

The RICARDIAN HERALD

Connecting our global community



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



A Continental Branch 'last supper' evening meal to close a branch visit in St. Julian's.



New BGLO

Meet the new Branches and Groups Liaison Officer. Talking from Dùn Èideann...

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Crossing borders and cultures

The Continental Branch began as the vision of a few enthusiasts determined to create a welcoming home for Ricardians scattered across many countries. Today, its members span borders and cultures, yet they stay closely connected through online communication, and a warm commitment to learning from one another.

What binds them is a common curiosity about Richard III. Members find meaning in exploring history together and challenging old narratives. At the heart of the branch is a dedicated organiser who offers both personal Ricardian experience and an international perspective, helping this diverse group feel like a true community.

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Medieval Christmas

America and Scotland collaborate around a medieval feast. And evidently, you wouldn't want to eat peacock. Pages 15-16

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KEEPING UP WITH EVENTS

A new and updated events listing will showcase the many activities organised by the Society and Branches and Groups.

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EXPANSION IN THE SOUTH WEST

The South West had a lot to celebrate this Christmas, including increasing membership.

p 25-28

HE WAS MISUNDERSTOOD

What do people think of Richard in the 2020s? The results of a recent survey might surprise you.



She put Richard on the throne. Pages 17-20



Dùn Èideann – Scotland’s southern outpost

Thank you for choosing me as your new Branches & Groups Liaison Officer. It is truly an honour and I look forward to working with you. It’s the first time the role has been awarded to the Southern Hemisphere, so allow me to introduce you to the place where I live.

Britain to New Zealand is the longest migration journey in human history. There be dragons and sea lions...In the 1800s it wasn’t fun stuck in the tight confines of rickety wooden ships for up to six months. But many made it; as did King Richard III.

Stafford Street, York Place and Rutland Street in Dunedin, where I have lived for the past five years, carry obvious Ricardian echoes. The name Dunedin is the Gaelic version - "Dùn Èideann" - of Edinburgh, honouring the city’s strong Scots heritage.

The gothic style architecture and statue of Robert Burns in the town centre not only mirror its namesake city but make Dunedin one of the best-preserved Victorian vibe places in the Southern Hemisphere.

I joined the New Zealand Branch in 2019 and made a pilgrimage to Leicester the same year. If you have flown from New Zealand to England, you’ll understand that by the time you arrive at Heathrow, you’re just looking for a place to die.

The return trip is much, much worse. Medieval pilgrims thought they had it tough; they had no idea what tough was...

The story of a medieval English king made this amazing journey; names associated with him are carved in the city’s history and New Zealand is home to a passionate and talented branch of Ricardians.

Most “up north” but two of us are “down south”.

I think it’s a remarkable testimony to Richard’s continuing journey that such a role is now in the southern hemisphere.





Keeping our Ricardian events in sync

By Graham Mitchell

The Society and Branches & Groups between you organise a vast array of in-person lectures, zoom lectures, presentations, meals and visits, month by month and all on Ricardian themes.

To avoid events clashing, the board has asked me to co-ordinate and produce a dynamic events listing, to be presented at each meeting of the board. This way board members can appreciate what is taking place in the Ricardian world, and hopefully, to reduce clashes of activity.

The events listing also goes to the Society Events Committee and now is published in *The Ricardian Herald*.

The accuracy of any such listing depends upon the secretaries of Branches & Groups providing up to date information, and so please send me details of your events for the coming year to: rgm@dockroyd.co.uk for inclusion in the listing.

Hopefully this will then be of interest, help and information, to everyone, and could also increase the participation at such events.

Thank you for your invaluable support and help in this new venture.



Events for the coming year feature on pages 34-36 of this issue. If you want to add information, or things have changed, let Graham know.

A year of expansion and celebration in the South West

By Edna Coles

Members of the Devon & Cornwall Branch of the Society gathered in festive spirits in December for their annual Christmas lunch.

This was a much-anticipated highlight in the branch calendar.

As tradition dictates, the venue was once again the Duke of Cornwall Hotel, renowned for its excellent festive fare. Before taking to the tables, members met in the bar to enjoy a celebratory drink and to reflect on what has been an especially successful year for the branch.

There was much to celebrate.

Membership has seen a healthy increase, and the branch enjoyed a full and varied programme of events throughout the year.

Highlights included two particularly memorable visits to the South West. In August, Annie Garthwaite, author of *Cecily & the King's Mother*, was at St Torney's Church in Cornwall, while in May, Philippa Langley visited Coldridge.

As a far-flung outpost of the Society, such visits are greatly appreciated and keenly supported. The year also saw members travelling further afield. In November, several enjoyed a coach holiday to Yorkshire, including a visit to York itself.

For some, this was a return trip, offering another chance to explore the city's rich Ricardian connections.



LEFT: Members gather in the hotel bar to enjoy a pre-lunch drink and good company before the festivities begin.

CENTRE: Edna Coles, left, with Shirley Stapley, who stepped down as Chairman this year and also celebrated 50 years of membership and her 90th birthday.



Members seated around the table for the Christmas lunch, enjoying festive food and lively conversation.



DEVON & CORNWALL BRANCH

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For now, the Devon & Cornwall Branch can look back on a year of friendship, scholarship, and shared enthusiasm—and forward with optimism to the year ahead.

Despite the disappointment of finding York Minster once again closed to the public—this time for graduation ceremonies—the group made the most of the experience, exploring the surroundings and inevitably spending time in the Minster gift shop.

Nevertheless, the mini break was thoroughly enjoyed by all and provided a welcome opportunity to relax and socialise.

Attendance at the Christmas lunch was impressive, with Jonathan Bartlett travelling up from Redruth, and Rosemary and Keith Jessop making the journey from Newton Abbot to join the celebrations.

A small number of members were unable to attend due to illness, including three affected by the seasonal flu. Events Officer Ian Lauder, who had expertly organised the event, was sadly sidelined with viral bronchitis.

As the meal drew to a close and festive conversations continued, members looked ahead to a quieter period over the winter months. Meetings will resume in the Spring, when the branch will once again embark on a new programme of events. For now, the Devon & Cornwall Branch can look back on a year of friendship, scholarship, and shared enthusiasm—and forward with optimism to the year ahead.

A bright winter's day at Fotheringhay

By Mhairi Macleod

One of the highlights of the Ricardian year is the lunch at Fotheringhay Village Hall, followed by the service of Nine Lessons and Carols in the church of St Mary and All Saints in the village.



This year's service took place on December 13. We could not have asked for a more wonderful day. It was bright and clear. Before lunch, some members took the opportunity to lay white roses on the grave of Dr Phil Stone, former Chair of the Society, in the churchyard.

From there, we made our way to the village hall for lunch, where we were treated to soup and an excellent cold buffet prepared by Jo and her team.

Following lunch, there was a raffle with a generous selection of prizes donated by members, which raised £175 for the Ricardian Churches Restoration Fund.



After the raffle we strolled along to the church for the service. The church was warm and welcoming, despite the cold winter's evening, with a Christmas tree decorated with white roses.

The Rev Annie Goldthorp led the service. It opened with an introit 'Drop Down Ye Heavens' by Richard Lloyd, sung by the St Peter's Singers, and followed the traditional format of nine carols and readings along with choral music. The readings were shared between parishioners and members of the Society, with Rev Goldthorp delivering the ninth lesson.

After the service, there was a chance to meet old friends and new, and to take some group photos. Later, a few of us adjourned to the Falcon pub for mulled wine or other refreshments.

Many thanks are due to Sally Henshaw of the Leicestershire Branch for organising the service and lunch. Heartfelt thanks also go to the Rev. Goldthorp, the St Peter's Singers, their musical director Jeremy Jepson, and the organist James Perkins for the wonderful music and singing that added so much to the occasion.





Why did York emerge from the safety of his castle at all?
Image: Sandal Castle today.
Courtesy Yorkshire.com

New research recasts Wakefield... York and Rutland remembered 565 years on

By Graham Mitchell

Members of the North Mercia and Yorkshire Branches gathered at the Chantry Chapel, Wakefield Old Bridge, December 30, 2025, to commemorate the 565th anniversary of the deaths of Richard third Duke of York and his second son Edmund Earl of Rutland.

Our commemoration was a little different this year as new research has presented something of a challenge to previous Ricardian beliefs.

Many aspects of a traditional battle between Yorkist and Lancastrian forces along Manygates Lane between this bridge and Sandal Castle have been challenged for some time by various authors and historians - “the foraging party” “the ambush attack from woodland cover” and the reason why York emerged from the safety of his castle at all. And it is recognised that ‘The Duke of York’s Pillar’ in Manygates Lane is a worthy but entirely 19th century construction.

But the publication this summer of new research by Dr David Grummitt and Mr Paul Dawson has argued that there was no battle as such at Wakefield, much less outside Sandal Castle, on December 30, 1460.

They argue that the earliest contemporary records, chronicle sources written before 1465, the evidence of the 1461 Act of Attainder, and various previously unexplored legal and financial records in The National Archives, all suggest that, instead of being killed in battle, Duke Richard and Earl Edmund and a limited personal retinue were ambushed by the Earl of Northumberland and John Lord Clifford on the road from Wakefield to York on December 29, taken captive and almost certainly killed in cold blood, probably in Pontefract, the following day.

Moreover, they suggest that the favoured date of the battle – December 30, 1460 – was the date of Duke Richard’s death, following his capture in the engagement which took place the previous day.



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But regardless of whether there was a battle outside Sandal Castle or an ambush on the York Road, Duke Richard and Earl Edmund were certainly killed, and most likely killed not honourably in battle, but entirely dishonourably murdered in cold blood as prisoners, so it is still entirely right and proper that we come here today in memory, to continue to remember and commemorate their deaths, 565 years on, here in this sanctified ancient place of worship.

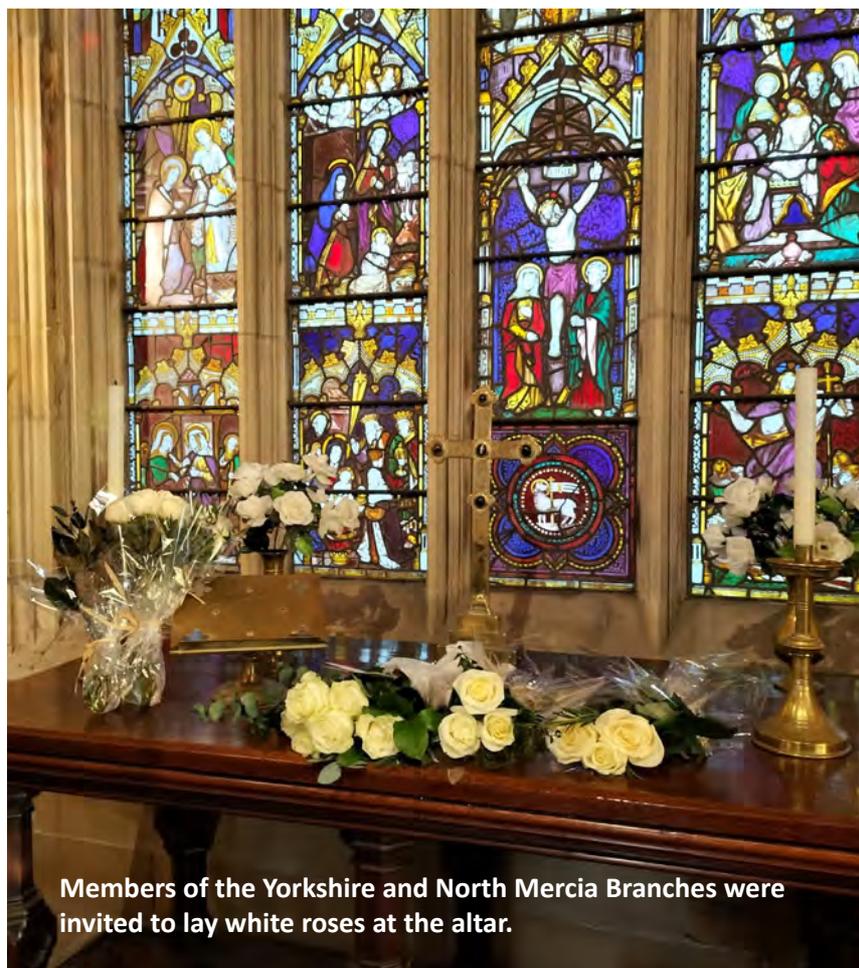


The Chantry Chapel: An ancient place of worship

We remember also that December 30, 1460 was a huge setback for the House of York and the worst time for 8-year-old Richard, our Richard, who was sent in mid-winter on a perilous journey across the North Sea with his 11-year old brother George, as migrants, as refugees to the Low Countries, not knowing whether they would live or die.

So, I ask you to observe a few moments of silence as we pray for the souls of Richard Duke of York and Edmund Earl of Rutland and all who suffered death in the conflicts of The Cousins' Wars.

We conclude with the ancient prayer for the dead ... as Richard would have said, ***Requiescat in Pace***, or as we still say in churches today.



Members of the Yorkshire and North Mercia Branches were invited to lay white roses at the altar.

Rest eternal grant to them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. May their souls and all the faithful departed rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.

Europe musters for the King...

...the Continental Ricardian realm

Continental Branch chairman Robert Galea-Naudi, of Malta, chats about the most geographically diverse Ricardian community.



Continental Branch visit to the Magistral Grandmaster's palace, in Valletta, Malta.

Herald: When did the Continental Branch start?

RG: Around 2014/2015; several continental members of the main Richard III Society contacted other continental members with a view to setting up a branch. It took some time until there were enough interested, and a branch was brought together. Currently we have 54 members.

Herald: Who were the founders, and what was their vision?

RG: At this stage, I cannot remember all the names of those involved in setting up the Continental Branch; I know Janet Watkins was instrumental – she was our first chair - and Charles Gauci is an avid Ricardian. There were a few from Germany who encouraged the setting up of this branch too. The idea was to provide a platform for non-UK residents to be able to meet and discuss all things related to Richard, with a special focus on Europe; a place where we could share and discuss the times of Richard - the late 15th century - within the perspectives of our own place of abode.

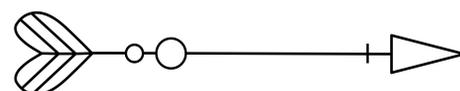
So, although Richard may not have travelled widely through Europe, we reference events and happenings in other European locales in Richard's lifetime.

Herald: The branch is quite geographically diverse. Could you explain in what countries the branch gets its members?

RG: Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland, with most located in Germany and France. All members are members of the main Richard III Society and it was the Society that put us in contact with each other in the first instance.

Herald: How do you communicate with folks of diverse cultures?

RG: Of course, the common theme is Richard III and our shared interest, so we already have a starting point. And English being the universal language helps in our communication. It is always interesting to get a different take on things, from people with different backgrounds and cultures.



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LEFT: Continental Branch visit to Mdina, Malta's old capital; hosted by the mayor of Mdina, Peter Dei Conti Sant Manduca, Count of Sant Manduca, Malta.

BELOW: Continental Branch visit to Casa Rocca Piccola, a 16th century palace of a Malta noble family in Malta hosted by Marquis Nicholas De Piro.

Herald: How do you meet? Do you use Zoom?

RG: Most communication is online; primarily email for disseminating information.

We also have had a quarterly magazine/publication - the *European Yorkist* - where we encouraged members to contribute articles, which could be on any topic, with a connection to Richard. We've had various interesting submissions over the years, from detailed historical accounts to write-ups on places visited. We've had poetry, art and music included in various editions. Co-ordinating the publication is a task in itself! And we try to encourage members to be more active in the branch.

In 2016, we organized the first branch meeting, which was held in Malta. We had a full programme, laid out over three days, where we visited many historical sites across Malta. There is no known, as yet, link between Richard and Malta but there are still some architectural remnants from the late 15th century, that were constructed during Richard's time.



Apart from the site visits, we also had a formal meeting, where we discussed the organisation of the branch and a way forward, together with taking suggestions for future activities and events.

The next visit was scheduled for Bulgaria but unfortunately, Covid hit, and all travel plans were cancelled.

Since the easing of restrictions, we are trying to make the branch more active and are looking at possible visits; one proposal is to visit Leicester as a branch to pay our respects to Richard and visit the new museum. It is however quite an exercise in co-ordination...



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In the interim, we occasionally organise online meetings, where members can meet and interact, although again, co-ordination, timings and technological issues often prove to be challenges.

And recently, we have been issuing newsletters, as a form of shorter version of the *European Yorkist*, the main aim being to keep members updated with news and provide a few short articles, to maintain interest in Richard and the branch.

Herald: What is the common bond that links your members - why are they interested in an English king who died so long ago?



RG: This is a difficult one to answer - who knows what the fascination with Richard is? And how this fascination has spread across the world. Many members already had an interest in Richard but, following the discovery of his remains and his reburial, there was a spike in interest - I think this is the main fascinating point and why more people became interested in Richard: the discovery of his remains in such a dramatic manner and from one from so long ago.

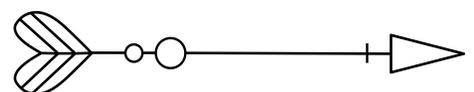
Herald: Tell me something about yourself. What's your background in Ricardian matters? Where do you reside and what's your role with the branch?

RG: I am a lifelong Ricardian and it is difficult to explain exactly how this came about. My mother and two of her sisters from Scotland instilled in me the pleasure of reading; birthday and Christmas presents were almost always books. One book my aunt sent was entitled *Kings and Queens*. At that age, I was too young to understand what I was reading but I remember enjoying the pictures in the book and being able to read the captions.

In the back of my mind, Richard seemed to be instilled in me as a "bad" king and I remember looking at the portrait in this book and thinking to myself he does not look like a bad person at all. I honestly cannot pinpoint exactly where this interest in Richard came from - they do say that children are influenced for life from a young age!

Fast-forward a few years and my mother had given me *Some Touch of Pity* by Rhoda Edwards. I was able to read and understand this book now and, whatever happened previously, this book sealed my fate as a confirmed pro-Richard! And I continue to read up about Richard.

Needless to say, my interest in Richard continued, visiting Ricardian sites whenever possible and I eventually joined the Richard III Society - when I found out about it. I was also very fortunate to briefly know John Ashdown-Hill.



CONTINENTAL BRANCH

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The Society had put him in contact with me; he needed some research from Malta but was not able to travel himself and asked if I could help him out. As it happens, I was able to help him with his research and provided him with the required material.

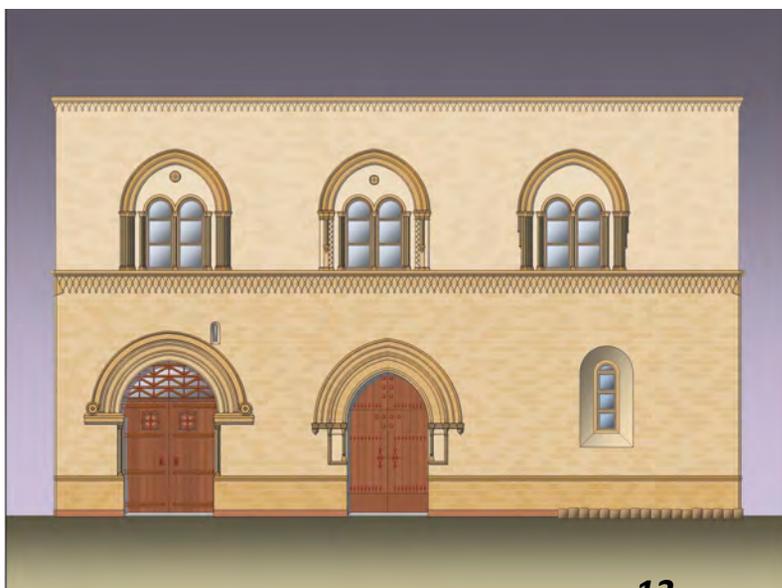
This was eventually used in his book *Royal Marriage Secrets*. This was around the time that the search for Richard was on, and I am honoured that John trusted me enough to report back at the end of each day on what they had done, unearthed and discussed.

I still have the email he sent describing the scene when they discovered Richard's bones...

I reside in Malta and am currently chair of the Continental Branch; Janet Watkins had been instrumental in setting up the branch and was its first chair. Last year, she stepped down and I was recommended to take over. Although Malta is a small country, we have some very keen Ricardians here!



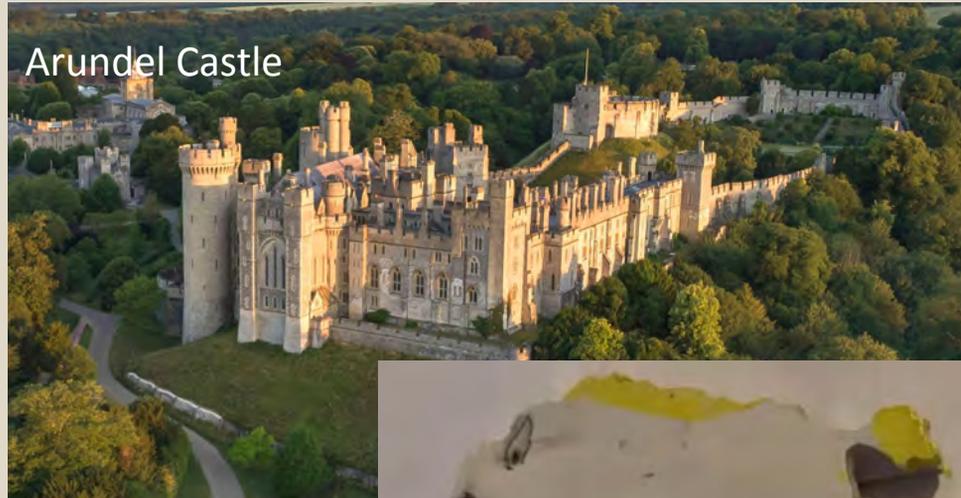
Map of Malta, showing the locations visited by the Continental Branch mentioned in this story. With thanks to Robert Galea-Naudi.



LEFT: Continental Branch chairman Robert Galea-Naudi created this image of Palazzo Falson in Mdina, Malta's former capital. He had it printed and mounted to be presented as a souvenir to each attendee of the first Branch meeting in Malta, 2016. Palazzo Falson was constructed around the 1450s, so, although not quite within the correct timeline, is a building from the time of Richard.

The Swan launches a Ricardian flock

The Arun West Sussex Group was set up in 2019, after Liz placed an advert in *The Ricardian Bulletin* for other members in the Arundel area.



The first meeting was in September that year, with five members, in The Swan in Arundel, which was to be the regular meeting place until the end of 2025 – initially in the bar, then, as the group got bigger, a private room.

One of the group's achievements was to correct the royal gallery in The Swan – all monarchs proudly portrayed – except that the portrait of Richard III wasn't him! We provided a copy of a correct portrait.

Julia was one of the founders of the group and was Secretary from November 2019 until December 2024 when she moved out of the area. During this time, she tried to sack herself at least twice, but the other members just laughed and let her carry on.

She had to move to Berkshire to convince them she was serious. Helen and Katharine then took over – contact details for them are at the end of this story. Julia's husband John made White Boar badges for all the group members before they moved, **pictured above**. Thanks John!

In the early days the group was just referred to as 'Arun'. We changed the name in 2025 to Arun West Sussex, as it became apparent that non-locals and, more significantly, people new to the area, might not recognise it.



Meetings have always been fairly informal as the group has never been large, but include members researching and presenting on varying subjects, some more memorable than others.

These include Lesley's portrayal of Cecily Neville in a role play meeting – a baptism of fire for Sue, and, as it was in the bar, probably quite memorable for other patrons. Another experience: freezing in an outdoor meeting as lockdown restrictions were gradually eased – though still an improvement on zoom.

Then there was 'dressing as a Tudor', when Katharine and Susan showed how women from about 1540 would have dressed from the shift up, including lacing their hair. This was, fortunately, after we moved our meetings to the private room! We also had a group visit to London, to see *The Daughter of Time*, braving the weather and tube strikes, well worth it though my memory of walking through the park back to Victoria in the pouring rain is almost as clear as of the play!



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The Sussex Weald is an area between the chalky slopes of the North Downs and the South Downs. Although it stretches across East Sussex and West Sussex, it also covers parts of Kent, Surrey and Hampshire. It is about 37 km from west to east, and about 48 km from north to south. The Sussex Weald is an area known from Saxon times and is considered to be a Medieval landscape.

Image courtesy: sussexexclusive.com

We generally meet at lunchtime on the first Monday of the month, and from March this will be at the Norfolk Arms in Arundel. We often have an outing for the August meeting – in 2024 this was a visit to Arundel Castle, and in 2025 we had a guided walk round medieval Southampton.

The excursion for August 2026 is still being discussed, but in February we are going to The Weald and Downland Living History Museum, where the Black Knight re-enactment group will be in residence for 10 days.

Topics for other meetings in 2026 include such varied subjects as medieval illness and medicine, the Northern Saints, Richard's children, Burgundy and the Valois Dukes, and medieval gardens. December is reserved for a social gathering, with conversations ranging across subjects, Ricardian and otherwise.

Arun and West Sussex Group contacts: Helen Clark hchockelle@hotmail.com and Katharine Millett chimillkathy@btinternet.com



The Weald and Downland Living Museum offers more than 50 historic buildings, period gardens, traditional farm animals and walking trails. Visitors are promised an immersive experience representing more than 1000 years of history.

Peacocks, pies and pagan magic: Christmas the medieval way

Review of A Medieval Christmas presentation delivered by long time Richard III Society member, author and historian, Toni Mount

Susan Troxell, Chair and Research Librarian of the American Branch welcomed viewers and listeners to this presentation. The American and the Scottish Branches joined up for this talk, and it was a great success as it showed that the global branches can collaborate with one another.

In her presentation, Toni described how the traditions of Christmas in medieval times came about. Traditions that have evolved from ancient customs and that are still with us. It was regarded as a time of magic, celebration and festivities. In many instances, powerful pagan rituals that were developed so long ago became Christianised, ancient magic became Christian miracles.

Christmas became a lively and vibrant time in the dark winter months. The wealthy would demonstrate their hospitality with grand feasts and merriment, the less fortunate could partake and indulge in more satisfying meals and activities with more variety.

Feasting and wassail date back to early Roman times and the tradition of hunting beforehand remains today. Boar was hunted and presented at the feast with an apple in the mouth and garlands around the neck.

Birds such as swans and peacocks were also featured during the feasts and given similar decorations. Swans belonged to kings and were given as a gift of favour. Peacocks were meant for the wealthy. Goose, chicken and capon were consumed by the less fortunate. It was not uncommon to make the birds look alive by using items such as wire to prop them up. Toni also mentioned that the meat of the peacock, having a very unpleasant taste, could be replaced with goose meat.

Toni described the mince pie as once being a very large, shared item with a baby Jesus carved into the thick crust.



Oliver Cromwell disapproved of this, so the mince pie became a smaller, more individual dish without the carving.

Wassail, a traditional beverage, came from the pagan practice of tree worship where a liquid would be poured on tree roots. Ale was a typical beverage year-round, wassail, with added spices, apples and honey, made it special. In Olde English "wassail" meant "be well".

The tradition goes that as time went on a piece of toasted bread was put in the wassail and whoever found it in their vessel would have good luck, hence, drinking to one's health, and then the tradition of "toasting".

AMERICA & SCOTLAND COLLABORATE

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Mysteries and miracle plays were an important part of medieval Christmas. Originally the participants were members of the clergy, and the language was primarily English or French, not Latin, so more people could understand.

The Church became concerned that it was inappropriate for people such as monks playing certain roles such as Mary or Herod, so lay members were employed to participate. Costumes were generally everyday clothing except for someone playing the role of God. The plays were considered wonderful entertainment adding colour and drama to the cold and dark winter. "Mumming" was a very different, less ambitious, ancient form of street theatre, marking the death of summer and the birth of winter. Mummers always wore masks to hide their identity, lest summer forget to return.

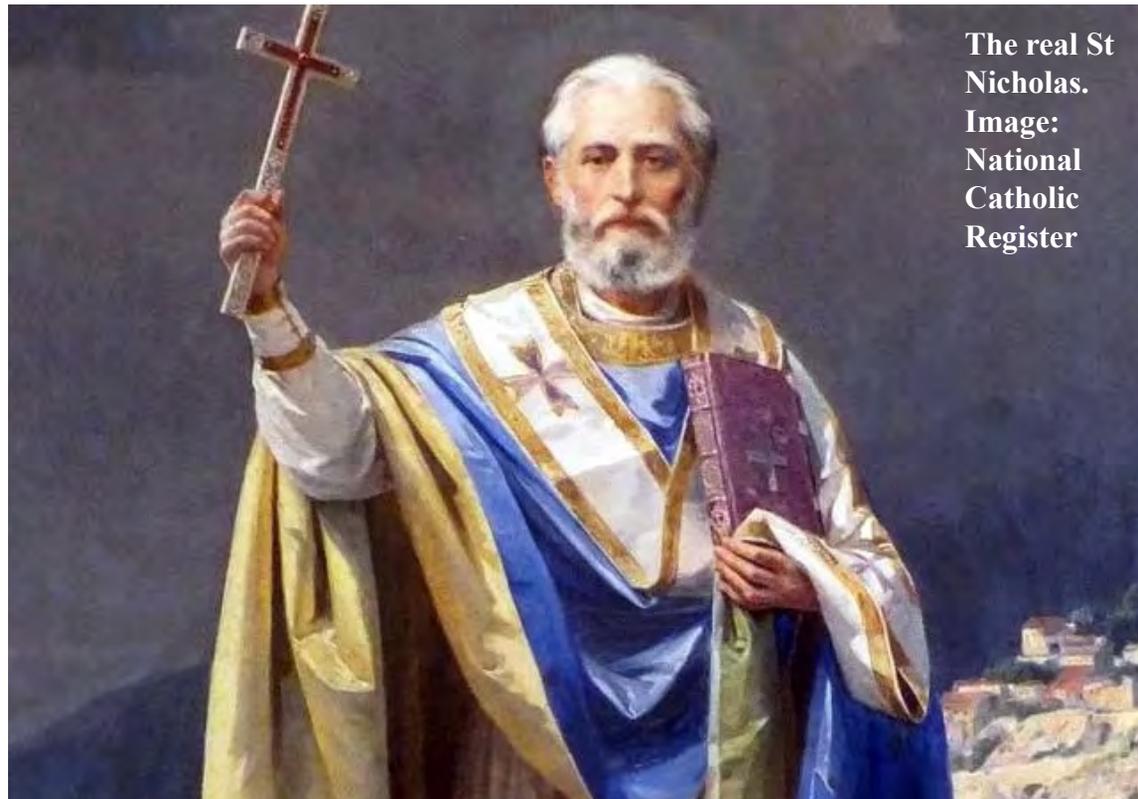
Toni also told us about the forerunners of Father Christmas. First was "Old Man Winter" described as an overindulgent pagan individual. Then, originating in Turkey in the 4th century, a bishop became known as "St. Nicholas".

He gave his fortune to the poor, and at one point he overheard a father's concern that he could not provide for his three daughters as he would like. St. Nicholas tossed bags of gold into their windows, two of the bags landed in two of the daughter's stockings, the window to the room of the third daughter was closed so he tossed a bag of gold down the chimney. Santa Claus, patron saint of the poor and the young, is still doing the job today.



The Barbers' Play: The Baptism performed from a wagon in the street in York in 2014.

Image York Mystery Plays, or the York Corpus Christi Plays, Wikipedia.



The real St Nicholas.
Image: National Catholic Register

There are contemporary records, such as King Edward IV's Black Book that provide some descriptions of festivities, such as rising on New Year's morning and dressing in a knight's robe to receive gifts from courtiers.

This would also be a time for adults to exchange gifts. Games in King Richard III's time would include singing and dancing. Wardrobe accounts indicate how much was lavishly spent on textiles and gifts.

This was a very interesting presentation that traced Christmas traditions past and present. Thank you very much to Toni Mount for providing us with such a fascinating history.

Lady Eleanor Talbot...

England's forgotten queen who put Richard III on the throne

This article, by Alison Harrop, is based on a presentation to the Yorkshire Branch by Richard Goddard.

Eleanor Talbot was born in 1436 and was the daughter of Lord John Talbot and his second wife Elizabeth Beauchamp, the third of Talbot's children.

Blakemere in Cheshire, Painswick in the Cotswolds, Goodrich Castle in Herefordshire and London were all her early homes

Her father was absent at war most of the time until she was six years old and probably met Ralph Botelier, Lord of Sudeley, in France. They negotiated the young Eleanor's marriage to Ralph's son Thomas. The marriage took place in late 1449 when Eleanor was 12 years old and Thomas 28



LEFT: What we do now echoes in eternity: In 2016 the late John Ashdown Hill from our Society unveiled a facial reconstruction of Eleanor Talbot based on skeletal remains discovered at Norwich Castle in 1958. This is the image of Eleanor commonly used today and used for this article. Richard III gained the English throne because of his brother's abandoned wife.

However Henry recovered in 1455 and this was a disaster for the House of York as the Duke's actions were all reversed and he was deprived of his positions, in favour of his rival Somerset. York was triumphant at the Battle of St Albans which followed however, in which Somerset was killed along with other Lancastrian nobles, and he regained control of the king at that time.

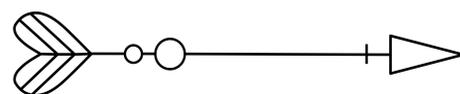
Lord Ralph held numerous titles and owned estates in Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and London and was therefore a man of considerable means and influence. Eleanor moved into the Botelier home of Sudeley Castle on her marriage, which her father missed attending as he was a hostage of the King of France at the time. The marriage was unlikely to have been consummated at 12 years old but this would have been likely by 1453 when Eleanor was 16.

In 1453 Eleanor's father was finally killed in the Battle of Castillon and England was in turmoil due to Henry VI's mental incapacity following the news of this catastrophic English defeat in Gascony. Richard, Duke of York became Protector of the Realm as we know.

Lord Ralph Sudeley was a Lancastrian supporter and had led the king into this battle as the Royal Standard Bearer but he survived.

In 1459 Margaret of Anjou ordered Audley into battle at Blore Heath. Audley was defeated but Thomas Sudeley, who had fought in Audley's army was killed, leaving Eleanor a widow at 23. Although they had been married for 11 years, they had conceived no children.

Lady Eleanor continued to live at Sudeley Castle. Lord Ralph appears to have been completely broken by the death of his son as he withdrew from public life. He also granted manors to Eleanor in dower for life, including Fenny Compton in Warwickshire. Eleanor subsequently left here however to be with her sister who had married John Mowbray and lived at Framlingham Castle in Norfolk.



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The future Edward IV spent a lot of time in Norfolk and met Eleanor at Framlingham on his visits. He was said to have been utterly transfixed by her and tried to seduce her but she resisted.

At some point (after Towton) Edward then agreed to marry Eleanor if she submitted to his advances and here we need to consider the nature of mediaeval marriage. Although marriage was considered to be a Sacrament, bans were not called for, a priest was not necessarily required and it did not even have to be in a church.

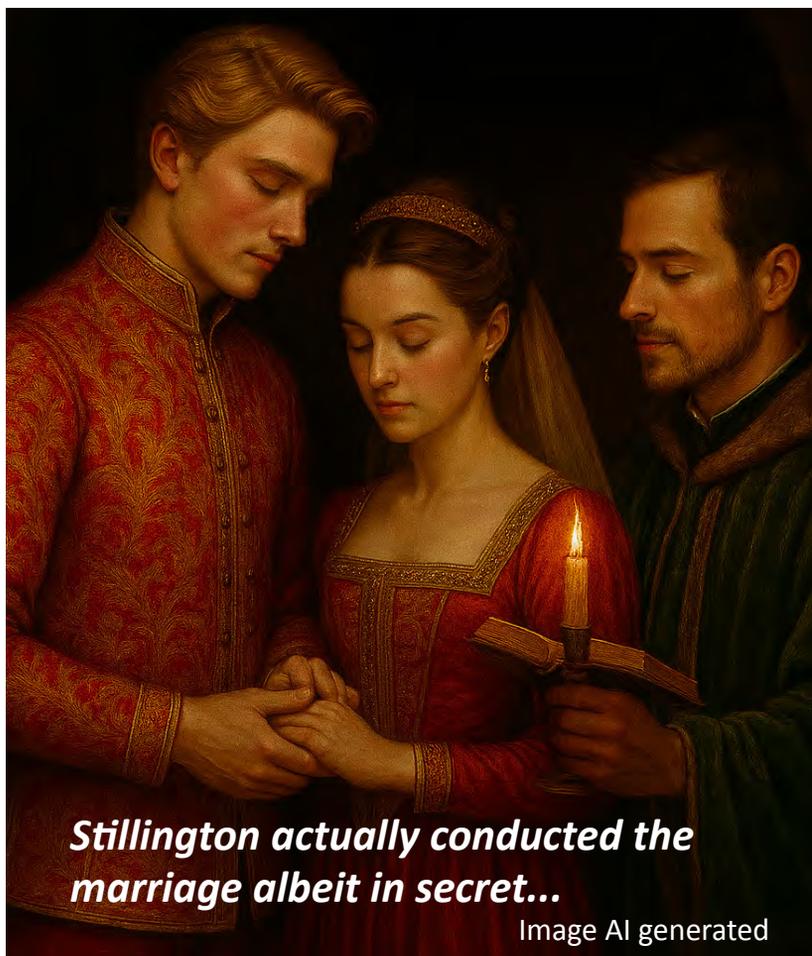
Only the free consent of each person was required (from the age of 12 for a woman and 14 for a man). A priest may or may not have been involved. A sign of marriage, known as a 'wed', perhaps a ring exchanged, was slightly more suspicious as it was the promise of marriage followed by sex. Sex outside of marriage was considered a sin however.

Divorce did not exist and the only way to dissolve a marriage was to prove it had never existed unless you could get a papal annulment.

In Edward and Eleanor's case Stillington actually conducted the marriage albeit in secret. Following the ceremony, the marriage was consummated. Robert Stillington was 'a man of the world' and a servant to the Crown as well as being a trained cleric. He had served in the administration of Henry VI as Lord Chancellor but then transferred his allegiance to Edward.

He was already Archdeacon of Taunton and the Keeper of the Privy Seal at the time of the secret marriage and his silence was assured. Edward did not make the marriage public. Why? Well, Edward may have considered her to be of low status.

He was after all expected to marry a foreign princess or high noblewoman though that did not hold him back with Elizabeth Woodville. He may not have been truly committed of course and he may have been concerned that she was barren in view of her previous childless marriage.



Stillington actually conducted the marriage albeit in secret...

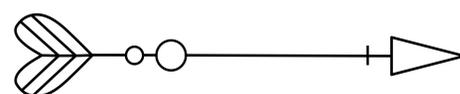
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Edward was then considerate to Lord Ralph Sudeley by exempting him from personal attendance, not requiring him to leave for war and giving him generous grants. Eleanor also prospered with generous royal grants of land from the Forest of Savernake.

So it is likely their relationship continued for a while. But by 1462 it may have run its course as Edward now had a regular mistress in Lucy White. Eleanor remained childless. She was now in a difficult position.

After all, she only had her word to support her claim in view of Stillington's silence. She chose to remain quiet and became pious, moving to East Hall, Kenninghall in Norfolk which was the site of a Carmelite priory.

By 1464, Edward had met and was trying to seduce Elizabeth Woodville. He also married her secretly but Elizabeth was more canny as she insisted on having witnesses present, including her mother Jacquetta.



From previous page...

Warwick was furious when this was revealed as he had been negotiating a marriage between Edward and Bona of the House of Savoy. (Bona was clearly none too pleased either as in later life she refused to contemplate a marriage between one of her daughters and one of Edward's sons, even though she had subsequently married the Duke of Milan).

All generosity to the Botelier family from the King now ceased abruptly.

Lord Sudeley's benefits were revoked and his estate of Sudeley surrendered to the Yorkist elite including Earl Rivers and Hastings. (They later granted it to Richard Duke of Gloucester.) By 1468, Eleanor was ill and gifted all her lands to her sister by deed.

It would not have been sufficient to merely gift this in a will as that would have required permission from any living husband. After his temporary exile, Edward imprisoned Sudeley in the Tower in 1471 which seems unnecessarily vindictive. Lord Sudeley died there two years later and is buried in St Peter's church in Winscombe near Sudeley.

Only Stillington was now aware of Edward's previous marriage apart from Eleanor herself and possibly her sister and brother in law. Edward V was born in 1470.

Interestingly, Mancini says that Elizabeth Woodville openly questioned the legitimacy of her children due to Edward's pre-contract with Bona of Savoy. We don't know if she knew about Eleanor but possibly not at that time.

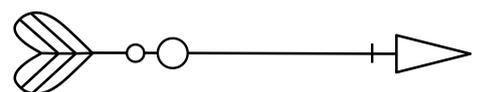


George, Duke of Clarence, in a window at Cardiff Castle. He got into trouble for publicly questioning the legitimacy of his brother's children. Image That History Nerd.

Clarence however was spreading rumours of supposed illegitimacy and Edward arrested him in 1478 for dishonouring the King and his issue and we all know how George came to his sorry end by execution in the Tower.

Stillington (now Bishop of Bath and Wells) may have had some association with the disgraced George, Duke of Clarence as he was also imprisoned in the Tower for three months in 1478 quite inexplicably. It is tempting to suppose he was released only on condition of his continuing compliance and silence. Everything certainly went quiet again until the unexpected death of Edward IV in April 1483, followed by Stillington's bombshell announcement in the June of 1483.

No objections were raised by the Boteliers to Stillington's testimony. Eleanor's sister attended Richard's coronation and she and her husband went on to have a good relationship with their new king.



From previous page...

Promotions were given unexpectedly to her husband in Norfolk and Eleanor's brothers were knighted personally (and not in war).

As mentioned earlier, Eleanor Talbot died in June 1468, probably at Kenninghall. Her death was certainly due to natural causes as she was known to be ill though a specific cause was not recorded.



ABOVE: Cowgate Norwich. By David Hodgson c. 1860. Whitefriars stood on the eastern side between the church of St James Pockthorpe, seen above, and the river a short distance away. Image Norwich Museum.

A chronicler noted that *"she was not killed by kindness"*. Whilst this is true, perhaps she was right not to insist on her claim to be Edward's Queen as it is doubtful she would have been happy in his court.

If she had borne him a child, history may have taken a different path. But she did not and chose to remain quiet. She was interred in the Carmelite Priory Church of Norwich, also known as Whitefriars.

In 1958, an archaeological investigation found a skeleton there which is thought to be Eleanor's because of the absence of molar teeth and a congenitally curled finger. The late John Ashdown Hill from our Society was involved in this research and unveiled a facial reconstruction based on the skeletal remains at Norwich Castle in 2016. This is the image of Eleanor commonly used today and used for this article.

If she had borne him a child, history may have taken a different path. But she did not and chose to remain quiet.

After Henry Tudor's defeat of Richard at Bosworth, Stillington was immediately imprisoned again by Henry who was trying to reverse the illegitimacy claim in order to marry Elizabeth of York. The death of Eleanor in 1468 would not have removed the illegitimacy of Edward IV's children however as his second marriage would have remained bigamous in canon law. Although Stillington was later released, he supported the rebellion of the so-called Lambert Simnel and was therefore imprisoned again by Henry in 1487 until his death in 1491.

Alice Chaucer: wealth, wit, and political mastery

Mhairi Macleod reports on a recent presentation by Sandra Pendlington.

On November 26 the Scottish Branch, joined by members of the Yorkshire and Canadian Branches, enjoyed a talk about Alice Chaucer presented by Scottish Branch Vice-Chair, Sandra Pendlington.



Alice was one of the most powerful and long-lived noblewomen of 15th century England, notable for her wealth, political influence, and family connections.

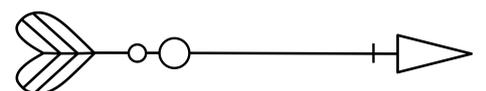
Sandra traced the Chaucer family's rise from tavern keepers in Ipswich to prosperous London wine merchants. The most distinguished member of the family was Alice's grandfather, Geoffrey Chaucer, who was not only a poet but also a diplomat in the service of Edward III, before entering the circle of John of Gaunt.

Geoffrey strengthened his position further by marrying Philippa de Roet, sister to Katherine Swynford, mistress and third wife of John of Gaunt and Alice's great aunt. Thomas and Philippa had one son, Thomas, Alice's father.

Thomas, too, had a distinguished career, serving five times as Speaker of the House of Commons, and married Maud, heiress to the wealthy Burghersh estates in Oxfordshire. Alice was born around 1404, probably in either Ewelme or London, and was their only child and heir.

In 1412, Alice was married to Sir John Phelip, a widower who, at thirty-two, was twenty-five years her senior, but the marriage was short-lived: Phelip died three years later at the siege of Harfleur in 1415.

Alice married again in 1421, this time to Thomas Montagu, Earl of Salisbury, also a widower, aged thirty-three.



From previous page...

A distinguished soldier, he commanded the English forces in France after Henry V's death in 1422 but was killed at the siege of Orléans in 1428.

By her mid-twenties Alice had been widowed twice and was both wealthy and well connected, making her one of the most sought-after women on the marriage market.



In 1430, at the age of 26, Alice married William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, who succeeded Montagu as commander of the English army in France. There is evidence that this was a genuine love match. When Thomas Chaucer died in 1434, William chose to settle at Ewelme Manor, the place Alice loved most. One chronicler remarked that Suffolk moved there “for love of his wife,” and together they set about transforming both the manor and the surrounding village.

Their benefactions were substantial and enduring. They founded almshouses and a school—the latter now recognised as the oldest primary school in England—while the almshouses continue to operate under their original charter. They also extended the parish church and undertook major alterations to its interior. William's will further attests to the depth of his trust and affection, naming “his best-loved wife” as his sole executrix and declaring that “above all on earth my singular trust is in her.” Their only surviving son was born at Ewelme in 1442, firmly rooting the family's legacy in the place they had made their home.

In 1432, Alice achieved a rare honour, becoming the fiftieth woman and only the 22nd commoner to be appointed a Lady of the Garter.

William and Alice were supporters of the Lancastrian dynasty. In 1444, they travelled to Tours for the betrothal of Henry VI to Margaret of Anjou, where William acted as Henry's proxy. The following year, they escorted Margaret to England with Alice as her main companion. Henry and Margaret of Anjou's preference for William and Alice made other courtiers jealous.

On July 2, 1448, he was created duke of Suffolk, a rank usually reserved for members of the royal family. Alice, the great-great-great granddaughter of a tavern keeper, had reached the highest rank in the peerage.

Rumours and accusations against William mounted up, and this unpopularity extended to Alice, who was close to the Queen. Sandra described the year 1450 as their ‘annus horribilis’. It began with the marriage of their son, John, aged eight and Margaret Beaufort, aged seven. Then William was accused of plotting with the French and imprisoned.

Henry VI reduced the sentence to five years' exile. As he left Dover, he was killed. Alice was now a woman alone and in danger.



From previous page...

St John's Chapel

(Wikipedia)



A petition was raised calling her a traitor, and some of her lands were attacked, and an attempt was made to declare William a traitor, which would have disinherited Alice's son. Henry VI resisted both petitions, helped by Alice's donation of 3,500 crowns.

Alice buried William at the Carthusian Priory in Hull, and for the rest of her life, she visited his tomb on his death date. She remained at Ewelme looking after her estates and her son, John de la Pole, whose marriage to Margaret Beaufort was annulled.

When John was 16, Alice arranged a second marriage to Elizabeth Plantagenet, the daughter of Richard, duke of York, and Cecily Neville. Alice's decision changed history, and from then on, the de la Pole family were aligned with the Yorkists. John fought on the Yorkist side at Towton, Barnet, and Tewkesbury, and he and Elizabeth would have attended court events.

They had 11 children, but only one died in childhood. The de la Poles suffered under the Tudors. The eldest, John Earl of Lincoln, Richard III's heir to the throne, was killed in the battle of Stoke. The last de la Pole was Richard, known as 'the last white rose', who was killed at the Battle of Pavia. After his death, Henry VIII said All the enemies of England are gone.

What was Alice like? Medieval women had little power - Alice was different. She held power and wielded it well. As a widow, Alice had lost a husband she clearly loved, survived and overcome attacks on herself, her son, her lands and her prosperity. She was a shrewd woman who coped without a man's protection.

Margaret Paston warned her son that if he had any business with Alice, he should take friends and counsellors with him because she was subtle and intelligent.



From previous page...

Alice died in Hull on 20 May 1475. She was buried in Ewelme Church. The effigy of Alice in life surmounts the tomb, and the effigy of Alice in death is at the bottom. It is one of the few remaining a 'cadaver' or 'resurrection' tombs in England.

Sandra finished her talk with some slides about the Order of the Garter, focusing on Ladies of the Garter. The Order was founded by Edward III in 1438, consisting of the sovereign, the Prince of Wales and 24 Knight Companions. Edward III's consort, Queen Philippa, became the first Lady of the Garter in 1358. In the next century and a half, 63 more women became Ladies of the Garter. Henry VII appointed only one in 1488, his mother, Margaret Beaufort.

After that, he abandoned the tradition of appointing Ladies of the Garter. In 1901, Edward VII revived the tradition by appointing his consort, Queen Alexandra, as a Royal Lady of the Garter. A few Royal Ladies were appointed, but by 1978, there were still no Lady Companions! Then Elizabeth II announced a new Garter Statute.

'We do ordain and declare that henceforth the Companions of Our said Most Noble Order shall be those of Our Subjects both Knights and Ladies as We or Our Successors are pleased to declare to be Knights Companions or Ladies Companions.'

Alice would have been delighted! Since then, eight women have been appointed, and today five remain.

Sandra's final slide showed Alice's effigy. After the long hiatus in appointing women to the Garter, when Victoria became queen, no one knew how a woman should wear the Garter.



In 1838, she came to Ewelme to see Alice's effigy with the Garter on her left arm. In 1910, Queen Mary, the Consort of George V, came to Ewelme to do the same.

She navigated the shifting regimes of the Wars of the Roses with consummate skill, protecting her family and safeguarding their future. Enduring and resilient, her legacy remains visible today, most notably at Ewelme, where her influence is still evident.

Sandra's presentation revealed a woman who challenged the limits of medieval women's power, leaving us with a vivid impression of Alice as a formidable and intelligent figure. Despite her husband's conviction and murder, Alice succeeded in retaining her lands and titles, a remarkable achievement in a period of intense political instability.

Good, misunderstood, maligned... the realm speaks!

PhD researcher Robyn Whalley attended the Richard III Festival in Middleham last year to get the down low on what people think of Richard today. The results reveal not only where public sentiment falls in the 2020s, but how reputation can be shaped—and reshaped—by time, storytelling, and fresh scrutiny.

This article is reprinted from Blanc Sanglier, journal of the Yorkshire Branch.

In July last year, Middleham hosted an event based within the castle ruins and across the town, featuring re-enactors, talks, stalls and performances.

I am a PhD researcher investigating the many ways in which Richard III has been historically, and continues to be, presented in media and how such presentations have affected public opinion. So the festival is an event that couldn't be missed.



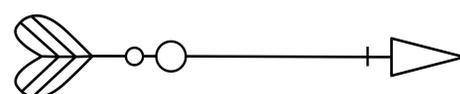
Working in collaboration with the King Richard III Visitor Centre in Leicester, my research is a Collaborative Doctoral Award funded by Midlands 4 Cities, an AHRC-funded Doctoral Training Partnership. My research takes an interdisciplinary approach to studying Richard III's legacy, combining traditional academic comparative analysis of multi-media presentations (fiction, film, biography, theatre) with survey and interview fieldwork.

A chapter of my thesis focuses on the Richard III Society, detailing its origins and influence on Richard III's legacy. Owing to a successful bid for fieldwork funding, I was able to take part in the festival on July 5 to collect survey data for my thesis. The completed surveys were collected using self-selecting sampling and therefore, owing to the nature of this event and its specific focus on Richard III, it is important to note the likelihood of bias within the survey data collected. In my thesis, these findings will be considered alongside additional datasets collected at various locations and events.

For visitors arriving at Middleham on July 5, an overcast sky wasn't nearly enough to keep them away, and the event was well attended, a fact which enabled me to collect a total of 47 surveys. I am grateful to the many enthusiastic participants who assisted with additional recruitment and encouraged others to take part, although I do regret that the many canine visitors we met were, sadly, due to a lack of informed consent, excluded from my results.

All participants were given an 11-question survey which began by enquiring whether they were in Middleham specifically for the Richard III Festival. Of the 47 responses, thirty-seven respondents answered "yes", leaving 10 who reported being on holiday, visiting family, or working at the castle.

Everyone was then asked to select adjectives that they most associate with Richard III from a list of options.



From previous page...

"Across all participants at Middleham, the most frequently chosen adjective was 'Misunderstood' "

Across all participants at Middleham, the most frequently chosen adjective was **'Misunderstood'** with 32 out of 47 respondents selecting it. The second most frequent being **'Good'** with 26, and **'Maligned'** at 25. In my analysis, I found that of the 32 selections for **'Misunderstood'**, 13 came from respondents declaring themselves to be members of the Richard III Society and 19 from non-members. The most popular adjective chosen by society members was **"Good"**, whereas non-members who were aware of the Richard III Society favoured **'Misunderstood'**. For non-members who reported that they had never heard of the Richard III Society, **'Misunderstood'** and **'Complicated'** tied for the most chosen.

Whilst it might seem predictable that members of a society dedicated to Richard would produce such a positive bias within the data, the positive responses of non-members, and indeed the number of non-members who attended specifically for the event (20), are suggestive that there exists a positive image of Richard more generally within the public imagination. However, owing to the small size of the Middleham dataset and the self-selecting nature of attendees, such a suggestion requires further study.

At the other end of the spectrum, we find **'Evil'**, which drew a grand total of zero responses and **'Bad'** which managed only two, both selections being from non-members of the society.



Image Calendar Customs

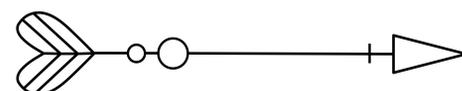
"...within the Middleham sample set, opinion of Richard leans towards the positive, with the majority of respondents believing him wronged and/or incorrectly presented and perceived."

With **'Complicated'** coming in as the third most popular option overall, it's clear that, within the Middleham sample set, opinion of Richard leans towards the positive, with the majority of respondents believing him wronged and/or incorrectly presented and perceived.

In my survey work, I encourage respondents to add their own marginalia and comments to the survey, a method which I believe allows my participants to fully express their views and provide detailed, meaningful answers.

However, it does mean that a mere glance at my work by my more numerically analytical research colleagues does leave them feeling a tad distraught.

Of the additional descriptors provided by respondents at Middleham, the results were also distinctly positive. From a total of 19 additional comments, **'loyal'** appears most frequently with a total of four additions.



From previous page...

Several supplementary responses highlighted the *'complex cut-throat times'* in which Richard lived and designated him as *'a man of his class and time'* who can't be judged by *'modern standards'*.

However, despite this, other comments were notable in their use of emotive language, describing Richard as *'sincere'*, *'concerned'* and *'honourable'*, all suggestive of a perceived sensitivity. It can therefore be argued from the Middleham data that Richard is viewed (correctly or otherwise) as both a medieval king, a soldier and a natural product of his time, but also as a man in possession of qualities which are valued positively today and potentially inspire notions of Richard as a modern figure.

Having handled visitors' perceptions of Richard as an individual, my surveys then move on to Richard's reputational legacy, both historically and today. To this end, participants are asked to determine if Richard's reputation can be described as *'Positive'*, *'Negative'* or *'Neutral'* firstly through history and then in the modern day. Regarding Richard's reputation through history, the response was clear, with *'Negative'* receiving 36 selections. The *'Neutral'* box received the ticks of five individuals, and *'Positive'* only three, with two surveys which were left blank. In contrast, opinion as to Richard's reputation today proved to be less conclusive with the frequency of *'Positive'* and *'Neutral'* responses only differing by three.

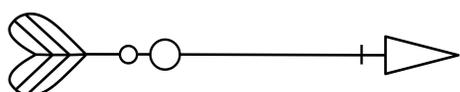
My question regarding modern reputation also elicited a higher number of marginal comments from respondents, with contributions such as *'Almost'* and *'More positive'* appearing next to the *'Positive'* tick box. Such additions suggest that for several participants, Richard's modern reputation is still in flux and not yet settled either way. My findings suggest that for visitors to Middleham on July 5, Richard's reputation lay somewhere between *'Neutral'* and *'Positive'* but with a marginal skew towards the latter, or, as one commenter described it as being: *'On the up'*.

Next, my survey sought to identify whether there were any sources which could be said to have influenced an individual's opinion of Richard III and his reputation.



Robyn Whalley

"It can therefore be argued from the Middleham data that Richard is viewed (correctly or otherwise) as both a medieval king, a soldier and a natural product of his time, but also as a man in possession of qualities which are valued positively today and potentially inspire notions of Richard as a modern figure."



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The results from the Middleham data line up with the findings of my other samples thus far: theatrical presentations of William Shakespeare's *Richard III* were selected the most frequently.

At Middleham, Shakespeare's work was selected as influential by 34 participants – 72% of respondents. With only 18 selections – 38% of respondents – 'Television/Film' was a distant second place. Indeed, in this dataset, only one respondent reported that they had never heard of Shakespeare's work at all.

Twenty-six respondents reported having seen or read Shakespeare's *Richard III* with an additional 19 contributing that whilst they had not engaged with the work, they were aware of it, totalling 45 participants.

In third place, the Richard III Society drew with historical fiction with 15 selections each. Of the Middleham dataset, 'Theatre (Other)' was only picked by one individual – a participant who reported no knowledge of the Richard III Society – suggesting that modern productions seeking to retell and/or engage with Richard III's narrative such as M. Kilburg Reedy's adaptation of Josephine Tey's *The Daughter of Time* for Charing Cross Theatre (directed by Jenny Eastop) and Philippa Gregory's *Richard, My Richard* (directed by Katie Posner) have yet to make their mark.

The above constitutes only a small snippet of my findings and, in my final thesis, these will be placed into conversation with data collected at Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, The King Richard III Visitor Centre, and Nottingham Castle.

Although this comparative analysis is in its early stages, a few differences are already becoming apparent in the Middleham sample. Some admittedly could have been presupposed, such as propensity to highlight Richard's connection to the North of England and Yorkshire in particular; however, others appear to have much less obvious causes, such as a marked emphasis placed on Richard's faith, a factor which is, thus far, exceptional in my collected data.

My survey work touches on several additional subjects which I have not covered here, such as disability and its presence/absence in depictions of Richard III through time, as well as exploring the changing role of museums and the responsibilities (as well as the opportunities) which can arise when heritage spaces engage in the presentation of historical figures.

My thanks go to each and every participant who took the time to speak with me and my team and complete a survey, and my most especial thanks to those who didn't take offence when my Dad only remembered your participation if you had a dog he could talk to instead!

This article is reprinted from Blanc Sanglier, journal of the Yorkshire Branch.

Duty, kindness, devotion remembered

Written by Alison Harrop and reprinted from the Yorkshire Branch Newsletter.

The Yorkshire Branch sadly reports the passing of its previous Chairman, Paul Williams, who died in Hartlepool at home after a long illness.



A dedicated Ricardian, Paul served the Branch as 'Master at Arms' for many years. He was elected Branch Chairman in 2022 and served until 2025.

Paul was a gentle, conscientious, considerate and kindly man who will be much missed by those who knew him. A dedicated Ricardian, Paul served the Branch as 'Master at Arms' for many years. He was elected Branch Chairman in 2022 and served until 2025.

Paul was born in Hartlepool and at the age of sixteen and a half joined the Army. From there he joined the prison service and spent the next 35 years working as a Prison Officer.

During this time, he was also in the Territorial Army where he served in the Military Police, also known as a Red Cap. In 1973 he met Norma whom he married in 1976, moving to London to live in married quarters.

They enjoyed their life there but moved back to Hartlepool in 1993. They would have celebrated 50 years of a long and happy marriage next year. Paul was a family man much loved by their children, grandchildren and great-grand children.

He also engaged in voluntary work for Healthwatch, The Fellowship of the Services, and sold poppies for the Royal British Legion. He was always present at the Cenotaph, and the Parade when he was still able, for Remembrance Sunday, wearing his Red Cap with pride and often laying a wreath.

He helped at the church where his funeral took place when needed. He received a lifetime award from SSAFA for volunteering for them for 16 years.

Thanks go to Sheila Wren, Angela and Hannah Moreton who represented the Branch at his funeral in his home town of Hartlepool on December 19, 2025. The British Legion took part, processing with their flags and The Last Post was played to a packed church. Deep condolences were sent to his wife Norma and all his family along with a bouquet of white roses





Visiting the Society's Ricardian treasures

The Society is fortunate to hold a diverse and interesting collection of Ricardian items. Until recently, these have been cared for in several different locations, and a small number still require separate housing.

The facial reconstruction is displayed at the King Richard III Visitor Centre in Leicester, where it can be viewed by the thousands of visitors who pass through the Centre each year. The Society's Ricardian clothing and jewelry are looked after by Dominic Smee, who models the pieces and uses these opportunities to promote the Ricardian cause.

Above: The Society's white boar. Top right: the framed facsimile of the Gloucester Grant. Right: Embroidered silk book created by Arabella Seymour



RICARDIAN TREASURE TROVE



Matt Ryan's painting of the princes. Inset: It has been suggested that the group in the background may include Richard himself, in the centre, because the individual is twisting the ring on his finger. It's also suggested the man on the right might be William, Baron Hastings. Obviously before the two fell out.

The Board has agreed that the remainder of the collection should, wherever possible, be housed in a single location.

These items are currently held by the Society's Secretary, Jane Trump, at her office in Surrey, UK.

The collection in her care includes the Society's framed Grant of Arms, the framed facsimile of the Gloucester Grant, Matt Ryan's painting of the princes,

the Society's white boar, and the beautiful, embroidered silk book created to celebrate the Society's centenary by member Arabella Seymour, along with several other smaller items of interest

Members are warmly invited to view these items by appointment. Jane is always happy to welcome members for a visit and a chat over a cuppa. **Anyone interested in arranging a viewing can contact her at secretary@richardiii.net.**

A white rose stronghold steeped in Ricardian history

Ludlow in Shropshire, England, is a perfect destination for Ricardians.

Phil Horsfall, one of 16 local volunteer tour guides, reached out to the Society this month to spread the word.

“From a Ricardian point of view, Ludlow Castle, pictured right, was a White Rose stronghold during the Wars of the Roses, owned by Richard Duke of York and his wife Cecily Neville. It was here that the future Richard III spent his seventh birthday.



“The picture of Ludford Bridge, below, which is in Ludlow is close to the so-called Battle of Ludford Bridge.

“The photo of the Buttercross, right, shows the market cross steps where some believe he stood next to his mother to await bravely the swarms of Lancastrians after the town gates were thrown open. They were then imprisoned in the castle (probably in Mortimer’s Tower) whilst the town was sacked.



“Ludlow is also famous as the de facto capital of Wales when Edward IV based the Council of the Marches of Wales here. It was here that the 12-year-old Prince Edward was proclaimed King Edward V in 1483, before going down to London.



“It was in Ludlow Castle that Prince Arthur and his wife Catherine of Aragon were living when he died aged just 15 in 1502.

“His remains are still buried in St. Laurence’s Church in Ludlow. This of course resulted in his younger brother becoming Henry VIII.

“The town has 500 listed buildings, most of the medieval walls still stand, and it is a wonderful place to visit.”



FEBRUARY

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	ORGANISER
Sat 7	Society Lecture (Bosworth Centre Story)	Zoom	Julia Langham
Sat 7	North Mercia Branch AGM & Janus Day	2.00 Nantwich	tedandbess1943@gmail.com
Sat 7	Glos & Bristol Branch (Mortimers Cross)	2.30 Zoom	richardiiigloucester.co.uk
Sun 8	Canada Branch Lecture (Gargoyles)	Zoom	Canada Branch
Weds 11	Greater Manchester Branch Lecture	7.00 Stockport	plclarke17@gmail.com
Sat 14	Yorkshire Branch – Andrew Slade Play	2.00 York	rgm@dockroyd.co.uk
Sat 14	Society Board Meeting	Zoom	Jane Trump
Sun 15	American Branch Lecture (Towton)	Zoom	Susan Troxell



MARCH

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	ORGANISER
Sat 7	North Mercia Branch Lecture (Sussex King?)	2.00 Nantwich	tedandbess1943@gmail.com
Sat 7	Glos & Bristol Branch (Martime Trade)	11.50 Leckhampton	richardiiigloucester.co.uk
Sun 8	Canada Branch Lecture (Bosworth Burials)	Zoom	Canada Branch
Weds 11	Greater Manchester Branch Lecture	7.00 Stockport	plclarke17@gmail.com
Sat 14	Members' Q & A Session	Zoom	rgm@dockroyd.co.uk
Thurs 19	Leicester Branch Lecture (Bee Keeping)	Leicester	sallyoftarahill@gmail.com
Sat 21	Scottish Branch AGM	Cramond	June McIntyre
Sat 21	Palm Sunday Campaign 1461 Symposium	Wakefield	Dr David Grummitt
Sat 28	Norfolk Branch Study Day	Norwich	anmarie04@gmail.com
Sat 28	Society Lecture (Towton Battle Casualties)	Zoom	Julia Langham
Sun 29	Society Board Meeting	Zoom	Jane Trump



APRIL

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	ORGANISER
Sat 4	Glos & Bristol Branch (Tewkesbury)	2.30 Leckhampton	richardiii@gloucester.co.uk
Weds 8	Greater Manchester Branch AGM	7.00 Stockport	plclarke17@gmail.com
Sat 11	Devon & Cornwall Branch Lecture	Plymouth	ednacoles1@gmail.com
Sat 11	North Mercia Branch John A-H Lecture	7.00 Stockport	plclarke17@gmail.com
Sat 11	Possible Yorkshire Branch Lecture	2.00 York & Zoom	rgm@dockroyd.co.uk
Sun 12	Canada Branch Lecture (topic TBC)	Zoom	Canada Branch
Weds 15	Glos & Bristol Branch Field Visit	Gloucester	richardiii@gloucester.co.uk
Thurs 16	Leicester Branch Lecture (Jerusalem)	Leicester	sallyoftarahill@gmail.com
Sat 18	Society Lecture (Henry VI)	Zoom	Julia Langham
Sat 25	Northern Dales Study Day	Barnard Castle	Kim Harding

In this edition of the Herald, we continue to look at the role of companion dogs in medieval life.



The tomb of Elizabeth of Lancaster. Her effigy shows a small dog at her feet - inset. It wears a collar of bells and is playfully tugging her very expensive gown and robe - an intimate and relatable moment.

Photo Jane Clarke

Paws, privilege & pure pandemonium...

Medieval aristocrats and their very important dogs



By Jane Clarke

It may be a surprise to learn that there were penalties for killing or harming a lap dog - but this was not an early form of animal welfare legislation, it was a reflection of the social status of their owners and the privileges of rank.

Only the rich and influential could afford to keep companion animals - any injury inflicted on them represented 'damage' to the owner's 'property' and constituted a 'slight' - an affront to their honour which would require redress/compensation. A system of fines existed based on the value of the dog - and the status of the offended owner.

No doubt some owners did 'monetise' their animals - regarding them as 'trophies' to demonstrate their place in the hierarchy. However, it is equally likely that many owners were genuinely fond of their pets - and even chose to depict them on their memorials.

Memorial artwork shows dogs in heraldic and symbolic context - as well as more personal representations.

The tomb of John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury - Eleanor Talbot's father - in St Alkmunds Church, Whitchurch, Shropshire features a talbot hound - an unsurprising detail given its direct link to the earl.



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A more whimsical and personal relationship is depicted on the tomb of Elizabeth of Lancaster - the younger daughter of John of Gaunt by his first wife Blanche of Lancaster. She lies at peace not in a cathedral or abbey but in a country church at Burford, Shropshire - the ancestral lands of her second husband Sir John Cornwall.

This strong-willed Plantagenet princess defied convention by rejecting her arranged marriage and chose her own spouse - not once but twice! Her effigy shows a small dog at her feet. It wears a collar of bells and is playfully tugging her very expensive gown and robe - an intimate and relatable moment.

Maybe this dog had a special place in Elizabeth's heart - it seems to mirror her outlook on life - break the rules and have some fun whatever the cost!

A memorial which leaves no doubt that the representation is of a specific pet is the memorial brass of Sir John and Lady Cassey at Deerhurst which shows a dog at her feet inscribed with the name 'Terri'.

Whilst married women were often shown with dogs as symbols of fidelity, the dogs mischievous playfulness indicates that this is perhaps intended to show one of Elizabeth's actual pets.

This surely reflects the close bond between the two - whenever Terri was spotted people probably knew that Lady Cassey was close by!

However, it was rare for a dog to be named in this way. But there was another example - now sadly lost - on the memorial brass of Sir Brian and Lady Stapleton at Ingham, Norfolk. A small dog nestles on Lady Stapleton's gown - whilst at Sir Brian's feet is a heraldic lion, and a dog, whose name 'Jakke' is inscribed on the scroll.



The memorial brass of Sir John and Lady Cassey at Deerhurst. Cheeky Terri is pictured at the Lady's feet, bottom left.

BELOW: The memorial brass of Sir Brian and Lady Stapleton at Ingham, Norfolk. At Sir Brian's feet is a heraldic lion, and a dog, whose name 'Jakke' is inscribed on the scroll. This brass is now sadly lost.



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The tomb of John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury - Eleanor Talbot's father - in St Alkmunds Church, Whitchurch, Shropshire features a talbot hound - an unsurprising detail given its direct link to the earl.

Photo Jane Clarke

In her history of the Stapleton brasses Sally Badham points out how distinctive the dog is. Quite unlike symbolic stylized artwork, it has a long-pointed snout and a ruff of long hair rather like a mane - which combined with the name indicates a lifelike commemoration of an actual pet. Badham speculates that this may have been the widowed Sir Brian's companion in his later years.

It seems likely that Lady Cassey and Sir Brian specifically requested these dogs be included on their memorials as a tribute to the loyalty and companionship they enjoyed during their lifetime; or the artwork was commissioned by their families who knew how much the animals meant to them.

It's intriguing to speculate why these are the only known animals to be named in this way. Maybe the answer lies with the medieval church and its attitude towards animals.

As we saw in the October Herald the church had a complex and sometimes contradictory approach to pets. Animals could be seen as embodying virtues, and vices, with dogs being linked to positive Christian values of fidelity and loyalty. So heraldic and symbolic depictions were 'approved'.

However, the real live animals were sometimes not so popular. They accompanied their owners to church services, and whilst clergy would be reluctant to upset an aristocratic patron by complaining about any disruption or mess caused by these dogs, their presence was not always welcomed and sometimes the clergy could be pushed too far.

The feud between Lady Mary Hungerford, who had married as her first husband the son of William Lord Hastings, and the equally well-bred Dean of St Marys Newarke, George Grey, is an interesting example.



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The two families had 'history' going back to the friction between Hastings and Thomas Grey in the reign of Edward IV. The dean was irritated by Lady Mary's dogs being allowed to run free in the chapel during services.

She also infuriated him by organising bear baiting in the college grounds and allowed her servants to be rude to his men. The feud lasted a decade and sometimes erupted into violence.

The medieval aristocracy certainly regarded their pets as an integral part of life, and as symbols of their privilege. Whilst it is possible that the church might not have approved of naming animals on memorials as it could be seen 'humanising' them - as we see with Lady Mary - the aristocracy had a well-defined sense of entitlement and were willing to defy the clergy if they felt that they were exceeding their spiritual authority.

It appears that most people were therefore happy to take a nuanced approach to how they included their pets on memorials - a representation that could pass for 'symbolic' - but with just enough detail to 'personalise'. Or maybe they deliberately avoided a name. Rather than singling out one animal, they were acknowledging the pleasure that a lifetime of dog ownership had given them.



Image AI Generated

"The dean was irritated by Lady Mary's dogs being allowed to run free in the chapel during services..."

Source material for Sir Brian Stapleton and Jakke: *Beautiful Remains of Antiquity, Ingham Norfolk* by Sally Badham - on the website www.academia.edu.

Ricardian labelled 'domestic terrier'...

By Jane Clarke

With Sue Grant-Mackie

– international correspondent

Staunch Ricardian Bella Grant-Mackie was almost placed on the domestic terrier list in Dunedin, New Zealand, this month.



Bella pictured protesting about Stafford Street recently. Her placards, below, attracted the ire of local law enforcement – aka animal control.

But she regrets nothing. “I will not back down. I will not stop until Stafford Street is re-named,” she explained to the pawparazzi.

She claims a street named after Henry Stafford, the Duke who betrayed Richard, supported a harmful historical narrative, causing on going trauma to Ricardians such as herself.

Bella’s bold protest began when she asked members of the public to sign a petition to have the street re-named Richard Street.

When asked by the pawparazzi if a street named in 1889 to honour a New Zealand Premier, could still be harmful, Bella was adamant

“Yes. Edward Stafford, while respected for his liberal views, was still related to THAT Duke of Buckingham. It’s an anathema. Every time I walk, or drive, past that street, I bark loudly in protest. Now, I realise that’s not enough. So, I have gone full radical.”

As a terrier, Bella has strong civil disobedience skills, and warns she will use them if necessary. Constant, high pitched, shrill, barking outside Dunedin City Council offices is one weapon in her arsenal, she says. “That will bring them to their knees in minutes”, she claimed. “We terriers are stubborn; I will not back down.”

During her public protest this month she urged motorists to toot in support and promoted her petition to have the street re-named. She whined sadly at passers-by – so they signed the petition out of pity.

Meanwhile, she says the petition had attracted signatures from many high-profile Ricardians, including Sir Credence and Lord Stanley.



NOTE: The street sign is real, the posters have been AI Generated.

The city council animal control chaps arrived on the scene after an hour, and demanded that Bella take down her signs, and go home. Otherwise, she could be placed on the domestic terrier list, and incarcerated behind bars at the animal shelter.



Bella is not phased. "My protest will continue. I want answers and I want results. Ricardians deserve justice."

Meanwhile, she says the petition had attracted signatures from many high-profile Ricardians, including Sir Credence and Lord Stanley.

In a statement, Sir C said he was ready to throw his full support behind the campaign.

"I have had a change of heart in a point of principle. If civil disobedience becomes necessary, I will be willing to take action and run amok in the choir. That'll show them."

Sir C is referring to a certain Lady Mary Hungerford who deliberately annoyed the Dean of St Mary's Newarke, George Grey, by allowing her dogs to run amok in the chapel during services.

Approached for comment, Lord Stanley said: "Barks can't describe how apawllled I am at this street name. Being a dog of action and I reacted immediately. I spotted a biography of the traitor Stafford's aunt, Margaret Beaufort, below the table and immediately began 'customising' it. I have to say it was a bit dry, but that might reflect the subject matter rather than the book. Unfortunately, this provoked a reaction from my staff."

"No, Stanley! Books are expensive".

"I don't know what expensive means. It probably involves cats. However, this presented an opportunity to be exploited."

"Recently, I went to my dogtor who told the staff that I was a bit plump and sentenced me to a low fat diet. Friends, you cannot imagine the cruelty of this. My cheese, bacon and sausage rations have been stopped. When the staff tried to take the book, I made it clear "Gimme da cheese or da book gets it".

"I got the cheese. I'm now eyeing up a volume on Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick. Surely the Kingmaker is worth a rasher of bacon."



Sir Credence: "If civil disobedience becomes necessary, I will be willing to take action ..."



Lord Stanley supported Bella's protest by vandalising a book about Margaret Beaufort, aunt of the traitor Stafford. However, his attempt at camouflage to avoid the retribution of his staff did not end well...



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.'