

Loyauté me Lie
Ricardian Register
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"...It is, of course, a source of pleasure to me that the man with whom I share not only a title but also a Christian name should be honored in this way. But there is more to this occasion than just the acknowledgement of a fine man's achievements - for the purpose and indeed the strength of the Richard III Society derives from a belief that the truth is more powerful than lies - a faith that even after all these centuries the truth is important. It is proof of our sense of civilized values that something as esoteric and as fragile as a reputation is worth campaigning for."

From the dedication address written
by the present Richard, Duke of
Gloucester, read July 31, 1980

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Richardian Register
Vol. 15 no. 2*

Editors: Pamela Garrett, Julie Vognar, Hazel Peter

Address material for the Register to Julie Vognar, 2161 North Valley, Berkeley, Ca. 94702. Articles on subjects pertaining to Richard III and his era are eagerly sought from our members, as are personal news items.

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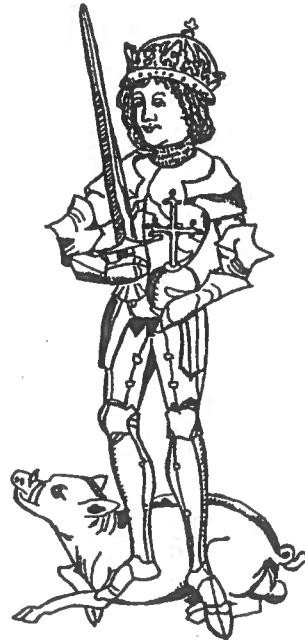
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The Fellowship of
the White Boar is
the original, now
alternate, name of
the Society. The
American Branch
now incorporates
the former Friends
of Richard III, Inc.

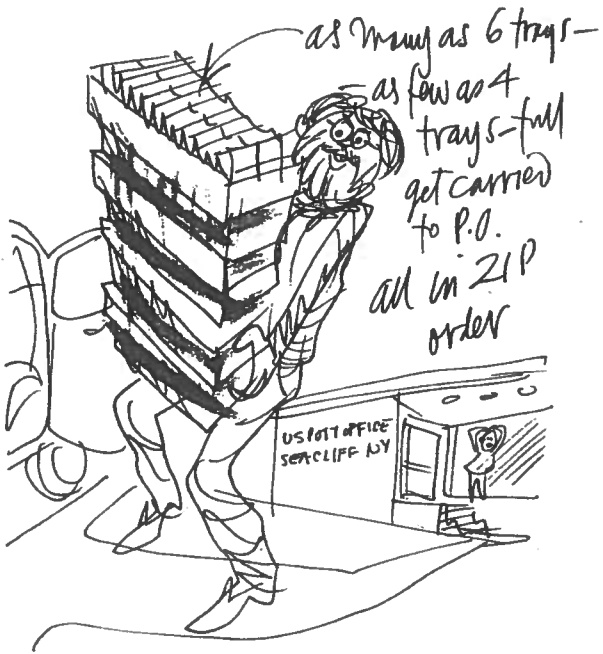
Cover photo by Kathryn Jones.



From Rous Roll

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A (presumably) self-portrait of Bill Hogarth, the former editor of the Register, who has been of enormous assistance in preparing this one, and has occasionally resorted to graphic instructions when all else fails.

Other art work is by Hazel Peter, except where indicated.

Rules and Information about Nominations for National Office

The Nominating Committee Chairperson is Gretchen Clumpner, 222 East 93rd Street, Apt. 6E, New York, N.Y. 10028. She will be assisted by Libby Haynes, present Recording Secretary, who does not wish to run again. Names for placing in nomination should be sent to Ms. Clumpner as soon as possible. There are only 5 elected officials: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, Recording Secretary.

We have many times in the past indicated why the Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary should be the same person; Martha Hogarth will stand again. This is not to say that someone else cannot do it; but it should remain a combined office, or Siamese twins?

Bill Snyder wants to step down as Chairman after 10 years, but will accept a draft if no one comes forward. Bill Hogarth will go on doing Public Relations whether Vice-Chairman or Dogcatcher.

Two very important points: no name should be sent in unless that person has been asked first if he or she wishes to run, and is briefed on duties. Secondly, 2 members of the Board must be residents of New York State, according to our charter. However, both Chairman and Vice-Chairman can reside elsewhere. For instance, we have a good candidate for Recording Secretary (his/her only duties are minutes at the AGM and UK correspondence), and Martha Hogarth's combined titles (Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary) would fill the charter requirements that "two members of the Board must reside in New York State."

For information on the duties of the various officers, write Martha Hogarth, 217 Carpenter Avenue, Sea Cliff, New York, 11579.

Bill Hogarth
Vice-Chairman
American Branch

An Appeal

It says on our masthead: "Articles on subjects pertaining to Richard III and his era are eagerly sought from our members, as are personal news items." This is not idle chatter. As those of you who are read in this L.M.L.-R.R. will be aware, it is at present largely a California operation (with a little Chicago and New York thrown in). We'd like to hear from Ricardians all over: articles, cartoons, news, book reviews, letters to the editor (s), complaints, hate mail, etc. We feel that with the long absence of Registers, the American Branch has to a large extent lost touch with itself, and we hope to re-establish communication. Please let us know what you think, what you're doing, what you're reading. And, incidentally, if it's your opinion that "I could put out a better Register than that with one hand tied behind my back!" we'd like to know that, too.

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--Julie Vognar

A Ricardian Innocent Encounters the Wycliffe Bible

by Frances Berger, President,
Southern California Chapter

My recent trip to New York just kept expanding, very much in the manner of the Apprentice's brew; expecting to stay only a few days in that city while I rushed around fulfilling family obligations and placating publishers, (and, truthfully, fiercely hoping the strike-bound Metropolitan Opera would miraculously begin to make music) I instead found myself prolonging my visit for five weeks.

Obviously, I was enjoying myself tremendously; and one of the pleasures I allowed myself during those illicit but delicious extra weeks was a second excursion to the Public Library for a more extensive look at the Wycliffe Bible which is presumed to have belonged to Richard when he was Duke of Gloucester.

My first visit to the Library might have been a scenario for a French farce. Oh, I was finally issued a visitor's research card cheerfully enough, but only after I had filled out a ponderous Information Form, had presented all my Richard III Society credentials, and had clinched the whole matter by producing that most binding and conclusive of all official documents - my California Driver's License. Then, holding my precious visitor's card aloft so that everybody concerned could easily see I was a respectable citizen seeking edification and not a registered mugger, thug, or revolutionary, I was solicitously and very meticulously directed to the wrong department. Since the New York Public Library is a monster of a building with miles of marble corridors and endless spiral staircases (all rather beautiful, by the way), I finally arrived quite a bit later at the correct department, understandably winded, somewhat disheveled, and thoroughly confused.

The reading area of the Manuscript Division turned out to be a rather curious room; it was small, it was stuffy, and the lighting was a total disaster. But the clerk was friendly, nodding quite knowingly when I asked to see the Book, and motioning for me to be seated. I waited patiently, sitting at the only table in the room, until he reappeared from somewhere in the rear. He had tucked the Wycliffe Bible casually under his armpit, and now plopped it in front of me on the table. "Sorry, but you'll only have a few minutes."

"I didn't realize there was a time limit."

"There's no time limit - ordinarily - but we have to close this department early today."

"Why?" The posted hours for the Manuscript Division clearly stated: 'Open - 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.' It was now only two o'clock in the afternoon.

"Short of funds, you know. We try to keep the scheduled hours, but..." He shrugged regretfully and walked away.

I remembered to wipe my hands with a tissue first, and then very gingerly picked up the Bible. Perhaps I should have felt something extraordinary at that moment, but all I honestly remember is that

the cover was very soft to the touch and that the color was a darkish tan. The pages had turned an oily brown and the inscribing had faded quite a bit. The only light in the room was high overhead, and the daylight through the window was dim because it was raining heavily that day. Frustrated, I realized I would probably go blind searching for the few words supposedly written by Richard.

I wasn't the only person 'reading' at the table. Across from me sat a woman who was attempting to examine a manuscript in spite of the fact that she had the most horrible cold imaginable. Her sneezes and coughs were constant and far-flung. And to my right was perched a young man who seemed to be aiding his concentration on his studies by sucking and chewing on his finger tips - loudly. I was debating whether or not to give up trying to read anything in the Bible when the matter was taken out of my hands altogether.

"Sorry, we have to close," said the friendly clerk.

That was that. I reluctantly handed back the Bible, and then flinched when I saw the clerk toss it indifferently onto a steel cart on the far side of the room. It landed with a small thud amid a pile of other manuscripts. So much for reverence.

A few days later I finally realized I would be staying on in New York much longer than originally planned, and I naturally put a second visit to the Public Library high on my list of priorities. I telephoned Pam Garrett* in Oakland to clarify specific points concerning the Wycliffe Bible. Our subsequent conversation followed the sedate pattern expected from two serious, somber Ricardians, of course.

ME: "Pam! I actually held it in my hands!"

PAM: "You did? Oh! my God!"

We calmed down, however, and soon Pam was quoting from the catalogue for the Richard III exhibition that had been held at the National Portrait Gallery, London, in 1973. "From the section headed 'The Oratory and Music,' number 59, Wycliffe New Testament, c. 1390, ff. 210, vellum, bound in English sheepskin, the New Testament, in the earlier Wycliffe version, with the usual prologues. The first three leaves contain the Kalendar (of feast days), with lessons inserted, in a different hand from the text. 10½ in. x 7¼ in. Inscription: at the bottom of f. 1 in a hand which has been accepted as that of Richard Duke of Gloucester by Sir Frederick Madden: 'A vo' me ly Gloucestre.'" Then she continued. "Literature: For this actual copy cf Seymour De Ricci & W.J. Wilson, Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada (1935-7), no. 67, p. 1325."

As we chatted an idea flashed through my head. What if the apostrophe (described as appearing in the word vo') actually displaced the letter 'y' instead of the presumed dual letters 'u' and 's'? Could the word be 'voy' (Italian) instead of 'vous' (French)? And what about the word 'ly'? My foolish theory really depended on whether or not that particular word had been interchangeable in both languages in the 15th century. Whichever the language it would probably make no difference in the meaning of the phrase (loosely translated as 'I bind myself to you'), but Pam and I passed a few pleasant moments mulling over the possibility of another engaging Ricardian mystery. Was Richard fluent in Italian, we wondered?

* Pamela Garrett, President of the Northern California Chapter of the Richard III Society, Supervising Editor of this publication, and a good friend of the author's.

My route to the Manuscript Division was much more direct the second time around; I was also better prepared, remembering to bring along my scribbled notes and a pocket magnifying glass. I had seriously considered taking a small flash light, too, but, luckily, the sun was shining gloriously. The same friendly clerk quickly produced the Bible again, and I took it over to the end of the table closest to the window. There were no other readers using the table this time, so I comfortably set out all my paraphernalia including a copy of the De Ricci Census which I had reserved when I phoned earlier - just to be sure the MS. Division would remain open as posted.

I put aside the Bible for a moment and concentrated instead on the De Ricci Census. For listing No. 67 it stated, 'New Testament in English, Wycliffe's translation, the original version. Vel (XIVth c.) 210 FF (27x18 cm) Old English sheepskin. ___ On the first leaf, the signature (a vous me ly Gloucestre) of an early Duke of Gloucester (ca. 1400 -?)' The following notation was written in ink, 'negative microfilm prepared Mar. 1962 as Master Neg.'

So, now! De Ricci had spelled out the word 'vous' from the phrase and that just about squashed my Italian version idea, but much more interesting was De Ricci's belief, '...of an early Duke of Gloucester (ca. 1400 - ?)' and that it differed from Madden's opinion, '...in a hand which has been accepted as that of Richard Duke of Gloucester ...' I knew that De Ricci had published his Census in 1935-7, but I had no idea when Madden had given his opinion regarding the signature. I would have to wait to establish this point until I could read through my own copy of the 1973 exhibit catalogue. I turned my attention to the Bible itself.

It was beautifully preserved, I saw, turning the Book toward the window's light yet carefully shielding it away from the direct sunlight. The cover had been originally embossed with a rectangular motive of gold of which now only a single thin line remained along the side nearest to the spine. The front board still held the remains of two delicate iron book locks, but the main portions of the locks themselves were gone. The first five pages of the Book were blank, had an ivory patina and were quite clean and free of flecks or water marks. Next came a title page with the legend (c. 1371) and dedication (in the reign of Edward III), and then the three pages of the 'Kalendar.' The Text itself started on the very next page without a separation or marker. The style of writing remained constant throughout the Text, but the inks had faded at varying degrees. The inscribing ranged in tones from brown to an opaque gray, and there was very little in the way of illumination. A word or two had been written here and there along the margins (the penmanship varied), and occasionally blue and green colors could be distinguished.

I had checked my urge to look immediately for Richard's supposed words and signature, but now I couldn't wait any longer. Following Madden's instructions, 'At the bottom of f. 1 in a hand which has been accepted as that of Richard Duke of Gloucester,..' I carefully turned back to the first page of the Text. Searching the bottom of the page I saw - nothing. Perhaps I was looking on the wrong page? Maybe 'f.1' meant the first page of the Kalendar? I turned to the frontpiece and searched the bottom of that page. Nothing. I returned to the beginning of the Text. The page was quite mottled and dark; a good-sized portion, roughly the shape of a triangle, had been torn away at the very bottom about an inch and a half down from the last line of the Text. Could Richard's 'signature' have appeared on this now missing piece? I stared grimly at the edge of the tear for .