, she was also considered “a giant in the historical fiction field. “I was a longtime admirer of her writing and was hugely flattered when she published an appreciation of my work,” said Bernard Cornwell, the author of his own long list of historical best sellers, including, most recently, *War Lord*. “She was immensely generous with her encouragement and praise, a tireless supporter of other writers, and self-deprecating about her own work.”

After Sharon passed away, her surviving brother reached out to Matt Lewis, chair of the Richard III Society, Ltd. in the UK, to see if the Society was interested in accepting her personal archives related to her Plantagenet history books. The legacy consists of all her papers, research notes, journals, drafts, galley proofs, and promotional materials for *Sunne in Splendour*, *When Christ and His Saints Slept*, *Time and Chance*, *Devil’s Brood*, *Lionheart*, and *A King’s Ransom*.

Her house was a modest Cape Cod-style home in the midst of woods that exuded a pleasant leafy ambience in late Summer. I was ushered into her library—a room as big as a garage that had been set up with floor-to-ceiling shelves holding thousands of non-fiction texts and primary resources. It was immediately apparent that Sharon took historical research very seriously. In an opinion piece written for History News Network, she reflected on the necessity for historical accuracy even in fiction novels:



View of Cape Cod from street.



View of a bookshelf

In an article that I did for National Public Radio in 2011, I described the past as uncharted territory, comparing it to visiting a country where we do not speak the language and depend upon the historical novelist to act as our translator. For that relationship to work, it must be based upon trust; we need to be able to rely upon a novelist’s interpretation of that past. So, truth matters. I would never have expected that statement to become controversial, but never has that bedrock value been under such relentless assault. As writers, we owe the truth to our readers—and to history. Many people accept what they read in a book or see on-screen as gospel, and that can give novelists and screenwriters more influence than even they



realize. We need only think of *Braveheart* or *Kingdom of Heaven*, a visually striking film that transformed Balian d'Ibelin, one of the most influential noblemen in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, into an illegitimate French blacksmith.

I met Sharon's brother and his wife. They observed how widely respected Sharon was and how tirelessly she cultivated her love of history and her extensive fan base. She loved what she did. "But she was a bit of a pack-rat", her brother said with a gentle laugh, as he handed over the final container of materials to me.

The estate also donated papers and manuscripts of Sharon's Welsh Princes novels (*Here Be Dragons*, *Falls the Shadow*, *The Reckoning*) to the National Library of Wales.

The archives for the Plantagenet series will be kept by a custodian of the Richard III Society, Ltd. in the UK where they hope to digitize portions and make it available to future generations of authors and biographers.

A note of thanks is also due to Stephanie Churchill, Sharon's friend and fellow author, for initially organizing the materials and acting as liaison between the family and the Society.

~Contents~

## FROM THE EDITOR

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

I want to thank everyone who contributed to this issue of the Ricardian Chronicle and hope everyone who is reading this will consider contributing as well.

Have you experienced a Ricardian adventure? Saw a movie, played a game, heard music that fits with our theme? If so, please share your experience and review with Diana Rubino at [assistant\\_editor@r3.org](mailto:assistant_editor@r3.org). Saw a movie, played a game, heard music that fits with our theme?

Have you read a book that deals with anything Ricardian or 15th century England and English culture that you'd like to see reviewed, or that you've reviewed? Yes? Please contact our Ricardian Reading Editors (Myrna Smith, Pauline Calkin, and Kathleen Jones) at [ricardian\\_reading\\_editor@r3.org](mailto:ricardian_reading_editor@r3.org).

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### \*Chapter Notes:

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Contents

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