

Ricardian Register



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Richard III Forever

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The burial—and reburial—of King Richard III

John Ashdown-Hill

Sine ullo funere honore

Contrary to rather peculiar statements on the subject issued recently by Leicester's Anglican Cathedral,ⁱ there is absolutely no question that King Richard III was a Catholic. Moreover he was a sincere and faithful Catholic. It is very important to understand that the term 'Roman Catholic,' which is now widely employed in Britain and other traditionally Protestant countries, was invented in the seventeenth century. Indeed, it was deliberately introduced by xenophobic Anglicans, in an attempt to make Catholics in post-Reformation England appear alien and of questionable loyalty. Despite the fact that official government forms in the UK still employ the invented designation *Roman Catholic*, other living British members of this church and I would generally prefer to designate ourselves as *Catholic*.ⁱⁱ There is no possible doubt that we follow the same religious leader (the Pope) and have the same religious faith as did Richard III.

It is traditional for a priest to say prayers over a Catholic's dying or recently dead body. These prayers normally begin with the invocation:

Go forth, O Christian soul, from this world, in the name of God the Father Almighty, who created thee; in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who suffered for thee; in the name of the Holy Spirit, who was poured forth upon thee; in the name of the glorious and ever blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God; in the name of St. Joseph, chaste Spouse of the same Virgin; in the name of the Angels and Archangels; in the name of the Thrones and Dominations; in the name of the Principalities and Powers; in the name of the heavenly Forces, Cherubim and Seraphim; in the name of the Patriarchs and Prophets; in the name of the holy Apostles and Evangelists; in the name of the holy Martyrs and Confessors; in the name of the holy Monks and Hermits; in the name of the holy Virgins and of all the Saints of God: may they place be this day in peace, and thine abode in holy Sion. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.ⁱⁱⁱ

Evidently, in the case of Richard III—who was killed in battle, with no priest immediately at hand, and whose body was then left lying where it had fallen, and robbed by battlefield looters, while the fighting continued for some time—it is extremely unlikely that such prayers were ever said over his corpse.

It is traditional for Christian bodies not to be buried immediately.^{iv} In the days when medical knowledge was less sophisticated than it is today, this was a means of ascertaining that the person really had died and was not simply unconscious. However, it was the custom for the body to be prepared for burial, both in a practical way—by being washed, embalmed and coffined—and in a spiritual way—by being sprinkled with holy water and prayed over.

In the case of a medieval royal body it was also normal for the body to be exposed to public view. Records show that in the case of Richard III's elder brother, Edward IV, this was done immediately after death and before embalming. Edward IV's body was exposed naked (but with a cloth covering the genital region) in the royal palace of Westminster immediately after his death. The royal corpse lay exposed to public gaze in this way for twelve hours, and was then taken away to be embalmed. Presumably the prime motivation behind this practice was to establish that the royal person really had died. A secondary motivation might have been to establish the manner of death.

The same practice was carried out in the case of Richard III. While many dead bodies on medieval battlefields were simply interred where they had fallen, Richard's body was placed over the back of a horse and transported to Leicester, where it was displayed to public gaze for 48 hours.

When a medieval dead body was formally laid out, the hands were placed in a crossed

position, either over the chest or over the lower abdomen. A wooden cross was often placed in the hands, and to keep the hands and the wooden cross in position they may sometimes have been bound together by a cord (see illustration 1). It is possible that this was done in the case of Richard III's body. However, Richard's body was not confined, but merely carried to its place of burial on a stretcher or in an open shroud.



Illustration 1

The norm for the funeral of someone important would have been for the body to be received at the church at least one day before the interment, and for Vespers of the Dead (*Placebo*) and Matins of the Dead (*Dirige*) to be celebrated, followed by at least one funeral (Requiem) mass the following day, at the end of which the interment would have taken place. But in Richard's case it seems likely that the body was handed over to Leicester's Franciscan friars early on the morning of 25 August 1485.^v That same morning the new king, Henry VII, departed from Leicester to ride to London.

When the friars reached their priory bearing Richard III's remains, the body was probably first laid out in the choir. This was probably early on the morning of Wednesday 25 August 1485, and possibly the office of *Dirige* was said. Then a requiem mass was probably said or sung. Although there is no evidence to prove any of this, it is very hard to believe that a religious community would have buried a body in their church without the normal basic religious rites.

It seems likely that the friars had already prepared a grave for Richard at the western end of their choir, on the south side of the entrance archway. The grave was correctly oriented east/west, as Christian tradition required. The friars had probably dug the grave on 24 August, because in order to do so, they would first have needed to take up some of their floor tiles. Evidently they had no chance to measure the body before the grave was dug, because the hole they prepared turned out to be a bit too short for Richard's remains (Richard III being slightly above the average height for a man of his period). But I think there is no reason for suggesting, as some people have, that Richard was shoved into it in a violent way. The friars simply laid the body in place with the head slightly up, as though the dead king's head were lying on a pillow. His head was at the western end of the grave. Thus, as was the norm, his body lay facing towards the high altar. And despite what some people have hinted, I do not believe there is reason to suggest that the position of his hands indicates malicious conduct (see above).

Finally the grave would have been refilled. It seems unlikely that the friars could have re-laid the original floor tiles. First they would have needed to wait for the earth to settle. Later, instead of attempting the difficult task of piecing the tiles back into place, they may simply have placed a flat stone over the grave to tidy up their church floor.

Richard was buried in the choir of the priory church. This was the long, east end section of the building—the part of the church reserved for the friars, and the area where they celebrated all their daily hours of prayer (matins and lauds, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, and compline). The choir was the most honourable place in a priory church for burial and was usually reserved for significant people—but it also had another possible advantage from Henry VII's point of view, in that it was not accessible to the general public.

In this respect, Richard III's burial was entirely consistent with the established pattern for burial of ousted kings of England.^{vi} Edward II had been interred in the choir of Gloucester Abbey; Richard II, in the choir of Kings Langley (Blackfriars) Priory; and Henry VI in the choir of Chertsey Abbey. All these reburials were later upgraded. Richard III and Edward II were not moved, but were subsequently given royal tombs where they lay. Richard II was moved to Westminster Abbey, and in 1484, Henry VI's body was transferred by Richard

III himself to St George's Chapel at Windsor, where it was reburied in an ossuary box on the opposite side of the altar to the tomb of Edward IV.

Of course, the most honourable burial place in the choir would have been directly in front of the high altar. However, Richard was a late arrival at the Leicester Greyfriars in terms of burial, and the places near the altar had already been taken. Thus he was buried at the western end of the choir near the entrance arch (see illustration 2). Thus the friars had to walk back and forth past him fourteen times a day, every day, as they went in and out of the choir for their religious hours of Office. Illustration 3, based on the surviving medieval choir of the Norwich Blackfriars, gives some idea of what the choir may have looked like, and the position of Richard's tomb.

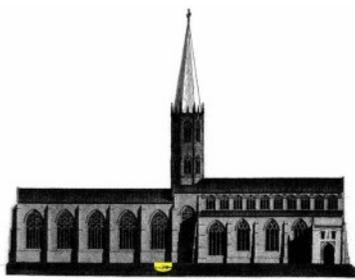


Illustration 2



Illustration 3

Both Richard II and Henry VI's successors were dead before their burials received the royal upgrading. But Richard III was luckier, for Henry VII himself commissioned a tomb for Richard in 1494. The date may have been significant, because it was the year the Yorkist pretender known as 'Perkin Warbeck' appeared to claim the throne. Perhaps Henry VII wanted to win over Yorkist opinion, and that was one of the reasons why Richard's tomb was commissioned at that point.

The tomb appears to have been inaugurated in August 1495, and it was made of Nottingham alabaster. That was a standard format for upper class tombs at that time—though the very finest tombs (like Henry VII's own tomb) were made of gilded metal and hard stone. Tombs of that sort were very costly. But Richard's tomb certainly wasn't cheap. The full accounts for the tomb have not survived, but the information which still exists indicates that Richard's tomb cost more than the tomb which his mother, Cecily, Duchess of York, commissioned for herself. We can get some idea of what the tomb might have looked like from the surviving tomb of Richard III's brother-in-law, John de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, at Wingfield Church (see illustration 4). That alabaster tomb was also set up in about 1495.



Illustration 4

As for Richard III's epitaph, until my research a few years ago, most people dismissed that as a seventeenth-century invention. But I rediscovered two sixteenth-century manuscript sources for the text. The earlier of these two manuscripts was certainly written before the Dissolution of the Leicester Greyfriars—so at a time when Richard III's tomb was still complete.

Of course, we do not know that the epitaph was actually inscribed on the tomb. Sometimes they were (as in the case of Henry VII), but sometimes they were inscribed on a wooden board and hung up beside the tomb. As for the text of Richard's epitaph the

surviving manuscript and early printed versions all differ; some more favourable to Richard, and some less so. Unfortunately it is hard to be certain now which form of the text is the closest to the original. The most recent thoughts on this subject were published in the latest edition of *The Ricardian* by Dr. Emily Kearns.

When the dig commissioned by the LOOKING FOR RICHARD PROJECT (headed by Philippa Langley, and of which I was a founder member) was due to start in August 2012, I took with me to Leicester a modern copy of Richard III's royal standard. That was because I thought if Richard's remains were found, we should follow the standard etiquette and place his royal standard over the bones. Therefore, on 4 September 2012, when I was asked to carry the box of his bones from the Social Services car park to the van which would transport them away for examination, Philippa Langley and I draped my royal standard over the box (see illustration 5). But as I was carrying that box containing Richard's remains, many thoughts went through my mind—and I realized that something was missing. Normally, nowadays, a sovereign's body would not only have a royal standard over it, but also a crown on top of the coffin. I then decided to make sure that Richard should have a crown on his coffin when his reburial takes place.

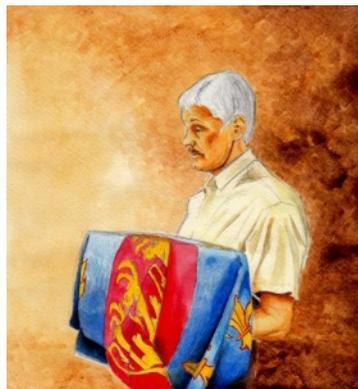


Illustration 5 Image of original painting by Flinders Willan

Clearly, the modern style of crown would appear inappropriate, so my first priority was to ascertain the kind of crown Richard would have worn. The fifteenth century was a time of change in terms of the design of English royal crowns. Previously they had all been open crowns, but in the fifteenth century, closed (arched) crowns were coming into fashion, and Richard III probably wore an arched crown on occasions. But at Leicester, prior to the battle of Bosworth, and during the battle itself, I think he must have worn an open crown over his helmet. So I decided to opt for an open crown, and took the basic design from Anne Neville's open crown as depicted in the Salisbury roll.

The size and shape of the crown was based on the head measurements of Richard III's facial reconstruction, and the ornamentation was inspired by the surviving crown of

Richard's sister, Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy. From Margaret's pretty little feminine crown, I borrowed the idea of setting the jewels on top of enamelled white roses. As for the jewels themselves, George Easton, the jeweller who made the crown, suggested sapphires and rubies, with pearls in between. These stones seemed very appropriate, because murrey and blue were the livery colours of the royal house of York. Later, however, an anonymous donor offered some emeralds, and we added these to the design because in the last year of his life Richard III had wanted to acquire an emerald. (See illustration 6.)



Illustration 6

Richard was a Catholic in full communion with Rome all his life. We know for sure how important masses for the dead were to him, because he was very committed to the endowing of such masses for his own dead relatives. Therefore, I am not at all happy with Richard III having a reburial that is not Catholic—and by that I mean using the full Catholic ritual and having the ceremony celebrated by Catholic priests. I am not hostile to Anglicans. Indeed, I work with them in local ecumenical groups where I live. However, the fact that I am a Catholic shows that I believe that the Anglican viewpoint and mine are different. Thus I am not an Anglican—and nor was Richard III. For that reason, I would like his beliefs to be respected. Therefore I think he should have a full Catholic mass at his reburial. Incidentally, the idea of offering a mass for his soul at this late stage does not imply that I think Richard III was a bad man! We all have our faults, and in Catholic belief, you cannot have too many masses celebrated for the good of your soul.

Endnotes:

- ⁱ ‘The Roman Catholic Church did not exist at the time, the state church was Catholic but there was no distinction’. Liz Hudson, Director of Communications for the Diocese of Leicester. <http://decodedpast.com/burying-richard-iii-details-re-interment-tomb-last-warrior-king-revealed/10742>
- ⁱⁱ Catholic means universal. It is, in effect, a claim that one is a member of the one true church.
- ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/prayers/view.cfm?id=1134>
- ^{iv} Unlike, for example, Muslim bodies.
- ^v The Franciscan friars (whose order had links with Richard’s family) may well have requested permission to bury the body.
- ^{vi} See J Ashdown-Hill, *The Last Days of Richard III*, 2nd ed., Stroud 2013, p. 91 *et seq.*

~ToC~

Lecture: *Rulers, Relics and the Holiness of Power*

Susan L. Troxell

Within days of acceding to the throne of England, Richard III made a very curious indenture with the Abbot at Westminster Abbey. It concerned the sacred oil of St. Thomas à Becket, and it ordered the Abbot to store the ampulla of oil with St. Edward’s Crown and other coronation regalia, with the stipulation that he was to deliver the sacred oil to the king whenever he requested it. In entering into the indenture, Richard III deviated from the practice of prior English kings, who had kept Becket’s oil in the Jewel House. Richard thus seemingly elevated the oil to the status of national relic, rather than just private monarchical relic. One wonders why he did so, but in contemplating the significance of St. Becket’s oil to Richard III, this Society member found the following lecture to be most enlightening.

It was given on June 3, 2014 at the Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies at Durham University. The lecturer, David Rollason, is an Emeritus Professor of History there, as well Honorary Fellow in Humanities at Bristol University. The lecture—open to the public—was based on one chapter of his forthcoming book, *The Power of Place: Rulers and their Palaces, Landscapes, Cities, and Holy Places*, to be published by Princeton University Press.

Rollason’s thesis is that medieval kingship derived its power not just on societal constructs and institutions, but also from the symbolic use of religious relics, palaces, landscapes, cities, saints’ shrines, and other holy places. His current research and book expands on the ideas expressed in his 1986 article “Relic-cults as an instrument of royal policy, c. 900 - c. 1050” published in *Anglo-Saxon England* 15, pp. 91-103.

Religious relics played a wide role in medieval society. They were used in judicial process (e.g., oath taking), were prominently featured in processions (e.g., being carried at the forefront of a monarch's entry to a city), and were kept in royal treasuries. Rollason expounded on three aspects in the way relics enhanced a ruler's power. First, they were seen as a personification of a ruler and a projection of his rulership. Second, they were used to give credence to a capital city or a seat of royal power. And, third, they were often used in the coronation ritual by which the monarch transformed into someone who stood above the laity.

Rollason used illustrations from manuscripts, photographs of archeological artifacts, and specific objects to demonstrate his points. A 9th century carved ivory plaque from Trier depicted an earlier scene involving two bishops holding a reliquary on a chariot, with the emperor at the forefront, on foot and carrying a taper, leading a procession into a city. The keys to the city could be handed over as part of such a ceremony. Later, in the 13th century, Louis IX obtained Christ's crown of thorns from Constantinople; when the relic arrived, Louis came barefoot and not in a royal robe but in a tunic. So attired, he took the crown of thorns into a cathedral. When a vial of Christ's blood arrived during the reign of Henry III of England, the king is described in Matthew Paris' *Chronica Majora* as carrying the relic under a canopy in an elaborate procession. Although liturgical in inspiration, the king in each of these situations is seen as using the power of the relic to project his own. In the case of Henry III carrying the vial of Christ's blood, the canopy is reminiscent of that carried over the king himself during processions.

Examples were given of how relics, and their repositories, were used to enhance the standing of a royal seat of power or a "capital" city. In Constantinople, the holiest relics were stored in the royal palace, usually an on-site chapel or church. In the 8th century, an Italian ruler in Benevento enhanced his prestige by gathering relics from other city-states. Louis IX built the Sainte Chapelle to house Christ's crown of thorns amongst other Christological relics, and this raised the profile of Paris as a "capital" city. In what was literally a "seat of power", Rollason pointed out that the "Aachen throne" aka "Charlemagne's throne" was literally constructed of marble plates that may have been actual relics themselves.

Relics often served to blur the line between what was sacred and what was secular, and the blurring of this line usually helped the image of royal authority. The regalia of coronation were frequently treated as sacred objects. For instance, the "Crown of Charlemagne" was considered a relic because Charlemagne—like other monarchs—had been made a saint. The "Monza Crown" of the Holy Emperor in Italy, contained a nail from the Cross. The "Imperial Cross" used by Holy Roman Emperors had within it an object which was supposed to be the Holy Lance of Christ's crucifixion. When someone prevailed over a competitor for the throne, it was not uncommon for the winner to display the relics in their possession. Rollason pointed out that the royal relic collection housed at Westminster could be taken on tour along with the king when he went on progress. This collection, he said, was a close parallel to that at the Sainte Chapelle in Paris, and helped to consolidate power behind the king at his primary residence in the capital city.

Rollason wrapped up his lecture with other observations. He reminded the audience that the tombs of kings often became relics themselves, especially when sainthood was conferred on the monarch. Aside from princes using them to project their authority, relics were used at city walls in their defense. Relics were not the only objects having supernatural powers; spears were frequently symbols of this power. And, the use of religious relics is not limited to Christian societies. Similar examples can be found in Islamic cultures.

The points made by Professor Rollason could provoke an interesting discussion on why Richard III removed St. Becket's oil from his own possession to that of the monks of the Abbey. Was it to enhance or to diminish his projection of authority? Was he intending to illustrate something about his kingship by requiring that it be brought to him upon demand? Obviously, he intended to use the oil in the future by making such a request. One can only imagine the visual impact made by the ceremony of the Abbot bringing it forth from the Abbey to the hands of the King.

Lastly, it would be remiss for this reviewer not to mention the wonderful opportunities made available by Durham University's Institute for Medieval and Early Modern Studies. IMEMS holds a wide variety of events including lectures, seminars, conferences and workshops—many of which touch on the 15th century. The above lecture by Professor Rollason was open and free to the public, and only required pre-registration. The lecture was followed by a reception, where attendees could interact with the speaker and other academics. A visit to IMEMS' website is highly recommended for anyone visiting Durham. The website can be found at: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/imems/events>. And all this transpired just footsteps away from Durham Cathedral, where Richard III is reported to have visited the shrine of St. Cuthbert.

The following is a transcription of the indenture made between Richard III and Abbot John Esteney of the Collegiate Church of St. Peter, Westminster, dated the 7th of July, 1483:

This endenture made the vij th day of the Moneth of Juyll the ffirst yere of the reyne of the most high and excellent Cristen Prynce Richard by the grace of god Kyng of Inglond and of ffrance and lord of Irland the thirde. Bitwene the same most Excellent Cristen Kyng on that one p[ar]tie and John by the sufferaunce of god Abbot of the monastery of seint Peter of Westm[inste]r and the covent of the same place on that other p[ar]tie. Witnesseth that the said Abbot and covent have receyved the day of makyng of this p[re]sent endenture at the commaundement and wille of the forsaid most high and excellent cristen prynce and Kyng by the handes and Deliv[er]aunce of the right rev[er]end ffaders in god Richard by the sufferaunce of god Bisshop[pe] of seint Asse (St Asaph) And maister Thomas Langton electe Bisshop[pe] of seint David. An egle of gold garnysshed with perles and precious stones in Which is closed the p[re]cious Relique called the Ampulle which the forsaid Abbot and covent graunte and promyt by this p[re]sent endenture to deliv[er]e anytyme to the said Kyng highness whensoever it shall please hym to aske it. And the same most excellent cristen prynce and Kyng ordeyneth and willeth that the same precious relique to abide and remayne after his decesse within the forsaid monastery among the Regalies now beyng in the same monastery for evermore. In Witnesse wherof aswelle the Signet of the forsaid most excellent cristen prynce and Kyng as the Seale of the said Abbot and covent to these p[re]sent indentures chaungeably been sette. P[r]oven the day and yere abovesaid.

(Transcription provided by Dr. T. Erik Michaelson)

* Editor's note: Because of its content, this review of the lecture was published as an article.

~ToC~

Ricardian Review

Myrna Smith

The King's (Queen's) English—*Shakespearism, from The Merry Wives of Windsor*: “Here will be an old abusing of God's patience and the king's English.”

AUTHORISMS: Words Wrought by Writers—Paul Dickson, Bloomsbury USA, NY, 2014

The author of this book tells us, in the foreword, that it was published “April 23, 2014...marking the sesqui-quadracentennial, or 450th anniversary of the birth of William Shakespeare, now and forever the greatest neologist of the English language.” Shakespeare is only the first among many. A few centuries earlier, Chaucer was busily neologizing, or at least recording words. He is credited with being the first one to write down the words Martian, bagpipe, and bed, which amazes me. Surely people had been laying themselves down to sleep for millennia before the 14th century. What did they lie on? That aside, the erudite duo have a lot of company. For one, there is P.G. Wodehouse (lame-brained, 1929); for another there is Alice McKeon, who coined the word litterbug—and where would we be without it?

Of course, someone had to coin the phrase, to coin a phrase, and someone did, in the 16th century. Not all the coinages caught on, and Mr. Dickson records some failures along with the successes, but all will be of interest to the logophile, of which I am sure there are many among our membership. I have used some in the headings, and **AUTHORISMS** may inspire you to invent a few neologisms of your own. And there are also recipes. What more could one ask for?

One neologism that has had some limited usage is good bad book, created by G.K. Chesterton, and defined by George Orwell as “the kind of book that has no literary pretensions, but which remains readable when more serious productions have perished.” In accord with that definition, we present herewith some Good Bad Books (pure escapist literature) and some Bad Good Books, and some that are—well, you be the judge.

Chesterton, by the way, features strongly in **1,000*UNFORGETTABLE SENIOR MOMENTS*of which we could remember only 246**, by Tom...uh...Friedman (Workman Publishing, NY 2006). Even if you, like me, have a scatty memory, you probably (I, certainly) have not sat down to write a letter to your mother while in the same room with her. Chesterton did. But then we have not equaled his literary output either.

Demimonde—*the title of a play by Alexandre Dumas, 1855*

MISTRESS TO THE CROWN—Isolde Martyn, Mills & Boon, London, 2013

How would you, as an author, make a many-time told story interesting, especially when the title gives away the main part of the plot? Well, you can put in a lot of sex—that goes without saying. You can describe the costuming, or lack of it (at one point, our heroine, Jane Shore, takes part in an entertainment semi-clothed as an antique Greek maiden), and the mise-en-scene, and Ms. Martyn does this very well. This is King Edward's digs:

A naked battle sword lay starkly across two wall braces, but dangling from its blade was a child's drawing of a heart. Upon the little table by the hearth, a statuette of a curvaceous St. Mary Magdalene presided over the stony-faced chessboard military, and a Venetian bowl of blood-red glass, entwining lovers enameled upon its curves, was at odds with the single arrow that rested across its rim.

Query: did 15th century householders use arms and armaments as décor, or were they strictly tools? At any rate, the author understands the minutiae of Renaissance life—supper at 4 p.m., for example, and bananas as an exotic gourmet treat (at least, the description sounds like bananas).

Another good way is to have compelling characters. Edward IV and Jane Shore, (nee Elizabeth Lambert) are certainly that, as are many of the supporting cast, particularly Hastings, Edwards tomboyish daughter, Elizabeth, and our heroine's family. (I am going to go on calling her Jane—there were just too many Elizabeths!) Jane narrates her own story, in rather modern but seldom anachronistic language. She wants a divorce from her impotent husband, so goes to first Hastings and then the King for help. One thing leads to another—well, we know all that.

Basically, Ms. Martyn builds interest by concentrating on the most dramatic part of Jane's life, that between the death of Edward and her marriage to Thomas Lynom. This is delineated on an almost day-by-day basis, so that the reader is caught up in the immediacy of her fear, in spite of knowing how it all came out.

Conclusion: A Good Bad Book about a good bad girl.

This is available in several formats, and from the Society library.

Friending—actually coined by Shakespeare in Hamlet, Act 2, Scene 5: “And what so poor a man as Hamlet is May do, to express his love and friending to you.” Shakespeare was also responsible for the first use of assassination, in Macbeth.

ROAN ROSE—Juliet Waldron, Books We Love, Alberta, Canada, 2013

The King of England and I played chess, passing his sleepless hours. After years of struggling with the game, I can say, without exaggeration, that I'd become a formidable competitor, nearly his equal. I will stand firm upon this claim, even though I was a lowly servant—and female at that.

A promising beginning to this first-person story, narrated by Rosalba Whitby, nicknamed Roan Rose because she is liberally freckled. Daughter (presumably) of a yeoman farmer and a village healer, she is taken into service by the Countess of Warwick because her mother treated the Countess when she was in danger of bleeding to death from a miscarriage. She becomes body-servant to young Anne Neville, and companion to both her and her cousin, Richard of Gloucester, and, briefly, Richard's lover. Rose learns not only the skills of an upper-class servant, but also those of an herbalist, healer and midwife. She even dabbles in witchcraft on occasion—and gets away with it. Essentially, she leads a double life. She is somewhat arbitrarily married off to a soldier/farmer who is a follower of Richard, but comes to accept this part of her life. However, she is ready to leave husband and family any time the Duke and Duchess call for her, rather to the resentment of the former.

One of the book's strengths is capturing the rhythms of life on the land, and reminding us that “the short and simple annals of the poor” are not necessarily that simple. I find only a few nits to pick. One is a typo: “huge” for “Hugh,” Rose's husband (he is rather sizeable). Another is “posset” where I think the author means “poppet” (doll).

The author's bio tells us she took up the writer's trade “30 years ago, after the kids left home.” Though this is not her first book (she has written a couple of novels about Mozart, among others) I believe burgeoning young talent should be encouraged. So I hereby nominate this as a very Good Bad Book, by Chestertonian standards.

(By the way, Waldron's Richard knows the Latin for freckles. Do you? See end of column.)

Mole—referring to a spy, first used not by John le Carre, but by Francis Bacon in his biography of Henry VII (1622). “..He had such Moles perpetually working and casting to undermine him...”

ON SUMMER SEAS: A Novel of King Richard III—Richard Unwin, Lexington, KY, 2014

A WILDERNESS OF SEA: The Rise of King Richard the Third—Richard Unwin, Lexington, KY, 2014

Laurence De La Halle, one-half French, one-half English, but raised in Brittany, considers himself a Breton. The son of a skilled armorer, following his father’s trade, he agrees to go to England to practice his craft among the great and good of that country, and incidentally to be a spy (a ‘sleeping’ agent, perhaps) for the Duke. Laurence quickly becomes involved in every important event of the Wars of the Roses, and meets nearly every important person, starting with James Tyrell. He will get into plenty of fights on his own account. At various times, he undertakes confidential missions for the English crown, such as the attempted kidnapping of Henry Tudor. (He fails, through no fault of his own.) We also get a look at Laurence’s not uncomplicated private life, and a good deal of information on the techniques of armor-making and smithing.

As in **ROAN ROSE**, these volumes are a look at the life and times of Richard and his contemporaries from below, as it were, although skilled tradesmen such as Laurence were maybe not as much ‘below’ as a peasant girl.

The fate of the princes posited here is not a common one, although I have heard it, but it is treated very logically. There is also occasional humor. Laurence rescues a naked woman from freezing to death under a holly bush. His wife looks on this with a fishy eye. “My mother once told me that is where babies come from, but this one is full grown!” Nevertheless, she helps the vagrant.

One nit to pick, Laurence has a beard. These were not commonly worn in the 15th century, at least not by gentlemen, which Laurence is not, of course. Wouldn’t they be rather a hazard in a forge, with sparks flying around? Or maybe they were a protection against such. Better a beard is singed a little bit than a face blistered.

The acid test for a series like this is: Would I want to read the next book in this trilogy? I would. Therefore, this qualifies as a Good Bad Book.

Escapist—in the sense of seeking distraction from reality, coined in 1933 by C.S. Lewis

THE BOOK OF MEDIEVAL PUZZLES—Tim Dedopulos, Metro Books, 2013

The introduction, written in the persona of a medieval librarian, includes these words:

The tides of fate are sweeping in, crushing everything, and when they recede again, I cannot say what they will leave behind. I suspect, however, that kittens will be involved.

In his own persona, the author writes:

In compiling this book, I have treated history in the same way that a magpie treats a jewellery box—I’ve grabbed names, places, and other shiny nuggets of random fact, and woven them into the nest of my puzzles. In other words, it’s safest to assume that I’m taking horrible liberties with anything that looks like it might be real information. I’m sorry about that. However, I hope you enjoy the puzzles.

And if you enjoy puzzles at all, you will. They are arranged according to difficulty, and many will be familiar. For instance: “There is something precious that you own./You take it everywhere./It weighs nothing, but can carry weight./You can share it with someone

you haven't met./Or you can give it to someone you dislike./Others may make more use of it than your do." The answer is, of course, your name. That is one of the easier ones. They can get much more difficult.

Though it has many handsome medieval-type illustrations, this hardly qualifies as literature or even a book, but it's a lot of fun to pore over.

Wars of the roses—coined 1829 by Sir Walter Scott. Contemporaries called them *the Cousins' Wars*. Scott also coined the phrase *the back of beyond* and the word *freelance*.

THE WOMEN OF THE COUSINS' WAR: The Duchess, the Queen, and the King's Mother—Philippa Gregory, David, Baldwin, & Michael Jones, Touchstone, 2013

Of the three authors, guess which one's name appears on the cover in letters four times larger, and bolder, than the others? Guess which one gets to write the introduction? And guess which one turns that introduction into a feminist polemic, attacking all male historians, with the exception of present company? At times, I might have thought she was anti-historian altogether: "Most histories are written in third-person past tense..." (all of them, since history by definition occurs in the past, and must be in the third person if the author was not there) "with a concealed narrator." This seems to mean, in her lexicon, not anonymous, but 'in the third person, fly-on-the-wall style.' Again, unavoidable unless the narrator is also a protagonist.

But no, it's all a male conspiracy. "Why was Mary Boleyn all but invisible to history, when the story of her life and her family were so extraordinary?" Why should Mary Boleyn be 'visible' to history? She was the Monica Lewinsky of her day, but with even less influence. Her 'interesting life' was a function of being Henry VIII's mistress and Anne Boleyn's sister. This makes for a fine bodice-ripping romance, but should not be confused with a legitimate history, although Ms. Gregory apparently thinks her novel, **The Other Boleyn Girl**, is just that. Per Gregory, men burned women as witches because they were afraid of women's sexuality. No doubt they did, but why does Gregory seem to condone and celebrate witchcraft in her novels? Granted, she doesn't have to believe in it to write about it; only her creations do. A person who does not believe in ghosts can write a ghost story, but he or she should not write a mystery in which the solution is "The ghost did it." Gregory does the equivalent of this when she has her fictional heroines utter prophecies which come true—because she is making the prophecies up to fit how she knows things turned out! The reader may suspend disbelief for the sake of the fiction, but the author may carry this literary privilege too far.

I feel justified in referencing Ms. Gregory's novels in this review, because she does so frequently herself, starting from the very first paragraph. In fact, this reads like shameless self-promotion. Her novels don't need this, selling as well as they do. And she seems to believe she is entitled to her own facts. "Every scholarly history that was written before 1920 was written by a man who had been taught by a man, who would be published by a male publisher and reviewed by a male critic." (Goodness knows, no male ever criticized another male writer!) This overlooks Agnes Strickland, who wrote **The Lives of the Queens of England** in the 1850s, Caroline Halsted, (**Richard III as Duke of Gloucester**, 1844), and Gladys Temperly's biography of Henry VII, circa 1912—to name some of those in Ms. Gregory's own period. But of course she could claim that they couldn't be scholarly, since their authors didn't get full degrees from Oxbridge schools! Perfect circular reasoning.

The subjects of this book have been overlooked because they were women? Well, then, what about Richard Woodville? He had a distinguished career as a soldier and statesman, but is remembered only because of his marriage ('above his station'), his daughter, and his descendants—in other words, as a breeder. (Well, that *was* his major contribution—14

young'uns!) His only biographies are brief mentions in biographical dictionaries. This should be remedied. In spite of his family connections, he was more than just a male Mary Boleyn.

Agnes Strickland has been criticized, with some justification, for not being objective. Victorian authors seldom were. Neither are Gregory and her male co-authors. They have all fallen in love with their subjects. Granted, it's equally hard to write objectively about someone you hate; an historian should at least try to understand his/her subject. With that caveat, the biographies themselves are interesting, though understandably given to 'perhapses' and other qualifiers. Baldwin's section on Elizabeth Woodville is especially intriguing, with its speculation on the fate of the princes.

Call me sexist, but I think I will confine myself to Gregory's novels in the future. She has a new one to be released in September, **THE KING'S CURSE**, about Margaret Pole. I think I will wait until it reaches the public libraries, though. Paying out hard cash for a 'history' and finding out that only about half of it is about what it purports to be about, means I think of it as a Bad Good Book.

I read this book in sections, going back to front, with the introduction last. Thus I wrote the above review within a few hours of finishing it. Coming back to it later, would I change anything, aside from grammar and spelling? Nah, not a thing!

Oh, another upcoming (in August) biography is **JASPER TUDOR**, by Terry Breverton. And speaking of Jasper Tudor (note the smooth segue) did you know that Jasper was the great-great-great-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell? At least according to **THEY GOT IT WRONG: HISTORY** by Emma Marriott (Reader's Digest, 2011).

Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned—coined by William Congreve in 1697.

The actual quotation is: "Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned, Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned."

By way of contrast, there is **BLOOD SISTERS: the women behind the Wars of the Roses**—Sarah Gristwood, Basic Books, NY, 2013

This has a broader—or maybe I should say wider—focus. It includes several other women, including Cecily Neville and Marguerite d'Anjou. The latter was one woman who was not content to work behind the scenes, like her "blood sisters," but took center stage for herself. Gristwood has tried to avoid falling in love with her subjects, or at least has tried not to show it. Being on friendly terms with both Alison Weir and Ann Wroe, she attempts a 'balanced' view of events; e.g. in regard to Richard III:

Unusually, it was to be a joint ceremony, the first double coronation for almost two centuries. Anne's inclusion in the ritual could be taken as a gesture of genuine affection on Richard's part, or simply as a suggestion that he needed to reinforce the commitment of the northerners loyal to Anne's family. It could by contrast, also be taken to mean that he did not want to give her a separate ceremony and the suggestion of authority that might bring.

Of course, it may be taken to mean simply that he was the first king in nearly two centuries to be married at the time of his coronation. In a footnote, she adds: "Henry VII, though, under those circumstances, would delay his wife's coronation."

To be fair, she tends to believe that Richard was not a murderer, and even names Margaret Beaufort as one of a number of alternate villains. The frequent use of 'alternatively,' and 'on the other hand,' and 'possibly' may make these attempts to be fair come across as a bit wishy-washy. They might also be considered by both Ricardians and Tudorites to be leaning the other way. But if both sides feel that way, one must be doing something right. Right?

Muggle—*a person with no magical powers, an inferior. Coined by J.K. Rowling in 1997.*

KNIGHT'S CASTLE—Edward Eager, Harcourt, Brace & World, NY, 1956

Edward Eager was a playwright, lyricist and author who, before his early death in 1964 wrote several children's books, very much in the spirit of E. Nesbit. That is, they treat magic and fantasy as everyday events happening to everyday children. **KNIGHT'S CASTLE** involves two youngsters, Roger and Ann, who go to stay with their cousins in Baltimore while their father is in the hospital. The nursery (although the siblings are a little old for a nursery) has an elaborate dollhouse and an even more elaborate model castle. The children, having read **Ivanhoe** and seen the movie, proceed to recreate the toy soldiers as characters from that story. Of course, their 'pretend' is translated into 'reality.' The dialogue is a combination of modern and medieval. Thus:

"..I came of my own accord," said Roger. "From Baltimore, Maryland."

"I know no merrie land save England," said de Bracy. "And la belle Normandy, of course."

"Quiet" said Bois-Guibert. "Who conducteth this inquiry, anyway?..."

All will turn out well in the end, of course. But why am I reviewing this here, since **Ivanhoe** was set back in the 12th century? Because, in spite of that, the illustrator, N.M. Bodecker, chose to use the costumes and armor of the 15th century—hennins and all that. Not historically accurate, but charming. Go to your local library and look in the children's section. (You can pretend you are looking for something for a child or grandchild.) Look for this book, or his others—including **Half Magic**, **Magic by the Lake**, **The Time Garden**, and more. They are a lot of fun, even for grown-ups. Besides, I think we will get references that a young person would not.

Conclusion: in their own genre, very good books. Or Good Bad Books, if you will.

The Latin for freckles is lenticulae - which I didn't know and you had probably forgotten.

THE CORONATION OF RICHARD III: THE EXTANT DOCUMENTS—Anne F. Sutton and P. W. Hammond, eds. Alan Sutton, Gloucester/St. Martin's Press, New York

On July 5th in the year 1483, the City of London played host to one of the most remarkable displays of pomp and circumstance seen in recent memory. Amid much bustling at the Tower, a procession emerged, led by minstrels and trumpeters in red liveries, heralds wearing coats of arms in beaten gold, and sergeants of arms, yeomen and grooms sporting the device of the new king: the white boar. The mayor, aldermen and councilmen of the City had completed their preparations in the wards through which the procession was to pass. Draped in scarlet finery, they took up their positions. Shop boards had been taken down, gutters cleaned, and new gravel laid on the streets. City monuments such as the Standard and Cross in Cheapside shone with fresh coats of paint and gilding. Wine spouted from conduits. Choirs of children gathered at various points, their high fluting voices joining the sounds of shawms and sackbuts. Householders along the route hung out violet and scarlet banners, fine tapestries and cloths of gold and silk, and packed themselves into their front windows and galleries to see the spectacle.

They waited to see King Richard III on his steed, dressed in blue cloth of gold wrought with "nets" and "pineapples" under a riding gown of purple velvet, heavily furred with ermine and sewn with over 3000 ermine tails. On his heels he wore a pair of gilt spurs, around his neck a rich jeweled collar, and on his left leg a garter of the Order of St. George. Four knights carried a red and green baldachin canopy over his yet-uncrowned head.

Following the king came the procession of Queen Anne, who sat in a “litter” of white cloth of gold and damask, her hair loose over her shoulders, a rich circlet inlaid with pearls and precious stones around her head. The procession wound its way from the Tower to the palace at Westminster, where the king and queen would spend the night.

It was England’s first double coronation since Edward II and Queen Isabella’s in 1308. Not even France had seen a double coronation since that of Charles V and Jeanne de Bourbon in 1364. What followed were two days of pageantry and a solemn crowning of the new monarch and his queen with holy relics and regalia. This tradition, dating back hundreds of years, culminated in a joyous feast of 49 dishes prepared for the 3,000 nobles, gentry, knights, and prominent common people in attendance.

Amazingly, all of this was planned and executed in ten days.

It is to the 73 tailors and 91 skimmers who worked a combined 1,209 days in man-hours, and all the other men and women who labored to prepare a double coronation in less than two weeks, that Anne F. Sutton and P.W. Hammond dedicate their text “The Coronation of Richard III: the Extant Documents,” first published in Great Britain in 1983 and the United States in 1984. The book is not only sumptuous in its detailed descriptions of the pageantry and its players, but it also provides primary source materials for the history student. Included are five documents: the accounts of the Great Wardrobe, records of the barons of the Cinque Ports who held hereditary rights to participate in the coronation, a manuscript of the *Little Device* of Richard III, a description of the coronation, and texts relating to the post-coronation banquet which describe the enormous amounts of spices and victuals required for such an affair. A General Introduction summarizes the highlights and theses of the book; an annotated chronology from April 9th to July 13th, 1483 gives a context for the political maneuverings leading up to the grand events; and biographies are provided of all the notable personages involved. Rounding this out are chapters on the royal regalia and the Court of Claims held on July 3rd, and a twenty-page bibliography of resources. In short, it is hard to imagine a more comprehensive treatment of Richard III’s double coronation. This text should prove invaluable to anyone curious about the English coronation tradition as well as the mysteries and controversies that continue to surround the reign of this oft-misunderstood monarch. What emerges is a figure from history that is more nuanced than that portrayed by Shakespeare.

From the Great Wardrobe accounts, the authors are able to reconstruct precisely what Richard and Anne wore during the Vigil procession on July 5th and the coronation ceremonies the following day, how horses were trapped, and what banners were carried. Besides the great quantities of cloth of gold and damask ordered from the wardrobe, and the vast number of dishes prepared for the banquet, one of the more charming aspects is that the authors tease out individuals who might otherwise be overlooked by the casual reader of Ricardian history. For instance, we learn about William Melbourne, one of the King’s painters, whose job included applying his skills to trumpet banners, the heralds’ coats of arms, the cognizances of the white boar, and the flags of the Trinity, St. George and St. Cuthbert. He prospered well and went on to become a draper, a merchant, and a chamberlain of the City of London. The fact that he could supply 13,000 boar badges made of fustian to Richard III, all “of his store,” indicated that he had a sizeable workshop in 1483. Other individuals, such as Christian Colborne and “Nichodemus,” the former a painter from “Almain” and the latter a trumpeter from Rome, reveal the contributions of aliens and immigrants.

The authors also address some of the misconceptions and debates surrounding Richard III’s coronation. They convincingly argue that Richard and Anne were not crowned simultaneously, as that would have required a significant deviation from both the *Liber Regalis* and *Little Device*, and would have required a complete reordering of the prayers as

laid out in the Fourth Ordo. Rather, it is much more likely that Richard and Anne were crowned one after the other, followed by a Mass. They explain that Richard and Anne were likely not naked from the waist up during the anointing ceremony, but rather—as the Great Wardrobe accounts show—special undergarments were made for this part of the ceremony. The belief of nakedness derives from a modern misconception of the word “naked” or “bare-footed.” Richard likely did not enter the Abbey bare-footed, but rather in his hose. They also convincingly make the case that Richard was the first known king of England to take his coronation oath in English, although there is no evidence as to what language was used between 1399 and 1483. Some speculation is supplied as to why Richard used the vernacular language; perhaps it was because he was not fluent in French, as he never lived there, or—according to the authors—it was important to him for publicity and propaganda purposes, given how many times he subsequently referred to the oath in missives and letters.

Because this is such a long text, over 500 pages including the index, it is unsurprising that there are some typographical and grammatical errors, but they are not glaring or distracting. Perhaps one of its weaknesses is the authors’ tendency to make redundant observations. It is hammered home that the 1483 coronation was the first double one since 1308, perhaps a little too vigorously. We are informed multiple times of the English desire to simulate the French coronation, for example by using the chrism of St. Becket’s holy oil for anointing the king, imitating the French use of sacred Clovis oil. The authors strive to be comprehensive and fair to all sides of a debate. This can cause the reader to get so caught up in the many details and counter-opinions, he may struggle to find the ultimate conclusion. Sometimes outdated theories are brought to the analysis, such as Horace Walpole’s premise that Richard III planned to hold the throne temporarily until Edward V reached the age of 24. There are also very few plates and illustrations—a total of only nine plates. But this reviewer particularly enjoyed seeing the indenture made by Richard III concerning the holy oil of St. Becket: he ordered it to be stored by the monks at Westminster Abbey along with St. Edward’s crown and other royal regalia, for delivery to him upon request.

Some might question why a review of an out-of-print text from 1983 is warranted or even worthy, when so many other books are being published in the wake of the discovery of Richard III’s remains. Actually, it is for that very reason that an assessment of past texts may be warranted. Presently, there seems to be such a flood of blogs, books (both fiction and non-fiction), newspaper articles, Facebook discussion boards, etc., that we may lose sight of gems from the past. “The Coronation of Richard III” is such a gem, and deserves to be on the bookshelves of Ricardians and history buffs alike. Through all those cloths of gold and damasks, all those dishes of salted river lampreys, all those elaborate liturgical prayers and processes, a picture definitely emerges that Richard III knew how to use the spectacle of monarchy to its fullest political and symbolic extent. –Susan Troxell

~ToC~

Erratum

Although the headline dates for the upcoming AGM were correctly recorded (September 19-21), the meeting schedule incorrectly listed the dates as September 27, 28, and 29 instead of September 19, 20, and 21.

Letter from Philippa Langley

Dear Editor

A word about the Leicester Visitor Centre

In July 2013 I was invited by the owners, Leicester City Council, to write the story of the Looking For Richard Project for display within the new Richard III Visitor Centre. This would include a personal diary of the dig itself, plus an important prior section under the LFR banner, located within the ‘pre-dig’ space, explaining exactly how the 2012 dig came about. All was approved and agreed with the Council on 23 May 2014.

It was with some dismay that I then discovered my agreed text had been rewritten, post deadline, without my knowledge or consent, by a member of the management at the University of Leicester; a person who had no direct part in the 2012 dig project.

I feel I need to bring this to the attention of all Ricardians, because those of you who visit the Centre will no longer be able to see my acknowledgement of your crucial role in making Richard’s discovery possible. It was *your funding* that allowed me to give instructions for the remains in Trench One, which proved to be those of the king, to be exhumed despite the scepticism of the archaeologists.

My original text:

‘I tell Richard [Buckley] I want them to be excavated nevertheless. There is very little money in the budget, but I have £800 remaining from the Ricardian International Appeal which helped to fund the dig. Richard says this will cover it.’

University replacement text which you will now see:

‘I tell Richard I want them to be excavated nevertheless. Richard says he isn’t digging up any burials until he knows for certain about their “context”, that is how they relate to the layout of the church.’

Representatives of the Richard III Society and the Looking For Richard Project (including Dr John Ashdown-Hill) held a meeting with the Council on 23 June 2014 as a last-ditch attempt to reinstate my text. There had been a series of such meetings and discussions subsequent to the abandonment of Annette Carson’s initial draft text for the Centre, commissioned last August. Persons unknown had rewritten Richard’s story, and Annette, Phil Stone, Wendy Moorhen and I had done our best to secure a more accurate and balanced depiction. Now I had to deal with the rewriting of my own story, both here and elsewhere.

We proposed the following compromise:

‘I tell Richard I want them to be excavated nevertheless and I have the money to pay for it from the Ricardian International Appeal.’

With the University’s management represented among the Visitor Centre’s trustees, I am told the likelihood of these corrections being allowed is very slim, although the Centre is open to comments by visitors. Their text now makes no sense with the unfolding dig narrative, suggesting that the king’s remains were authorised for exhumation *following* discovery of the choir. They were not. They were authorised *before* the location of the choir was established. Why the University needs to suppress the role of Ricardians and their funding I have been unable to discover. No explanation has been forthcoming. Perhaps we are an inconvenient truth.

I must also report that the visual display of John Ashdown-Hill's ground-breaking discovery in 2004 of the king's DNA has been removed from the 'pre-dig' section where it was to have been visually represented under the banner of The Looking For Richard Project. Instead, genealogical lines are now displayed as part of the University's area. The original proposal had been to include John's discovery of the genealogical line to Joy Ibsen together with a photograph of Joy and her original letter to John from 2004 confirming her agreement for a DNA test. The genealogical line John discovered is now within the University's section. As for the photo of Joy and her original letter, these have, at present, been excluded.

The University's changes are subtle and may not seem significant. However, there will be many whose knowledge will leave them wondering at this representation of the contributions made by Ricardians. We have spent several months doing what we can, and I can only apologise that our best endeavours have failed to correct the record now displayed in the Visitor Centre.

Philippa Langley

Looking For Richard Project

~ToC~

Editor's note: Please enjoy a bit of satire from a prolific author and life-long Ricardian.

He Ain't Heavy, He's My...

Sandra Heath Wilson

"Now, listen to me, Henry, my dearest son, I have something very delicate to tell you. Something I should have mentioned a long time ago, well before Bosworth, but you know how difficult it was at that time, what with all the plotting, bribing, threatening, forced marriages, smothering, blackmail and—"

"Yes, yes. Do get on with it, Mother."

Margaret, Countess of Derby clasped her noticeably veined hands before her, to prevent their trembling from being observed by her only child, His Majesty King Henry VII, who was a child no more, but a full-grown man. She was diminutive, clad in black with a white wimple, and had a small, rather ratty face with prominent eyes and a large nose. Her anxiety was palpable. She had come to a decision, but was really loath to divulge the secret history she knew Henry would abhor.

They were in the royal apartments at Windsor Castle, and tall, graceful Henry was about to receive the French ambassador, hence his royal robes. "Hurry up, Mother," he said testily, removing his crown in order to buff it with his ermine-trimmed sleeve. He had to lean his head back to see what he was doing, for his eyesight was not ideal, his left eye wandering in the opposite direction from the right. Satisfied the symbol of his kingship was without blemish, he flicked his long reddish hair into place and then rested the crown on his head again. He did love crowning himself. Such a good feeling.

"Well, you see..." Margaret's shoulders slumped and she exhaled heavily. "Oh, there's no easy way of saying it. Henry, Edmund Tudor was not your father."

Henry turned slowly, his strange eyes suddenly very focused indeed. "Not my—? Are you telling me someone else bedded you before you were of age? Good God, woman, what manner of precocious little trollop were you?"

"A faithful one. At the time of your birth I was a widow and had only lain with my first husband Edmund, whom I loved."

“And yet I am not his? It lacks logic, Mother. Clearly you seek to tease me.” He laughed dismissively and returned his attention to the tilt of the crown. He was sure he looked more rakish if it were... ah yes, that was the angle.

“I don’t tease, Henry. You see, I’m not your mother.”

At that he blinked. “Next you’ll tell me Jasper isn’t my uncle.”

“He isn’t.”

“Sweet Jesu! Then who, exactly, am I?” He was now thoroughly shaken.

She gazed at him, her eyes huge and fearful. “You... are Richard III’s younger half-brother, and therefore half-brother to Edward IV and the Duke of Clarence as well.”

Henry sat down abruptly. “You have to be jesting!”

“No, I’m afraid not. It’s true. You are the son of the late Duke of York and a Leicester chambermaid.”

“Have you been over-indulging in the wine and wafers again? What on earth prompts you to come up with this arrant nonsense?” Henry was unable to believe what he was hearing.

“It’s not nonsense, Henry. You were conceived on 5 May 1456, in Leicester, in the same inn your brother Richard used the night before Bosworth.”

“Enough!” Henry cried, leaping to his feet again. “You’re about to tell me it was the same bed, aren’t you?”

She gazed at him, unable to speak.

“It... was the same bed?” He was appalled.

“Well, it was the best the inn could provide, and York would hardly settle for less.”

“Who, pray, was the chambermaid?”

“Elsie Pottington.”

“Oh, spare me. Tell me I’m dreaming and will soon awaken.”

“You’re already awake, Henry, and everything I’m telling you is true. It happened when the duke was going to Coventry. Or was it from Coventry? Let me think now...”

“I don’t give a flying f—!”

“Henry!” She was shocked.

He drew a long breath. “I do not care where he was going, just what he did in Leicester! And how, after that, I somehow arrived in your fond maternal embrace in Pembroke? That is where I was born?”

“Yes. Pembroke. Oh, this is not easy.”

“Hell alone cares how easy it isn’t, just tell me, damn it!”

“Please don’t swear, Henry, you know I don’t like it.”

He eyed her. “You’ll like it a lot less if I have my hands around your throat. How – did – I – end – up – with – you?” He emphasised every word sarcastically.

“Well, Jasper was rather fond of Elsie Pottington, and—”

“He was in the same bed in Leicester?” Henry asked bemusedly.

“I imagine so, but not at the same time, of course. He and the Duke of York couldn’t abide each other, let alone share a woman. Of course he was in that bed, he was Earl of Pembroke, so they wouldn’t suggest he slept on a pallet. He often stayed at the inn, and Elsie usually kept him warm. When he arrived there this time, in the Christmas season 1456, he found her eight months with child and knew it could not be his. He did not know of the Duke of York’s part. Not then. Elsie confessed it all later. Anyway, he brought her home

to Pembroke Castle, thinking her child might grow to be a companion for mine. He's very thoughtful like that. Such a noble man, your uncle Jasper."

Henry cleared his throat warningly, and she hurried on. "My dear lord Edmund was dead of the plague, and Jasper had taken me in to care of me. Elsie and I commenced our travails together, and... well, my child was stillborn. Elsie gave up her son—you—to me. You were an inconvenience to her."

"How nice to know."

"You were hidden in a warming pan and... oh, but that's another story. The upshot was that the son of the Duke of York and a Leicester chambermaid became the heir of the House of Lancaster. And you faced your half-brother, Richard, at Bosworth. You're not a Tudor and not Lancaster, but are York."

"You've forgotten the Beauforts. They're Lancastrian and there has to be some of their blood in me, or I wouldn't look so damnably like you."

"Well, that's another tricky matter," she answered reluctantly, avoiding his eyes.

"Oh, sweet saints, there's more? Well, surely it can't be any worse than learning I'm half Pottington."

She couldn't meet his eyes. "I'm afraid it could."

He sat back wearily. "Do tell. I trust that at the very least it's entertaining."

"It rather depends upon your sense of humour, my son."

He tossed a look at her. "But I'm not your son, it seems."

"You... look like me because my father was Elsie Pottington's oldest brother, Ernie. My mother liked, well..." Margaret coughed with embarrassment. "Well, she liked brawny blacksmiths, and Ernie was very brawny. Not much brain, from all accounts, but that was not what attracted her."

Henry felt almost sick. "So, you were conceived in that same damned bed?"

"Dear me, no! My mother wouldn't think of it. She preferred the loft at the smithy."

"How elegant. So, my lady, you're not a Beaufort, you were never the great heiress, and you have been giving yourself airs and graces when all the time you're nothing more than a blacksmith's by-blow?"

"If you wish to put it that way," she replied huffily.

"There aren't many other ways of putting it. How charming for me, to have a Pottington mother and a Pottington grandfather. The only royal blood I have is from the blasted Duke of York, and even that is bastard blood!" Henry eyed her. "Dare I ask if my slippery stepfather knows all this?"

"He certainly does not! What do you take me for?" She was aghast.

"I'm not quite sure how to answer that. Thomas Stanley likes being the king's stepfather, but once a Judas, always a Judas, so if he knew the truth, no doubt he'd soon be negotiating with the other side, whatever that is now." Henry laughed mirthlessly. "Maybe even me, since I appear to be York! He'd have to negotiate with me against me."

"You shouldn't joke about it, or speak of Thomas like that." She was reproving.

"I'll speak of him how I choose. Well, where's my real mother now? I take it she's still with us?"

Margaret cleared her throat. "She keeps a whorehouse in Shoreditch."

"How nice," Henry murmured weakly. "Mother, it might have been helpful to have known all this before."

"What difference would it have made?"

“Quite a lot, actually. I’d never have been hounded out of England and Wales to Brittany, never had to spend fourteen years of my life there, never been first on the Yorkists’ hit list, and never have had to risk my life facing my damned demon of a half-brother. Jesu, at Bosworth, when he charged at me, he’d have put the fear of Hades up Beelzebub, let alone me. And you do know what I’ll have to do now, don’t you?”

“What’s that, son?”

“After leaving Richard quietly hidden away and forgotten in Greyfriars in Leicester, now I’ll have to put a damned memorial stone over him.”

“You don’t have to. He isn’t going to know.”

“But I know! He’s my brother, damn it! I do have some vestige of conscience. So he’ll have a fine memorial in Leicester, suitably engraved, but you may be sure I’ll never stay at that bl—dy inn. With my luck there’d be another chambermaid named Pottington! Or worse, Arsington!”

Margaret put out a tentative hand. “I’m so sorry, Henry.”

“So you should be. What on earth has possessed you to tell me now? I didn’t need to know.”

“I couldn’t live with the lies.”

“So you’ve kindly deposited them on my shoulders instead. Thank you so much. Well, you can give me back Richard’s Book of Hours for starters.”

“Oh, but—” She did not want to part with the beautiful little volume.

“It belonged to my half-brother, and is therefore now mine,” Henry answered tartly.

“Very well, if I must.”

“Yes, you must, madam. And if I think of anything else, I’ll have that back as well, since it seems I share his blood not yours. Except for the Pottington deluge. Oh, what a waste those thirty years of bloody warfare were. And for what? To put a flaming *Pottington* on the throne!” He was silent for a long moment, and then sighed wistfully.

“You know, I always wanted a big brother...”

~ToC~

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From the Editor

By now I'm sure most have noticed that I've been separating and ending sections (articles, reviews, contacts, etc.) with a line containing only the characters ~ToC~ This is actually a link in the digital edition that returns the reader to the table of contents when clicked on. It has no other purpose than to provide navigation for the digital edition. Likewise, items in the table of contents are linked to their respective pages in the digital edition. These editions are first made available on the members' only page of the American Branch website and become generally available on the *Ricardian Register* Archive page after two calendar years of its publication.

Those of you who have registered your email address with the Membership Chair should have received a ballot for the election of officers. For this and other time critical communication, we respectfully request that if you do have email and haven't registered it with us, please send an email to membership@r3.org to get it added to your profile.

I'm still desperately seeking articles for publication. If you have anything you wish me to consider, please email it to me at info@r3.org. Don't worry about deadlines, if you miss one, you will be in time for the next.

~ToC~

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Photo of reconstruction from skeleton taken by Joan Szechtman from display at York Museum

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