

Richard III Society AGM

This was held on the 29th September in York in the Temple Hall of the College of Ripon and York St John on Lord Mayor's Walk. The Yorkshire Branch arranged their medieval banquet for the evening, so it was a busy day.

I decided to attend my first ever society AGM, attracted by the prospect of meeting friends and seeing some of Richard's favourite places over the weekend. Events started at 11 am on Saturday with registration, and purchase of tickets for tea and the raffle. Stalls were selling items on behalf of the Ricardian Churches Restoration Fund, the Yorkshire Branch, and the Friends of Barley Hall. All the society's items from the mail order catalogue were available, and David Spenceley also had a good range of books to choose from.

Bill immediately pounced on the lap top computer to view the revamped web site, and I admired the huge scrapbook commemorating all the society projects which Carolyn and Peter Hammond have been involved in during their mammoth stint on the committee.

The AGM started at 2 pm in a rather warm room! Elizabeth Nokes announced that the branches/groups meeting will be held in York in 2002; the membership department averages thirty new members a month; the wills index is to be published in 2003 on CD ROM, with a subscription to a printed copy.

Lynda Pidgeon reported that Barley Hall has just enough visitors to keep going. A bench is being built, funded from donations, and they are fund raising to buy a commode for Lady Snawsell.

Allan Barton, who wrote the article on the Malvern glaziers in the last issue, is organising a medieval mass at All Saints on North Street for Nicholas Blackburn, a lord mayor in Ricardian times.

Carolyn and Peter Hammond both retired from the committee after many years' service as librarian and research officer respectively. Their reports were fascinating, and John Saunders also

gave a warm witty tribute to them. At the end they were each presented with a commemorative plate and cheque, and Geoff Wheeler's "This is Your Ricardian Life" scrapbook.

Carolyn has seen the library grow from three shelves of books to thirty-seven. She joined the committee in 1965, and has published several library catalogues, and four editions of "Ricardian Britain". In the thirty-six years she has despatched more than 29,000 parcels!

Peter was elected to the committee in 1970 and thanks to him the society is taken seriously in academic circles. He helped edit and publish the four volumes of *British Library Harleian Manuscript 433*, has written lots of books, is a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, and has helped organise numerous research weekends and the wills project.

Wendy Moorhen takes over as research officer. There will be three librarians: Jane Trump is responsible for non-fiction, Rebekah Beale for the papers and magazines, and Anne Smith continues with the fiction.

The 2003 March issue of "The Ricardian" will be a bumper issue to celebrate the 60th birthday in 2002 of the editor and prolific author, Dr Anne Sutton. There will be four issues of "The Bulletin" as usual that year, but only the one "Ricardian".

Dr Phil Stone has taken over "Ricardian Britain" from Carolyn Hammond and there should be a new edition in 2002.

The requiem mass for Anne Neville on 16th March 2002 will be held at St Etheldreda's due to problems with the Westminster Abbey authorities. March 16th is the actual anniversary of her death.

The annual subscription will increase to £15 from October 2002 for existing members, and immediately for all new members.

Next year Bosworth Sunday is the 18th August, and the AGM will be the 28th September in London.

A lot of us went outside after the AGM to drink our cups of tea and eat the lovely cakes provided, as the torrential rain of the morning had gone to leave a warm sunny afternoon. Next on the agenda was a talk given by Professor Mark Ormrod, head of the Centre for Medieval Studies in York, entitled "Names in the English Royal Family during the later Middle Ages."

It wasn't always the first born male child of the current king who inherited the title, so it's surprising that between 1154 and 1547, the only names to be used for kings were Edward, Henry, John and Richard. Only one John, though there could have been another, and a King Alphonso and King Arthur were also possibilities.

None of the three kings named Richard was born into the position of heir apparent, and all failed to provide firm heirs themselves.

Children were named for the senior godparent, or to please foreign countries (Alphonso), or because of hero worship (Richard II after Richard the Lionheart, Lionel after a cousin of Lancelot, Arthur for King Arthur). Or because names were already popular - William and Henry. Edward and Edmund were named for royal saints. George of Clarence was named for Cecily's side of the family - importance was attached to descent from both the male and female side.

Henry VIII was the first to include VIII in his title. Previously all Henries had been either Henry, by grace of God, king..... or Henry of Navarre or other place of birth.

When Edward II succeeded Edward I, he was called Edward son of Lord Edward in the royal records. Then came a third Edward, and he became known as Edward the third since the conquest - the previous Saxon kings were ignored.