

ST MARTIN-CUM-GREGORY, YORK

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IN THE *Ricardian* of March 1971 Elizabeth Nokes drew our attention to a piece of mediaeval stained glass bearing a white boar, which is in the church of St Martin-cum-Gregory, Micklegate, York.¹ Modern authorities were cited to support the view that this was indeed Richard of Gloucester's white boar, but evidence linking Richard with the church had not, it appears, then been found. Judicious browsing among the volumes of the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* has now provided this evidence.

French, in *The Advowson of St Martin's Church in Micklegate, York*² traces the history of the advowson (right of presentation to the living) from Dame Hilary Trussebut in 1230 to the Priory of Warter (East Riding) in the fourteenth century and the family of Scrope of Masham in the fifteenth century and later. Thomas, fifth Baron Scrope, died in 1475 leaving as his heir his son Thomas, who was then under age. About the time of his father's death Thomas, sixth Baron, had married Elizabeth, the daughter of John Neville, Marquess Montagu, thus becoming Richard of Gloucester's cousin by marriage. The living of St Martin had fallen vacant in the same year. It was not until December 1476 that Elizabeth, widow of the fifth Baron, was granted custody, during her son's minority, of his "lordships, manors, lands, . . . and advowsons." Meanwhile there was no one with authority to present to the living—an undesirable state of affairs for the parish. Thomas and his wife were both minors (Thomas was about sixteen), as was his wife's brother George, the Marquess Montagu's son and the then Duke of Bedford. Richard of Gloucester at 23 was the "eldest of the family"³ and "may well have



The boar glass in St Martin-cum-Gregory (this drawing is also used as the emblem of the London Branch of the Society)

regarded himself as his young cousin's guardian." This supposition is strengthened by his actual appointment in 1480 as guardian of George Neville.⁴ Whether Richard was, in 1476, the legal guardian of Elizabeth Neville and her

husband Thomas, Lord Scrope, is not known, but "the enormous power which Richard held would have tended to discourage any argument." Accordingly, in May 1476 Richard presented his own candidate to the living of St Martin, the entry in the Archbishop's register calling him patron of the said church "*vigore et pretextu minoritatis Thome . . .*" French translates this as "by his powerfulness and on the pretext of Thomas' minority," adding the comment that this was "strange language to justify a simple presentation." The word *praetextus* has several meanings, however, and "pretext" is only one of them. "*Pretextu minoritatis Thome*" can also mean "*as a consequence of Thomas' minority,*" and this seems a more likely reading.

Richard's choice for the living was Thomas Beeston or Beston, who was a man of some stature, being a graduate of Oxford and Junior Proctor there in 1470-71. He was the only M.A. to be rector of St Martin's before the seventeenth century. It is not known how long Thomas Beeston was rector, only that some time before 1505 he died and was succeeded by Christopher Werdman.

When the living next became vacant, on Christopher Werdman's demise in 1505, the advowson had reverted to the Scrope family, and Henry the younger brother of Thomas, Lord Scrope (who had died without male issue in 1493), presented John Harte. It was not until 1520 that another rector was required, and before then Henry and his brothers Ralph and Geoffrey, who had succeeded him in turn, had all died without issue leaving their three sisters Margaret, Alice and Elizabeth to divide the Scrope estates and possessions among them. Probably only Margaret was alive in 1520, as the list of patrons at that time mentions her by name, but only the widower (or son)⁵ and the sons-in-law and daughters of her two sisters.

The glass containing the white boar is accompanied by a piece "of similar style and colouring"⁶ on which appear three white daisies on a tuft. It is true that these form one of the badges of Margaret Beaufort⁷ but they could equally well have been used by any woman called Margaret. The dating of the glass is imprecise—the two quarries "could be fifteenth or early sixteenth century"⁶—but it is at least possible that these two pieces were inserted in allusion to two patrons of the living, Richard of Gloucester in 1476 and Margaret Danby (née Scrope) in 1520.

NOTES

1. E. M. Nokes, *Richard's Boar in York*, in *Ricardian*, No. 32, p. 3 (March, 1971).
2. T. W. French, *Yorks. Arch. Jour.*, Vol. 40, pp. 496-505 (1959-62) from which all quotations are taken unless otherwise stated.
3. *Op. cit.*, p. 503. Mr French ascribes this to Richard's being "the second husband of Anne, Richard the Kingmaker's daughter" (*loc. cit.*), but Richard was also, of course, both Warwick the Kingmaker's and Marquess Montagu's first cousin, their father and his mother being brother and sister. Hence he was first cousin once removed of both Warwick's daughter Anne (whom he married) and Montagu's son and daughter.
4. He was granted the custody and marriage of George Neville (*Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1476-85*, p. 192).
5. Alice married Sir James Strangways or Strangeways, "whose name appears second in the entry" (p. 504). But the second name actually reads "*domine Thome Strangways de Whorleton militis*." (*ibid.*, note 1).
6. Nokes, *op. cit.* See also J. A. Knowles, *The York School of Glass Painting*, pp. 185-87; and George Benson, *Ancient Glass in York Minster and Churches*, p. 176.