Ricardian Register

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King Richard III

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BOARD NEWS

From the Chair (March 2023)

Things are getting exciting at the American Branch! At the GMM, our members voted in an 8-person slate of Directors and Officers who bring decades of experience with our branch. The Board is well aware of the American Branch's long history and legacy, and we will be striving to add more accomplishments to its illustrious past.

I am also pleased to report that we closed our Fiscal Year 2022 in a good financial position. This result was obtained not only through careful financial oversight, but also by the extraordinary generosity of members who donated more than $5,000 to our branch. The dedication and passion of the American Ricardian community is evidenced by their charitable and volunteer contributions.

One of the first priorities of the incoming Board was to establish a program of Zoom talks for branch members, in addition to the program of bi-monthly online lectures already offered by the UK parent society. Dr Toby Capwell, a world-renowned armor expert, jouster, and former curator of Arms and Armor at the Wallace Collection in London, gave the first lecture on January 22 about Richard III-the Scoliotic Knight. The next talk is scheduled for March 26, and will be given by Sally Keil, who will walk us through all the incredible challenges faced by "The Looking for Richard" team in discovering the final burial place of Richard III. See our Events page, r3.org/events for further details on our upcoming talks.

Many of you are undoubtedly excited about the American release of "The Lost King" movie which dramatizes the experience of Philippa Langley in leading the search for the king's grave in Leicester. We understand that it will come to limited theaters starting March 24, so you may have to travel some distance to view it on the big screen. Amazon.co.UK is also selling DVDs of the movie, should you wish to view it on the small screen. Check your DVD player to make sure it can play discs from the UK.

There are several exciting projects on the near and far horizon, so stay tuned for future news!

Loyaulte me lie,
Susan Troxell, Chair,
Richard III Society-American Branch

Letter of Affiliation

RICHARD III SOCIETY

Patron: The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO

S Keil
Secretary
American Branch

Chair: Matt Lewis
Email: chair@richardiii.net
Website: www.richardiii.net

21 December 2022

Dear Sally,

I am writing to confirm that the American Branch has successfully attained affiliation to the Richard III Society. Thank you for taking the time to complete this process and to strengthen the bond between the American Branch and the main Society.

Affiliation is an important step in ensuring that our shared goals and aims, enshrined in the Society's Mission Statement, are easier to reach together. The partnership between the Society and the worldwide network of Branches and Groups is a key strength of the Ricardian movement. You are often the boots on the ground and the public face of the Society, for which we are incredibly grateful. In turn, the Society is well placed to offer support and to facilitate the sharing of ideas and innovations around the network.

If I can offer any support at any time, please do not hesitate to contact me. Jane Trump, as Branches and Groups Liaison Officer, is in the perfect position to assist with any issues, to offer support, and to help develop and propagate good ideas and best practice. Please feel free to reach out for any help you may need at any time.

I look forward to a bright future for the Society and the American Branch as we champion and progress our Ricardian messages.

Yours sincerely

ML

Matthew Lewis
Chair
Richard III Society

Medieval Palaeography

Dr. Heather Falvey

Although there are numerous published books and articles on all manner of aspects of the history of late fifteenth century England, there are countless original documents still to be analysed or discussed. Reading such documents requires proficiency in palaeography. I would emphasise that this article is not about the academic discipline of palaeography, which covers all aspects of the reading, dating, development and classification of handwriting in documents and manuscripts. It is about palaeography as the 'simple' skill of reading old handwriting, a skill that comes with practice. Once mastered it enables you to read documents produced in the past.

I needed to learn how to read old handwriting when researching an article that was published in *The Ricardian* in 1992.[1] I subsequently studied for various qualifications including a PhD in History at the University of Warwick on early modern social history.[2] Since then, I have published various articles and chapters in edited collections and also edited several texts for publication, ranging from fifteenth century wills, through the notebook of two early modern vicars, to eighteenth century recipes and early nineteenth century letters written between members of the family of Humphry Repton, the landscape gardener.[3]

In many old documents the handwriting is quite regular and the letters have particular shapes, although there might be several forms for each letter. There were several so-called 'hands'. Trained scribes knew how to write in particular styles; for example, 'anglicana', secretary, court or italic. However, handwriting is variable, as we know from our own experience. Some people have good writing, others produce an illegible scribble. The same person will write a quite different script on different occasions. All writers make mistakes: they misspell, they form a letter oddly because they began writing something quite different or because they were not really concentrating. And many of these problems are particularly acute in the fifteenth century just because increasing numbers of people were writing. It was no longer a skill confined to professionals who could do it well. A hasty private letter written by someone who generally employed a secretary is likely to be harder to read than the records produced by central government. Thus although it might seem counter-intuitive, earlier documents are often more legible than later ones.

1 'The More: Archbishop George Neville's palace in Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire', *The Ricardian*, vol. IX, no. 118 (September 1992), pp. 290-302.

2 'Custom, resistance and politics: local experiences of improvement in early modern England', supervised by Professor Steve Hindle (PhD in History, University of Warwick 2007)

3 *Pre-Reformation Wills from Rickmansworth Parish (1409-1539)* (Rickmansworth Historical Society, 2021); *Humphry Repton and his family: Correspondence, 1805-1816* (Norfolk Record Society, vol. LXXXIV, Norfolk, 2020); *The receipt book of Baroness Elizabeth Dimsdale, c.1800* (Hertfordshire Record Society, vol. XXVIII, Hertford, 2013); *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1439-1474: Wills from the Register 'Baldwyne', Part II: 1461-1474*, (Suffolk Records Society, vol. 53, June 2010), co-edited with Peter Northeast; *"This little commonwealth": Layston parish memorandum book, 1607-c1650 & 1704-c1747* (Hertfordshire Record Society, vol. XIX, Hertford, 2004), co-edited with Steve Hindle.

The other difficulty for the modern reader of medieval manuscripts lies in the use of abbreviations. As in any handwritten document, familiar words – which can easily be guessed – tend to be abbreviated ruthlessly. These are not usually a problem, as long as the words which the writer assumed to be obvious are still obvious to the reader. In very formulaic documents, such as legal proceedings, whole phrases can be abbreviated down to a few letters. But the most acute difficulties are likely to arise when the writer is jotting down notes for their own use. Because they only need to be enough to jog their own memory they might well be totally incomprehensible to anyone else. In medieval Latin documents the text is frequently highly abbreviated not least because they are usually legal documents that took a fairly standard format. Some of the Latin abbreviations for particular letter combinations were also used in documents in English and, interestingly, these were carried over into early printed books and pamphlets.

The use of one particular word in relation to palaeography annoys me intensely: decipher. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'to decipher' means 'to decode; to convert (what is written in cipher) into normal language'. Medieval documents were not written in cipher: the writer wrote them in their normal handwriting in a known language (whether English or Latin, or occasionally Norman French). The fact that we might not be able to read it does not make it code. Similarly when a beginner picks up a fifteenth-century manuscript in English, the first reaction is often a bewildered sense that it ought to be readable and yet isn't. It looks legible, and some words jump to the eye immediately. Others make sense with a bit of effort. But the rest remain obstinately illegible to the new reader: the writing was perfectly legible to the writer and the intended contemporary reader, but *you* don't know what it says. The shapes of the letters themselves can be very different from their modern equivalents. You will often find that a letter which seemed totally unrecognizable in one word is perfectly obvious in another just because you realize what that word must be and so read the letter instinctively. For example, capital R, can be a surprisingly difficult letter to identify, but then the name Richard crops up and all becomes clear. If you persevere, sooner or later there comes a moment when you find yourself thinking that the writing has got clearer. Of course it hasn't, it is simply that you are beginning to read more fluently and more instinctively. Genuinely illegible words in medieval documents are those obscured by an ink blot, or by dirt accumulated over the centuries.

In the Richard III Society's palaeography course, the emphasis is on private and business hands – the sorts of script to be found in government and family records – rather than the formal book hands employed in copying literary texts. Many of the surviving medieval documents are legal documents generated for or as a result of lawsuits or in relation to landholding. This being the case, their contents had to make sense both linguistically and in terms of the law. Thus when reading them and writing them out, the text that one produces should make sense. Admittedly the language was somewhat different and spelling was erratic to say the least;

nevertheless, it was basically the language that we use today, so should be comprehensible.

There is nothing inherently difficult about reading old handwriting. The reading of manuscripts is not about the application of theoretical knowledge but about exercising a skill requiring effort on the part of the learner, and much patient practice. The biggest problem is checking that what one has read is the correct reading of the letters on the page. This is where various free online courses can help. The (English) National Archives has an excellent online palaeography course 'Palaeography: reading old handwriting 1500–1800. A practical online tutorial'.[4] Although it starts at 1500, those early hands are the same as late fifteenth century hands. Similarly, the English Department of the University of Cambridge has 'English Handwriting Online 1500-1700'.[5] A beautiful book, again covering the period 1500-1800, was published in 2020: Kathryn James, *English Paleography and Manuscript Culture, 1500-1800*.[6]

Many of the people who have completed the Richard III Society's palaeography course have become involved in the Society's various wills projects. The first, transcripts of the wills in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury's probate register called 'Logge', culminated in the publication of transcripts of all 379 wills, including translations of the (numerous) Latin ones.[7] The second project was the transcription of wills in English proved in the Prerogative Court of York, again subsequently published.[8] We are now working on the Prerogative Court of Canterbury register Milles. We have finished transcribing the English wills but there are still rather a lot of Latin ones to complete. (Latin specialists are few and far between these days.)

The National Archives at Kew is the main repository for the English government's records. Most of the documents relating to or generated by Richard III are held there. You can look at some of them on the website of the Anglo-American Legal Tradition (AALT) set up by Professor Robert Palmer of the University of Houston.[9] This website has photographs of documents generated by/for various lawcourts and government departments. It also has pages on English and Latin palaeography, with documents and transcripts. The British Library also has digitised several of its manuscripts, not only medieval ones but also, for example, the St Cuthbert Gospel and works of J. S. Bach.[10] Although most medieval manuscripts written in England are held in various repositories throughout the country, some have ended up in US libraries and archives, notably in the

4 https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/palaeography/

5 https://www.english.cam.ac.uk/ceres/ehoc/index.html

6 Yale University Press, 978-0-300254-35-8; $40. https://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/9780300254358/english-paleography-and-manuscript-culture-1500-1800/

7 *The Logge Register of PCC Wills, 1479 to 1486* (2 vols), edited by Lesley Boatwright, Moira Habberjam & Peter Hammond (2008).

8 *English Wills proved in the Prerogative Court of York, 1477-1499*, edited by Heather Falvey, Lesley Boatwright and Peter Hammond (2013)

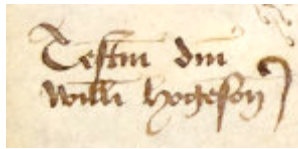
9 http://aalt.law.uh.edu/AALT.html

10 https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Default.aspx

Huntington Library (San Marino, CA) and Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University.

To close, I have provided an example of one of the Milles wills, that of Sir William Hogeson, vicar of Burpham (Sussex).[11] Below is our line-by-line transcript of this will (reference TNA, PROB11/8/208)

[*margin*] Test[amentu]m d[omi]ni Will[elm]i Hogeson

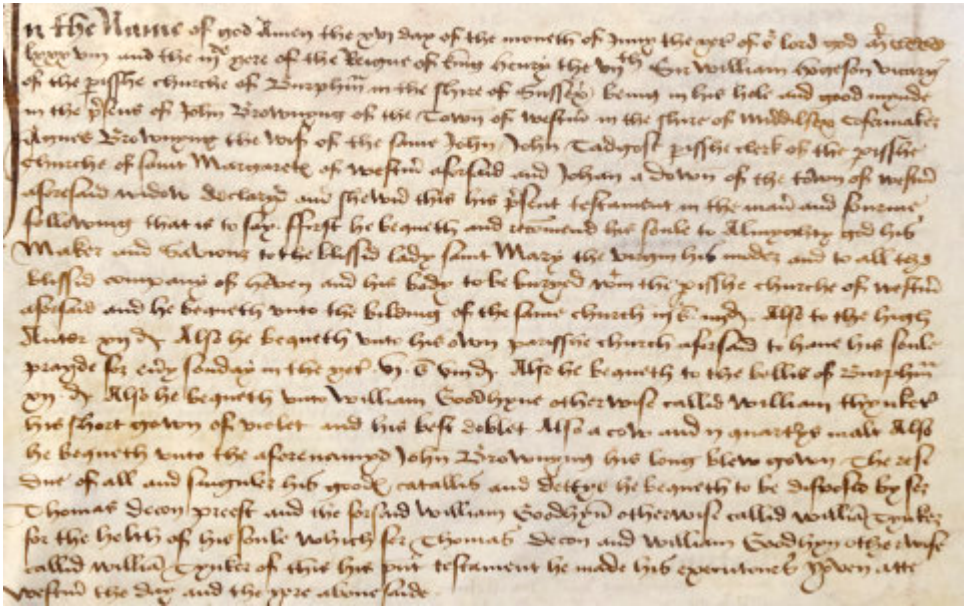


[Print is Actual size, Digital image is 33% actual size]

In the Name of god Amen the xvj day of the moneth of Juny the yer[e] of o[ur] lord god M[l] CCCC
lxxxviij and the iij[de] yere of the Reigne of King Henry the vij[th] Sir William Hogeson Vicarij
of the p[ar]isshe churche of Burpham in the shire of Sussex being in his hole and good mynde
in the p[re]sens of John Brownyng of the Town of Westm[inster] in the shire of Middilsex cofermaker
Agnes Brownyng the wif of the same John / John Tadgost p[ar]isshe clerk of the p[ar]isshe
churche of saint Margaret[es] of Westm[inster] aforsaid and Johan a [*sic*] Down of the town of Westm[inster]
aforesaid widow declaryd and shewid this his p[re]sent testament in the man[er] and fourme
following that is to say. First he bequeth and recom[m]end his soule to Almyghty god his
Maker and Saviour to the blissid lady saint Mary the virgin his moder and to all the
blissid company of Heven and his body to be buryed w[i]t[h]in the p[ar]isshe churche of Westm[inster]
aforsaid and he bequeth unto the bilding of the same church iij s iiijd Also to the High
Auter xij d Also he bequeth unto his own parisshe church aforsaid to have his soule
prayde for ev[er]y sonday in the yer[e] vj s viij d Also he bequeth to the bellis of Burpham
xij d Also he bequeth unto William Goodhyne otherwise callid William thynker[e]
his short gown of violet and his best doblet Also a cow and ij quart[er]ys malt Also
he bequeth unto the aforenamyd John Brownyng his long blew gown The resi

11 He was not an aristocrat: 'Sir' was an honorary title for a priest without a university degree.

due of all and singuler his good[es] catallis and dettys he bequeth to be disposid by ser
Thomas Decon preest and the forsaid William Goodhyn[e] otherwise callid Willia[m] Tynker
for the helth of his soule which ser Thomas Decon and William Goodhyn otherwise
callid Willia[m] Tynker of this his p[rese]nt testament he made his executours Yoven atte
Westm[inster] the day and the yere abovesaide.



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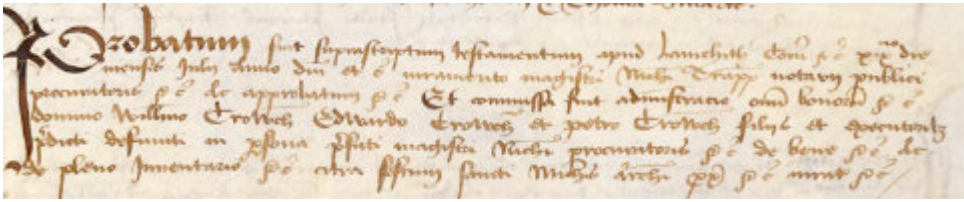
[translation of the Latin probate clause] The before written testament was proved in the presence of &c at Lambeth on the 23rd day of the month of June AD &c on the oath of Sir Thomas Decon chaplain, executor &c, and of John Brownyng and approved &c; And administration of all the goods &c was committed to the said Sir Thomas executor &c well &c And to exhibit a full inventory &c before the feast of St Peter that is called in chains next coming &c, Power reserved &c to William Goodehyne alias Tynker executor &c when he shall come &c.



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[Print is 53% of actual size, Digital image is 17% actual size.]
[Permission to publish PROB11/8/208 (Hogeson Will)--The National Archives]

Dr. Heather Falvey runs the Richard III Society's Palaeography Course, which was originally set up by Dr Rosemary Horrox. Heather is currently managing the Society's Milles Wills Project. Amongst other roles, she teaches sixteenth and seventeenth century local and social history to Continuing Education (mature) students at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

A Royal Unsolved Mystery: An Overview

Sandra Worth

Ask anyone about the Princes in the Tower, and in all likelihood, they will tell you Richard III murdered his two little nephews for the throne. That is what the Tudors would have us believe, just as they wanted history to believe that Richard was born after two years in the womb with a hump, a tail, and a set of gnashing teeth. Thanks to the recent discovery of Richard III's remains, however, we now know the truth. He suffered from scoliosis that in life would have made one shoulder appear a little higher than the other.

This slight physical defect was magnified by the Tudors for political gain in an effort to discredit the last Plantagenet king and justify a usurpation that rested on right by conquest. The same element of this Tudor playbook applies to the mystery of the Princes in the Tower.

For those unfamiliar with the general facts, I provide a brief outline here.

Richard III took the throne in 1483 following the revelation that his brother, King Edward, had committed bigamy when he secretly married Elizabeth Woodville. The king's bigamy rendered his two young sons illegitimate and the crown passed to the next in the line of succession, Richard of Gloucester. Once king, Richard sent his nephews to live in the Tower. At the time, the Tower of London was not the torture chamber it became under the Tudors, but a royal residence that boasted a delightful zoo. Londoners were accustomed to hearing the princes play in the garden and seeing them shoot arrows over the walls.[1] Then abruptly, one autumn day in October 1483, the arrows stopped flying.

The little princes were never seen again.

We do not know if Richard III murdered the princes. We do not know if a murder was even committed. We only know what the Tudors told us. Under the circumstances, the question we should be asking ourselves is not whether Richard III murdered the princes in the Tower, but what happened to them.

The fate of the princes in the Tower, one of history's most enduring mysteries, is shrouded by the passage of time. Evidence has been lost, or destroyed, sometimes by royal decree. William Shakespeare, writing for a Tudor queen, forged Tudor myth into historical fact. What physical proof survives in modern times resides in the urn at Westminster Abbey that claims to contain the bones of the princes in the Tower. In the absence of a scientific forensic examination, however, the bones have no validity. There has been a human presence at the Tower for over two thousand years and the discovery of skeletal remains in their confines is not unusual. The bones in the urn could date from Roman times, or they could be female. The heavily flawed examination conducted in 1933 did not check for gender. Its results

1 *Great Chronicle of London*, ed.A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley (London 1938)

have been rejected by the scientific community. Until such time as the bones in the urn are given a proper forensic examination that is confirmed by DNA, no further advance can be made in solving the mystery of the princes in the Tower and it will continue to remain a cold case file.[2] To date, all requests for a valid forensic re-examination of the bones have been denied.

Historians are left with the historical record of this period. In their assessment, they have found tantalizing clues to the fate of the princes but have reached widely divergent conclusions. Among those who believe the princes were murdered, some point the finger not at Richard III, but at Henry VII, who had more to gain from the crime. After a divide of more than five hundred years and in the absence of further proof, however, no one can say with any certainty what really happened, and no one can claim a monopoly of the truth. Hypotheses formulated by even the most eminent authorities remain speculation and there are holes in all the theories. Much remains unexplained. Aware of these parameters, I offer my own conclusions.

A decade of research has convinced me that Richard III has been found guilty on blatantly false evidence and hung by history for a crime he did not commit. I have reached this conclusion based primarily on the facts in the case, the actions of his life, and what we know of his character, as well as his legacy.[3] As to the Tudor's charge of infanticide, the subject is dealt with in full elsewhere in these essays, therefore for the sake of brevity I will confine myself to a single observation in this overview.[4] The Tudors have conveniently made us forget that Richard III had three little nephews standing between him and the throne, not just two. So what happened to the third prince, the son of Richard's older brother, the Duke of Clarence who, like his cousins, was legally barred from the throne?

He was executed by Henry Tudor.

As explained in this extract from my Author's Note in *The Rose of York: Fall From Grace*:

> Though the Tudors were anxious for history to believe the princes were murdered and that Richard III committed the deed, there are some compelling pieces of evidence in favor of Richard's innocence. A fact often overlooked is that Richard had three little nephews who were legally barred from the throne. The Tudors would have us believe he murdered two of them, but not the third—Clarence's orphaned son, Edward Earl of Warwick. Richard brought this child to live with him in his household, and as soon as Richard was slain, Henry Tudor imprisoned the boy, then eleven, in the Tower of London. Thirteen years later, he beheaded young Warwick on a pretext of treason, so that his son, Prince Arthur, could inherit a throne unchallenged by a rightful heir and marry Catherine of Aragon.

2 For a detailed study of the bones, see *Richard III Loyalty Lordship and Law*, pp. 104-147, "The Sons of Edward IV: A re-examination of the Evidence on their Deaths and on the Bones in Westminster Abbey." By Peter W. Hammond and W.J. White

3 The Tudor myth of the hunchback has already been noted. See also Shakespeare's distortion of Richard death at Bosworth.

4 See the essay in this 0collection, *Who Was Perkin Warbeck?* p. that is adapted from my Author's Note in *Pale Rose of England*.

> The treatment of young Warwick alone speaks volumes about the difference in character between these two kings. And in the actions of Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter, Elizabeth of York, it is possible to find further evidence of Richard's innocence.[5]

There is yet one much neglected avenue of exploration that might shed new light on the fate of the princes. It requires turning history on its head to ask, *what if the younger prince survived?* Before dismissing this out of hand, it is worth noting that many illustrious historians were previously convinced that Richard's bones had been thrown into the River Soar during the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII. It was by pursuing a different and long-standing rumor that filmmaker Philippa Langley ultimately discovered Richard's grave. Perhaps there is a similar validity to the tradition that Richard sent the younger prince, Richard Duke of York, to safety on the eve of the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, and that the older prince died of natural causes brought about by an infection of the jaw often fatal before the advent of antibiotics. Fast forward to 1492. A mysterious young man appears in Europe claiming to be the younger prince in the Tower—Richard of York—and challenges Henry Tudor for his throne.

The identity of this young man is the key that can unlock the mystery of the fate of the princes. If he was the true prince, then it follows that they were not murdered and the younger one somehow survived.

The question then becomes, *Who was Perkin Warbeck?*

A recent biography by Ann Wroe provides the clearest picture yet of this enigmatic figure. While the author herself makes no claim as to his true identity, her illuminating biography invites further study[6]. For those who find themselves accepting the so-called "Perkin Warbeck" as the true prince, it will remove murder from the equation and fully exonerate Richard III. For me, the biography answered many questions previously left unanswered. It was as if puzzle pieces suddenly fell into place to form a surprisingly cohesive picture.

As with the mystery of the princes, the question of Perkin Warbeck's identity is covered in more depth elsewhere in this collection of essays and an outline must suffice for this brief overview.

During the early years of Henry VII's reign, there had been many rumors about the survival of the younger prince. The so-called "Perkin Warbeck" was put forward by Richard's sister, Margaret Duchess of Burgundy in 1492. In due course he was examined by, and recognized by, all the crowned heads of Europe as the true King of England. Elizabeth Woodville, the mother of the princes in the Tower, could have definitively established the young man's identity one way or another. She was alive at the time. However, she had been imprisoned for her support of a previous rebellion against Henry Tudor. As soon as the news of the survival of Prince Richard reached England that summer, the Tudors announced that she had—conveniently for them—died.

5 Worth, Sandra, Author's Note, THE ROSE OF YORK: FALL FROM GRACE, End Table Books, 2007

6 While Wroe never says who she thinks the pretender was, her work builds a strong circumstantial case that he was indeed Richard of York.

Her death was devastating to the Pretender who was about to return to England to oust Henry VII. If his mother had been alive to claim him as her son, the realm would have rallied to his cause. As it was, he had only his physical resemblance to his father and mother to rely on. Foolishly and inexplicably, he came alone to England with his wife and child, without an army at his back. Perhaps he thought that once the English people saw him, they would recognize him and restore him to his father's throne. That miscalculation would prove a fatal mistake.

Could this young man have been the true prince? Many of his contemporaries believed he was. There is evidence that even Henry Tudor believed it. Tudor propaganda, however, has been so effective that the question is rarely raised in England. Aside from a sprinkling of a few authors and historians who championed the young pretender's cause over the centuries, it is widely assumed he was a fraud. Those who approach the subject with an open mind, however, may find much to suggest this young man, identified as a "boatman's son" by the Tudors and nicknamed "Perkin Warbeck," was really who he claimed to be—the younger prince who vanished from the Tower.

King James IV of Scotland certainly believed in him. He supported the Pretender not only with men and money and arms, but gave him the hand of his royal cousin, Lady Catherine Gordon—a dazzlingly beautiful and spirited princess who believed utterly in her husband to the end of her days, and who later became known as England's "Pale Rose."

Ultimately, however, the sad truth remains. The mystery of the disappearance of the Princes in the Tower remains a cold case file, yet to be solved.

Kindred Spirits: Regal Retribution—Jennifer Wilson, Kindle Edition 2022

It started with Anne Boleyn and Katherine Howard. They felt shivers as if another ghostly spirit had passed through them. No physical harm, Anne explains to Richard III and the other ghosts who call the Tower of London home, but it was still disconcerting. Sometimes those pranksters, the Georges—Boleyn and Clarence, might engage in such antics but they would immediately materialize to laugh and take credit. Soon, more attacks are reported against Anne of Cleves at Westminster Abbey, Catherine Parr at Sudeley Castle, and Catherine of Aragon at Peterborough.

The obvious conclusion: Henry VIII is back in town, and he is in a vengeful mood. In his mind he was one of the greatest, if not the greatest king England has ever had, and his reputation has been systematically trashed. The last straw was when he attended *Six the Musical* playing in the West End and saw himself being mocked by singing and dancing actors portraying his wives. He wants retribution.

Richard III organizes the response to the attacks at the Tower and liaises with the spirit community at Westminster Abbey which is led by Edward the Confessor and Edward III. It soon becomes apparent that simply monitoring the situation and posting guards around the five Queens (Jane Seymour is never attacked) are not adequate to prevent more serious and widespread attacks, including ones against Margaret Pole and Thomas Cromwell. The ghosts in the *Kindred Spirits* world are very touchy feely —a comforting embrace here, a reassuring shoulder squeeze there—but a physical attack can result in fading, which means the ghost vanishes into nothingness. When Katherine Howard is partially faded by a second attack, Richard III wants to mount a massed counter attack by ghosts to fade Henry VIII. Richard tries to convince Henry VII that it is necessary to "murder" his son for the common good, but the latter balks. It is only after an innocent soldier ghost is faded while trying to protect Thomas Seymour that Henry VII and Elizabeth of York consent to Richard's plan.

I would have enjoyed a face-to-face confrontation between a good king whose reputation has actually been destroyed through the years and Henry VIII, whose bad reputation is well deserved. Nevertheless, I found this to be one of the more entertaining of the *Kindred Spirits* series because it combines a crime story with the usual fun look at the antics of some famous ghosts.—P.C.

Comments by M.S.—In this volume, we learn more of the facts of afterlife. We learn that "London is alive with the dead" per Richard III, and accidents will happen. It appears that English ghosts do go out in the midday sun, because they need sunglasses. We learn that ghosts are the same age they were at death, so Clarence is less than half the age of his daughter.

We do not learn what happens after a 'fading,' or a 'going toward the light,' as no spirit has come back from either one. 'Fading' is not murder (how can you kill someone already dead?) but some of the ghosts regard it

as such. Some of them talk of utilizing the techniques of Machecoul, but if I understand correctly, weren't these instituted by living humans against Giles de Rais, a very bad guy?

In the end, both Richard III and Henry VII decide to sit this one out, Richard because he doesn't want to spoil his newfound allyship with the Tudor, and Henry because blood is thicker than water, even when you haven't any. One can't help but feel a certain empathy/sympathy for even Henry VIII. All he wants is his reputation back. Wasn't that all that Wilson's Richard wanted? But Wilson's Richard didn't take his frustration out on innocent bystanders, corporeal or otherwise.

Walking Among Lions: A Novel of Constance of York—Brian Wainwright, Independently published, 2022

Walking Among Lions covers the time from April 1386 to January 1390, a short but eventful period in the reign of Richard II which saw the rise to power of the Lords Appellant. In a sense it can be considered a prequel to the author's *Within the Fetterlock* which provided an account of the final years of Richard's reign and the first years of Henry IV's from the viewpoint of their cousins, the children of the Duke of York, principally that of his daughter, Constance. Here Constance herself narrates* the story beginning with her appointment as a Lady of the Garter when she is a mere 10 years old. Thereafter, she joins the household of Queen Anne of Bohemia, developing deep affection for both monarchs. She is also fiercely loyal to them, as is her father, so that she deplores the seizure of power by the Lords Appellant, even while noting Richard's reliance on a small group of courtiers. And what was her opinion of the Lords Appellant taking their revenge in the Merciless Parliament on those favorites? "[A]n assembly of treacherous serpents that called itself a Parliament." By the end of the book, the power of the Lords Appellant is on the wane, with the return of the Duke of Lancaster expected imminently.

Is Constance a little bit too politically savvy for a 10-year-old? Perhaps, but it's not a stretch to believe that an intelligent child who has lived her whole life near the center of the royal court would develop some political awareness. Constance has a lot of Wainwright's Alianore Audley (as in *The Adventures of Alianore Audley*) in her—intelligent, politically astute, and unsentimental. Like Alianore, she has little patience with those obsessed with the knightly code. "I had always imagined that Thomas would be knighted by the King in some great ceremony at court, and that I myself would kneel to fit the golden spurs to his heels. Instead, it seemed, he preferred to be dubbed by Arundel, in some muddy field in France. It made no sense to me at all. Still, I knew that it was pointless to say so. He would only talk of his honour, or some such nonsense."

Having read *Within the Fetterlock*, I became aware of the part the York family played in the events that led to the fall of Richard II and rise of Henry IV. Here, the same cast of characters who later played a part in Constance's life are introduced—in particular, her wily brother Edward, her husband

Thomas Dispenser, and Edmund Mortimer—and appreciated seeing their relationships developing.

This is Book One of Constance's story, so we can expect to hear her tell us of subsequent events. (The notes indicate that the author has another *Alianore* book in the words, too. Yipee!)

*The author indicates that this is the first "serious" book he has written in the first person, because after trying other styles for the first six chapters, he concluded that Constance wanted to speak for herself. I am not sure if this change in voice accounts for some seeming confusion in the use of pronouns. Thus, "I look… at the medal in *her* hand, my trophy for the day." Constance was the one holding the medal—there was no other *her* around.

And, "I half closed my eyes again. The light in the room was so bright it hurt at first. *She* tried to sit up, but fell back."?

Finally, "The same shop had some fine girdles, suitable for my waist, and *she* took time to consider which of several pleased me best." Does the *she* refer to the shop, some female shop clerk, or Constance herself? I might be too picky, but I just notice these things.—P.C.

The Colour of Rubies—Toni Mount, Kindle Edition, 2022

"*Hey Jude, don't make it bad*
Make a sad song and make it better."

That's what a modern-day Sebastian Foxley would sing to his brother, but it would fall on deaf ears, for Jude Foxley is forever thinking himself ill-used. In this latest entry in the series, Jude finds himself as a lowly clerk in the Office of King Edward's Secretary—the "scene of [his] life-wasting scribbling and associated tortures." When he offers to show his visiting brother Seb the stained glass in St. Stephen's chapel, they discover the body of one of his fellow clerks. Drafted by Lord Hastings to discover the murderer, Seb goes undercover working alongside Jude (at least for a while) in the scriptorium. Whereas Jude thinks his fellow clerks are imbeciles and those with authority to order him about as "puffed up toads," Seb finds reasonable, friendly fellows.

In unraveling the mystery, Seb discovers spies and an international conspiracy that threatens the English succession. Interwoven with this intrigue, Seb must deal with family problems on the home front. Jude and his wife Chesca add some complications in both areas, although at Jude's instigation Seb finally makes a decision regarding his future with dearest Rose.

After Seb solves the mystery, he vows never to return to the corruption and intrigue at Westminster. (Does that remind Ricardians of a certain duke?) As for Jude, his one redeeming quality is his fierce protectiveness of his little brother, and that proves to be his undoing. I will say no more and wait for the developments in the next book.—P.C.

Comment by M.S.: Friends, this is how it is done. The best detective stories feature good solid deductive reasoning. But they should also hold human interest. Make your leading characters likable, but fallible. Super-sleuths are rare on the ground. Advance the plot, or the human interest, (ideally both) at least a little in every chapter, but don't let them see you doing it! You are allowed to use a few tricks of the trade. One of Toni

Mount's pets is to give a flavour of medieval speech by using such words as 'forwhy' where we would say 'because.' I am not an expert on 15th century linguistics, but I have not come across the expression often in my reading from the period. But, of course, people did not always write as they spoke, or vice versa. So we can give her a pass there. It certainly saves her from any temptation to 'write forsoothly,' which can be annoying to the reader.

And there is a bonus - a sampling from the next book in the series: The Color of Bone. Something to look forward to!

Sons of York (The Order of the White Boar #4)—Alex Marchant, Marchant Ventures, 2022

Sighting the Sunne in Splendour flag flying above the ancient castle of Piel on the Cumbrian coast, Edward V is ebullient as his forces begin the invasion which he hopes will see him reclaim the throne of England. And so begins the fourth adventure in the saga of the Order of the White Boar. Not only is Edward supported by Lord Lovell and his cousin John, Earl of Lincoln, but the three friends, Matthew, Alys, and Roger, who formed the Order pledging their loyalty to Richard III (then Duke of Gloucester) and to one another. They had vowed to protect Richard's nephews and so found themselves as part of the invasion force, although Alys has to disguise herself as a boy to escape the notice of Lovell and Lincoln who would disapprove of her coming.

Soon after landing, they are met by Hugh Soulsby offering the support of his uncle Lord Walter Soulsby. Now Hugh has been Matthew's nemesis from the time they were pages together serving Richard at Middleham, and his uncle is pledged to Lord Stanley and is just as duplicitous as the latter. Matthew and friends suspect they have an ulterior motive for joining Edward's forces.

As the rebel army journeys across England, Matthew faces several perils, including getting caught in quicksand, and all the while he is trying to figure out what game Hugh Soulsby and his uncle are playing. When he returns to York, he learns that this city, once so loyal to his former master Richard, is not so willing to risk supporting Edward.

As we knew they would, Yorkist hopes die at the Battle of Stoke, but Matthew witnesses there an act of vicious retribution that shocks him to his core. In a postscript occurring ten years after Stoke, the author adds another twist—a shattering one.

The adventure is good and the plot is imaginative albeit improbable in part. Even the individual personalities of the key players Edward, Lovell and Lincoln come through. But the two twists at the end, particularly the postscript, give the story added pop. No spoilers here because that would not be fair to you, the potential reader. You have to read it.—P.C.

Comment by M.S.: I found the climax a bit contrived, calling for a complete volte-face by a major character. Equally unlikely is the possibility of Henry Tudor taking a young boy 'off the street,' or out of the priory, telling him he must answer to the name of 'Lambert Simnel,' for the rest of his life, and expecting this would actually happen? And it actually does happen? How could Henry, suspicious by nature, be confident the boy wouldn't not slip up and 'blow the gaff,' strictly by accident, at any moment?

How long would it be before the young laborer met with some unfortunate accident? Instead, he outlived Henry by a number of years.

My opinion, FWIW is this: Whatever his real name was, there was a 'Lambert Simnel' at the Battle of Stoke. If not a Pretender himself (in both senses of the word) he must have been an understudy/stand-in for the real claimant (Edward V or Edward of Warwick) whose life was too valuable to risk. Therefore, he was involved to some degree from the first. Henry must have realized that 'Lambert' was an (almost) innocent dupe. He could afford to make a show of treating him leniently, for why he could rescind that leniency at any moment. 'Lambert' would have been aware of this, which insured his silence, but also gave him some assurance that he would remain reasonably safe if he did keep his mouth shut.

I also have a sneaking hunch that he never 'blew the gaff,' since there was no 'gaff,' or secret, to blow. Either Lambert was the only 'Pretender,' or he never knew the identity of the true one. But this is only a hunch on my part.

I trust I haven't revealed any serious spoiler here. Overall, this was a solid effort.

My Lord John—Georgette Hyer, 1973

Ms. Heyer is renowned for her Regency novels, but her husband informs us in the preface to this book that her favorite historical period was what she called “armour”—the Middle Ages and in particular the years 1393 to 1435 when the House of Lancaster was at its peak. She planned a trilogy centering on John, Duke of Bedford to illustrate this period because the life of this younger, and most trusted brother of Henry V spanned the whole period and because he was a great, but little-known man. She never completed the work because of the constant demands to produce her best-selling Regency works. Thus, the present volume covers the period from 1393 to 1413, representing about a third of the entire projected work. Ms. Heyer had finalized three parts of this work at the time of her death, leaving the final part as a rough draft. Although editing was done of the final part, the book ends in mid-sentence.

Her husband also states that she had conducted extensive historical research of the period. It shows, but it is not necessarily a positive as she seems intent on displaying every bit of her knowledge, and this includes introducing every notable person living in Europe at the time. The book reads like a dull history lesson, which, however, does almost nothing to elucidate the complicated politics of the period which saw Bolingbroke take the crown from his cousin Richard II.

This flat narrative is further burdened by the use of archaic words. If the author can find an archaic or obscure word or usage, she uses it. I can cope with “fewterer” instead of keeper of greyhounds or “ymerer” who did the same for bloodhounds—these words are in the glossary, but it became tiresome not to mention time-consuming to flip back and forth from the glossary or the web to look up such words. Why use “haughty” when you

can use "orgulous?" It was always "costage" instead of cost or expense, and "unwit," "unhale," and even "unglad." John of Gaunt asks Richard for assurance that his son will inherit when "I unbody me." I have to admit the language does evoke a certain antique air, but not one I found particularly appealing especially where it is combined with a dull recitation of history. Also, rather oddly she often uses "my lord" to refer to various lords depending on who is the subject of the paragraph. Since there are usually numerous characters in a scene, I sometimes have to pause to figure out which lord is the "my lord" this time— John of Gaunt or his son, Henry Bolingbroke, e.g. Of course, she does not consistently use these names or titles. The name John of Gaunt is not used; he is M. de Guyenne, M d' Espagne, or Bel Sire. Bolingbroke is usually referred to by whatever title he held at the time— Earl of Derby, Duke of Hereford, and later king.

Since the title character was only 4 at the beginning, he doesn't play a major part for the first half of the story. He is shown to be even-tempered and pragmatic while brother Harry is idealistic. They and their other two brothers are dismissive of the Yorks: uncle Edmund seems scared of his own shadow while his son is a good-natured buffoon, only interested in hunting. (He did write a book, *The Master of the Game* which is available today.). They reserve their disdain for York's youngest son, the always sneering Richard of Conisbrough. (OK, he was one of the Southampton conspirators, but I think I can guess what side Ms. Heyer would favor in the WOTR.).

Later, John is assigned to secure the north as his brother Harry tries to set down rebellious Wales. He was also Constable of England—Ricardians take note. We are told that he wins the respect of the northerners, but, as with the book as a whole, we are told rather than shown. There are glimmers of some interesting scenes. John reluctantly agrees with Ralph Neville that rebels who agreed to negotiations under a flag of truce should be arrested as a matter of necessity. Then, there is Harry, reminiscent of Shakespeare's rakish Prince Hal, taking his brothers along as he ventures into the stews. Finally, there is Harry's futile effort to save an unrepentant "heretic" from the flames. The problem is that none of these scenes are developed or animated. With reference to the latter incident, in fact, John (or his squire) is remembering the incident when the narrative goes off on long tangents recounting in boring detail the struggle in France between Orleans and Burgundy, the King's mysterious illness, and brother Thomas's adulterous liaison. Maybe Ms.Heyer would eventually have tightened up the narrative a bit, but I can only judge that which was before me and it was not entertaining

As an aside, the picture on the various covers showing a young woman has absolutely nothing to do with this book. Neither does the publisher's blurb that it is a romantic tale involving the virile John.—P.C.

King's Games: A Memoir of Richard III—Nance Crawford, Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015

This book is in two parts. The first is a verse play about Richard III. It is two years after Richard's death at the Battle of Bosworth, and Francis

Lovell has taken refuge in a secret room in his home following the Battle of Stoke. While awaiting an opportunity to escape to his family in France, he reminisces about his best friend Richard and the significant events that led them to their fates. The poetry is good and I enjoyed the storytelling although a person less familiar with Richard's history might have a tough time following the events. It didn't seem at first that Francis's perspective added to the story and was a little odd because he was not present at some scenes, e.g., Morton and Buckingham bemoaning the ill fortune that doomed the rebellion. However, toward the end when Francis is in despair and near death, Richard's ghost appears and tells him it is time to go. "Now come along, let's find another day, / A day when there was hope." They then revisit the eve of the Battle of Bosworth. The play ends as Richard marches out of his tent placing under his arm the helm crowned with a golden circlet. "Well Anna, they will all know the king," he exclaims. Richard is often portrayed as being in a state of deep despair when he entered the battle, so it was a refreshing reminder that he must have had hope at this time.

The second part of the book consists of the author's commentaries, including a brief and lively summary of the history of the war of the roses, a timeline, and "a sort of bibliography." The latter contains the author's incisive and sometimes humorous view of various sources. When noting Thomas B. Costain's *The Last Plantagenets*, she somehow manages to work in a comment about how fetching Paul Newman looked in a short toga in the *The Silver Chalice*!

The most interesting sections tell the author's personal story. The author comes from a family of actors—her brothers are Bobby and Johnny Crawford. (The latter was the boy in TV's "The Rifleman") She is both an actor and playwright. (She helpfully advises that when acting or reading verse, read to a period, not the end of the line.) In 1967 she told her mother (also an actress) that she was looking for an idea for a new play, and her mother pulled down a book from her bookshelf, suggesting it would make a wonderful play. That book was Josephine Tey's *Daughter of Time*. Thus, began a decades long struggle to obtain the rights to publish and produce the original version of *King's Games*. Finally, she gave up, but then it dawned on her to rework the play with Francis Lovell substituting for Inspector Grant. In addition to the play, this book is a Ricardian's delightful and interesting musings.—P.C.

(Note: I recently had the great pleasure of meeting Nance Crawford and in addition to being entertained by her stories, she noted that *Daughter of Time* is now in the public domain so we might soon be able to see and read her play. I'll be looking forward to it.)

Now and Always—-Diana Rubino, Independently published, 2022

Leah Halliday, an historic preservation architect, is working at Donington-Le-Heath Manor which touts that it has the bed of King Richard III. While exploring the manor, she comes across the portrait of a medieval nobleman, Hugh Radcliffe. Once one of King Richard's closest friends, Hugh was executed for treason, and history also recorded he drowned his wife, Matilda. But Leah sees the face of a kind and intelligent man staring back at her from the portrait.

When Leah succumbs to a desire to lie down in King Richard's bed, she falls asleep and wakes up in that same bed, only it is in Whitehall Palace in 1485. It seems that the bed at the manor stood on a Ley Line where strange things happen, things like time travel. If this weren't weird enough, Hugh Radcliffe is the one who wakens her, thinking she is his wife Matilda. The king arranged the marriage, and Hugh married Matilda by proxy that morning, having never seen his bride before. He likes what he sees in the bed and wants to consummate the marriage at once. Our Leah is certainly in a predicament now, isn't she? How can she escape the clutches of this man that history says is destined to murder her? The formal church ceremony is to take place in a fortnight, and Leah plays for time, telling Hugh that she is a very traditional girl who will not have sex with him until after the church service. She explains she dreams of marrying in a white wedding dress and being carried over the threshold by her husband. Hugh doesn't seem to question these anachronisms, and accedes to Leah/ Matilda's prudish wish. In the meantime, Leah plans to acquire enough money to escape to France.

Hugh moves Leah into his London townhouse, and she hits upon a great moneymaking scheme when she is entertaining some court ladies. The conversation turns to exchanging beauty tips, and Leah realizes that they would love to be pampered with "the soothing fragrance of roses in the hair, vanilla's delicious essence rising from a steaming bath, the silky feel of aromatic oils smoothed over the skin, and ah, the luxury of a deep massage." So why not open London's first beauty spa? It is a resounding success. While Leah also would like to teach an exercise class, she wisely concludes that these women will not go in for aerobics or Pilates.

Hugh indulges Leah in her rather strange enterprise, and on her part Leah learns about Hugh; that he mourns the deaths of a much loved first wife and their son; and that he blames all his misfortunes on the Griffins, witches all, with whom the Radcliffes have been feuding for generations. She comes to doubt that the Hugh she has come to know would be capable of treason and murder. (In fact, I lost count how many times Leah tells herself exactly that.) Yes, folks, true eternal love has blossomed between the 15th century Hugh and the 21st century Leah.

Eventually, Leah is confronted by the sister of real the Matilda demanding to know what happened to her sister. Leah also meets another traveler from the 21st century, Andrew Gilbert. Gilbert met and fell in love with the real Matilda and they planned to run away together before she disappeared. The two of them figure out that she and Leah must have exchanged places in time, and they resolve to get Andrew to return to the 21st century to find Matilda and live there happily ever after. I mean who would prefer to stay in the 15th century "only to die of the pox or the sweating sickness or dysentery from the filthy water or any one of these other horrid diseases?" They keep Hugh in the dark as much as possible but he helps out and Andrew manages to disappear into the future.

Leah and Hugh's next adventure is with his Griffin nemeses who had contrived to implicate him in treason against Richard. Leah's actions manage to absolve Hugh. Hugh won't be executed for treason but Leah

doesn't want him to fight and die at Bosworth, which is imminent. Prior to the battle Richard's bed has been brought and placed on a Ley Line. The problem is that Hugh insists on acting honorably, stubbornly refusing to desert his friend and king although by this time Leah has informed him of the battle's disastrous outcome. What happens? If you're interested, read the book!

I confess that time travel romances are probably my least favorite subgenre of Ricardian fiction. However, I have to give this one props because the plot does not involve Richard finding that his soulmate is a 21st century woman —a concern when I read that Leah fell asleep in his bed. (There is one scene in the beginning in which Leah hears, but does not see, Richard frolicking in a bathtub with a lover. Perhaps his playmate was his time traveling companion from the author's *For Love and Loyalty* aka, *One Too Many Times*?) Also, Hugh behaves in the end in accordance with the chivalric ideals of an honorable 15th century man. The adventures are diverting and the beauty spa episode is amusing.—P.C.

False Rumours—Danae Penn, Nicol Press, 2017

Guillaume Lansac is the Bishop's inquirer in Condom, a cathedral town in southwest France on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostelo in Galicia. A pilgrim has been found dead, probably poisoned, in a local hospice and it is Guillaume's job to investigate the suspicious death. Half-English, Guillaume admires its new king, Richard III, who was crowned only a few weeks earlier. Guillaume views Richard as a great champion of justice and fairness, of helping the weak and the poor. Richard's plans to restrain wealthy landowners from exploiting their tenants does not suit many of those greedy landowners, including Margaret Beaufort, the mother of Henry Tudor. Guillaume is also a secret agent working for the *Reconquista* of Gascony by England, and knows that Margaret Beaufort and Bishop Morton are leaders in a plot to stir up rebellion to unseat Richard and replace him with Tudor by spreading rumors that he has murdered his nephews, the princes in the tower. When Guillaume learns that the cathedral's new Paris-appointed treasurer is funneling money and treasure to Henry Tudor in Brittany, he abandons his investigation of the pilgrim's murder in order to deliver an urgent message to Bordeaux.

In his absence, he delegates the investigation to his capable wife Belina. Belina runs the cathedral shop that sells medallions, statues, and other trinkets and assorted wares to pilgrims, but she is intelligent and trained in her husband's investigative methods. Belina discovers that the pilgrim's murder is connected with a plot to assassinate the English princes who are traveling from Luxembourg to Portugal. An attractive Flemish stranger offers to help Belina, but his real motive may be to hinder rather than help the investigation. The assassination attempt is made when the princes arrive in Condom, but, fortunately, Belina and Guillaume (who has arrived back in town in the nick of time) are able to thwart it, the assassin apparently killed and the princes safely sent on their way.

This is a well plotted mystery—not overly complicated—that flowed well. The Lancastrians were portrayed as an evil, money-grubbing lot in contrast to the noble Richard. Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed reading it, but

even I thought the author laid it on a little thick about how bad the former were. I particularly enjoyed that Belina was a different sort of female detective. She was not very worldly, apparently not having traveled beyond the immediate vicinity of Condom. And she was really sort of an innocent who blushed at ribald comments made in her presence—and there were plenty of them. She was very conscious that as a miller's daughter (a *molerota*), and a pretty one at that, she had to live down a reputation for being promiscuous. (I guess this was the equivalent of jokes made with winks and smiles that I heard when growing up about the farmer's daughter and the traveling salesman.) She was always worrying that Guillaume might hear that she had often been in the company of the handsome Fleming. The author did a particularly good job in populating Condom with an interesting assortment of true to life characters, making this a thoroughly entertaining read.—P.C.

A Mystery of Blood and Dust—Danae Penn, Nichol Press, 2020

This is the second Belina Lansac murder mystery that begins shortly after the conclusion of the first, *False Rumours*. Whereas the first mystery involved matters of international politics with a plot to assassinate the "princes in the tower," this one deals with family troubles closer to home. It opens with Belina and her husband Guillaume, the Bishop's investigator, having a meal with her brother Jordi and his wife at the family's mill. Jordi has money problems, and his wife Catalina is even more ill-tempered than usual, not only is she pregnant once again but she has to deal with two new arrivals. Geraud, Jordi and Belina's brother, fought in the war in Spain and has now returned, gravely wounded and accompanied by a Moorish girl, Wasila. Harboring Gerald, who may be an army deserter and a Moorish slave girl could subject them all to criminal charges.

The meal is interrupted when Guillaume is called away to investigate the murder of a consul's daughter, Viola Lussan. Her body was found in a chapel with her throat cut and blood everywhere. One man is discovered in the chapel with the body; he is a crestian —a descendant of returning Crusaders who were thought to have had leprosy. Like most crestias, the man, Josep Sarbazan, is a skilled carpenter, and the murder weapon is a spokeshave—a carpenter's tool. Josep is withdrawn and tearful, and does not respond to Guillaume's questions. He seems the obvious suspect and is arrested.

Guillaume learns that Viola Lussan was supposed to have attended a banquet to celebrate her betrothal to the son of another counsel. She claimed there was a problem with her dress and her parents went ahead without her. During the course of the investigation Guillaume learns that the man who attempted to assassinate the English princes in *False Rumours* is not dead, and he must leave in order to hunt him down. Belina takes over the investigation and at the same time she has to deal with family problems.

Belina attended school with Viola and is particularly upset by the murder of this gentle, friendly girl. She learns that her friend did not have a loving family; her mother was obsessed with acquiring jewels, and preferred her brother who had died several years before of the plague. Once very rich, her father had been losing wealth because of the mother's

profligate ways. He was intent on Viola marrying, but it was unclear how he could afford her dowry. The prospective groom's father is senior counsel and he wanted his son Charles to follow in his footsteps and serve in Condom in the same capacity. The best way to achieve that was to have his son marry another counsel's daughter. Charles, meanwhile, seems to like living in Toulouse where he has a mistress and two children. At one time, the son had had an affair with the notary's daughter, Ana Corloni, who lived across the street. Ana may still carry a torch for her one-time lover.

Edith Senclar (commonly referred to as "the poisoner" by locals, and Condom's version of Margaret Beaufort) wants her son Henri, already a counsel, to become the senior counsel. For his part, Henri is more interested in laying every kitchen maid around, that is when he isn't publicly fondling his wife's big breasts.

There was one person in the Lussan household that loved Viola and that was her nurse Mounette. From her, Belina finds out that Josep did carpentry work at the Lussan household and that he and Viola had fallen in love and planned to run away together. Following this revelation, Belina quickly solves the mystery of Viola's murder.

Meanwhile, Belina has to find a hiding place for Geraud where his wounds can be properly tended. A Jewish doctor takes in Geraud, while, surprisingly, Belina's ill-tempered shop assistant welcomes Wasila into her house. That's not all the family problems; Jordi has been charged with short changing customers. Even more serious, Corloni, the *notaire*, has filed a claim against Belina and her brothers in which their step-mother charges that they have cheated her out of her inheritance. The Senclars, who want to acquire the mill property, appear to have had a hand in bringing these accusations.

The judge and the Senechal, the local civil governor, are both remarkably enlightened. The judge sees through their step-mother's claims against Belina and her siblings and dismisses the cases against them out of hand. He also discovers that Ana Corloni's father is not the notary but Edith Senclar's deceased husband—a piece of the puzzle that helps Belina solve the murder mystery.

On his part, the Senechal, who is opposed to the Spanish Inquisition, wants Geraud and Wasila to live in the Cadeot Fort so that Geraud can advise him about the war in Granada. He also extends a welcome to the Jewish physician to stay in Condom.

Having been shown a variety of familial relationships, none of them particularly loving, I was touched at the end when Josep fell into his father's embrace. I felt a great deal sadness, however, that he and Viola were never able to share a life together.—P.C.

Hawker and the King's Jewel—Ethan Bale, Camelot Adventure, 2022

On the eve of battle, King Richard III summons Sir John Hawker, the man who trained him at Middleham, to perform two tasks for him. First to return a precious ruby to the Doge of Venice who had gifted it to his brother Edward IV. The king also charges Hawker to protect his 18-year-old illegitimate son, Sir Giles Ellingham, in the upcoming battle.

Hawker once led a mercenary company of soldiers in Venice, handing back his command to return to England and serve Richard. After Richard's defeat and death at Bosworth, Hawker is intent on fulfilling the dead king's wish to deliver the jewel to Venice, not only out of a sense of duty but also in hope that he can return to the woman he loves and, perhaps, obtain a new mercenary's *contratto* from the Doge's counsel giving him the right to raise a new mercenary company. At the same, he is committed to protect Richard's son.

Hawker managed to escape from the battle with a rag tag crew in tow: Ellingham who is not yet aware of his true paternity; Sir Roger Beconsall, who, in Hawker's estimation, is nothing more than an ox in armor; and Gaston Dieudonné who claims to be a Burgundian who fought for Richard. Before Bosworth, a spy overheard Richard telling Hawker about his two missions. Thus, on their journey south Hawker and his band are beset by those seeking the precious jewel and the dead king's son—for the latter is as valuable a commodity as the jewel. There is plenty of adventure and even more intrigue. A really interesting plot. The characters are compelling and complex. Hawker is grizzled and world weary, but not entirely jaded—despite the fact that he is still haunted by the fate of the princes in the tower. Ellingham proves to be his father's true son, wanting to believe the best of his cohorts, even the duplicitous Dieudonné. "I will take his word. To believe otherwise would break my heart that all honor is dead." Eventually, Elllingham will run toward, instead away from his destiny, and hopes that in the future he will be able to fight for the White Rose.—P.C.

EX LIBRIS

Susan Troxell

New Acquisitions to the Non-Fiction Library (March 2023)

The Non-Fiction Library has acquired three new and exciting volumes for members to borrow.

The first is B.M. Cron's *Margaret of Anjou and the Men Around Her* (History & Heritage, 2021, 470 pages, with 162 pages of endnotes, bibliography and index**)**.

Members of the American Branch may recognize the name of B.M. Cron. He, along with former branch librarian Helen Maurer, published a new edition of Margaret of Anjou's letters in 2019. This new book is a full biography of Margaret of Anjou covering her entire life, but places her in the context of the events and men who profoundly affected her. She is portrayed neither as a "She-Wolf" nor a meddling French harpy, but rather a conscientious aristocrat who had the misfortune to wed one of the worst kings in English history at a time of great upheaval.

The tale of her life is dramatic and tragic. She hardly knew her parents, Rene I of Anjou and Isabella of Lorraine, because they were busy pursuing the family's economic interests in Italy. As their fifth surviving child, she was raised in the household of her grandmother, the brilliant and politically

influential Yolande of Aragon who was famous for her beauty but also–according to her grandson King Louis XI of France–"had the heart of a man in a woman's body." It is easy to see how Yolande was a role model for her granddaughter.

Given her junior status, Margaret would have been astonished to learn she had been chosen to marry Henry VI of England. It had been arranged in order to seal a treaty ending the Hundred Years War. She made a favorable impression on the English public during her first decades as Queen because of her beauty and ability to surround herself with competent administrators and mentors, such as Alice Chaucer, the dowager duchess of Suffolk. Cron credits her with being the first to bring the Duchy of Lancaster's chamber administration into the crown's own hands, rather than it being left to languish in the Exchequer. She managed the estates competently. Edward IV usually gets credit for this new approach.

The peace treaty with France ultimately fell through and England lost almost all of its holdings there. Margaret of Anjou became a scapegoat for widespread public dissatisfaction in her adopted homeland. She was French, she had not brought a dowry or lands to her husband, and she had failed to produce an heir to the throne. She tried–and failed–to use a woman's "soft power" by proposing diplomatic marriages to restore peace. Her attempts were seen as naive and intrusive. At her request, general pardons were offered to the leader and adherents of the 1450 Cade Rebellion as long as they dispersed and returned to the king's allegiance. It was Chancellor Kemp who ordered the brutal mopping-up and commissions to execute them for treason, yet Margaret–in the ongoing effort to paint her as an implacable foreign queen–was said to be the mastermind.

With her husband being either uninterested or unable to fulfill his duties, the political conditions of Margaret's life continued to deteriorate even after she produced a Prince of Wales. Had Henry VI been a medieval king of average competence, Margaret could have focused on running her own household, raising her son, and administering her estates–she excelled at these things. However, Henry VI's inability to say "no" to his favorite courtiers caused a continuous cycle of recriminations between the "in" and "out" groups at his court.

Margaret was never able to access the income she had been promised as queen because of Henry VI's financial profligacy, and she had to be proactive in demanding what she was entitled to. In an Appendix, Cron analyzes her finances and dower lands, using surviving household accounts originally published by A. R. Myers. Her demands further antagonized the "out" group at court, the central figurehead of which was Richard, Duke of York. In this biography, the Duke of York is not a sympathetic character and is portrayed as self-serving, impulsive, and very naive himself. Cron has a much better opinion of his eldest son Edward IV, who is described as charismatic, handsome, and a superior warrior. As for the duke's youngest son Richard, he is only mentioned in his military and official roles, and makes almost no impression.

Cron moves quickly through the Wars of the Roses, and deftly interweaves the rise and fall of powerful men like the Nevilles, the Beauforts, the Percies, and the de la Poles. Throughout this period, Margaret is seen doing her utmost to keep the Lancastrian dynasty intact. Her methods were proportional at the outset. As the body count mounts and personal vendettas are waged between ancient families, however, Margaret starts flexing her own muscles and taking control of the situation by moving the court to Coventry and calling the Great Council of 1455. Cron believes she did not abuse her power as queen. She was the victim of Yorkist propaganda that wrongly accused her troops as northern marauders who sacked and pillaged their way south in 1460. They did no such thing. If anything, she repeatedly failed to realize the importance of occupying London and making allies of London's elite merchant class–something that the Duke of York, his son Edward IV, and their allies exploited in her absence.

Margaret's years of exile, living in Scotland and then France during Edward IV's first years on the throne, were periods of constant diplomatic exchanges between her and other European potentates in an effort to build a coalition to restore Henry VI to the throne. It is a testament to her determination that she almost managed to pull it off, although she had to swallow her pride in accepting the support of the Kingmaker. She was not in England to see her husband's brief readeption, and did not turn back when news of the Kingmaker's defeat at Barnet was disclosed to her. She believed the future of the Lancastrian dynasty depended entirely on her coalition.

It was only with the Lancastrian disaster at Tewkesbury when she finally accepted her destiny as a failed queen and prisoner. She lived the rest of her life as a poor pensioner living on meager income from Louis XI. When she died in 1482 at age 52, the only possessions she had were a few household items of no value and her dogs. Louis XI took everything, even the dogs. She was even denied the pleasure of seeing the demise of her arch-enemy Edward IV, who died the following year leaving his own realm in a state of uncertainty. One can only imagine how she would have responded to news of Edward's sons being removed from the line of succession, just as her own son had been removed from succession in the 1460 Westminster Accord–perhaps, a bit of divine retribution?

Margaret's reputation, like Richard III's, suffered at the hands of history's victors. In this instance, it was the Yorkists who manipulated facts to cast her as wantonly ambitious and vindictive. There was a good measure of misogyny behind it. Cron does an outstanding job of analyzing the primary sources to assess their credibility and bias. This is an easy book to read, it is extremely well researched, and it teases out facts that were previously unknown to this reader. (For instance, this reader never knew that an anatomist had examined the skeleton of Henry VI in 1910 and determined his skull to be "unusually thin"; the author speculates this as a cause for his death.) Cron avoids the trap of hagiography, and presents a

woman who embodied all the contradictions, foibles, and ambitions of those upon whom power was thrust in the medieval game of thrones.

The second and third new acquisitions are Tobias Capwell's *Armour of the English Knight 1450-1500* and *Armour of the English Knight–Continental Armour in England 1450-1500* (Thomas Del Mar, 2021 & 2022, each 340 and 330 pages, with additional appendices, glossaries, indexes, and hundreds of illustrations and photographs).

These highly-anticipated, coffee-table sized volumes provide the most extensive and definitive analysis of what an English knight would have been wearing to battle, to tournament, or to ceremony in the second half of the fifteenth century. Using medieval effigies, sculptures, paintings, manuscripts and objects in private and public hands, Dr Capwell demonstrates that there was indeed an English style of armor which was highly influenced by continental trends, something that evolved over the century.

These books carry on the story begun in Capwell's *Armour of the English Knight, 1400-1450* (2015), where a characteristically English style first appeared by combining various elements of continental components (especially those imported from Italy) adapted for the distinctive needs of the realm's men-at-arms. The story of the second half of the fifteenth century is one of elaboration and the import of armor from other parts of Europe such as the German Lands and Low Countries, and to a lesser extent France and Iberia. "The influx of these diverse continental designs was no doubt a result of significant changes in the political and military situations from the mid-fifteenth century onwards," writes Capwell. Fighting on foot during the French wars and the Wars of the Roses, for example, demanded longer cuirass skirts and other technical adaptations.

The conceptual apogee of the English style appears around 1465-85, under the rule of the Yorkist kings. The armor craftsmen were located in cities like London and York. During this time, Capwell says "we may regard the English style as having reached its idiosyncratic extreme, its vegetal, organic forms in full bloom, its wearers assuming the appearance almost of 'green men' rendered in steel, or armoured wildmen of the woods, wrapped in vines and roots and wreathed in leaves and flower blossoms". In all of Capwell's decades of research, he has never come across a similar explosion in any non-English source.

Dr Capwell, an American by birth, is a well-known lecturer and scholar in the field of medieval armor, and was the curator of arms and armor at the Wallace Collection in London for many years. Ricardians may recall his participation in the 2015 reinterment of King Richard, as one of the armored knights on horseback who led the funeral cortege to Leicester Cathedral, and his tutoring of the king's "body double" Dom Smee in the televised documentary about the unique challenges facing a young knight with scoliosis.

REVIEW: Anne Sutton's *The King's Work: The Defence of the North under the Yorkist Kings, 1471-85* (2021, Richard III and Yorkist History Trust, 530 pages, hardback, ISBN 978-1-907730-92-4)

Our Non-Fiction Library has acquired this monumental examination of Yorkist policy on defending the northern border with Scotland as well as the dangerous coastlines along the northwest and northeast of England. Sadly, the author Anne Sutton passed away before completing her analysis of how the Yorkists defended the rest of England's borders. But what is contained in this book will surely add to her reputation as being a prolific and astute Ricardian historian.

This is not an easy book to read because it seeks to inform rather than entertain. The first 155 pages include Sutton's analysis of Richard of Gloucester's remit as warden of the Scottish west march in 1471-1485, his successful 1482 military campaigns into Scotland, the 1483 royal grant to Richard of a "buffer state" palatinate on the western border with Scotland, and his hard-won and historic truce with Scotland in 1484. Sutton marshals an army of primary and secondary sources to calmly rebut the criticisms leveled at Richard III by "traditionalist" historians, such as Michael Hicks and A.J. Pollard—both of whom have accused Richard of being aggressive and disruptive to the traditional power structures of the northern borderlands. Sutton's evidence shows instead that he worked with the Earl of Northumberland and other borderland families cooperatively and with very little antagonism, and in fact, was viewed as the logical heir to his grandfather, Ralph Neville, first Earl of Westmorland in that he assumed the same estates and duties in defending the northwestern frontier.

The remaining 300 pages of text survey the borderlands and coastlines in great detail, starting in the extreme northwest part of England highlighting Carlisle and Penrith, running northeast along the Scottish border to Berwick, and then southward along the coast covering Scarborough to Hull on the Humber River. Sutton aims to identify every significant defensive earthwork, beacon, tower, and castle on this stretch of land, and to identify the families who—by hereditary or non-hereditary means—were tasked with garrisoning and maintaining them. The church is not overlooked either, as the great abbeys and their leaders (and, of course, Durham's prince-bishop) were benefactors to the kingdom's defense. Sutton describes the important towns, cities, and parishes in this extensive area, and the people who governed them. Through this analysis, she enables the reader to see the inter-connectedness between crown, church, gentry, and local government in the system of national border defense. Her narrative often centers around the figure of Richard of Gloucester, including how he leveraged his northern experience as duke, warden, king's lieutenant, and—eventually—as a king himself.

It might seem that this book is directed to only the very serious researcher or graduate student. However, a writer of historical fiction who is developing a timeline or setting a scene in the Scottish borderlands, or

along the northeast coast, might find it incredibly useful. The 50-page Index is arranged by name and place, making it easy to find information about particular families, locations, and events during the years of the Yorkist kings. The 27-page Bibliography is a treasure trove of resources for further study, including Cynthia Neville's refreshingly unbiased studies of the border law system and its administration, which Sutton quotes approvingly throughout.

For further information about this book, see Joanna Laynesmith's review in the September 2022 *Ricardian Bulletin* (pages 77-79). Laynesmith is visiting research fellow at the University of Reading, a well-respected medieval scholar whose biography on Cecily Neville has reached "definitive" status, and a member of the Society's Research Committee. This book, she writes, "is an exceptionally rich and rigorously scholarly account of much of Richard's lordship in the north of England" and "it rejects generations of negative assumptions created by scholars who had been trained to imagine Richard as power-hungry and manipulative. Instead, it plausibly gives Richard the benefit of the doubt, without elaborate apologetics [or any] attempt to build up alternative bogeymen."

This book can be loaned to any member of the American Branch by submitting your request to researchlibrary@r3.org.

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From the Editor

Please welcome Colleen Goos to the Assistant Editor staff, joining Diana Rubino. Both will assist me in sourcing articles and reviewing submissions. As a result, the article submission process has been modified from submitting to the Research Office to now submitting articles to Assistant Editor.

In the past, members have been able to advertise in the Register. Since I've been editor starting in 2011, I have received a handful of ads, mostly for member authored books. Since it's so under-used, we will no longer charge for member ads.

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