

# The RICARDIAN HERALD

Connecting our global community



*The magazine for the worldwide branches and groups of the Richard III Society*



### A YORK!

The Richard III Society was well represented at the Tewkesbury Medieval Fayre. Pages 10-12

## The board needs YOU in 2024

**Our society has members all over the world and is proud of that fact.**

However, one regret is that we have never been able to have a non-UK member on the old executive committee or current board. In the past this was due to logistical difficulties in that meetings were always in person in London. But times have changed, and the board now holds almost all its meetings via Zoom and corresponds via email.

This means that board membership is now open to all members, no matter where they live. Time Zone differences may prove a challenge, but this can be managed. Currently there are no vacancies on the board, so we cannot co-opt someone. But it would be great to have members, from anywhere round the world, offer their candidacy for the board at the 2024 annual meeting. Nominations are due by the end of July and forms will be included in the Bulletin.

**Please share this with any non-branch and group members you may know. For more information contact Jane Trump at [janetrump@btinternet.com](mailto:janetrump@btinternet.com)**



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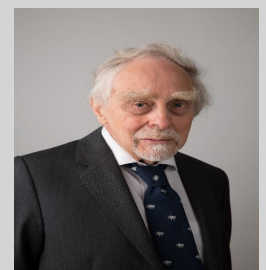
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### THAMES VALLEY GROUP

Informality, fun, loyalty



### Profile

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Princes and 1924...

## Reasons to celebrate

The year 2024 is nearly here. I can't believe just how quickly 2023 has been flying by! As branches and groups liaison officer, I always enjoy my interaction with you all via email but you can't beat meeting people face-to-face. Just recently I have had the pleasure of meeting up with quite a few of you. Back in September I took the opportunity of being on holiday in The Lake District to meet up with members of the Northern B&Gs (see my separate article on that on page 13) and I also met up with quite a few of you at the society AGM in Reading, including Susan Troxell and her husband, attending the meeting while on their UK holiday. Thank you to everyone who visited the branch and group stall. I spent a most enjoyable day in conversation with you all!

### Missing Princes - 'missing' no more!

There is a lot of excitement and much being written about the documentary and book on the fabulous results of Philippa Langley's Missing Princes Project so I won't dwell long on it. However, I had to give it a mention as it really has turned history on its head. (I know not all of you overseas have had the opportunity to see the documentary yet but hope it won't be too long until you can.) I am really looking forward to reading about the team's discoveries in more detail in the book. You really have to hand it to Philippa and her team!

### Celebrations

I am sure you are all preparing for and looking forward to various Christmas celebrations. Don't forget to send in photos to Sue Grant-Mackie for February's *Herald*! Let's have a collage of photos to share with the community just how good we are at celebrating!

Talking about celebration, how are the plans coming on with your 2024 celebrations? I have been sent some plans which look fabulous and would love to receive more. I am assuming therefore that final



**Jane, right, with Susan Troxell at the society annual meeting in Reading.**

touches are being made to other plans. If so, it would be good to let me know as soon as possible what is happening so that we can have a full calendar of events (July 6 and other dates if applicable) in the February *Herald* and March *Bulletin*. Even the simplest of activities is worth promoting to other society members.

### Be proud to be affiliated!

As affiliated branches and groups, you are representing the society when what you do is in the public eye, so be proud to be ambassadors for the society and 'fly the flag' for Richard. An easy way to do this and show your affiliation is to incorporate the Society Mission Statement in any materials used (including websites) and for the 'Dickon' logo to be present on these materials and banners, etc. It will give your branch or group that extra kudos of being part of a larger, well-known historical society. I will be sending your secretaries both the Mission Statement and logo for convenience.

**Jane Trump, branches and groups liaison officer**

*North Mercia Branch member Marion Moulton was the recipient of this year's Robert Hamblin Award. Marion established the branch and is a communications natural. She has an eye for a good story – literally, she featured in the first issue of the Herald after proudly shooting Henry Tudor in the eye. And she produces an amazing yearly calendar featuring Ricardian places. (For more on the calendar, see page 31) Her wit, humour and amazing Ricardian background inform many of the photos and stories she sends to the Herald – and thanks to Marion, Jack Clarke and his friends have become an international sensation. Here, Marion tells her story...*

## Society honours Marion Moulton

My interest in medieval history goes back to my primary school days. I was seven years old, in what is now year three, when I was introduced to the Battle of Hastings.

Fast forward to year five, and an introduction to local history extended my love of the medieval period.

In fact, before Richard III, I was known as 'Monastery Moulton' due to my fascination with monasteries and priories - another interesting area of the medieval period.

In July 1973 while teaching in Salisbury, I visited W.H. Smith's, which I used to do regularly. I spotted a Penguin book on the top of a ledge of a bookcase. The figure on



**Marion Moulton beside her stall in Nantwich Parish Hall at the branch's Dr John Ashdown-Hill social day this year.**

the front was in medieval dress, which was why I was drawn to it. I picked it up, read the spiel on the back and put it down again, but thought I wouldn't mind reading that sometime. A fortnight later on July 23, 1973, I went into W.H. Smith's again and



**Photo: The 2022 North Mercia Branch outing to Norbury in Derbyshire. The church contains the tomb effigies of the Fitzherbert family. Ralph Fitzherbert wears the collar of the Yorkist roses and the boar pendant - the only one in existence.**

saw the same book. This time I bought it, read it, and as the saying goes, the rest is history. That book was *The Daughter of Time* by Josephine Tey. It took me about four days to read, so this year on July 27, I celebrated being a Ricardian for 50 years! In the beginning I became positively boring about Richard III. He was almost my sole topic of conversation. Then a college lecturer friend said, 'there's a Richard III Society'. I was off on another mission - to find out how to join this

society. I achieved this on August 22, 1975, which was the 490<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Bosworth. I dragged my mother to the battlefield and our route from Cheshire took us into Shenton. We parked in Shenton, walked round, through Ambion Wood to King Richard's Well. There was quite a crowd of people there, but then we heard a gentleman saying he'd been a member of the Richard III Society for 30 years. He directed me to the Church at Sutton Cheney, where he said I would probably find the address of the society.

We were looking at the beautiful heraldic kneelers in the church, when three people walked in. One was a Blue Badge guide from Grantham, another a member of the American Branch and the other was Jean Townsend, who was soon to become the

secretary of the Lincolnshire Branch. Jean was wearing a badge and I asked her if it was the badge of the Richard III Society. She said it was. 'How do I join?' I asked. 'Leave me your name and address,' said Jean, and that was it.

We started to correspond and explored Ricardian Britain on numerous occasions when I went to visit her. While still living in Salisbury I joined the Wessex Group of the society and made two very good friends there, with whom I am still in contact. In my last six months in Salisbury, I was elected chairman for the group. Eventually I moved up to Grantham and became press officer for the Lincolnshire Branch until just before I retired. This connection with the Lincolnshire Branch was key in maintaining my interest in Richard III. The branch continued to grow, and I made a lot of lovely Ricardian friends. This time in my life served me in good stead when I retired and moved back to my roots in Cheshire and formed the North Mercia Branch, which will be 15 years old in 2025.

The North Mercia Branch is only the second Richard III Branch in the North West in almost 40 years. The first branch was the Greater Manchester Branch, which is not active at the moment. After the discovery of Richard's mortal remains, another very successful group was formed in Southport under the excellent leadership of Margaret Byrne. Between us we represent the North West and long may it continue.



**Marion celebrated being a Ricardian for 50 years in July this year. She holds an Eccles cake to toast Dr John Ashdown-Hill. Eccles cakes were one of his favourite tipples. "We always say 'cheers John' before we eat an Eccles cake!"**

The totally unexpected accolade of being awarded the Robert Hamblin Award was a very uplifting experience for me, but also very humbling. I have a lovely certificate, a money voucher and the memory of tumultuous applause, over 200 likes on Facebook within two hours of its announcement and more than 40 wonderful comments.

The society is entering exciting times, with the publication of Philippa's book on the missing princes, and the Channel Four Documentary and I am SO proud to be part of it all.

Our society currently has nine Fellows. The choice of Fellow honours senior Ricardians who have offered outstanding service to the work of the society or in the cause of King Richard. In this issue of the Herald, we introduce **Peter Hammond, of the UK.**

**Peter** is a medieval historian and leading authority on the reign of Richard III. For thirty years, he was the research officer of the Richard III Society and also recently for two years. He is known for his books Richard III and the Bosworth Campaign and Food and Feast in Medieval England, also recently The Children of Richard III. With the late Dr Anne Sutton, he wrote The Coronation of Richard III: The Extant Documents and Richard III: The Road to Bosworth Field. As an editor, he has compiled a new edition of Historic Doubts on the Life of Richard the Third by Horace Walpole. He has also written and contributed to other books and magazines on medieval and local history. The Ricardian Herald put some questions to Peter...

## Coronation manuscripts “my most important work”

**Q Could you walk us through what led you to Richard III and the society.**

Richard III first came to my attention in 1952 (I think) when I heard a radio programme by Hugh Ross Williamson, a historian and writer who later wrote a book with the title *Enigmas of History*, which included a chapter on the princes. What he said about the mystery of the princes interested me and when later I saw a letter in the *Times* about Richard III by Isolde Wigram, then secretary of the society, giving her address, I joined the society. This would be in the early 1960s.

**Q As a former member of the executive committee and a former president, and one of the first Fellows, what do you see as 1) your proudest moment/s and 2) the society’s key achievements through that time**

I will not mention the discovery of the bones of Richard III here because this was not driven primarily by the society – it was undoubtedly a key achievement though!

I am not now a member of the committee, although I did serve on it for nearly 30 years but I think my first proud moment and a key achievement of the society is the foundation of the Richard III and Yorkist History Trust. We had investigated the possibility that the society could become a charitable trust so as to be able to take advantage



of grants only available to charities. This proved impossible and so Carolyn and I proposed to Jeremy Potter, then chairman, that we investigate setting up a separate body to publish the books that the society was then planning and perhaps to take advantage of grants from other charities. This was done in 1985 as part of the quincentenary celebrations with a large grant from the society to enable it to start

straight away. I served as a trustee from its foundation, finally as chair for many years. Since its inception the trust has published many important books which may not otherwise have been published.

Another important achievement for the society was, I believe, the raising of the money for the Leicester statue, now standing at the front of the cathedral. This took a great deal of hard work in fund raising and was driven by Jeremy Potter. This undoubtedly helped to raise the profile of the society.

**Q What do you feel have been the toughest moments over those years, both on a personal level and for the society as a whole?**

I think tough personal moments were trying to fit society work round ordinary working life. Both Carolyn (who ran the library) and I used to get many letters a week, I had nearly 1,000 one year and Carolyn sent out over 1,500 items in her busiest year. For the society I think that I could say that there were no really tough moments, not more than would be expected in the life of any society.

**Q How do you see the position of the society within the academic community?**

I think that society activities over the past years, publication of academic works such as BL Harleian MS 433, the published work of members of the research committee, notably of course that of the late Anne Sutton, and other society members and the increasing academic quality of *the Ricardian* have led academic historians to accept that we are a serious historical society and not just a group of fans of Richard III. This is a position that we need to be careful to safeguard.

**Q What do you feel are the big challenges facing the society in 2023?**

I think the big challenge is to remain a respected society, whose approach to Richard is as an historical figure who must be seen in his context as a mediaeval figure. This does take a conscious effort so that we remain a broadly based society, allowing all views about Richard and his times.

**Q Looking at the society in 2023, and comparing it to the way it was in 1970, what do you feel are the biggest differences?**

That we have become a serious historical society as I say above. In the past while those who founded the Society were serious about wanting to show that the traditional view of Richard, derived from Shakespeare and More, was not soundly based, in fact the founders did not initiate any serious study of the period. I think that over the years this has changed to a more scholarly approach and we have raised our profile bringing ourselves to the attention of the academic community and are generally respected as part of that community.

**Q You were the society's first research officer. Can you explain why the role was created, and what did it involve? What do you feel are some key achievements of that role up to 2023**

The role of research officer was created by the constitution of 1970 and I became the first such RO under that constitution. The role was to draw together the research efforts of the society and with the research committee which I created, to discuss ongoing projects. As a committee the RO has not really produced any corporate work although group projects, such as recently the books of

mediaeval wills transcriptions have been brought together by groups of committee members.

**Q You are an editor and author of things Ricardian. Tell us what you think is your best work, and why.**

Undoubtedly my work with Anne Sutton in editing the existing manuscripts of Richard's Coronation is my most important work, I co-edited Harley 433 but my role in that was technical editing. Richard's coronation is one of the best recorded mediaeval coronations and probably the best attended, and a knowledge of this important event is valuable to all mediaeval historians.

**Q Have you watched *The Lost King*? What are your thoughts on this? What are your thoughts on the hunt for the lost princes?**

Yes, we have seen the *Lost King*. We found it rather an odd film. It is always difficult to make a film about actual events and real people without distorting the truth somewhat and someone seeing the film who did not already know the story of the search for Richard's burial place might have had difficulty following the action. The actress playing Philippa did not look anything like her which could have confused anyone who already knew her.

I am not taking a formal part in the Looking for the Princes project but like other research committee members have been answering queries from those who are working on the project.

**Q If you could have Richard III to dinner, what would you like to discuss with him once he'd had a wine or three? And, if you had a choice, who else from history would you like to dine with?**

Well of course we would want to ask him to tell us what actually happened after the death of Edward IV. Who else is tricky really, I am not sure, in this kind of situation if etiquette would allow anyone of lesser status to be there. Perhaps though we could ask the two princes to meet their uncle Richard. I do wonder though if any of them would want to talk to me!

**Q Is there anything else you'd like to discuss with members?**

How frustrating do they find it that all Ricardian sites are so far away? **VERY - editor**

**In the February issue of the *Ricardian Herald* we will meet Fellow Rob Smith, of New Zealand.**

**Kim Harding and Joanne Larner** joined the board this year. Here they chat about why they joined the society...

**Joanne Larner**

## Scoliosis intrigues osteopath

I became interested in Richard III after I saw the documentary *The King in the Car Park*. As an osteopath, his scoliosis interested me, and I was also intrigued by the diametrically opposed views of him. Up until then I knew nothing about Richard – I hadn't even seen Shakespeare's version, so I started with a clean sheet and began reading all I could about him.

Of course, I found that the more research I did, the more I came to believe that Richard was maligned by the Tudors. The unfairness of this has caused me to be a passionate defender of Richard's reputation, especially as it was Richard himself who championed the 'innocent until proven guilty' premise. It's ironic that he is often not accorded the same consideration.

I joined the society in 2015 and, soon after, the Mid-Anglia Group, as I live in Essex. I have enjoyed the local visits of our group to a wide variety of sites loosely linked to Richard.

I enjoyed and still enjoy reading novels about Richard because of the huge variety of stories that can be created, whilst still sticking to the known or likely facts, but they always ended sadly, with him dying at the Battle of Bosworth. I wanted to read a story where he won the battle, but I couldn't find one at the time, although there are now several. When I complained about this to my sister, she said, 'Well, write it yourself!' So, I did! I wrote the book I wanted to read and called it *Richard Liveth Yet*. I have since written two more follow-up novels and made it a trilogy. It resulted in a time-travel scenario – sort of *Back to the Future* with Richard III!



A fourth, *Distant Echoes*, was written to inform my readers of all the positive things Richard did that most do not know about, such as his laws and good judgments. This is quite a dry subject to recount, so I made it more interesting by incorporating some sci-fi and a paranormal element.

I have also written short stories and poems on various Wars of the Roses themes, and edited an anthology of short stories, written by twenty authors, called *The Road Not Travelled*. These were all 'What if...' stories, exploring situations which might have been but never were, the profits of the book going to Scoliosis Association (UK).

I have since also joined the Scottish and Yorkshire Branches and I attend several Ricardian events each year, such as the Middleham Festival and the Fotheringhay Carol Service.

I answer questions about Richard on Quora (and contest negative views about him). I also give a variety of talks to local groups such as the WI, U3A, etc, including one on Richard, geared to those who know nothing about him.

I think the society is definitely going in the right direction, especially the way we are now embracing modern technology, so that capturing the interest of younger people is more possible. I like the idea of more statues and plaques for Richard and correcting misinformation about him, which is why I wanted to join the board – to help where I can with these aims.

I believe views of him are changing – people I meet often say they don't think he murdered his nephews. In fact, one day I was sitting in my car, (which has a R111 personalised number plate and a magnetic portrait of Richard on the sides) when a lady knocked on my window. I rolled down the window and she said: 'He didn't do it, did he?'



Kim Harding

## Brat Farrar

I first became interested in Richard when, aged c.14, we studied Josephine Tey's book *Brat Farrar* at school. It is, I believe, her study of a Perkin Warbeck scenario, though I didn't know that at the time. I then read all her popular detective works, including *The Daughter of Time*. Around then, an actor I was keen on was in the BBC Shakespeare Henry VI (1,2,3) and Richard III so I watched those for the first time because of him. My tiny local library in north Sheffield happened to stock Jeremy Potter's *Good King Richard?* and after that, I found the address for the society and joined straight away. My interest – like that of many teens – was for injustice to be righted and, like many, I saw deliberate accusations against Richard which simply didn't square with what we see of the man. That sense becomes stronger the longer you are in this.

At first as a teenager, I joined the Rotherham group of the Yorkshire Branch, c. 1984 (I think!) but had no opportunity to be involved in a group again after university and when raising a family full-time. In 2013 Dr John Ashdown-Hill was speaking in Barney on the *Dig & Discovery*: a local Ricardian and myself took this opportunity to kickstart a new group in Barnard Castle, open to anyone within travelling distance: I had always been aware that even in the 1980s there were no groups close to Richard's beloved Dales. The Northern Dales RIII Group began as an independent group for a number of reasons – including the whole group's very strong feelings about the reinterment - and consisted of mainly folk with a brand-new interest in Richard. We focus on all our activities being promoted and open to the public, to engage anyone interested in history. Over a third of our current members are now society members - we actively and strongly

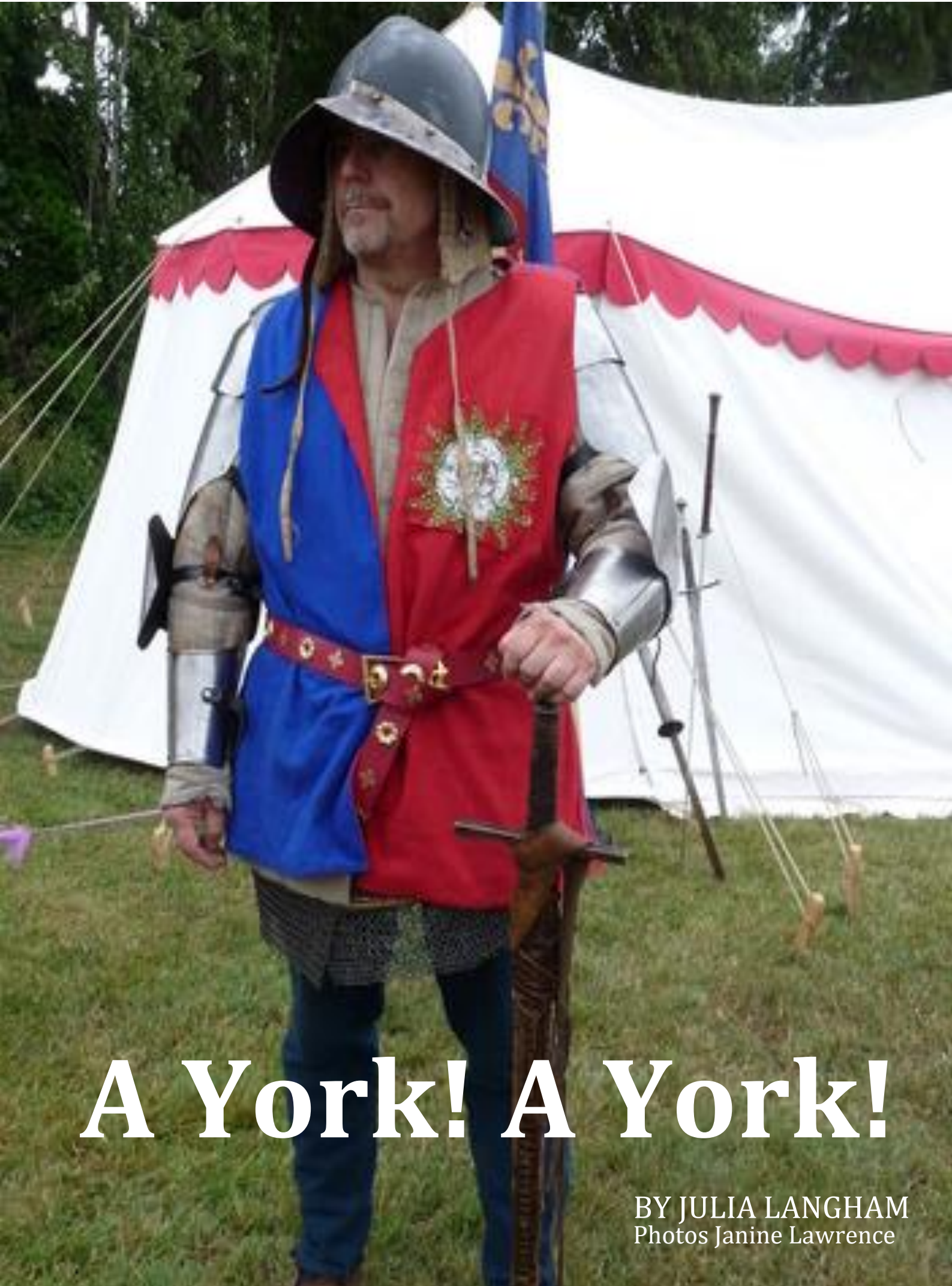


encourage this. I am also currently a member of the Yorkshire and Scottish Branches.

Philippa Langley invited me to put my name forward for the board – I would never have dreamed of it myself and I consider it an honour to play my part. I believe the society has a strong and impressive research tradition that has disseminated many

important texts – eg. Harleian 433, and recently, Buc's history – and such things as the palaeography course, and it has held Richard's memory high with memorial plaques and the statue, and 90 years ago the memorial window in Middleham. I like that there is now some popular outreach and engagement - like the new play commissioned for York Theatre Royal and the painting of the princes, even if it's not to everyone's taste: I've used it and seen it used and it's a good alternative to the "murderous" images of the princes. The website itself and the society's major online presence (including the education website) are huge achievements which have enabled large numbers of folk to join the society and learn about Richard.

I think the wider achievements of Philippa and the The Missing Princes Project and Matt Lewis's terrific engagement with the public add to this success. I believe greater openness would be positive: conferences, study days, branch and group meetings being open and advertised so interested people can come along: the more the merrier! Right now my home is St Mary's Barnard Castle, one of the five major Ricardian churches, which is a huge privilege and I have a chance to build up the profile of Richard in my corner of the world – it helps being married to the vicar, though!



# A York! A York!

BY JULIA LANGHAM  
Photos Janine Lawrence

# Flying Richard's banner at Tewkesbury

The Richard III Society was very well represented at the Tewkesbury Medieval Fayre in July. The Fayre is held every July, and is the largest free Medieval Fayre in Europe, attracting many reenactors and companies from across the UK and Europe.

Dave Fawcett and myself of the Events Committee, and my husband John joined Keith Stenner and other branch members of the Gloucester and Bristol Branch on their stall for the weekend.

I met many people interested in Richard III, and made 13 new memberships over the weekend. John, the new merchandise officer, sold a good variety of society items.

The Gloucester and Bristol Branch ran a second-hand book stall which was very popular and met potential branch members from the local area.

Marion Moulton and Norma Benathan of the North Mercia Branch (pictured right) had a stall which did a roaring trade in Ricardian t-shirts and horoscopes. Despite the weather (and a huge downpour on Sunday) the event was very well attended on both days and probably broke the record of how many people could squeeze into one marquee at one time! The society stands were either side of the main entrance to the large marquee, with banners strategically placed outside and inside the entrance, so visitors could not miss Richard III.



From left: Keith Stenner, Julia Langham, Dave Fawcett, John Langham. Dave Fawcett engaged with visitors to talk about Richard and offered children stickers and handed out leaflets.



In the living camp there were lots of activities, such as music, cooking demonstrations, falconry, and weapons and archery displays.

The highlight of both days for many visitors was the reenactment of the Battle on 4 May 1471 between the Yorkist forces led by Edward IV and his brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester with George, Duke of Clarence, and the Lancastrian forces led by the Duke of Somerset with Margaret of Anjou.

The victors were the Yorkists, triumphing over and routing the Lancastrians – and rightly so!

When the crowds went to view the battle many people took advantage of the lull to visit both stands to make more purchases and become a member. We unfortunately missed the reenactment each day but watched the march to the battlefield and joined in the cries of ‘A York, A York’.

It was lovely to see so many people enjoying their day out and finding out more about life in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and visiting the Branches’ stands to learn more about Richard III. We hope we changed many people’s opinion of this much maligned king.



My grateful thanks to Janine Lawrence for the use of her photos. Society members have given permission to be featured in this article.

# New Council of the North?

By Jane Trump

**Members of the Northern Branches and Groups met up in Carlisle recently.**

On September 13 I took the opportunity of being on holiday in The Lakes to meet up with representatives from branches and groups in Scotland and Northern England.

I was delighted that so many members from the Penrith and Northern Lakes Group, Yorkshire Branch, Scottish Branch, the North East Group, South Cumbria Group, Merseyside & West Lancashire Group and the Northern Dales Group agreed to get together for a social in Carlisle.

There were over 20 of us. I am indebted to Sue Scott-Buckleuch of the Penrith & Northern Lakes Group for making all the arrangements for lunch at the Tuille House Museum Café (which really did us proud).

Sue also gave a group of us a fascinating, fact-filled tour of Carlisle Castle afterwards. It was a great social occasion and I really enjoyed meeting everyone and having the opportunity to discuss how the various branches and groups were getting on and how the board could support them more. What I was very pleased to hear was how much everyone who attended also enjoyed the opportunity to meet up and socialise and those attending have discussed making this an annual occasion.

It would be great if I could do the same with other regions in the UK and will be in touch to see if we can make this happen.



**For those of you overseas, I would be very happy to join a meeting via Zoom if you would like a 'meet the BGLO session'.**

It would be fabulous if regional branches and groups got together annually to socialise and support each other. For those of you overseas, I would be very happy to join a meeting via Zoom if you would like a 'meet the BGLO session'.

**Jane Trump is branches and groups liaison officer. Her email is [janetrump@btinternet.com](mailto:janetrump@btinternet.com)**

# Your society website wants to hear from you

Have you looked at the society website lately? It is fabulous! Easy to navigate and packed full of information – historical and current. The website is visited by no end of people, worldwide so this is your chance to really promote yourselves – to members and potential members.

Apart from the branches and groups page under Membership, the website also promotes up and coming events. Some of the larger branches do post their events but there is nothing to stop all of you putting up any event you wish to promote.

The Communications Manager, Amanda Geary wants nothing more than for the website (and society social media) to be used by the branches and groups community. If you want something advertising or whatever you need promoting, she would love to help.

The contact email is: [comms@richardiii.net](mailto:comms@richardiii.net).

## International members sign up in Yorkshire

By **Graham Mitchell**

The branch has 136 paid-up members plus six who still have to renew, so 142 in all. The increase results from the new website, the film *'The Lost King'*, personal recruitment at 'Outreach' events and the new policy whereby the society passes details of new society members to their geographical branch or group. Yorkshire branch members are spread from Oban and Stirling to Cornwall and Kent, plus one each in Germany, New South Wales, Victoria and Louisiana.

We also have an Argentinian member studying in Oxford. Meeting face-to-face is limited and to keep members informed we use electronic circulation. If the 18 members not on internet have friends or relatives who are internet-connected, we could supply more, because in addition to our own branch newsletter we circulate:- the society *Ricardian Herald*, Scottish Branch *Court Journal*, *Chantry News* from Wakefield, *Affinity* from NSW and *Ricardus Rex* from Victoria.



**Graham Mitchell, Yorkshire Branch.**

# Monuments of the Wars of the Roses

By Sally Henshaw

A one-day colloquium was held at Leicester Guildhall on Saturday October 21. It was in honour of Mark Downing, the retiring President of the Church Monuments Society. The subject was chosen as Mark's particular interest is medieval military effigies. The Richard III Society, the Church Monument Society and the Monumental Brass Society joined together for what proved to be an excellent event.

The day was split into four sessions with two speakers for each session – **Monuments in Yorkist London; Status and Splendour; Burial and Commemoration.**

During the first session **Toby Capwell** spoke about the evolution of armour as depicted on tomb effigies and how this related to the Wars of the Roses. Some changes were cosmetic, while others were due to the functional demands of the armour. **Challe Hudson** talked about the fashions in ladies' headwear 1450s - 1480s and the differences between the English, French and Burgundian styles. Brass, stone and alabaster effigies help us to understand these changes. Following coffee, **Monuments in Yorkist London** was the next topic of discussion.

**Richard Asquith** began by telling us how Edward IV had knighted many Londoners after they had defended the city from the Bastard of Fauconberg in 1471. He went on to discuss the funerals and monuments of this group. **Christian Steer** spoke about where the Yorkist court chose to be buried in late medieval London and why. He mentioned the tomb of Katherine, Richard III's illegitimate daughter, in St. James Garlickhithe. After lunch **Status & Splendour** was the third session. Unfortunately, **Madeleine Gray** had been unable to make it due to the recent storm, so her paper was read



**Speakers, incoming and outgoing presidents at the Leicestershire Branch study day.**

by the new CMS President Moira Ackers. Madeleine discussed the Herbert tombs in Tintern Abbey. She was able to answer questions afterwards by 'phone. **John Lee** spoke about the brass of William & Elizabeth Fitzwilliam of Sprotbrough in Yorkshire. His talk also featured a letter from Richard Duke of Gloucester to William Fitzwilliam. Tea followed before the final session **Burial & Commemoration**. **David Lepine** examined the chantry chapel of Hugh Sugar, the treasurer of Bishop Stillington, in Wells Cathedral. Although it is unlikely that he is buried there, David considered it as a commemorative monument.

The final speaker of the day, **Nicholas Flory** discussed the burial of Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy. Her body was buried in the Observant Friars at Mechelen, commemorated with a double-sided monument, but her heart was taken to the Carthusian monastery church at Herne. The Guildhall staff could not have been more helpful especially with the serving of teas and coffees in the Mayor's Parlour. One of the speakers commented that

*"It was such a good day and there was such a nice atmosphere in the room. And the venue was absolutely brilliant - one of the best places I've ever spoken in!"*

**A full report will appear in the March edition of the Bulletin.**

## 'Informality, fun and loyalty'

The Thames Valley Group was founded as the Berkshire Group by Marie Morris in 1985. We changed our name to Thames Valley in 1993 and enjoyed branch status between 2001 and 2022.

Throughout these changes and all the years, we have remained a steady band, our watchwords being informality, fun and loyalty. However, we are not all frivolity. The group has provided the society with several EC/Board members and officers (Sales and Back Issues). We have also had members participating in the Wills Project and we are very proud that one of our members has been a recipient of the Robert Hamblin Award.

We have survived some lean times, with our numbers going down to five at one point, but those five members are still with us. We have always met at a member's house (currently in Wokingham) but that hasn't prevented us from welcoming such notable speakers as Michael Jones, Philippa Langley and our late chairman, Phil Stone. One of the most popular talks was given by the late John Ashdown-Hill about his then latest book, *The Third Plantagenet*.

The hostess's sitting room was packed to the gunnels with eager listeners so John sat on the floor with his laptop and entranced his audience from there.

We also benefit from having 'home-grown' speakers and talks by group members have included such varied subjects as Margaret Beaufort, the Woodvilles, Cecily Neville and the



**The mix of hennins and modern gas hobs proved to be a health and safety nightmare! We were all rehearsed to perform several dances, including the Farandole and a Basse dance called La Spagna.**





Stanleys. As a group we have reviewed books, adopted the persona of battlefield participants, and brought 15th century people into the 21st century to imagine what their current career might be.

Our field trips and outings have included tours of Lewes, Crosby Hall, the College of Arms, the Houses of Parliament plus St George's Chapel and the Archives at Windsor Castle. When the society chairman learned of our visit to the Archives, he suggested a report be written for the *Bulletin*. There was instant panic as no one had taken any notes!

Later trips have included Minster Lovell, Ewelme, Arundel, Warwick and Grafton Regis. We have visited the battlefields of Barnet (we got lost!), Bosworth (which of course saddened us), Mortimer's Cross (we sweltered and saw no parhelion) and St Albans (twice – one for each battle). Longer weekend trips have taken us to Sandwich, Cambridge, Ludlow and Ludford Bridge.

Some of our members even used to dress up for the Research Weekend's Medieval Banquets in Barley Hall. The seeds for this were sown in our early years when Taplow Church Hall was the venue for a riotous medieval Christmas celebration, complete with authentic recipes (the

mushroom patties became legendary) and a variety of homemade gowns.

The mix of hennins and modern gas hobs proved to be a health and safety nightmare! We were all rehearsed to perform several dances, including the Farandole and a Basse dance called La Spagna. We even had a one-page spread in the *Maidenhead Advertiser* which included a very positive spin on King Richard. The last few years have seen our numbers dwindle again but that doesn't diminish our spirit of fun and adventure

and we continue to enjoy in-house talks and trips out to places of Ricardian – or non-Ricardian but still historical – interest. We are all keen historians but more than that we are good friends who enjoy our pursuit of all things Ricardian.

We always welcome newcomers and look forward to the group expanding again.



**We have visited the battlefields of Barnet (we got lost!), Bosworth (which of course saddened us), Mortimer's Cross (we sweltered and saw no parhelion) and St Albans (twice – one for each battle).**



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## Impressions of Middleham Castle

**By Rosie Slawinska - North Mercia Branch**

With such an important place in history, especially for Ricardians, Middleham Castle is somewhere I had long wished to visit and it did not disappoint.

Approaching Middleham from Coverdale my first impression was how large and imposing the castle still looked surrounded by the beautiful North Yorkshire countryside. The first castle was built by Alan the Red, one of William the Conqueror's right-hand men, on nearby William's Hill to defend the Richmond to Skipton Road and control this part of Wensleydale.

Alan's descendants began to build the existing castle in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, and it was the powerful Neville family who from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century extended and altered the castle converting it into a palatial residence.

At its centre is one of the largest "hall keeps" (a keep consisting of a basement and one upper story) in the country. These impressive remains stand before you as you enter the castle and on the first floor is the Great Hall, the most important room in the castle, used for feasting and entertainment as well as for meetings and the administration of justice. Although floorless and roofless now it evoked thoughts of how it must have looked in the time of Richard and Anne, buzzing with visitors and nobles and the life and activities of that time. Tapestries on the painted walls would have given it an air of richness and splendour. As we explored further inside the castle walls we climbed the south east turret to take in the beautiful views. The whole place seemed to have a discernible atmosphere of tranquility and peace, maybe the heat helped.

# Needlework in England 1000-1570

## A brief overview

*This is an account of a talk on August 6, 2023 to the New Zealand Branch, given by Kaye Batchelor, with her friends Brenda Walker and Lesley Longhurst, who displayed examples of their crafts to illustrate the talk.*

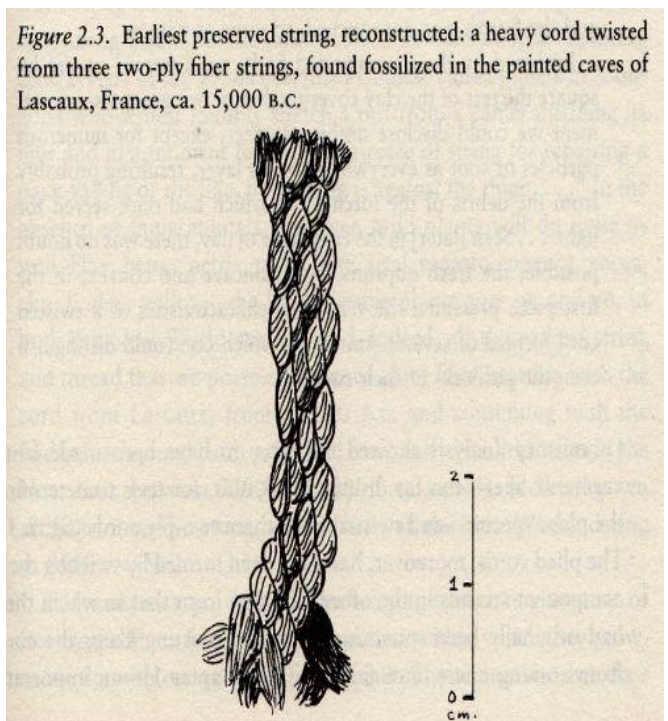
When we think about what noble ladies in Richard's time did with their 'leisure time,' delicate needlework comes to mind, at least to my mind. But we really don't know for sure. There are documented examples of medieval ladies being esteemed for their needlework, and some needlework including cross-stitch and tent stitch attributed to Mary Queen of Scots has survived. So, it is likely that the noble ladies of our period did practice needlework.

However, you don't get a talk from me without mentioning archaeology, so I am doing to do a brief recap of what is known about the development of needlework pre-1000 before I cover the years 1000-1570. Brenda Walker has examples of her own work illustrating some of the styles of needlework and Lesley Longhurst finishes with examples of other crafts.

### Prehistory

The impulse to decorate ourselves and our property is evident from prehistory.

- Neanderthals used pigments as decoration – recently markings using blown and smeared pigments have been found in caves in France that pre-date the arrival of homo sapiens to that region.<sup>i</sup>



Early humans painted art on cave walls, and probably themselves – tattooing is well represented from later mummified bodies.

- Many Venus figurines dating from 20,000 – 4000 B.C. show clothing of some kind, such as string skirts.<sup>ii</sup>
- The earliest preserved string was found as imprints in lumps of clay in the painted caves of Lascaux in France, dated to around 15,000 B.C.<sup>iii</sup>
- Fragments of a Neolithic linen cloth found in Irgenhausen, Switzerland dated to ca. 3000 B.C. show at least 3 colours used.<sup>iv</sup>

- The oldest complete linen garment found to date in Egypt (also ca. 3000 B.C.) shows shoulders and sleeves finely pleated, and a fringe decorates the neck opening.<sup>v</sup>
- Many bone needles have been found from archaeological contexts all over the world.

The concept of adding needle worked decoration to clothing was well established in parts of Europe by 1500 B.C. according to finds in Denmark.<sup>vi</sup>

The earliest needlework was practical, using fibrous materials to join skin and furs for clothing, and embroidery was used to strengthen parts subject to greater wear, such as under the armpits. From this basic necessity a sumptuous decorative art gradually emerged.<sup>vii</sup> The earliest decorative embroidery was probably Chinese or Indian, as silk has been cultivated in these regions for thousands of years.<sup>viii</sup>

### **Europe to 1100**

The spread of Christianity across Europe from the seventh century stimulated artistic expression and religious iconographical embroidery aided the propagation of scriptural stories.<sup>ix</sup> Access to silk fabric and thread became more available and the standard of needlework soared in places where time and conditions were right; noble houses and convents.<sup>x</sup>

In the seventh century, Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne, wrote a poem mentioning tapestry weaving and embroidery, worked by the women of England. From this period until the height of the medieval period, when highly organised professional workshops consisted of mainly male needleworkers, embroidery was chiefly the cherished prowess of Anglo-Saxon women, especially those of noble and privileged positions.<sup>xi</sup>

King Canute (1016-1035) is said to have presented altar-cloths worked by his first wife, Aelgifu of Northampton, to the abbeys of Croyland and Romsey. King Canute's second wife, Queen Aelgiva, gave an altar hanging with a gold border to the Abbey of Ely. Their daughter, Aethelswitha,

was also known for her gold embroidery and she made church vestments for Ely Cathedral "with her own hands."<sup>xii</sup>

William of Malmesbury wrote that King Edward the Confessor's wife Editha embroidered the mantle for his coronation in 1042. Queen Margaret, wife of Malcolm III of Scotland, was also a skilled needlewoman, embroidering various vestments and hangings.<sup>xiii</sup>

Beautiful examples of Anglo-Saxon embroidery survive in England, Belgium and France. Different techniques co-existed, from exquisite goldwork on linen to wool embroidery such as found on the Bayeux Tapestry.



The Bayeux Tapestry is an embroidery made in the years following the Battle of Hastings. It features coloured wool on linen fabric and depicts events leading up to the Norman Conquest in 1066. The stitches used are relatively simple and probably intended to be viewed from a distance.

These two pictures above show reproductions from photographs, embroidered by Brenda Walker.

Fine embroidery was not solely confined to convents and nobility. The Domesday Book, William I's survey of 1085-87 mentions the granting of land to a woman referred to as "Aldwin the maiden" by a sheriff Godric, as a reward for teaching his daughter the art of gold embroidery. It continued to be the favourite pursuit of Anglo-Norman ladies as well as professional embroiderers, both men and women.<sup>xiv</sup>

### *opus anglicanum*

The pinnacle of ecclesiastical embroidery was known as *opus anglicanum* ('english work') and was mostly carried out by men in workshops, especially from 1250 to 1350. Mabel of Bury St Edmunds, whose name has become synonymous with *opus anglicanum*, appears 24 times in the account books of Henry III (1216-1272) in the years 1239 to 1245, when she was engaged on several embroidery projects for the king. Other women's names also appear, so it is evident that some women continued to be professional embroiderers.<sup>xv</sup>

These rich pieces generally feature images worked in silk with a gold background or gold design elements. The gold background was usually laid using a technique called underside couching. Gold threads were laid in straight lines, often arranged to lie in two different directions perpendicular to one another. This arrangement and careful placement of the couching threads created subtle patterns ranging from a simple brick or chevron effect to trellises or other geometric patterns.

The best surviving examples of *opus anglicanum* are truly high-end embroideries, often originally commissioned by royalty or the pope.

To explore the techniques of *opus anglicanum*, Brenda Walker produced a small roundel featuring three hunting dogs, pictured on the right. "My main goal in creating this piece was to work out how to make a patterned gold background using underside couching. With normal topside couching, the decorative thread is laid on top of the fabric and held down by small stitches. With

underside couching, the decorative thread is pulled through the fabric by the couching thread with each anchoring stitch. The couching thread does not show on the front of the embroidery and a pattern is formed by the spacing of the places the decorative thread dips through the fabric."<sup>xvi</sup>

Medieval secular embroidery was as great in quantity as ecclesiastical, although fewer examples have survived. Even the Squire who went on the Canterbury pilgrimage was attired in needlework according to Chaucer:

*Embroidered was he, as it were mede  
Al ful of fresh floures whyte and rede<sup>xvii</sup>*

In 1364 a law was passed that the clothing of servants could not contain gold or silver embroidery. Craftsmen or yeomen could not wear silk, nor could their clothes be embroidered at all. I wonder how many people actually obeyed this law.

Needlework was considered an essential part of a noble lady's education. It was a privileged pastime, not available to all, since the materials were relatively expensive, especially metal threads. Ordinary women were limited to doing utility sewing.<sup>xviii</sup> Many ladies of high birth did enjoy



needlework. It was increasingly being used to decorate the edges and seams of the fine linen beloved of Europeans during the fifteenth century.<sup>xix</sup>

Although the quality of English embroidery had declined severely after the Black Death, during the fifteenth century the importation of foreign embroideries was more than once forbidden by statute to protect home production.

Little survives from this period, but this chasuble is an example - from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, dated to the late fifteenth century. It is silk and metallic threads on linen; appliqué on silk velvet foundation with silk embroidery and silver-gilt shot.<sup>xx</sup>



### Samplers

Samplers are known only from the early sixteenth century although they must certainly have been worked for quite some time before this. The privy purse expenses of Elizabeth of York, niece of Richard III and consort of Henry VII, record in 1502 the taking of 'en elne [45 inches] of lynnyn cloth for a sampler for the Quene to Windsor'.<sup>xxi</sup>

Early samplers were collections of designs probably recorded for later use. They were stitched haphazardly on the fabric and might be created by experienced embroiderers for the recording and exchange of designs. In 1509 an inventory of Joan the Mad, Queen of Spain, lists fifty samplers. Around 1523-40 the earliest pattern books started to appear with designs suitable for various styles of embroidery. These patterns can be seen on existing samplers from the time. By the seventeenth century samplers were moving away from their role of recording motifs and were becoming teaching exercises for girls to learn the accomplishment of needlework.<sup>xxii</sup>

The picture at right shows a sampler created by Brenda Walker of various designs using the

blackwork embroidery technique - a monochrome counted thread technique that uses geometric patterns.

### Cross stitch

Hardwick Hall, in England's Derbyshire, is home to a marvellous collection of late sixteenth century textiles, including examples of cross stitch. Originally acquired by Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury ('Bess of Hardwick'), these superb items have survived over 400 years and have now been catalogued in a beautiful book by Santina M. Levey.<sup>xxiii</sup> Among the items at Hardwick Hall are the Oxburgh Hangings. These are made up of numerous pieces applied to velvet and are attributed to Mary Queen of Scots, Bess of Hardwick and members of her household.

Cross stitch was used to create pictures as early as the 1570s. It could be worked by amateurs as a pastime. Designs might be copied from pattern books available at the time. The design was painted directly onto plain-weave linen fabric, could then be outlined in cross-stitch and the colours filled in. A wide range of coloured silks were used, varying tones were used to give a shading effect and two colours of thread might be



mingled to increase the colour range. The finished item was likely to be used as some sort of furnishing.



Brenda spoke about her cross-stitch example. “I chose an image (above) from The Medieval Sketchbook of Villard de Honnecourt.<sup>xxiv</sup> Villard was a thirteenth century French artist. While this particular image was not published in the sixteenth century, it is a clear outline drawing in a medieval style of an animal found in England at the time. I traced the design onto my fabric then stitched the outlines in black cross stitch. I chose my colours to match photos of mute swans. While these swans are generally white, their necks can become stained by tannins in the water. I liked this effect and thought it would give some contrast between the neck and body of my swan. I have experimented with some shading to add interest to the main body of the swan but wanted to keep this fairly simple. I have used bands of colour in the background to give a similar appearance to some of the Oxburgh Hanging images.”

## Other craft techniques

### Fingerloop braiding

Lesley Longhurst showed examples fingerloop braiding, taken from a fifteenth century treatise (Article 4, British Library Manuscript Harley 2320) which gives instructions for making forty different braids of



### Tablet weaving

The technique uses cards known as tablets, usually square with one hole in each corner. Each card produces a cord-like structure, with the

varying complexity. Braids such as these were used for a variety of purposes during the medieval period; lacing clothes, purse strings, decorative trim and seal tags.<sup>xxv</sup>

## Tapestry



There were multiple uses of the word tapestry, and it was often confused with embroidery (e.g., Bayeux Tapestry which is an embroidery). Large tapestries were used in castles and other stone houses to create an insulating air gap. They were also known as “arras” because the town of Arras was the centre of the industry during the late Middle Ages and Renaissance.

The technique is “weft-faced,” i.e., the weft thread that is woven in and out completely covers the warp threads which are not seen at all. Modern tapestry uses the same techniques but in smaller formats.

Lesley showed her work in progress of a modern design but using traditional technique.

cords held in place by the weft thread. Patterns are produced by varying the rotation of the cards. Tablet-woven items, and work in progress items have been discovered in graves going back to the Viking era. Lesley showed us a tablet-woven bookmark. Kaye also produced examples of her embroidery (pictured right), including a black and gold work inspired Tudor piece and a cross stitch White Rose of York.

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# *What did the duke say to make a king?*

By Annette Parry – New Zealand Branch

**Dateline, London, 1483.** It's all been go here in the capital in the last few weeks. After the late king's death in April (God have mercy on his soul) and the Duke of Gloucester (as was) protector for the Lord Bastard (as now is) and the revelation that King Edward was not married to Dame Elizabeth Grey, we now have a new king – Richard III. God save the King!

An important player in the last few weeks is the dishy Henry Stafford, second Duke of Buckingham. Henry is 28, very wealthy and married (sorry, girls) to Katherine, sister of Lady Grey. He caught up with King Richard at Northampton at the end of April (it seems so long ago) and they arrested the treasonous Lord Rivers, who had been corrupting rather than guarding the young boy we knew as the Prince of Wales.

We believe Lord Rivers is facing trial in the north and will soon answer for his crimes. He entered London with the Lord Protector and the boy we erroneously believed to be King Edward V, on May 4, and we all marvelled at the sight of three who were known of, but not known well, in the capital. Harry Buckingham is royal because his father is descended from Edward III's youngest son. He is also related to the royal family as the King's mother the dowager Duchess of York is his grandmother's sister. His mother is the cousin and name-sake of Lady Stanley, who is the daughter of the oldest son of the grandson of the old Duke of Lancaster.



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*An important player in the last few weeks is the dishy Henry Stafford, second Duke of Buckingham. Henry is 28, very wealthy and married (sorry, girls) to Katherine, sister of Lady Grey.*

Interestingly, Lady Stanley's first husband was the brother of King Henry VI. He has large estates in Wales (but he is English) and is the heir general to the De Bohun lands. Duchess Katherine is a lucky lady. We know that preparations for the coronation were going ahead and that the Lord Protector (as was) had granted some offices and lands to the Duke.

Government was going smoothly. The Duke of York left his mother's care to join his brother in the Tower in preparation for the Coronation. Then, last Sunday, Dr Ralph Shaa preached at St Paul's Cross on the text "That bastards slips shall not take deep root". He explained that of the three sons of the late Duke of York, only Richard,

named for him, was English born. And that Richard has the character and ability to wear the crown. He is the true heir of his father as the late king left no legitimate children, the Duke of Clarence is barred by his treason and attainder so our true king is Richard III.

It was a shock to those of us who were there (or heard about it later as we left our own more private devotions). Shock, yes, but not a surprise as the late King Edward was a well-known lecher and no-one should be surprised that he had promised marriage to several women, including Lady Grey, and “married” them in secret. Only God knows who our rightful queen is or was.

On Monday, the Duke spoke to the Lords – noble and spiritual. He explained again as to why the Lord Protector deserved the crown. On Tuesday, the Duke spoke again. I was present at the Guildhall where he awed us at his conviction and his eloquence. He spoke for over an hour, some say longer, and it was something I shall never forget. I was too far back to hear what he actually said but was impressed as he never seemed to draw breath, take a drink or even to spit.

I spoke to some who stood closer to the Duke. Abraham said that he was disappointed that the Duke did not give a “shout out to the Jews as they pay for this country”. Jehan (a Fleming) said that he didn’t understand a lot as he does not speak much English but felt that England and Europe should be closer with good trading relationships and was disappointed that the Duke did not talk about trade. John (a carter) told me that he wished that he could remember what the Duke said as he had never heard any man, learned or unlearned, speak as well as he did.



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*He caught up with King Richard at Northampton at the end of April (it seems so long ago) and they arrested the treasonous Lord Rivers, who had been corrupting rather than guarding the young boy we knew as the Prince of Wales.*

“I really understood why the King wasn’t the king and the Duke wasn’t the duke. I wish I could remember what he said – it all made sense at the time”. Juliet (cook-shop worker) told me that the Duke of Gloucester had rescued the Duchess from her cookshop years ago (the woman is clearly mad) but went on to say that “Rich people, Dukes and that, they think different to real folks. If I found out that my Edward had been “married before”, I would have called the girl out and taught her a lesson that she wouldn’t forget in a hurry. That Elizabeth, she knew something but just hoped it would never get out”.

The news that King Edward V is not a true king has spread like the plague and we all hope and pray that King Richard, the start of whose reign has been murky, will reign long and happily. The king is blessed to have a staunch supporter as the Duke of Buckingham in the upcoming weeks, and in the years to come. Rumours of the Duke’s plans for his coronation robes are rife – watch this space.

*This story was used in one of the Notts & Derby Group lockdown cyber magazines, that issue being titled Who Dunit in which members gave their own take on the princes' so-called "murder". Of many theories, Patricia's was the only short story - which was of course written before Philippa Langley's latest discoveries were broadcast. Patricia has published five contemporary novels and a collection of short stories. Anyone interested in reading more of Patricia's work can find links on her Facebook page "Patricia Greasby Author". Her work is available on Amazon and e-reader outlets.*

# Princes Edward and Richard

by Patricia Greasby

Anne Neville, in a rare moment alone with her husband, sensed his disquiet and put a hand on his arm. 'It has been difficult for the boys to adjust,' she told him. 'Edward's attitude does not help his general wellbeing.'

'Adjust he must,' Richard confirmed, 'if he wishes to continue to enjoy my protection. There are those who wish to use him for their own advantage, and I must ensure they have no opportunity to seize him.'

'The boys are surely safe here, in the Tower.'

'They cannot stay here indefinitely.'

'Then they must be sent north to continue their education with our own son.'

The naivety of her suggestion became apparent as her husband turned his back. Her perception of his mood prompted her withdrawal.

'My Lord, I have done my best, but the poison is already in his system. Lord Edward remains languid, he refuses to go outside and daily seeks remission of his sins.'



**'There are those who wish to use him for their own advantage, and I must ensure they have no opportunity to seize him.'**

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**'The boys are surely safe here, in the Tower.'**

**'They cannot stay here indefinitely.'**

The king paced the length of the room, incessantly twisting the ring on his little finger.

'Return to your patient Doctor.' To a nearby manservant he said, 'Fetch Sir James Tyrrell.' Richard scooped up a goblet which was immediately refilled by an attendant. He waved the young man away as Sir James was admitted. 'Is all prepared?'

'It is, my Lord. A ship will dock at —'

Richard silenced Sir James with a look. 'I leave on Progress within the week. The timing of the enterprise, after my departure, I entrust to your judgement.'

'The Constable?'

'Brackenbury awaits your word.'

Sir James bowed. 'It will be done, my Lord.'

Sir James Tyrrell accepted a ring of keys from the Constable of the Tower and with two attendants strode along a bare stone corridor; an occasional pitch torch, resting in an iron bracket, shed intermittent light, causing shadows to grow and diminish as the men passed.

Inserting a key into a sturdy oak door, Sir James pushed it open. Flames in a small brazier shed flickering light on a modest canopied bed. A boy, in rough day clothes of doublet and hose, legs dangling over the edge of the bed, stared, owl-like, at the intruders.

Sir James shook out a woollen blanket and wrapped it around the boy's shoulders, indicating for his manservant to lift the child. The man, with the child tightly swaddled, stood back allowing the second man to approach. Sir James spread another blanket on the bed and put a hand on the shoulder of another boy who rolled over to face him. The boy, flushed, his day clothes damp with perspiration, shrank away as if in fear. Sir James stood back and exchanged a concerned glance with his manservant before motioning for him to wrap the boy in the blanket.

At the exit from the dimly lit passage, Sir James handed the keys back to the Constable. Timed for minimum moonlight, Sir James was glad of Brackenbury's knowledge of the narrow, cluttered ways leading to St. Thomas' Tower and access to the river.

A boat bobbed at the base of the steps, two bundles handed over, secreted in the depths of the vessel.

Under cover of twilight, a baggage wagon rumbled into the bailey of Sheriff Hutton castle. The outrider dismounted and spoke quietly to the steward, Ralph Upton, who directed the driver to a corner tower.

Ralph instructed approaching servants to take care of the horses and then waved them away. 'I will supervise the unloading of the king's personal belongings.'

The driver of the wagon relinquished the reins to a stable boy and jumped down. He joined his companion, who had pulled aside a canvas curtain at the rear and was rummaging inside. Miles grunted as he hoisted a heavy, rolled tapestry, he handed it to John who slung it over his shoulder. Miles lifted a second roll with more care and followed John to where the steward held open an iron studded door.

At the top of a stone, spiral staircase Ralph directed them to a roomy chamber, the last rays of the setting sun filtering in from an unglazed oriel window.

First one, then the other rolled tapestry was dumped on the curtained bed.

John Dighton took out his knife and sliced a cord. The



tapestry unrolled, a dishevelled boy pushed his way out, sat up and spluttered, 'You said it wouldn't take long. I've been in here ages.'

'Hush boy.' Dighton ruffled the lad's fair hair. 'You have ridden up front with me most of the way.'

The boy leaned across and shook the second rolled tapestry. 'Edward.' He turned to Dighton. 'Give me your knife.'

John Dighton relinquished his weapon and watched Richard sawing at the rope. 'Wait. Give me the knife. Here,' he lifted the boy from the bed and set him on his feet.

Catching John's concerned look, the castle steward said, 'Take him to the kitchen, Master Forrest, get him some food.' He waited as they left the room. 'What is it Master Dighton? What's wrong with the other boy?'

'He is sick.' With a single action, John sliced through the cord.

'You are wrong, Dighton,' Ralph Upton declared as they unrolled the heavy cloth. 'The boy is dead.' After a moment the steward went on, 'Though this eventuality is most inconvenient for us, it has solved a problem for our Sovereign Lord.'

'He will be missed by his brother,' said Dighton. 'So far he has been pleased to get from under the skirts of his mother and sisters. He's treated this whole affair as an adventure.' After a few moments of heavy silence, John added, 'Far from solving the problem, it is doubled.'

'Indeed.' The enormity of the situation appeared to settle upon the steward.

'Perhaps,' Dighton said, 'you will give consideration as to how we ... we can ... dispose of —'

'I understand.'

'There are boys in the tiltyard,' young Richard declared. 'May I not go down and practice with them?'

'Come away from the window,' Miles Forrest told him. Forrest cast three dice across the table and swore vehemently when the numbers totalled a mere nine.



Dighton scooped the wooden cubes and rattled them in a leather cup.

'Come and roll the dice for me,' he called to the boy.

Richard sauntered over and taking the cup, shook it vigorously

before tipping out the dice.

'Thirteen,' he shouted joyously after counting the spots. A timorous, 'What?' added when the men were silent and shot sidelong glances at each other.

'That's good,' Dighton forced a light-hearted tone. 'Anything over ten is good. Come on Miles, pay up and look cheerful.'

Miles begrudgingly tossed a couple of coins across the table.

At that moment Ralph Upton entered the chamber and John said, 'Take the boy to get some fresh air on the battlements, Miles. Set up a butt and let him practice his archery.'

'But why can't I ...' drifted back from the corridor as Miles left with his charge.

Ralph Upton surveyed the gaming table. 'I hope that isn't an omen for our forthcoming enterprise,' he remarked on seeing the score of thirteen.

'That depends upon you, Master Upton.'

'Ah,' Ralph Upton sat at the gaming table opposite John. 'I have spoken to the old priest —'

John shot him a fierce glare. 'It is not good to involve more people than necessary.'

'Be assured,' Upton soothed, leaning forward and lowering his voice. 'The priest is of great age and not in total control of his wits. He is prone to wandering at night, seeing the spirits of his long dead family. Anything he might mention will not be believed.'

John waited for further enlightenment.

'There is a tomb, several hundred years old, recently brought into the church from outside. The weather,' he explained, 'was taking a toll on the rather excellent carvings. As it was being moved the lid was dislodged and ... I considered this might be

an excellent resting place for ... a certain, recently deceased, young gentleman of your acquaintance.'

John leaned back in his chair and rubbed his chin.

Outside the church John Dighton lifted a bundle from a handcart. An observer might have wondered why, under the direction of the castle steward, a sack of root vegetables was being delivered to the priest, during the darkest hour of the night...

The priest carried a single taper which illuminated the nave the mere length of a man's stride around a cortège of three. They halted at the tomb.

'It is said 'tis a boy whose father came over with the Conqueror,' Ralph whispered. He took hold of a corner of the lid and motioned to Miles to do likewise.

At first John believed it would not move but with muscles straining, Ralph and Miles shifted the lid, at first opening no more than a slit, then, it ground and grated to reveal its dark interior.

Through a gap, just large enough, John laid his bundle carefully atop the wooden coffin already encased in the tomb. He arranged the limbs, now past rigor, carefully and covered Edward's body with the canvas sacking, pulling it over the boy's marble-like features.

'It must be sealed,' John whispered.

'I will order the mason carrying out repairs to seal it before he starts work elsewhere. He knows it was damaged when moved, he will suspect nothing.'

Ralph beckoned the priest who muttered, 'Requiem æternam dona ei, Domine. Et lux perpetua luceat ei: Requiescat in pace,' before signing the cross over the tomb.

The men responded, 'Amen.' On an evening tide, a ship rode at anchor in the harbour at Scarborough.

'What's wrong with the boy?' Miles asked.

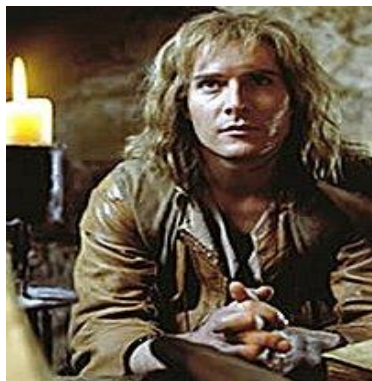
'Since the death of his brother he misses his mother and sisters,' John told him.

'Many a lad has left home afore his age, apprenticed or to join the henchmen in a lord's household. He's fortunate there's a new family waiting for him and a trade to learn.'

'Aye, fortunate indeed.'

'So, what troubles you?' Miles added as they watched the ship hoist sail and leave the harbour.

'The last thing he said was that one day he'd return.'



Mark Umbers as Perkin Warbeck/Duke of York in "The Princes in the Tower" by Channel 4

## Digital version of Richard album

Ian Churchward, of the band Legendary Ten Seconds, has produced a new digital version of the *Tant le Desiree Richard III* album which is available on Bandcamp.

This new digital version includes the narratives which were written and read by Sandra Heath Wilson and these were not previously available in digital format via Apple music and Spotify etc.

Although the album was originally released several years ago the recorded narratives were only included on the CD version of the album.

Here is a link to the album on Bandcamp where the narratives can be heard at the beginning of track number 2 (The Ragged Staff) through to the last song number 15 (The Road to Middleham). There is no narrative for the first song on the album: -

<https://thelegendarytenseconds.bandcamp.com/album/tant-le-desiree>

## *Calendar celebrates all places Ricardian*

Every year North Mercia Branch founder Marion Moulton creates a Ricardian calendar, featuring places of Ricardian interest. Marion works with a skilled editorial team, who insist on nothing but pawfection.

Jack and Bran are branch co-mascots – among other key duties. Jack devotes a lot of his time to major projects such as the calendar. He was particularly interested in the recent findings of the Missing Princes Project and made an excellent point: ‘Why weren’t they microchipped?’ Well, excellent point Jack, why weren’t they? It would have saved a lot of time and trouble...

Bran enjoys hosting guests. For instance, he was on duty to listen to society chairman Matt Lewis give a talk on Richard’s coronation. Bran is the companion of branch chairman Richard and wife Fran. Branch pawparrazi - Jack’s companion Jane - suggests Bran is well-behaved, Jack not so much. So, they complement each other.

Meanwhile the branch calendars are available for £10 each, which includes postage and packing. Send a cheque made out to The Richard III Society North Mercia Branch, to: Miss Marion Moulton. 6 Shrewbridge Crescent, Nantwich, Cheshire. CW5 5TF and include address details or e-mail her for branch bank details.  
TEDANDBESS1943@GMAIL.COM



**Above: Final sign-off on the 2024 Ricardian Calendar. Editorial team Marion and Jack.**

**Right: Bran listens to Matt Lewis talk at a branch meeting.**



**Left: Hawes Church, built on the site of the church Richard himself paid for so the people in Hawes would have a church. Above: Sheriff Hutton Castle Gatehouse, with the Neville coat of arms. Both images are among those featured in the North Mercia Branch Ricardian calendar 2024.**

Out and about...

# Calendar of Events

Some branch events for the next quarter. If other branch and group members would like to attend, get in touch with the branch contact in advance so they know you are attending.

## AMERICAN BRANCH

**3 December 2023 / 12:00 EST**  
**Zoom Talk**

“Richard III’s Bodies” - ‘Richard III is a disability icon.’ Addressing both the man and the myth, this talk will explore the aspects of disability that Richard III may have encountered in his life as well as those which shaped his legacy during the century that led up to Shakespeare.

Dr Jeffery Wilson, Harvard University

**MORE INFORMATION: via American Branch**  
**Website: <https://r3.org/events-gmm/>**

## CANADIAN BRANCH

**14 January 2024 - Zoom Talk**  
“Richard Three – a play about Richard and disability”  
Patricia Allison (External Speaker)

**11 February 2024 - Zoom Talk**  
“Margaret of York: “Henry’s Diabolical Duchess” Juliet Howland

**MORE INFORMATION: via Canadian Branch**  
**Website: <https://www.richardiii.ca/general-membership-information/>**

## GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL BRANCH

**Saturday 3 February**

**Zoom Talk**  
Title TBA Toni Mount

**CONTACT: Claire Arnold - Tel 07730 404740 /**  
**Email [claire.arnold@sky.com](mailto:claire.arnold@sky.com)**

## LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES BRANCH

Saturday 16 December - Croydon Group  
Christmas lunch

Saturday 24 February - London Branch meeting

**CONTACT: Elizabeth Nokes - Tel 01689 823569 /**  
**Email [e.m.nokes@gmail.com](mailto:e.m.nokes@gmail.com)**

## MERSEYSIDE AND WEST LANCASHIRE GROUP

**20 January 2024 - Group Discussion**

Group discussion about the revelations of Philippa Langley’s book published in November 2023 *The Princes in the Tower: Solving History’s Greatest Cold Case*.

Also: A bring and buy book sale



## **MERSEYSIDE AND WEST**

### **LANCASHIRE GROUP (continued)**

**17 February 2024 - Talk in person**

*Lovell Our Dogge. A look at the life of Francis, Viscount Lovell (Part 1)* Margaret.

Part 2 of this talk - consider what might have happened to Lovell after the Battle of Stoke will take place in November 2024.

**9 March 202 - Presentation in person**

*Manors, their courts and their records.* Dr Alan Crosby

**CONTACT: Margaret Byrne – Email**  
[margaret.byrne58@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:margaret.byrne58@tiscali.co.uk)

## **NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH**

**Saturday 9 December**  
**Talk in Person**

“Communication in the Middle Ages” Judy Howard

**CONTACT: Rhonda Bentley - Email**  
[info@richardiii-nsw.org.au](mailto:info@richardiii-nsw.org.au)

## **NORTH MERCIA BRANCH**

**Saturday 2 December**  
**Christmas Lunch**

**CONTACT: Marion Moulton - Tel 01270**  
**623664 /**  
**Email [tedandbess1943@gmail.com](mailto:tedandbess1943@gmail.com)**

## **ADELAIDE SOUTH AUSTRALIA BRANCH**

**Saturday 3 February**  
**Talk in Person**

Katherine Swynford - Vicky Horwood

**CONTACT: Susan Walladge – Email**  
**[walladge@internode.on.net](mailto:walladge@internode.on.net)**

## **WORCESTERSHIRE BRANCH**

**Saturday 9 December**  
**Social**

Bring and Share lunch - 12pm, Upton Snodsbury

**Saturday 13 January**  
**Zoom Talk**

"Battle of Towton" Chris Berendt

**Saturday 10 February**  
**Zoom Talk**

"Buckingham and his rebellion" Steve David

**CONTACT: Jane Tinklin – Email**  
[jane.tinklin@outlook.com](mailto:jane.tinklin@outlook.com)

## **YORKSHIRE BRANCH**

**Saturday 2 December 2023:**

**Presentation “The Missing Princes Project”**

A presentational update on The Missing Princes Project given by Philippa Langley MBE, The Yorkshire Museum, Museum Gardens, Museum Street, York,

Entry to the presentation will be by ticket only.

£5 per head for a Member of the Richard III Society or a Branch or Group thereof.

£10 per head for non-members.

Tickets available from the Yorkshire Branch via the 'Contact Us' section of their website.

**Saturday 30 December 2023: The Battle of Wakefield Commemoration**

The traditional commemoration of the deaths of Richard Duke of York and Edmund Earl of Rutland will take place on Saturday 30th December at 2.00 pm at the Duke of York’s Pillar on Manygates Lane, Wakefield and afterwards at The Chantry Chapel on Wakefield Old Bridge. Members may like to meet for refreshment at the family-run, dog-friendly cafe in the grounds of Sandal Castle beforehand.

**CONTACT: Graham Mitchell – Tel 01535**  
**645454 / Email [rgm@dockroyd.co.uk](mailto:rgm@dockroyd.co.uk)**



## **Mission Statement**

'In the belief that many features of the traditional accounts of the character and career of Richard III are neither supported by sufficient evidence nor reasonably tenable, the Society aims to promote in every possible way research into the life and times of Richard III and to secure a reassessment of the material relating to this period and raise awareness of the role in history of this monarch.'