

The RICARDIAN HERALD

Connecting our global community



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



Yorkshire Branch member Maria Grazia Leotta was among the many conference attendees who didn't miss the opportunity to take a selfie with Richard.

Century honoured, reputation rewritten

Richard never lived to experience the selfie, but his reconstruction was incredibly popular for this purpose at the Society's recent annual meeting and conference. In this issue we cover some of the key events, including Chair Amanda Geary's report on 2025 as a year of celebration and breakthroughs. We hear from speakers Tobias Capwell, who reenacted Richard's final charge, and Carol Wilkinson, who unveiled tech advances in facial reconstruction and voice animation. Meanwhile we share an in-depth chat with Richard's body double, Dominic Smee, who was also at the conference. Pages 2-10

Media darling Lord Stanley also attended the conference. Check out pages 47 and 48 where he chats about his adventures.

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BOOKS FREE

Copies of the recently published *The Ricardian Century – A History of the Richard III Society*, are on offer free to all Branches and Groups.

p 28-29

AFTER BOSWORTH

The Gloucester and Bristol Branch explores the downfall and fate of Richard's relatives after Bosworth.

p 38-43

OUR MEMBERS

The Society comprises so many talented people. Here's a spotlight on two of them.



Richard's body double

Dominic Smee offers an insight into his journey with Richard, and what it has meant to him on a personal level. Pages 8-10



Rich history

Former Chairman Shirley Stapley recounts the vibrant 51-year history of the Devon & Cornwall Branch of the Richard III Society, from its humble beginnings in 1979 to its flourishing present-day membership. Pages 14-18



The New Zealand Branch presents an in-depth profile of the amazing Margaret of Burgundy. Pages 20-25

Annual General Meeting 2025...

Society Secretary and acting Branches & Groups Liaison Officer Jane Trump reports back from the recent annual meeting in Leicester. She highlights some major events of 2025, including a breakthrough in how Richard is perceived by the media. Yorkshire member Maria Grazia Leotta took the photos.

Times turns the tide on Richard's reputation

Deputy Chair Philippa Langley opened the meeting. It was a huge shame that Amanda Geary had to miss her first AGM as Chair due to illness. Graham Mitchell was invited to read the Society Mission Statement to the meeting.

Philippa read Amanda's address to the meeting. An important 'first' highlighted was the appointment of a female Chair. She said it was a great honour to follow in the footsteps of such notable predecessors as Jeremy Potter, Phil Stone and Matthew Lewis.

The Ricardian Century

A phenomenal achievement, given how the Society has developed from small beginnings to the large and highly respected historical society it is today, with the special celebration at the College of Arms in London being attended by our Patron, His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester, who ensured that he spoke to everyone present that night.

10th anniversary of King Richard's reburial

Week-long celebrations laid on, made even more special by the coming together of Ricardians from around the globe.

Significant media breakthrough

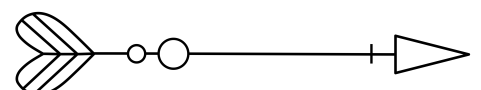
The Times newspaper published an editorial in which it stated: '... in the court of public opinion the last Plantagenet king may have been subjected to one of the greatest miscarriages of justice in history'.



The Times newspaper published an editorial in which it stated: '... in the court of public opinion the last Plantagenet king may have been subjected to one of the greatest miscarriages of justice in history'.

This was a remarkable about-turn to the often negative 'evil uncle' caricature propagated by the media.

After a follow up letter to *The Times* from the Society was published, Amanda received an email of congratulations from the Duke of Gloucester's Private Secretary. Hopefully this indicates a move in the right direction towards a fairer reporting of King Richard and of Ricardian studies.



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A year of change

Significant changes in the Board were highlighted, including a new finance team: Neil Trump as Treasurer and David Withers as Finance Manager. Dr Christopher Tinmouth had retired earlier in the year and Gabriella Williams was also leaving the Board but remaining as Distribution Manager. She was thanked for her tireless work. Amanda then took the opportunity to highlight the lack of volunteers. She put out a plea to members to consider how they could help the Society and to come forward.

Financial situation

The large reserves from 2019 had been whittled down as agreed at the AGM in that year. Unfortunately, the speed of cost increases had led to the current situation where the Society needed to get back to a position of financial security. Several changes and cost savings have been made. Big savings have been made on new member packs and membership cards, along with the AGM not being streamed live and replaced by a recording. Amanda gave thanks to her husband, Malcolm, for undertaking that task free of charge.

Bursaries

Bursaries will be reduced due to the need for financial savings, although the Society will still be giving two bursaries at the Fifteenth Century Conference. The Society aims to continue the incredibly important funding of bursaries as soon as possible.

Schools Conference

The Conference is now self-funding and goes from strength to strength, proving the academic worth of the Society and encouraging new young Ricardians. Amanda thanked the Education Officer, Duncan Rowe who has had to step down and our former Education Officer, Iain Farrell and the rest of the Education Team for stepping into the breach.



The Ricardian – online only

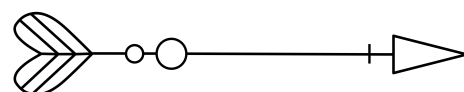
The Ricardian will be online only in 2026 and possibly beyond. Knowing this would not be a popular move with all members, the Board had not taken the decision lightly, but was helped by the knowledge that many academic journals now choose to go down the digital only route. However, on the understanding that some members wish to retain a hard copy, the Board will be keeping a close eye on the situation.

AGM 2026

This will be online only with a separate Members' Day, now becoming a Richard III Convention. The aim is to make voting as easy as possible for all members worldwide. The first of the Richard III Conventions will be held in Nottingham in September 2026. There will be a small fee to attend but it promises to be a very special event.

You Tube Channel

This has been used to maximum effect this year. As well as footage of Society events, a series of films was created, fronted by our Deputy Chair, Philippa Langley, entitled Busting the Mythology. These films aim to set the record straight on so many of the myths that have grown up around Richard over the years and are proving very popular with thousands of people viewing them.



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The Ricardian Podcast

Presented by Bulletin editor, Alec Marsh, our podcast is also proving increasingly popular with its deep dives into topics covered in the latest Bulletin. The podcast is being made available on as many platforms as possible. Amanda concluded her address by summarising that 2025 had been a year of great celebration and strides forward, despite the challenges the Society had faced. She encouraged members to continue with their help and support and, working together, the Society can emerge stronger than ever.

American Branch

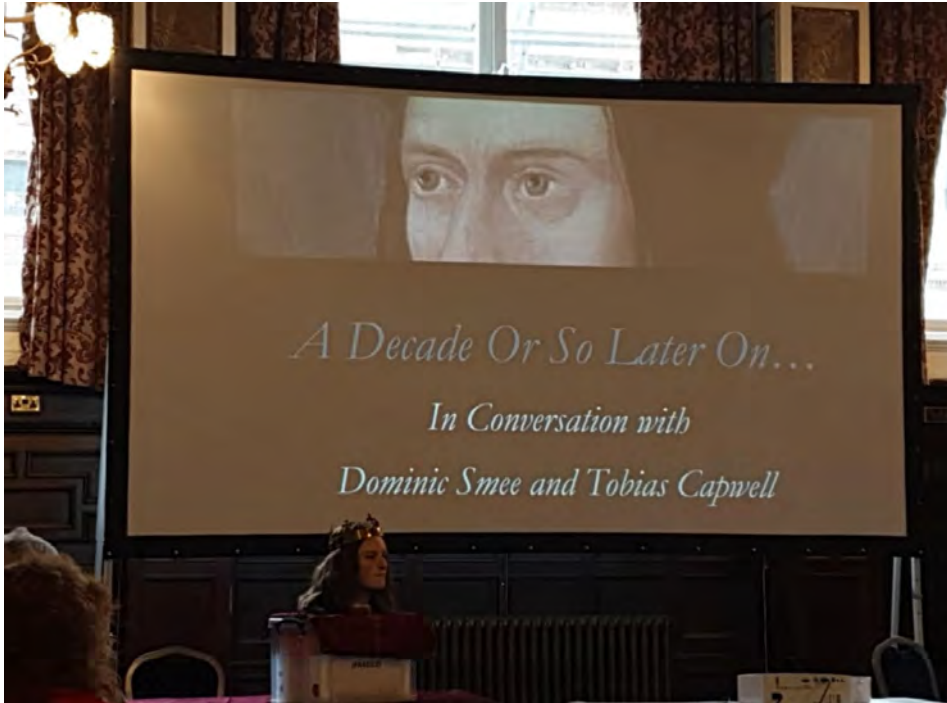
Sally Keil reported the big news of the digitisation of the Edward IV Roll, which has been in the possession of the Free Library of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. The American Branch has funded a project to digitise the Roll and bring it online interactively. The branch is also very proud of its Schallek Fund. Every year PhD students receive scholarships of \$40,000 to enable them to continue their research, especially in the medieval period. Five smaller awards of \$5,000 are also granted so recipients don't need to be a graduate student to submit a proposal, but just be working on something relevant.

The Robert Hamblin Award

The Secretary announced the winner of the 2025 Robert Hamblin Award as **Jacqui Emerson**. For 17 years she has provided excellent administrative support for triennial conferences and study weekends. She was also Branches and Groups Liaison Officer between 2012 and 2017, playing a key role in establishing The Recorder - the predecessor of the Herald.

The Jeremy Potter Award

This Award was established more recently to recognise notable contributions via a significant project. This award is in the gift of the Board. The Secretary announced the 2025 recipient as **Nathalie Nijman-Bliekendaal** for her invaluable research for The Missing Princes Project since 2016, including rediscovering important manuscripts in Holland and Germany.



She also contributed four chapters and wrote the foreword for the Princes book. Her dedication is commendable and serves as an inspiration for others to conduct their own research.

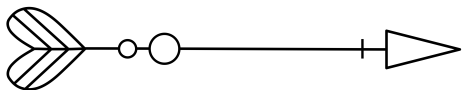
Board members

Philippa confirmed the appointment of Directors. Given there were seven candidates for seven places, there was no election this year. The new Board comprises 15 members. Directors re-appointed are: Amanda Geary, Kim Harding, Philippa Langley and Jane Trump. The Director appointed to ratify his mid-year co-option onto the Board is Neil Trump. New appointments are: Sue Ollier (Chair of the Events Committee and returning to the Board after a year's absence) and David Withers (Finance Manager).

Questions from the floor

Low votes

One member expressed disappointment at the low number of votes cast at this AGM and said that this did not reflect the majority of the membership. They felt it was quite special having voting on the day by those in the room. A straw poll was not meaningful as members needed more details to make an informed vote.



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Philippa agreed that it was a low turn-out (approximately 4.5% of the membership) although this was not unusual, given previous years' voting. However, conversely this showed that most people seemed to be happy with the way the Society is going, otherwise they would have felt the need to vote.

Online only AGM

Concern was raised about how having an online only AGM would affect those members who are not online.

It was pointed out from the floor that Zoom meetings could be accessed via the telephone so members not online could access the AGM that way. Philippa added that the Board were always open to dialogue with members so those not online could write in at any time with their concerns or comments. There is always plenty of notice regarding an AGM so those not online would have time to contact the Board in advance.

London calling

The same member also raised the question as to why the South, especially London had not been considered as an AGM location for many years.

Philippa answered that it was purely a question of cost and London would be considered again once the Society was in a better financial position.

Snail mail

With Royal Mail costs being so high, a member queried whether the Board had considered an alternative carrier.

Neil Trump said an alternative carrier had been researched but its costs were very similar to those of Royal Mail. The deal the Society has with Royal Mail is very competitive, but the Society will constantly review alternative options with a view to reducing costs.

Zoom book club

The Barton Library Co-ordinator spoke on behalf of the absent Fiction Librarian who wished to canvass opinion regarding the idea of establishing a book club via Zoom for members, possibly alternating fiction and non-fiction books. A straw poll was taken which showed that there would be interest in a book club.

Trip to Bruges 2026

A member announced a trip to Bruges planned for October 2026 for Ricardians and their friends and invited those interested to give her their email addresses for her to contact them. The editor of the Bulletin offered to pass on requests as well.



Leicester Cathedral

Princes painting

It was inquired as to what was happening with the painting of the Princes.

Philippa responded that the Society is currently in talks with the King Richard III Visitor Centre in Leicester to display it.

Phil Stone memorial

A member asked if the Society could make a memorial for Phil Stone, given his length of tenure as Chair. A lecture was suggested as an option.

Philippa said the Board had been trying to think of ideas for a memorial but had struggled to find a special place for this. She invited members to send in suggestions to the Board.

Branch on social media

The Canada Branch is embracing social media. It's just started a branch Whatsapp group for those who wish to chat about things Ricardian or medieval in a more immediate and informal manner. This is in addition to its accounts on X @RichardIIICA, Mastodon @RichardIIICA@mstnd.social and BlueSky RichardIII SocCa.bsky.social. See Pages 30-31

Researchers shed light on hidden truths

By Maria Grazia Leotta

The Richard III Society AGM 2025 was a very special event for me because I started my new role as a volunteer guide at the tomb of Richard III on October 3.

I had applied some months ago, but for several reasons I couldn't attend my training session until October. The main problem is that I live in York, so getting to Leicester can be difficult sometimes.

I got the chance to visit the new visitor centre in the Cathedral and meet guides Virginia and Lyndsay, who told me a lot of interesting things about statues and details in the Cathedral.

I attended the AGM the day after. There were many stalls with memorabilia and books - I bought 35 of them and I had to buy a trolley to bring them all the way to York by train and bus. After coffee during which I met old and new friends, many of them known only through Facebook, the first part of the AGM started officially with Philippa Langley acting as a Chair due to Amanda Geary been stuck at home with Covid.

Bulletin editor Alec Marsh introduced Tobias Capwell and Dominic Smees, who is known as the "double" of Richard III.

Tobias talked about his involvement in the Looking for Richard Project. He stated he had never met a person with the same scoliosis as Richard. Tobias is an expert in medieval armour, especially the War of the Roses ones.

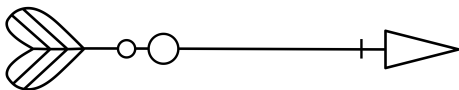
After the documentary *The King in the Car Park* was released, Tobias met Dominic Smees. As the documentary had been a huge success, the company suggested the production of another episode about the same subject.



Maria was one of many who got a selfie with Richard

Philippa sought to involve people who had investigated Richard's skeleton, and it was at this point that Dominic Smees became the main character of the new documentary, because the curvature of his spine is very similar to that of the king even though the vertebrae are different.

Tobias explained that armours are symmetrical so what happens when the body is asymmetrical?



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Dom could not wear normal armour. He found it difficult to breathe and he felt very uncomfortable. It was clear, therefore that Richard had worn an armour tailored to suit his body. In Sweden Tobias and Dom found an expert in 15th century Italian armour. At Bosworth Richard wore Italian armour because it was the best on the market at that time.

Dom's first attempt at riding a horse was a challenge. He felt uncomfortable and experienced pain and tiredness, though this improved when he was given a medieval saddle that helped him to stay straight on his horse.

He said it was like "sitting on a chair" and he was able to do a quintain. The training was hard because he had to learn all the skills Richard learned as a young adolescent; considering he was around 12 when he started, he trained for 20 years. When he was ready Dom tried Richard's final charge. Capwell explained that the distance between Richard and Henry Tudor was about 600 metres. He galloped all the way and so did Dom.

Tobis said warriors were safe on a horse, surrounded by 30 men. Though the horse had to be free to move. A warrior unhorsed and alone was in dangerous territory which almost inevitably ended in death. This sadly is what happened to Richard.

Caroline Wilkinson, who made Richard's reconstruction, was the next speaker. She explained that since she gave a face to Richard in 2013, technology has progressed and today it is possible to add both movement and voice to the reconstruction.

Caroline also mentioned the possibility of animated photos, and chat bots of deceased historical characters who can be asked questions and give answers.

An ambitious animatronics project for a 3D reconstruction that could talk, and move will probably be displayed in the visitor centre. It will say Richard's prayer in English. The original was written in Latin which, in my opinion, would have been a better choice.



The Chapel of St Mary de Castro in Leicester where Richard apparently prayed before leaving for Bosworth. Photo Maria Grazia Leotta

She discussed A Voice for Richard, the project led by Yvonne Morley-Chisholm in which actor Thomas Dennis matched Richard's voice.

Thomas is also the main character in the short film *A Taste of Royalty*, based on Matthew Lewis' historical novel *Loyalty*.

The reconstruction of Richard III with his new hair, and the crown donated to Philippa by actor Henry Lloyd from *The Lost King*, were on display. Many Ricardians took a selfie with it: do you think I could resist such a temptation?

Yorkshire Branch member Maria Grazia Leotta caught up with Richard's body double Dominic Smee at the Society's conference and annual meeting. Here he shares his story.

A scoliotic knight's journey from armour to inspiration

I recently had the privilege of being invited to the 2025 Richard III Society AGM at The Grand Hotel in Leicester. It was a great opportunity to connect with familiar faces, as well as to get to know some new ones!

I was grateful for the chance to reminisce with Dr Toby Capwell after such a long time; we hadn't spoken in person in many years. Until Saturday, we had only met up once or twice since filming wrapped in 2013.

Toby's presentation began with a short introduction on how he got involved in the Richard III scene.

He talked a little about meeting Philippa, and his experience working with the people who made the King in the Car Park documentaries.

Around about this time, Toby gave a lecture to the Society theorising the creation of a harness for somebody with such a significant scoliosis.

As a person who had worn, but not fought in oversized armour, but also from having what I thought was a similar Adolescent Onset Idiopathic Thoracic Scoliosis to that of King Richard, I would eventually see this talk on Facebook, which would ultimately lead me to get in touch with Toby to help him with his research project. The rest is, as they say, history.

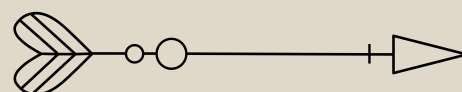


Dominic Smee, left, with actor Thomas Dennis. Image courtesy Matt Lewis.

The next part of the presentation included many images of my training to ride and fight in armour in order to extrapolate how much of a hindrance King Richard III's scoliosis could have been to his combat prowess as a warrior on the battlefield.

To try and answer this question effectively, a harness was constructed/acquired in a similar style to that which Richard himself may have worn.

To begin with, it was important to explore whether the cuirass needed to be completely bespoke to my scoliosis in order to be functional in battle.



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We investigated this by borrowing Arne Koets' cuirass and trying to close it around my torso. Arne, a classical riding expert, and one of the knights shown in the programme I was involved in, is of a similar build to me, although much taller in height. We soon discovered that my scoliosis did have an impact upon my ability to wear the armour.

The concave side of my torso was depressed enough that Toby was able to fit his entire hand into the gap, whereas the convex side where my rib hump is, prevented the team from being able to properly close the armour. It would not have been safe to wear oversized armour which would rattle about in use. Padding generic armour would simply cause me to overheat or inhibit my ability to breathe.



Dominic Smee in armour:
Image courtesy
www.highlivingbarnet.com

My pelvis was supported in a straighter posture, as opposed to being slumped forward, which was almost immediately the case with the modern saddle which I started off in. People who do not have scoliosis have to battle with maintaining a straight, upright posture on horseback – imagine how much more difficult that can be for somebody with a curvature of the spine! The muscles which I rely upon to support my spine were only designed to keep it straight; they were never meant to hold it up. That is why my back can tire quickly in certain situations such as lunging forwards or parrying an attack. In the conversation, I gave the example of playing badminton.

Because I do not have a platform (gap between bottom rib and pelvis/hip bone) on both of my hips (absent on the right side) to accommodate the weight of the cuirass, as is possible in people without scoliosis, we needed to find a work-around to level out the armour using leather straps.

Toby has theorized that Richard's shoulder muscles could have been overdeveloped in order to compensate for this by taking as much weight as possible off of the hips. Our scoliosis is what is called a 'balanced curve', which means that both the hips and shoulders are more or less, level.

One of the advantages of a medieval saddle was that it acted like a comfortable chair; something which, as a novice rider, I most definitely appreciated!

Whilst learning to ride and fight in plate armour, I also learnt a choreographed fight sequence representing a possible scenario in which Richard could have met his death based upon the wounds inflicted upon his remains. Unfortunately, this was not included in the final cut, or even discussed in the programme.

Toby suggested that a cavalry charge such as the one at Bosworth could not have been spontaneous, and would need to have been pre-planned. Using evidence from the battlefield site, he was able to recreate Richard's final cavalry charge and work out the timings for the consequences of that decision to unfold.

Whilst the documentary has never led to a change in my circumstances, it has most definitely been life-changing. I have had many dream-come-true experiences both during and post filming. I have had the privilege of meeting some amazing people throughout the UK, and even got to travel to Germany, Sweden and was twice invited to the United States of America.



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Image courtesy PBS: *Resurrecting Richard III*

King Richard III has been described as the 'gift that keeps on giving'. Certainly, in my case, whenever I get ready to put all of this behind me, something else seems to appear from around the corner! You never know what the future holds...

It has been an honour to be able to say that my involvement in the Channel 4 documentary, *King Richard III: The New Evidence* and PBS' *Resurrecting Richard III*, if you are reading this in the United States, has helped people to look at Richard and his physicality in a new light; that just because he had such a significant condition, did not mean that the history books were wrong about what they say he achieved.

There is most definitely more to this man than meets the eye, and I hope that, ultimately, people will begin to see him as I have grown to; as a source of inspiration instead of blindly accepting the Tudor propaganda fed to us by Shakespeare.

People are beginning to look at how King Richard's faith may have driven him in his life; something which I can say has been hugely important on a personal level, more specifically by defining the ways in which I have dealt with the highs and lows of my own experience.

"It has been an honour to be able to say that my involvement in the Channel 4 documentary, King Richard III: The New Evidence and PBS' Resurrecting Richard III ...has helped people to look at Richard and his physicality in a new light..."

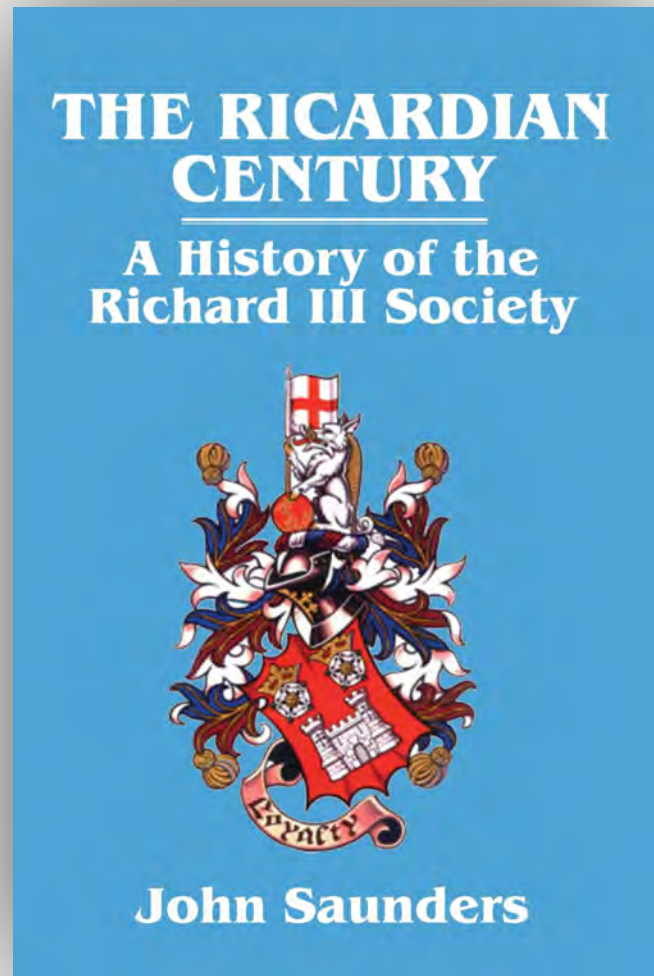
Ricardian history available for free

It's an offer you can't refuse!

Copies of the recently published *The Ricardian Century – A History of the Richard III Society*, by John Saunders, are on offer free to all Branches and Groups.

A box of 15 copies can be yours for just £15.00 postage. You can sell those copies for whatever price you feel appropriate, thereby making a profit, or give them to your local schools, libraries or whatever you choose.

It's a win-win, because right now it's costing the Society money to keep the excess stock in storage.



**...wait, there's
more!**

The Society also has 2024 Ricardian Journals available which you could put into bundles with the Centenary History for any events you may be holding.

If you are interested in either of these, please do get in touch with the Society.

In September this year, we ventured to Bruges in Belgium, intrigued by the power and influence of the city and its Burgundian Dukes during the medieval period. Scotland also has its own connection to Bruges, through the fascinating Anselm Adornes, which we were keen to explore.



Yorkist echoes in medieval Bruges

By June McIntyre

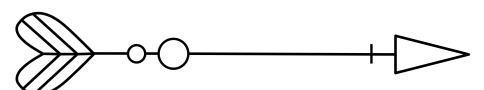
Having arrived on the Friday afternoon, there was only time for dinner and a quick wander in the historic market square, which is overlooked by the 13th century Belfry.

On the Saturday, we packed in visits to the Adornes Domein and Jerusalem Chapel, the Stadhuis and the Basilica of the Holy Blood. There was also time for a horse drawn carriage ride and a jolly dinner. On Sunday, we visited the Gruuthuse Museum, the Church of Our Lady and took a canal tour of the city.

A last supper on the Sunday night concluded the formal visit, and we had some free time on Monday morning for chocolate shopping and waffles, etc, before catching our train connection to Brussels and home.

As Ricardians, one highlight of the trip was our visit to the Gruuthuse Museum, where Richard lodged with Edward IV during the exile of 1469-71. At that time, it was home to wealthy nobleman Louis de Gruuthuse, and it remains a treasure trove of Burgundian manuscripts, tapestries, stained glass windows and precious items which tell the story of Burgundian Bruges.

The stunning Gruuthuse Oratory overlooks and allows access to the neighbouring 13th century Church of Our Lady, which we also visited in its own right.



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In the Church we saw the Renaissance tombs of Charles the Bold and his daughter Mary of Burgundy, with gilt bronze effigies and carved animals at their feet (although there is a rumour that the actual remains of Charles the Bold are buried in the foundations of the Crown Plaza, where some of us chose to stay on that basis!). We also viewed sculpture of the Madonna and Child, which we were told was the only Michelangelo marble north of the Alps.

To understand the power of medieval Bruges, a visit to the Stadhuis or city hall is a must.

As well as a gothic hall, a work of art in itself and somewhere that Richard would have been received during his visit, there is an interactive exhibition which tells the story of the origins and rise of Bruges in medieval times - the extent to which the city owed its wealth and prosperity to the North Sea and how it had to fight over time to retain that important access while also protecting itself.

All brought to life here in a fascinating exhibition that really is a must see!

For Scottish medievalists, Anselm Adornes (1424-83) holds a special fascination. He was an influential businessman, knight and diplomat, close to Charles the Bold and also to James III of Scotland – he finally settled in Scotland and was murdered by the king's enemies in 1483.

In Bruges, we were able to visit his family home and estate, the Adornes Domein, and the replica Jerusalem Chapel, which was built following his pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Also, the 'Scottish Lounge' where we were offered a taste of home – tartan and shortbread. A follow up visit to Anselm related sites in Scotland is now being planned!

Bruges manages to retain much of its medieval charm and was a lovely place to visit, made more special by those Yorkist links. We'd highly recommend fellow Ricardians to make the trip and would gladly go back, as there is more to see!

On pages 20-25 New Zealand Branch member Sheila Reed explores the amazing life of Margaret of Burgundy, sister to Edward IV and Richard III.

She was a formidable political strategist who played a pivotal role in shaping Anglo-Burgundian relations and resisting French dominance.



Former Chairman Shirley Stapley recounts the vibrant 51-year history of the Devon & Cornwall Branch of the Richard III Society, from its humble beginnings in 1979 to its flourishing present-day membership and rich calendar of talks, outings, and commemorative events. Through decades of camaraderie, creativity, and historical exploration, the branch has fostered deep connections among members while celebrating the legacy of Richard III across the UK and beyond.

A 51-year Ricardian journey

So, how did the Devon & Cornwall Branch begin? I have always been very interested in English history and especially in Charles II.

However, I knew little about medieval history until I went to London in 1973 and saw an exhibition in the National Portrait Gallery about Richard III which had been put on by the Richard III Society. I began reading books about him including *The Daughter of Time* by Josephine Tey. I decided to join the Society, and my membership was confirmed in January 1974.

It was not until 1979 that Wendy Tubb organised a meeting in a Plymouth restaurant with five members - Trina Rockey, Margaret Hammond, Cherie Stephens, Wendy and me.

From this meeting evolved the Southwest Group as we were then called. It was in 1982, when we had more members, that we were given permission to call it the Devon & Cornwall Branch.

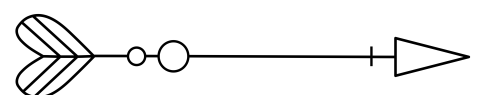
At first all our meetings were held in member's houses, with our very first one being on March 31, 1979, at the home of Trina Rockey when we elected Wendy as our Secretary, Margaret Hammond as Chairman, Trina as Treasurer and I had responsibility for the minutes. Subscriptions were set at 50p per month to cover expenses. We obviously discussed ways and means to raise funds and to attract new members.

Before long, our membership had increased, and we continued to meet in members' houses around Devon & Cornwall.



As we increased our membership, we found we needed more space and met in several venues including the College of St Mark & St John, Ivybridge College, Sir Joshua Reynolds Centre and in the boardroom of Derriford Hospital.

We later decided to always hold our meetings in Plymouth and started to meet in a room at a hotel near Plymouth Hoe. This worked for a while but then we had the chance to hire the Prysten House which dates to medieval times.



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Eventually the steep stairs proved too much for some of our members, and we next had meetings in Plymouth Museum followed by our last meeting place which was the University of Plymouth. This proved unsuitable after a time, and it was then at Maggie Heath's suggestion that we began to meet in our current venue at Ford Park Cemetery which has proved ideal.

Apart from our meetings, Wendy Tubb organised some brilliant outings throughout the early years including St Michael's Mount in Cornwall, Leicester - to see the newly erected statue of Richard - Bosworth, Sutton Cheney, The Houses of Parliament,

York, Canterbury, Tewkesbury, Fotheringhay, Fountains Abbey, Ludlow, Middleham, Sheriff Hutton, Raby Castle, Eltham Palace, Gloucester, Knowle, Hever Castle, Warwick Castle, Alnwick, Lincoln, Kenilworth and Berkeley Castle.

It was on this occasion in London that we visited Windsor Castle and were given permission to lay a bouquet of flowers on the tomb of Edward IV in St George's chapel on the 50th anniversary of his death. In our own area we visited Cotehele, Bickleigh Castle, Powderham, Berry Pomeroy, Pengersick Castle and St Nicholas Priory in Exeter. One of our members was a friend of the owner of Tiverton Castle where we were allowed to hold a meeting.

Locally we had a stall at Drake 400 in Plymouth's Central Park when we dressed in medieval costume. For several years we also had a stall at Saltram Fair. In 1984 an exhibition of Geoffrey Wheeler's Ricardian photos was organised in Plymouth, in which we took part. A mass was held for the soul of Richard III at a Roman Catholic church in Exeter on the anniversary of his death and I put a notice in the local Herald each year in August to remember Richard III and his death at Bosworth.

Our very first medieval meal was in 1979 when we met in Pillaton in Cornwall. It was in 1983 that we had a quincentenary medieval dinner arranged by Anne Painter and her husband at their hotel in Newquay. Members dressed in medieval costume and there was suitable music and dancing for the

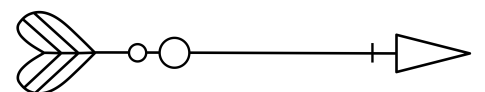
occasion, for which specialist tuition had been arranged beforehand with a specialist dance teacher. Trina and myself attended the Society's AGM in London when I gave a report on the Group, and some of our members attended the Society's special

quincentenary dinner held at the London Guildhall in 1985.

Various talks have been held over the years, to mention a few: one on Shakespeare's *Richard III* and others on the Arundel archives, Archbishop Morton, The Battle of Bosworth, Edward of Middleham, Perkin Warbeck and many more.

A play was performed for the branch about the Paston Letters. Dr Phil Stone, who was Chairman of the Society, came to Plymouth several times and gave us talks on Richard and on medieval medicine. Other prominent speakers have included Peter Hammond, Dr Anne Wrote and the late John Ashworth Hill.

Every Christmas we had a meal at various hotels and various locations. There have been so many events over the years that it is not possible to list them all. Some that stand out are a Ricardian evening held at the Two Bridges Hotel on Dartmoor and a lecture by Jeremy Potter, former Chairman of the Society, on Ireland and the House of York; meals with members of the London Branch; and visits from Linda Treybig with the members of the American Branch.



From previous page...

We were very proud of our Richard III mug that we produced for the Quincentenary in 1985 as over 300 were sold. In addition, members have produced keyrings, a Ricardian seal and the late Mary Kelly produced some beautiful Ricardian postcards. For a time, we produced Pro Ricardio, which was in the form of booklets containing articles and poems written by members.

In the early days we were invited by Plymouth Sound, our local radio station, to talk about our branch when Joyce Melhuish from the main society came with us; the whole experience lasted about two hours.

The BBC invited us to talk on the radio about Richard and the Branch several times and we also had some publicity in the local paper. We had a reunion meal at a Plymouth hotel for the 20th anniversary of the Branch and there were also several reunion teas in Exeter where, on each occasion, a number of former members joined us.

At one time we had up to 40 members but by the late 1990's our membership had dropped. We were getting a little stale when luckily John Saunders joined us as he had come to live in Plymouth. It was through John that we were able to have some of the aforementioned speakers.

John himself was an excellent speaker and became our Chairman until he moved away. As you will all know he has recently produced the book *The Ricardian Century - A History of the Richard III Society*. At the unveiling of the book our member Ian Lauder was present and met John, as well as the Duke of Gloucester.



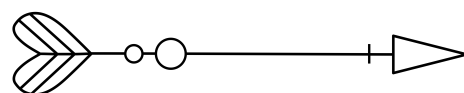
Some Branch members at Coldridge

Mention must be made of past members, now deceased, who particularly helped in the development of the Branch and who are sadly missed.

Personally, losing my husband John in 2008 was a very big blow, he had always encouraged me to take part in everything that the Branch did. The loss of Dodie Martin, our Vice-Chairman for many years, was another blow to the Branch, as were the losses of former Chairmen Margaret Hammond and Linda Peabody; Mary Kelly, Dr Phyllis Hillock, Elizabeth Carey, Doreen Lewis, Alison Bray, Caroline Green and Dr Mike Jones.

When Local Studies Day began in Plymouth, we had a stall for our Branch, and I still attend every year with David & Edna Coles and Ruth Self on our stall.

As mentioned earlier, it was Maggie Heath who suggested that we meet at Ford Park. Maggie had been Secretary until Edna took over.



From previous page...

By then John Saunders had left Plymouth and Elaine Henderson took over from him, followed for a short time by Linda Peabody, then by Jenny Powys-Lobbe and Mary Kelly who were joint Chairmen until I took over in 2015. I should mention that Anne Painter was Secretary for 20 years. By 2012 our membership was falling so met only every two months. More recently our membership has steadily climbed and is now around 40.

I would like to mention two coincidences which have occurred – one more recently and the other several years ago when I was in touch with Beth Argall of Chicago. I happened to mention to her that Dr Phil Stone had given us a talk in Plymouth on Richard III.

Beth replied that she had met Phil many years ago and asked for his email address so that she could write to him. It was a few months after this that I had a phone call from Beth in America to say that she and Phil had got engaged and invited John and myself to their wedding in Chicago. Sadly, now they have both passed away. I first met Julie Ellis in hospital when we were both having our hips replaced and she told me that she was a Society member.

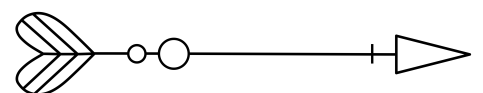
The second coincidence was when in 2016 I attended an event to mark the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Jutland. I got talking to a couple who turned out to be Edna and David Coles. We were both thrilled when Edna and myself found out that our fathers had been on the same ship HMS Tiger at Jutland.



Another big surprise was when Edna said that she belonged to the Richard III Society but had never been to a local meeting! Of course, I gave her details and the rest is history. Edna has been our Secretary for several years now and David helps organise meetings.

At our meeting in June 2015, we were given details of an event in Exeter which Bill Leedham had arranged. It was held in the Devon and Exeter Institution where Bill spoke of its interesting history.

We were also given a guided walk around Exeter which included a visit to the Guildhall and to the Bishops Palace where Richard had stayed in 1483. We enjoyed the visit so much that Bill kindly arranged another one when we were treated to view a display of 15th century documents in the Cathedral Education Centre. We were also taken to see the monastic refectory at St Nicholas Priory.



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Ian Churchward of the Legendary Ten Seconds had recently joined and gave us a concert of his Ricardian songs, with his wife Elaine singing. He has done this several times since for which we are very grateful. We are also lucky enough to have Rosemary Jessop as one of our members and she has often given us interesting talks on the medieval period.

It was when Phil Stone gave a talk on Richard to members that I saw

Lindsay Noad there who, like me, was a volunteer at Ford Park. Neither of us knew that the other was a member of the Society at that time. Soon after this Lindsay became our Treasurer and now Brigitte has taken over from her.

Another member I should mention here is Lesley Morris who has for a long time now sent members news of events that she receives from the main Society.

By now of course Richard's body had been found with worldwide publicity. Ian Lauder organised a very successful trip to Leicester in 2017 when we were able to visit Richard's tomb in the Cathedral, which was a very special moment for all of us.

We also went to the Richard III Visitor Centre and had a tour of St Mary De Castro church which Richard had attended. We also went to the Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, Ashby De La Zouch Castle and Minster Lovell.

Ian also arranged for the Branch to visit Cotehele again but this time we were able to have a meeting there. Ian gave us a talk on the history of the house and then took us on a tour.



Tiverton Castle. Image courtesy Historic England.

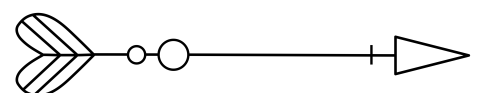
Another visit organised by Ian was to Tewkesbury, including a tour of the Battlefield.

Another member Rosemary Jessop has given us a number of talks and will be giving another at our forthcoming AGM. Another member Ann Brightmore-Armour (sadly now deceased) wrote an excellent booklet on Richard in Exeter.

We had a return visit to Tiverton Castle for a tour, starting in the garden and moving to the medieval part of the castle.

The castle has always been of special interest because of the connection with Princess Catherine, daughter of Edward IV, who lived there for many years with her husband William Courtenay, Earl of Devon. We later visited St Peters Church where the princess is buried but sadly her tomb has been lost, possibly at the time of the Reformation.

I had an article on the Princess published in the *Ricardian Bulletin*.



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By now Edna had taken over as Secretary and her minutes are brilliant as she always writes about the talks that have been given at each meeting. This is such a help for members who are no longer able to come to meetings.

In 2018 David Elliott joined us as a member - I had known him at the local Postcard Club - and his talks quickly proved popular, the first one being on the genealogy of George Savage from Exmouth who is descended from Anne of York, Duchess of Exeter, eldest sister of Richard III. David has given us many and varied talks, every one highly entertaining and has helped me with some of my presentations. David also had the lovely banner made which advertises our Branch.

In 2019 the Branch celebrated its 40th anniversary when several previous members attended a special meeting. The same year Julie Ellis organised a medieval banquet at Pentillie Castle when we all wore medieval costume. Later that year some of us visited St Matthews Church in Coldridge where we heard a talk on the possible connection that the portrait in the adjoining chapel was that of Edward V.

In July of 2018 we had Alan Bricknell as our speaker. He is the Chairman of the Heritage team at Ford Park. He had given us a talk on Queen Emma a few years before, but this time it was on King Edward III and the wool trade. Next year Alan will be giving us a talk on King Stephen and Empress Matilda.



Next year members of the Devon & Cornwall Branch will learn about The Anarchy. Image: Empress Matilda, from History of England by St. Albans monks, 15th century. Courtesy Historic UK.

The Branch celebrated the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Richard III Society with a memorial service for Richard held in the chapel at Ford Park. This year some of us had the pleasure of meeting Phillipa Langley.

As it can be hard to find speakers on the medieval period we sometimes have speakers on other historical subjects, one being Stephen Luscombe who has given us two excellent talks on Prince Rupert.

I was so pleased that Julie Ellis agreed to take over from me as Chairman when I stepped down and she has organised our speakers for 2026.

Sheila Reed explores the amazing life of Margaret of Burgundy, sister to Edward IV and Richard III. She was a formidable political strategist who played a pivotal role in shaping Anglo-Burgundian relations and resisting French dominance. She remained a loyal Yorkist, supporting her two nephews, and was instrumental in preserving Burgundian independence and influencing European power dynamics. As her main source, Sheila refers to Margaret of York, the Diabolical Duchess, by Christine Weightman.

Shield and strategy

The woman who secured a nation

I'd always thought of Margaret of Burgundy as short and slight, from the usual rather unprepossessing portrait we have of her, and which appears in most books.

But apparently she was tall, slim with a straight carriage, an oval face, dark grey eyes and an air of "Intelligence and will." She was also said not to smile a lot.

In the photos in this book, where Caxton presents her with an English translation, she appears tall, well dressed, regal and grand. She will have learned how to carry herself and how to behave from her mother Cecily. Until Edward married, the two of them were the most important women at court and took precedence at events.

International politics as the background of everything she does

Another of my assumptions was that she was free to do what she liked and how she would like to support the Yorkist cause. But not so. Margaret of Burgundy, her policies, decisions and everything she did or didn't do has to be seen against the international politics of the day.

In her case, the players were England, France and Burgundy. Who was allied with whom dictated her policies and she could not do anything without the backing of her husband Charles the Bold, and then her step son-in-law Maximilian and later her step grandson Philip.



...she was tall, slim with a straight carriage, an oval face, dark grey eyes and an air of "Intelligence and will." She was also said not to smile a lot.

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The struggle between Burgundy and France was the constant political framework of her life, although she always leaned to an Anglo-Burgundian alliance rather than one with France.

Marriage to Charles the Bold

After the death of her father Richard of York it was her brother Edward's responsibility to arrange her marriage.

And apparently, Elizabeth Woodville who was so successful with her family's marriages, took a great interest in Margaret's.

Before 1465 there had been suggestions of marriages with Scotland and Castile and there was a betrothal with Don Pedro of Aragon, but this too came to nothing as he died in 1466. However, this was fortunate timing because in 1465 Charles the Bold had come on to the marriage market with the death of his wife Isabelle. Edward IV was keen for the new Yorkist dynasty to be recognized in Europe and feared a French-Burgundian alliance, and of course Louis supported Margaret of Anjou. And Charles feared an Anglo-French alliance as Louis was keen to acquire Burgundy.

The negotiations took two years and at 21 Margaret was relatively old to be married. It was however, like the marriage of Charles and Diana, the wedding of the century.

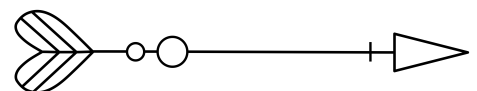


Charles the Bold had inherited a very wealthy and influential area.

Thus in summer 1468 Margaret, daughter of Richard of York and Cecily Neville, and sister of Edward, George and Richard, became Duchess "of Burgundy, and Lotharingia, of Brabant, Luxembourg and Guelders, Countess of Flanders and of Artois, of Burgundy, Hainault, Holland Zeeland Namur and Zutphen, Marchioness of the Holy Roman Empire, Lady of Friesland and of Salines and Malines"- one of the most extensive and valuable collections of land and territory in medieval Europe.

Charles the Bold had inherited a very wealthy and influential area.

For the first three years of her marriage Margaret's role was simply to provide an heir and as we know she was totally unsuccessful at this. Was she infertile? Charles wasn't as he had an heir, Mary, and two illegitimate sons. Margaret was anxious about this as she made several pilgrimages to sites known to help in such cases but to no avail.



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However, this lack of an heir didn't affect her relationship with Charles or her status at court. Unlike Henry VIII Charles was quite content with a female heir. The Low Countries had a good record of women in positions of power, unlike England.

Charles preferred the company of men and after four years of marriage they saw relatively little of each other. While Charles was away with his army she was actively involved in affairs of state, was active in the Burgundian court, made ducal journeys to many cities and was involved with the marriage negotiations for her stepdaughter Mary.

She was to play an active role for 35 years in the relationship between England and Burgundy and was totally respected despite her childlessness. She formed a good working relationship with her stepson in law Maximilian and did the same with her step grandson Philip.

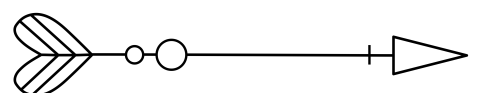
Support for fleeing Yorkists

Burgundy proved a welcome haven for Yorkists when Edward and Richard fled England after the Readeption of Henry VI, though at first they were more a political embarrassment for Charles and were not allowed to come to court, and were tucked away in the north of the country.

But when Louis declared war on Burgundy, Charles gave his backing for the restoration of Edward, and Margaret was allowed to invite her brother to court.



Margaret of York before the resurrected Christ



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Preparations were made for an invasion of England and Margaret was active in raising support and money. Burgundy was delighted with Edward's win at Tewkesbury and Edward rewarded Margaret by granting her licences to export English cloth free of duties to Flanders.

But in 1477 everything changed again with the death of Charles at the Siege of Nancy.

The richest tyrant in Europe was dead and in this period Margaret came into her own. Burgundy was almost fatally weakened, and Louis was threatening to swallow it up completely. It was Margaret's diplomatic efforts in securing a Spanish marriage for her stepdaughter Mary, bringing in a Habsburg to the Low Countries rather than a French marriage, that she effected a major reorientation of European politics and its future.

Edward had not been much help as he was keen on his French pension and the betrothal of his daughter Elizabeth to the Dauphin. It's probably not exaggerating to say that Margaret saved Burgundy from annihilation and secured its future as a country.

Bosworth and the Yorkist cause post 1485

We don't have any record of what Margaret thought of this, apart from the obvious, but she had after all seen her brother Edward make a comeback and perhaps another Yorkist could do the same.

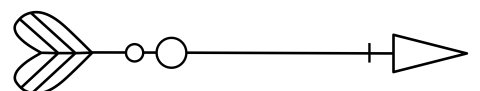
In 1485 Henry Tudor made a diplomatic blunder when he didn't renew Margaret's trading licences.



Mary of Burgundy. It was Margaret's diplomatic efforts in securing a Spanish marriage for her stepdaughter...that she effected a major reorientation of European politics and its future.

One possibility is that Margaret resented this and her support for her two nephews was a way to get her English income back. In fact, in the agreement between her and Richard of York he explicitly promised to restore her trading licences and repay the debt still owed on her dowry when he became King.

He also promised her the properties of Hunsdon and Scarborough. It wasn't just familial love. She wouldn't have risked her Burgundian assets for a Yorkist "pretender" unless it suited Burgundian interests.



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Henry had won the English throne with French support, which had alarmed Maximilian who had been building a good relationship with Richard and was hoping for support against France.

After Bosworth Yorkist exiles were allowed to take refuge in Burgundy and in 1486 Frances Lovell arrived. Maximilian was keen for the new king to be pro Burgundian and assist him against France. In 1486 Margaret was openly supporting 'Lambert Simnel' who claimed to be the Earl of Warwick. Unfortunately, there wasn't enough support for him in England, and he failed in his attempt. But Henry had learned a lesson, and negotiations began with Burgundy.



Philip I of Castile

Margaret the victim of Tudor propaganda

Like her brother Richard, Margaret too was the victim of Tudor propaganda.

Henry had said nothing during the Lambert Simnel affair and perhaps was being diplomatically careful by not blaming Maximilian or Phillip but this all changed with the arrival of Perkin Warbeck/Richard of York, a much greater threat to him.

This time Henry blamed Margaret totally and the Burgundian men seem to have hidden behind this.

Margaret was allowed to give 'Perkin Warbeck' her full support as a royal prince. He was accepted at court and became a close companion of Duke Philip. She hadn't seen her nephew since he was seven, but she seems to have been sincere in her support for him, that he was Richard of York, son of her brother Edward.

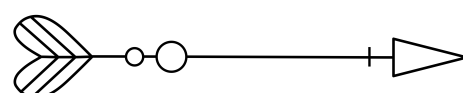
With the full support of Maximilian and Philip she raised funds for the expedition to England and in 1494 a series of protocols was drawn up which I've already mentioned that he would repay the money still owing on her dowry, repay any expenses incurred on behalf of Lovell and Lincoln and restore her English trade licences.

However, it is significant that Margaret's financial support ceased once Richard was in Scotland. Philip had withdrawn his support for the venture as he had a rebellion on his hands from Flemish merchants who wanted an end to the trade war with England.

I find it completely satisfying to think how many sleepless nights Margaret gave Henry and the difficulties she made for him. He had done nothing to deserve an easy ride as king.

Moreover, Louis also blamed Margaret completely for his complete lack of success when Charles the Bold died. He had assumed that Burgundy would now be his for the taking but no, it wasn't to be. He offered her a bribe to retire but this she refused to do so.

Moreover, the marriage happened just nine months after Charles the Bold's death and with a Habsburg influence now in Burgundy she was the major contributor to a major reorientation of European politics and history.



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Her Belgian biographer Luc Hommel went so far as to claim that “she was greatly responsible for the present-day kingdom of Belgium”.

As to the propaganda it was Edward Hall who described to her as “the diabolical Duchess.” Hall spoke of her as “malice diabolical” called her the “devil’s agent” and said that she had “the spirit of a man and the malice of a woman.” Her reputation as vengeful and malicious was propagated by Tudor historians and has been entrenched in English history ever since.

But in fact, it was Henry Tudor who was the source of these opinions. In a letter to a noble he speaks repeatedly about Margaret’s malice to him personally and repeated all these opinions to his ambassador to France.

Final comments and conclusions

Away from her political work and role I need also to mention that Margaret was a great lover of books. She collected manuscripts and was a patron of William Caxton.

She is a key player in Philippa Langley’s Missing Princes Project with the references to supplies given to Richard of York.

She believed in doing what was right and within the law, as is shown by the reforms she supported within the church.



Margaret never had to give up her claim to the English throne, and if all Yorkist claimants had somehow miraculously vanished off the face of the earth, she would have been a very competent, fair and excellent monarch like her brother Richard.

Image: Margaret’s crown

But in character she was more like her younger brother, serious, personally religious and a supporter of the written word in English. She was totally loyal to the Yorkist cause though this did have to take second place to her Burgundian loyalty once she was their Duchess.

She is very like her brother Richard. She is reported as being exceptionally fond of her brother George and was instrumental in having him accepted back into the family.

Margaret never had to give up her claim to the English throne and if all Yorkist claimants had somehow miraculously vanished off the face of the earth, she would have been a very competent, fair and excellent monarch like her brother Richard.

Ancient castle drops the drawbridge for tourism

By Sue Scott-Buckleuch

Greystoke is a village about four miles west of Penrith. Its castle has long remained secluded behind high walls, but recently it was opened to the public for the first time and the Penrith and North Lakes Group went to inspect it.

Greystoke Castle began as a timber pele tower, rebuilt in stone after the Norman conquest and fortified in 1346. The Greystoke family married into the Dacres, and Elizabeth Dacre married Thomas Howard, 4th Duke of Norfolk in the 1560's. The Howard family have owned the castle ever since.



The castle was destroyed by Cromwell's forces in 1660 and it remained abandoned until the 1840's when the architect Anthony Salvin was involved in the grand rebuild. There was further disaster in 1868 when a maid's candle ignited a devastating fire.

Henry Howard oversaw the restoration. The army commandeered the castle in 1939 and used it as a prisoner of war camp for Polish soldiers who had been captured fighting for Germany. By 1949, the building was once again in ruins, and its restoration still continues.

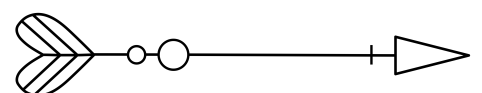
The present representative of the Howard family lives in a modest house inside the grounds, while the castle is occupied by a local businessman who started out as a cleaner in his uncle's truck business.

He has taken on the challenge of restoring the castle, and is raising funds by offering guided tours, cream teas, medieval re-enactments, a wedding venue, corporate event space and anything else that will help to cover the cost of the work.

One of the bedrooms on the first floor has been restored and furnished. Higher up were the rooms occupied by the Polish POWs, with graffiti still visible. There were great views from the rooftop terrace; then we descended to the basement which has been transformed into a wonderfully atmospheric Dungeon Bar. Finally, a visit to the tearoom rounded off an enjoyable visit.

Our guide was aware that we were a Ricardian group and had done her homework, seeking to highlight the castle's history in the fifteenth century.

Two of our members declined all the steps to the upper floors and settled for tea in the grand drawing room – after our tour the guide made a point of joining them to give them the part of her presentation which they had missed; a thoughtful touch.



From previous page...

So, any connection with Richard? Not really, though in his day the Dacres would have owned the castle and they were his lieutenants in the West March. There was a big family wedding which the Duke would probably have attended, if he was in residence at Penrith at that time.

Greystoke is new to the 'heritage business' and the package is not yet as professional as other venues - lack of disabled access, for instance. But they deserve full marks for effort and enthusiasm. If you're in the area, it's worth a visit, but you do need to book. The website is www.greystokecastle.co.uk.



Above: Greystoke Castle today. Below: Greystoke Castle in the 1700s. The image is in the collection of the Museum of New Zealand – Te Papa Tongarewa.

Greystoke Castle, 1777-1786, England, by Thomas Hearne. Gift of Archdeacon F.H.D. Smythe, 1957. Te Papa (1957-0009-301)



At a recent lecture, Gloucester & Bristol Branch Chair Carol Southworth explored the downfall and fate of Richard III's surviving relatives after Bosworth, highlighting how the Tudor regime systematically dismantled Yorkist power through marriage, exile, and execution.

What happened after Bosworth

After the death of Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field on August 22, 1485, the last Plantagenet king's family and supporters faced ruin, exile, or political rehabilitation under the victorious Henry Tudor, now Henry VII. The defeat marked not only the end of Richard's reign but also the collapse of the House of York's power and influence in England.

Richard left no legitimate heirs. Thus, after Bosworth, the fate of his relations—the surviving members of the Yorkist royal family—became a central question for Henry VII's new Tudor dynasty.

The most immediate relative was Elizabeth of York, Richard's niece and the eldest daughter of Edward IV.

Her marriage to Henry VII in January 1486 was a deliberate act of reconciliation, uniting the warring houses of York and Lancaster. By this marriage, the two rival lines were symbolically joined, giving rise to the Tudor dynasty. Elizabeth became queen consort and bore Henry several children, including Arthur, Prince of Wales, and Henry VIII.

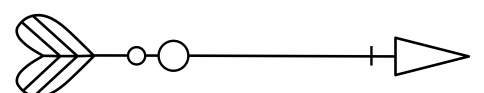
Although she was treated with dignity and respect, Elizabeth's position was carefully controlled by her husband, who was wary of her Yorkist bloodline and any potential claims that might arise through it.

Richard's sisters fared less uniformly. Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, was one of the most implacable enemies of the Tudors.



Living in the Burgundian court, she became a patron of Yorkist exiles and a supporter of such as Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck, who said they were the surviving sons of Edward IV. Her influence ensured that Yorkist plots continued to trouble Henry VII's reign for many years.

Another sister, Anne of York, who had been married to Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter, and later to Thomas St Leger, lived quietly after Bosworth. Her daughter, Anne St Leger, was technically Richard III's heir after the death of his son, but she never pressed any claim to the throne and was largely sidelined under the Tudors.



From previous page...

Richard's mother, Cecily Neville, the formidable "Rose of Raby," survived her son by a decade. She withdrew from political life after 1485, living quietly at her estates in Berkhamsted until her death in 1495. Cecily's reputation suffered somewhat because of her sons' rivalries — Edward IV, George of Clarence, and Richard III — but she was treated with courtesy under the Tudors, likely out of respect for her age and lineage.

The wider Neville and Plantagenet family, however, did not fare as well. Richard's nephew, Edward, Earl of Warwick, the young son of George, Duke of Clarence, was imprisoned in the Tower by Henry VII as a potential threat.

In 1499, he was executed on charges of treason, probably to remove a rival claimant to the throne. His sister, Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury, initially survived and was restored to some favour under Henry VIII, but she too met a tragic end—executed in 1541 after being accused of conspiracy.

Many of Richard's loyal supporters, died with him at Bosworth, while others, like Francis Lovell, fled into exile and continued resistance before disappearing from history.

To sum up, the death of Richard III brought not only the extinction of the male Yorkist royal line but also the systematic dismantling of his family's power.

The surviving relatives were either absorbed into the new Tudor order, as with Elizabeth of York, or destroyed as potential threats, such as the young Warwick.

By the early sixteenth century, the once-great Plantagenet dynasty had been reduced to a memory—its surviving descendants living under constant suspicion or in quiet obscurity and the Tudor faction struggling with each new monarch, to really secure their succession and the killing of a crowned and anointed King.

Following her talk, Carol answered a number of questions on the subject followed by tea and cake.

To sum up, the death of Richard III brought not only the extinction of the male Yorkist royal line but also the systematic dismantling of his family's power.



Branch annual meeting...

Those pivotal six months in 1483

By Tracy Bryce

On October 4, we gathered for our Branch Annual General Meeting which was prefaced by a stimulating Zoom lecture from author Annette Carson.

She walked us through those pivotal “six months in 1483” which led to Richard’s assumption of the crown.

Annette explained that Richard’s possession of the highest offices of the state: namely High Constable and Protector and Defender of the Realm, gave him great political and judicial latitude, which he applied appropriately during the crisis in 1483, between Edward IV’s death and the coronation on July 6.

Our AGM was a hybrid affair, with a group of 10 local members meeting in Toronto and a similar number joining in from across the country via Zoom. Our slate of executive officers was acclaimed, with one change, as our Vice-Chair, Jan O’Brien, who elected to step down. On behalf of us all, I wish to recognize and sincerely thank Jan for her time, her energy and her contributions over the past year.



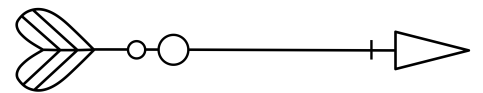
Annette Carson presented a Zoom lecture for the Canada Branch members recently.

Next up for us was the Ricardian Online Auction, October 11 – 25, organized by Sheilah O’Connor and her team. Sheilah put in an enormous amount of work to bring this project to fruition. Some of the proceeds will go to the Ricardian Churches Restoration Fund.

Book club & social media

At a member’s suggestion, we’ve just started a branch Whatsapp group for those who wish to chat about things Ricardian or medieval in a more immediate and informal manner. This is in addition to our accounts on X @RichardIIIICA, Mastodon @RichardIIIca@mstnd.social and BlueSky RichardIIIiSocCa.bsky.social

The branch has also revived its book club this year, with a focus on *The Brothers York*, by Thomas Penn.



Annette explained that Richard’s possession of the highest offices of the state: namely High Constable and Protector and Defender of the Realm, gave him great political and judicial latitude...

Book Club revival leads off with York brothers

By Sheilah O'Connor

For years our librarian ran a book club, alternating fiction and non-fiction, with the conversation taking place at the in-person September meeting. One year we were joined via Skype by Anne Easter Smith as we discussed her latest book. Being largely pre-online days, this was a big event!

This fell into abeyance until members Juliet Howland and Jan O'Brien suggested it was time to revive the book club. Once again, this was held at the September meeting.

Juliet had proposed we start with Thomas Penn's *The Brothers York* and she and Jan worked up a series of discussion points and questions that kept the meeting moving along.

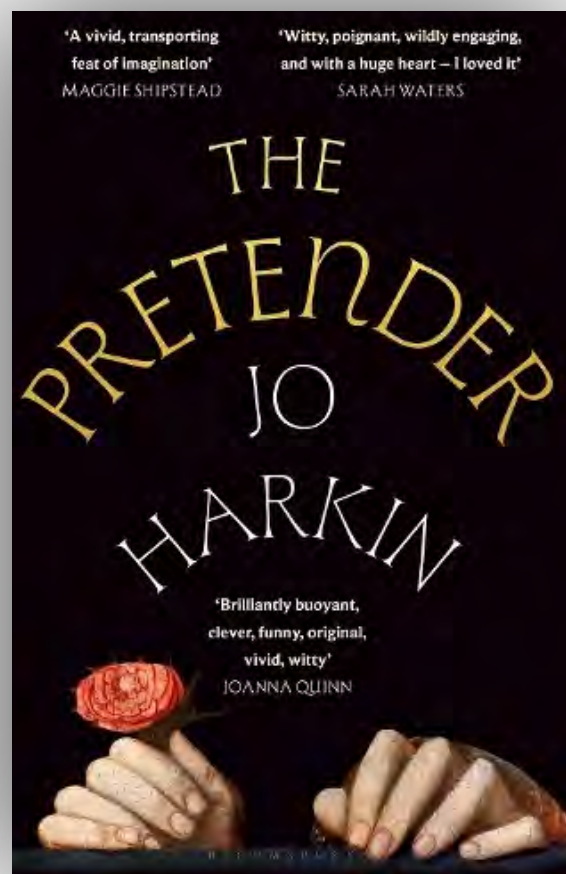
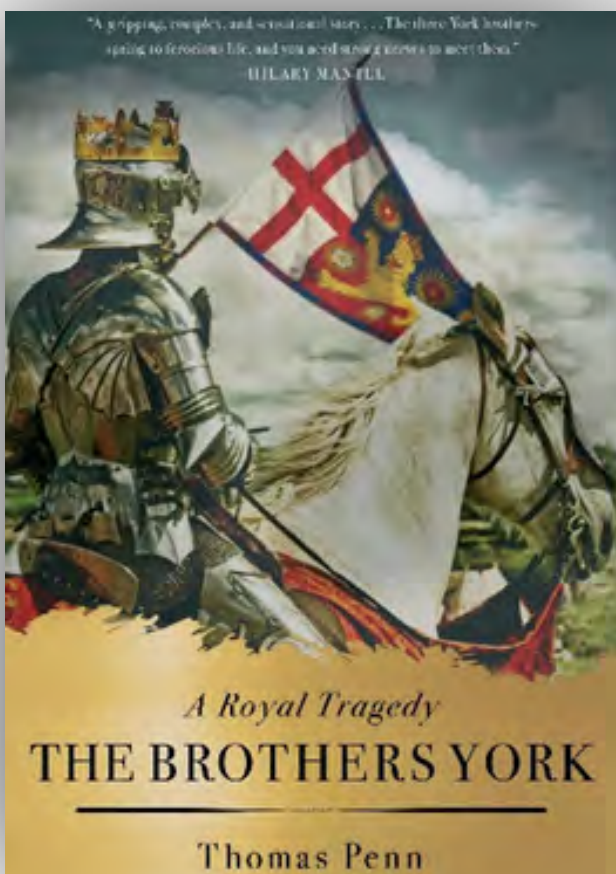
The book is a big one, over 600 pages and not all members there had read it, but the subject matter ensured that everyone who cared to, could contribute.

And since all our meetings are now via Zoom, that meant we had members across Canada offering their thoughts.

Most people found the slight fictionalization of the writing useful when reading the book, and appreciated the close look at the three brothers and how their actions impacted on each other.

I was annoyed he ignored all the women. His footnotes were questionable, but it was a great book to get discussion going.

Juliet has now suggested that the next book be the fiction title *The Pretender*, by Jo Harkin. Members who have already read this have agreed enthusiastically and so the date is set for June 14, 2026. We are looking forward to it.



The tomb of John de la Pole & Elizabeth Plantagenet

By Pat Palmer

As with many rural East Anglian medieval churches, St Andrews Church, Winfield, near the Suffolk-Norfolk border, lies within deep countryside reached by ever narrowing twisting lanes. It can be puzzling to understand these often large and seemingly isolated churches with their legacy of invaluable artifacts.

However, during mediaeval times they formed a central focus for communities. East Anglia held a particularly prominent role in the prosperous wool trade during the Middle Ages and Norwich was a key regional city and an important centre for art production. Wingfield was one of many thriving villages with ancestral nobility, which in this case could be sourced to Saxon times.

St Andrews is of knapped flint; the current building replaced an earlier church on the site. It was built to house the tomb of Sir John de Wingfield, a close associate of the Black Prince.

In 1362, St Andrews was rebuilt as a collegiate church. One feature denoting a collegiate church is a large chancel to accommodate priests and collegiate members.



St Andrews Church, Winfield: It can be puzzling to understand these often large and seemingly isolated churches with their legacy of invaluable artifacts.

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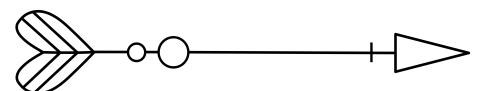


The alabaster chest tomb of John de la Pole (d. 1491) and his wife Elizabeth (d. 1503) lies at the chancel's north end. Photo Credit: David Ross and Britain Express.

This chancel opens into a spacious area, often patterned with sunlight from unusually closely set clerestory windows and revealing three family tombs.

The entire chancel appears to be the monumental chapel of a noble family.

The tombs chart changing styles of effigies, armour and costume dating from the mid-fourteenth century into the sixteenth century.



From previous page...

It was in the fifteenth century that the de la Pole family married into the Wingfield nobility and shows the political aspirations of the family. The tombs evoke a sense of piety, ancestry and status, which is heightened by the quiet dignity that both the chancel and the John de la Pole tomb possess. It can be said that this tomb is one of the key funerary monuments of the House of York in existence.

Alice Chaucer (granddaughter of the poet Geoffrey Chaucer) extended the chancel after the death of her husband William, Duke of Suffolk, in 1450.

The alabaster chest tomb of John de la Pole (d. 1491) and his wife Elizabeth (d. 1503) lies at the chancel's north end, adjacent to the entrance of what is now the vestry but was once the chapel of the Holy Trinity.

This chapel doorway retains a finely decorated ogee arch defining its original importance. John, second Duke of Suffolk, was descended from highly successful Hull wool merchants who rose to positions of close service to the monarchy.

Elizabeth, his Duchess, is of course known to us as sister to Edward IV, Richard III and Margaret of Burgundy. The tomb is partially set within a recess, above which is a decorated stone canopy surmounted by chivalric emblems of the de la Pole family – these are John's original tilting helmet with the crest of a Saracen's headset between two carved, wooden animals, known as supporters.

Concealed on the underside of the carved canopy is a design that includes the rose en soleil, a significant and personal emblem of Elizabeth's.

Carved shields set within a quatrefoil design decorate the sides of the tomb, which has a weathered stone base and top.

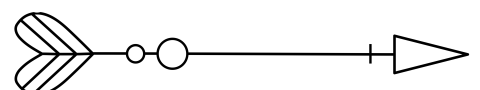


Both effigies rest on stylised, but significantly different, sculptured lions.

The effigies, slightly larger than life, rest on these. They are sculpted from separate pieces of alabaster and, in common with many tomb effigies, lie with their feet facing east, ready to rise to meet Christ at the Second Coming.

The reclining pose of an effigy represented 'sacred sleep' yet possesses alertness ready for the Judgement Day with subsequent resurrection and eternal salvation. Perhaps the open eyes of the effigies express this alertness. Both effigies rest on stylised, but significantly different, sculptured lions.

John's highly polished effigy has a bulk still presenting a commanding physical presence. Fine detailing and craftsmanship suggest a carver of considerable skill.



From previous page...

John is depicted in full armour, with Knight of the Garter insignia, although the Garter collar is omitted. Elizabeth appears finer in appearance, not only in the depiction of a contemporary pleated widow's barbe under her chin, but in the apparent use of whiter, less polished alabaster.

Both wear finely carved coronets; Elizabeth's over a realistically carved veil. Her head rests on two cushions supported on either side by the damaged remains of two small angels. John's head is supported by a further representation of his helmet with Saracen's head crest.

Elizabeth's effigy has virtually lost all polychromy, apart from remains of red in the folds of her gown and faint gilding to the coronet and robe cords.

John's effigy retains a slightly better state of polychromy, particularly where the alabaster is deeply grooved, such as the hair and the lion's mane. There is evidence of natural wearing to the tomb but also deliberate damage; historic graffiti defaces John's effigy for instance. The damage and loss of Elizabeth's arms is almost certainly resulting from Reformation iconoclast destruction.

There is no record as to who commissioned the tomb but as Elizabeth is presented as a widow, it is probable that she was the patron. Thought would have been given as to presentation to combine expectations of piety and memorialisation whilst demonstrating chivalric aspects and enhancing ancestry and royal status. Elizabeth would have faced the dilemma of how to affirm this as befitting the couple at a time of reversed fortunes following the death of Richard at Bosworth and the enthronement of Henry VII.

John had carried the sceptre at the coronations of both Edward IV and Richard III, and after outwardly professing allegiance did so again at the coronation of Henry VII.



Both wear finely carved coronets; Elizabeth's over a realistically carved veil. Her head rests on two cushions supported on either side by the damaged remains of two small angels.

But the family was under much suspicion. The couple's eldest son, once heir apparent to Richard III, was killed fighting at the battle of Stoke in 1487. Although sheltered by the Burgundian court for some years, their third son, Edmund, third Duke of Suffolk, was later held in the Tower and beheaded in 1513 by order of Henry VIII. Validity of the family claim to the throne was perceived as a constant threat by the new Tudor monarchy.

These are important facts to be borne in mind and will help in understanding certain aspects when studying the tomb.

A visit to the church is recommended in the latter part of the year as the church and the tombs seem to be at their most atmospheric in the afternoon light of a fine autumn day.

This article is an extract taken and edited from an essay submitted by Pat as part of an Open University course she undertook. It was published in Mid Anglia Group News, October 2025.

Library visit highlights rare historical works

Words: Steve Austin-Andrew

Photos: Visit Organiser Moira Walshe

The Mid Anglia Group met up in September at The Dog & Partridge on Crown Street, Bury St Edmunds for lunch and a pleasant chat over some delicious food and some discussion around where the group might like to visit in 2026.

Many of us hadn't met in person before, so it was a great chance to get to know each other a little before heading off to visit The Ancient Library, which is housed in a room over the north-west porch at St. Edmundsbury Cathedral, just a few minutes' walk away.

Moira had arranged a tour, and we were met by Stephen Dart, a volunteer librarian, who showed us around the collection and discussed the various works on display with great erudition. The library is now housed in purpose-built gothic style cabinets, in a climate-regulated setting to preserve the various books and maps in good condition.

The library was founded in 1595 as a resource for clergy training, interestingly used across both Catholic and Calvinist traditions.



Some of the publications date back as far as 1482 and the library booklist also details booklets, pamphlets or broadsides printed using metal type before 1500, collectively known as incunabula, from the very earliest days of typography.

Stephen further enriched the tour by bringing some of the works to life with his insights into the lives and times of the authors, symbolism and political satire.

This item first appeared in the *Mid Anglia News*, October 2025.

Yorkshire Branch AGM...

Wakefield battle reconsidered

The Yorkshire Branch celebrated an increase in membership at its AGM recently. And convinced even the most cynical that the battle of Wakefield wasn't really a battle. It was a sneaky ambush.

Some 65 years after its founding, the branch has seen its membership rise from 177 in 2024 to 196 as of the end of July 2025. This makes the branch the largest in the UK.

Secretary Graham Mitchell, pictured on the right, says the growth in membership had come mainly from personal recruitment at 'Outreach' events and lectures to other organisations.

"We currently send out 146 *Blanc Sanglier* journals in hard copy, eight take the journal electronically and seven take newsletters only. Some 18 members are not on the internet and receive hard copies of three newsletters + three *Blanc Sangliers*.

"We also circulate regular journals electronically from other branches:- *Ricardian Herald* from the Society; *Court Journal* from Scottish Branch; *Chantry News* from Friends of Chantry Chapel; *Affinity* from NSW Branch; *Ricardus Rex* from Victoria Branch; *RIII* from the Canada Branch".

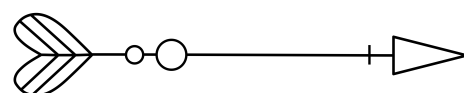
Branch members are geographically widespread, including one from Oban in Scotland, one in Germany, and even one in Louisiana in America.

He said the branch had organized a Christmas lunch at The Bay Horse York; the Wakefield Commemoration; Michael Brown's lecture on Gardens in the Age of Chivalry; Matt Lewis's lecture on Richard Duke of York and five lectures at the Middleham Festival.

"The branch has been represented at the Society AGM; Voice for Richard launch at York Theatre Royal; Re-lording Richard at York St John's University; the Yorkshire Heritage Day; the Grassington Richard III Day and Keighley Agricultural Show."



He said the branch is now an affiliate member of Yorkshire Archaeological & Historical Society, giving members research access to Brotherton Library at University of Leeds plus all YAHS lectures. Graham said he had responded to 14 invitations to give a Ricardian lecture. Branch newsletters and membership application forms are always made available at such events.



From previous page...

Librarian and research officer Joan Lee reported on the liaison with the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) regarding Lead Chapel at Towton. The former Chapel Friends group had folded, and the branch committee felt it inappropriate to use members' funds to support something which no longer existed. A new CCT officer has been appointed and is trying to form a new group to support the chapel. Joan discussed the branch collection of the Reginald Bunnett papers, which contain a tremendous amount of relevant historical information of interest to researchers.



The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club met recently at the Lead Chapel, Towton. Image courtesy The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club.

She said the material is too fragile to loan, but present thinking is to provide an opportunity for access it through digitalisation on the website. We would also like to digitalise back copies of Blanc Sanglier to make them available via the website.

Events

The next branch lecture will be on November 22 in St Bede's Pastoral Centre, York. Richard Goddard, Chair of the Tewkesbury Battlefield Trust, will speak on England's Forgotten Queen - Eleanor Botlier.

The deaths of Richard Duke of York and Edmund Earl of Rutland will be commemorated in Wakefield on December 30.

The branch is hoping to arrange another Christmas lunch at The Bay Horse in December.

Battle of Wakefield

Following the AGM, the branch enjoyed a presentation covering The Battle of Wakefield reconsidered.

Speakers were Dr David Grummitt, Society Research Officer of the Society (and the OU) and local historian Paul L Dawson, from Wakefield.

They presented new evidence that there was no actual battle at Wakefield at all; Richard Duke of York was in fact ambushed and captured on the road somewhere to the north of Wakefield and taken to Pontefract where he was murdered along with his son, Edmund, Earl of Rutland and - possibly a little later - the Earl of Salisbury.

Graham says he thinks some members were initially sceptical, but they were largely won over.

Ian Churchward...

Weaving history into folk-rock

The Legendary Ten Seconds is the solo music project of Ian Churchward, the former guitarist of The Morrisons, who featured on John Peel's Radio One show in 1987.

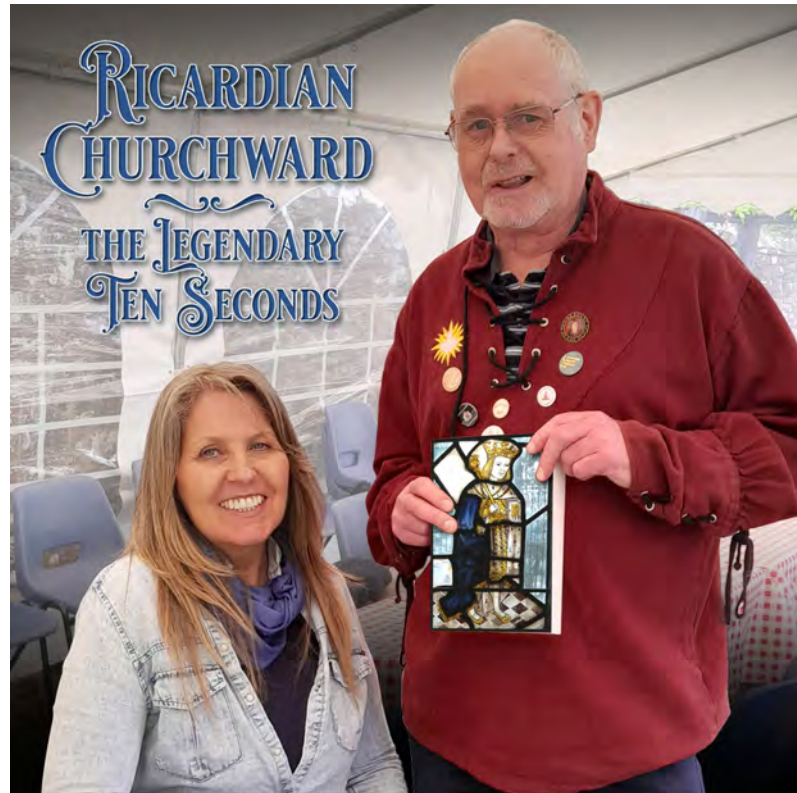
Ian has a deep passion for blending rich historical narratives with his distinctive sound. His musical project took on new life in 2013 when Lord Zarquon joined forces with Ian, bringing additional depth to the recordings. Since then, a talented roster of guest musicians and vocalists have stepped in to contribute to the studio projects, the most recent being Jay Brown, who co-composed and recorded the evocative time travel track called the Time Stream.

As The Legendary Ten Seconds, Ian has made a name for himself in the folk-rock genre, notably for his historically inspired albums. He has received critical acclaim for the work chronicling the Wars of the Roses and the life of Richard III, focusing on England's 15th century. The music is more than just entertainment; it's a dedication to keeping history alive through story-driven songs that resonate with modern listeners.

In addition to crafting meticulously researched and artistically compelling albums, Ian has donated part of the proceeds from his music sales to a scoliosis charity.

In 2018 he took the historical work to new heights with the release of the Mer de Mort album, commissioned by the Mortimer History Society in honour of its 10th anniversary.

This album is a historically accurate collection of songs that delve into the fascinating and impactful history of the Mortimer family, from their roots in Normandy before the Battle of Hastings to their role in the 15th century.



Ian's latest endeavour, Ricardian Churchward, is reviewed on the next page.

**For more information, interviews, or promotional material, please contact:
Ian Churchward - UK Mobile 07484300210**

Email: legendarytenseconds@gmail.com

Website:

<https://linktr.ee/legendarytenseconds>

Rock rebellion...

Churchward strikes back at Tudor myths in stirring new album

Reviewed by Sandra Heath Wilson

As Ian “Ricardian” Churchward sings in the opening song of this, his latest album, he writes and sings songs about Richard III, his “favourite king”. Ian and his group, the Legendary Ten Seconds have produced a great backlist of folk-rock albums. Well, his favourite king is also the favourite king of everyone reading this review now!

I’ve had the honour of reviewing and contributing to some of the Legendary Ten Seconds’ past output, and am delighted to have the chance to share my opinion of this new album, which is entitled *Ricardian Churchward*.

Ricardian Churchward, the first song in the album, is an amusing mickey-take of both Ian himself and all those who damned Richard III throughout history. A long list of Tudor lies has somehow taken root in the world’s psyche. I thoroughly enjoyed this track and, knowing Ian, can imagine his smile as he sang it. He certainly has the Ricardian bit between his teeth in this album and takes no prisoners when he has Tudorite propaganda in the crosshairs!

The next track, *Bones in the River* also takes a pop at Tudor myths and those who believe them. Especially those who insist that Richard murdered his nephews, the princes in the Tower. It’s a chirpy track that mocks all the ridiculous rumours.

He certainly has the Ricardian bit between his teeth in this album and takes no prisoners when he has Tudorite propaganda in the crosshairs!

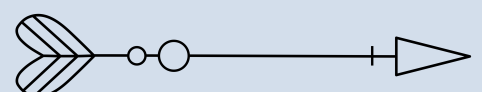
Next comes *Cheyne of Gold*, which concerns the (ahem) “undeniable proof” claimed by Tim Thornton to be his very own research discovery! Ahem, indeed

The discovery in question is of a lady’s last will, in which she apparently bequeaths a chain of

gold that was supposedly once owned by Edward V, elder of the princes in the Tower.

Well, it’s not a new discovery, everyone already knew about it, and it doesn’t “prove” anything, no matter how much Tim Thornton and his Tudor cronies (particularly Tracy Borman) bang on about it. Ian’s music and lyrics puts these Tudorites in their place.

The fourth track is *His Crowning Glory*, which as you can probably imagine concerns Richard’s coronation. This strikes a different note because it reminds us that Richard was a rightful king who was the first to take his coronation oath in English so that his people could all understand.



From previous page...

The lyrics point out that if anyone lacked a right to the crown, it was Henry Tudor.

Quite right too. Boo! Hiss!

The sixth track, *The Year of Three Kings* is an instrumental version of one of the Legendary Ten Seconds' best-loved songs of the same title. It's an infectious song that has everyone participating in the boisterous chorus,

Justice was high in his mind, as the few laws he was able to pass have proved ever since. All Ricardians know he would have been a great king, had he been given the chance to reign long enough. But he was betrayed and murdered by "supporters" who stabbed him in the back. This song strikes the right note and conjures the scene as the crown is placed on Richard's head.

In Sanctuary, the next track, concerns the birth of Edward V, firstborn of the two sons of Edward IV and his queen, Elizabeth Woodville. England was amid the turmoil of the Wars of the Roses, at a time when the great Earl of Warwick, known to posterity as the Kingmaker, was at the peak of his machinations.

Having fallen out with the Yorkist King Edward, Warwick had turned upon him and gone over to and restored the Lancastrian King Henry VI, forcing Edward IV to flee into exile. Edward's pregnant queen Elizabeth Woodville was in sanctuary at Westminster Abbey when she gave birth to the boy who was meant to one day be Edward V. Edward IV did return to his realm, of course, and finally emerged victorious at Tewkesbury in 1471, after a few bloody battles and the deaths of both Warwick and Henry VI.

In Sanctuary is a brisk track, filled with the tension of war. It is also longer than other tracks. The music is strong, and the mediaeval atmosphere is unfailing.

and I wondered how Ian would treat it when there were no words with which to join in.

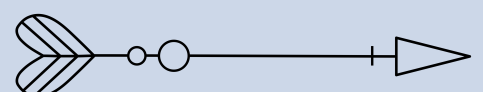
I really enjoyed the result, which (to me, I hasten to point out, maybe not to everyone) seemed almost like a close-by echo of the original. It had a sort of wistful and yet hopeful tone which appealed to me.

Track seven, *Pretenders to the Throne* took us back to the Tudor-prodding of earlier songs on the album. Never a bad thing! The lyrics point out that if anyone lacked a right to the crown, it was Henry Tudor.

Quite right too. Boo! Hiss!

Sir Richard Charlton is the title of the eighth track, and concerns the anxiety on Sir Richard's estates as his people await news of him after the battle of Bosworth. He's in Tudor's hands and is accused of treason, as was everyone who fought for Richard that day. Tudor had the gall to date his own reign from the day before the battle. Such jiggy-pokery was already the light-fingered fellow's favourite pastime.

If he'd played football the goalposts would never have been still for more than a minute if that. The track is easy-going, with a strong but steady beat that reminded me of the drums that accompanied the condemned to the scaffold. But that's just my impression.



From previous page...

The Tragedies of England, track nine, starts by naming several past disasters for our land, such as losing Harold at Hastings, Richard III at Bosworth and Edward V at Stoke.

But Ian is keeping up the barrage against the Tudors because the song launches into their advent, which was surely one of the biggest tragedies of all. Oh, misery! What a vile lot they were, bringing with them darkness, mistrust, spies, oppression, you name it. Vilest of them was Henry VIII. If his father was dark, Henry VIII was darker, and more bloodthirsty. So well sung, Ian.

Track ten is another instrumental, this one entitled *Lancastrian Lament*, and as you'd expect from the title, it's sad. But not too sad, after all, they were the opposition. Their laments meant Yorkist hurrahs! The Wars of the Roses split families and were the cause of great bitterness between former friends. Of course, this was to happen again in the English Civil War and many other conflicts. Under-overtones or not, I liked this track.

The eleventh and final track, *Philippa's Song* version two, is an homage to Philippa Langley, to whom all Ricardians—and Richard III himself—owe so much. It's a delightfully lilting song, and (as with all Legendary Ten Seconds tracks) maintains that wonderful folk-rock sound.

To hear the Legendary Ten Seconds is to be taken back in time, while somehow managing to keep our feet firmly here in the present. We can be in our normal everyday surroundings but we can see and experience the music of the mediaeval period that grips us so intensely. And thanks to the clever lyrics, we can almost reach out and touch those great figures who feature in this most tumultuous time in our history.

This is another brilliant album, and I'm proud to have been asked to review it. Some of my interpretations may not be how others hear the tracks, but I can only recommend them all. I have no favourite, because they're all excellent. The Legendary Ten Seconds continue to shine!



You can hear the tracks on:

<https://thelegendarytenseconds.bandcamp.com/album/ricardian-churchward>

Maria Grazia Leotta, a multilingual scholar and medieval history expert, blends her rich background in languages, music, and historical research to craft compelling narratives rooted in the life of Richard III. Her latest book offers 14 stories - two contemporary and 12 set in the tumultuous Wars of the Roses - where historical fact, fiction, and spiritual introspection converge.

Richard reimagined: a journey through time and spirit

Maria Grazia Leotta was born in Sicily. She attended a private High School for Languages and she graduated in Modern Foreign Languages and Literature at the University of Catania. She also obtained a Diploma in Theology.

She worked as a clerk and interpreter at the Magistrates Court of Catania, as a reporter for the newspaper *La Voce dell' Jonioin Acireale* and as a foreign languages teacher in several secondary schools. She also taught at the Università Popolare (Cultural Institute) of Acireale and was a private tutor.

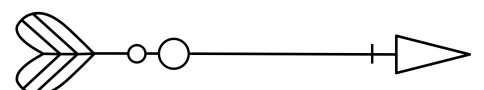
For more than ten years, she devoted herself to choral music and pop music working as a singer in piano bar and local television channels, presenter and events planner.



Thirteen years ago, she moved to England where she earned a MA Translation Studies at the University of Sheffield. Currently, she works at the York Trust Museum. She is also a translator, interpreter and speaker and an active member for The Missing Princes Project led by Philippa Langley. Maria Grazia is a researcher and an expert in medieval history and palaeography, and she writes for several bulletins and magazines published by the Richard III Society.

She is the author of the very first Italian biography of Richard III titled *Riccardo III Il Re Più Amato* published in December 2022 by Edizioni Efestò.

Maria Grazia is also a poet. Two of her poems were published in England for the anthology *White Rose Bards*. She also contributed to some anthologies of short stories, the proceeds of which all went to the SAUK (Scoliosis Association UK).



From previous page...

She lives in York and she is fond of history, antiques, music, and craft.

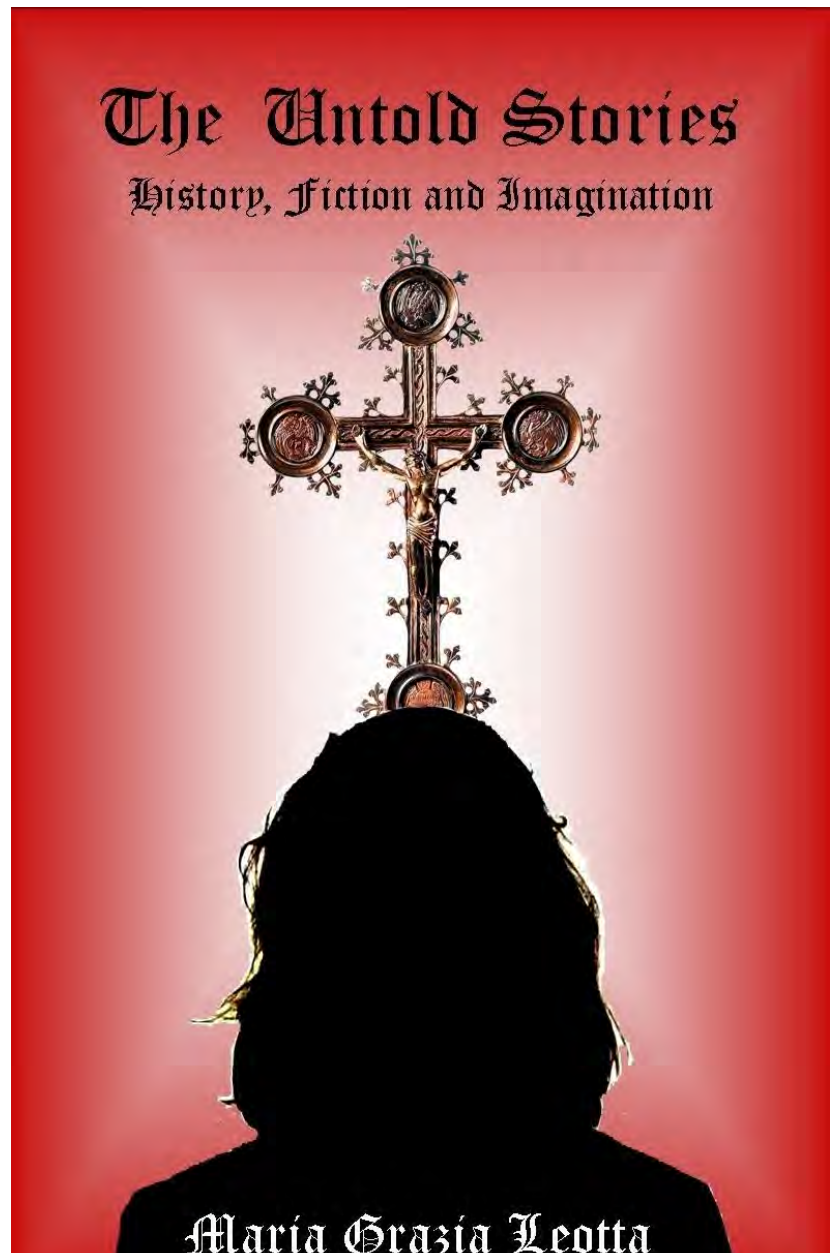
The Untold Stories

Maria's latest book is *The Untold Stories - History, Fiction and Imagination*.

The book offers 14 stories. Two belong to our time, while the other 12 transport us to the turbulent, violent era of King Richard III, following a path from the death of his father, Richard, Duke of York, to several years after the fateful Battle of Bosworth in 1485, where the king lost both his crown and his life.

Here, history meets imagination. Real events intertwine with fiction, vibrant creativity, and a whisper of the paranormal. Through vivid dialogues and intimate inner monologues and memories of Richard and the other characters, we enter the mind and soul of the real man, with his doubts, emotions, courage, and above all, his faith. The spiritual element prevails, alongside Richard's undeniable determination and bravery.

This is an intense, profound, and introspective journey into how Richard might have faced some of the most troublesome moments of his tragically short but exceptional life.



"...we enter the mind and soul of the real man, with his doubts, emotions, courage, and above all, his faith. The spiritual element prevails, alongside Richard's undeniable determination and bravery."

Book auction - the results are in!

Philippa Langley and The Missing Princes Project would like to send the most enormous congratulations and heartfelt 'thank you' to two of our members for their winning bids in the recent book auction.

The winning bids were for the complete set of *Harleian Manuscript 433* and the 1st edition, signed copy of *The Sunne in Splendour*. We are thrilled to report that the auction **raised £172.00** for the project which will go a very long way in aiding its research efforts. Philippa would also like to thank Marion Moulton and Norma Benathan who donated these two iconic works.

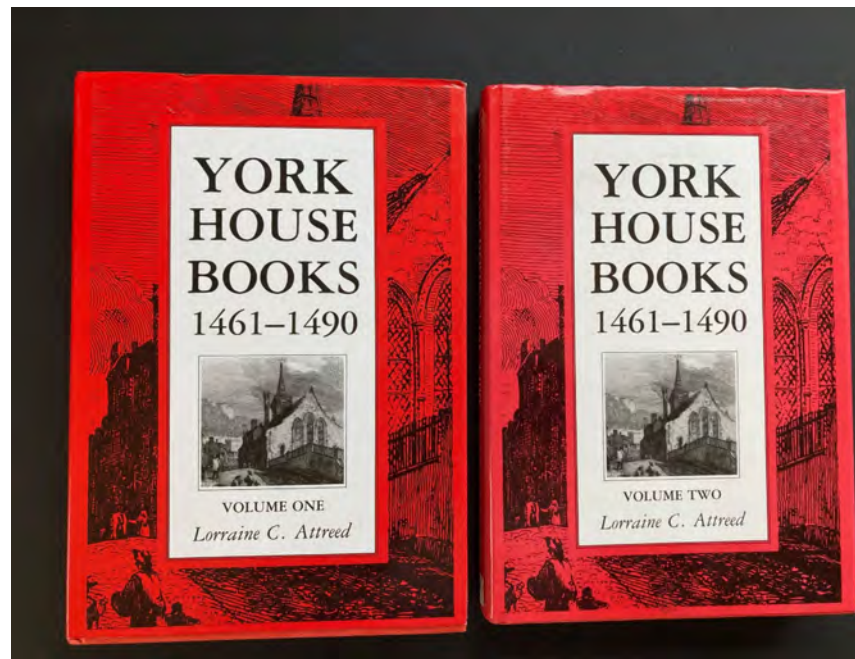
The complete display set of *The York House Books* by Lorraine C. Attreed (two volumes, out of print) is still available so if anyone would like to own this important and iconic work, any reasonable bid will be accepted.

We would like all the books to go to a good home. Bids in please by November 25, 2025. Please email June McIntyre with your bid at: juneym@btinternet.com Please note, as before, postage is not included in any winning bid.

Philippa would also like to thank Sue Grant-Mackie, Editor of the *Herald*, for publishing the auction and in a special edition to boot, and June McIntyre, Secretary of the Scottish Branch, for kindly offering her email address in order to administer the auction.

Heartfelt thanks to everyone involved - and please do get your bids in for *The York House Books* set!

Reasonable bid accepted



The complete display set of *The York House Books* by Lorraine C. Attreed (two volumes, out of print) is still available

Medieval folks probably recognised the mental health benefits of companion dogs – and possibly cats. In the first of a two-part series, Mid Mercia Branch member Jane Clarke tackles the philosophical aspect of companion dogs, what they represented about class, and reveals how the posh pups are accurately portrayed in the art of the day.

What a posh pup said about you

The role of companion dogs in medieval life brings us back to the delineations of social class and status.

Only the wealthy could afford to keep a dog whose only function was companionship. The rest of society certainly kept dogs - with whom they may have bonded - but these dogs had to earn their keep as working or guard dogs.

To begin we can look at one of the most famous (albeit fictional) dog lovers - the prioress from *The Canterbury Tales*. Chaucer uses caricature to expose the personal shortcomings of the clergy - and also the failings of the church. But the portrayals would have resonated with Chaucer's audience; many would have encountered a corrupt pardoner, or a monk preoccupied with eating and hunting! So too the character of the prioress would have been recognisable. Therefore, it is useful to examine several aspects of the medieval attitude to animals.

The prioress holds a senior role in her convent, but she is not of noble birth - she has worked her way up through the ranks. She represents those within the church who pursue a career rather than a vocation.

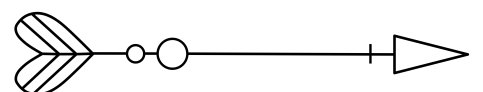
She is worldly and conscious of her status. She is keen to take her position in the upper echelons of society by adopting the manners and conventions of the elite (to the best of her ability!).



Anne of Burgundy, Duchess of Bedford, with her lap dogs in tow. Their cheeky antics suggest these are realistic representations of her actual pets. Image Wikipedia.

Alongside her excessively fine clothes and abundant jewellery is another status symbol - her lap dogs. She has three and they are very pampered pets. They represent her 'aspirational' values - but there is no doubt that she loves them - perhaps a bit too much!

Periodically the church became concerned about the presence of companion animals in convents and monasteries and attempts were made to discourage the practise. The arguments against were spiritual, moral and practical; pets might 'distract' from religious devotions, they consumed food which could have been given to the poor, and they might be a nuisance and disturb the holy tranquillity of others.



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However, it would appear that these directives were not always observed - or rigorously enforced; in fact, there seems to be an acknowledgement that sometimes there was a need for these animals - perhaps an early awareness of the benefits of pet ownership - particularly on mental health.

Interestingly an anchoress was specifically allowed to keep a cat - not usually considered pets in medieval times, but no doubt they were very welcome companions whilst also acting as 'pest controllers'!

Status was therefore a major factor in pet ownership. We can see the relationship between owner and the dog depicted in portraits and memorials, and it is obvious that these animals were an integral part of everyday life. The image on the previous page is an example. It is from the Bedford Hours. It depicts Anne of Burgundy, Duchess of Bedford, the first wife of John of Lancaster, Regent of France, and uncle of Henry VI.

Anne was a pious and charitable woman, and she is shown at prayer. A sombre representation, but the mood is lightened by the presence of Annes lap dogs, who are obviously mischievous and indulged by their mistress. One has made itself comfortable on the edge of the kneeler cushion, whilst the other seems to be hitching a ride on her train! Whilst it would not be unusual for dogs to be included in a portrait of a married woman as a symbol of fidelity, their cheeky antics suggest that they are representations of Annes actual pets.

Another well-known picture, from the Tres Riches Heures, shows the Duc de Berry with a variety of canine companions - pictured on the right. The event is the epiphany feast, and surprisingly there seem to be two lapdogs actually on the table! In the foreground is a greyhound - showing that a favourite hunting dog could also be a companion.



Another well-known picture, from the Tres Riches Heures, shows the Duc de Berry with a variety of canine companions. The event is the epiphany feast, and surprisingly there seem to be two lapdogs actually on the table! In the foreground is a greyhound - showing that a favourite hunting dog could also be a companion. Image courtesy Catchlight Blog.

To critique the illustration, we have a guest post from our new correspondent Sir Credence - who has been familiarising himself with medieval history.

"This shows how my ancestors were a valued part of all aspects of medieval life. Greyhounds make wonderful dinner party guests, and every home should have one. However, I am rather concerned that no one seems to have offered him a glass of wine."

These portraits capture the lives of the elite and their relationship with their dogs. They are shown in everyday situations and are therefore likely to be realistic representations.

In the second part of this series, Jane Clarke will introduce us to how beloved pets are often featured on memorials.

Stanley's Leicester weekend

Hello friends! I've just returned from my holiday in a place called Leicester, where my human, Mhairi, was attending something called an "AGM."

Leicester, I must say, is quite a way from Stirling, but I'm no stranger to long car journeys and I handled it in my usual way, stretched out in the back seat, eyes closed with the occasional snore (or flatulence!) to remind my chauffeuse of my presence.

After a very long drive due to an incident on the motorway, we at last reached our overnight stop in a place called Doncaster, Mhairi joined some friends on something called Zoom. It was King Richard's 573rd birthday, and a toast was drunk to the king. I noticed that Mhairi's 'toast' was generously sized, so she was twittering even more nonsense than usual, while I sensibly drank to His Grace's health with a refreshing and virtuous draft of water.

The next day, we set off for Leicester. There had been warnings about someone called Storm Amy causing problems for drivers, but we didn't meet her on our journey.

Once we finally parked the car, we headed to our hotel. Mhairi told me that some Ricardian friends would be arriving soon, which was excellent news. I can always rely on Ricardians to pass a few tasty snacks in my direction, even though I'm a Stanley.

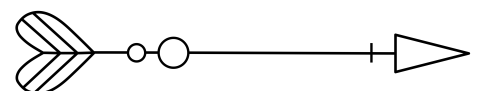
When they did arrive, I demanded cuddles from them all. They were delighted to see me, of course, and I was naturally the centre of attention. Then everyone gathered around a table and started a Ricardian gossip session, chatting about people from the fifteenth century. I listened quietly, hoping they might discuss some royal hounds, but after a while, I just dozed off.



Lord Stanley in his Ricardian threads

After successfully scrounging a few pieces of sausage from my friends at lunch, we set off to pay our respects to King Richard. By then, Storm Amy had arrived and upset the sky, which had burst into tears.

When we arrived at the cathedral, the entire place was in darkness thanks to a power cut. So, instead of meeting the king, we stood outside in the rain and wind, feeling betrayed by the National Grid and annoyed at Amy.



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So, it was back to the hotel for my dinner and a quick nap before going out for an evening meal. Fortunately, our hostelry had escaped the power cut, and a few delicious morsels of chicken soon made their way to me. Afterwards, we trudged to our hotel through the wet streets to rest in anticipation of the AGM the following day. A Ricardian dog's life is never dull.

Morning brought a hearty breakfast of three sausages, before I received the rather distressing news that dogs were not permitted at the AGM. After duly digesting both the information and the sausages, I settled in for a quiet morning in the car. I didn't mind too much; I'm a country lad at heart, and city streets can be hard on one's paws.

A couple of hours later, I was roused and informed that we were going to see King Richard. Off we trotted to the cathedral.

Thankfully, Amy had gathered her belongings and departed, taking the rain clouds with her, so the day was clear and dry. Upon arrival, however, things took a less pleasant turn because Mhairi produced my best jacket. Now, being an Irish Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, I take pride in my fine, curly coat and see no need to conceal it beneath any jacket, no matter how smart. Still, I was told I must look my best.

Mhairi also reminded me very firmly that there was to be no barking or marking, which I thought rather unfair. I do like to leave a few d-mails here and there to let the locals know I'm visiting. Nevertheless, I behaved impeccably, despite the indignity of the jacket, and even had my photograph taken beside King Richard's banner.

Afterwards, I returned to the car, while Mhairi went back to the AGM. I didn't mind too much, after all I need my beauty sleep.

Later, we ambled back to the hotel, where my Ricardian friends were busily constructing floral arrangements for a grand banquet.



I behaved impeccably, despite the indignity of the jacket, and even had my photograph taken beside King Richard's banner.

Naturally, I assumed snoopervisor duties. There were bags of greenery on the floor, and someone had to check them for hidden sausages or any other overlooked delicacies.

Once I'd approved of the decorations and assisted with their delivery, it was time for dinner, and another well-earned snooze. Mhairi joined her Ricardian friends, who headed off for something called a "curry". Appawrently it's not good for dogs, so I didn't get to try it.

The next morning, I bid a fond farewell to my lovely companions, and Mhairi and I set off back to Scotland. It was a long journey, but we made an essential stop at a place called Tebay, where there was cheese, chocolate, and, most importantly, sausage, a fitting end to a pawsome adventure.



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.'