

Bolingbroke contrived an argument that his mother's great-grandfather was in fact Edward I's older brother in order to prove a superior dynastical right to that of Richard II.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Ricardian*, Vol. 4, No. 63 (1978), p.36.
2. *The Complete Peerage*, Vol. 12 (1959), p.912.
3. *ibid.*, Vol. 9 (1936), p.611, footnote h; *ibid.*, Vol. IX, p.912.
4. Mary O'Regan, The Pre-contract and its Effect on the Succession in 1483, *Ricardian*, Vol. 4, No. 54 (1976), pp.5-6; Anne Sutton, Richard III's 'tytyle & right': A new discovery, *Ricardian*, Vol. 4, No. 57 (1977), p.5.
5. *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, Vol. 6, 1472-1504, p.241.
6. *op. cit.*, p.5, though consider too Anne Sutton's comments *op. cit.*, p.5.
7. *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, Vol. 6, 1427-1516, HMSO (1927), pp.242, 250; *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1476-1485*, HMSO (1901), pp.15, 75, 153, 210.
8. *Cal. Ch. Rolls*, p.258.
9. *Complete Peerage*, Vol. XII, p.911, fn. d.
10. *Cal. Ch. Rolls*, p.258.
11. *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p.358.
12. *ibid.*, 403.
13. For a typical administrative reference to the princes after the bastardisation, see *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1476-1485*, HMSO (1954), p.396.
14. As discussed by Anne Sutton *op. cit.* p.5 and note 11.

Research Notes and Queries

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WHITE SURREY

The story that Richard III rode to battle in August 1485 on a white horse, named White Surrey, has become firmly fixed in the minds of many people as absolute fact. It has been used by many popular authors, such as Elizabeth Jenkins (*The Princes in the Tower*, London, 1978, p.213), who cites for her authorities Shakespeare and P. M. Kendall. The latter has been responsible for a renewal of the legend, since he cites the British Library Harleian Manuscript 433 as evidence that Richard had a horse of that name (*Harl. MS. 433*, f.4, see P. M. Kendall, *Richard III*, London, 1955, p.492, note 1). This is not in fact so. There is indeed a list of the King's horses, 'at grass' in various places, on folio 4, but none are called by any name remotely similar to White Surrey. None of the original sources for the period gives this name, the earliest history to mention Richard's horse is that of Edward Hall, who says that he was 'mounted on a great white courser' (*Union of the Two Noble Families of Lancaster and York*, London, 1550, Richard III, f.28b). This may, or more probably, may not, embody a genuine tradition. The

contemporary, or near contemporary, accounts of Vergil and the Croyland Chronicler do not mention Richard's horse. Thus Shakespeare's reference to White Surrey rests on no foundation, a picturesque but unsubstantiated fable.

THE WILL OF HENRY VI

The only extant will of Henry was made in 1447, when he was 26, 24 years before he died. It was made largely to promote the building and maintenance of the royal Collegiate foundation at Eton. This foundation was so dear to the King's heart that his will contains some expressions much more forcible than any one might expect from him, in an effort to get his wishes carried out. He invokes all the maledictions in the curse from Deuteronomy (Chapter 28, verses 15 *et seq.*, slightly abbreviated), 'I exhort them to remember the terrible comminations and full fearful imprecations of holy scripture against the breakers of the law of God and the letters of good and holy works. *Quod si audire nolueris venient super te omnes maledictiones istae et apprehendent te. Maledictus eris in civitate, maledictus in agro, maledictum horreum tuum, et maledictae reliquiae tuae . . .*' (See J. Nicholls, *A Collection of the Wills of the Kings and Queens of England*, London, 1780, p.317). Despite this curse the will was not carried out in full. Edward IV appropriated much of the property of the College, although he later partly restored it (C. D. Ross, *Edward IV*, London, 1974, p.269). Richard III however apparently took no action either way. It has been suggested that evidence that he did not carry out the requirements of the will lies in the fulfilment of two of the curses from Deuteronomy by his death and subsequent fate, i.e. 'And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb and a byword among all nations' and also 'And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away' (verses 37 and 26). This should much more reasonably be applied to Edward IV, whatever happened to Richard can hardly be blamed on the curses of Henry VI.

I thank Isolde Wigram for drawing my attention to the suggestion of the applicability of the two verses from Deuteronomy to Richard III.

THE DEFORMITY OF RICHARD III

Dr Bernard Juby has taken issue with Dr Gordon Dale over the suggestion that Richard may have suffered from coeliac disease (*Ricardian*, Vol. 4, No. 62, 1978, p.35). He points out that because of the coeliacs' problem in absorbing food they develop rickets, the commonest leg deformity being knock-knees. This is not perhaps consistent with being a soldier, nor is another common effect, that of being anaemic and hence tiring easily. Neither does Richard seem to have shown any of the prominent scorbutic symptoms (e.g. skin reactions or thinning greying hair) developed by coeliacs. Dr Juby also says that they usually make normal progress for the first six months of life, this is contrary to the picture of Richard in Shakespeare, an author on whom Dr Dale relies, and also (possibly) contrary to the historical evidence (*Ricardian*, Vol. 4, No. 61, 1978, p.21). Dr Juby also believes that Dr Dale places too much weight on Shakespeare's use of the word 'foul'. He points out that it has been used up to modern times to denote a moral or spiritual pollution as well as a physical one. The former use could equally well have been what Shakespeare had in mind.

Dr Juby has in addition pointed out that kyphoscoliosis, mentioned last June in the article on possible deformities of Richard III (*Ricardian*, Vol. 4, No. 61, 1978, p.22) and there described as a backward and sideways curvature of the spine, is in fact a forward and sideways curvature.

Book Review

ORDERING CHAOS—NEW SOURCES OF INFORMATION FROM THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, Patricia Barnes, Ed., 'The chancery corpus cum causa file, 10–11 Edward IV' in R. F. Hunnisett and J. B. Post, gen. Eds., *Medieval Legal Records*, London, 1978, pp. 430–76.

Pessimism has a respected place in medieval history, particularly when applied to the availability of manuscript material and the conclusions that can safely be drawn from its examination. K. B. McFarlane warned that the missing private papers and records of finance and retainership for noble families, for the most part 'are now past praying for',¹ and without them little more than a superficial study of the period can be expected. The evidence that does remain, namely the title deeds, private cartularies, estate accounts, and correspondence, is scattered in public and private archives, fragmentary, often illegible from neglect, and dangerous to interpret without accompanying material.² Generalisations about an entire society often have to be made from the few family archives that have survived, such as those of John of Gaunt, Sir John Fastolf, and the early fifteenth-century Beauchamps of Warwick.

It is only with care and intelligence that the papers of one family can be interpreted to illuminate the times in which they lived. A recent case in point is that of the Earls of Stafford, Dukes of Buckingham, documented by Carole Rawcliffe.³ Undaunted by the loss of valuable records in the retaliatory conflagrations of Richard III's supporters, Dr Rawcliffe located remaining material now widely dispersed in private collections and the more accessible county record offices, as well as the PRO.⁴

It is in this last named archive that there lies the hope of future historical research. Hope may perhaps be abandoned for the discovery of hitherto-unknown documents able to answer key questions about past puzzles, but records that shed light on what we already know, and deepen our knowledge of the processes of administration, are extant and awaiting perusal.

A major deterrent to this examination has been the inability of the Public Record Office to sort its collections. While its four main classes of chancery rolls (the Charter, Close, Patent, and Fine rolls) are almost completely in print for the middle ages, the PRO's files for the period were split between the Rolls Chapel and the Tower of London. No attempt at identification had been made until Dr Barnes and her colleagues began a sorting process, making more accessible the corpus cum causa file interpreted and calendared in her C. A. F. Meekings *festschrift* article.⁵

The corpus cum causa file is a collection of writs ordering the production in court of defendants committed to prison, along with a record of their case. Dr