

# Adelaide Branch Richard III Society



## Meetings

Our November meeting had more apologies than people present but the 5 of us continued on. Minutes of September's meeting were read and accepted, Treasurer's reminder about subs as being sent off to UK Monday. Correspondence was information on Sue Garforth coming to talk Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2019. Choice of topic- Bonnie Prince Charlie, Anastasia or Tichborne affair. Battle of Wakefield 1460 comic, copy printed off for library. Email exchange over "Change of Status for the Society" Paper was in September's Ricardian Bulletin. May be discussed at Albury conference next week. A new member Veronica Hartnett joined as senior UK member- lives in Mintabie so unlikely to attend meetings but welcome Veronica.

General business was Judith interviewed on radio. Her report follows-

From Judith: Just thought that I would give you a few more details to report to the group tomorrow. I was interviewed by Ewart Shaw 103.1 fm this was in a small building 10 Byron Place just off Gouger Street. Maybe a small community centre. I spoke to him briefly on Tuesday and he said come Thursday and arrive about 11.15 and we go live to air at 11.30 ! When I arrived I could see a man sitting in a small studio and I heard some classical music playing. He came out and introduced himself and I asked how long the interview would be he said about 10 minutes. My 4 pages of notes were not really necessary! He introduced me with some comment about his interest in history and a bit about Richard. So I spoke about the society in UK, our beginnings here, our aims and some of the topics we discuss and that we are self sufficient and all contribute. He then introduced the topic of the discovery of Richard so I talked about the myths surrounding the burial and what happened 5 years ago in the carpark. I must have talked fast! Think I got 15 minutes before he could get a word in! We finished with advertising this Saturday's meeting. He has Sue's and my phone numbers.

Reminders about calendar raffle- 50c a ticket, write your name on ticket stub and money in envelope. Drawn Christmas meeting.

Christmas meeting- 1<sup>st</sup> December, lunch, 12.30pm, Christmas food , Christmas themed mantelpiece raffle and bring along to share your Christmas thing.

**Talks-** Anne – measurements Valerie- cordwainers- shoes, leather goods Kevin- side saddles (from Spain, introduced -Catherine of Aragon) Ruth- pets in 15<sup>th</sup> century

Sue -medieval roads,

### Ruth Pets in the 15<sup>th</sup> century

*The information below is based on the following limited sources- paintings/ tapestries and literature- regarding keeping a pet in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.*

If you had lived in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, which pet would you have chosen??

Your gender and occupation was a deciding factor.

### A dog ??

For ladies of the gentry and nobility, one breed above all was the favourite, the Maltese. The existence of small, white, long-haired dogs of the Maltese type, as pampered pets of wealthy women is attested in many paintings and tapestries.

The ownership of such a dog was a status symbol, and these little white dogs were pampered pets, sleeping on embroidered cushions or the owner's bed, and frequently shown wearing velvet collars adorned with bells.

Moralists raved against the keeping of such dogs, because they were usually fed on expensive white bread and milk, food which they believed should have been given to the poor.

The dogs lived mostly indoors, only venturing outside on a lead or carried by a loving mistress, though it's more likely that a servant would have attended to the dog's "needs of nature". The dog would accompany its owner when travelling, either on horseback or by carriage.

Clergy and scholars, like wealthy ladies, tended to favour the small white dogs, quiet companions often shown curled up at the owner's feet while he studies or writes. Sometimes there might also be another bigger dog, more of a watch dog.



When the dog died, it would be mourned as deeply as any modern pet, and many were given marble monuments. Poets and friends of the bereaved owner would write elegies

or appropriate epitaphs for the tomb. For the owner it meant the loss of a beloved daily companion.

As for the men who spent much of their life outdoors, their favourite dogs were hunting dogs, which might be trackers, retrievers or killers. These male owned dogs did not share their owners' homes but lived in kennels, and their collars were practical and serviceable, sometimes adorned with spikes to protect their throats in a fight.



### A cat ??

Cats were not merely companions but served a useful purpose too, since they kept down mice and rats in the home. The moralists who condemned pet dogs seem to have been more tolerant of cats who were probably less spoiled and less expensive to keep. They also seem to have been much more difficult for contemporary artists to depict!

The typical native British cat was grey with black stripes, probably still the commonest form of moggy to this day. However from the 14<sup>th</sup> century a type of Syrian cat began to be imported into Britain. They were tawny brown with black stripes, a tabby colouring, and these exotic animals were much coveted, selling for high prices. Merchants would buy them and import them, often via Greece, Cyprus and Italy and if they survived the journey they would become the latest fashion accessory for the wealthy.



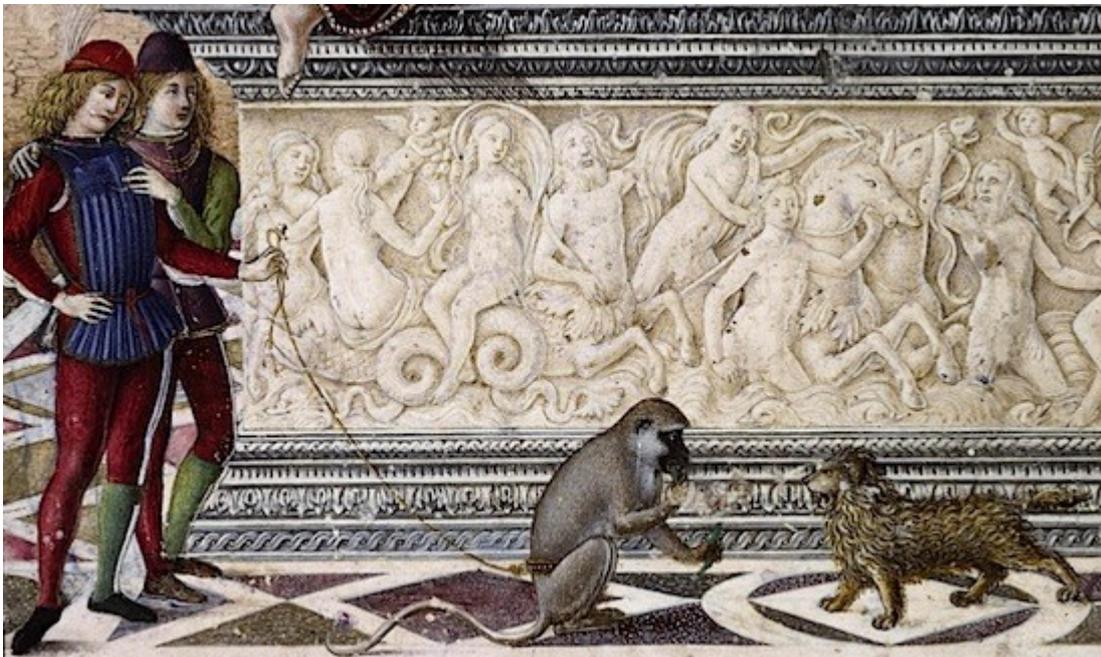
### A squirrel??

Another small mammal which often occurred as one of a lady's medieval pets was a squirrel. These were generally depicted with a collar and lead, presumably because they were apt to run away. They were of course the red squirrel, the invasive American greys not yet having reached Europe.



### A monkey??

The only other type of animal which was regularly kept as one of the indoor pets was the monkey. Some ladies loved the creatures, despite their destructive habits, dressing them in little coats and treating them like substitute children. However they were more popular among the higher clergy, who sometimes kept more than one and lavished rich food and affection on them, a practice which was roundly condemned as improper and immoral.



### A bird??

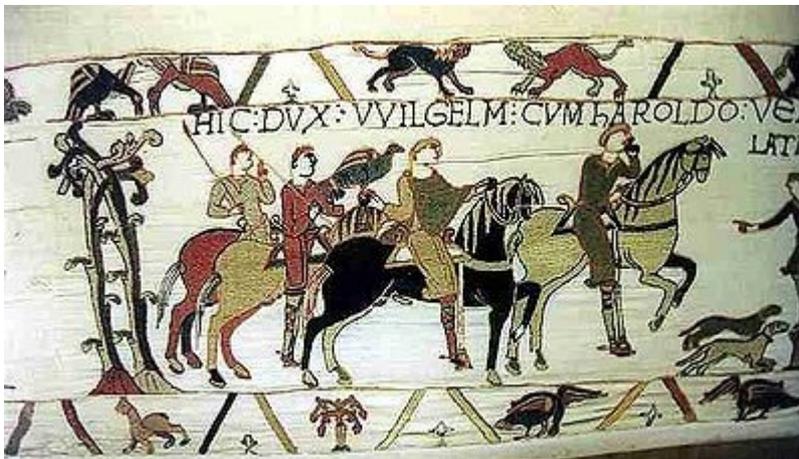
Birds were the last of the main types of medieval pets. These were often singing birds, common British garden songsters. These birds frequently had elaborate cages, some even of gold and studded with jewels. There was no limit to the ostentatious bling for such pets.

Surprisingly a large number of parrots were kept. A parrot sounds like a very exotic pet for the 15<sup>th</sup> century, yet they seem to have been fairly common. These were Indian parrots, the green rose-ringed parakeet, and they appear in the margins of manuscripts, form the subject of large illustrations and occur in portraits of their owners. Moreover, being more talkative than cats and dogs, they spawned a whole literature of their own. They had a tendency to narrate satirical poems and stories, all the way from Scotland to Spain.

### Exemptions but still favourites

I have excluded the following animals as “pets” as they were primarily “working” animals, although this did not stop the owners having favourites or grieving when the animal died.

Horses, who clearly could not be pets lived in stables, and various types of birds of prey werer kept in mews, although they are sometimes pictured indoors, where a favourite hawk might be seen perched on a special stand.



### The trouble with pets

Pets in the wrong place could raise hackles. Nuns had a habit of taking their little dogs ( and rabbits) into divine service with them. Repeated injunctions failed to eliminate the practice altogether, although keeping pets in nunneries was tolerated as long as they were not taken into church. So many animals were kept in monasteries that it roused the wrath of the authorities, but once again it had little effect.

The other institutions which tried to clamp down on the keeping of pets were the universities. Oxford and Cambridge issued regulations banning the keeping of pets by students. These boys came up to university at a very young age, some as young as twelve, and the homesick boy wanted the companionship of a favourite dog. However, as many students came from the landed gentry, they also liked to bring their horses, hawks and hunting dogs.

### The “other” class

Most of the lit and the portraits depicting medieval pets relate to the upper classes, but it was not only the wealthy who kept household pets. Certainly the less wealthy could not afford collars and cages of gold, or costly embroidered cushions for their pets to sleep on, but many families would have owned a cat, one of those simple grey and black striped moggies, to keep the rats out of vital food stores. Most accusations of witchcraft

against poor old women involved claims that her pet cat was a satanic familiar. And a family dog does not have to be a pampered overfed Maltese, carried everywhere like a toy, most of them being normal household dogs.

### **Valerie Cordwainers**

Cordwainers MADE shoes, Cobblers REPAIRED shoes.

The term “cordwainer” is an anglicization of the French “Cordonier” which means shoemaker. The word was introduced into the English language after the Norman invasion, and was derived from the Spanish city of Cordoba, famous for its Cordovian leather. The title Cordwainer also applied to the merchants who imported cargoes of Spanish leather.

The Cordwainery was the name of a 13<sup>th</sup> century London ward near St Mary le Bow in Cheapside.

The “Worshipful Company of Cordwainers” was formed in 1272. By 1316 the Cordwainers Hall was established near St Paul’s Churchyard and continued as such until the Blitz in 1941. Now the company is located at the Clothworkers Hall in Dunster Court, Mincing Lane EC3. This is located approx  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile east of their original site.

In medieval London men and women wore the same style of shoes and boots. According to the shoes found in Baynard’s Castle both wore below the ankle boots in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. Shoes were probably more useful indoors, while boots were more appropriate for outside. A large number of 14<sup>th</sup> century shoes recovered at Baynard’s Castle were below the ankle shoes and few shoes at the site have been repaired, which suggests that these shoes may have belonged to members of the upper class or even the Royal Wardrobe. Many medieval shoes had long poulaines, which were stuffed with moss or hair. In 1463, legislation was passed that allowed only the aristocracy to wear poulaines over 2 inches. Later NO Londoner was allowed to have poulaines over 2 inches. London had its own shoemakers, the London Cordwainers (established 1272) and guilds who gradually increased the standardizing of sizes.



*Leather shoe with poulaine 14<sup>th</sup> century*



**22 leather shoes** made of thick cattle leather range from unisex slip-on shoes, similar to modern-day shoes, to styles fastening with a strap over the instep. These flat shoes would have belonged to ordinary Londoners. Crossrail excavations

Most Cordwainers of this time worked in the *corveiseria*, near Cordwainer St, south Cheapside. They bought their leather from tanners and goat, deer and calf hides from butchers. The most important innovations were making shoes to become more waterproof. Cordwainers were also an important part of the economy in other major cities. Medieval Cordwainers shoes have been excavated from many sites in London. They definitely left their footprints in history.

### 2019 meetings

February Anne is talking about surnames.

**March** Guest speaker Sue Garforth talking on pretenders –the Tichborne affair.

**April** DVD The man who killed Richard III

**May**

**June**

**July** Coronation medieval lunch

**August**

**September** Quiz

**October** AGM

**November**

**December** Christmas lunch

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