



The Richard III Society  
Adelaide South Australia Branch

## Newsletter January 2016

**Our December lunch** was very enjoyable and the highlight was the poems reproduced below. These have been sent to Jacqui for inclusion in the Ricardian Recorder- not all at once- spread out during the year to be better appreciated. I think I've given the correct poets as some were not named. If I've not got it right let me know.

**February meeting** is a DVD or 2 on the Princes in the Tower. The first one –“a compelling film explores the truth about Richard III and one of the most infamous episodes in English history. For more than 500 years it has been assumed that Richard killed his nephews in a craven attempt at glory. This film explores what might have happened, interrogating all the possible culprits, and capturing the debates that rage as fiercely as ever. Fresh and incisive, this film combines compelling personal arguments with the latest evidence to present a coherent and contemporary perspective on an enduring mystery.” The second one was on History channel mid Jan as part of a series on Medieval Murder mysteries [The Princes in The Tower: Royal Blood](#) “Examining the case of the princes in the tower, and questioning whether or not Richard III ordered their deaths.”

**Lisa** has been working hard on our **website** which she has emailed to everyone for comments. Committee will be looking at comments before Feb meeting so please do email Lisa with comments, criticisms or additions.

**March- Picnic meeting at Geoff Merrill's winery** Mount Hurtle Winery 291 Pimpala Road Woodcroft SA 5162 CELLAR DOOR OPEN, 12 midday – 4.30pm Saturday. Bring picnic lunch to share plus chairs, rugs, plates, cutlery, drinks, glasses etc.....you know... picnic stuff!! Obviously we can do wine tasting and say hello to our Ricardian member Tim who works there. Meet there 12.30pm for lunch? Anyone needing lift or wishing to car pool, let us know. **Don't forget family and friends are most welcome** as this is a fun meeting.

## Presenting Those poems

Definitely needed Kenneth Branagh or ..... to read these aloud and do them justice

### MY PLEA FOR JUSTICE

Richard III, King and Protector of England  
1452-1485

Forsaken, lost, lonely, I lay alone in that Grey tomb  
Untimely cut down by that basest of Welshmen  
Traitors all at night's end I see

Bosworth's Field where my fate was sealed

More than half millennium must now pass  
Before I am unearthed by our most worthy Langleyan  
Whose true forbearance led to that famed courtyard  
Where but conveyances were my body guard.

And now my person is removed  
And rests at peace in Leicester's Sanctuary,  
Rituals and sacraments are plentiful and ease its passage

A fitting repository for my brittle bones...

But rejoice ye not, for my soul is yet encumbered,  
Battered and bruised like my poor body at Bosworth  
See! See how my wounds bleed afresh with injustice  
All the burial rites in the world won't ease this burden

I cannot rest nor slumber, I hear my brother's babies wailing.....  
Alas my sin was not to slay, but to trust unwisely  
Therefore no rest for me in this bright hour  
Though Ricardians may light the way with words of power

I beseech your graces - eschew those unbelievers  
Restore my good name – Richard, the last Plantagenet  
For as surely as the black night heralds the dawn  
So shall the truth be my history reborn.

Lisa Cortez – November 2015

***A King's Lament***

King Richard died in battle,  
piteously slain.  
His body quickly buried  
in an unknown lonely grave.  
That is until  
his burial plot  
remarkably was found,  
under a council car park space  
eerily marked with R.  
Five hundred years had passed  
but his memory not forgotten.  
His bones are properly now interred  
as befits an English monarch,  
in beautiful Leicester Cathedral.  
And Ricardians can finally say  
Our King can rest in peace.

By Rilla McEvoy

## Richard III

A millennium half gone a world away  
Yet we in this day and age can gaze in wonderment upon aged bones.  
Those of Richard, stand alone, as a ghost king of past yore  
A young man from the noble house of York.  
The white rose a symbol of loyalty and truth  
Emerges again in history pages now  
York minster cries for this honoured king  
Yes we afar, think of him lost for so long  
Without family to mourn his death in loneliness is buried.

The new season close at hand, March ushering the new spring, yet here rains  
drenched our shores, half a world away yet close in heart,  
Saw Bosworth descendants from both sides witness Richard's burial and duly  
acclaimed pomp and glory accorded him now,

All reverence due we applaud those who from their heart took this our Cried out cue.  
At 18 you bravely led the vanguard for Edward  
At your coronation you made your oath in the dialect of England so all could  
understand you were for England.  
Sleep well Richard, your life nobly spent

Mists of time your laws had past, today our lives intertwined  
by thy wise choices whilst upon that hallowed throne.

Dedicated to the memory of King Richard III

by Lyn Gill

### **King Richard iii**

A woman called Phillipa did pester  
The Uni and great city of Leicester.  
It was quite absurd  
That Richard iii  
Could lie under a car park  
But that's what they heard!

They put in three trenches  
Surrounded by fences  
And the very first day found some bones  
After months of discussion, searching and tests  
It was him! King Richard iii no less.

Arguments raged, tempers rose high  
But where would he lie?  
Leicester cathedral they finally chose  
Now came the buying of lots of new clothes and roses and hats  
Banners and screens, red carpets and mats.

The royals came, commoners too  
All wanted a seat with the very best view  
Why all this fuss for a much maligned king?  
Perhaps the Tudor propaganda didn't have a true ring  
So we all paid our tributes to a great king  
Now may he rest in peace  
For another 500 years, at least!  
By Judith Carr

That erudite man Sir Thomas More,  
You've all heard of him I'm sure,  
Some of what he wrote was anti King Richard,  
as was that of the Great Bard,  
of course that's Will Shakespeare.  
Both men had cause to fear  
the House of Tudor,  
somewhat lacked a sense of humour.  
Both did write with certain flair  
tho' of some deeds they would not dare.  
Their writings have been well read  
tho' ONE of them did lose his head.

In this both Johnny and the teacher do feature.

The HISTORY CLASS.  
Oh! What a farce.  
"Richard the third did he flee  
From that Henry?"  
    "Yes Johnny"  
"No miss, 'e lost 'is horse;  
And 'is crown of course"  
    "Then did he live to forgive the Tudor.....?  
    Rhymes with custard, as does mustard"  
"No miss, they did 'im in, took all 'is tin, money, jewels and horse, of course".

By Valerie Walden

### **At Market Bosworth**

Oh, I have seen the burial of a king:  
Stood for half a day  
Beside the road until a muffled bell  
Announced the laden catafalque with its sad borders  
While all around was decked  
With proud, gay bunting  
And brave white roses strewn before its path.

And though but bones were being carried,  
It was the King within the coffin my mind saw,  
And Bosworth's battle newly lost, once more.

You got it wrong, Bard. All your flights of angels  
Sang for the wrong prince. A simple message  
In a Market Bosworth window ('mid more white roses)  
Said all that needed to be said:

Farewell my Liege,  
Farewell.

By Margaret Collings

### **At Leicester**

As I was lying, sleepless in my bed  
Seeing again, glowing and fading, those bones of light  
In that cold, now empty hole, his first grave site,  
A truly frightening image filled my head.

Computers can print out, in 3D, any item-  
A tiny skeleton with twisted spine  
And put it in a little box of pine  
Then print out another, and yet ad infinitum.

These little chests'd go to the Visitors centre  
With postcards, pencils, books, key-rings and scarves  
To fill the tourist pockets. They don't do things by halves  
When it comes to Ricardian mementa.

Then every shelf would have a little chest- ah!  
Here is where the plot begins to sicken  
For everyone could buy a little Dickon  
And take it home: a Souvenir from Leicester!

By Margaret Colling

### A Burial Sonnet

Laid with rude haste in charity's cloister  
Only the friars were sure of his grave  
Years as the butt of the troubadour's roister  
As actors and playwrights traduc-ed his name.

Lords who had followed him paid for it dearly  
Tudor's calumny spread through the years  
Yet York's honest burghers mourned him sincerely  
Bemoaned his demise with sorrow and tears.

In dark Bosworth soil let his slumber ensue  
'neath Leicester's high, noble and beckoning spire  
Draped in a pall of rich, sable tissue  
Sung to his rest by ser-a-phic choir.

May his grave be unsullied, his honour restored  
England's last and undoubted, Plantagenet Lord.

By Anne Cooper

### Regius Osseus

Bones that are waiting for wisdom and words,  
Bones that are royal, slain and lain in Greyfriars,  
Bones that are revealed and reinterred,  
Bones that are longed for by throngs of Ricardians.....

"Sleep soft, sleep safe"  
SEMPITERNUM  
By John Forster 2015

Support the correct colour of a flower  
Choose the wrong one and you'd be in the Tower.

.....  
Came along a young man called Richard  
Who wanted the crown which glittered  
On the battlefield he lost his horse,  
So he called for another , of course.

.....  
Placed in a lowly grave after Bosworth,  
His remains have recently been unearthed.  
Re-buried at last with honour and grace,  
A King at rest in his correct place.

By Di Haynes

*'Twas the night before Bosworth*

"Twas the night before Bosworth  
And all thru the fields  
Not a soldier was sleeping  
Praying the other side would yield.

Our Good King Richard  
Awake in his tent  
Was working on a strategy  
So no lives would be spent.

Alas though it went  
And at a great cost  
The battle was fought  
And many lives lost.

Our Good King Richard  
Fighting midst the crowd  
Was one of the losses  
So valiant and proud.

The miserly Tudor  
Thinking of the cost  
Denied Richard a funeral  
In a crude grave he was tossed.

Hundreds of years passed  
And our King lay cold  
Waiting for the woman  
Who would chance to be bold.

Under a civic car park  
Our Philippa she looked  
Found the Plantagenet king  
And a nation was hooked.

By Ruth Overy

**Thai Moist Coconut Pie recipe,** ( made for our Xmas meeting. As requested by members.)

4 eggs                      125g butter,softened

1/2 cup plain flour    1/2 cup milk

1 cup castor sugar    1 cup coconut

400ml can coconut milk

Blend or process all ingredients until smooth, pour into greased 23cm. pie plate, bake in

moderate oven 1 hour.

Cool and if desired decorate with whipped cream, glace cherries or whatever you like.

I usually do 1/2 quantity. Regards Valerie.

Valerie's recipe is similar to **Impossible pie**

[I had 2 recipes -same ingredients- different oven temps and cooking times Sue]

2 cups milk                      4 eggs  
1/2 cup butter                  1/2 cup plain flour  
1 cup sugar ( or castor sugar)      1 cup coconut  
2 tsp vanilla essence

Method- mix in bowl, use electric beater until completely mixed

Pour into pie dish or greased pan

Bake 45 mins in 350 F/ 180 C OR 1 hour at 175 C

[BBC History Magazine](#) Thursday 7th January 2016 by: [Emma Mason](#)

## **The 5 greatest mysteries behind the Wars of the Roses**

It is one of the most keenly studied periods in British history, and the inspiration for the ever-popular *Game of Thrones*. But the [Wars of the Roses](#) is still full of uncertainty, contention and debate. Here, Dan Jones, presenter of the new Channel 5 series *Britain's Bloody Crown*, based on his book *The Hollow Crown*, explores the top five unanswered questions. Let us know what you think the answers are...

### **5) What was really wrong with King Henry VI?**

Henry VI (1422–60 and 1470–71) was comfortably the most incompetent king of the whole Plantagenet line, and his benign but ultimately disastrous rule began the series of conflicts that we now call the Wars of the Roses.

The crisis broke in 1453 when Henry appears to have suffered a near-complete mental collapse. He stopped responding to other people; he didn't recognise his own wife or newborn son; and for several months he was completely helpless and utterly withdrawn from the world. One contemporary said the king was "smitten with a frenzy".

The obvious comparison was with Henry's grandfather Charles VI of France, who had suffered similarly long bouts of madness in which he attacked his courtiers, smeared himself in his own waste and screamed that he felt thousands of sharp needles piercing his flesh.

So was Henry's illness hereditary? And how would we diagnose it today? Catatonia? Schizophrenia? Severe depression? Medical diagnoses across the centuries are fraught with difficulties, and it is quite possible that we will never be able to say for sure. What we do know is that Henry's debilitating illness had a correspondingly dreadful effect on both the man and his kingdom, as his subjects fought at first to save the realm, and then to steal

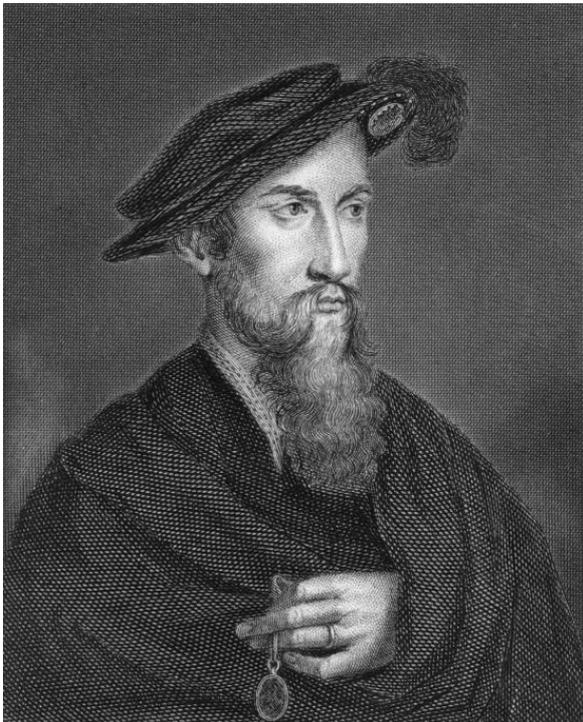
control of it for themselves.

#### 4) Were the Tudors really Tudors?

The great survivors of the Wars of the Roses were a strange little half-Welsh, half-French family who took the surname Tidyr, or Tudur, or Tudor. Famously, it was Henry Tudor who emerged victorious from the battle of Bosworth in 1485 and, as Henry VII of England, went on to establish the most famous royal dynasty of them all.

But the origins of this remarkable family are surprisingly foggy. Their first connection to the English crown came through Henry VII's grandmother, Catherine de Valois, widow of Henry V and mother of Henry VI. As dowager queen Catherine had caused quite a stir by secretly marrying her lowly servant, Owen Tudor. Plenty of romantic rumours have swirled around that union, but whatever the case, during the early 1430s Catherine gave birth to several children who took the Tudor name, most notably Henry VII's father, Edmund Tudor, and another boy named Jasper Tudor.

But were they really [Tudors](#)? Intriguingly, shortly before Catherine became involved with Owen, there was a widespread suggestion that she was having an affair with Edmund Beaufort, the future duke of Somerset, who would be killed at the battle of St Albans in 1455. This rumour was taken so seriously that parliament took up the matter and issued a special statute restricting the right of queens of England to remarry.



*Edmund Beaufort, c1450. Engraving taken from portrait painted by Hans Holbein the Younger. (Photo by Kean Collection/Getty Images)*

It has been speculated that Catherine's marriage to the lowly Owen Tudor was contracted to cover up her politically dangerous relationship with Edmund Beaufort. In that case, is it

possible that Edmund Tudor was not a Tudor at all, but was actually given the forename of his real father?

The great 15th-century expert Gerald Harriss made precisely this suggestion in a fine footnote written in 1988:

*“By its very nature the evidence for Edmund ‘Tudor’s’ parentage is less than conclusive, but such facts as can be assembled permit the agreeable possibility that Edmund ‘Tudor’ and Margaret Beaufort [ie Edmund Tudor’s wife and Henry VII’s mother] were first cousins and that the royal house of ‘Tudor’ sprang in fact from Beauforts on both sides.”*

Wouldn’t that be something?

### **3) Who was Edward IV’s real wife?**

The history books usually state that Edward IV’s wife was Elizabeth Woodville (or ‘Wydeville’). That in itself is a delicious fact: when Edward married Elizabeth in 1464 she was of lowly rank, a widow with two children from her previous marriage and one of the king’s subjects, rather than a foreign princess. What’s more, Edward’s choice of queen upset his closest political ally, the earl of Warwick; caused diplomatic trouble with more than one other country; and annoyed a significant number of other English noble families.

But nothing caused quite so much trouble as the suggestion that Edward IV had in fact married someone else. Following the king’s death in 1483, his brother Richard duke of Gloucester claimed that, before the Woodville marriage took place, Edward IV had promised to marry Lady Eleanor Boteler (née Talbot), a daughter of the famous soldier John Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury.

In 1483 Richard argued that since Edward had once promised to marry Lady Eleanor, he had not subsequently been legally entitled to marry Elizabeth Woodville. This in turn made their union invalid, and their children bastards.



*Elizabeth Woodville, 1463. (Photo by The Print Collector/Print Collector/Getty Images)*

This claim was the basis of Richard's usurpation of the crown. He made it known that Edward IV's young son and successor, Edward V, was illegitimate, and instead claimed the throne for himself, as Richard III.

But was it true? Conveniently, in 1483 the case could not be properly tested, since Lady Eleanor had died 15 years previously. But today, those seeking to rehabilitate Richard III's reputation frequently rely on the 'pre-contract' argument to defend his actions.

## **2) Did Richard III really kill the princes in the Tower?**

Perhaps the greatest mystery of them all, and certainly the question most likely to start a fistfight among any given group of medievalists.

For centuries Richard III's name has been blackened thanks to his usurpation of the throne in 1483 and the subsequent disappearance of his nephews, Edward V and Richard duke of York – better known as 'the princes in the Tower'.

Did the boys really die? And if so, who was to blame? Did Richard have them murdered? Or did they die of natural causes? Were there other agents at work? And if so, who? Could it be, as one contemporary source suggested, that Richard's sometime ally, the oily and feckless Henry Stafford, duke of Buckingham, was the prime mover behind the boys' deaths? Or was there an even more sinister conspiracy, perhaps involving Henry Tudor's wily mother, Margaret Beaufort?



The Young Princes in the Tower, 1831, by Paul de la Roche (1910). (Photo by The Print Collector/Print Collector/Getty Images)

Readers of my book *The Hollow Crown* (2014) will know where I stand on this, and you can find out more by watching the third episode of Channel 5's *Britain's Bloody Crown*. But I do not pretend that the case is closed. For many Ricardians, the charge of murdering the princes in the Tower is a heinous and unjust accusation levelled at a grievously misunderstood monarch... Where do you stand?

### **1) Was Perkin Warbeck really Richard IV?**

An odd young man with an even odder name, Perkin Warbeck is usually described as either a 'pretender' or an 'imposter'. Who was he really?

We usually think of the Wars of the Roses as having ended in 1485 at the battle of Bosworth. In fact, the threat of a revived dynastic war to put a Yorkist king back on the English throne haunted England deep into the Tudor years – well into the 1520s, in fact.

One of the most dangerous times was the 1490s, when the threat of Yorkist plots sponsored from the continent seriously unsettled the fragile Tudor regime. For several years the figurehead for these plots was a young man who claimed to be Richard, duke of York – the younger of the princes in the Tower. If he were crowned, he would have taken the throne as King Richard IV.

It is easy now to scoff at all this. But at the time, this supposed Richard IV had serious support from rulers in Ireland, France, the Netherlands, Scotland and the Holy Roman Empire, and he attempted several sea invasions of England.



*Perkin Warbeck, c1495. (Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images)*

Events came to a head in 1497 when the pseudo-Richard finally succeeded in landing in England and joined up with rebels in the west country. He was captured and brought before Henry VII, where he confessed that he was not, in fact, Richard duke of York, but a French-Flemish merchant's son, a troublemaker and a puppet for enemies of the Tudor regime.

At first Henry VII was merciful, keeping Warbeck at court and parading him in public to assure people that he was not the real Richard duke of York. But this peaceful situation did not last long. In 1498 Warbeck escaped. He was recaptured and placed in the Tower of London. But while there he was caught up in further plotting against the crown, this time in league with another Yorkist claimant, Edward earl of Warwick.

Again the plotting was foiled and in 1499 Warbeck was forced once more to confess his imposture, and was hanged at Tyburn.

Yet doubt remains. Was Warbeck a pretender? Or were his confessions made under duress? The plots against Henry VII have more than a whiff of a set-up about them: could it be that really was the young Richard duke of York, entangled in a nightmare of Henry VII's concoction and forced to deny his own birthright?

Most historians would say not. But the possibility remains tantalizing enough to consider...

(some very interesting ideas-maybe have to get hold of his book!)

## **Did the Tudors invent the Wars of the Roses?**

It was in Henry VII's interests to propagate the concept of a titanic clash of dynasties in the 15th century – and for 500 years we've bought the lie, according to Dan Jones...

*This article was first published in the October 2014 issue of BBC History Magazine*

Thursday 28th January 2016 Submitted by: BBC History Magazine



Henry Payne's *Plucking the Red and White Roses in the Old Temple Garden* (1910) shows noblemen declaring their allegiances by choosing blooms, an interpretation of the conflicts that is "misleading, distorted, oversimplified and – in parts – deliberately false". © Bridgeman

On an early spring day in 1592, *The Rose* – a theatre in the London suburb of Southwark – filled with one of the largest crowds seen that year. The men and women who crossed London Bridge and scurried into the theatre from the dirty streets lined with brothels and bear pits had come to see *Harey the vjth*, performed by Lord Strange's Men. Today we call it *Henry VI, Part I*, by William Shakespeare.

*Harey the vjth* was a hot ticket. Its exciting storyline – noble intrigue and monarchy in peril – echoed the uncertain spirit of the 1590s. Its battle scenes made full use of the Rose's wide stage, thrilling the audience with *melées* and slaughter, explosions and duels. It was tender, too: Lord Strange's actors could move theatregoers to tears.

But there was another thrill to this new drama. *Harey the vjth* belonged to a new genre of 'history' plays, which depicted – or claimed to depict – England's recent past. In this case, the subject was the period of upheaval we now call the Wars of the Roses.

"I'll find friends to wear my bleeding roses," cries Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, in *Harey the vjth*. Standing in a rose garden, he has plucked a red flower from a great bush that stands between him and his nemesis, Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York. York has selected a white rose – "with this maiden blossom in my hand/I scorn thee," he spits – and the noblemen standing by have followed suit, choosing the colour of their rose to advertise their allegiance.

In 1592, this image made perfect sense. This was how the Wars of the Roses were generally understood. Against the backdrop of weak kingship and disastrous military defeat in France, two rival branches of the Plantagenet dynasty – Lancaster and York – had gone to war for the throne, using red and white roses as emblems of their causes. The war had shattered the country, causing tens of thousands of deaths and incalculable misery.

Only after decades of chaos had the family rift been healed by the victory of a Lancastrian, Henry Tudor, over a Yorkist, Richard III, at Bosworth in 1485. Henry's victory, and his subsequent marriage to Elizabeth of York, reconciled the warring factions. Thus had been created the red-and-white 'Tudor rose' that seemed to be painted everywhere, reminding the populace that the Tudors stood for unity, reconciliation, peace and the incontestable right to rule.

It was a powerful and easily grasped story that, by Shakespeare's day, had already been in circulation for 100 years. And, in part thanks to the success of Shakespeare's brilliant cycle of history plays, this vision of the Wars of the Roses remains in circulation – on television, in film and in popular historical fiction. Lancaster versus York, red versus white: it is a story as easy to grasp as a football match at the end of which everyone swaps shirts. Yet it is misleading, distorted, oversimplified and – in parts – deliberately false.

In England, the 14th century ended badly – with regicide. Richard II, having been deposed by his cousin, Henry Bolingbroke, was murdered in prison during the early days of 1400. The usurper Henry IV endured a troubled reign, but his son, Henry V, achieved stunning successes in the wars with France – notably the battle of Agincourt in 1415 and the treaty of Troyes in 1420, by which Henry V laid claim to the French crown for his descendants.

But in 1422 Henry V died of dysentery. His heir was a nine-month-old son, Henry VI, whose birthright – the dual monarchy – required the men around him both to pursue an expensive defensive war in France and also to keep order in an England that was fairly groaning with dukes, earls and bishops of royal blood. Disaster surely loomed.

Or did it? It is often assumed that the Wars of the Roses began simply because, by the 15th century, there were too many men of royal blood clustering around the crown, vying for power and influence over a weak-willed king. Yet if that were the case, civil war would have broken out straight after Henry V's death. The baby king was watched over by two charismatic and extremely 'royal' uncles, John, Duke of Bedford, and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. In addition, many more adult relatives of royal descent were expecting a stake in power, including Cardinal Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, who maintained a bitter feud with Gloucester.

Yet the 1420s saw no serious unrest. Rather than fighting one another, the English nobles showed a remarkable unity of purpose at the moment of greatest royal weakness. They did not hive off into dynastic factions, but stuck together, kept the peace and attempted to preserve a normal system of royal government. Even when men came to blows, as Beaufort and Humphrey did in 1424, the violence was quickly stopped and the protagonists reprimanded. There were no roses. There was no blood. And this peace lasted a long time.

But Henry VI grew up a very strange man. Perhaps this was unsurprising: denied the apprenticeship of princedom, child kings tended not to become very able rulers – witness

Henry III and Richard II. Yet no medieval English king was ever as weak as the adult Henry VI.



*A portrait of Henry VI. For all his frailties, Henry's accession didn't pitch England into dynastic war. In fact, at the start of his reign, the nobility showed "a remarkable unity of purpose". © Alamy*

He was indecisive, absent, vague and naïve, an impossibly innocent and squeamish king whose flaws could be explained by embarrassed courtiers only in terms of his great personal piousness. But this was of little use in winning a war with France, and Henry's gentle, bovine incompetence and lack of military leadership soon became a terrible problem.

Henry was anointed king of France in 1431, but never fought for his crown. At home, meanwhile, he was hopeless: unable to offer any direction to government, unable to keep the peace between noble families who fell out (such as the Bonville and Courtenay families in south-west England, and the Neville and Percy clans in the north) and incapable of choosing wisely between competing counsellors.

Yet Henry's weak kingship did not immediately cause a dynastic war. England coped for a remarkably long time – thanks chiefly to the efforts of William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk. With offices in the royal household, a post on the royal council, a close personal relationship with Henry VI and a substantial array of landholdings across southern and eastern England, Suffolk directed royal government from behind the scenes to an increasing extent through the 1440s, tacitly supported by a large group of other nobles. By the time Suffolk fell from power (impeached by parliament and murdered by rebellious sailors off the coast of Kent in May 1450), Henry VI's reign was 28 years old – yet still there had been no civil war.

What had happened, however, was a devastating English collapse in France. It began around 1429 with the arrival of Joan of Arc before the walls of Orléans, continued with the gradual loss of Normandy to the forces of Charles VII of France, and ended on 17 July 1453 with

humiliation and defeat at the battle of Castillon, when the renowned captain John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, was killed.

This war rocked English pride, wrought havoc on royal finances and created personal feuds (but not dynastic rivalry) between men such as Richard, Duke of York, and Edmund, Duke of Somerset. It also sent Henry VI mad.

Henry's illness rendered him catatonic. It came in bouts, the first in 1453–54, and it emboldened his enemies, resulting in civil war. At the first battle of St Albans on 22 May 1455, the king's cousin, Richard of York, and his allies including Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick – the 'Kingmaker' – defeated forces led by Somerset. What followed, it's usually suggested, was 30 years of intermittent civil war in which York fought Lancaster, the crown changed hands and eventually the Tudors won at Bosworth. But it wasn't quite that simple.

We will understand the Wars of the Roses better if we divide them into four phases. During the first, from 1455 to 1460, there was a confused attempt to vie for control of government. Richard of York argued that his great aristocratic lineage and proximity to the king in blood (as third cousin, once removed, on his mother's side) gave him the right to steer government during the king's incapacity. Queen Margaret, though, jealously defended her own rights and those of her infant son, Edward, Prince of Wales, by allying with the Beaufort family and others. This was not chiefly a dynastic conflict, though all protagonists had royal blood, but a tussle for political dominance.

This phase came to an abrupt end in 1460 when York, having been defeated in battle at Ludford Bridge the previous year, realised he could now never be reconciled with the indignant queen, and assumed that his only hope for survival lay in escalating the argument. Fatally, he decided to claim the crown itself. When Neville defeated a royal army at Northampton, Henry VI was forced to disinherit Prince Edward and appoint York and his descendants to the royal succession.



*Henry VI is captured at the battle of Northampton in 1460, bringing the first phase of the Wars of the Roses to an end. © AKG Images*

Then – and only then – the wars became dynastic. And it is worth noting that, though the white rose was one of a number of badges used by York and his family, the ‘Lancastrian’ royal family never used the red rose as a symbol during the conflict.

This second phase lasted about a decade. York died at the battle of Wakefield in 1460, but his son Edward took up his royal claim and, after victories at the battles of Mortimer’s Cross and Towton in 1461, took the throne as Edward IV. Yet he had neither killed nor captured Henry VI or Prince Edward, so spent the first 10 years of his reign fighting to secure his crown. He won battles at Hexham and Hedgeley Moor, and wed a ‘Lancastrian’ – a widowed minor noblewoman, Elizabeth Woodville – pre-empting Henry VII’s inter-factional marriage by more than 20 years. Alas, no intertwined roses were produced – and Edward’s omission would be the Tudors’ gain.

Edward’s reign was not straightforward. He was forced from the throne in 1470, when the disgruntled Warwick defected to Queen Margaret and helped her restore the moth-eaten Henry VI. But Edward struck back – conclusively. In 1471 he killed Warwick at the battle of Barnet and Prince Edward at Tewkesbury, and had Henry VI murdered in the Tower of London. This marked an end to this truly ‘dynastic’ phase of the Wars of the Roses: one side was comprehensively defeated, and the other had comprehensively won.



*This 15th-century miniature depicts Edward IV striking Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick – the ‘Kingmaker’ – with a lance during his victory at the battle of Barnet in 1471. The fall of Warwick fatally weakened the Lancastrians, leading to 14 years of Yorkist rule. © Bridgeman*

Yet, as we know, that was not the end. A third phase began in 1483 after Edward IV’s death when Richard III usurped the throne, reopening the old wounds of 1460–71. Whatever his arguments for seizing the crown – almost uniformly specious – the new Yorkist king’s brutal power-grab and the dreadful fate met by the Princes in the Tower created a huge faction of implacable opponents who preferred to see anyone but Richard in charge. It was in this context that they turned to Henry Tudor, a Welshman who had lived much of his life under house arrest in Brittany.

This brief third phase of 1483–85 was also not dynastic. It was confused, desperate, opportunistic and lucky. Henry Tudor’s Lancastrian royal lineage was threadbare (he had a better claim to the French throne than the English), and his main attraction was his promise to marry Edward IV’s daughter, Elizabeth of York, and continue the ‘true’ legacy of the old

king. This made him useful to the angry Yorkists, and earned him just enough support from exiled Edwardians to make invasion possible.



*The Bosworth Crucifix, found at, or near to, the battlefield site in the 18th century, may have been carried by Richard III's retinue. © Bridgeman*

In 1485, Henry won at Bosworth. It was a close-run battle that could easily have gone the other way, but he killed Richard III and took the crown – and then, true to his word, he married Elizabeth of York. The Tudors subsequently devoted a great deal of energy and propaganda to portraying Bosworth as the end of the story – but in a sense it was only the beginning.

Henry VII was acutely aware of how hard he would have to fight to keep his crown. His success at Bosworth was impressive, but it also encouraged others to see the English crown as a bauble, a thing so denuded that anyone with a drop of royal blood could raise an army and take it. One by one, they tried. So began the fourth phase of the Wars of the Roses in 1485; it lasted for at least 30 years.

In 1487 John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln invaded England with the pretender Lambert Simnel (who claimed to be Edward IV's nephew Edward, Earl of Warwick) and a gang of Swiss mercenaries. Henry defeated them at the battle of Stoke Field, but others continued to plague him. Perkin Warbeck pretended to be Edward IV's younger son, Prince Richard; he was

sponsored by Edward IV's sister Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy, and raised an army that disrupted the whole of south-west England before he was captured in 1497.



*The Flemish impostor Perkin Warbeck – depicted in this 16th-century sketch – claimed to be Edward IV's son Richard, but was executed by Henry VII in 1499. © Bridgeman*

Warbeck was executed in 1499, alongside the real Edward, Earl of Warwick, who had lived his whole life in prison and certainly offered no genuine threat to Henry beyond his potential as a figurehead for further rebellion. Yet these deaths did little to calm Tudor minds. As Henry VII's reign progressed, he devoted much time and money to continuing to fight the Wars of the Roses.

The Tudor rose appeared everywhere, its implied narrative of 'families reunited' popping up in cathedral doorways, the margins of prayerbooks and manuscripts in the royal library. The king's second son, Prince Henry, was created Duke of York in 1494 to try to shut down all other claims to that family's legacy. Potential rivals, however minor, were mercilessly hunted. Edmund de la Pole, a nephew of Edward IV who had fled the realm, was captured in 1506 and remained imprisoned for life. The warning to others was clear.

This paranoia outlived Henry VII. His son Henry VIII grew up fearing the spectral 'Yorkists' and, like his father, treated them mercilessly. Henry had Edmund de la Pole summarily beheaded in 1513. He hounded Edmund's brother, Richard de la Pole, across Europe, and celebrated heartily on learning of his death at the battle of Pavia in 1525. In 1541, the 67-year-old Margaret Pole, one of the last living nieces of Edward IV, was hacked to death in the Tower by a novice axeman, a spectacle that shocked Europe. Margaret was branded a potentially rebellious Catholic, but her fate was almost certainly decided by the fact that she was – in theory, at least – a Yorkist.

By the time Margaret Pole died, the Wars of the Roses had all but sputtered out. Yet for half a century they had been a vital part of the Tudors' programme of self-justification. It was this part of the war that had been the most overtly 'dynastic', and it is no surprise that historians

writing in the mid-16th century viewed the 15th century through that lens. Edward Hall's huge chronicle history of England called (to give it its short title) *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancastre and Yorke* gave a decidedly 'Tudor' version of events. Hall was followed by writers such as Raphael Holinshed, who provided source material for Shakespeare. By the 1590s, history had been determined – even if it had been somewhat warped in the process.



Portraits of Elizabeth of York and Henry VII are combined in a 19th-century watercolour by Sarah, Countess of Essex. The motif of intertwined red and white roses was earlier used in a street pageant during the coronation of Elizabeth I. © Bridgeman

A middle-aged theatregoer watching *Harey the vijth* in 1592 might have remembered the coronation of Elizabeth. Perhaps, as they watched York and Somerset pluck white and red roses from a bush, they recalled a stage that stood on Fenchurch Street during the coronation. On it was representations of English royal history as an intertwining rose, with branches of red and white blooms writhing together and emerging as one plant in the person of Henry VIII.

They could have reflected on how poetically neat English history in the 15th century had been, and how consistent it had been in the telling ever since. It is testament to the power of that original Tudor myth that it persists to this day.

**Dan Jones is a historian and journalist.**

From **The Hinckley Times**

## **Richard III: 2015 was the year a hunch paid off**

10:00, 31 Dec 2015 By [Simon Holden](#)

**"It was a hot summer and I had goosebumps so badly and I was freezing cold."**



The skull and bones of Richard III

Everyone knows the story of the hunchback king who had two princes killed in the Tower of London so he could bring a reign of terror over the country. We all learned about Richard III at school with the help of Shakespeare who called him a bunch-backed toad.

The king was not from around these parts but he died in battle on our patch. So we have always laid claim to him.

We even built a visitors' centre near Market Bosworth so we could take the kids for a nice walk to see King Dick's Well and perhaps enjoy a cup of tea on a sunny day.

And, to be honest, that was about it for most of us.

The story was old news and worthy of a mention every time a major anniversary of the battle came up.

At the end of the day, an evil king died in a field near Market Bosworth and his body was then lost forever. The end.

Or at least that is what we all thought until these last few years when it turns out he was not that evil, didn't die near King Dick's Well and his body turned up under a car park in Leicester.

The story begins in around 2006. Step forward a few archaeology experts and some metal detectorists who were determined to find out once and for all where the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 took place.

Historians had been fighting for years over where they thought the king had died. Perhaps they didn't like the tea served at the Battlefield Centre or they thought it needed to be nearer a pub, but many of them were convinced he died somewhere else.

In 2009 rumours began circulating that major discoveries had been made. And then in February 2010, history was changed before our very eyes.

Experts revealed they had found enough evidence to conclude the battle took place at Fenn Lane Farm near to Stoke Golding.

Glenn Foard, project director with the Battlefields Trust, led the study on behalf of Leicestershire County Council.

Speaking at the time he said: "We've found that the battlefield is in none of the sites that have been suggested in the past. We think Richard marched out of Leicester the day before the battle and there is a good chance he camped on Ambion Hill the night before. But accounts of the battle are few and sparse."

The four-year archaeological survey of hundreds of acres was backed by £1.3 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The most important find was a silver boar emblem, discovered next to a medieval marsh which experts think was the exact spot where the king was killed.

This was amazing news. However, it was just a prelude to the main story.

The next important person to join our story is historian and screenwriter Philippa Langley. She was also a keen member of the Richard III Society.

She was writing a screenplay about Richard III and decided to pay Leicester a visit. The virtually unknown Greyfriars car park in the centre of Leicester was one place she stopped off at.

Some research many years ago had suggested his body could be buried here.

Philippa said she "felt a chill" and was immediately convinced the royal was buried there.

She said: "It was a hot summer and I had goosebumps so badly and I was freezing cold. I walked past a particular spot and absolutely knew I was walking on his grave.

"I am a rational human being but the feeling I got was the same feeling I have had before when a truth is given to me.

"On a subsequent visit, I found a little white 'R' painted on the exact same spot. Of course it was 'R' for 'reserved', not 'R' for Richard but from that moment on, I was on a mission."



Philippa Langley, originator of the 'Looking for Richard III' project, moves hair from the face of King Richard III

She was so sure, she began funding the dig, which has now changed history. She teamed up with experts from Leicester University.

They believed an ancient church where Richard III was buried was located under the car park which was used for council offices.

It is believed his body was brought to Leicester - but the exact whereabouts of the church became lost over time.

Old maps were used to work out that the Franciscan Friary, demolished in 1538, would have been where the car park now stands.

And on the very first day of the dig in 2012 they found bones. Bones, laid out in the shape of a human who had a curvature of the spine.

A few months later, in February 2013, it was confirmed the bones and skull were that of Richard III.

Archaeologists described the find as one of the most significant “in recent times” and said the history books had been rewritten.

The king’s 500-year-old remains feature fatal skull wounds he sustained at the bloody Battle of Bosworth.

His skeleton also has a distinctive scoliosis of the spine and had a metal arrowhead in its back.

Experts believe one of the King’s shoulders was higher than the other, consistent with descriptions of him having a hunchback.

They even found evidence he was stabbed through the right buttock after his death aged 32 in 1485 by his jubilant enemy.

Delighted archaeologists said the discovery was “truly astonishing”.



Richard III visitor centre

Just as Shakespeare described in his famous tale, the 5ft 8in skeleton shows Richard III did have a curved spine. But another feature described by the Bard – a withered arm – proved to be false.

The hands were crossed over the front of the pelvis, indicating they may have been tied when he was buried.

Tests showed the man found had died between 1485 and 1550, consistent with historical records of the king's death.

And DNA taken from the remains was compared with that of Michael Ibsen, a descendant of Richard III's maternal line.

The Canadian-born furniture maker, who now lives in London, is a direct descendant of the king's sister, Anne of York.

A match was also made between the remains and a second living person, who wished to remain anonymous.

Lead archaeologist Richard Buckley said: "It is the academic conclusion that the individual exhumed is indeed King Richard III, the last Plantagenet King of England.

"It has been an honour and privilege for all of us to be at the centre of an academic project that has had such phenomenal global interest.

"Rarely have conclusions of academic research been so eagerly awaited."

Dr Jo Appleby, from the University of Leicester, added: "The skeletal evidence provides a highly convincing case for identification as Richard III.

"The analysis of the skeleton proved that it was an adult male but was an unusually slender, almost feminine, build for a man. This is in keeping with historical sources which describe Richard as being of very slender build."

She said his death was probably caused by one of two injuries to the base of the skull, both with a bladed weapon.

Deputy registrar Richard Taylor called the find "truly astonishing". He added: "Today we bear witness to history."