



THE RICHARD III SOCIETY



Year ended 31 March 2020

Mission Statement

In the belief that many features of the traditional accounts of the character and career of Richard III are neither supported by sufficient evidence nor reasonably tenable, the Society aims to promote, in every possible way, research into the life and times of Richard III, and to secure a reassessment of the material relating to this period and raise awareness of the role in history of this monarch.

Foreword

As ever, I take pleasure in introducing this report for the year 2019/2020, demonstrating as it does that we continue to make progress. (To avoid confusion with the Annual Report which the Society now has to lodge with Companies House, we have re-titled this as the Members' Report.) Challenges remain of course, not least in ensuring that Richard III is given a fair hearing in the press and media. We have maintained our public profile, attending the Middleham, Tewkesbury and Bosworth festivals and, following a suggestion made at the 2018 AGM, we began a programme of erecting plaques at sites associated with King Richard. The first was unveiled at Bestwood Lodge. Further progress has been halted by the Covid-19 pandemic but additional sites are in the pipeline.

It remains pleasing to see that the Richard III and Yorkist History Trust continues to bring the Society credit, especially in the academic world, demonstrating our commitment to good quality historical scholarship.

Knowing how much work was involved in the preparations, it was very pleasing to see the overwhelming support given by the membership for the change of status to a Company Limited by Guarantee. Once the initial teething problems are overcome, this will make the administration of the Society much easier for everyone, at every level. Once again, my thanks go to the chairman Dave Wells and the other members of the working party concerned for their long and, at times, arduous efforts, especially as they oversee the transfer from one status to another, developing the Articles of Association required by Companies House and a new set of Rules of governance to replace the now outdated Constitution.

This report provides a useful source of information about the Society and its achievements, reflecting the dedication and hard work of the many members who voluntarily give their services at all levels of the Society. I remain grateful for the commitment and enthusiasm of everyone who help to run the Society both nationally and locally. We remain a financially sound and confident organisation and we will continue to work tirelessly to further the rehabilitation of Richard III's reputation.

Phil Stone, Chairman

Key achievements for 2019/20

- Completion of the ballot for a change in status of the Society, resulting in an overwhelming vote in favour of the Society becoming a Company Limited by Guarantee.
- Solid progress on the transition to Company status and the new governance documents for approval at the 2020 AGM.
- A successful AGM and Members' Day in Edinburgh, our first-ever 'north of the border'.
- Launch of The Ricardian Online project, making articles from the journal accessible online for the first time.
- Continuing progress on research projects: Middleham Accounts, the Itinerary, Polydore Vergil and the Milles wills.
- Introduction of Executive Committee/Board meeting summaries in the *Bulletin*, enabling more transparency in our governance.
- Progress toward placing Society memorial plaques at important Ricardian sites.



The plaque unveiled at Bestwood Lodge on 19 August 2019

The Society

The Society was founded in 1924 under the name The Fellowship of the White Boar. It was refounded in 1956 on a wider membership basis and formally changed its name to The Richard III Society in 1959. For the purposes of this report, the Society is an unincorporated body bound by a constitution and managed by an Executive Committee elected at the AGM, which takes place each October.

Governance

Patron

HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO has been the Society's Patron since 1980.

President and Vice-Presidents

Peter Hammond FSA was re-elected President at the 2019 AGM. For the year October 2019 to September 2020 five Vice Presidents were also re-elected: Kitty Bristow, Carolyn Hammond, Jonathan Hayes, Elizabeth Nokes and Robert Smith. All were elected to serve for the year up to and including the 2020 AGM. The Society is saddened to record the death of Jonathan Hayes, and of former Vice President John Audsley.

Executive Committee (EC)

At the 2019 AGM the following were elected to serve on the EC: Amanda Geary,* Sally Henshaw, Gretel Jones, Philippa Langley,* Joanna Laynesmith, Matthew Lewis,* Jeanette Melbourne, Susan Ollier, Phil Stone, Anne Sutton, David Wells, Susan Wells, Geoffrey Wheeler, John Whiting and Stephen York. Richard Smith and Marlene Arnese served on the EC until the AGM. Phil Stone was subsequently re-elected Chairman. The Executive Committee meets every four to six weeks at the Civil Service Club in London. From March 2020, meetings have been held by Zoom conferences.

* Note: Matthew Lewis, Philippa Langley and Amanda Geary resigned from the Executive Committee early in the next reporting year (2020/21). The EC/Board commissioned an independent inquiry to assess and recommend 'better rules and procedures for the conduct of the Board's business and any wider lessons for the Society'; the report to be published with the September 2020 *Bulletin*.

Standing Committees

These are permanent bodies with specific tasks and responsibilities delegated from the Executive Committee. Current standing committees are: Research Committee, *Bulletin* Editorial Committee, Website Communications Committee and the Ways and Means Sub-Committee.

Working Parties

These are temporary bodies established by the Executive Committee to examine a specific area of Society business. Current working parties are as follows: the Constitution and Governance Working Party and the Education Working Party

Constitution and Governance Review

2019/20 was another year of significant progress in establishing a formal status for the Society. Achievements during the year were:

- A member-wide ballot returned a 98.4% vote in favour of establishing the Society as a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) on a turnout of 83.3%.
- The Richard III Society was incorporated as a CLG and registered with Companies House.
- At the 2019 AGM those elected by members to the Executive Committee were also elected to be the first directors of the Company's Board. The Executive Committee and Board will operate in parallel.
- Draft Articles of Association and Society Rules have been produced which will be presented to members for agreement during 2020/21.
- New bank accounts were established for the CLG, including a new PayPal account.
- Transitional operation of the new CLG, in parallel with the old, unincorporated body, commenced at the end of the 2019/20 Ricardian year.

The Constitution Working Party (CWP) is continuing its work during 2020 to ensure a smooth and trouble-free transition to the new organisation.

Dave Wells, chairman of the CWP, would like to thank all of those members of the CWP who gave up so much of their time and expertise in 2019/20 to work on procedures and documentation to move the Society forward, namely: Marlene Arnese, Sally Henshaw, Gretel Jones, Sue Ollier, Phil Stone, Sue Wells, John Whiting and Stephen York.

Secretariat

During the year to March 2020, the Secretariat has continued to provide vital support for the Chairman and Executive Committee (EC) as the Society transitions to CLG status. The Secretary is the key link between the Society's management and the wider membership and is the first point of contact for general Society enquiries, with the volume of contacts increasing markedly to reflect ongoing interest in Ricardian matters in general and the transition of the Society to its new status. From April 2020 the Secretary will provide support to both the EC and to the transitional Board.

In addition to the organisation and minuting of EC meetings, the Secretary has continued to provide meeting summaries and articles for publication in the *Bulletin*, a now well-established feature keeping

members up to date with the opportunities and challenges for the Society brought before the EC.

The Secretary has also been an active member of the busy Constitution Working Party (CWP). As part of this, the Secretary is co-ordinating the establishment of a suite of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Society. These SOPs support the implementation of Society Rules and adherence to our Articles of Association. They enable the Society to formally capture detailed knowledge, held by experienced officers, of how the Society operates and conducts day-to-day tasks. When complete, there will be over 40 detailed procedures, of which approximately 30% were completed in the year to March 2020.

Organising the AGM element of our Members' Day, including the formal election of EC/transitional Board members, and assisting the Events Manager at the Bosworth Festival weekend also contributed to a busy year.

2019/20 has been another year of profound change, but we are confident that the Secretariat can continue to develop an enhanced level of service to support the Society as it faces an exciting future.

Membership

Although the Society's subscription year runs from 2 October, the financial year runs from 1 April and the following information reflects the membership figures as at 31 March 2020. The bracketed figures are those for the previous year.

Membership fell during the reporting year. The number of fully paid-up memberships at the end of March 2020 was 2,709 (2,904). This is the first significant year-on-year fall for some time. To calculate the Society's total individual membership is more complex. The family membership categories assume a minimum of two individuals per household. However, since about 2005 our database has captured names of family members where provided on the application form. In order to calculate as accurately as possible the overall number of Society members, we assume an average of 2.3 members per household for general family memberships and 2 members per household in the senior family membership categories. With this calculation in mind the total number of members at March 2020, including the US branch, can be estimated at 3,425 (3,671).

The membership database records the breakdown of fully paid memberships (family memberships counting as one unit) by country. In addition to a UK membership of 2,366, overseas memberships were as follows: Australia 116; Austria 5; Belgium 3; Canada 67; China 2; Denmark 4; Finland 3; France 11; Germany 20; Gibraltar 1; Hong Kong 1; Ireland 6; Italy 5; Japan 2; Kenya 1; Luxembourg 1; Malta 1; Netherlands 13; New Zealand 26; Norway 1; Philippines 2; Poland 1;

THE ROBERT HAMBLIN AWARD FOR SERVICE TO THE SOCIETY

This award was established in 2002 to recognise members who have given significant service to the Society; it is named in honour of the late Robert Hamblin, who was Chairman of the Society from 1989 to 2002. In 2019 the award was made to Wendy and David Johnson of the Scottish Branch, in recognition of their contributions to research on Richard III and their efforts as founding members of the Looking for Richard Project.



Wendy and David receive their award from the Chairman at the 2019 AGM

Portugal 1; South Africa 2; Spain 3; Sweden 1; Switzerland 3; USA 41; plus 343 members of the US branch.

During the year there were 187 (268) new memberships. In the same period we lost a total of 571 members. Reasons, where provided, were as follows: lapsed 414; resigned no reason 88; age & infirmity 7; deceased 35; financial 9; gone abroad 1; interests changed 6; rationalising societies 1; other 10.

Towards the end of the reporting year and onwards into the current period, the process has been under way to re-register our members as members of the Richard III Society Ltd. This will be reported in detail in next year's Members' Report but it may be worth noting here that the new arrangements require all members within a family membership to be listed individually. This will mean that calculation of membership numbers will be much more accurate in future.

For all of the reporting year the management of the Society's membership function has been successfully outsourced to E-Mediacy Ltd, with Sue Wells acting as Membership Liaison Officer. We would like to place on record our thanks to E-Mediacy for the efficient manner in which they have managed this process during the year.

Branches and groups

Several branches held study days during the year, starting with the Norfolk Branch, who held their 'Red Roses and Red Carnations' in association with the Battlefields Trust on 18 May 2019. A difficult choice had to be made in June, as both the Gloucester and the Somerset Branches held study days on 1 June. The Gloucester Branch presented 'Medieval War and Warfare', while the Somerset branch in partnership with Strode College and the Battlefields Trust held their 'Wars of the Roses' joint conference. A week later on 8 June the Leicestershire Branch held a study day – 'Wives, Mothers, Saints and Sinners'. June was a busy month indeed for branches. On 9 November the Norfolk Branch held another study day, entitled 'Richard III – who was he?'

On 30 December the Yorkshire Branch commemorated the Battle of Wakefield. White roses were placed at the Duke of York's statue in Manygates Lane. Afterwards more white roses were laid on the altar in the chantry chapel on Wakefield Bridge.

Four branches and groups celebrated significant anniversaries in 2020. North Mercia Branch reached their tenth anniversary, Surrey Group achieved 20 years, Norfolk Branch a splendid 40 years and the Yorkshire Branch a magnificent 60 years.

The fifth anniversary of the reinterment was planned in March of 2020 with H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester due to be present for the service at Leicester Cathedral. Members from across the globe were to attend and travel arrangements had been made. Events were planned for the whole weekend, but sadly, just before any of this could happen everything was cancelled due to the Covid-19 situation.

The Society has branches and groups spread throughout the UK and overseas. America, Canada, New Zealand and the Continent have a branch each, while Australia has four. The remainder of the branches are in the UK. The groups, except for the one in the Republic of Ireland, are all in the UK. During the reporting year the new Arun group became established, but very sadly, the Greater Manchester Branch, which began in 1975, had to disband.

Belonging to a branch or group allows members to attend talks, events and outings with other Ricardians, all of which creates the chance to learn, meet others with similar interests and make new friends. Many branches and groups have their own website, produce newsletters and some hold study days. The Branches and Groups Co-ordinator (BGC) produces *The Ricardian Recorder*, issued four times per year, which provides a forum for branches and groups to advertise their forthcoming meetings. It is also an opportunity to let others know about interesting speakers, or worthwhile places to visit. The BGC would like to



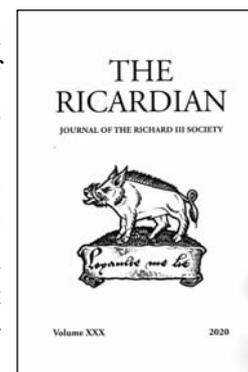
Study days and conferences are a significant part of many branches' activities. Above: Gloucester Branch's Study Day on War and Welfare in Late Medieval England. Below: the joint conference of Somerset Branch and the Battlefields Trust on the Wars of the Roses. Both events took place on 1 June 2019.

thank all the members who have sent in articles, suggestions and ideas for the *Recorder*. They are all gratefully received and help to make your newsletter more interesting.

Regular publications

The Ricardian

This has developed into a widely respected scholarly journal of late fifteenth-century studies since it began in 1961. It continues to flourish under Anne Sutton's editorship and enjoys a good assortment of contributions from members and academics. This year's edition has reviews of several notable collections of essays which include items by members: the collection in honour of Clive Burgess and that on medieval Londoners in honour of Caroline Barron.

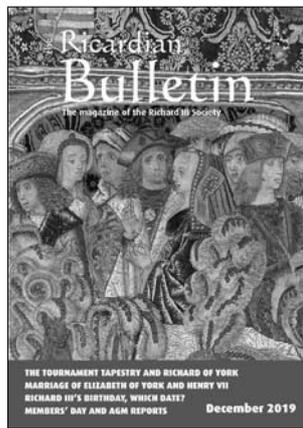


The 2020 edition is larger than any previous volume (265 pages) and is notable for a series of articles on Yorkist women: Cecily, Duchess of York and her Lincolnshire estates; Cecily Bonville, whose life was a complex mesh of ties to the Nevilles, Lord Hastings, the Stonors and the Woodvilles via her husband the Marquess of Dorset; and Princess Bridget, daughter of Edward IV, whose date of death is revised. Notes on Anne, queen of Richard III, emphasises her 37 first cousins and the social life of her household, but also covers her life in France while her father engineered her first marriage to Edward of Lancaster, and the life of her mother Anne, Countess of Warwick, including her last residence. Sir Nicholas Bowet, sheriff and justice of the peace and owner of a book of legal precedents, makes a considerable addition to the history of late medieval Lincolnshire, along with a new analysis of the battle of Losecoat Field, and a study of the postmortem depositions of Sir Thomas Burgh. This issue was fortunate in securing some of the contributions given at the 2019 Lincoln Record Society's Wars of the Roses Conference. The concluding essay provides the evidence for the armed contingent indented to support Richard III at Bosworth. There are eight illustrations.

Twenty-five books were reviewed; 15 books and articles had their contents summarised for the benefit of members. Livia Visser-Fuchs is thanked again for assisting with the index.

The Ricardian Bulletin

The Society's members' magazine was first published in 1974; it underwent a major change in style and format in 2003 with further significant design changes in December 2013, including the introduction of full colour throughout. In 2019 environmentally friendly wrapping was introduced for the posting of the magazine.



During the reporting year the *Bulletin* Editorial team continued to work hard to produce four issues of the magazine. Also during the year the chair of the *Bulletin* Committee announced his intention to step down from overall responsibility for editing the magazine. The search for a new Editor has begun and is ongoing.

The *Bulletin* contains a mixture of Society and Ricardian-related news, reviews and correspondence, together with articles and features covering a range of fifteenth-century topics. There is always at least one article with a specific focus on Richard III. During the year articles were published covering topics that included Richard III's Parliament and its laws, Francis Lovell, Philippe de Commynes and the pre-contract,

and Henry VII's marriage to Elizabeth of York. the first of a number of articles based on research initiated by The Missing Princes Project was also published during the reporting year.

The December 2019 issue carried a special centenary tribute to Isolde Wigram, who played a key role in the refounding of the Society during the 1950s.

Online communication

Society website

The website is a gateway for members and visitors to the Society's work and achievements. It provides information on Richard III, his family, places associated with him and the Wars of the Roses in general, plus related sites that focus on the king and his period. It also provides up-to-date news and information about the Society and its structure, activities, services and history. The volume of people accessing the site continues to be high, and feedback from both members and the public remains positive.

Throughout the reporting year work has continued on maintaining and regularly updating the website, which is a key remit of the Website Communications Committee. To this end a major review and overhaul of the website is currently under way, including its historical content.

Facebook

The Society's Facebook page, now in its tenth year, has over 22,000 followers, with the vast majority affirming they like the site and its postings. The page is updated on an almost daily basis with news about the Society and matters relating to Richard III, and there is also a regular medieval diary, highlighting significant events and dates from the period. Posts regularly reach an

The new Ricardian Resources website (www.ricardianresources.online) was launched with a complete digitised version of the four volumes of Harleian MS 433. This and other research materials created by the Society are available to download free of charge from the site for private study.

Introduction:

The Society's edition of Harleian MS 433 was first published in print in four volumes over the years 1979 to 1983. Harleian MS 433 may be said to be one of the most important manuscript sources for the history of the late fifteenth century and for Richard III in particular.

It demonstrates how Yorkist government depended on the personal activity of the king and how he exercised his royal patronage. Most of the book consists of grants which were made under the signet, also letters and matters relating to the royal revenues which also passed through the signet office. The signet seal enabled the king to exercise his authority directly, since it was held by his secretary and thus under his immediate control, as opposed to the Privy Seal, held by its Keeper, and the Great Seal, kept by the Lord Chancellor.

There is much of interest in these volumes not found elsewhere, for example the only record of the last summer in the life of Richard's son, or the letter to his mother asking her to favour one of his servants. There are several lists, for example a list of office holders at the death of Edward IV, a list of fees paid to officers on the royal estates and a list of legal terms used in grants and letters. These lists can be described as reference material for the officers in the signet office or indeed for the king. Volume 4 is a very full index to the names of the people and places mentioned in the manuscript and of the topics covered.

Presentation:

- For each of Volumes 1-3, the body of the book, numbered in Arabic figures from p. 1 onwards, is presented in a separate PDF file, and the PDF page numbers are identical to the book's page numbers: this makes it easier to look up pages when using the Index volume, Volume 4.
- The introductory pages of Volumes 1-3, numbered in roman numerals, are presented in separate PDF files.
- Click the images shown to download the associated PDF. Some of the PDFs are large, so may

audience of several thousand, allowing the Society to communicate quickly and effectively with a large and growing audience throughout the world. The page, along with the Society's other social media accounts, proved invaluable last year during the Society's campaign against the proposed building on Bosworth Battlefield, enabling information to be shared quickly with a large number of members and supporters.

Twitter

Since its launch at our 2016 AGM, the Society's Twitter account has gone from strength to strength. We have over 2,400 followers and have posted over 4,400 tweets. Twitter's immediate impact allows for faster-moving and more informal discussions with members and non-members alike. The growing profile of our Twitter account allows us to promote the Society to an expanding worldwide audience, accessing demographics that might not otherwise be open to us.

RIII Mailings

Since its inception in December 2012, RIII Mailings has been providing signed-up members with e-mail alerts about newsworthy events and important items of relevance to Richard III and the Society. RIII Mailings is an important means of communicating with members between issues of the *Bulletin*. We currently have over 1,800 members signed up to receive the mailings. During the reporting year a total of 26 mailings were sent and there was a 62% opening rate. We continue to receive positive feedback from members enjoying this service. If you have not already signed up and wish to do so, please e-mail: riii_mailings@richardiii.net

Instagram

The Society's Instagram account allows us to use photographs of historic places of interest and of Ricardian events as another way to promote the Society and its work to a larger audience. This has proved very popular and we have over 600 followers.

Promoting the work of the Society

Richard III continues to have a high public profile; consequently we continue to deal with a constant stream of enquiries from members, other entities, the media and the public. This often involves engaging with other organisations and the media to promote our work and to challenge inaccurate depictions of the king that might occur. Some highlights of the year that reflect this interaction include the following:

- We continue to support and have a presence at major historical events such as the Tewkesbury Mediaeval Festival, the battle of Bosworth annual commemorations and Middleham's Richard III Festival.
- Following discussion with Leicester Cathedral

authorities, it was agreed that the Society will have 'a seat at the table' when talks about the content of the Cathedral's Heritage Learning Centre and its programme of lectures, etc., take place. In return, the Society has given a substantial donation towards the building costs.

Research

The Society's primary purpose is to promote research into the life and times of Richard III and we undertake this through these key areas: *The Ricardian*, the *Ricardian Bulletin*, research projects, publications, individual members' research, and conferences and study weekends. We keep members informed about our research initiatives via the Research News and Notes section of the *Bulletin* and the Society's Research Blog. Key projects and activities this year include work on the following:

Milles Project

This is the third Wills project undertaken by the Society. The PCC Register Milles follows on from the PCC Register Logge and contains 660 wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury during the period 1487 to 1491. Of these, 324 are wholly in Latin, 299 in English and 37 partly in English and partly in Latin. Work is now well under way on transcribing, and where necessary, translating the wills. At present there are 20 members actively transcribing the wills. Each will is transcribed twice, and then both transcripts are checked by a third person. So far 329 wills have been transcribed once; of which 305 have been transcribed twice; and 193 have been checked. The project will inevitably take some time to complete; in the meantime articles about the testators are being published in the *Ricardian Bulletin* and participants on the project receive a (roughly) quarterly project newsletter containing information gleaned about testators. In November 2019 we held a third Milles Wills Study Day at the King's Manor, York, which was attended by 25 people and was a very enjoyable and productive event.

Itinerary Project

This project, started by the late Lesley Boatwright, aims to compile an itinerary for Richard III before he became king. Marie Barnfield has been working through checking and significantly updating this information with support from Peter Hammond and Dr Joanna Laynesmith. We have now reached 1477.

Middleham Accounts

Dr Jonathan Mackman has completed his translations of the accounts for 1473/4 and 1465/6. We are in discussion with the Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society regarding publication.

Polydore Vergil

This project to transcribe and translate the section about Richard III from the original manuscript of Polydore Vergil's History was started by the late Dr Lesley Boatwright and has been completed by Dr Stephen O'Connor. It has now been edited and formatted for printing.

Harleian 433

The project (begun by Amanda Geary) to digitise this invaluable resource has now been completed and the text is available online as part of our new Ricardian Resources website: www.ricardianresources.online.

E404s

A project to transcribe the E404s (Exchequer Warrants for Issues) for the reigns of Edward IV and Richard III was begun by Pat and Bob Hairsine in 1980 but was never completed. We have been in discussion with The National Archives to restart this, now with a view to publishing images of the documents online and producing both a calendar to aid research and data for TNA's catalogue. They have suggested a researcher for the project. The Hairsines' article explaining the value of these documents can be found at:

www.thericardian.online/downloads/Ricardian/8-100/03.pdf

Inquisitions Post Mortem

This project was detailed in last year's report. Publication is expected in 2021.

Richard III Society Research Prize

This was launched in 2018 as a prize for the best article on the life and times of Richard III in a peer-reviewed journal the previous year. This year the prize was given to Dr Alexandra Sapoznik for 'Bees in the Medieval Economy: religious observance and the production, trade and consumption of wax in England c.1300–1555' in *The Economic History Review*.

Conferences

The 2020 Conference scheduled to take place in Exeter has been postponed due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

The joint conference with the Mortimer History Society at Ludlow in July 2019 was very well attended and praised. Some of the lectures are available online at www.mortimerhistorysociety.org.uk/index.php/the-mortimers/online-lectures.

Palaeography Course

In 2019 nine people signed up to the course and of these three have already completed it.

Bursaries

The Society has for some time funded two bursaries for postgraduate students studying at UK universities.

These are administered by the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of York and the Institute of Historical Research (IHR) in London. A third bursary is available exclusively to members of the Society. Following discussion with the director of the Centre for Medieval Studies in York, it has been decided to exchange the bursary for a dissertation prize.

In 2018 we launched a new bursary for postgraduate students wishing to attend the annual Fifteenth Century Conference. This conference is organised by medievalists at a different university each year and consciously combines lectures from established academics and students. It is an excellent opportunity for early-career researchers to deliver papers in a supportive environment where a range of experts can provide constructive criticism and suggestions. For 2019 we gave bursaries to three students: Joshua Ravenhill, whose paper on 'How Useful are the Ideas of Integration and Assimilation? Aliens and belonging in fifteenth-century London' built on research previously published by the Society; Alice Raw for a paper on 'Edward IV's Hosts in Bruges'; and Imogene Dudley, whose paper was entitled 'Diplomacy and Dynasty: European marriage alliances during the Wars of the Roses'.

We recently received a generous legacy from Dinah Coyne to be spent on lectures and an art history bursary. Unfortunately the first lecture had to be cancelled due to Covid-19. We have arranged the terms of the art history bursary with the University of St Andrews.

Society Research Blog

This was launched early 2017 by the Research Committee. Its purpose is to help share knowledge of research into the life and times of Richard III, whether carried out by Society members, with Society funding, or completely independently of the Society. Topics posted during the reporting year included the Coventry Guildhall Tapestry, Elizabeth Woodville as plague victim (with 2,683 views this was the most read) and the wills of William Brandon. The blog can be accessed at <https://riiiresearch.blogspot.com>.

Research enquiries

Over the year many research enquiries were received and dealt with (mostly by Marie Barnfield and Joanna Laynesmith with support/suggestions from the rest of the committee as needed). These included specific requests for help and advice from schools, students, family historians, the media and Society members as well as general requests for information from a variety of sources.

Education

The Society's education initiative aims to support the teaching of the life and times of King Richard III in schools and to encourage young people to join the

Society. Once again it has been another busy year, with many queries for information from schools and individuals. Several branches and groups, as well as individual members, have given a membership to a school they know, building on the ongoing support some branches and groups already give to their local schools. We also encourage branches and groups to include activities that will appeal to families and younger adults in their programmes.

The development of the separate but linked 'Wars of the Roses' website to support school students and teachers is anticipated to go live in 2020. The site will be accessible to all age groups, and will include online resources to help teachers in the development of their lessons.

Richard III & Yorkist History Trust

The Trust, founded in 1985 to take over most of the Society's academic publishing activities, has continued to work with authors and editors of initiatives which it has agreed to support. The Trust supported the publication of *The Urban Church: Essays in Honour of Clive Burgess* and Gordon McKelvie's book *Bastard Feudalism, English Society and the law*, published by Boydell and Brewer, which came out in early 2020. There have been no publications by the Trust in the last year; however, the Trust is supporting existing projects which will lead to publication in the future. This includes Richard Arnold's *Customs of London, A Yorkist Merchant's Handbook, The Church Records of St Nicholas Shambles, London* and *The History of Richard III* by Sir George Buck being prepared by Arthur Kincaid and Shaun Tyas. A grant was also given to Dr Virginia Bainbridge to enable her to complete her book *The Prayer and Power: The Birgittine nuns of Syon Abbey c1400–1600*.

The Trust remains most grateful to the Society for its support and the implicit vote of confidence involved.

The Barton Library

During the reporting year 55 new items were added to the collections of books, papers and audiovisual items that are available for members to borrow. Some of the books were donations from generous members.

The total number of items borrowed is a little lower than last year's figure at about 78 items, approximately 13 non-fiction books, 10 novels, 40 papers and 15 audio/visual items.

In addition to advising members on their choice of reading material the Library Team also looked up information, and supplied photocopies and scans.

The catalogue of non-fiction papers has been updated and installed on the Society's website, and the catalogues of books are currently being revised – new lists will be appearing on the website as they are completed. The Audiovisual Library is currently in

abeyance, and a revised version of its catalogue is planned for 2021.

The Library Team raised £427 towards Library funds by selling duplicate library books and donations of books from members - this more than covers the cost of running the library and buying new items for stock.

Ricardian heritage and sites

There are a number of associated organisations that reflect the Society's links during the reporting year with places of Ricardian interest:

Ricardian Churches Restoration Fund

A list of the fund's donations can be found on the Society's website. The current RCRF managers are Elizabeth Nokes and Phil Stone.

Friends of Fotheringhay

Phil Stone is the Fotheringhay co-ordinator. Over the years the Society has given many gifts, both practical and financial, to the church.



Fotheringhay church has been supported by the Society for many years, and is the venue for our traditional December carol service.

Barley Hall

The York Archaeological Trust (YAT), who own the hall, have day-to-day management of the building. Society members Lynda Pidgeon and Carolyn and Peter Hammond are part of an advisory committee to the YAT on the Hall. Individual support for Barley Hall can also be achieved through membership of the Friends of the York Archaeological Trust.

Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre

The Society remains in close contact with the Battlefield Centre via the Events Co-ordinator and local Society members. We ensure that they are supplied with

Society leaflets and are available to answer any queries and we continue to maintain a presence at the annual commemoration weekend.

Leicester Cathedral and the King Richard III Visitor Centre

The Society maintains links with both through the Leicestershire Branch.

Sales

Sales Administration (stockholding and sales) continues to be managed by E-Mediacy Ltd on behalf of the Society, whose interests are overseen via the role of Sales Liaison Officer, which is fulfilled by Sue Wells. Again, we would like to thank E-Mediacy for their efficient service during the year.

Sales continued at a steady rate during the year although overall figures are slightly down on the previous year. Precise details are contained in the accounts as reported by the Treasurer. Significant sales opportunities included the AGM in Edinburgh, where takings were £965 from an attendance of 132 (£1,500 from an attendance of 158 in Leicester in 2018), and Bosworth, £1,785 (£1,843). The Bosworth figure is of course affected by overall attendance at the event, which was significantly lower in 2019.

We continue to work with E-Mediacy to ensure that our members receive value for money in terms of the publications, merchandise, information and services provided for them. During the year, we have continued to stock popular items, both books and merchandise. We have added new titles and ensured available stocks of old favourites where possible. At the request of members, we have also introduced silk scarves specifically designed for the Society and have managed to re-stock the ever popular Pewter Boar and Arms of England badges. We continue to investigate new items for the sales catalogue and, as always, would welcome any suggestions for these from members.

The full catalogue of sales items is distributed annually with the September *Bulletin*. It is available in hard or electronic copy on application to E-Mediacy and the on-line version is updated regularly.

Many new sales items have been introduced over the year, including a key ring and a brooch both featuring the white boar badge



The future

King Richard continues to inspire a high level of interest amongst the general public and the media, and the Society will continue to seek new opportunities to promote its work and to build on established platforms. We will also endeavour to ensure that our finances remain sound and our members receive value for money in terms of the publications, information and services we provide for them. Key objectives for the coming year are:

1. Ongoing initiatives

- To build on Richard III's legacy in places associated with him both in life and death. In particular, to maintain good relations with the Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, Leicester Cathedral and the King Richard III Visitor Centre, Fotheringhay and Barley Hall, York. We will also continue to explore the possibility of a commemoration of King Richard elsewhere in the country.
- To maintain the Society's commitment to evidence-based historical research, to complete existing projects while developing our research programme with initiatives that allow for more participation by members (including continuing our popular annual conference when circumstances permit), and to develop our relationships with a wider research community and general public through bursaries, joint conferences and support of the Richard III & Yorkist History Trust's programme of publications.
- To maintain and develop our education initiatives, including further progress with the dedicated education website, and to work with other like-minded bodies to provide accessible information about King Richard, the fifteenth century and the work of the Society for students and young people.
- Mindful of our pledge at the 2019 AGM to devote greater resources to our online presence, to launch the new Society website and further develop the The Ricardian Online and Ricardian Resources websites.
- To complete the conversion to a Company Limited by Guarantee with Articles of Association, and new Rules of governance.
- To receive and act upon the report commissioned by the EC/Board from the independent assessor

2. Membership

- To carry out a comprehensive survey of members' views and ideas for the Society after the 2020 AGM, which will be a major contributor to the development of the Society's strategy.
- To continue to improve our services to members by maintaining and improving the quality of our websites, social media presence and the *Ricardian Bulletin*, and sourcing new sales merchandise and discount options for members.

3. Governance

- To develop a comprehensive, multi-year plan that will allow us to focus our efforts and to measure our achievements. This will inform our work on the website redesign and the new education website, our social media presence, and our approach to media and other opportunities to make the case for a reassessment of King Richard's life and reputation.
- To complete the documentation of the Society's operating procedures for consistency and best practices, and to ensure orderly handover of duties.
- To continue efforts to improve transparency in the Society's governance and encourage more members to participate.

4. Key future events

- The 2020 Annual Conference will eventually be held in Exeter, with a theme of 'The South West During the Wars of the Roses'.
- The next two AGMs will be held as follows: 2020 in London and 2021 in York. This is a reversal of the usual order, brought about by the pandemic.
- 2024 will be the Society's centenary year. Members can look forward to a range of appropriate events and initiatives to mark this milestone in the history of the Richard III Society.

Commemoration

Commemoration of King Richard is an important and visible activity carried out by the Society and by individual branches and groups. In 2019 Society members twice laid wreaths at Richard's tomb in Leicester Cathedral, on the anniversary of his coronation on 6 July and to mark the king's birthday on 2 October, and in August, thanks to the initiative of EC member Amanda Geary the first of the Society plaques was unveiled by the Chairman at Bestwood Lodge in Nottinghamshire to mark the site of the Royal Hunting Lodge of Beskwood. It was while staying there in August 1485 that Richard III learned of Henry Tudor's invasion.



Above: Sue Wells, Phil Stone with Amanda Geary at the unveiling of the Bestwood plaque.

Below, left: Richard Smith, chairman of the Leicestershire Branch, leads the laying of roses at the Bosworth sundial.

Below, right: Society member Dan Rendell lays the birthday wreath at the King's tomb in October.



The 2019 AGM

The 2019 AGM and Members' Day in Edinburgh was the first ever to be held in Scotland – as the Chairman remarked, probably the greatest gathering of Ricardians in the Scottish capital since 1482. The choice of venue was particularly appropriate, as 2019 marked the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Scottish Branch and the 10th anniversary of the beginning of the Looking for Richard Project at the Cramond Inn.

Key motions passed at the AGM included the unanimous approval of the transition of the Society to a Company Limited by Guarantee, the pledge to introduce a new survey of member's views when shaping the Society's five-year plan and the agreement to establish a significant capital budget for website and online developments.



The National Museum of Scotland provided not only an excellent conference centre but also the opportunity to browse one of the UK's finest museums.



FINANCE REPORT ON THE 2019/20 ACCOUNTS

I am pleased to be able to present the Society's accounts for the first year of my stewardship. Possibly members will think I have not started off very well, as the accounts show a considerable deficit for the 2019/20 year compared with the previous year when there was a small surplus. The Society remains wealthy, in the sense that we have considerable funds on hand, and our increased spending does reflect comments from members together with planned projects. There is no proposal to increase subscription rates at present.

We have seen a further small reduction in income from members' subscriptions, but the main causes of the deficit are increased spending on (in round numbers):

- Awards and grants of £15,000 (of which £10,000 is funded by the legacies funds)
- Running the Society (Executive Committee and Constitution Working Party) of £6,000, essentially the cost of the membership-wide ballot
- AGM of £6,000 due to Edinburgh location
- Library move costing £2,000
- Website £3,000
- Marketing and promotional £4,000

It has been some years since there was a valuation of the contents of the Barton Library and I am very grateful to Carolyn Hammond and her colleagues, who have carried out a full and careful exercise this year (see note 4). Similarly, we have critically reviewed our stock of books and other merchandise and our fixed assets. These have resulted in write-downs of stock and fixed assets (see notes 2 and 3).

Income from members' visits has continued to fall; the Executive Committee has decided to create a small reserve to cover deficits for the next year or two whilst we work out future strategy in this area.

Next year's accounts will look somewhat different, as both the unincorporated Society and new limited company will be in action. A formal set of accounts has been drawn up for the company for filing purposes but as it was dormant from incorporation to 31 March 2020 there are no transactions to report.

I am conscious that members may have questions on the accounts which they would have posed at the AGM. As we will probably not have a normal AGM this year, members can email me at treasurer@richardiii.net with such questions.

John Whiting, Treasurer

Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts of the Richard III Society

Responsibility of the Examiner

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions for Independent Examinations and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of my report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given for such examinations. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the organisation and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts, and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Statement by the Independent Examiner

In connection with my examination no matter has come to my attention:

- I. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements have not been met – that is, to keep accurate and comprehensive accounting records and to prepare accounts in accordance with those records – or
- II. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

William Featherstone, FRSA, ACIB

The accounts follow on pp 13–15

RICHARD III SOCIETY
Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2020
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	Notes	Year to 31 March 2020			Year to 31 March 2019		
		£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOME							
Income from members							
Subscriptions	1			82,769			85,711
Donations				2,795			2,962
Events for members							
Income	8			21,597			20,888
less: related costs				(22,003)			(18,188)
(Deficit)/surplus for the year				(406)			2,700
Members' sales							
Sales				7,274			8,298
Opening stock				6,790			7,060
Purchases				6,515			6,909
				13,305			13,969
less closing stock	3			(4,854)			(6,791)
				8,451			7,178
Sales admin costs				1,744			3,400
Cost of sales				(10,195)			(10,578)
Deficit on sales				(3,021)			(2,280)
Bank interest				357			383
Other income				–			200
Total income				£82,494			£89,676
EXPENDITURE							
<i>The Ricardian and Ricardian Bulletin</i>							
Design and print				23,476			26,474
Distribution costs				26,425			20,515
less advertising income				(436)			(261)
				49,465			46,728
General expenditure							
Membership				6,645			6,051
Awards and grants	8			24,563			9,408
Executive committee				4,565			6,911
Constitution working party and CLG conversion				8,598			1,455
AGM				11,140			4,542
Website and email system				6,228			3,095
Library				2,938			316
Financial and insurance				1,375			1,497
Marketing and promotional items				4,308			437
Other expenditure, including secretarial admin				1,993			421
John Ashdown–Hill memorial service				–			2,338
Total expenditure				£121,818			£83,199
Changes to reserves							
Grant funded from Legacies reserve	8			10,000			–
Plaques funded by Monument fund balance	8			793			–
Transfer to Ricardian Churches Restoration Fund	8			–			(3,000)
Transfer to events fund	8			(3,000)			–
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year				(£31,531)			£3,477

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2020

	Notes	Current year		Prior year	
		£	£	£	£
Assets					
Fixed assets	2		4,550		2,043
Stock	3		4,854		6,790
Library	4		14,690		15,758
Debtors & prepayments	5	13,797		25,638	
<i>less</i> Creditors and accruals	6	<u>(18,899)</u>		<u>(18,894)</u>	
			(5,102)		6,744
Bank balances	7		266,124		292,480
			<u>£285,116</u>		<u>£323,815</u>
Represented by					
Members' fund	8		189,266		220,797
Legacies fund	8		83,794		93,644
Other funds	8		12,056		9,374
			<u>£285,116</u>		<u>£323,815</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. Accounting policies

The Society's accounting is cash-based, with year-end adjustments for accruals and prepayments, debtors and creditors. Income received via PayPal and in foreign currency is stated net of any charges.

2. Fixed Assets

The Society's fixed assets include banners and stands for use at members' days. These have been critically assessed at the year end and written down to a value of £1,000. The Society owns the replica head of Richard III, currently on display at the Richard III Visitor Centre; the cost of this was written off in previous years. The Society also owns the arms of the Society, granted by the College of Arms which are stated at a value of £3,550 paid during the year.

3. Stock

Stock consists of books and other merchandise held for sale to members and others at Society and Branch events. At the year-end stock items have been valued at the lower of cost and realisable value, resulting in a write down of a number of old items of stock.

4. Library

The Barton Library contains a wealth of volumes and is supplemented by the audiovisual and press records section. As it has been some years since a formal valuation of the library's contents, this year the Librarian and her colleagues have carried out a full valuation exercise of the books held, an exercise for which the Executive Committee wishes to record its appreciation. That process arrived at a value of £13,690, on a conservative basis. Valuing the audiovisual and press records section is more difficult as most items were acquired at little cost but have rarity value. After discussion, the Executive Committee agreed to put a value of £1,000 on this section, leading to a write down of £833 in the carrying value of the library in the accounts.

5. Debtors and prepayments

Prepayments are for the Exeter conference (£11,148 – 2019 £16,120) and for the 2020 AGM in York (£1,755 – 2019 £1,865). The Exeter conference was due to be held in April 2020; it is currently postponed until October 2020 but is under review. As members will be aware, we are unable to hold the 2020 AGM and members' day in York, but we have been able to roll forward our deposits to the equivalent days in 2021.

At the end of 2019, the US Branch subscriptions for 2018/19 were outstanding at £7,653, awaiting confirmation of member numbers. Subscriptions for the 2019/20 year were received during the year.

6. Creditors and accruals

Income received from members for the Exeter conference was £11,929 (2019 £17,264); as stated in Note 5 this is currently scheduled to take place in October. Accrued expenditure at the end of the year was £4,939 (2019 £nil). Amounts due in respect of Paleography courses were £2,031 (2019 £1,552).

7. Bank balances

Balances held at the Society's bankers include a separate savings account holding the Legacies funds.

8. Members' and other funds

The movements on the various funds are as follows:

	Members' fund £	Legacies fund £	Monument fund £
Opening balance	220,797	93,643	792
Interest received	–	151	1
Utilised during the year	–	(10,000)	(793)
Deficit for the year	(31,531)	–	–
Closing balance	<u>£189,266</u>	<u>£83,794</u>	<u>£0</u>

	Armour fund £	Ricardian Churches Restoration Fund £	Visits fund £
Opening balance	5,927	2,655	–
Donation from Norfolk Branch	474	–	–
Established in year	–	–	3,000
Closing balance	<u>£ 6,401</u>	<u>£2,655</u>	<u>£3,000</u>

The payment from the Legacies fund was to Leicester Cathedral, being a donation the Society made to the 'Leicester Cathedral Revealed' project. During the year, the Executive Committee agreed to utilise the small balance long remaining on the Monument fund to cover the cost of memorial plaques. The armour fund is the accumulated monies from members and general fund raising to donate to Dominic Smee's armour; this project remains live but has been unable to progress this year due to a lack of an armourer. This fund has been augmented by a generous donation by the Norfolk Branch.

The Visits fund has been established this year to provide a reserve to cover modest losses on members' visits (currently Fotheringhay and Bosworth) organised by the Society. The plan is to review the place of these and similar visits in the Society's activities and encourage take up over the coming two years. Regarding the Bosworth visit, the Society is grateful to the Canadian and New South Wales Branches, who continue to jointly fund the memorial wreath that is laid.



The Richard III Society was founded 96 years ago and we have achieved much over these years, not least our significant contribution to fifteenth-century research and scholarship. We will continue the work to secure a fair reappraisal of King Richard and his achievements.