

RICHARD III TRAIL

A new walk looking at sites with Richard III connections in York. This much-maligned monarch was fond of and very popular in York, and numerous locations in the City were the backdrop for events in his life or have memorials to him.

GUILDHALL

One of Richard's favourite places to stay in York was the Augustinian Friary, which lay along the River Ouse between Lendal, the Guildhall and Museum St. The white stone wall on the left as you go into the Guildhall may be part of its boundary wall. Other bits of its foundations survive on the Ouse bank built into the base of the Guildhall. Richard began his visits to York while in his teens staying at Middleham, and would stay here or at the Earl of Warwick's town house on Walmgate. Richard often came to York for the Corpus Christi (Mystery) plays.

There is a plaque in the Guildhall to Richard; he was very popular in York, as he had grown up in the area and was a frequent visitor. He was the last King to really favour York-after his death the Tudor Kings regarded York with suspicion because of its support of Richard. Richard also halved York's £100 annual tax bill- a symptom of York's decline by the late 15thC. In 1484 Richard reconstituted his Council in the North as The Council of the North, a Royal instrument of Government north of the Trent. It was based at Sandal and Sheriff Hutton Castles.

ST MARTIN LE GRAND CHURCH

Richard wanted to marry to Anne Neville, daughter of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick. After the death of Warwick at the Battle of Barnet in 1471, Anne became the heiress to the Neville's northern domains. After the Battle of Tewkesbury the Duke of Clarence, Edward IV's brother, took Anne and her sister Isobel to live in his household, hoping to get his hands on the inheritance. When Richard came north to take up his appointment as Governor of the North and marry Anne, Clarence hid her in a cook shop. Richard found her and ensconced her in Sanctuary in St Martin's church in London. He married her in Westminster 12th July 1472 and eventually brought her north to York and Middleham, where their son Edward was born in 1473. The Middleham Jewel in the Yorkshire Museum was found near Middleham castle and dates to this period; it is not known whom it belonged to, but some suggest Anne.

KINGS ARMS PUB, OUSE BRIDGE

The City Council sent 80 men on horseback to help Richard against the Usurper Henry Tudor, whose claim to the throne was tenuous in the extreme-through his mother and via an illegitimate branch of the Royal line. 80 were all York could muster as the city was in the grip of the plague at the time. But York's help was to no avail - they never reached the Battle of Bosworth. John Spooner, York's serjeant-at-mace, galloped back to York with the news and it is recorded in the Council Minutes, kept in the Council Chamber on old Ouse Bridge "that King Richard, late mercifully reigning over us, was through the great treason of the Duke of Norfolk piteously slain and murdered, to the great heaviness of this City". The City must have regretted writing those words and when Henry VII visited in 1486 the City Fathers had to grovel and put on a pageant as elaborate as that for the late King Richard.

MERCHANT ADVENTURERS HALL

In 1478 Richard intervened to protect York's interests. John Pickering, a Governor of the London Merchants based in Antwerp tried to thwart York merchants by forcing them to sell their goods on the streets instead of in Halls and getting the Tax collector to charge York merchants double, and confiscating their goods if they didn't cough up. An appeal went to Richard, who forced Pickering to appear on his knees in the Hall here, beg forgiveness and promise to behave in future!

MINSTER CHOIR

Richard was a generous benefactor to the newly completed Minster donating gold and silver plate, a cross studded with gems and a cope embroidered with a White Boar. The 2nd window from the East on the South side has a new window to commemorate Richard; it consists of his arms and motto 'Loyaltie me Lie' and his Royal Coat of Arms with White Boar supporters and white roses of the House of York. The White Boar may well be a reference to Eboracum-the place of the Wild Boar. In 1985 there was a Solemn Requiem Mass for Richard in the Minster.

ST WILLIAMS COLLEGE

The home for the Minster chantry priests. In 1480 Richard ordered a College for 100 chantry priests to be erected in York. This was partly completed and some altars erected in the Minster at his death in 1485, but Henry VII would have dissolved them. Where the College was to have been we do not know, but perhaps near St Williams College. With all this preparation it is possible that Richard intended that he should be buried in the Minster, and it is possible his son who died in 1484 at Middleham was buried here.

MINSTER LIBRARY

So delighted was Richard with his reception in York in 1483 that he decided to invest his son prince of Wales in York Minster on 8th September. The ceremony was so impressive that many in other parts of England thought he had celebrated a second Coronation. The young Prince seems to have been invested the night before in a smaller ceremony in the Archbishop's Chapel the night before followed by the grander ceremony. According to one account "the Royal Family left the Minster precincts and with Queen Anne holding her son's hand, walked among the people, to the great joy of the inhabitants...as they extolled King Richard above the skies"

MONK BAR

The top storey with cannon ports-the latest technology-was added in the late 15thC, probably at the instigation of Richard III. It is now a museum to Richard III. The man behind the museum is Mike Bennett who each summer gives a one-man show in the upper chamber of the Bar, arguing that Richard was innocent of the crime of murdering his nephews, the Princes in the Tower. Visitors can also examine the evidence about the murder and vote who they think was guilty!