

THE TYRELL CONFESSION: Fact or fiction?

He served three kings and was executed for treason in 1502, but Sir James Tyrell is best remembered for a confession Sir Thomas More asserts he made to the murder of the sons of Edward IV – the so-called Princes in the Tower. Here *PHILIPPA LANGLEY* offers a critical re-analysis of the evidence

Sir James Tyrell (1456–1502)¹ is a significant person of interest for The Missing Princes Project, the research into the enduring mystery of the disappearance of the sons of Edward IV. This is not least for an unspecified journey undertaken by Sir James to Flanders on behalf of Richard III in late 1484 ‘for diverse matters concernyng gretely our wele’,² and shortly afterwards in January 1485 for his receipt of a quite astonishing sum of £3,000 on the Continent.³

More generally Tyrell enjoyed a longstanding closeness to Richard, as both duke and king. In respect of The Missing Princes Project, he is also prominent on account of the number of inquiries received questioning the existence of a research initiative into the mystery of the princes when it is widely understood that Tyrell confessed to their murder. Many cite as proof a Channel 4 TV documentary broadcast on 21 March 2015, just before the reinterment of Richard III in Leicester, which was recently repeated.

After briefly introducing Sir James, we will consider his alleged confession in light of the historic record and establish precisely what is known. We will then consider the conclusion reached by the television programme.

The following analysis also brings to light what seems to be new information regarding Tyrell: that he was appointed Duke Richard’s Chamberlain in 1479 (at the same time Robert Brackenbury was the duke’s Treasurer), and his likeness may adorn the walls of St Nicholas’s Chapel in Gipping, Suffolk.

Who was Sir James Tyrell?

Very truth is it and well known that at such time as Sir James Tyrell was in the Tower for treason committed against the most famous prince, King Henry the Seventh, both Dighton and he were examined and confessed the murder in manner above written ...⁴

(Sir Thomas More, c.1513,⁵ *The History of King Richard III*, first published 1543; the ‘authentic’ account published 1557.)

Sir James Tyrell was the son of Sir William Tyrell of Gipping, and Margaret Darcy of Maldon, Essex. In 1462 his father was executed for his involvement in a conspiracy against Edward IV. Tyrell’s wardship was given to Cecily, Duchess of York, who shortly returned it to Tyrell’s mother, Margaret, and her feoffees for a token £50.⁶ In May 1471⁷ Tyrell fought for the house of York at the battle of Tewkesbury and was knighted on the field by King Edward. By 1473, he had joined Richard of Gloucester’s retinue and was entrusted to escort the duke’s mother-in-law, the widowed Dowager Countess of Warwick (1426–92), from sanctuary in Beaulieu Abbey to Yorkshire. By 1474 he was one of the challengers at the tournament to celebrate the grant of the

dukedom of York to King Edward’s youngest son, and was also part of the army that invaded France the following year. By 1477, Tyrell was Duke Richard’s Sheriff of Glamorgan and Morgannwg in Wales, and in April 1479 was appointed the duke’s Chamberlain.⁸ By January 1480, his cousin, Elizabeth Tyrell (c.1436–1507) had been appointed Lady Mistress of the Royal Nursery by Elizabeth Woodville.⁹ In 1482, Richard made Tyrell knight-banneret during the Scottish campaign and by mid-November he was also appointed vice-Constable of England (Richard held the office of Constable of England).¹⁰ As vice-Constable, Tyrell was responsible for the short custody of Thomas Rotherham, Archbishop of York, following the discovery of the conspiracy by William Hastings on 13 June 1483. Tyrell had five children with his first wife, Anne, daughter of Sir John Arundel.¹¹

Serving Richard III and Henry VII

Following King Richard’s accession in June 1483, Tyrell was made a knight of the body, Master of the Horse, and Master of the Henchmen. During the October rebellion he was largely responsible for the Duke of Buckingham’s capture in Wales, and escorted the duke to Salisbury for execution. With the aid of his gentleman-servant, Christopher Wellesbourne, Tyrell was also responsible for the discovery of Buckingham’s five-year-old son and heir.¹² Tyrell was given authority to seize and administer Buckingham’s forfeited Welsh estates and to reassert his authority, for the king, over crown lands in Wales.¹³ He was also rewarded with the stewardship of the Duchy of Cornwall for life and given the land there of the rebel Thomas Arundel.¹⁴ By early January 1485 Tyrell was made Lieutenant of Guînes Castle in the Marches of Calais, a key strategic stronghold. As a result he was not present at the battle of Bosworth.

Tyrell’s absence from Bosworth may account for the fact that he was not attainted by Henry Tudor. Moreover, he seems to have made his peace with Henry, keeping his office at Guînes but losing his positions in Wales¹⁵ and Cornwall and the disputed lands which were returned to Arundel. By 16 June and 12 July 1486, Tyrell had secured two royal pardons for a possible association with the first Yorkist rebellion, headed by Francis, Viscount Lovell and the Stafford brothers,¹⁶ and which included Giles and Christopher Wellesbourne. The first pardon was for himself, the second for himself and those in the Guînes garrison, including its former chaplain.¹⁷ By 1488 Tyrell was a knight of the body, and by 1495, a royal councillor and feoffee to the use of Henry VII’s will. In November 1499 the executions of the young men said to be the Earl of Warwick and the Pretender known as Perkin Warbeck took place (Tyrell was not named in the Pretender’s confession). In 1501 Tyrell was in attendance on the Lord Steward (Sir Robert Willoughby) at the reception of Catherine of Aragon in London. Following the death of Henry

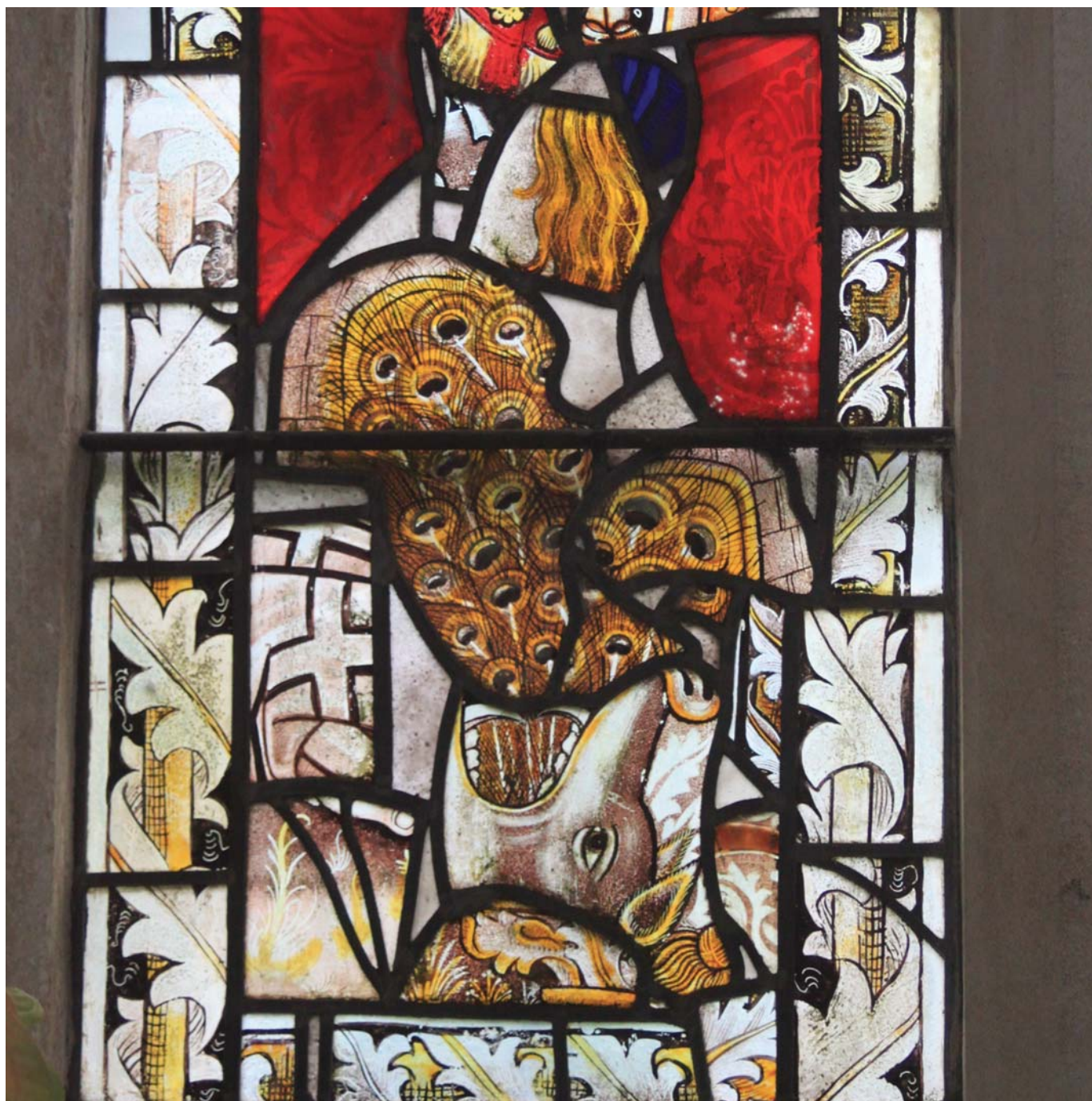


Image courtesy of Gipping Chapel

Above: Stained-glass window in Gipping Chapel showing the Tyrell crest, peacock feathers issuing from a boar's head. David White, Somerset Herald at the College of Arms, comments that the peacock represents Christ in religious paintings and iconography so it is very possibly a representation of the Tyrell family's religious devotion; it is not known whether the boar's head is connected with the white boar badge of Richard, Duke of Gloucester. Below: the Tyrells' standard, showing the crest and the 'Tyrell knot'. Illustrated by Bob Pritchard (2018) from John Cocke (Lancaster Herald), sixteenth century

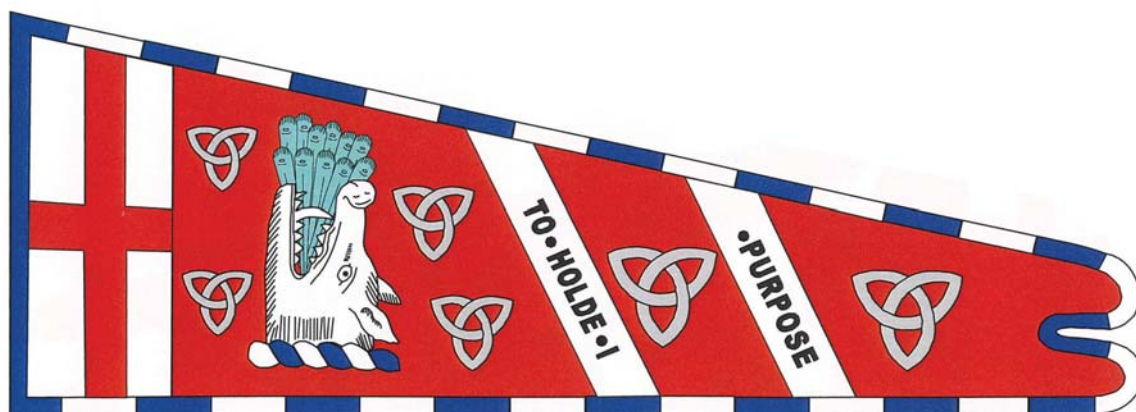


Image courtesy of Philippa Langley



Prime accuser: Sir Thomas More, in this portrait by Hans Holbein the Younger of 1527, provided the written narrative of the Tyrell 'confession', an account discovered amongst his papers after his death in 1535 and first published (without acknowledgement) in 1543

VII's son and heir, Prince Arthur, in April 1502, Tyrell was lured out of Guînes Castle by a safe conduct and indicted for his support of the Yorkist heir, Edmund de la Pole. Imprisoned in the Tower of London, Tyrell was tried for treason at the Guildhall in London on 2 May 1502 and executed on Tower Hill four days later. He was 46. His son Thomas, who had been arrested with him, had his sentence commuted to imprisonment. Sir James Tyrell was attainted for high treason on 25 January 1504.¹⁸ The attainder was reversed three years later, on 19 April 1507.¹⁹ He was buried in the Austin Friars, in London.

The confession

The account of Tyrell's confession quoted at the beginning of this article was written by Sir Thomas More (1478–1535) in c.1513 when he was Under-Sheriff of London.²⁰ It is possible that it may have been written later in the decade when More was a Privy Councillor to Henry VIII, with revisions as late as 1527.²¹ A Latin version also exists, attributed to More.²² Over the centuries, a number of writers have attributed More's *History of King Richard III* to Cardinal John Morton (c.1420–1500).²³ Regardless, More's *History* must be treated with caution as an historical source, which in turn brings into question the veracity of his account.

Written as a dramatic narrative,²⁴ More's account was first published (without acknowledgment) in 1543,²⁵ seven years after his death, when the unfinished manuscript was discovered amongst his papers by his brother-in-law, John Rastell (d.1536), an author, printer and publisher. It was at this

time that a corrupted version was included in Richard Grafton's²⁶ edition of *The Chronicle of John Hardyng* and acquired the title 'history'. Today five versions of More's manuscript exist. William Rastell (1508–65) (More's nephew, also a publisher) published the 'authentic' vernacular account in 1557,²⁷ 22 years after More's death.

That More failed to publish the *History* during his lifetime raises a number of concerns, as many have commented on.²⁸ For a prolific writer such as him to keep a manuscript unfinished, untitled and unpublished, is perhaps a first warning sign; that he never referred to it in his many letters is perhaps another. A further significant alert is provided by its innumerable errors.²⁹ William Hastings, for instance, is named 'Richard' Hastings and Henry, Duke of Buckingham, 'Edward'. Moreover, More's opening line detailing Edward IV's age at his death is incorrect and seems to follow the age of Henry VII at his demise. As a result of many decades of scholarship, More's manuscript is today viewed as a dramatic narrative and early humanist treatise on royal tyranny.³⁰

We must also consider More's handling of his sources. Although he states that Tyrell and Dighton's confession is 'Very truth is it and well known', he offers no evidence to corroborate his claim. Prior to this he makes a number of statements strongly implying his sources to be local rumour and gossip. In addition he claims to have heard a number of differing accounts of the princes' deaths:

I shall rehearse you the dolorous end of those babes, not

after every way that I have heard, but after that way I have heard by such men and by such means as me thinketh it were hard but it should be true.³¹

His account is then peppered with statements such as ‘as some say’, ‘as I have heard’, ‘they say’³² and ‘I have learned of them that much knew and little cause to lie’, and: ‘For I have heard by credible report of such as were secret with his chamberers that, after this abominable deed done, he [Richard] never had quiet of mind.’³³ More also reports ‘that some remain in doubt whether they were in his [Richard’s] days destroyed or no’.³⁴

The mysterious Dighton

In terms of Dighton (the second named confession), More goes on to reveal that he ‘yet walketh on alive in good possibility to be hanged ere he die’. This seems a quite astonishing and scarcely credible claim; a man who confessed to a double murder and regicide is nevertheless at liberty and permitted to walk free. Moreover, there is no evidence that a ‘Dighton’ was in the Tower during Tyrell’s confinement,³⁵ or that Tyrell and Dighton were ever examined.³⁶

With the above concerns noted regarding More’s account, what can we establish regarding the veracity of his statement about the confession by Tyrell and Dighton? Is it supported by other sources of the period? It is important, therefore, that we now consider these sources in some detail.

Sir James Tyrell is first referred to in connection with the murder of the sons of Edward IV in *The Great Chronicle of London*, written c.1512. After considering the various rumours concerning the manner of the children’s demise,³⁷ the *Chronicle* says:

But howsoever they were put to death, certain it was that before that day [Henry Tudor’s invasion] they were departed from this world, of which cruel deed Sir James Tyrell was reported to be the doer, but others put that weight upon an old servant of King Richard’s named _____. [name left blank].³⁸

Then we have Henry VII’s historian, Polydore Vergil, writing in c.1512–13,³⁹ who says that during King Richard’s royal progress visit to York in September 1483:

For when Richard heard that the constable [of the Tower] was delaying the execution of his command, he immediately gave to another, namely Sir James Tyrell, the task of swiftly despatching his nephews. Obligated to execute these orders, Tyrell left York for London and at once had the boys put to death.⁴⁰ Thus perished Prince Edward alongside his brother Richard. But what manner of death the poor innocents met is not known for certain.⁴¹

Following Richard III’s death, Vergil’s account of the reign of Henry VII returned to the death of the princes. After announcing the birth of Henry’s heir, Prince Arthur (September 1486), and introducing the uprising on behalf of the Yorkist Pretender ‘Lambert Simnell’ (May 1487), Vergil says:

since Henry VII had (as soon as he had gained power) flung Edward, the only son of the duke of Clarence, into the Tower of London, and since it was popularly rumoured that Edward [V] had been murdered in that place.⁴²

Vergil then states that Lambert Simnell was an impostor for the Duke of Clarence’s son, Edward of Warwick, adding that

Simnell’s followers in Ireland would ‘restore the boy to the throne’ of England (my emphasis).⁴³

Vergil then goes on to discuss at some length the next Yorkist uprising in the name of ‘Peter Warbeck’ who was a ‘deception’ or believed to be the ‘resuscitated duke of York,’⁴⁴ the younger Prince in the Tower. Vergil reports that the ‘youth’ had

falsely assumed the person and name of Richard duke of York, who had many years before been murdered with his brother Edward in the Tower of London on the orders of his uncle Richard, as was known beyond doubt. And to assert or to believe otherwise would be the height of folly.⁴⁵

Then, in discussing ‘Peter’s’ time with James IV in Scotland from 1495 to 1497, Vergil adds, ‘if he [Peter] were restored to the kingdom with the king’s help’ (my emphasis again).⁴⁶

With ‘Peter’ executed for treason by King Henry in November 1499, Vergil moves on through the years to discuss a new Yorkist Pretender to Henry’s throne, Edmund de la Pole, the son of Edward IV and Richard III’s sister, Elizabeth Plantagenet, Duchess of Suffolk. Here, in 1502 Tyrell is again named as the murderer of King Edward’s sons. Vergil reports:

At length even James Tyrell came to the scaffold. He was that same James to whom King Richard deputed the business of arranging the deaths of the two wretched sons of King Edward; which business he thoroughly performed.

Vergil adds:

On that occasion James could – without danger to his own life – have spared the boys, rescued them from death and carried them to safety ... But he would not do this in order that he might afterwards try, against all human and divine injunctions, to help Earl Edmund, son of Edward’s sister; for this at length he paid by his own death the appropriate penalty for his previous crimes.⁴⁷

Thus concludes Vergil’s account of the fate of the sons of Edward IV.⁴⁸ There is no record in Vergil of a confession by Tyrell, or of an individual named Dighton.

More’s *History* and his account of Tyrell (and Dighton’s) confession now formed the basis of many histories published during the reigns of the Tudor monarchs. These included a revised Hall in 1550 and Holinshed in 1587 (second edition) which became the principal source material for Shakespeare’s play, *The Tragedy of Richard the Third*, in 1593.⁴⁹

Consequently, following the demise of the Tudor dynasty, it is important that we now consider what the early Jacobean historians had to say about Sir James Tyrell and the confession.

Jacobean history

In 1619, Sir George Buck, Master of the Revels to James I of England, believed More’s account to stem from an original work by Cardinal John Morton (c.1420–1500),⁵⁰ Henry VII’s adviser and chief administrator.⁵¹ In considering the contradictory nature of More’s work, Buck observed:

For they [Morton and More] say in one place, as I have cited it before, that it was held in doubt whether they were murdered. But they say afterward that Tyrell and Dighton, being examined, confessed plainly and certainly the murder of the two princely brothers, the sons of King Edward IV, and all the manner of it. These be contraries. And by these contraries their speech falleth.

Later Buck adds:

And then in regard that the confession of [those was such as that] it might not be disclosed nor the crime called in question and to justice but left unpunished (as the said authors confess), then it was but a counterfeit confession.⁵²

After considering how all those named by More (and Morton) in connection with the murder died of natural causes, Buck concludes:

But Tyrell may be excepted in one respect, because he died not his natural death but a violent death. But yet that was not inflicted upon him for the murder of the two princes, but for other treason long afterward committed by him, and against King Henry himself. Moreover, John Green,⁵³ who was said to be a party in the practice of this foul treason against the young princes, was never called in question.⁵⁴

Three years after Buck's commentary in 1622, in his history of Henry VII, after reporting the rumoured survival of one or more of the sons of King Edward IV,⁵⁵ Sir Francis Bacon, former Lord Chancellor of England, records the deaths of two of the four named individuals involved in the murder. These are given as Miles Forrest⁵⁶ and the Tower of London's priest – who is said to have buried the boys.⁵⁷ Bacon adds:

and there remained alive only Sir James Tyrell and John Dighton. These two the king caused to be committed to the Tower, and examined touching the manner of death of the two innocent princes. They both agreed in a tale, as the king gave out to the effect ... [the account then follows More's account of the murder] ... This much was then delivered abroad, to be the effect of those investigations, but the king, nevertheless, made no use of them in any of his declarations; whereby, as it seems, those examinations left the business somewhat perplexed. And as for Sir James Tyrell, he was soon after beheaded in the Tower-yard for other matters of treason. But John Dighton, who, it seemed, spoke best for the king, was forthwith set at liberty, and was the principal means of divulging this tradition.⁵⁸

More doubts

Paradoxically, More concedes that 'some remain in doubt' that the princes were murdered and that it 'should be true', but then goes on to say of Tyrell's confession, 'Very truth is it'. More identifies his anonymous sources as 'such men' and from those who 'much knew and had little cause to lie'. The only real clue to his information comes from 'such as were secret with his chamberers', meaning those who were close to those who served King Richard in his chamber. However, More also tells us that he had heard many versions of the story, 'after every way that I have heard'.

The Great Chronicle does not record Tyrell's confession (or mention a Dighton) and adds that Tyrell was 'reported to be the doer'. Like More, the chronicler fails to record the source of the rumour condemning Tyrell as the murderer, but adds that



Photo: Kerry Baker

Family faith: St Nicholas's Chapel at Gipping, Suffolk, was built in the 1470s by Sir James Tyrell at his Gipping Hall seat

'others' put 'that weight' on someone else committing the crime, 'an old servant of King Richard's named ____.' It seems the compiler had hoped to name this individual. It is also unclear whether 'old' referred to the advancing age of this servant as it was now some 29 years later, or if it meant an aged servant, or a servant of many years standing at the time of the murder.

Like the *Great Chronicle*, Vergil's account also fails to include a confession by Tyrell and does not mention a figure called Dighton. Vergil attributes the murder to Tyrell but then reports that Tyrell murdered the sons of Edward IV because he wanted the son of King Edward's sister to reign. Vergil tells us that it was 'popularly rumoured' that Edward V was killed and then, paradoxically, uses the words 'restore' and 'restored' when discussing 'Lambert Simnell's' claim to the throne as the 'King Edward' crowned in Ireland, and 'Peter Warbeck's' claim as the youngest son of Edward IV. Vergil also states the murders of both boys were 'known without doubt' and to 'assert or to believe otherwise would be the height of folly'. Vergil offers nothing in respect of identifying the sources of his information, or the rumours.

The first Jacobean writer, Sir George Buck, questions the veracity of More's confession story on account of its many contradictions, particularly the lack of written evidences, and the failure of King Henry to publish the alleged confession. Buck, an antiquarian, identifies the Howard family as one of the sources in his *History*, including Lord William Howard, Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel and Surrey (great-great-grandson of John Howard and great-grandson of Thomas Howard, who both served Richard III and fought for him at Bosworth), and, intriguingly, an old manuscript book which he was able to consult. Buck's sources also included the contemporary records of the time, heralds and some of the families involved in the events of Richard's reign.⁵⁹

Bacon concurs with Buck in questioning the validity of the confessions, adding that Tyrell and Dighton were examined in the Tower where they 'both agreed in a tale'. It is perhaps Bacon, however, who offers a most intriguing royal source for Tyrell (and Dighton's) confession, revealing it was 'as the king

gave out', and it was Dighton, set at liberty, who was the 'principal means of divulging this tradition.'⁶⁰

Documentary proof?

So let us now turn to the recent TV documentary, *The Princes in the Tower* by Oxford Films (Channel 4, 2015), referenced at the beginning of this article and considered by some as twenty-first-century proof of Tyrell's alleged confession. 'More is 99 per cent right. There is some sort of confession. What we have here is as near as we can get to the truth.' With this verdict delivered by the Tudor historian, Dr David Starkey, the documentary concluded: 'We may finally have solved the mystery of the Princes in the Tower.' How did the TV programme come about and reach such a startling conclusion?

In 2014 as the preparations for the reburial of King Richard III were under way in Leicester, I was informed by Darlow Smithson Productions (DSP) that Channel 4 was considering revisiting the mystery of the Princes in the Tower. By this time DSP had been researching Richard III for nearly five years, knew the contemporary source material and had a number of history graduates on the team. It seemed that DSP would be best placed to tackle this complicated issue and ensure rigorous and critical examination of the evidence.

However, another production company was chosen, which by necessity began a fast catch-up within the few short weeks before filming. Meanwhile, the commissioner at Channel 4 took the view that Richard had murdered the boys because 'everyone said so'. It seemed the writing was on the wall and as a result Annette Carson pulled out. John Ashdown-Hill agreed to stay on as a talking head in the hope that he could offer some facts to help with any potential critical analysis.

The documentary followed Dr Starkey's suggestion that the truth of More's confession story was confirmed by the fact that Henry VII and his queen had been staying in the Tower of London, where Tyrell was being tried, and were therefore present in person to witness Tyrell's admission of guilt. If this were true it represented a considerable step forward. However, Dr Starkey omitted to report three significant points. First, Tyrell's trial had nothing to do with the sons of Edward IV; he was in fact arraigned for committing high treason with the Yorkist heir, Edmund de la Pole.⁶¹ Second, the trial did not take place at the Tower of London, but was heard at the Guildhall in central London, so Henry and his queen were not present to witness proceedings. And third, the Tower of London was a royal palace where the king and queen stayed regularly.⁶² Sadly, none of these pertinent facts were presented or scrutinised.

A proper evaluation of the veracity of More's account of the confession of Sir James Tyrell (and Dighton) to the murder of the sons of Edward IV is dependent upon a consideration of the following factors.

First, the existence of any confirmatory evidence. As England's former Chancellor, Sir Francis Bacon tells us, this does not exist. No declarations or proclamations were made by King Henry, and nothing reported in Parliament or recorded and published by the government of the day. Moreover, what accounts we do have are contradictory and incoherent. Polydore Vergil claimed that Tyrell murdered the sons of King Edward IV so that a younger son of King Edward's sister could rule at some future date. Such remarkable foresight and political cunning is not borne out by the historical evidence, nor

supported by Tyrell's long and faithful service to three reigning monarchs.⁶³ Furthermore, Vergil's first published account of his history of the reign of Henry VII (Basle edition, 1534), includes the following statement which was removed from later publications:

It was generally reported and believed that the sons of Edward IV were still alive, having been conveyed secretly away, and obscurely concealed in some distant region.⁶⁴ [Hay records this as 'a certain secret land.']⁶⁵

It must also be noted that Vergil uses the words 'restore' and 'restored' when reporting the identities of the two Pretenders to the English throne. Did these descriptors also slip through the editorial net?

We also have evidence that members of Tyrell's wider family supported the Pretender, Perkin Warbeck, who claimed to be the younger son of Edward IV. In 1498, Sir John Speke was fined the enormous sum of £200 by Henry VII for 'aiding and comforting' the Pretender.⁶⁶ W. E. Hampton records:

Speke's adherence to Warbeck suggests that even that branch of the Arundell family which was hostile to Richard III had no knowledge of the certain deaths of the sons of Edward IV nor suspicion of Sir James's responsibility in the matter...⁶⁷

The other Tyrell

Significantly, we also have evidence of Tyrell's close family support of Warbeck, and their confirmation that he was the son of Edward IV. Tyrell's first cousin,⁶⁸ Sir Thomas Tyrell of Essex and Hertfordshire (c.1453–1510), was one of a number of conspirators in the Warbeck rebellion, which aimed to assassinate Henry VII. One of Henry's spies recorded a remarkable conversation where Sir Thomas Tyrell is unequivocal that the boy is King Edward's son.⁶⁹ Sir Thomas had been an esquire of the body to Edward IV and Richard III,⁷⁰ and was also the nephew of Elizabeth Tyrell, Mistress of the Royal Nursery. It seems, therefore, that Sir Thomas, like many others in the Warbeck conspiracy, had connections with the Yorkist royal family, its household and nursery.⁷¹ Despite written evidence of his treason, together with two witnesses, it is quite remarkable that Sir Thomas was never brought to trial, when the likes of Sir William Stanley, King Henry's Chamberlain, had been summarily executed for uttering some words in support of the boy. Interestingly, today the *ODNB* records no mention of Sir Thomas Tyrell's part in the conspiracy, or the family's identification of 'Warbeck' as King Edward's son.⁷² We must also add to this the Tyrell family tradition that the boys stayed at Gipping with their mother (Elizabeth Woodville) 'by permission of the uncle'.⁷³

Moreover, we must also consider, as Annette Carson established, that no Masses were said for the souls of the boys.⁷⁴ This, in terms of the period's religiosity, is highly significant.

Secondly we must consider chronology. Henry VII had been king and master of the Tower of London from the summer of 1485, but it had, apparently, taken 17 years to produce a story of any kind which accounted, 'as the king gave out', for the disappearance of the princes. Importantly, the story appeared at a time of genuine crisis for the early Tudor dynasty. Henry VII's son and heir had died unexpectedly (as had his third son, Prince Edmund), while the king himself was ill and deeply unpopular. The marriage of Catherine of Aragon to Henry's

remaining son (Prince Henry) therefore assumed some importance in securing the dynasty's future. Did Henry VII feel compelled to reassure the Spanish monarchs of his continued hold on the throne by finally bringing the mystery of the princes to a definite conclusion, thereby securing the ground for a future marriage between Prince Henry and Catherine?

Thirdly, we must take into account what we know about Sir James Tyrell. He served three kings faithfully and was placed in positions of trust. His biographer, Revd W. H. Sewell, said of him:

We have abundant evidence of the greatness, reputation and personal bravery of Sir James Tyrell. He was one of the foremost, and certainly one of the ablest men of his day.⁷⁵

So was it one of Tyrell's royal duties which had made him the ideal candidate for the confession story? As Master of the Henchmen, Tyrell was in charge of the young boys and teenagers at King Richard's court, the squires and pages required for ceremonial duties and knightly training. Did this role provide a connection and give credence to the story? Or was it because Tyrell's cousin, Elizabeth, was Mistress of the Royal Nursery? Both positions would have placed Tyrell within the orbit of the children of Edward IV. Or was it because he was responsible for the discovery and delivery of Buckingham's heir during Richard's reign? No contemporary source from Tyrell's lifetime raised any concern regarding his proximity to children or their safety in his care. Interestingly, even today, the *ODNB* fails to record any mention of Tyrell's own children, four of whom married.⁷⁶

Finally, we must also consider what we know about More's unfinished manuscript; specifically that it is written as a dramatic narrative and remained unfinished, untitled and unpublished. That it was not taken seriously as a 'history' can perhaps be further deduced from the published work of More's brother-in-law John Rastell in 1529. As C. S. L. Davies and Matthew Lewis established,⁷⁷ Rastell published his history of England in *The Pastime of People*,⁷⁸ yet fails to record Tyrell, his

confession or any involvement in the murder. This, even though his brother-in-law (More) was a prolific writer and publisher, and Rastell also an author and publisher. Would More not have known about Rastell's forthcoming great publication, or mentioned what he knew? What a scoop this would have been for his publisher brother-in-law. At the time More had also been made Lord Chancellor with access to all records.

Conclusion: unreliable evidence

It seems that Sir James Tyrell has been cemented in the collective consciousness as the undoubted murderer of the Princes in the Tower because of two dramatic narratives; More's and Shakespeare's. With More's *History* published in the middle of the sixteenth century, it went on to become the key source for Shakespeare's *Richard III* in 1593.

Until further evidence is forthcoming, or new materials uncovered, we must conclude that there are no grounds to support the validity or veracity of Tyrell's alleged confession to the murder of King Edward IV's sons.

What we can perhaps conclude from this analysis, however, is that some connection was made between Tyrell and the sons of Edward IV at, or before, the time of Tyrell's death. Could this connection be explained by the two pardons granted to Tyrell by King Henry in the summer of 1486, which in turn added an indirect degree of credence to what the king later 'gave out' in respect of Tyrell's guilt? This supposition will be explored in the forthcoming September *Bulletin*, when The Missing Princes Project will announce its initial results, and two remarkable new discoveries.

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For the remarkable Yorkist Sunne in Splendour and White Rose stained glass windows discovered at Gipping Chapel, please visit The Missing Princes Project website

Notes and references

1. On 2 December 1495 Tyrell's age is confirmed as 40. See M. A. Hicks, 'The Last Days of Elizabeth Countess of Oxford', *English Historical Review* (January 1988), Vol. 103, No. 406, p. 89. A calculation of Tyrell's age on 6 May 1502 when executed makes him 46 at the time of his death. For this reason I have slightly amended his birth year to 1456. For a birth year of c.1455 see: Rosemary Horrox, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)*, 2004. A number of writers have suggested a slightly earlier date of c.1450. This might be due to Tyrell's age at the battle of Tewkesbury, see note 7 below.
2. Annette Carson, *Richard III: The Maligned King* (2008), p. 190, fn. 24. From: Rosemary Horrox and P. W. Hammond (eds), *British Library Harleian Manuscript 433* (1980), Volume Two, p. 187.
3. Carson, p. 190, fn. 25. Carson aptly calls this vast sum a 'king's ransom'. From: *Harleian 433*, Volume Two, p. 191. Tyrell is charged to buy wool to this amount and make a profit – 'to Receyve for us and in our name of the merchantes of ourre Staple at Calais . as many Sakkes of Wolle as shalle ammounte to the some of thre thousand poundes sterling and the same Wolle to selle and utter for ourre use and prouffitte.'
4. Richard S. Sylvester (ed.), *St Thomas More: The History of King Richard III and Selections from the English and Latin Poems* (1976), pp. 88–9.
5. Sylvester, *More*, p. xi, 3. From William Rastell's introduction to the 1557 publication. Rastell was More's nephew and writes: 'written by Master Thomas More, then one of the under-sheriffs of London, about the year of our Lord 1513.' It is interesting to note that 1513, when More may have first drafted his narrative, was the same year that the Yorkist pretender Edmund de la Pole was executed by Henry VIII.
6. Joanna Laynesmith, *Cecily Duchess of York* (2017), p. 96. William Tyrell (James's father) had been Richard, Duke of York's, receiver general.
7. If Tyrell's age was recorded correctly at the court of 2 December 1495 (above note 1) this made Tyrell about 16 years of age when he fought at Tewkesbury.
8. The National Archives, SP 46/139/fo167. Memorandum of admission of Sir James Tyrell as chamberlain under letters patent of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, 28 April [1479]. For Robert Brackenbury as Duke Richard's Treasurer at this time, see: Rosemary Horrox, Brackenbury, Sir Robert (d.1485), *ODNB* (2004). Brackenbury was knighted by King Richard in 1484.
9. W. E. Hampton, 'Sir James Tyrell: with some notes on the Austin Friars London and those buried there', *Richard III: Crown and People* (1985), p. 214. First published in *The Ricardian*, Vol. IV, No. 63 (Dec 1978), pp. 9–22. From: *Calendar of Patent Rolls [CPR] 1476–1485*, p. 241: 'Grant for life to Elizabeth Darcy, lady mistress of the king's nursery. For her good service to the king and his consort the queen and his son the prince, of a tun of wine yearly in the port of London.' Elizabeth Tyrell was the daughter of Sir Thomas Tyrell (c.1411–1476) and Anne Marney and had married Sir Robert Darcy. However, following his

- death in 1469 she remarried Richard Haute of Kent in about 1470. Richard Haute was the son of William Haute and his second wife Joan Woodville. Joan Woodville was the sister of Richard Woodville and Elizabeth Woodville's aunt.
10. Hampton, *Crown and People*, p. 205. *CPR 1476–1485*, p. 317. *The Ricardian* (Dec 1978), p. 12. Tyrell shared the office of Vice-Constable with Sir William Parr and Sir James Harrington. From: *CPR, 1476–1485*, p. 317.
 11. For Tyrell's children, see Hampton, Tyrell family tree, *Crown and People*, pp. 212–13. For Margery Tyrell, who married Richard Garneys, see: www.geni.com/people/Anne-Tyrell/600000008064424506. Horrox's *ODNB* entry does not record Sir James's children.
 12. Revd W. H. Sewell, 'Memoirs of Sir James Tyrell', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Natural History and Archaeological Society* (1878), Vol 5, Part Two, pp. 133–4. During the search for his rebel father, five year-old Edward Stafford had his head shaved and was dressed as a girl in order to avoid capture. Also see Hampton, p. 205. Following Richard's death, Stafford, and his younger brother, Henry, were placed in the household of Margaret Beaufort. See note 19 below for Edward when Duke of Buckingham leading the trial against Tyrell in 1502.
 13. Horrox, *ODNB*.
 14. *Ibid.*, Tyrell had been in dispute with Arundel, his brother-in-law, for some time over the right of his wife to these lands. In 1469, he had married Anne, the daughter and heir of John Arundel of Lanherne, Cornwall, and his first wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas, Lord Morley. Tyrell had been made knight of the shire in 1478 and had four children with Anne Arundel: Thomas, James, William and Anne (as above note 11).
 15. In 1488 Tyrell's office of Sheriff of Glamorgan was returned.
 16. With thanks to Marie Barnfield (Walsh) on the Richard III Discussion Archive (2007) for first alerting us to this possibility, see: www.richardiii.org.uk/topic/9114/Tyrell%27s+two+Pardons. For Giles and Christopher Wellesbourne, see: W.E. Hampton, 'Opposition to Henry Tudor after Bosworth', *Richard III: Crown and People* (1985), p. 174.
 17. William Campbell, *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII* (1873), Vol. 1, pp. 460, 503. Tyrell's first pardon is sandwiched between John Smyth and William Welles of Warwick, both had been indicted for their involvement in the Stafford brothers' uprising in the West Country and Worcester, as Lovell headed to Yorkshire. See: TNA: KB9/ 127 M.9, KB 9/138, m. 4, KB 9/ 127, m.9 & KB9/ 127 M.10. My thanks to Marie Barnfield (Walsh) for the TNA sources for Smith and Welles and for first alerting us to this possibility (note 16). Following King Richard's death at Bosworth, Lovell and the Stafford brothers had taken sanctuary in St John's Abbey in Colchester, not far from Tyrell's home at Gipping in Suffolk. The second pardon, end-dated 12 July, names Tyrell first in a long list of those from Guines Castle and garrison, including the castle's former Constable, John Bonyngton, gentleman, a Calais merchant, William Bondeman, William Rose, the castle's former chaplain, John Lichfield, a scrivener, John Thirlewal, gentleman, the elder of Thirlewal in York, fourteen yeomen and eight soldiers, are all named. See *Materials*, pp. 503–5. As Tyrell remained in post, the pardons may have been to help reassure the new king of his loyalty.
 18. *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, Vol 6 (1472–1504), p. 545. The attainder for high treason took place during Henry VII's Parliament of late 1503, dissolved 1 April 1504. Edmund de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk is named first in the attainder, with William Courtney, heir of the Earl of Devon, and William Pole and Richard Pole of Wingfield in Suffolk. James Tyrell is fourth to be named. List includes eleven further names and reads: '.. with diverse other evil disposed persons, falsely and traitorously imagining and conspiring the death and destruction of the King our Sovereign Lord, and the subversion of this his Realm, and for which false and traitorous purpose, divers of them were and be before divers of the King's Commissioners of Oyer determiner in several Shires within this Realm, severally convicted and attainted of high Treason ...' A second list of those attainted for high treason includes the late Lord Audley and Edward, Earl of Warwick with Sir James and a further 37 other names.
 19. *CPR, Henry VII A.D. 1494–1509* (1916), pp. 506–7. Tyrell's reversal reads: 'the said James having been convicted in Guildhall London ... of diverse offences committed 1 July 14 Henry VII [1499], and at other times, and afterwards beheaded'. For Tyrell's son Thomas (1475–1551), 'the said Thomas having been convicted in the white hall within the king's palace at Westminster ... of treason committed in December, January, February and March, 17 Henry VII' [1502]. That it had been a show trial for Sir James there is no doubt. Tyrell was arraigned before every leading member of Henry VII's court and its nobility, including the then mayor of London, John Shaa. Of interest to the project is that they were led by Edward, Duke of Buckingham, Thomas, Marquis of Dorset, Henry, Earl of Northumberland, and Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, amongst others.
 20. Sylvester, p. 3. Also: Paul Murray Kendall, *Richard III* (1955), p. 421. Alison Hanham, *Richard III and his Early Historians 1483–1535* (1975), p. 198.
 21. Seymour Baker House, *ODNB*, Sir Thomas More, 2004, for More's manuscript written c.1513–18, see p. 5. More joined the King's Council in 1518, see pp. 6, 11. Sylvester, p. xi, adds that 'It is clear, however, that manuscript copies of at least the English text were known in the 1530s'. For later revision that recorded Dighton as living in Calais and his death there, see: Tim Thornton, 'More on a Murder: The Death of the 'Princes in the Tower'', and Historiographical Implications for the Regimes of Henry VII and Henry VIII', *History: Journal of Historical Association* (28 December 2020), p. 10, fn. 35. Hanham, *Early Historians*, offers the date of the final months of 1527 for More's revision, see pp. 209–19.
 22. Sylvester, p. xi. & fn. 3, the Latin version preserved in the College of Arms (MS Arundel 43). Sylvester adds that there is no evidence that this version circulated widely. However, it must be noted that the Latin version (printed in Louvain in 1566) is in a different hand to More and does not include the 'common' story of the murder. See: Sewell, 'Memoirs', p. 150. Sewell records that the Louvain edition is prefixed by its editor with a 'very striking apology'. Whilst recording the popular account of the *History* written in 1513 by More, the editor includes a caveat against More's account as being accepted as 'sterling history'. Sewell directs his readers to this extant edition in the British Museum and gives his thanks to James Gairdner of the Record Office there.
 23. Sir Clements Markham, *Richard III: His Life and Character* (1906), pp. 169–71. Markham records that both Sir George Buck (in his *History of King Richard III* in 1619, see below) and Sir John Harington, the poet (in his *Metamorphosis of Ajax* in 1596), state that they had heard that More's work was written by Morton. However, Markham adds that it couldn't have been, as it is addressed to Henry VIII. Morton died in 1500, nine years before the king's accession. However, Markham believes that it was More's original English version that was 'dictated or inspired by' John Morton. For evidence of this he cites the fact that the author speaks of the death-bed of Edward IV as an eye-witness account. At the time, More was five years old. He also discusses how the *History* ends abruptly, at the exact point when Morton left England. See also: Sewell, pp. 154–5, who adds Sir Henry Ellis and Sir Horace Walpole to the list of

- those who believe Morton was an influence and author. Sewell also believes Morton to have been the author. See also, Arthur Noel Kincaid (ed.), *The History of King Richard the Third* by Sir George Buck Master of the Revels (1979), pp. ciii-civ, for the known existence of a pamphlet on Richard III written by Bishop Morton on which More's *History* was based. This information from Sir Edward Hoby, who said that Sir William Roper had the original. The Ropers were the heirs of both Morton and More. See Baker House, *ODNB*, p. 2, for More entering Morton's household in about 1489 when he was 11 years old. More was educated in the Cardinal's household. For More as the author, see Sylvester, *Complete Works*, pp. lix-lxiii. Certainly a possible marker against Morton as the author (rather than the inspiration) are the innumerable errors in the account, particularly the names of those he would have known well such as William, Lord Hastings and Henry, Duke of Buckingham.
24. For a detailed analysis of More's account as a dramatic narrative see: Hanham, 'Sir Thomas More's Satirical Drama', *Early Historians*, Chapter 7, pp. 152–90. Also: Sylvester, *Complete Works*, pp. lxxxv–vi, and Josephine Wilkinson, *The Princes in the Tower* (2013), Chapter 9, 'History and Imagination in Sir Thomas More's History of King Richard III', pp. 122–8. See pp. 121–2, fn. 35, for More's friend Erasmus explaining that as a young man More would write plays and act in them [Erasmus, *Opus Epistolarum*, 4.16]. For a dramatic account and literary work: C. S. L. Davies, 'Information, Disinformation and Political Knowledge under Henry VII and Early Henry VIII', *Historical Research* 85 (2012), pp. 241–2. Also Sewell, pp. 157–9. Also Baker House, *ODNB*, p. 2, for More as a young actor, p. 5 for the irony in his *History*, p. 7 for the satire in *Utopia*, p. 12 for More's writing of worldly events compared to a stage play, and p. 24 for the *History's* 'theatrical metaphors'.
 25. Kendall, p. 421, reveals More's *History* 'first appeared, in a corrupt copy, in Grafton's *Continuation of Hardyng's Chronicle*, 1543'. See also Hanham, p. 152, and Jeremy Potter, *Good King Richard?* (1983), p. 120. For More's account not being printed under his own name until 1557, see Davies 'Information, Disinformation' pp. 242–3. Also fn. 26 below
 26. See Sewell, pp. 146–7 for Grafton's imprisonment in the Fleet prison in London in 1537 for the notoriety of his work. Sewell notes Sir Henry Ellis's remarks about Grafton's publication of two different editions of *Hardyng's Chronicle*, both printed in January 1453, and 'differing in almost every page', and one (Grafton's own portion of the work), 'no less than 29 pages more than the other.' Ellis was the Victorian editor of *The Three Books of Polydore Vergil* in 1844.
 27. Hanham pp. 152, 198. For a detailed account of the many versions of More's *History*, see: Appendix, 'The Texts of More's History of King Richard III', pp. 198–219. Also Kendall, p. 421, and Davies, p. 243 for publication in 1557.
 28. *Ibid.*, also: Wilkinson, pp. 113–28.
 29. Sewell, pp. 156–9; Hanham, p. 201; Wilkinson, pp. 116–21.
 30. Jürgen Meyer, 'An Unthinkable History of King Richard III: Thomas More's Fragment and his Answer to Lucian's Tyrannicide', *The Modern Language Review* (2014), Vol. 109, pp. 629–39.
 31. Sylvester, p. 85.
 32. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
 33. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
 34. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
 35. Hampton, Appendix I, p. 209, fn. 40. *The Ricardian*, pp. 16–17. From: Sewell, pp. 172–6.
 36. Hampton, fn. 41. From: James Gairdner (ed.), *Memoirs of Henry VII* (1858), p. xxxvi.
 37. A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley (eds), *The Great Chronicle of London* (1983), pp. 236–7. 'But of their deaths manner was many opinions, for some said they were murdered between two feather beds, some said they were drowned in Malmsey and some said that they were sticked with a venomous potion.'
 38. *Ibid.*, p. 237.
 39. Denys Hay (ed.), *The Anglica Historia of Polydore Vergil A.D. 1485–1537* (1950), p. xiii. See: Sir Henry Ellis (ed.), *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History Comprising the Reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV and Richard III* (1844), pp. xxxi–ii, for Vergil's original manuscripts of Henry VI, VII and VIII remaining 'uniform' and 'untouched' but for the 'coarser hand, with numerous interlineations, marginal additions, and changes of expression' for the manuscripts of Edward IV and Richard III.
 40. The possibility of Tyrell being able to undertake the murder at this time will be placed under the microscope in the forthcoming September 2021 *Bulletin*.
 41. Stephen O'Connor, *Polydore Vergil's Life of Richard III: An Edition of the Original Manuscript* (Richard III Society, 2021), p. 18. (For the slightly amended version of 1844, see Ellis, *Three Books*, p. 188).
 42. Hay, *Anglica Historia*, p. 13.
 43. *Ibid.*, p. 15 for 'restore'. For 'restituendo' see p. 14.
 44. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
 45. *Ibid.*, p. 69–71.
 46. *Ibid.*, p. 87. For 'restituere' (restored) see p. 86.
 47. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
 48. The following account by Vergil has been recorded in a number of works: 'that it was generally reported and believed 'that the sons of Edward IV were still alive, having been conveyed secretly away, and obscurely concealed in some distant region'. However, I've been unable to locate this source in any of Vergil's works. The quote is from Caroline Halsted, in her biography, *Richard III* (1844), Vol. II, p. 187, fn. 3, when it seems to have been first attributed to Vergil. Halsted gives her source as: 'Pol.Virg., p. 569', which I've been unable to discover. It is not known if Halsted might have discovered this elsewhere as part of her researches. My thanks to Marie Barnfield for alerting me to Halsted as a possible source for this (as yet, unattributed) Vergil quote.
 49. Holinshed's account (first edition published in 1577) is itself taken from the revised edition of Edward Hall's *The Union of the two noble and illustre famelies of Lancastre and Yorke*, published by Richard Grafton in 1550. Hall's *Union* was first published by Grafton in 1548, the year after Hall's death.
 50. Kincaid, *History, Sir George Buck*, pp. ciii-civ (fn. 23 above), cxi, for Morton as More's source, cxxi for Morton's Latin book on Richard III, p. 120–2 for Morton as the 'chief instigator and prime submover of all these treasonous detractions and the ringleader of these detractors and vitilitigators of King Richard'.
 51. Following Henry VII's accession, in March 1486, John Morton was made Lord Chancellor. On 6 October 1486 he was also made Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1493, following innumerable appeals to Rome by King Henry, Morton was made a cardinal by Pope Innocent VIII. As Head of the English Church and judiciary, Morton died of the plague at Knole House in Kent (residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury) on 15 September 1500. He was buried at Canterbury Cathedral, although his grave is believed to be empty. Stoneyhurst College in Lancashire holds a skull said to be Morton's. For more on Morton's burial and skull, see: Isolde Martyn, 'How Posterity Beheaded Morton: The Case of the Missing Head', *The Ricardian* (September 1992), Vol. 9, No.118, pp. 311–14. For the recent examination of the skull, see: Martyn, 'Cardinal Morton's Skull', *Ricardian Bulletin* (December 2015), pp. 59–62. Also available at: www.richardiii-nsw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/CARDINAL-MORTON-article.pdf.
 52. Kincaid, *Buck*, p. 165.
 53. For an analysis of a number of individuals called John Green, see: Hampton, 'Sir James Tyrell', *Crown and People*, Appendix 1, pp. 210–11.
 54. Kincaid, *Buck*, p. 167.

55. Roger Lockyer (ed.), *Francis Bacon: The History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh* (1971), p. 40. When discussing the first days of Henry VII's reign and his claim to the throne by conquest, rather than descent of blood or act of Parliament, Bacon records 'at that time secret rumours and whisperings – which afterwards gathered strength and turned to great troubles – that the two young sons of King Edward the Fourth, or one of them, which were said to be destroyed in the Tower, were not indeed murdered but conveyed secretly away, and were yet living'.
56. For the possibility that Thomas More may have encountered the sons of Miles Forrest (Edward and Miles) in the course of royal business, see Thornton, 'More on a Murder', pp. 1–22. For an analysis of whether this had implications for More's assertion that Richard III murdered the sons of Edward IV, see Matthew Lewis, 'The More I Read', Matt's History Blog (7 February 2021), <https://mattlewisauthor.wordpress.com/2021/02/07/the-more-i-read>. Also, Joanna Laynesmith, 'Miles Forest and the Fate of the Missing Princes', Richard III Research Blog (11 February 2021): 'Was More really reporting what the Forest boys had told him, or was it just that his acquaintance with them had caused him to learn that their father had been a servant of Richard's who died in circumstances that might seem fitting for a villain?' Available at: <https://riiiresearch.blogspot.com>.
57. For a report of the search for the bones of the boys having apparently been conducted at the Tower of London, see, Thomas Frognall Dibdin (ed.), *The Pastime of People, Or, The Chronicles of Divers Realms, and Most Especially of the Realm of England 1529* (1811), John Rastell, p. 293. Rastell records: 'because the bones of the said children could never be found buried, neither in the Tower nor in no other place.'
58. Lockyer, Bacon, pp. 138–9. For a list of the nobles arrested with Tyrell on suspicion of treasonous behaviour with the Yorkist Pretender, Edmund de la Pole, see p. 211. Also Hay, p. 125.
59. Kincaid, *Buck*, pp. xxxi–xxxii, xlv–xlvi. For the letter from Elizabeth of York to John Howard, 1st Duke of Norfolk, pp. cxiv, 191. For the old manuscript Buck read, p. 163. Buck records, 'For I have read in an old manuscript book [it] was held for certain that Dr Morton and a certain countess, [conspirin]g the deaths of the sons of King Edward and some other, resolved that these treacheries should be executed by poison and by sorcery.' Following the execution of John Buck by Henry Tudor after the battle of Bosworth, the Buck family was taken into the care and protection of the Howard family (pp. xii, xlvi). Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel and Surrey (later 5th Duke of Norfolk) was Sir George Buck's patron to whom his *History* was dedicated. For the frontispiece dedication, p. 3. For Buck's request for protection from the earl for his *History* so that none might take offence, p. 4. For Buck's other sources including the Earl of Oxford, John, Baron Lumley and Baron Darcy, etc. see pp. cxi–cxii. For all of Buck's sources, pp. cii–cxxiv. For the Howard family's 'strong sympathy and sense of gratitude and baffled by what had been written about Richard [III] by the 'authorities.' see p. cviii and Henry Howard in 1583. For the Croyland Chronicle manuscript, Tower Records, College of Arms, Parliament Rolls and memorials, etc., also for Buck's sources, see p. cxx.
60. For a John Dighton, a priest, being given the living of Fulbeck in Lincolnshire in 1487 by Henry VII, the year of the 'Simmell' uprising, see Hampton, *Crown and People*, Appendix 1, p. 210.
61. *CPR 1494–1509*, pp. 506–7, for Tyrell's trial. Also see notes 18 and 19 above.
62. For more, see: Annette Carson, 'After 500 years of controversy we may finally have solved the mystery of the Princes in the Tower!' available at: www.annetecarson.co.uk/357052362.
63. For Tyrell's commissions for Edward IV, see *CPR 1467–1477* (1900), pp. 492, 606.
64. Caroline Halsted, *Richard III* (1844, first published 1977, reprint 1980), Vol 2, p. 187, fn. 3. My thanks to Marie Barnfield for alerting me to this quote, which may have first appeared in Halsted. From: P. Vergilii, *Anglicæ Historiæ libri XXVI* (1534), p. 569.
65. Hay, p. 13, from Latin fn. 3, lines 3–9, 'aliquo terrarium secreto'. My thanks to project member Christopher Tinmouth for his transcription of Hay and for undertaking the search for the original quote in Vergil's first edition of 1534. This will take place when the British Library reopens. Please note that for whatever reason Hay does not translate this key line into his English account for Vergil. Ann Wroe, *Perkin: A Story of Deception* (2004), p. 73, also renders this as 'some secret land'.
66. James Gairdner, *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Reigns of Richard III and Henry VII* (1863), Vol II, pp. 335–6, 'XVII – Fines Levied on Warbeck's Adherents'.
67. Hampton, *Crown and People*, pp. 204–5. My thanks to John Dike of The Missing Princes Project's Coldridge Research Group for alerting me to this and for a copy of Speke's will. See also: p. 214 for James Haute's support of Richard III. Haute was a former Esquire of the Body to Edward IV and a close relation of the Woodville family and a number of the rebels in the October 1483 rebellion, which spread the rumour of the boys' deaths.
68. Ann Wroe, *Perkin*, p. 177.
69. Sir Frederick Madden, *Documents Relating to Perkin Warbeck, with Remarks on his History* (1837), p. 25. Also see: *Archæologia*, Vol 27, (1838), p. 178. From a long and very detailed written report to Henry VII from Bernard de Vignolles, a Frenchman, dated at Rouen, 14 March 1495 (modern calendar 1496). Vignolles records: 'the said Prior of St. John, has been two or three times, once a twelve-month, to the house of Sir Thomas Tirel, to inquire after news, and discussed various matters between them, and among other things the Prior began to speak how King Edward had formerly been in the said house, to which the said Sir Thomas replied, that it was true, and that the King had formerly made good cheer there, and that he hoped, by God's will, that the son of the said Edward should make the like cheer there, and that the said house had been built with the money of France ... and during the above discourse the said Bernard and Sir John Thonge [Thweng?] were present'.
70. Horrox, *ONDB*, Tyrell family.
71. Wroe, *Perkin*, pp. 177–8, 185, 228.
72. Horrox, *ONDB*, Tyrell family.
73. Audrey Williamson, *The Mystery of the Princes* (1978), p. 91. The tradition records: 'that the princes and their mother Elizabeth Woodville lived in the hall by permission of the uncle' and goes back 'well before the eighteenth century and was handed down from generation to generation'. In 1973 it had been revealed to Williamson during her researches by a relative of the Tyrell family, Kathleen Margaret Drewe.
74. Carson, *Maligned King*, p. 183.
75. Sewell, p. 179.
76. For Tyrell's children, see note 11 above.
77. Davies, p. 242. Matthew Lewis, *The Survival of the Princes in the Tower* (2017), pp. 29–31. For a transcript of John Rastell's *Pastime*, pp. 29–30. A full extract is also available on The Missing Princes Project website at: <https://revealingrichardiii.com/tyrells-confession.html>
78. Sewell, p. 152. Dibdin, *Pastime*, pp. 293–4, 297. Rastell states: 'Immediately after his coronation, the grudge, as well of the lords as of the commons, greatly increased against him [King Richard], because the common fame went that he had secretly murdered the two sons of his brother, King Edward IV in the Tower of London.' Sir James Tyrell is not mentioned in Rastell's account for any of the reigns including Richard III's (pp. 297–9), although a 'Sir Thomas Tyrell' is recorded as being beheaded after the (second) battle of St Albans (1461), p.274. This is a mistake for Sir Thomas Kyriell of Kent (1396–1461).