

## The Yorkshire Rebellions of 1469\*

by K R Dockray

The history of fifteenth-century Yorkshire in general, and the Yorkshire rebellions of 1469 in particular, illustrates exceptionally well the compressed, contradictory nature of so much surviving later medieval primary source material. Such chronicle accounts as there are tend to be notably southern-orientated, their authors often ill-informed about (even uninterested in) the North of England. This is certainly true of London chronicles, such as the *Great Chronicle of London* and *Fabian's Chronicle*, both written during the reign of Henry VII, and probably the work of the same London merchant Robert Fabian. Worse still, southern chroniclers are sometimes downright hostile to the North and northerners: the monkish continuator of the *Croyland Chronicle*, for instance, who (at the Fenland abbey of Crowland) penned his account of the 1460s not much later than 1469, was both frenziedly fearful of (and fanatically hostile to) the alien hordes from north of Trent, especially when, as in 1469, they invaded the Midlands and threatened the South.<sup>1</sup>

The only chronicler of the period with both a considerable interest in, and knowledge of, northern affairs is the author of the *Chronicle of John Warkworth*.<sup>2</sup> In all probability, this chronicle was written by John Warkworth, sometime Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge, between 1478 and 1483 (and if, as seems likely, he took his name from the Northumberland village of Warkworth, this might explain his north-country interests). *Warkworth's Chronicle*, however, has received a mixed press from fifteenth-century historians: on the one hand, it has been described (by Antonia Gransden) as a 'well-informed, contemporary and generally moderate account' of the first thirteen years of Edward IV's reign (1461-74); on the other, it has been criticised (by J. R. Lander) as compressed to the point of confusion and inaccuracy, its author a man writing without notes, whose memory is suspect and whose chronology is unreliable.<sup>3</sup> Certainly, as a source for the Yorkshire rebellions of 1469, it has distinct shortcomings.

The most detailed discussion of these northern risings is in Polydore Vergil's *English History*.<sup>4</sup> Again, historians are divided on the value of Vergil as a source for the 1460s: Charles Ross, for instance, considers his account of the 1469 rebellions to be 'the most obviously contrived, and of very late date to be reliable for events of this character'; Denys Hay, by contrast, concludes that 'from at the latest 1460 ... the *Anglica Historia* offers a narrative of the highest value'.<sup>5</sup> Polydore Vergil was certainly a man of considerable learning and, despite the fact that he was commissioned to write by Henry VII, he cannot be written off as a mere Tudor apologist. Moreover, when writing of the later fifteenth century, Vergil was clearly drawing on at least one more nearly contemporary written source (which has since disappeared) as well as deriving oral information from men around at the time. Given all this, he must be regarded with respect, albeit a cautious respect, as a source for the events of 1469, despite the fact that he (like all our other informants) can be sadly confused and confusing.

There are a few other narrative sources touching on the 1469 rebellions, but all are both brief and inconclusive in what they say (sometimes embarrassingly so). The best of them is the so-called *Brief Latin Chronicle*.<sup>6</sup> Although its author is unknown, this chronicle does seem to be of contemporary date and, despite its brevity, it is a source of some importance when it comes to sorting out the northern insurrections of 1469. Also of contemporary date is an interesting fragment preserved in the archives of Cambridge University.<sup>7</sup> Finally, two early sixteenth-century narratives (Vergil apart) seem worthy of consideration, despite their late date: *Hearne's Fragment* and Edward Hall's *Chronicle*.<sup>8</sup> *Hearne's Fragment*, probably composed between 1516 and 1522, is an anonymous source – but, so its author tells us, it was written by a man who had formerly served the house of York and (despite adding further to our mounting stock of confusions) it does provide some interesting new details on 1469. Edward Hall is later still, writing in the 1530s and 1540s, and he was clearly much influenced by Tudor propaganda about the pre-1485 era. Nevertheless, he too cannot be neglected: a conscientious and capable narrator, he drew constructively on earlier writers (notably Polydore Vergil) and did preserve material on later fifteenth-century history not to be found elsewhere.

All in all, however, surviving chronicle accounts of the 1469 rebellions are desperately meagre. Sadly, too, record evidence – at any rate, such as has so far come to light – cannot add a great deal to the picture. Presumably because the 1469 rebels were never formally charged with riot (let alone treason), no record of their activities survives in the rich archives of the court of King's Bench, a source which has proved invaluable for northern discontent in 1453/4 and for the Yorkshire rebellion of 1489.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, apart from a somewhat meagre entry in the Beverley Records and a certain amount of evidence relating to the unpopular demands of St Leonard's Hospital, York (a possible cause of at least one of the 1469 risings), the only significant surviving documents seem to be a rebel manifesto despatched to England from Calais on 12 July 1469 and an accompanying letter signed by Richard, Neville Earl of Warwick, his brother George Neville, Archbishop of York, and Edward IV's malcontent brother, George Duke of Clarence.<sup>10</sup> Both letter and manifesto are of obvious interest but, unfortunately, there is considerable doubt about the true nature of the latter. At first sight it seems to be a genuine rebel petition, but, as J. R. Lander has pointed out, it is possible that Warwick the Kingmaker was the author not only of the letter but of the manifesto as well.<sup>11</sup>

Clearly, no certainties can be possible when discussing the Yorkshire rebellions of 1469. Indeed, it is not even certain *how many* of them there were. Most contemporary and near-contemporary chroniclers settle for *one*: John Warkworth, for instance, tells us about the rebellion of Robin of Redesdale, as also do the *Great Chronicle of London*, *Fabian's Chronicle* and *Hearne's Fragment*. The *Cambridge Fragment* and entry in the Beverley Records likewise refer to an insurrection fronted by Robin of Redesdale, but it is by no means clear that this is the same insurrection. Further confusion is provided by Polydore Vergil who likewise has only one rebellion – but this time it is led by Robert Hulderne! Edward Hall, no doubt following Vergil, also tells us about the insurrectionary activities of Robert Hulderne (culminating, indeed, in his execution), but he mentions too the northern captain Sir John Conyers (whom most recent historians have identified with Robin of Redesdale). Perhaps a way out is provided by the *Brief Latin Chronicle* which postulates two rebellions, one led by Robin of Redesdale and the other by Robin of Holderness.

Not surprisingly, given all this, historians too have differed markedly in their reconstructions of these obscure events. C. L. Scofield, in her monumental two-volume *Life and Reign of Edward IV* (published in 1923), provides the best attempt to sort it all out, and Charles Ross in his more recent 1974 biography of the king follows much the same line.<sup>12</sup> Scofield, in fact, postulated no fewer than *three* rebellions: an abortive rising under Robin of Redesdale in April 1469; a rebellion led by Robin of Holderness in May 1469; and the major rebellion in 1469, again led by Robin of Redesdale, in June and July 1469. And, despite the notably inconclusive nature of the evidence, this analysis does seem to provide the best way of making sense of the source material.

Most doubtful, obviously, is the abortive rising of Robin of Redesdale in April 1469, and the first puzzle is the very name Robin of Redesdale: presumably Redesdale is derived from the Northumberland village of Ridsdale; as for Robin, it might well link up with the already emerging mythology surrounding the name of Robin Hood, and was certainly associated with popular protest in Yorkshire. There is some indication that northern unrest against Edward IV's regime, perhaps stimulated by supporters of Warwick the Kingmaker, was already developing in 1468 and the winter of 1468/9, but the first specific evidence is of a premature rising by Robin of Redesdale in April 1469. According to the *Cambridge Fragment* there occurred:

... at the end of April and in the month of May an insurrection in the northern parts (led) by one calling himself Robyn de Redysdale (or) Robyn Mendall. In order to incite the minds of the county, he compiled various articles and sent them to the king ...

Seemingly, the rebellion was rapidly terminated by Warwick the Kingmaker's brother John Neville, Earl of Northumberland, at any rate if we are to believe the succinct reference in the Beverley Records to archers despatched by the town of Beverley 'to ride with the Earl of Northumberland to suppress Robin of Redesdale and other enemies of the kingdom on the morrow of St Mark [April 26 1469]', and were absent for some nine days.<sup>13</sup> This rebellion, if it occurred at all, can only have been a shadowy affair: there is certainly no reason to think that Warwick the Kingmaker was behind it, especially since his own brother reputedly put it down.

More significant is the rebellion of Robin of Holderness which apparently followed hot on its heels. Again, unfortunately, this is a regrettably ill-documented affair. The only contemporary source to include specific discussion of the rebellion is the *Brief Latin Chronicle*, but it does not amount to much. Otherwise, we are forced to rely on the testimony of Polydore Vergil and Edward Hall. Vergil mentions neither Robin of Holderness nor Robin of Redesdale by name, and his account of insurrectionary activity in 1469 runs the various strands of Yorkshire protest together in a desperately confusing fashion; he does, however, identify Robert Hulderne as captain of the Yorkshire rebels and, in view of the fact that much of his discussion appears to be about the Robin of Holderness rebellion, it seems reasonable to identify his Robert Hulderne with the *Brief Latin Chronicle's* Robin of Holderness. Edward Hall, closely following Vergil here, likewise devotes most of his attention to the rebellion captained by Robert Hulderne.

Polydore Vergil and Edward Hall are in agreement, too, about the causes of this Yorkshire rebellion. Both see it as originating in protest at an ancient tax in northern England levied by the Hospital of St Leonard at York, protest stirred up, moreover, by members of the Earl of Warwick's faction. 'To this holy howse' of St Leonard, declares Vergil, all the province of York:

... dyd, for devotion sake, geave yerely certane quantitie of wheat and first fruytes of all graynes ... which quantity of corn thusbandmen, by provokement and instigation of certain headesmen of therles faction, as the report went, first denyd to geave, alledging that the thinge geaven was not best owyd uppon the powre but uppon the riche, and rewlars of the place; aftirward, when the proctors of the sayd hospytall dyd urge the same earnestly at ther handes, they mayd an affray uppon them ...

'Certain evill disposed persones of the erle of Warwikes faccion', echoes Hall, persuaded:

... a great nombre of husbandemen to refuse and deny to geve any thyng to thesaid Hospitall, affirmyng and sayyng: that the corne that was geven ... was not expended on the pore people, but the Master of the Hospitall wexed riche with suche almose, and his priestes wexed fat, and the poore people laie leane without succour or comfort. And not content with these sayynges, thei fell to dooynges, for when the Proctors of the Hospitall ... went aboute the countrey to gather the accustomed corne they were sore beaten, wounded and very evil intreated. Good men lamented this vngodly demeanure, and the perverse people much at it reioysed, and toke suche a courage, that they kepte secrete conventicles, and privie communicacies, in so muche, that within fewe daies, thei had made suche a confederacie together, that thei wer assembled to the nombre of xv thousand men, even redy prest to set on the cite of Yorke.<sup>14</sup>

It is extremely unlikely that either Warwick the Kingmaker himself or agents acting on his behalf had anything to do with this rebellion (unlike the rebellion of Robin of Redesdale which was to follow): indeed, it was Warwick's brother John Neville, Earl of Northumberland who, far from helping stir it up (as Vergil suggests), was responsible for its suppression. Much more plausible, however, is the suggestion that it can be linked to 'petercorn', the right claimed by St Leonard's Hospital to exact a 'thrive' of corn annually from every ploughland in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Westmorland and Cumberland. Certainly, opposition to this tax in Yorkshire was no new thing. Indeed, to combat it, the Master and Brethren of the Hospital had earlier petitioned the court of Chancery, alleging that Sir Hugh Hastings and others within the East Riding of Yorkshire had 'confederated them together to withdraw' the thrive and prevent its collection.<sup>15</sup> Judgement had been given, in July 1468, favouring the Hospital's right to the tax,<sup>16</sup> and it seems more than likely, therefore, that rumblings of discontent would continue – and might well explain the degree of support for rebellion in May 1469.

Sir Hugh Hastings, seemingly a leader of the earlier protest movement, may well have been a retainer of the house of Percy; moreover Robert Hillyard, identified by some historians as Robin of Holderness, was both Hastings' brother-in-law and himself a Percy adherent. This brings us nicely to the cause of the rebellion suggested by the *Brief Latin Chronicle*: Robin of Holderness and his accomplices, this chronicler tells us, specifically asked 'for the Earldom of Northumberland to be restored to the rightful heir' (i.e. Henry Percy, eldest son of the third earl of Northumberland, who had been imprisoned in the Tower following his father's death on the battlefield at Towton in 1461).<sup>17</sup>

The Percies had long been an immensely powerful and influential aristocratic family in the North: indeed, by the mid-fifteenth century, northern England was dominated by the Percies and their great rivals the Nevilles (the rest of the northern nobility and gentry tending to be either for Percy or for Neville) and, it is clear, the Percy/Neville feud was of crucial importance in explaining the outbreak of the Wars of the Roses in the 1450s. Towton, however, effectively broke the power of the Percies (at any rate for the time being), and control of the North passed to the Nevilles, culminating in 1464, in Warwick the Kingmaker's brother being created Earl of Northumberland. Nevertheless, Percy sentiment remained very strong in the North, not least in the East Riding of Yorkshire (where the Percies had long controlled much of the countryside from such castles as Leconfield and Wressle): indeed, there is evidence that the total disinheritance of the house of Percy following Towton alienated a considerable section of public opinion there. Certainly, there is good reason to suppose that pro-Percy (and, perhaps, anti-Neville) sentiment in Yorkshire did play a big part in the rebellion of Robin of Holderness, and this no doubt explains the rapidity with which John Neville, Earl of Northumberland, put it down.

One further question needs to be considered: who was Robin of Holderness? Only two candidates have ever been put forward (as far as I know), both members of the ancient Yorkshire gentry family of Hillyard: Robert Hillyard Esquire (who died *circa* 1486) and his son Robert Hillyard (later Sir Robert) who lived until 1501. Certainly, the Hillyards' main interests centred on Holderness in the later fifteenth century: the bulk of their estates were there, with Winestead as the principal family seat. Also, the younger of the two Robert Hillyards did later become a Percy retainer, and probably so did the 'yong Hilyard of Holdrenes' who submitted to Edward IV in March 1470 after taking part in yet another Yorkshire rebellion which occurred at that time.<sup>18</sup> But no strictly contemporary authority identifies Robin of Holderness with Robert Hillyard. Moreover, the first mention we do have of Robert Hillyard in connection with the 1469 rebellions identifies him not with Robin of Holderness but with Robin of Redesdale: this is in a marginal addition to the text of the *Great Chronicle of London* made sometime during the sixteenth century. This does not seem likely, but there is the interesting further information that Robert Hillyard:

... after that he had hys pardon servyd well the kyng and was made knyzt and lyvyd till Kyng Henry the VIIIth dayes.<sup>19</sup>

The crux of the matter, however, is that both possible Hillyard candidates for the role of Robin of Holderness were still alive in the 1470s and early 1480s.<sup>20</sup> Yet our only contemporary narrative source, the *Brief Latin Chronicle*, insists Robin was not only captured by the earl of Northumberland but peremptorily beheaded. Vergil and Hall, too, tell us that their favoured northern captain Robert Hulderne was seized and executed by John Neville.<sup>21</sup> If these statements are reliable – and, for once, there is unanimity on the matter – then Robin of Holderness could *not* have been either Robert Hillyard the father or Robert Hillyard the son. The only other possibility, and it is a very remote one, is that Robin of Holderness

was not executed in 1469: then and only then, might this rebel captain and Robert Hillyard be one and the same man.<sup>22</sup> Otherwise, the identity of Robin of Holderness must remain a mystery.

Whatever its causes, and whoever its leader was, the rebellion of Robin of Holderness certainly seems to have been a substantial popular rising and, before it was finally contained, the rebels got virtually to the walls of the city of York. According to Polydore Vergil, indeed, the citizens of York suffered a considerable shock, and were entirely undecided as to what they should do for the best until the earl of Northumberland:

... delyveryd the cytie of that feere, who, taking a very fyt way for avoyding of further danger, encownteryd with the commons as they came at the very gates of the towne, wher, after long fyght, he tooke ther captane Robert Hulderne, and furthwith stroke of his heade ...

Vergil also tells us, however, that the rebels nonetheless continued in arms, made their way southwards, and eventually defeated a royal army under the command of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke.<sup>23</sup> Here, in fact, Vergil goes seriously off the rails, running the rebellion of Robin of Holderness into the second rising of Robin of Redesdale. Perhaps some of Robin of Holderness's followers did join the new wave of dissidents, although the causes of the new rebellion were strikingly different from those of its predecessor. The balance of likelihood is that the rebellion of Robin of Holderness simply petered out following the seizure and execution of its leader, and that it had done so before the end of May 1469.

An obvious starting point for discussing the rebellion of Robin of Redesdale in June and July 1469 is the manifesto (and accompanying letter) issued from Calais on 12 July.<sup>24</sup> The manifesto seems, in many respects, very much in the tradition of such documents in the later middle ages. Certainly, it does include all manner of grievances felt by ordinary folk in England by 1469, most notably heavy taxation, the prevalence of lawlessness and the misuse by great men of their power in the provinces. In these respects, the manifesto does indeed have all the appearance of an authentic rebel petition (such a petition as the Yorkshire rebels in 1469 might well have produced). Yet there are strong indications, too, that it might be essentially the work of Warwick the Kingmaker and his discontented aristocratic supporters George, Duke of Clarence and George Neville, Archbishop of York. In particular, and ominously, it begins with a comparison between the reigning King Edward IV and three of his recent predecessors who were deprived of their thrones: Edward II, Richard II and Henry VI. These Kings met their fate – and, by implication, Edward IV might well do the same – as a result of excluding princes of the blood from their presence and giving favour instead to greedy favourites whose sole concern was to enrich themselves. Specifically, the manifesto indicts Edward IV's favour to the family of his own Queen (the Woodvilles) and his advancement of men like William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and Humphrey Stafford, Earl of Devon. There clearly is a propaganda element about these references (as about the rest of the document), but they do very much reflect, as well, the personal and political grievances of Warwick the Kingmaker. And, there can be no doubt, the letter and manifesto together were intended to stimulate support for Warwick and Clarence in south-eastern England when they arrived there (as they intended to do) a few days later.

There is powerful evidence, too, that the rebellion of Robin of Redesdale in Yorkshire (in June and July 1469) was also in many respects a Neville-inspired affair, albeit one well-grounded in popular grievances among northerners. As the monkish continuator of the *Croyland Chronicle* insisted, the rebels complained bitterly that they were 'grievously oppressed with taxes and annual tributes by the favourites of the king and queen'.<sup>25</sup> Yet, at the very least, they were encouraged by the Nevilles to rebel against such oppressions; indeed, if we are to believe the *Chronicle of John Warkworth*, it was specifically by the assignment of the Earl of Warwick, his brother the Archbishop of York and his new son-in-law the Duke of Clarence that the northerners rose up in arms.<sup>26</sup>

The Nevilles, like their great rivals the Percies, had long enjoyed extensive power in northern England, and were possessed of massive estates there. Since 1461, and the disgrace of the Percies, their lands and authority had become wider still, thanks to the generous patronage of Edward IV. Nevertheless, the chief of the Neville clan – Richard Neville Earl of Warwick – became increasingly disillusioned and discontented as the 1460s wore on, so much so that (by 1469) he was prepared once more to chance his arm in the lottery of civil war. Neville power in Yorkshire was particularly noteworthy in the Richmondshire area, centred on Warwick the Kingmaker's castle at Middleham, and it was in Richmondshire that the rebellion began and from the inhabitants of Richmondshire that it derived its greatest support.<sup>27</sup> Among the leaders of the rebellion, moreover, were members of Warwick's own family. Most obviously, there was Sir Henry Neville, eldest son of Warwick's uncle, and the insane George Neville Lord Latimer: most of the Latimer estates, in fact, were in Warwick's hands in the 1460s, and his cousin Sir Henry Neville is specifically identified as a captain of the Yorkshire rebels in the *Great Chronicle of London*. Similarly involved was Sir Henry Fitzhugh, nephew of Warwick the Kingmaker and eldest son of Henry Lord Fitzhugh (who was himself to lead an insurrection in Yorkshire in 1470). Sir Henry Fitzhugh, too, seems to have been a captain of the North in the summer of 1469.<sup>28</sup> Edward Hall suggests, in fact, that it was Sir Henry Neville and Henry Fitzhugh who

'bare the names of captaines'; however, he then declares, they had: ... a tutor and governer called sir Ihon Conyers, a man of suche courage and valiauntness, as fewe was in his daies, in the Northe partes.<sup>29</sup>

Certainly, the Conyers family were very prominent in this rebellion: indeed, their role may well have been most crucial of all.

The Conyers were an influential Richmondshire family, possessed of very considerable lands, and having their chief family seat at Hornby near Richmond. Significantly, they had a long-established and close connection with the Nevilles as lords of Middleham. Sir John Conyers of Hornby, for instance, was retained for life by Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, in 1465 (having served his father Richard Neville Earl of Salisbury in the same capacity in the 1450s), as well as being a member of Warwick's baronial council and his steward in Richmondshire; Sir John's brother, William Conyers of Marske, was likewise a Warwick retainer in the 1460s, while his son John married Warwick's cousin Alice Neville, daughter and coheir of William Neville, Earl of Kent.<sup>30</sup> In all probability, moreover, the rebel leader Robin of Redesdale was himself a member of the Conyers family.

At least three candidates for the role of Robin of Redesdale have been put forward at one time or another: Robert Hillyard, William Conyers of Marske and Sir John Conyers of Hornby. Robert Hillyard can be rejected immediately. The Hillyards were an East Riding not a North Riding family, and their connections were with the Percies rather than the Nevilles; also, the first attempt to identify Robert Hillyard with Robin of Redesdale was not until the early sixteenth century (in a marginal note to the *Great Chronicle*).<sup>31</sup> William Conyers of Marske is a more promising candidate, and is certainly strongly fancied by the historian A. J. Pollard.<sup>32</sup> Pollard, however, relies almost entirely on the *Chronicle of John Warkworth*, where the chronicler comments that:

Sere William Conyars knyghte was therre capteyne, whiche callede hym self Robyne of Riddesdale ...

Such an identification is, in fact, unconvincing. For a start, William Conyers of Marske (head of a cadet branch of the Conyers family seated at Marske in Swaledale) never seems to have received a knighthood. More importantly, Warkworth is not to be relied upon when it comes to forenames: for instance, in his list of northerners killed at the battle of Edgecote, he has *James* Conyers, son and heir of John Conyers knight (when it should be *John*) and Sir *Roger* Pigot (when, in fact, there is no Roger but only a *Richard* mentioned in records relating to the Yorkshire family of Pigot).<sup>33</sup> It is not unlikely, therefore, that for Sir *William* Conyers we should read Sir *John*. Also, it is perhaps unlikely that William Conyers of Marske, who (in contrast to his brother Sir John Conyers of Hornby) had virtually no public career, should have allowed himself this one moment of dubious prominence in 1469.<sup>34</sup> This leaves us, then, with Sir John Conyers of Hornby.

Edward IV's early twentieth century biographer C. L. Scofield concluded that Robin of Redesdale was, in fact, Sir John Conyers the Younger, husband of Alice Neville.<sup>35</sup> His father Sir John Conyers the Elder is much more likely, however, with the younger John as the casualty at Edgecote. Certainly, Robin of Redesdale was a man influential enough to win a great deal of support not only in Richmondshire but elsewhere in the North as well, and the head of the house of Hornby fits this bill very well. Sir John, moreover, was a tried and trusted Neville partisan by 1469: as a retainer of the Earl of Salisbury in the 1450s, he had fought at the battles of Blore Heath and Ludford in 1459, and suffered attainder and confiscation of his estates by the temporarily victorious Lancastrians in consequence; following Salisbury's execution after the battle of Wakefield in December 1460, he transferred his prime allegiance to Salisbury's son Warwick, perhaps fought at Towton in March 1461, and certainly entered Edward IV's service (albeit as a Neville man) thereafter.<sup>36</sup> In December 1462, for instance, he is said to have accompanied Edward IV when he journeyed northwards towards Scotland, and served as sheriff of Yorkshire in 1467/8.<sup>37</sup> And, although there is no evidence of any specific connection between Conyers and the Northumberland village of Ridsdale (should that matter!), Sir John did have a certain amount of property in that county.<sup>38</sup>

Whatever its origins, this rebellion certainly did develop into a very considerable rising indeed. *Warkworth's Chronicle* describes it as 'a grete insurreccyon in Yorkeschyre, of dyvers knyghtes, squyres, and comeners' to the number of 20,000; while, according to the *Croyland Chronicle*:

... a whirlwind came down from the North, in form of a mighty insurrection of the commons of that part of the country (who), having appointed one Robert de Redysdale to act as captain over them, proceeded to march, about sixty thousand in number, to join the Earl of Warwick ...

The *Brief Latin Chronicle*, although it places what seems to be the *second* rebellion of Robin of Redesdale *before* the uprising led by Robin of Holderness, nevertheless provides the best clue to the starting date of the insurrection: he Feast of Holy Trinity (May 28).<sup>39</sup> Only gradually does the rebellion seem to have built up momentum, however, and it was not until the early part of July 1469 that the rebels began to move south via Doncaster and Derby into the Midlands. In mid-July Warwick and Clarence crossed the Channel from Calais, landed in Kent and attracted considerable support there; then, after a brief pause in an unenthusiastic London, they proceeded towards Coventry, gathering men as they did so. The northerners, meanwhile, reached Daventry on 25 July 1469. The following day, at Edgecote near Banbury,

they were intercepted by a largely Welsh force under the command of Edward IV's trusted lieutenant William Herbert Earl of Pembroke, and there (so the Croyland continuator tells us):

... a great battle was fought, and a most dreadful slaughter, especially of the Welsh, ensued; so much so that four thousand men of the two armies are said to have been slain.<sup>40</sup>

The rebels, in fact, scored a notable victory on Warwick's behalf, despite the deaths on the battlefield of northern leaders like Warwick's cousin, Sir Henry Neville, and Sir John Conyers' eldest son and heir, John. The Earl of Pembroke and his brother, Sir Richard Herbert, were taken prisoner, carried to Northampton and summarily beheaded on Warwick's orders. Soon after, Edward IV himself fell into the Kingmaker's hands, and was even imprisoned for a time (first in Warwick castle and later in the Neville Yorkshire stronghold at Middleham). As for the Yorkshire rebels, if we are to believe Polydore Vergil, they now:

... waxed soodaynly more coole, and therefor procedyd no further forward, but loden with pray drew homeward ...<sup>41</sup>

Yorkshiremen were to rise twice more on the Nevilles' behalf, in March and July 1470, with the Richmondshire gentry again prominent. The rebellion in March 1470, centred on Richmondshire and Holderness (and closely associated with the much more serious Lincolnshire rebellion), seems to have been led by John Lord Scrope of Bolton and Sir John Conyers (both Neville men). It soon fizzled out, however, and its leaders (including Sir John Conyers) sought and obtained pardons from Edward IV at York soon after.<sup>42</sup> Some four months later, in July 1470, many of them were in arms once more, this time under the leadership of Warwick's brother-in-law, Henry Lord Fitzhugh of Ravensworth, and again including at least two members of the Conyers family.<sup>43</sup> This rebellion, indeed, by drawing Edward IV to the North, proved crucial in enabling the Kingmaker to return from exile in Calais and engineer the readoption of Henry VI in the autumn of 1470. Eventually, however, Warwick was killed at Barnet (in April 1471), Henry VI was murdered in the Tower (in May 1471), Edward IV re-established himself on the throne more firmly than ever before, and his brother Richard Duke of Gloucester became the heir to Neville patrimony and power in Yorkshire and the North. What use he made of it is, of course, another story!<sup>44</sup>

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. *The Great Chronicle of London*, ed. A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley (London 1983), pp.208-9; *Robert Fabyan's New Chronicles of England and France*, ed. H. Ellis (London 1811). p.657; *Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland*, trans. H. T. Riley (London 1854), pp.445-6.
2. *J. Warkworth's Chronicle of the First Thirteen Years of the Reign of King Edward IV*, ed. J. O. Halliwell, Camden Society (1839), pp.6-7.
3. A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England II: c.1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London 1982), p.259; J. R. Lander, *Crown and Nobility 1450-1509* (London 1976), p.260. Lander does add, however, that the chronicle's 'real interest (and greater accuracy) begins with Robin of Redesdale's rebellion in 1469'.
4. *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History*, ed. H. Ellis, Camden Society (1844), pp.120-3.
5. C. Ross, *Edward IV* (London 1974), pp.439, 434.
6. *Three Fifteenth Century Chronicles*, ed. J. Gairdner, Camden Society (1880), pp.182-3.
7. *Abbreviata Cronica*, ed. J. J. Smith, Cambridge Antiquarian Society (1840), p.13.
8. *Chronicles of the White Rose of York*, ed. J. A. Giles (London 1845), pp.24-5; *Edward Hall's Chronicle*, ed. H. Ellis (London 1809), pp.272-4.
9. The National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office), King's Bench Ancient Indictments, KB9/148 and 149 (for 1453/4), and KB9/381 (for 1489). The equivalent file for 1469, KB9/324, contains virtually no Yorkshire material.
10. *Historical MSS Commission Reports, Beverley Corporation MSS*, p.144; PRO, Early Chancery Proceedings, CI/32/145 and *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1467-77*, pp.131-2; *Warkworth's Chronicle, Notes*, pp.46-51.
11. J. R. Lander, *Government and Community: England 1450-1509* (London 1980), pp.250-1 and n.14.
12. C. L. Scofield, *The Life and Reign of Edward IV* (London 1923), vol. 1, pp.488-97; Ross, *op.cit.*, pp.126-31, 439-40.
13. *Abbreviata Cronica*, p.13; *Beverley Corporation MSS*, p.144.
14. *Polydore Vergil's English History, op.cit.*, p.121; *Edward Hall's Chronicle*, p.272.
15. PRO, Early Chancery Proceedings, CI/32/145.
16. *CPR 1467-77*, pp.131-2.
17. *Brief Latin Chronicle*, pp.182-3
18. J. Leland, *Collectanea* (London 1774), vol. 4, p.187; *Chronicle of the Rebellion in Lincolnshire 1470*, ed. J. G. Nichols, Camden Society (1847), p.17.
19. *Great Chronicle*, p.208.
20. *CPR 1476-85*, p.578, for reference to 'Robert Hillyard the Elder' as late as 1483; *Calendar of Fine Rolls 1485-1509*, p.306 gives the date of Sir Robert Hillyard's death as 21 May 1501.

21. *Brief Latin Chronicle*, p.183; *Polydore Vergil's English History*, p.122; *Edward Hall's Chronicle*, p.272.
22. M. A. Hicks, *The Career of Henry Percy, 4th Earl of Northumberland*, with special reference to his retinue (unpublished Southampton MA dissertation, 1971), p.14, suggests that the younger Robert Hilliard and Robin of Holderness are synonymous, and that he was not executed.
23. *Polydore Vergil's English History*, pp.122-3.
24. *Warkworth's Chronicle, Notes*, pp.46-51.
25. *Croyland Chronicle, First Continuation*, p.445.
26. *Warkworth's Chronicle*, p.6.
27. On this see A. J. Pollard, *The Richmondshire Community of Gentry during the Wars of the Roses, Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England*, ed. C. Ross (Gloucester 1979), pp.37-59.
28. *Great Chronicle*, p.209.
29. *Edward Hall's Chronicle*, pp.273-4.
30. TNA (formerly PRO), SC6/1085/20.
31. *Great Chronicle*, p.208, where we are told that 'thys Robyns name (ie. Robin of Redesdale) was Robert Hylyard off Riddisdale'; the Elizabethan antiquarian John Stow made a similar identification, *Annales*, p.421.
32. Pollard, *loc.cit.*, pp.37-42.
33. *Warkworth's Chronicle*, pp.6-7.
34. *CPR 1461-7*, pp.30, 492 and 576, for the only references we have to William Conyers as a commissioner.
35. Scofield, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, pp.488-97.
36. A. J. Pollard, *The Northern Retainers of Richard Nevill Earl of Salisbury, Northern History*, vol.II (1976), p.67; *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, vol. 5, 1439-68, pp.348-9, for his presence at Blore Heath and Ludford, and his subsequent attainder.
37. *Three Fifteenth Century Chronicles*, p.157; *CFR 1461-71*, pp.210, 222.
38. *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, Henry VII*, vol. 1, no.637, where he is said to have held estates in Northumberland (at the time of his death in March 1490) valued at some 10 marks.
39. *Warkworth's Chronicle*, p.6; *Croyland Chronicle*, p.445; *Brief Latin Chronicle*, pp.182-3.
40. *Croyland Chronicle*, p.446.
41. *Polydore Vergil's English History*, p.123.
42. *Chronicle of the Rebellion in Lincolnshire*, p.17.
43. A. J. Pollard, *Lord Fitzhugh's Rising in 1470, Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, vol. 52 (1979), pp.170-5.
44. I hope to consider this in a paper to the 1984 symposium of the Richard III Society at Jesus College, Cambridge.

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