

## The Richard III Society seminar at Trinity College, Oxford

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THE long-anticipated Society seminar met at Trinity College, Oxford, over the weekend of April 3–5, 1981. Over one hundred members and interested persons attended the papers and presentations, and their positive response encourages plans to be made for another seminar within the next three years.

Following dinner on the Friday evening and a welcoming address by Chairman Jeremy Potter, members Robert and Patricia Hairsine had arranged a workshop session on medieval paleography. Their introduction to fifteenth-century documents was exceptionally clear and illuminating. The presentation was accompanied by a careful use of slides showing representative writing styles.

On Saturday morning, the first of the day's three papers was presented by Dr. Rosemary Horrox, co-editor of *British Library MS. Harleian 433*. Dr. Horrox discussed the composition of the household of Richard III, beginning with the strategy a researcher must use to derive information about a body of servants for which there are no household accounts to consult. Initiative in entering the household seemed to have come from levels below the King, such as from the individual himself or his friends and family. Nevertheless, Richard III probably had a conscious policy in creating his royal household. At the beginning of his reign Richard realised that the best way to extend a power base into the south was by accepting the previous king's servants. Richard also tapped the household he himself had created as Duke of Gloucester. Later in the reign, the King welcomed a few of the Duke of Buckingham's servants into his own employ, in particular those who were not involved in the Duke's rebellion. However, Richard relied heavily upon northerners, thereby depriving himself of contact with representatives of different areas of his realm. Suspicious of other nobles' servants after Buckingham's revolt, Richard placed northern men in positions of power in the south of England. He probably hoped that initial resistance to this move would be overcome when local men attached themselves to the northerners, using the latter as patrons eventually to enter royal service. Richard's short reign prevented this plan's fulfilment: on a short-term basis, southern hostility to Richard's foreigners unfortunately became the strategy's most important and obvious result.

Dr. Ralph Griffiths of University College, Swansea, concluded the morning session with a paper concerning the sense of dynasty early in Edward IV's reign. Dr. Griffiths noted the success Edward had achieved in reconciling the great families of the realm to the Yorkist rule. The 1476 re-interment of the bodies of the Dukes of York and Rutland at Fotheringhay was a time of celebration as well as sober remembrance. The ceremony was attended even by reconciled

Lancastrians and the representatives of foreign enemies. Those with good claims to the throne, like Henry Holand and the Staffords, had died or married into the Yorkist family. Except for Henry Tudor, all of Edward III's descendants had been married into the Yorkist line, and even Henry was betrothed to Maude Herbert, daughter of a staunch Yorkist supporter. In 1476, Dr. Griffiths concluded, Edward was still able to congratulate himself on the successful foundation of an unopposed dynasty.

Saturday afternoon began with the presentation of Dr. A. J. Pollard on north-south relations in Richard's time. This paper is printed below. Afternoon proceedings were concluded by a masterful tape/slide presentation concerning monasticism in the Middle Ages. Members Gwen and Brian Waters traced the development of monastic life in medieval England, and provided fascinating details of the cloistered experience. Lorraine Attreed, of Harvard University, presented the final paper of the seminar, on medieval attitudes towards children and the effects of their deaths on family structure and national politics. An abbreviated version of the paper can also be found in this issue.

Formal proceedings concluded with a 'Brains Trust' panel discussion, chaired by Research Officer Peter Hammond and including the four speakers and members of the Research Sub-Committee. Questions ranged from specific examinations of the Duke of York's strategy and the benefits of papal dispensations, to more philosophic queries about the difficulties of penetrating the medieval mind. Finally, all participants must thank Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hammond for their excellent planning of the proceedings.