

Cowbridge Record Society

Registered Charity No 1094061

Newsletter No 9

July 2006

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MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Society, starting in April each year, costs £3 pa. Cheques should be made payable to *Cowbridge Record Society* and paid to Keith Jones, Ruthyn Fach, Ruthin, St Mary Hill, Bridgend, CF72 5EB. Membership means two newsletters a year, two meetings a year, and discounts on our publications.

NEW CHAIRMAN

At the AGM we reluctantly accepted the resignation of Richard Press, and were pleased to elect, unanimously, Deborah Fisher as our new chairman.

Deborah, originally from Port Talbot, has lived in Colwinston since 1998. She read French and Latin at St Hilda's College Oxford, in the 1970s and then spent a year at the College of Librarianship Wales. She has worked as a librarian, a computer programmer, systems analyst and as a part-time writer. She has been involved in helping to run the Cowbridge Museum, and is also an amateur archaeologist.

Among the books she has written are 'Who's Who in Welsh History' (1997), 'Princesses of Wales' (2005) and 'Princes of Wales' (forthcoming). Her talk on *Anne Neville, Princess of Wales* was given to the Society at the 2005 AGM, and we are pleased to be able to print it in this newsletter.

RICHARD PRESS

Richard was our first Chairman, and has been a diligent, hard-working and unassuming leader. His meetings have been short and to the point, his sense of humour unflinching. His energy and his common sense will be sorely missed, but we are glad that he and Marion will continue to be members of the Society.

Richard's valedictory talk, given at the last AGM, was on his experiences as a boarder at Cowbridge Grammar School. This was a stimulating and amusing half hour which prompted many questions; I hope to be able to print a version of his talk in a forthcoming newsletter.

AGM

We welcome Roger Bird to membership of the Committee. A founder member of the Society, he has also donated a number of items to the Society's archives.

AMERICANS IN COWBRIDGE : ABOUT 1780

It is always pleasing when one can fit in a couple of pieces of the increasingly complex jigsaw of local history. A recent conversation with Brian James about Old Hall has helped me to do just that – though of course, for Brian it was a portion of the jigsaw that he had completed many years earlier!

In Hopkin-James's *Old Cowbridge*, there is a detailed mention of some of the loyalists who returned to Britain during the War of American Independence. Among these was “an eminent Massachusetts Loyalist in the person of William Browne of Salem, sometime representative in the General Assembly and judge of the Superior Court”. He had been a JP in Salem, and in 1762 was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives; he became Collector of Customs in 1764 and a Colonel in the Massachusetts Militia. He had no sympathy for the Boston Tea Party faction, and left Boston for London and exile in 1776.

This must have been the William Brown who took a lease on Old Hall in 1778, the lease which has given us a really detailed inventory of the layout and the furnishings of Old Hall at the time (hardly the 'small house' mentioned in the Dictionary of National Biography). Browne - and his wife Ruth - stayed in Cowbridge at least two years, and was visited at Old Hall by the also-exiled Governor Hutchinson of Massachusetts. The latter invited Browne's son, also William, to London to be measured for his uniform prior to his joining the 58th Regiment of Foot in 1779. Later that year, or in January 1780, a daughter was born and on January 23 1780, Holy Cross Church saw the baptism of Mary, the daughter of William and Ruth Browne. Browne and his family left Cowbridge in 1781 on his appointment as Governor of Bermuda.

Browne's close friend Richard Saltonstall, descended from Puritan stock, apparently took a room at a Cowbridge inn to enjoy Browne's company; we are unlikely to find out whether it was the Bear or the Mason's Arms, or any other inn, which benefited from this stay. At the same time there resided in Cowbridge Samuel Mather, according to Hopkin-James the chief clerk of Customs at Boston, and the nephew of Governor Hutchinson. So far there does not seem to be any information about where he stayed, but another American, John Murray, is

recorded in both Land Tax and Burgage rent assessments as being the occupier of 85-7 Eastgate. The more you look at this three-storey building, with its sizeable garden, the more impressive it becomes; in the late-eighteenth century it would have been an eminently suitable residence for a prosperous if exiled loyalist family.

I look forward to finding out more about these short-term Cowbridge residents.

JA

BOOK LAUNCH

The Aubreys of Llantrithyd have played a large part in the life of the central vale of Glamorgan, and we in Cowbridge have had strong connections with the family. It was Sir Leoline Jenkins, the 'second founder' of the Grammar School, who was a tutor to the Aubreys during the Civil War, while the first of the Edmondes family to live in Old Hall had been the steward of the Aubreys.

Just before Leoline Jenkins came to Llantrithyd Place, Sir Thomas Aubrey was the head of the household, and Dr Lloyd Bowen of Cardiff University has done some invaluable research into the household in the 1620s and 1630s, which is now to be published by the South Wales Record Society.

We are delighted that *Family and Society in Early Stuart Glamorgan; the household accounts of Sir Thomas Aubrey of Llantrithyd* is to be launched in Cowbridge Lesser Hall on Friday July 28th at 7.30pm, with a talk by Dr Lloyd Bowen. All members of Cowbridge Record Society and/or Cowbridge Local History society are cordially invited to attend. It will be a chance for our members to buy a copy at South Wales Record Society members' rates, ie for £15 instead of £20.

Please respond to the enclosed flyer to the Treasurer, South Wales Record Society, 1 Fields Park Ave., Newport, NP20 5BG (and not to us!)

ANNE NEVILLE, PRINCESS OF WALES

Some of you may be wondering what connection there could be between a medieval queen of England and a town in south Wales. Others of you will be aware of the links between Anne Neville and the churches of Cowbridge. Because this talk was given to a meeting of the Cowbridge *Record* Society, it tries to focus on illustrating how *records* contribute to our understanding of her life and her connection with us. It aims to show that, not only can records tell us a lot about the past, but the *absence* of records can affect our view of past events.

Anne Neville died at the age of 28. In her time, she held the titles of Princess of Wales, Duchess of Gloucester, and Queen of England, in that order. She had an eventful life by most people's standards, yet we know very little about her, as is the case with many of the medieval queens of England. Some would say this is only to be expected, as the queen consorts had no share in governing the kingdom. But we know that some of them had a very strong influence, and this was also the case with Anne.

The only picture of Anne that is anywhere near contemporary is from the Rous Roll, which is a genealogical record of her family. One of the most useful sources of historical knowledge for the past 150 years has been the photograph, but in mid-15th century England, not only did they not have photography, they didn't even have proper portraiture. If you go to the National Portrait Gallery, you'll find that their portraits of monarchs only begin with Edward IV. The painting of him is one of the first that bears any suggestion of being true to life. Women would have to wait a few years longer to be considered important enough for their appearance to be recorded with any care.

Anne was born at Warwick Castle on June 11th, 1456. She was the second child of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, whom we know as "the Kingmaker". Richard came by the title of Earl of Warwick through his wife, Anne Beauchamp, who was the daughter of the previous earl, Richard Beauchamp. That might be regarded as good luck, but it was Richard Neville's *bad* luck that, like his father-in-law, he had no sons to succeed him. He had only two daughters, Isabel and Anne.

Neville was a very wealthy, powerful man. In his own right, he was Earl of Salisbury, and his two earldoms brought him vast estates (including the lordship of Glamorgan). He owned several castles; one of his favourites was Middleham in the north of England, and this was where his children spent a lot of their time. When the two girls were born, King Henry VI was on the throne. Henry was considered a weak king. Although he was king from the age of nine months, the country was run by regents until he came of age. He then married Margaret of Anjou, who would gain the nickname, "The Tigress of France", for her role in the Wars of the Roses. They had only one child - Edward, Prince of Wales, usually known as Edward of Westminster, to differentiate him from all the other Edwards that were around at the time.

One of those other Edwards was Edward, Earl of March, the eldest son of the Duke of York. The Duke of York, who happened to be an uncle of Richard Neville's wife, had a strong claim to the throne, and until the birth of the Prince of Wales, he had hoped to be next in line after Henry VI. By the time Edward of Westminster was born, King Henry was

already in the grip of mental illness, and there were rumours flying around that the child wasn't really his. The Yorkists took up arms against the king, and this was the beginning of the Wars of the Roses. At the Battle of Northampton in 1460, the Yorkists were victorious and they took the king prisoner and forced him to agree to disinherit his own son and make the Duke of York his heir.

Margaret of Anjou, the queen, wasn't having any of this. She raised an army of her own, and defeated York later in the same year. The Duke of York was killed, which made his son, Edward, Earl of March, the Yorkist claimant to the throne. This is really where the kingmaking abilities of the Earl of Warwick (Richard Neville) came into play. He was 32 years old at the time, and he went into exile along with the young Earl of March, who was only 18. The Duke of York had had several sons. One of them was killed along with his father at the Battle of Wakefield, but there were two younger sons, George and Richard. They came under the protection of the Earl of Warwick and went into his household. In the meantime, their elder brother, despite his youth, showed himself to be a military genius, and with Warwick's help he became King Edward IV of England. Henry VI was finally deposed and put into confinement, and Queen Margaret and her son escaped to France.

So at Middleham Castle we have four children growing up: George, Duke of Clarence, aged eleven, his brother Richard, aged eight, and Warwick's two daughters, Isabel Neville, aged nine, and Anne, aged four. What do *you* think happened?

The point about this is that we have no idea what happened during those years. Children's activities were not carefully recorded. There were no school photographs, no concerts to be video-recorded, and most of the time we can't even be sure who was where. We can only surmise that the four children became close friends.

So far, so good for the Earl of Warwick. He was well in with the new young king. It was a few years before King Edward started to want to be free of the Earl's influence. One of the first signs of this was when Edward, knowing that Warwick was negotiating for him to marry a foreign princess, got secretly married to an English widow, Elizabeth Woodville, whose family had been *Lancastrian* supporters in the recent war! Things got worse, as the Woodville family took over prominent positions at court and Warwick was sidelined.

In 1469, the king's brother, George, Duke of Clarence, married Isabel Neville, his childhood companion. Like Warwick, he was growing a little tired of the king and his new in-laws. So he agreed when Warwick suggested that they should all go to France and find Margaret of Anjou. This was the one and only time that Warwick turned coat. He went to Margaret and offered to help her get her husband's throne back. Henry VI was in Yorkist hands, but this didn't really matter, as Margaret's main concern was to get her son's inheritance back. She didn't trust Warwick, and as proof of good faith she insisted that he go back to England and get the throne back *before* she and her son followed. In return, she agreed to his proposal that her son, Edward of Westminster, aged seventeen, should marry Warwick's daughter, Anne, who was now about fourteen.

This is where the lack of records, combined with our lack of understanding of the period, again makes it difficult for us to know what was going on. We are not sure when the marriage took place, but after December 1470 Anne was married to the Prince of Wales,

making her Princess of Wales. Or was she? It's not clear whether the ceremony that took place was a wedding or just a betrothal. Even if the records were more complete, we could not necessarily be sure of the answer, because a promise to marry someone was regarded as legally binding. We don't know whether it was a marriage, or just an arrangement that Margaret of Anjou could get out of later if Warwick didn't come up with the goods. We don't know whether the marriage, if it was one, was ever consummated. And there is no record of Anne being called Princess of Wales, so we don't know whether she used the title. And if she didn't, it wouldn't be so surprising, because the title of Prince of Wales had only been held by four princes before Edward of Westminster - it was still not automatic - and the title of Princess of Wales had only been held by one woman before Anne.

Let's assume Anne *was* Princess of Wales when the news reached France that her father, the Earl of Warwick, had defeated King Edward IV in battle and had restored King Henry VI to the throne. Edward IV had been forced to flee the country, and it was safe for Margaret of Anjou, together with her son and daughter-in-law, to return.

Not everything was going according to plan. Warwick's other son-in-law, George, Duke of Clarence, had deserted him. It had suddenly dawned on Clarence that, if the Lancastrians got back on the throne, he was never actually going to be king himself, whereas if he went back over to his brother's side, he would at least have some standing. Furthermore, Warwick, despite his experience, wasn't a great diplomat. By accepting French help, he had turned the Burgundians against him, and it was to Burgundy, where his sister was duchess, that Edward IV went. Edward IV got back to England before Margaret of Anjou, and when the Lancastrian royal party arrived, they were greeted with the news that the Earl of Warwick, whom they'd been relying on, was dead, and Henry VI was back in prison - where he didn't last long.

Imagine what this must have been like for Anne. But we don't know how she reacted. In fact, we don't know exactly where she was in the period after she returned to England. At the Battle of Tewkesbury, on the 4th of May 1471, Edward of Westminster was killed - the only Prince of Wales ever to be killed in battle. Or was he? Actually, some say that he was killed *after* the battle, when many of his army took refuge inside Tewkesbury Abbey and were slaughtered by the Yorkists. It's said that Anne and her mother-in-law took refuge in a religious house, possibly Malvern Priory, which has a window given by Anne and her second husband, but there is no proof of her having been there, only oral tradition and some generally unreliable written sources. If it's true, it goes some way to explaining her later interest in religious foundations.

And then she disappears altogether. The next time Anne surfaces in the records is in 1472, and by then she has re-married, and her new husband is none other than her childhood companion, Richard, Duke of Gloucester. We know they were married in 1472, but we don't know exactly when their son, Edward - another Edward - was born, although we do know that he was born at Middleham Castle, hence he is referred to as Edward of Middleham.

What was Anne doing in the fourteen months between the end of her first marriage and the beginning of her second one? The story that has grown up may have a grain of truth in it, but is not supported by any official records. Anne was brought to London in the train of her victorious brother-in-law, Edward IV. There's no reason to think she was ill-treated or even

treated as a prisoner. Although she was Warwick's daughter-in-law and the widow of Henry VI's son and heir, she was also a long-standing friend of the family, and her sister was married to the king's brother. It's possible that Anne had never been happy as the wife of the Prince of Wales. Imagine having Margaret of Anjou as a mother-in-law! Even if she had loved her first husband, she was probably relieved at seeing those familiar faces, the family of the Duke of York.

What is said to have happened is that she ran away from her brother-in-law, George, Duke of Clarence. It's known for certain that Clarence and his youngest brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, were not on good terms. They were jockeying for position. Clarence had been disloyal to his brother, but, like the Prodigal Son, he had returned to the fold. It must have seemed hard to Richard, who had stood by Edward through thick and thin, that Clarence should receive a share of the rewards. But there was more to it than that. Because Warwick was dead, his inheritance, and the estates of his wife Anne Beauchamp (who was still alive at this time), passed jointly to his daughters and their husbands. Isabel Neville was married to Clarence and they had children, therefore Clarence stood to gain if anything happened to Isabel's sister, Anne. However, he had everything to lose if Anne decided to marry his brother, Richard, who was already his greatest rival. We don't know whether Richard and Anne had been close when they were younger, but it would seem a reasonable idea for them to marry, and we can understand why Clarence might have kidnapped her, which is another version of the story. Whether he did this or whether she was in hiding from him, she is said to have been discovered working as a kitchen-maid in London, and rescued - by Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

This supposed act of heroism has become part of the great myth surrounding Richard III, about which I would like to say something, but not too much. Richard III was a victim of Tudor propaganda. After Henry VII took the throne, he did his best to make Richard out to be an utter villain. He didn't need to do his own dirty work, because there were many Tudor supporters who were prepared to invent stories about Richard in order to win Henry's favour. Later, they went even further, and altered his portraits to make him look deformed, which in those days would have been considered evidence of an evil character. The one thing Henry did do, which would backfire on the Tudors a long time afterwards, was to destroy a lot of the records relating to Richard's reign.

Because those records no longer exist, there are many things we can't be sure about. We don't really know, for example, if it is true that Richard executed Lord Hastings without trial, as was claimed during the Tudor period. If there had been records of a trial, it might have shown either of two things: (1) that the evidence of treason against Hastings was considerable, or (2) that the evidence against him was non-existent. However, the absence of records does not prove that there was no trial.

Now, in the last fifty years or so, it has become fashionable to take the view that, because the Tudors made up stories about Richard III, he must therefore have been innocent of all the crimes of which he was accused. This is nonsense. One of the things people fail to understand is that the concept of recording history accurately is a relatively modern one. Medieval historians were not concerned with the truth; they just wanted an exciting story. The word "historia", in Latin, means "a story". From the few facts that are available, we know that Richard III had by far the best motive and opportunity for murdering his two

nephews, the Princes in the Tower. It's a matter of historical record that the rumours of his having killed them were circulating as early as January 1484. To me, the most damning evidence against Richard is that, despite knowing about these rumours and publicly denying them, he made no attempt to disprove them by allowing the boys to be seen in public. They were never seen alive after the autumn of 1483.

Another thing that many people don't understand is how a king who is recorded as having been very popular in parts of the country, particularly the north, a man who endowed places of worship and educational establishments, could have done something as repellent as to kill two children who were related to him ~ the sons of a brother to whom he was very close. The people known as Ricardians believe that Richard was a good man, and therefore he could never have done anything bad. But if we look at the evidence for a moment, we see - and again this is a matter of record - that Richard had already had the two princes, his brother's children, declared illegitimate, in order to take the throne from them. Richard foresaw that his nephew, Edward V, would be easily influenced by the Woodville family, and that the Woodvilles would probably resent Richard and try to get rid of him. So he stepped in and made sure of his own safety and that of his family. Reasonable motives. Once the boys were in captivity, he had a problem, because his enemies might have got hold of them and made them into figureheads and started another civil war. So they had to be removed. Of course Richard didn't go into the Tower of London and strangle them with his own hands. But there was no shortage of people who would have been prepared to do it for him, and he probably didn't even need to ask.

We can't say what happened. We assume that Richard's wife, Anne, didn't know much about it. For more than ten years, from the time of their marriage up to the sudden death of King Edward IV in 1483, they had lived quietly, as Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, in the north of England, mainly at Middleham Castle, the very place where they spent their childhood together. They had a son of their own, who had been born there. If Edward IV had lived a little longer, they might well have stayed there.

Edward's death threw the country into turmoil, and it pushed Anne Neville into the limelight. We don't know what kind of person she was, but she didn't leave the stamp of her personality on things, so we make the assumption, perhaps wrongly, that she was quiet, self-effacing, perhaps shy, easily pushed around and taken advantage of. We can assume that she was happy with her husband and that she loved her family. Her sister, Isabel, had died and Isabel's husband, the Duke of Clarence, had been executed for treason. So Anne was responsible for the welfare of her sister's children as well as her own.

Founding churches and colleges was all part of the business of being wealthy and powerful. Anne Neville is supposed to have had the tower of Llanblethian Church built. She is also supposed to have paid for the building of of the Llanquian aisle in Holy Cross Church in Cowbridge, and we know that Richard signed a charter relating to the appointment of a chaplain for Holy Cross. Does this mean that they ever came here? I don't think so. I have not come across any evidence that Anne Neville, either as Princess of Wales or as Queen of England, ever set foot in Wales. If anyone knows of any such evidence, please let me hear about it!

Amongst other things, Anne had inherited from her father the lordship of Glamorgan, but it

was Richard who took the title. Perhaps that's enough to explain why they took an interest in the churches of Glamorgan. They took an interest in many other places. They founded or restored churches at Barnard Castle and Sheriff Hutton in the north of England, and they were generous benefactors of York Minster. They went to Cambridge, where Queens' College, originally founded by Margaret of Anjou, was re-endowed in Anne's name. In return, they could be assured of having prayers said for them in these places. But why did they need prayers? Was Richard a devout man who really cared about the church? Or was he appeasing his conscience? Pardons could be bought and sold in the Middle Ages, and endowing a church would be enough to save your soul even if you *had* murdered your nephews.

However they came by their position as king and queen, they didn't have long to enjoy it. Anne Neville was probably already dying. She is thought to have had tuberculosis. She had only one child, her son Edward, who was invested as Prince of Wales in September 1483. He died only a few months later. The Croyland chronicler says that "you might have seen his father and mother in a state almost bordering on madness by reason of their sudden grief. Reading that is the only time I've ever felt sorry for Richard III.

Edward of Middleham had been the heir to the throne, and he was replaced in that role by another Edward, his first cousin. This boy, Edward, Earl of Warwick, was the son of George of Clarence and Isabel Neville, so he was Anne's nephew as well as Richard's. It's interesting to note that, almost as soon as Anne died, Richard named a new heir, an adult relation, John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln. He had presumably named Edward in order to please Anne, or maybe she had talked him into it; but once the threat of a Tudor invasion became real, he didn't think it would be wise to have a child as his heir.

Anne only survived her son by 11 months, and no doubt his death contributed to her illness. She was young enough to have another child, but the fact that she only had the one suggests that there was some basic weakness in her constitution. It began to be said, quite openly, that Richard was planning to bump her off and was intending to marry his niece, Elizabeth of York, in her place. Here's another example of how records can mislead the modern mind if we don't read them in context. Although the idea of marrying one's niece gives us a feeling of revulsion, it would have been considered fine as long as the Pope was prepared to give a dispensation. We don't know whether he would have, but we know that Richard didn't make a move to marry Elizabeth of York after Anne's death.

Anne's death was expected, but did she die of natural causes, or had Richard been poisoning her over a long period, as the Tudors later claimed? Unlikely, I think. If we compare her with her sister, who was dead at 25, we see that the family constitution wasn't exactly strong. Ill-health was probably the reason she didn't conceive again. For Richard to have murdered her, he would have needed a motive, and there is no obvious one apart from the desire to marry again, which he made no serious attempt to do. He died not long after his wife, at the Battle of Bosworth Field, and a Welshman, Henry Tudor, became King of England. For many years, there was not even a memorial to Anne Neville in Westminster Abbey, but eventually one was erected by the efforts of the Richard III Society. So they have done some good after all.

Deborah Fisher

This is a version of the talk given by Deborah Fisher at the AGM of April 2005