THE BIRKBECK

EARLY MODERN

SOCIETY

BULLETIN

Issue 7
Summer 2008

Birkbeck
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Early Modernists,

Welcome to the seventh edition of our bulletin. I am delighted to say that our events programme for 2008-09 is shaping up very well, with confirmed speakers including Heather Forsyth from the Museum of London, who will talk about the treasure found in Stuart London that is known as the 'Cheapside Hoard', and Peter Burke, who will discuss the rhetoric of autobiography in seventeenth-century Europe. We will finish this year's programme of academic events with our second student conference, 'Journeys and Encounters', on Saturday 12 July. The range of papers is very exciting and reflects the society's multi-disciplinary ethos: people will be speaking about topics that include the New World, plant finding journeys of English herbalists in the 1640s, pamphlet wars, and Sir Kenelm Digby's privateering career. I would like to thank everyone who submitted a synopsis – all of them demonstrated a high level of interest in the period and theme. On the day we will be able to provide lunch for all delegates and speakers, thanks to the generosity of Julian Swann and the School of History, Classics and Archaeology, which is much appreciated. We will therefore need to ask those who want to attend the conference to register beforehand, in order that we have an idea of how many people to expect. The registration form and full programme is available via the School of History, Classics and Archaeology website. There is no charge to attend this event, so come along and hear your peers do what they do best!

Sticking with events, this year Laura Jacobs has co-ordinated our series of film nights: we have seen 'The Return of Martin Guerre', 'Luther', 'La Reine Margot' and 'Tous les Matins du Monde'. These have been well attended and hugely enjoyable. It is a delight to see films such as these on the big screen, particularly since cinemas such as The Scala at Kings Cross have been consigned to history, and it has become increasingly difficult to see non-mainstream films in our capital city.

I hope that you can all make the Natalie Zemon Davis event on 30 June, and are aware of the seating arrangements: members can access the room between 5.45-6.15, and everyone else from 6.15-6.30, so please arrive before 6.15 in order to be guaranteed a seat! This promises to be a very stimulating paper. Over the summer we have organised a guided walk to be led by Karen Chester on 1 August ('Shakespeare's London') and hope to put on another film night and have a trip to the Globe Theatre; and our AGM is scheduled for 6.30pm, 25 July. Further details on all of these events will be e-mailed to members nearer to the time.

Finally, I wish to thank the committee members for their hard work, and the staff in the Students' Union and History offices for their help in promoting our events.

With best wishes,

Stephen Brogan
President, Birkbeck Early Modern Society
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/hca/current/societies/#earlymodern
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/susocieties/earlymodern/index.htm

THE BULLETIN: EDITOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to Issue Seven of the *Birkbeck Early Modern Society Bulletin.* As editor, I have striven to introduce new features and an increase use of imagery into the publication over the past few issues in order to make it more interesting and attractive to read. I would therefore like to thank all those people who have said kind words about the *Bulletin* and praised the new features such as 'Visits'. The next logical step is to submit an article for inclusion. So if any of you wish to write an article for a future issue of the *Bulletin* then please contact me at the e-mail address below.

In this issue we have all the usual features including a section detailing our next set of events. Whether it be at a lecture, a film night, or on an organized outing we are determined to provide our membership with enjoyable and informative events. In much the same way the *Bulletin* exists in order to inform and entertain our membership, and if any of you have questions or observations about the publication then please get in touch.

At this point I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the *Bulletin* over the past year and in particular my fellow committee member, Karen Baston, without whose help this publication would be much the poorer.

Finally, I would like to send my best wishes to another of my fellow committee members, Nadiya Midgley, and wish her a speedy recovery from her present illness and a worry free time for the rest of her pregnancy.

Please contact me for any information regarding the *Bulletin.* The next issue will be out in the autumn of 2008. Have a wonderful summer.

John Croxon
Editor
john.m.croxon@magnoxsouthsites.com

RECENT EVENTS

Richard Williams on 'Lucas Cranach at the Court of Saxony', 3rd April 2008, Birkbeck College, University of London

In conjunction with the Cranach exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, Richard Williams gave an entertaining and enlightening talk for us at Birkbeck.

Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553) is an artist who inspires controversy. His 1532 'Venus' was banned from posters on London Underground but later reinstated. Brian Sewell, art critic of the *Evening Standard*, dubbed the artist 'Cranach the Crude' in a review of the exhibition.

Cranach is an artist who needs to be related to his own time and place to be properly appreciated. Comparisons to his Italian contemporaries are unfair since Cranach was working in a completely different environment with different aesthetic considerations in mind. When his good friend Martin Luther became the first critic to describe his work as 'crude', he was referring to non-religious content not to style.

Opinions about Cranach are influenced by trends in art criticism. In the early twentieth century, quasi-scientific methods of art criticism and theory, led by German critics, took interpretation away from works of art and focused on texts related to the works. The approach is exemplified by Erwin Panofsky whose *Studies in Iconology* (1939) encouraged marginalising style in favour of content. In the last twenty years there has been a renewed interest in how paintings look. Cultural history is considered and the visual idiom and style can convey meaning. This attention to material culture looks at surviving objects for insights and can help us to discover the meaning to people living in the period. Cranach's life and work make an interesting study in this technique.

Cranach contentious style was a self-conscious aesthetic for his contemporaries and has been interpreted three ways in recent years. Was his work a signifier of social status, meant to evoke German nationalism, or a simplified idiom of a new protestant church? One thing is sure: his style changed over time.

Cranach was part of a dynasty of artists. His father, Hans, and his son, Lucas the Younger, who took over the workshop in 1550, were all painters. Cranach took the name of the city of his birth. He was in Vienna by 1501/2. The earliest paintings that have survived come from his time in Vienna and it is important to realise that Cranach was already in his 30s by this time. His early works are unidentified or lost. His 'St Jerome in the Wilderness' of 1502 is characterised by the use of bold, vigorous strokes and is very different from his later styles.

Cranach left Vienna in 1504 to take up a position in Wittenburg as court painter to Frederich of Saxony. (Frederich had wanted Dürer but was rebuffed.) The appointment was a success. Cranach had an annual salary of 100 guilders, a clothing allowance, a horse, and rights to a lodging in Wittenburg Castle (but he moved out to a posh town house in the city). Cranach became the second richest man in Wittenburg.

As court painter Cranach created religious paintings, portraits, and mythological paintings. He also designed gigantic wall paintings and panel paintings. All ornamental painting was Cranach's responsibility whether on textiles, silks, furniture, carriages, chandeliers, or facades. He was known for his realistic style with one viewer refusing to believe that some painted stags were not real until he touched them. Anything that required paint on it was the job of Cranach and his workshop. Cranach also acted as the designer for the court of Saxony and created patterns for other craftsmen. Carpets, stained glass, costumes, coats of arms, inscriptions, and even the dish for baking the gingerbread were all down to Cranach.

To accomplish all his tasks, Cranach had a business empire running from his workshop. In addition to his court commissions, he did private work including the illustrations for Luther's Bible and paintings for wealthy burghers. All this work meant a change in style and the change was quick. By 1506 a martyrdom of St Catherine is smoothly painted and blandly expressed. There is a marked difference from the Vienna years.

Cranach can be compared with Holbein who was working at the same time. The two painters take different approaches to similar subjects. Holbein's depiction of red velvet, for example, is a time-consuming, multi-layer approach which uses light and texture to create a complex effect. Cranach, on the other hand, cuts corners with a black background with red stripes painted over either by himself or by his studio assistants. Cranach was known as 'the swift painter' and his time saving methods show streamlined production was happening in the workshop.

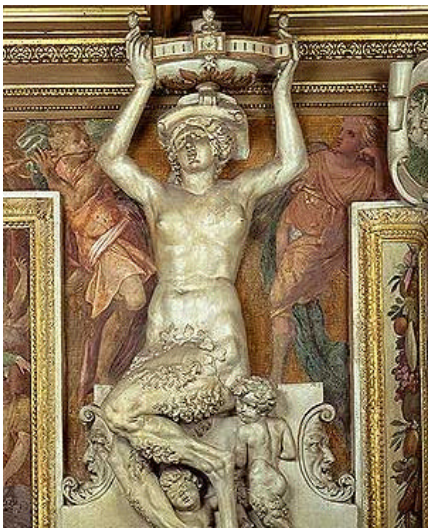
Cranach's work rate was epic. In 1532, the duke commissioned sixty pairs of portraits of himself and his brother to be delivered in one year. Cranach delivered. How? One way was to simplify the facial features of the sitters. Another was to incorporate printed pages stuck on with a glaze instead of painting inscriptions by hand.

Cranach is, of course, best known for his stylised female portraits. His women were even more stylized than the men. (This is not unlike the modern day when airbrushing is common.) Cranach's 'Three Saxon Princesses' are hard to tell apart. For 19th-20th century critics, portraits like this reflected the down-hill progression of the portrait. They were cartoon-like to post-romantic viewers. But we know Cranach could do 'real' portraits. His 'Hans Luther' (Martin's father) of 1527 was done on tinted paper and has a sense of spontaneity. The sitter has a resigned, melancholic look and his age is evident. So why the difference in styles?

The difference is in the sitters. The court princesses may have insisted on the stylised look to reflect their status. This is comparable to the court portraits of Queen Elizabeth I in England where how a person actually looks is secondary to showing a mask of status.

Cranach's female nudes are also highly stylised. An early woodcut of 'Venus and Cupid' of 1508 shows the influence of an Italian Renaissance figure. Venus has a rounded form and a large bosom. A 1509 painting of the same subject, the earliest surviving from Cranach, also has an Italian feel with Botticelli as the model. Cranach's approach to the 'Venus and Cupid' theme – a best seller – changes over time. The shape of the body changes and this new style can be traced to France.

In the 1530s, Fontainebleau developed a new French style under the influence of Italian Mannerist artists Rosso Fiorentino and Primaticcio. The rich stucco interior of Fontainebleau Palace inspired a new look and long limbed and small breasted females became the favoured look of the art of the day. Cranach, to be appreciated, needs to be compared with artists working at the same time. His dramatic change in style shows that he was not parochial but bang up to date with fashions in other European courts. The Fontainebleau look had no sense of the skeleton or muscle structures so beloved of the Italian Renaissance artists. This new style found a ready audience in Germany as it looked strangely familiar.



Fiorentino
Fontainebleau Satyre
c. 1535-7

Cranach
Venus Standing in a Landscape
1529

Riemenschneider
St Catherine
c. 1505

In 16th C. Germany, two types of art were recognised. 'Welsh' art was foreign and by that meant Italian. 'Deutsch' art was the traditional German style. Many of Cranach's patrons objected to the foreign style and preferred the German approach. Elongated figures, however, were not the discovery of Italian Mannerists: the forms used by Cranach go back to an earlier German medieval tradition. The stylised bodies reject the Classical and the Italianate in favour of a native style. In adopting them, Cranach responded to his patrons' requests to assert a Germanic style. By looking more at German medieval art and less at Italian examples, we can better understand why Cranach was so successful in his time.

KAREN BASTON

Laura Stewart, 'Serving God and Mammon: The Anglo Scottish Relationship in the mid 17th century',
7th May 2008, Birkbeck College, University of London

Dr Laura Stewart

Birkbeck's Laura Stewart gave an intriguing introduction to Anglo-Scottish relations during the Civil War as our first summer 2008 event.

Taking recent historiographic developments as a starting point, Stewart revealed the problems inherent in studying relations across the border. Is 'The British Problem' really a problem or is it academic angst? Britishness has always been a Scottish concern since they are the ones who seek it. But the integration by Scots into England, especially in recent times in the realms of politics and journalism, means what we need to take a new holistic approach to old questions. On the same day the Scottish Labour Leader called for a referendum on Scottish independence, Stewart took us back in time to look at the history of the relations between Scotland and England.

Not a lot of collaborative work has been done on the Civil War period but common themes and shared experiences will enhance our understanding of events. The extent of censorship and the question of how a particular culture achieves dominance are areas to be explored.

The Scottish political perspective is especially important. Financial records offer clues as to the creation of a small state. Taxation records are difficult to use but with them it is possible to put together estimates of expenditure. These records show the political constraints placed on the government as it waged war.

In 1638, Scotland was ruled by a Covenanting regime. It financed the Bishops' Wars in 1639 and 1640 by borrowing. In 1639, the Covenanting government overhauled the tax system – a bold act which the king had not dared to do – to reflect the real values of taxable assets. One major innovation was the introduction of a completely revolutionary excise tax. Monthly maintenance charges were also levied. Some of the new taxations ideas were borrowed from the English parliamentary regime. They provided the funds for uprisings in 1643, 1644, and 1649 and, in 1643, financed the sending of troops to Ireland. By 1647 and the end of the first Civil War, the government had breathing space to do some auditing.

But Scotland was divided about how to deal with the monarchy. In autumn 1647 Scottish nobles allied themselves with Charles and in 1649 even the godly Covenanters decided to gamble on a restored Charles II. The Scots were too busy fighting each other to put together a financial package to fight the English.

The Covenanters, however, proved that they were more successful at raising money than relying on royal income had been. They were able to raise twice as much as the monarchs had even with war and plague raging in their country. The reformed taxation system was based on real wealth assessments and this had larger implications for the development of Scotland.

The Scottish state's tax system was part of a bigger process. The re-organised state strengthened links between the centre and the provinces. Up to date information meant that leaders knew what people were worth and how reliable they were to a much greater extent and this made the central government more successful.

Interestingly, the major provider of funds from 1629-51 in Scotland was England. In 1643, the 'neutral' Scots were approached by the English parliament. The southerners wanted Scottish support and they were willing to pay for it. The negotiation was successful and a personal triumph for Archibald Campbell, earl of Argyll and *de facto* Scottish leader. In return for cash, the Scottish army would invade England and fight

on English soil. But things did not go entirely to plan south of Berwick. By the end of 1644, the English were refusing to give the Scots priority and the Scottish army fell back, but not completely. The English on the Border were not impressed and wanted to be rid of the Scots. In July 1646, the English Commons voted to stop paying the Scots. Because the Scottish army was by now more than half funded by the English, this caused a huge problem.

Civilian politicians were aware that their soldiers were going hungry and that they desperately needed injections of sterling if they were to pay them. By autumn the alliance was in tatters and the government began to consider settling with the king. Argyll was pragmatic and negotiated a way to leave the English payroll with dignity. Soldiers did not give up their garrisons until they were paid and, after a lot of haggling, the Scots agreed to leave for £200,000 sterling. (£2.5 million in Scottish currency.) The settlement of 1647 meant the Scots could retreat without having endured any significant defeats and a rupture between the countries was avoided.

If the Covenanters thought this settlement would bring peace, they were mistaken. Two interpretations of the monarchy were in opposition in Scotland. Argyll supported a non-monarchist, but not a republican solution. He wanted a limited monarchy. His rival leader was James Hamilton, duke of Hamilton, supported a fully restored monarchy. Hamilton was not practical politically: an impoverished and untrustworthy king was not a good bet. The Covenanters were not in a good position either: plague had curtailed their tax collections and they were in debt. Neither side could afford a war.

Hamilton raised an army which was defeated by the New Model Army. (He himself was executed by the English parliament soon after his king.) The Covenanter regime also collapsed and its financial revolution did not last. The Restoration meant that London-based Scots were better placed for advantage and Scotland's government eventually failed.

Scotland's state was fragile and its people were marginalised. It is an interesting question to debate why Scotland failed while other small states like the Dutch Republic and Lithuania managed to survive. Why did Scotland capitulate in 1707? Does it have potential as a modern European Union country separate from the rest of Britain? If it does, 'Britain' would cease to exist.

An interesting discussion followed which encompassed a range of topics from the rate interest charged during the Bishops' Wars (8%) to dialectal differences along the Border and the effect this may have had on Anglo-Scots relations to the 'Scottishness' of Charles I. Other considerations were the role of religion, the reasons for Scotland's large army, the administration of the inland revenue system, and what it meant to be 'Scottish' in the 1640s-1650s.

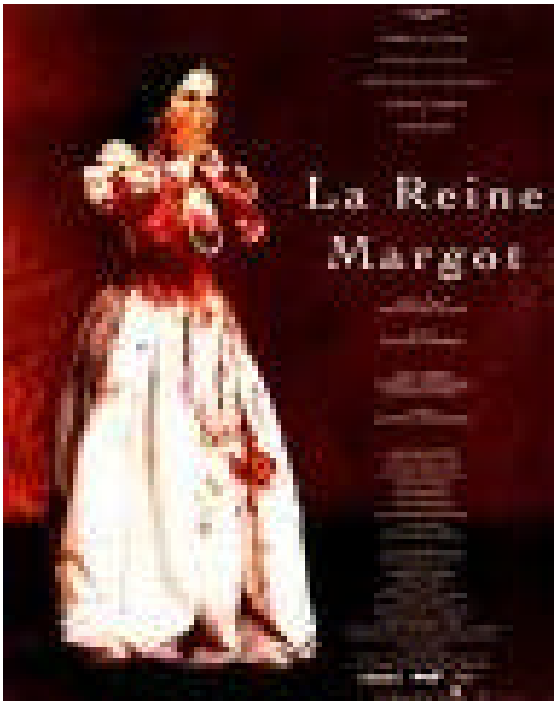
We were left with much to consider and a reminder of the relevance of history to modern issues.

KAREN BASTON

FILM FRIDAY

We held two more Friday film night this term. These could become permanent fixtures with your support. Birkbeck lecture theatres make ideal cinemas - they have comfortable seating, great sound and big screens - What's more we provide free refreshments and there is usually time to socialise before and after the film.

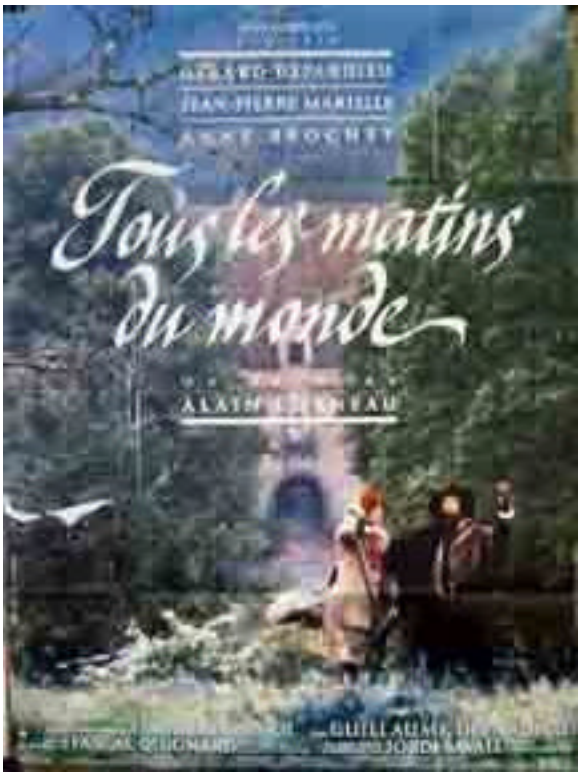
Please send suggestions for films with an early modern theme that you would like us to show on a big Birkbeck screen to Laura Jacobs l.jacobs@english.bbk.ac.uk



La Reine Margot (1993)
Directed by Patrice Chereau and staring Isabelle Adjani and Daniel Auteuil.

On May 30 we showed *La Reine Margot* (1994) directed by Patrice Chéreau, based on the novel by Alexander Dumas. Isabelle Adjani played Marguerite de Valois, better known as Margot, daughter of scheming Catholic power player Catherine de' Medici (Virna Lisi). Although Margot herself is excluded from the throne by the Salic Law, Catherine decides to make an overture of goodwill by offering up her daughter Margot in marriage to prominent Huguenot and King of Navarre, Henri de Bourbon (Daniel Auteuil). At the same time, Catherine schemes to bring about the notorious St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572, when thousands of Protestants are slaughtered. The marriage between Henri and Margot goes forward but Margot, who does not love Henri, begins a passionate affair with the soldier La Môle (Vincent Pérez), also a Protestant. Murders by poisoning follow and court intrigues multiply. Queen Catherine's villainous plotting to place her son, the future Henry III (Pascal Greggory) on the throne threatens the lives of La Môle, Margot and Henri as well as that of her own son King Charles IX (Jean-Hugues Anglade).

Laura Jacobs



Tous les matins du monde (1991)
Directed by Alain Corneau and staring Gerald Depardieu .

On June 13, 30 people attended our screening of *Tous les matins du monde* 1991, directed by Alain Corneau, staring and Gérard Depardieu who revisits the life of his character, a late 17th century composer named Marin Marais. Narrated by Marais, the story revolves around his life as a musician, his mentor Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe (Jean-Pierre Marielle) and his love interests. The haunting sound of his instrument, the viol (viola da gamba), played by Jordi Savall, is heard throughout and plays a major role in setting the mood. Though fictional, the story is based on historical characters and is beautifully and poignantly imagined.

Marin Marais (31 May 1656, Paris – 15 August 1728, Paris) was a French composer and viol player. He studied composition with Jean-Baptiste Lully, often conducting his operas, and with master of the bass viol Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe for 6 months. He was hired as a musician in 1676 to the royal court of Versailles. In 1679 was appointed "ordinaire de la chambre du roy pour la viole", a title he kept until 1725.Marais was a master of the basse de viol, and the leading French composer of music for that instrument. He wrote five books of *Pièces de viole* (1686-1725) generally suites with basso continuo. His other works include a book of *Pieces en trio* (1692) and four operas (1693-1709), including *Alcyone* (1706) noted for its tempest scene. Little of Marin Marais' personal life is known. He married a Parisian, Catherine d'Amicourt, on 21 September 1676 shortly after he arrived at court and the couple had 19 children.

Laura Jacobs

Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553)

The Royal Academy

Ten members of the Birkbeck Early Modern Society turned up in Piccadilly at 6.00 p.m. on Friday, 23rd May in order to view the present exhibition at The Royal Academy of the works of the German artist Lucas Cranach the Elder.

Most people appeared impressed, to varying degrees, by the exhibition, and Cranach certainly seemed to have painted a larger range and scope of subjects than perhaps some of us were aware of prior to viewing the exhibition. For a comprehensive review of the exhibition please see the article by Timothy Alves elsewhere in this *Bulletin*.

The exhibition was well attended with a timed admittance but there were never too many people present to make it an uncomfortable experience. In one of the rooms I spotted one of the experts from the Antiques Roadshow. However, I doubt that he was giving valuations for any of the works!

Afterwards, most of us went to a local pub and, standing around outside in the warm evening air, people discussed the exhibition and other Society events and generally had a good time.

Great thanks must go to our secretary, Laura Jacobs, who purchased the tickets on behalf of the Society and organized the event.

John Croxon

VISITS
Middleham Castle

For anyone who has been to the small town of Middleham in Wenslydale, deep in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales, it is the ruined castle that dominates the surrounding countryside and every year captures the hearts of thousands of tourists.

The castle belongs of course to the Middle Ages, but its inclusion here is quite legitimate as the most important era in the history of the castle occurred at the beginning of the period that we cover. During the dynastic struggle of the late-fifteenth century that later became known as the Wars of the Roses the castle was owned by its two most important figures: Firstly, by Richard Neville, Warwick the Kingmaker, and then by his son-in-law Richard, duke of Gloucester, later King Richard III.

The attraction of Middleham Castle is threefold: It lies in the beautiful Yorkshire countryside and a climb to the top of one of the towers produces breathtaking views of the surrounding area. Secondly, it possesses great ruined beauty; its once impregnable stonework now a battered remnant of a magnificent past. Thirdly, above all others, Middleham was the favourite residence of Richard III. He spent what were the happiest times of his life at Middleham with his wife and son, and its sad, haunting decay echoes the history of that of its most famous owner.

The history of Middleham castle is in many ways the history of the north of England. After the Norman Conquest, in 1069, the land around Middleham was given to Alan Rufus or 'Alan The Red', a nephew of William the Conqueror. Rufus built a wooden motte-and-bailey castle, 500 yards to the south-west of where the present castle stands, on a site known as William's Hill. Middleham was a Northern stronghold, originally sighted here in order to counter raiding Scottish forces and to guard Coverdale and to protect the road from Richmond to Skipton. Alan Rufus was also the builder of nearby Richmond Castle. By the time of the Domesday Book in 1086 Middleham had been granted to Alan Rufus's brother Ribald. This early castle was abandoned in the 12th century when a new castle was built centered around a massive stone keep. The construction of the present castle began around 1170 by Robert Fitzrandolph (grandson of Ribald) during the reign of Henry II when he built the keep and original bailey. It was enlarged and developed over the generations and much improved by the Nevilles. King Richard III was particularly fond of Middleham, preferring it to any of his other castles and the round tower at the south-west corner of the curtain wall, traditionally known as the Prince's Tower, is said to be where Richard's son, Prince Edward, was born in1473. Sadly, Middleham was also the place where Edward fell ill and died in April 1484. After Richard was killed at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 Middleham Castle came under the control of the Tudors and the castle was left to fall into disrepair. In 1604 James I granted the castle to Sir Henry Linley, who made some repairs and lived there until his death in 1610 when his daughter Jane Linley then inherited the castle. In 1613 Jane married Edward, 2nd Viscount Loftus, who occupied it until 1644. During the Civil War it was to be used as a prison. In 1646 Parliament ordered the east range wall be destroyed along with most of the wall-walks, thereby leaving the castle as the shell that survives today.

Although a ruin, there is enough remaining of the castle to make a visit to Middleham a really worthwhile experience. Passing through the ruined gatehouse there are enough walls remaining to enable everyone to gain clues as what it looked like in its heyday.

Owned by English Heritage, and situated close to other castles and abbeys, it is a really worthwhile day out for anyone holidaying in Yorkshire and who wants to learn more about England's past. The only downside is the quite dreadful sculpture, supposedly of King Richard, situated within the walls. With a serpent sliding down his back it purports to represent something of the monarch of Shakespeare's play and of Tudor propaganda. This modern rubbish should never have been placed in Middleham; no doubt someone in English Heritage thought that they were being trendy when they commissioned it but, akin to many Turner Prize exhibits, this is trash. I sometimes wonder how it has survived this long without being vandalised and surely, after so many complaints, English Heritage will have to remove it.

However, if one can ignore this rubbish then a genuine jewel of the North awaits you. Climbing to the top of the south-east tower provides the visitor with glorious views for miles around, and explorations of the remains of the site can give fascinating insights into the layout of the castle and a glimpse of what life was like for its inhabitants.

If you have never visited Midleham then do go, you will be captivated by its broken beauty and by its association with the last true English king.

John Croxon

Middleham is now known as much for its racehorses as for the medieval castle

Middleham Castle set in beautiful countryside

After the castle fell into disrepair much of the stone was taken from its walls and used by locals to build many of the houses in the town. Some local premises still have to this day huge mantel stones around their fireplaces which were once part of this great castle.

The castle ruins tower above the small town of Middleham

Despite its ruined state, the central keep is still an imposing structure measuring some 110 feet by 80 feet.

Marston Moor

The battle of Marston Moor was fought late in the evening of the 2nd July 1644 and proved a decisive victory for the Parliamentarians under Lord Manchester. It was also a battle where Oliver Cromwell distinguished himself as a cavalry commander. The battle took place just outside York and is an easy trip from the city. Unfortunately, there isn't a lot to see and with only a commemorative obelisk and an information board containing a brief description of the battle anyone without any knowledge of the battles of the Civil War would struggle to find much to interest them. However, for those with some knowledge and an interest in the period, it is worth a brief stop on the way back from an abbey or castle to have a look at the site.

It was pouring with rain when we arrived and the scene of the battle was a soggy muddy field. A minor road to York traverses the battlefield and the obelisk has been erected at the side of the road. Despite the inclement weather we got out of the car and read the inscriptions upon the monument and what was written upon the information board.

Although none of the land has been built upon the topography has changed. Depending upon the time of year, the battlefield will either be ploughed fields or be full of wheat, barley or some other crop. However, looking across the fields and back beyond the road whilst referring to the information board and a map of the battle, it is possible to visualise the action and the different battle formations, assessing where certain sections of the opposing armies lined up.

For a country steeped in history and, as evidenced by the popularity of historical sights and historical television programmes, a country with a populace increasingly interested in history, we fail to care for our battlefields. Whilst there are a few such as Bosworth and Hastings which are embraced with enthusiasm, some, such as Barnet, have been built upon and lost forever, whilst many, like Marston Moor, are just marked with a simple information board and a stone monument. Surely it is time that either the government, county councils, or government bodies such as English Heritage or the National Trust bought up these battlefields in order to preserve them and open them up for visitors to find out more about our past.

I did suggest to my companion that we re-enact the battle in the mud with me playing the part of the victorious Cromwell and she the defeated Prince Rupert. However, her complete lack of enthusiasm for my suggestion left us with no alternative but to return to the car and drive off back to York. You just can't please some people!

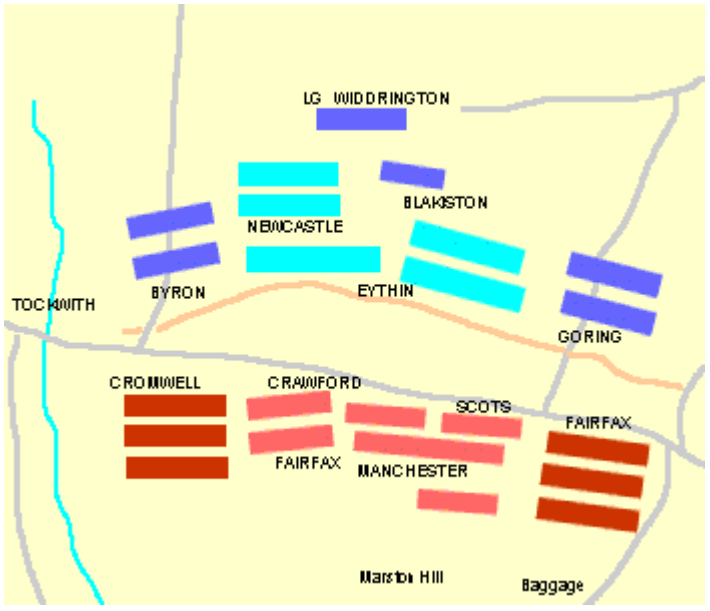
John Croxon

For anyone interested in visiting the battlefield site I have provided an account of the battle, including maps. For this, I have found an invaluable source in David Ross and Britain Express. Their web site is a good place to discover more about the battle. For a deeper analysis of the battle see David Clark's Marston Moor, published by Pen and Sword Books Ltd.

Battle of Marston Moor, 2nd July 1644

Jul 2 Parliamentarian troops had started to move south towards Tadcaster in case Rupert marched south from York, but realised that the moors behind them were filling up with Royalist horsemen. They then had to turn back and take up positions south of the road.

Rupert delayed the start of the battle. Newcastle's foot were slow to appear. Much of the day was spent with both armies deploying regiments as they arrived.



Both armies lined up in the traditional way with foot in the middle and cavalry on both flanks. The brown line shows a ditch which had a hedge along the side. The darker colours indicate cavalry.

2 pm Some time after 2pm, Lord Eythin brought the infantry from York as the Roundhead foot were taking up positions after their aborted march to Tadcaster. An exchange of cannon started - making Byron move his cavalry back a little.

4 pm Both sides had finally deployed all their forces.

7 pm Rupert decided there would be no attack that day and instructed his men to cook food and prepare for the night.

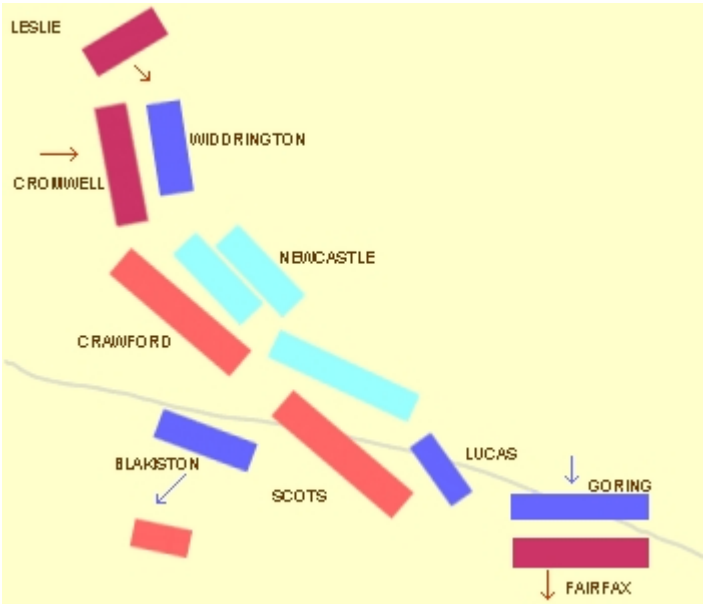
7.30 pm A sudden hail and thunder storm. The Parliamentarian armies started advancing down the slope towards the enemy lines.

The infantry in the centre advanced to the ditch which they crossed after a short struggle with the 'forlorn hope' and then went on to engage the Royalist front line. Newcastle's Whitecoats pushed in to join the hand-to-hand fighting. The Parliamentary foot started to fall back. When Blakiston charged in with his brigade of horse it almost turned into a rout. He charged across the road as far as the Parliamentarian third line. The Parliamentarian left were more successful as they wheeled to the right, turning in on the Royalists.

Fairfax on the Parliamentary right, charged across difficult terrain (hedges, ditches, gorse) and came under effective fire from the Royalist musketeers. He managed to get about 400 of his men over the ditch, but came under such heavy fire he had to charge Goring's troops straight away. The Royalist front line were scattered, but Fairfax had lost a lot of men in the process. He pursued the fleeing Royalists westwards for a while, but when he turned back, he found himself among a large number of enemy horsemen who had charged the Parliamentarian second rank. In fact Goring's horsemen charged right through to plunder the baggage at the top of the hill.

The second line of Royalist cavalry, under Sir Charles Lucas, then turned in to attack the right flank of the Parliamentarian infantry. On the left, Cromwell’s cavalry charged.

Byron, against Rupert's instructions, made the mistake of advancing to meet the charge head on. This masked the fire of the musketeers and also landed his men in some very marshy ground, which would have served better to defend him. The Royalist front line was quickly routed. Rupert saw what had happened and counter-attacked with his reserves, his life-guard and the men from the broken ranks that he could rally. The attack halted Cromwell's advance for a while but when Leslie attacked the Royalist flanks with his third line of horsemen, Rupert and his men were sent fleeing northwards. Cromwell's disciplined horsemen did not pursue the enemy but reformed ranks on the battlefield.



8.30 pm At this point, the centre and right of the Parliamentary army had been routed. Leven thought the day was lost and fled to Leeds. Fairfax also left and made for Hull.

The day gave way to a clear night with a bright full moon.

Fierce fighting was still going on in the centre as Crawford's foot battled with Newcastle's Whitecoats.

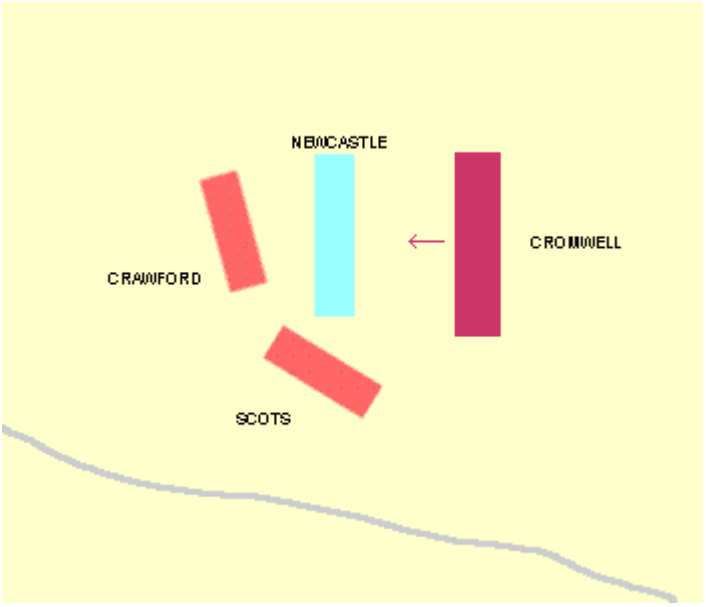
Cromwell had reformed his horsemen and he and Leslie were taking on Widdrington's horse.

On the Royalist left, Sir Charles Lucas, whose cavalry had been attacking the enemy flanks, had been unhorsed and taken prisoner.

Goring was trying to gather as many of his dispersed horsemen as he could.

Fairfax, who had returned from chasing towards York, met up with Lambert, but finding themselves surrounded by Royalists, removed their white ribbons from their hats and proceeded to ride northwards behind the rear of the enemy and met up with Cromwell. They persuaded him to move round the rear of the Royalists to attack Goring, the only Royalist horse left on the battlefield. Goring found himself having to turn and face an attack from the north. The Royalist horse were soon driven from the field and Cromwell spared some men to chase them towards York.

Cromwell then turned and helped in the destruction of the Royalist foot, who by now had been completely turned into a north-south position. They were completely surrounded by the Parliamentarian forces, and with Cromwell attacking them in the rear, stood little chance. The last resistance was from Newcastle's Whitecoats who refused to surrender and fought to the last man.



9.30pm The battle was over - it had lasted two hours.

11 pm Manchester rode round his regiments thanking them and asking them to thank God for victory.

Midnight All fighting had subsided by midnight.

Jul 3 Rupert, Newcastle and Eythin met up in York.

Newcastle left for Holland, taking with him Eythin, Mackworth, Widdrington and several other senior Royalists.

Rupert rode out of York with what troops he could find (no more than 6000), but he collected stragglers on his way. He met Montrose at Richmond who asked him for troops to attack Scotland. Rupert turned him down and led his troops to Chester.

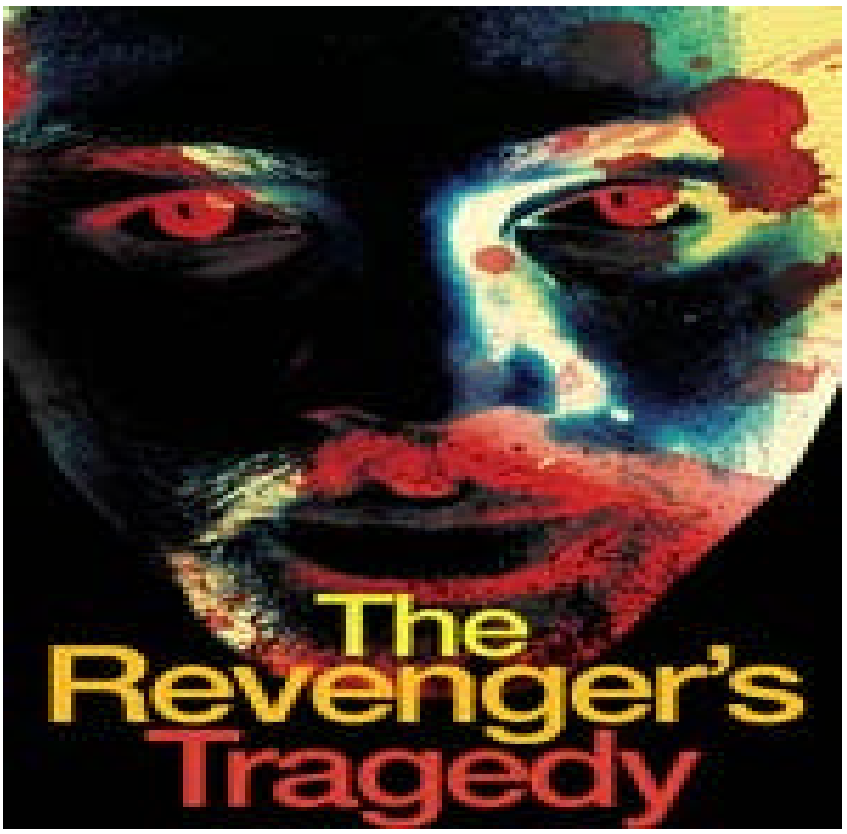
Jul 16 The allied armies did not pursue Rupert. Instead they returned to their positions outside York. Sir Thomas Glemham had no alternative but to yield the city, which he did on July 16th. Lord Fairfax replaced him as the governor of York.

As a direct result of the battle, York fell and the north of England came under the control of Parliament. Marston Moor proved the first major decisive Parliamentarian victory of the war. It showed Cromwell to be a great cavalry commander, and it was the first time that Rupert had really experienced defeat.

ARTS REPORT

THEATRE

The Revenger's Tragedy: The Olivier, National Theatre, London



Thomas Middleton

Thomas Middleton wrote The Revenger's Tragedy in 1606 and although it enjoyed a degree of popularity it never achieved any great acclaim, and over the last three centuries has been largely ignored. Now we have two productions playing, one in Manchester, and this one at The National.

From the opening moments the similarities with Hamlet are obvious; a corrupt court, a feuding family, a tragic figure at the heart who is hell-bent upon revenge, but there is no real comparison between the two plays: One is a work of genius, the other is fatally flawed. This is not to say that I disliked the piece, because it does have some strong moments, but unfortunately there is a sense of weakness and a definite unevenness with both the play itself and in this particular production.

The play contains a duke and a duchess, both have been married before and the duke has a son from a previous marriage and a bastard son, while the duchess has three sons from her first marriage. All sons possess ambitious and corrupt natures and Spurio, the duke's bastard son, ends up having an affair with his stepmother. Then there is a widow with two sons and a daughter. One son, Vendice, is set on revenge for the death of his father who died in disgrace at the duke's hands, and for the death of his betrothed, Gloriana, poisoned by the duke.

Vendice, in disguise, is charged by Lussurioso to arrange for a young woman to become Lussurioso's mistress. The woman is chaste and has so far refused. Vendice is to offer her and her mother jewels and money. The woman in question is, surprise surprise, Vendice's sister. The sister again refuses but the mother succumbs to the riches and promises to change her daughter's mind, Vendice is distraught. It is perhaps worth pointing out here that this is exactly what most of the nobility and upwardly mobile families did in these times, and that a good chunk of today's aristocracy owe their wealth and position to the procurement of daughters and nieces for the entertainment of the royal family over the centuries.

Vendice, aided by his brother Hippolito, set out to destroy the royal family and, in an orgy of bloody revenge achieve this, and the play ends with the duchess banished and the duke and all sons and stepsons murdered, and then finally, in the deaths of Vendice and Hippolito themselves.

The play begins with an explosion and immediately launches into a hard, fast rock rhythm which sets the tone for the rest of the play. So far so good, the only way to stage this piece is to go hard and fast. The decadence and corruption endemic in the court is established from the beginning with scenes of debauchery and excess and the brutal rape of the wife of Lord Antonio by the younger son of the duchess. At his subsequent trial it appears that he will be sentenced to death but the verdict is deferred by the duke. Justice is not seen to be done.

The fast-paced action hardly ever ceases, added by the use of a revolving set in the centre of the stage which is divided into sections. This works well on many occasions but at other times just spins around in a rather pointless way. The first glimpse that we have of Lussurioso, the legitimate heir, is of him masturbating in a corridor. I'm still unsure why he should be doing this other than perhaps the director thought to emphasise in a very direct manner that he is a bit of a tosser! The production is also full of irritating moments; two androgynous figures accompany Lussurioso everywhere and don't speak but just smoulder; obviously another heavy nod towards the depravity of the court, there are people having sex everywhere, which is amusing at the beginning but begins to wear and distract as it continues, the production is in modern dress which is fine but why then have the protagonists wear swords, it just looks ludicrous. However, the most annoying aspect of this production has to be the use of dancers who cavort about the stage in meaningless dance routines regardless of what action is taking place on stage. Indeed, on one hugely irritating occasion one lone dancer throws herself about the stage front for several minutes in an energetic but pointless manner, then rolls about the rear of stage in full view of the audience whilst unrelated dialogue takes place at the front of the stage.

There are some plus points: All the performances are good, Rory Kinnear in particular gives a tough and compelling performance as Vendice, a man driven to the ultimate in his thirst for revenge. When, at the end of the play, Vendice surveys the carnage before him and exclaims that now, with all their enemies dead it is time to die, it is quite poignant. However, the play as a whole is just not strong enough to hold ones attention throughout and upon two occasions I found my eyes wandering around the audience.

I don't wish to be over-critical of this play because there are some good moments and it is worth going to see if for nothing else but as an interesting example of Jacobean theatre, but there are far better plays and far better productions. For Hamlet it most certainly isn't.

John Croxon.

The History Plays
Royal Shakespeare Company
Roundhouse, Camden
(Finished May 2008)

Richard II

Jonathan Slinger in Richard II

Shakespeare's *Richard II*, the opening play in his Histories cycle, may be considered the most important part. *Richard II* introduces themes that are explored throughout the rest of the cycle: loyalty, rivalry, conspiracy, rebellion, murder, and revenge. Shakespeare is retelling the history of the late-middle ages, but he is also asking the audience to think about the big ideas behind the play.

Big ideas require performances to match and the actors in this RSC production rise to the challenge. Jonathan Slinger's Richard II comes across as a clever man but ultimately a weak ruler. Clive Wood's Henry Bolingbroke/Henry IV is powerful and determined. Whenever Bolingbroke strides across the stage you feel the immense presence of the man who would be king. Roger Watkins presents a dignified portrayal of John of Gaunt. His last speech in Act 2, beautifully and poignantly delivered from his wheelchair, begins as a celebration of the English state: 'This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle'. Only towards the end does its true nature become clear: a dying man's criticism of the government:

> 'That England, that was wont to conquer others,
> hath made a shameful conquest of itself.' (Act 2, Scene 1)

There are subtleties within these performances, however: Richard's reflections after he has been deposed by Bolingbroke are thoughtful and touching. Bolingbroke, now Henry IV, appears genuinely disturbed at Richard's murder. Just before Richard's

murder, the audience sees Richard and Henry not as ex-king and king, but as men shocked at what their respective actions have led to and ironically, at this point in the play, the two cousins appear closer to each other than ever before.

With such a powerful male presence, the contribution of the female players might be overlooked. This is not the case: Hannah Barrie provides solid support as Queen Isabel and their final moments together when they are illuminated in a pillar of white light and showered with petals – one of the play's few visual effects – is another highlight. Two other notable performances are given by Maureen Beattie as the Duchess of York and in a small, but important role, Ann Ogbomo as the Queen's lady. Her role is another subtlety: a reminder that despite the political problems, daily duties must still go on.

The Roundhouse was originally an engine shed in the nineteenth century then became a bonded warehouse for Gilbey's Gin, before being redeveloped as a theatre in the 1960s. The building is Grade II listed so many original features remain. Its round shape is reminiscent of the Globe theatre at Southwark. All the plays in this series make good use of the walkways that lead through the audience to the stage. This is clever design and helps create a three-dimensional performance. The other main feature of the venue is a large boiler. Its lower doors allow dramatic entrances and exits and the upper sections make convincing representations of a tower. The stage sets are virtually non-existent: when Richard II observes the dual between Bolingbroke and Mowbray, he sits on a wheeled stepladder, while the combatants fight on saddles suspended from ropes. This is as it should be. The audience focuses on the players and speeches, not the furniture. Overall, this was a magnificent play in its own right and the story is set up nicely to be continued in *Henry IV*…

Henry IV, Part One and Part Two

Geoffrey Streatfeild and David Warner in Henry IV Part One

David Warner in Henry IV Part Two

King Henry IV kneels silently in prayer as dawn breaks. After several minutes he reaches for a water bowl and begins to wash. Whether he is preparing himself for the day ahead, or attempting to wash away the stain of his guilt over his cousin's death, is unclear. What is clear is this powerful man has been shocked. Henry has claimed the kingship and quickly realised that being the king is more than just a matter of wearing the crown. There is peace in France, but Henry's reign is threatened by rebellion at home from disgruntled nobility. Henry also has family problems. Henry's son and heir, Hal, has fallen in with bad company: Sir John Falstaff. Henry is alternately proud and dismayed by young Hal's behaviour. Hal fights well and honourably, assisting his father in suppressing rebellion. After the fighting, however, Hal slips back under the influence of Falstaff. This pattern repeats itself until Henry IV's death in Part Two. Falstaff hurries to London to greet Hal, now King Henry V, hoping for favours, but is dismissed: 'I know thee not old man. Fall to your prayers'.

Consensus of opinion holds that Part One of *Henry IV* is arguably better than Part Two, because of Part Two's relative lack of drama and the repetition of plot. To a certain extent, this is true: the plotline of Part Two, like many sequels, looks slightly recycled. This is partly due to the ending of Part One that finishes, somewhat abruptly, in the middle of Henry IV's kingship. Thus a sequel is required to finish the story and tie up loose ends. The problem is there is not enough historical material, so Part Two is padded with Falstaff's antics as comic relief. This might be seen as weak scripting but Shakespeare turns a potential weakness to his advantage. Falstaff's extended scenes allow the actors a larger canvas to display their abilities.

David Warner's performance as Falstaff is simply extraordinary. Falstaff lumbers around the stage, though he is quite nimble in escaping from personal danger, drinking and plotting his next hare-brained exploit. Falstaff can also spin a yarn, but his tallest story is claiming to have killed Hotspur, despite merely stabbing his corpse. Clive Wood develops his character of Henry IV. Henry is still the powerful, determined man the audience saw in *Richard II*, but now there are additional layers to

his character. The shock of Richard's death has given him a little humility, while the responsibilities of kingship have made him increasingly serious. Seriousness is a quality that Prince Hal often lacks and this is played well by Geoffrey Streatfield. Other notable performances are given by Maureen Beattie, as Mistress Quickly and Roger Watkins playing Owen Glendower.

As in *Richard II,* sets and furnishings are minimal. Henry IV's council chamber is six wooden chairs arranged in a circle. Only the king's chair is slightly more ornate than the others are. This may be a clue to the nature of Henry's kingship: not an absolute monarch but the first among equals. The other stage effects are simple. Ropes suspended from the ceiling represent a forest. Later in the play, these are tied into nooses to indicate execution of the rebels.

Part Two does a good job of concluding the story of Henry IV's kingship. Important loose ends are tied up. Rebellion is suppressed; the dying Henry is reconciled with Hal; Falstaff is dismissed by the young king: 'I know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers' (Act 5, Scene 5). Once king, however, Henry V's first challenge lies in France…

Henry V

Geoffrey Streatfeild as Henry V

Henry V is something of a high point for England in Shakespeare's Histories cycle. The wounds to the English body politic, caused by Richard II's political ineptness, and Henry Bolingbroke's usurpation of the crown, appear to be healing. England, however, is only part of the story. Henry V is king of England and France – or will be once his claim has been made good. Dialogue between the English and French courts however, break down in spectacular fashion when the Dauphin's gift to Henry – a box of tennis balls – is opened. Henry and England are insulted and amongst a sea of tennis balls, war is declared on France.

'Now all the youth of England are on fire,
And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies
Now thrive the armourers, and honours' thought
Reigns solely in the breast of every man' (Act 2)

In *Henry V*, the audience has a real sense of King Henry's character development. The mercurial youth seen in *Henry IV* has matured into the warrior-prince that England needed and expected of its kings. Henry's reaction to the insulting 'gift' of tennis balls is that of an angry young man, but he is also expressing anger on behalf of his country. Geoffrey Streatfield expresses this very well and each difficult moment whether dealing with rebellious lords at Southampton, rousing the troops at Harfleur, or walking incognito round his camp the night before Agincourt, is acquitted brilliantly.

Although *Henry V* is a play about battles and conquest, it is also about perceptions of news. Off the battlefield, the English and French parties almost never meet face-to-face, until the conclusion. Dialogue between the two is relayed via Montjoy, the herald. This important role is perfectly played by Chuk Iwuji. Another key role is played by Forbes Masson as the Chorus (a plot device rarely used in this series). Jonathan Slinger excels as Captain Fluellen. The French party are well represented with John Mackay playing the Dauphin and Roger Watkins, Grandpre. Katy Stephens deserves high praise for her good performance in her slightly smallish role as Queen Isabel. Alexia Healey and Hannah Barrie are also good in their respective roles of Lady Katherine and her Lady-in-Waiting, Alice.

Sets and effects are simple but spectacular in this series, proving that less can be more. The stage becomes a melee of flying tennis balls in Act One. The French nobility, resplendent in shining armour, deliver their pre-battle speeches whilst suspended in mid-air, possibly an allusion to their over-confidence. The English forces are on the ground and sometimes underground. Floor panels rise and fall during the battles: smoke and men issue forth.

Overall, this version of Henry V was a magnificent performance in its own right and made a strong conclusion to the first half of the Histories cycle.

Robin Rowles

Sources:
Rubin, Miri. *The Hollow Crown: A History of Britain in the Late Middle Ages,* (London, 2005)
The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, (Ed) W.J. Craig, (London, 1990)
The Wordsworth Dictionary of Britain, (Ed) J.P. Kenyon, (Ware, 1994)
William Shakespeare: The Complete Works, (Ed) Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, (Basingstoke, 2007)

Internet Links:
www.bl.uk for information about the plays *Richard II*, *Henry IV*, and *Henry V*
www.imdb.com
www.roundhouse.org.uk/about

OPERA

Don Carlo by Giuseppe Verdi
Performance at the Royal Opera House

Don Carlo is Verdi's grand operatic portrayal of the conflict between public duty and private desire. Set in sixteenth-century Spain and based on the play *Don Carlos* (1787) by Friedrich von Schiller, it tells the dark story of Phillip II's son, Carlo, and his love for Elizabeth of Valois. The bitter politics of Flanders and Spain, with the ever present menace of the Inquisition, forms the backdrop to the events that unfold. Their continuing impact on the opera makes Don Carlo a weightier drama than is usual for Verdi (although Simon Boccanegra, with its Council scene, comes close).

Carlo is betrothed to Elizabeth and, after their first chance meeting in the forests of Fontainebleau, they fall deeply in love. Rolando Villazon plays Carlo and his urgent outpouring of love for Elizabeth reveals why he is considered to be the tenor of the moment. He is utterly convincing as the love struck young man and the richness and melodiousness of his voice is riveting. If a criticism can be levelled at Villazon, however, it is that in scenes which require a real energy, for instance when he confronts his father, his voice is less than commanding. It should be pointed out that this may be accounted for by the fact that this is Villazon's first return to the stage after some months of indisposition and, when in the main role of Les Contes D'Hoffman at the ROH some years previously, his voice did not seem to suffer from the same weakness. Certainly, the applause he received early on in the performance showed the audience was very much behind him even if the adulation seemed a little less ecstatic at the final curtain.

Immediately after these declarations of love, the couple receive the terrible news that Elizabeth is, instead, to marry Carlo's father Phillip. Acceding to the demands of duty and the pleas of her people for an end to war, Elizabeth reluctantly agrees to the marriage. The Russian soprano Marina Poplavskaya plays Elizabeth as both cool and somewhat aloof, but yet recognisably pent up with inner turmoil. This contrast in temperament between the two lovers is maintained throughout the opera to good dramatic effect.

Simon Keenlyside plays Carlos' friend Rodrigo, Marquis of Posa, with dignity combined with compassion for the suffering people of Flanders, where he has lately been a soldier. His pleadings are unable to move Ferruccio Furlanetto's intelligently portrayed Phillip II, however, even though Rodrigo's music delivers a fine expression of his noble ideals. Later in the opera, he will lay down his life for Carlos who he believes, mistakenly, will save Flanders. Verdi was committed to both liberalism and Italian unity and his hero, the diplomat Cavour, can be seen in Rodrigo. It is clear in the clash of political outlooks between Rodrigo and Phillip that Verdi considers Rodrigo to be on the 'right side'. However, although Phillip is undoubtedly an unsympathetic figure it is also evident that Verdi is deeply interested in what motivates his character. Verdi expresses the King's personal despair and the limitations of his power with remarkable insight in his music. Verdi also does not recoil from providing a weight and authenticity to Phillip's views which were so far removed from his own, with Phillip's complexity being particularly perceptively revealed in his chilling confrontation with the Grand Inquisitor. The Inquisitor is unambiguously evil, a half-blind, old man who represents a force that Phillip cannot control. The music reveals that the King's power, no matter how dark it may be in its imposition, is not as black as that of the Church.

This new production of Don Carlo is ably and energetically conducted by Antonio Pappano and directed by Nicholas Hytner. The period staging reproduces the world of baroque Spain with another distinct duality being felt in the glistening of gold and overblown ornamentation set against the depths of heavy shadow and a cast costumed largely in black. There is a recurrent feeling of forbidding enclosure, too, in many of the sets from the gloomy interior of Vallodolid Cathedral to Phillip's chiaroscuro-lit study to Carlos' prison cell. The less claustrophobic scenes such as the grand procession outside a church heralding an auto-da-fe are accomplished with considerable spectacle, but here there is perhaps rather too much cliché in the depiction of the Inquisition and the burning of 'heretics'.

It is in the smaller scenes, that the conflict of public and private and the clash of political ideals, given such wonderful musical expression by Verdi, is consummately delivered on stage. Overall, this magnificent opera is well served by a truly excellent cast and chorus and the ever good orchestra of the ROH.

Sue Dale

ART EXHIBITIONS

REFLECTIONS ON LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY: CRANACH, LANDSCAPE AND ANIMALS

Cranach is probably best known to the general public for his portraits and his soft porn. So far as the latter is concerned a typically magisterial Kenneth Clark sums up the situation

> … his skill in combining sinuous line with shallow internal modelling is unprecedented in the north, and reminds us of Egyptian reliefs…Cranach is one of those rare artists who have added to our imaginative repertoire of physical beauty. The necklaces and waistbands, enormous hats and flimsy draperies worn by his goddesses leave us in no doubt that he did so with an erotic intention; and it is curious how often Cranach has discovered devices used by purveyors of this kind of effect before and since. ("The Nude", p. 321)

In his own day the religious paintings would have seemed far more important. He lavished some of his most ingenious efforts on them. An early example is the "Martyrdom of St. Catherine", c. 1505, Ráday Collections of the Hungarian Reformed Church, cat. 11. The colour is very strong, but by Italian standards, believable coherent light is somewhat lacking. The absence of unified tonality is a function of the structure of the work. The heavens are divided into light and dark caverns, the dark a storm of divine wrath in response to the first attempt to martyr St. Catherine with the spiked wheel. (Really lucky saints like Catherine and Sebastian were allowed to triumph over one attempted execution before attaining the ultimate distinction of martyrdom at a second try).

The collapsed foreshortened figure of the executioner in golden attire at the lower right could suggest a knowledge, through intermediaries, of Signorelli's famous frescoes at Orvieto, 1499-1504. Both the "Signs of the End of the World" and "The Deeds of the Antchrist" in Orvieto have instances of serious cosmic disturbances blasting down at dramatically foreshortened and other figures from the sky. As an Italian, in a world more rational than the northern, Signorelli is very restrained in his treatment of these disturbances and more interested in accurate and pleasing anatomy than Lucas. Cranach took up the ideas that may have reached him from Orvieto relatively quickly. Another drastically foreshortened figure in the act of falling appears in the "Resurrection" in the Isenheim Altarpiece, Musée d'Unterlinden, Colmar, by the artist still generally referred to as Matthias Grünewald. Here the force causing the foreshortening is not a violent uproar in the sky, but the aureole of steady light around the rising Christ's upper body. Heavenly concurrence with events on earth, in the form of swirling cloud around defined areas, as in the light part of the Cranach's painted sky, shows him to have been ahead of his time. It anticipates by almost a quarter of a century, in concept, if not painterly accomplishment, the effects in Albrecht Altdorfer's "Battle of Alexander", 1528-9, Alte Pinakothek, Munich. This sky is also divided into compartments. A large central area of blue sky framed by

cloud is, in a sense, the eye in the storm. It is behind the dangling inscribed explanatory tablet. There are two other distinct areas of sky. At the upper left corner, in calm concentric circles of cloud, is a crescent moon and, in the lower right sky, the setting sun disappears into a cloudy funnel as it does throwing a few passing rays of light behind it. Below, masses of troops, laagers of tents and a landscape of water and mountains worthy of Leonardo, surge in sympathy with the cosmic drama. Alexander chases Darius in his chariot in a scene perhaps best known today from a Pompeian mosaic, the "Battle of the Issus", imitating a Greek painting of c. 330 B.C., from the House of the Faun, now in the Museo Nazionale in Naples. Cranach's painting is not as polished as Altdorfer's, but on a smaller scale it has the same forces in heaven marshalled to reflect great events on earth.

In their different ways both in figure drawing and in the settings, the three Germanic artists, Cranach, Grünewald and Altdorfer, reflect the staggering discoveries of the Italian Renaissance. In his earlier career Cranach worked in Vienna, along with Basel the main entry point for Italian ideas into southern Germany. The most typical Italian Renaissance visual invention is often held to have been single point perspective, a development not ignored by Cranach but not usually one of his central concerns. It plays an unusually important part in his "Triptych with the Holy Kinship", 1509, Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, cat. 19, with swinging outer panels painted on both sides so that it can be closed. When this work is opened to the correct angle, a more or less correct perspective effect governs all three inner panels. A long session in front of the painting with a camera would be needed to see if the perspective is absolutely correct viewed from any single location. This strange phenomenon of perspective covering three non-aligned picture planes both celebrates and refutes the notion of single point perspective. The frame, rather than being a three light window through which, according to Alberti, we look at the scene, causes confusion. In fact it becomes a strange thing around and, in places, against which the subject is seen. It anticipates the inexplicable space frames in some of Francis Bacon's paintings, which are often triptychs. The "Kinship" is a result of Cranach's visit in 1508 to the Netherlands. He is known to have been at the court in Mechelen of Margaret of Austria and met her father Maximilian I and the future Charles V. There is another version of this type of painting, significantly of 1507-9, by Quentin Massys, who worked in Leuven/Louvain. His painting, the "Altarpiece of the Holy Kinship", Koninklijk Musea voor Schone Kunsten/Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels/Bruxelles, was commissioned by the Confraternity of St. Anne for their chapel in St. Peter's Church in Leuven/Louvain. It is not inconceivable that Cranach saw this work in progress in the city where it was made, which is not far from Mechelen. The subject of the Holy Kinship, depicted the clan of St. Anne. The assembled figures represented the supposed genetic links between biblical figures. Such links were important in Christian, as in most effective mythological narratives. The subject was popular in the Rhineland. Another much earlier example of the type is Geertgen tot Saint Jans, "Holy Kinship", c. 1480-5, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, in which the characters are arranged in a full-scale church. A later version is the peripatetic Jan van Scorel's "Holy Kinship", 1519, in the church at Obervellach in Carinthia for which it was painted.

The Rhineland was not an area in which Cranach operated professionally. His version of the Kinship is in some respects more advanced than Massys's. Like a good disciple of the Renaissance, Cranach has spread one scene across three panels. Sophisticated

Italians would have been very dubious about the visual trickery of the three panels of the scene being literally at angles to each other and the ambiguities this introduces. The Massys panels, by contrast, had three different scenes. The death bed episode on the right hand side has a perspective that takes very full account of its relationship to the different scene in the central panel and to the fact that the picture surface will be viewed obliquely. The left scene of Joachim in the wilderness with the angel is better known from the Giotto Arena Chapel version. Only in rather general compositional way is Massys's version integrated with the main panel. This is apparent in the continuity of the sky and the lower outline of the angel's robe that is a counter curve to the nearest arch in the "Holy Kinship". The placement of the Kinship's husbands and fathers in Massys's work behind a rear parapet is taken up by Cranach who gives one of the men the features of the Hapsburg emperor Maximilian I. Cranach at this stage at his most Italianate, before being drawn permanently into the northern ambiance of Saxony, is very interested in depicting space. He tips up the floor so we can see a number of the receding orthogonal lines on the chequerboard pattern, while Massys all but blocks the view into his lower interior space with the massive skirted forms of the four female figures.

Cranach's visit to the Netherlands, a major artistic centre, came at what, for an artist of his natural bent, was the right time. Increasingly, attempts to emulate Italian style swamped Netherlandish, and more generally, northern painting. The results were very mixed. Northerners, with their love of painstaking detail, could not really assimilate Italianate idealizing until a sort of compromise was reached by Rubens a century later. Quaint personal deviations, in the German or Netherlandish manners, from the perfect figure or physique, and the portrayal of the ideal body simply cannot be merged. Attempts to pull this off are often inadvertently funny, or unpleasantly erotic, as in Jan Gossaert's "Neptune and Amphrite", 1516, Staadtliche Museem, Berlin. Bruegel, with his rotund peasants, and Cranach, once he had devised his late, stylized erotic type, managed to avoid the worst of the pitfalls and created art forms that could be judged on their own terms. Other ways out of the impasse of an unsatisfactory merging of incompatible styles were to be found in landscapes and wildlife painting. Bruegel again, and Joachim Patinir, made the most of their talents as landscape artists, while in Italy northern landscape specialists were not spurned by great masters who let them fill in the hilly backgrounds. Jan van Scorel often redeems works with questionable pseudo-Italian nudes by putting them in fine landscapes, as in the "Baptism of Christ", c. 1528, Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem. Jan Mostaert's "West Indies Landscape", c. 1545, on loan to the Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem, done from his imagination, applies Boschian notions of human existence to the real world. The West Indies are a setting in which the full impact of the Fall is not yet revealed. Cranach is not the greatest of landscapists, but he could draw a natural environment in meaningful ways into some of his most dynamic works. A few are important paintings.

Landscape could be employed in rather specialized religious contexts as in Bosch's "Garden of Earthly Delights", c. 1510-15, the Prado, Madrid, done just after Cranach's visit to the Low Countries, a coincidence of which more will be said below. Altdorfer's "Battle of Alexander", already mentioned, indicated that landscape and narrative were far from incompatible. Multiple animal images were another Northern speciality to which Cranach made a major contribution. The best known example of this category is Albrecht Dürer's engraving, "The Vision of St. Eustace", 1500-1. The

animals, mostly in profile, a horse, several hunting dogs and a stag, bearing a crucifix between his antlers, are grouped in a large compositional triangle covering half the picture, divided diagonally. There is a complicated interplay between illusory depth and what is on the picture's flat surface. The tops of the animals' backs are probably more or less ranged in a coherent diagonally receding plane. Unlike Bosch's "Earthly Delights" this is a very static work. St. Eustace kneels to one side of the triangle worshipping a symbol of natural hierarchy running from dogs through horse to miraculous stag, as well as adoring the symbol of salvation. The dogs in the presence of the divine vision leave the stag in peace in an inversion of the transformation in the Actaeon legend. This is a modification of animal behaviour relevant to Cranach's explorations of the genre. There is an analogue of hunted stag and sacrificed God, which might have some bearing on Cranach hunting scenes.

Dürer was working in what was becoming a minor, if largely graphic, established tradition. As a printmaker Dürer could well have known a book "Sanctae peregrinations" issued in 1486 in Mainz by the Utrecht artist and printer Erhard Reuwich. It was a travelogue sponsored by Bernhard von Breydebach. Among other plates it had an animal page, the subjects again all in near profile. They included a wild man with a lion's mane and monkey's tail with the camel on a lead. There is a blank background in a rectangular outline so that the shapes and names float freely. The giraffe's horns break through the border with an impunity that is felt to be daring when details in Caravaggio paintings do it. The artist had some fun with the interaction among his creations; a hoof on a head, tickling tails, a horn tip alarmingly near genitals, but any aggression is in the cleverness of the graphic artist not the psyches of the creatures. It is irrelevant to this discussion that not all the beasts allegedly seen by the artist/printmaker are believable. A similar image of the previous year is the Master of Bellaert's "Animals" from the woodcut frontispiece of Book 18 of a very superior edition of "De prorietatibus rerum" (On the Properties of Things) by Bartholomaeus Anglicus. These animals are arranged in a token landscape but can be read as profile images on the picture plane running from largest at the bottom to smallest at the top Various small creatures are scattered in the gaps in the pattern. A foreshortened dragon (?) near the lower right disrupts the format by hunkering down aggressively rather than gambolling playfully as do some of the others. The mostly placid interactions of the beasts are an important feature.

There is at least the beginning of an earlier parallel Italian tradition along the same lines in painting, of which a good example is Antonio Pisanello's "The Vision of St. Eustace", 1436-8, National Gallery, London. Nearly all the beasts, mostly in profile, have been brought to a halt by the vision. Pisanello's treatment of the animals was probably influenced by a lavish hunting treatise often with copious illustrations by Gaston de Foix, using the pseudonym Phébus. It was written between 1387 and 1389 and is known through 44 manuscripts. The illustrations show various species of hunting dog, mostly in profile engaged in doggy behaviour as explained in the National Gallery Catalogue "Fifteenth Century Italian Paintings", vol. I, p. 313, figs. 3-6. However Gentile Bellini's Louvre version in the Paris Sketchbook, ff41 verso and 42, c. 1445-6, has stag, horse and one of the three dogs in various degrees of foreshortening sparsely populating a wide space. The profile format may have been incompatible with the Italian ideas of objects naturally placed in space. Cranach did not arrange his animals as artificially as Dürer, Reuwich and Bellaert, but it seems very probable, judging by part of his output, that he was aware of such abbreviated

bestiaries as theirs on a single field. Two such Cranach works were in the exhibition, back to back on a special stand. It would have been better to have displayed them side by side.

The first to appear was "Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg as St. Jerome in his Study", 1526, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Museum of Art, State Museum of Florida, Sarasota, cat. 67. Appropriately, given the large numbers of animals, in it was acquired by the Ringling family that made its money in the circus business. Behind it was "Adam and Eve", also 1526, Samuel Courtauld Trust, cat. 119. The Cardinal Brandenburg/Jerome study was of course in a genre that was also the subject of yet another of Dürer's famous engravings, done in 1514. Many details, the window, the form of the table at which the scholar sits, the cardinal's round, broad brimmed hat hanging on the wall directly over the his head, have clearly been taken by Cranach from his distinguished predecessor. Lucas, in an age when copying/quoting were not frowned upon as later, has at least taken the trouble to reverse the image so it returns to something in some senses close to the image Dürer would have seen before him as he toiled on the copper plate. Both versions lay great emphasis on the creature comforts around the archetypal scholar as do other works of the same or similar subjects by Antonello da Messina c. 1450-60, National Gallery, London, and by Carpaccio of "St. Augustine in his Study", 1502-7, Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavone, Venice. Carpaccio's St. Augustine and Cranach's and Antonello's Jeromes all work on wooden platforms so their feet are not in contact with the cold floors. Jerome clearly had a, to the modern mind, seriously split personality. When he is not seen in the well appointed donnish rooms he has stripped naked, or nearly so, as he pummels himself with a stone, to expiate his sins. This represents his period as a hermit in the Palestinian desert learning Hebrew in order to translate the Old Testament into Latin in the Vulgate. There was an example of this aspect of the saint in Cranach's "St. Jerome Writing in a Landscape", c. 1515, Pérez Simón Collection, Mexico, cat. 54, not in the main scene but in a little vignette to the upper left.

Inside or outside Jerome always has his faithful lion with him. In the Dürer print the comatose lion has an animal friend in the form of a rather weird dog (?), also dozing contentedly, only inches from the massive claws, in the warmth pouring through the window. Yet again a lack of aggression among the beasts is maintained. It is even more marked in the Cranach scene. A whole menagerie of outdoor creatures have migrated inside in peaceful co-existence, as though to remind Albrecht/Jerome of his other self in the wilderness. There are various birds, a hare, a beaver, a squirrel eating grapes on a side table, and a stag, perhaps not visible to the potential predator round a corner, the inevitable lion. The lion, crouching down and swishing its tail might want to pounce but presumably wouldn't dare in Jerome's presence.

There is a picture of the external world which is a counterpart to this painting from the following year, "Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg as St. Jerome in the Wilderness". The cardinal sits reading at a rustic improvised table. Hare, beaver and stag are again in attendance. This lion is rather subdued and doesn't eye the potential meals but the viewer as though to ward off interruptions of the great work on the Vulgate. The stag raises its muzzle over the table top while its antlers on the picture plane interact with the crucifix Jerome has set up as a visual aid, in way that brings to mind the St. Eustace legend. In the circle around Jerome all is calm, barring the image of the

tormented Christ on the Cross. This can not be said of the background. In a clearing on the left, two stags lock horns watched by a third stag and does. Sex, from which cardinals should abstain, rears its head. To the right, pack animals hurry into a town followed not far behind by a lion (St. Jerome's in a second appearance seeing off distractions?). The curving road they are on is juxtaposed against the crucifix in a manner that recalls Mantegna paintings in which unfeeling oblivious humanity travelling on a road goes about it affairs as Christ, or Saint Sebastian, suffers. In this painting, events at the margins suggest encroaching evil and violence as in Bosch's "Earthly Delights". On the face of it, everything is at peace in "Adam and Eve". Around and on either side of the human pair are animals, including some additional species compared to other works, in profile as usual. The cross-looking lion is pawing the ground as though he can't wait for Adam to take a bite and complete the Fall, bringing aggression and blood shed into the world and a good bloody meal. The lower left stag with the splendid antlers is a choric character who looks knowingly at the viewer. He too understands what is about to happen. To make the point clearer Adam's genital area is rather precisely indicated by the topmost fork of one antler. Messy lusts, sexual shame and child birth in pain which will follow the Fall are all in the offing. In his own way Cranach has indicated coming disaster, not as in Bosch by horrible, mutated creepy crawlies in dark holes, but by a study of animal perceptiveness standing in for the human variety.

As we have seen Cranach derived ideas from important contemporaries, especially Dürer and Quentin Massys. There is an extremely Boschian triptych, possibly a copy of a lost original, that has been plausibly attributed to Cranach, "The Last Judgement", c. 1520, state collections Berlin. The most likely dating would place it shortly after the visit to the Netherlands. "The Deer Hunt of the Elector of Saxony", woodcut from two blocks, 1506, cat. 31, has the same swirling movements of streams, stags and foliage that, applied to people, streams and foliage, would appear in Bosch's "Earthly Delights", c. 1510-15. The influence, given the dates, would be from Cranach to Bosch. Perhaps the combination of a meeting during Cranach's travels and subsequent reference to the woodcut may have caused Bosch to introduce much more dynamic figurative groupings than the rather static versions he had hitherto employed. Bosch's more ordered transformation of the Cranach early woodcut composition in the "Garden of Earthly Delights" would have been known to Lucas, if at all, through drawings or copies. Two late Cranach paintings, not in the exhibition may reflect the calmer composition of the "Garden" compared to the wood cut. They are "A Stag Hunt", 1544, the Prado, Madrid and "A Stag Hunt", 1545, the Prado, Madrid.

The early print version of a hunt was compositionally divided down the middle. The two paintings are more harmoniously symmetrical with bodies of water in the centres. Instead of the strange natural rock/crystal/hive formations of Bosch, Cranach substitutes the Schloss Hartenfels near Torgau in the background. It was a residence of the House of Wettin, the rulers of Saxony. This too is carefully centred in contrast to the village and the much more modest schloss in the woodcut. There is hardly a religious message to the Hartenfels scenes, except in the rather general sense that hunts for sport are, in a culture permeated by symbolism, quests for salvation, as in the St. Eustace story, or moral tests. "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight", the Middle English manuscript, equates the temptation of Gawain, his resistance to it and an eventual moral lapse with hunting expeditions by his host. He accepts the gift of a

green girdle from his host's lady instead of, or perhaps as a metaphor for, sex. These events, spread over three days, are contrasted with varying outcomes of the chase. If there is a more specific spiritual message to the Hartenfels Hunts it is that a hunt, and the questing of the soul, bring together political and religious rivals. The earlier image has the Protestant Elector of Saxony, Johann Friedrich, the Magnanimous, laying on a hunt for his Catholic overlord Charles V and in the later picture the same Saxon prince is staging another hunt for Charles's younger brother Ferdinand. The depiction of light is not one Cranach's greater talents, but in these relatively late works, perhaps motivated by his employer's pride in his fine residence, he depicted Schloss Hartenfels, bathed in pale light, rising proudly over scenes of human activity in a manner worthy of the brothers Limbourg in the Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry, before 1416, Musée Condé, Chantilly. Johann Friedrich had every reason to be proud of his house, having built the most impressive wing himself in 1533-6, during Cranach's time as court painter. Its court façade, still largely intact, has been described as "…the first monumental production of the German Renaissance… rarely exceeded in grandeur of scale or regularity of design before the next century." (Hitchcock, "German Renaissance Architecture", p. 72; see fig. 12, ills. 78-9). It even had a projecting open spiral staircase like the one at Blois.

The moralizing interpretation of human evolution found in so many Bosch works is also present in two works in the exhibition, "The Golden Age", c. 1530, Alte Pinakothek, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, cat. 104, and "Mythological Scene (The Silver Age)", c. 1530, the National Gallery, London, cat. 105. In the former, in a pagan version of the Garden of Eden, figures disport themselves as in the middle panel of the "Earthly Delights", with two of them in a pond. There are rock formations that show an awareness of, but are much more sober than, Bosch's imagined surreal sculptures or "installations". Within the walled in-space, as well as the people, are in, co-existence, a stag and a doe and two lions, the later seemingly both male. The "Mythological Scene" marks a point in the decline of humanity as the Silver Age follows the Golden much as happens from the left to the right of the "Earthly Delights", running from Eden, to the world after the Fall, to Hell. In the Cranach the male figures fight viciously and the women and infants look understandably alarmed. Innocence has been lost. This small work, though lacking the poetic elusive quality of Giovanni Bellini's five rather mysterious, small allegorical panels, c. 1500(?) in the Accademia in Venice, like them combines limited numbers of figures and landscape. An immeasurably superior work to anything by Cranach, Giorgone's "La Tempesta", 1503/4(?), Accademia, Venice, perhaps the greatest Venetian painting, is arguably part of the same very general grouping. Cranach's predecessor as chief court painter in Saxony was the Venetian artist/printmaker Jacopo de' Barbari. Venetian art appealed to Cranach's patrons.

The landscapes and animal paintings reveal to us a Cranach who was much more than the soft pornographer or an only partially successful follower of the Italians. He may not consistently have had the pictorial subtlety and refinement of Dürer or Bosch or Altdorfer, but he interacted with the other northern painters at an innovative iconographical level and not, it seems to me, merely as a recipient of ideas or an adapter. As the Reformation gathered momentum he took up genres, landscapes and animal painting, that were also characteristic of other periods, or strands, of religious reform in which the image was suspect, Byzantine iconoclasm, Islam and the later more intense Calvinist phase of the Reformation. The mosaics with landscapes and

animals on the Great Mosque in Damascus and the still lifes on the organ shutters in the Calvinist Wester Kerk in Amsterdam are examples. Cranach was not driven away from the human form or religious subjects as completely as were artists in the other eras, but the great cultural upheaval of his time made him explore areas that might otherwise have remained underdeveloped.

St. Jerome stripped of creature comforts, and often stripped naked, may in that state have been closer to his God than he was in his study. A similar point is made in Hans Holbein the Younger's woodcut, c. 1525, "True and False Forgiveness". On the right Clement VII in an elaborate chancel hands over a document remitting sins behind visually balanced foreground scenes. On one side, confession to priests, without the anonymity afforded by that modern piece of furniture, the confessional, takes place suspiciously close to a money chest with slots for donations. One slot is in use. On the other side is the overt sale of indulgences at a table. On the left part of the block as a whole, outdoors, King David, Manasses and Offen Synder (public sinner) in a variety of postures pray for forgiveness to God the Father who reveals himself in the sky. For Cranach and other Protestant artists, the Fall may have taken place in a landscape but so could redemption. An unexpected sequel to Cranach's non-aggressive animal works is to be found in the many versions of the "Peaceable Kingdom", by the American 19th century folk artist Edward Hicks, which relates the imagery of Isaiah's prophecy of the lion lying down with the lamb to William Penn's Treaty with the Indians.

Readers who wish to look up the images not by Cranach will find all the northern examples in the ever useful "Northern Renaissance Art" by James Snyder.

Timothy Alves

FILM/DVD

Middleham Castle: A Royal Residence (2007)

Written and presented by John L Fox

For all those fascinated by castles and the tales of the past, *Middleham Castle: A Royal Residence,* is a welcome addition to one's DVD collection. The DVD provides a guided tour around today's ruined castle. Using computer reconstruction, the castle is seen in its fifteenth-century heyday. A castle designed as both a fortress and as a home, with comforts and conveniences fit for the brother of a king.

Presented by John Fox, this DVD is something of a family affair as various members of the Fox family are involved in its creation. John Fox's presenting style is a little stiff but is also gentle and unhurried and he provides detailed knowledge and enthusiasm of the castle and it fifteenth-century owners. He obviously has a passion for history and I found this, coupled with his straightforward approach to presenting, to be very refreshing. The accompanying music adds atmosphere and the graphics are superbly done.

This is a comprehensive tour and adopts a logically approached beginning with an account of the early history of the site when in 1086 Alan the Red constructed a motte and bailey castle on nearby Williams Hill. The stronghold was then moved to its present location by Robert FitzRanulph and then developed and enlarged by subsequent owners, principally the Neville family who developed it into the formable fortress and comfortable family home acquired by Richard, duke of Gloucester after the death of the Kingmaker at the battle of Barnet.

Entering through the main gatehouse, John Fox leads us through the intricacies of the various parts of the castle. Original entry was via a gatehouse on the East side of the castle across a wooden bridge (possibly having a drawbridge over a now dry moat). The huge wooden gates and probable portcullis must have presented an imposing sight. The present day entrance to the castle is through the Northern gatehouse, known as the 'Neville Gate'. Travelling through the bailey he dismisses the dreadful statue of Richard III as "an insult to a good man" and with a click of his fingers it is gone. If only we could do that in real life. The keep, one of the largest in England, had twelve foot thick walls and three floors; for its time, this would have provided palatial accommodation. It contained a great chamber, large kitchen, chapel, dovecot, cellars and the living rooms of the lord of Middleham. It is with the great hall that the computer graphics are at the most spectacular with the colours and patterns vividly bring the room to life before our eyes. At each end of the keep's vaulted basement there were two wells (which can still be seen today). The thirteenth-century curtain walls formed an enclosure around 250 feet on each side. In the fourteenth and fifteenth century the garrison quarters, stables and stores were housed within these walls.

This is not a cheap DVD but it is very professionally produced and it does provide a greater understanding of how the castle looked when it was at its peak, enabling one to see it in all its splendour. If you are planning a trip to Middleham then your visit can only be enhanced by first watching this DVD.

This is the first in what promises to be a series of DVD's describing castles associated with the Yorkist Royal family with Sandal near Wakefield the second castle due to be featured.

John Croxon

MUSIC

Robin Rowles continues his series by taking a look at music in Early Modern France.

A Layman's Guide to Early Modern Music: Part 2: Seventeenth-century France

Students wishing to tune in to the early modern period, or simply to chill out between essays, could do worse than sample the music of the period. Here are a few suggestions. First, however, two caveats should be sounded. It should be noted that, as the title indicates, I am writing as a non-musician, therefore my opinion is that of a layman. Secondly, the recordings discussed are not necessarily the best of the genre, but simply the versions that I possess. At the time of writing (June 2008) all CDs featured were available to purchase.

The first CD under review is Marin Marais *Viol Music for the Sun King* (Naxos 8.553081). Marin Marais (1656-1728), was part of the new wave of French musicians that emerged after the Thirty Years War. He was a pupil of St. Colombe (1640-90) and Jean-Baptiste Lully. St. Colombe tutored Marais in viol lessons for six months, but terminated his tutelage when he realised that his pupil's abilities exceeded his own. The story of St. Colombe and Marin Marais is recounted in the film *Tout les Matins du Monde* (1991). The viol with its six strings and frets was a development from the lute and a predecessor of the violin family of instruments. Bass viols were also known as *viola da gamba* (viola of the leg) and this name was also a generic term to differentiate the viol family from the *viola da braccio*, (viola of the arm) hence, violin (or viola). This particular CD is interesting because Marais integrates the sound of the viol with that of its successor, the violin.

Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-87) was a major composer in seventeenth-century France. A Florentine by birth, Lully was initially employed as a language tutor to Mademoiselle de Montpensier, niece of Louis XIII. The French court proved conducive to Lully's musical talents. In 1653, he was appointed composer of the king's instrumental music; by the 1660s, he was collaborating with Corneille and Moliere in the composition of ballets. Lully began writing opera in the 1670s and received the monopoly for operatic composition in 1672. In 1687, Lully accidentally stabbed his foot with his conductor's staff and later died of blood poisoning.

Les Divertissements de Versailles (Erato 0927-44655-2) represents a cross-section of Lully's compositions for the Sun King (Louis XIV). The influence of Louis XIV is present throughout Lully's career. His opera *Psyche*, for example, was written in 1671 because Louis XIV remembered an earlier opera, *Ercole Amante* and had wished to see the massive stage machinery reused. Featured on this CD is 'Prelude pour les trompettes' from *Psyche*. During the latter-seventeenth century and early-eighteenth century, short, lively, trumpet pieces were in vogue. Jeremiah Clarke's *Trumpet Voluntary* and Henry Purcell's *Trumpet Tune* were later examples of this.

Lully's compositions were not restricted to comedies, ballet, and opera. He wrote four volumes of motets for the French Chapel Royal. Motets were choral works celebrating an aspect of a Latin theological text in the Roman Catholic Church. Lully's contributions to this genre are known as *Grand Motets* and attempt to cover the whole sweep of human emotion. His *Grand Motets*, Vol 1, (Naxos 8.554397) opens with *Te Deum* a hymn traditional sung to express rejoicing. Ironically, it was while rehearsing *Te Deum* that Lully suffered his mortal foot injury. In *Grand Motets, Vol 3*, (Naxos 8.554399) Lully develops the religious themes even more explicitly: this CD contains three pieces based on the 19th, 75th, and 112th psalms respectively.

Louis Couperin (1626-1661) was appointed organist at St. Gervais in 1653. His *Harpsichord Suites* (Naxos 8.550922) include 'Prelude a l'imitation de Mr Froberger'. Johann Froberger (1616-67) swapped his ideas, particularly that of the Italianate style, with Couperin. This track is his acknowledgement to Froberger. Another tribute is 'Tombeau a de M. de Blancrocher'. Blancrocher (died 1652) was a renowned lutenist. On hearing of his death after falling downstairs, Couperin composed this tribute. The low notes tell of Blancrocher's body falling but the higher notes represent the ascent of his soul to heaven. Couperin's other contribution to musical style was to incorporate preludes into harpsichord suites. Previously, preludes were improvised as a 'warm up' to the main performance. His work was largely overshadowed by that of his nephew, Francoise 'Le Grand', whose compositions will be reviewed with other eighteenth-century composers, later in this series.

In the next article in this series, I will examine the music of seventeenth-century Italy.

Robin Rowles

Sources:

Dictionary of Music, (Ed) Alan Isaacs and Elizabeth Martin, (London, 1982)
Kamen, Henry. *Who's Who in Europe 1450-1750*, (London, 2000)
www.last.fm
www.wikipedia.org.uk

FORTHCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS

Events 2007-2008

All events start at 6.30pm, and are followed by refreshments and Questions

- 30th June 2008 - Prof Natalie Davies, 'Pursuing "Leo Africanus" and other Enigmas: Some Thoughts on Historical Method' Room 101, Clore Building

- 12th July 2008 'Journeys and Encounters Conference' Room 538, Malet Street

- 1st August 2008 – Karen Chester 'Big Smoke Walks'. 'Bankside to Blackfriars - William Shakespeare's City of London' starting at London Bridge Station at 6.30 p.m.

For further information on membership and activities contact the secretary, Laura Jacobs: l.jacobs@english.bbk.ac.uk

Membership is £5 for the year. Non-members may attend events at a cost of £3 each.

The Birkbeck Early Modern Society

Prof. Natalie Zemon Davis

Pursuing "Leo Africanus" and Other Enigmas: Some Thoughts on Historical Method

30th June 6:30 pm

Room B01 Clore Building

There is no charge to attend this event
Members can access the room from 5:45, non-members from 6:15
Followed by our end of term party

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

This section concerns those events staged by other societies which we feel might be of interest to our membership.

Boucher and Chardin: Masters of Modern Manners
The Wallace Collection, London
Telephone 02075639500
12th June – 7th September 2008

This exhibition features the works of Francois Boucher and Jean-Simeon Chardin, two of the finest French painters of the eighteenth century.

Turmoil and Tranquillity: The Sea Through the Eye of Dutch and Flemish Masters, 1550-1700
National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London
Telephone 08707804552
20th June 2008 – 11th January 2009

Featuring seascapes painted during the Dutch Golden Age when the Dutch Republic became one of Europe's foremost maritime powers.

Early Music Afternoon
Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Sussex
Telephone 01243811363
6th July 2008

Music from the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries played in the open air.

Eighteenth Century Re-enactment
Gilbert White's House and the Oates Museum, Hampshire
Telephone 01420511275
19th – 20th July 2008

British, French and Native American troops from the eighteenth century participate in drills and other activities.

Petworth in the time of Jane Austin
Petworth House and Park, Sussex
Telephone 01798342207
26th – 27th July 2008

Depictions of early-nineteenth century life with soldiers, smugglers and craft practitioners.

New Approaches to the Battle of Naseby
A day conference organised by the Centre for English Local History
University of Leicester
Kelmarsh Hall, Sunday 29 June 2008

Programme

09.30 – 09.50 Registration and Coffee

9.50 – 10.00 Dr Andrew Hopper (Leicester) Welcome

10.00 – 11.00 Prof. Martyn Bennett (Nottingham Trent), ' "…None are to share with Him": Cromwell, Naseby and God'

11.00 – 12.00 Dr Jason Peacey (UCL), 'Opening the King's Cabinet: Propaganda and Public Opinion after Naseby'

12.00 – 12.15 Coffee

12.15 – 13.15 Glenn Foard (Project Officer, Battlefields Trust), 'Recent Advances in Battlefield Archaeology: the Implications for Naseby'

13.15 – 14.30 Lunch

14.30 – 16.30 Martin Marix Evans (Chairman, Naseby Battlefield Project) 'Battlefield Tour: Interpreting the Landscape of the Battle of Naseby'

16.30 – 17.00 Afternoon Tea

17.00 – 18.00 Closing Lecture: Prof. Ian Gentles (Tyndale University College, Toronto), 'The Legacy of Naseby'

Conference Details

This conference will investigate the past, present and future of Naseby. It will link the recent successful approaches to the battle by academic historians, archaeologists and landscape analysts, encouraging them to engage with a public audience. It will celebrate and look to build upon the exciting developments made in recent years by the Naseby Battlefield Project: **http://www.naseby.com/**

Registration

To register for the day please send your name, address, email and contact details in an envelope marked 'Naseby day Conference' to the Centre for English Local History, no later than 1 June 2008. Please enclose a cheque payable to 'The University of Leicester' for £29.50 per person. This will cover admission to Kelmarsh, buffet lunch, refreshments and the battlefield tour. Please bring waterproofs and sturdy footwear in case of poor weather.

Ms Lucy Byrne
Centre for English Local History
Marc Fitch Historical Institute
5 Salisbury Road
Leicester, LE1 7QR
http://www.le.ac.uk/elh/

Please send queries to the conference organiser, Dr Andrew Hopper: **ajh69@le.ac.uk**

Directions to Kelmarsh

Kelmarsh Hall is 5 miles south of Market Harborough's railway station. The journey time from London St Pancras is just 75 minutes. The Hall is easy to reach by road. Exit the A14 at J2 and head north on the A508 towards Market Harborough. The Hall's entrance gates are on the Kelmarsh crossroads, just 500m north of the A14. Naseby battlefield lies just 3 miles west of Kelmarsh Hall.

http://www.kelmarsh.com/

Accommodation

Northamptonshire holds proof that there is more to a good night's sleep than just a roof over your head. Visit **www.explorenorthamptonshire.co.uk** for special offers and discounts at a full range of accommodation in the county, some with online booking.

BOOK REVIEW

NON-FICTION BOOKS

I hope that many of you will send in your reviews of newly published books and the occasional old book. The only criteria being that it deals with a subject within the Early Modern period, roughly from the Renaissance (the middle of the fifteenth century) through to the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and that the book is still in print.

John Croxon

Who was Who in The Wars of the Roses by Pauline Harrison Pogmore, Rosalba Press

The period 1455 to 1487 was a time of great turmoil in England as two branches of the Plantagenet family fought for the throne, both backed by powerful supporters such as the Nevilles for York and the Beauforts for Lancaster.

This book details most of the major characters, men and women, who were caught up in the conflict, which began with a saintly and useless king totally unfit to rule and concluded with the death of the last Plantagenet king at Bosworth and the first early rebellions against the Tudor usurper.

The book gives a brief description of notable people of the age such as Richard III, Edward IV, Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou, Warwick the Kingmaker and Elizabeth Woodville, as well as countless other individuals involved to varying degrees in the conflict.

Arranged in alphabetical order, the book is a useful and interesting list of the participants in the Wars of the Roses with short biographies containing their allegiances, family ties and enemies. Loyalty, treachery, betrayal and tragedy are all described within these pages. For anyone interested in the period this is a welcome addition to the literature about the period.

John Croxon

Decency & Disorder 1789-1837 by Ben Wilson, faber and faber

Just a generation before Queen Victoria ascended to the throne, the British people were notorious for their riotous behaviour, their plain-speaking and their drunkenness. They were lightly policed and disorder was largely tolerated as the price of liberty. Yet, by the mid-nineteenth century the British had accepted the type of values we now know as 'Victorian'.

In this fascinating book, Ben Wilson, skilfully presents a balanced portrait of the duality at the heart of Britain; the prig and the pleasure-seeker, the bawd and the abstemious. By exploring the rationale behind this remarkable transformation from disorder to decency, Wilson deftly captures both the energy and the hypocrisy of the era. Byron called this era "the age of cant" and Wilson brilliantly analyses the reasons behind the dramatic changes of attitudes.

"Speaking English" was once a term used by the French in the eighteenth century for being frank to the point of offensive. Yet when Byron published the first two cantos of *Don Juan* in 1819, the outbreak of moral hysteria that greeted it epitomised the unthinking prurience and moral rectitude that had enveloped the nation. When the Great Exhibition of 1851 was being planned some predicted that when the people saw the great wealth and riches laid out before them they would drink themselves into a rage and riot. Yet, people came in their thousands and quietly marvelled at the exhibits. It was obvious that society had changed quite dramatically.

There is no doubt that many Britons welcomed the reformation of manners and the accompanying religious revival, and certainly one can argue that the spectacle of the masses devouring the latest steamy gossip and an enforced pious respectability, was a small price to pay for a greater spread of education and literacy, a free press, cheap newspapers and increased social provision. Yet, others saw this same process as insincere and hypocritical, with the intolerance now shown to previously forgivable human foibles seen as a regrettable development. Wilson quotes one commentator as stating "As soon as it becomes necessary to appear wiser or better than the mass of mankind… the reign of the humbug commences". Some, like John Stuart Mill rejoiced in the success of the country but feared that society had paid dearly for this security. Benjamin Constant wrote that "We have lost in imagination what we have gained in knowledge" and there was a thought that although this new world would be cosy and secure, this had been purchased by a loss of personal ambition, stilted intellect and lack of originality. The change in manners brought many rewards but there will always be something in the human spirit that will rebel against such conformity.

This is a marvellous book that superbly explores the reasons behind such fundamental changes in British society and presents opposing views in a refreshingly objective manner. It also poses questions for our own age when cheap rubbish attracts huge television viewing figures and tales of teenage drinking and sexual excess often dominate the newspapers of today.

John Croxon.

The French Renaissance Court by Robert J. Knecht

Yale, 2008. xxiii + 415 pp. £25.00

Professor Knecht has published extensively on Valois France, and is considered to be a leading authority on François I, Catherine de Medici, and the French Renaissance. His latest book, *The French Renaissance Court***,** traces the evolution of the court from a peripatetic institution to a more sedentary one during the sixteenth century. Knecht's book is concerned with the political and cultural dimensions of the centre of French government and power from the reign of Charles VIII to Henri III, i.e. 1483-1589. He has chapters that examine the role of the courtier, ceremonies, art patronage, outdoor pursuits, and heresy, and his book is lavishly illustrated, containing twenty-one colour illustrations and numerous black and white ones. Some of these appear in an English language publication for the first time, such as the remarkable drawing of Henri III dining in public with his *mignon*, D'Epernon and surrounded by other favourites (p. 297).

In his Preface Knecht says that his book 'concentrates on the court as an institution' rather than as the backdrop to royal love affairs and intrigues, and that one of his aims is to present a synthesis of recent European work on the French Renaissance court to the British reader, especially Monique Chatenet's *La Cour de France au XVI Siècle* (2002) and Nicolas Le Roux's *La Faveur du Roi: Mignons et Courtisans au Temps du Dernier Valois* (2000). This is an admirable design and by and large it works. However, whilst Knecht is adept at describing events and interactions, his treatment of ideas is weaker, and so for example his chapter 'Henri III: The King and his Mignons' (pp. 280-304) lacks a thorough discussion of what exactly a favourite or *mignon* was, and how and why Henri's men provoked such negative reactions from certain quarters. He has not placed the king and his *mignons* within a broad context of patronage and clients, gender, sexuality and appearance, and so the culture of the last Valois court is not entirely drawn out: just how strange were the *mignons* to contemporaries at court and in the wider world? Furthermore, Knecht's overall treatment of the period adheres to the traditional view that the 'Golden Years' (1483-1559) were followed by a decline that was due to the rule of Henri II's degenerate progeny, and yet this is debatable. The problems of the Wars of Religion would probably have been insurmountable even to a ruler such as François I.

However, this book is a valuable contribution to the English-language historiography and sits nicely with works such as A. G. Dickens' *The Courts of Europe* (1978) and John Adamson's *The Princely Courts of Europe* (2000). It is to be hoped that other historians will develop Knecht's agenda and further increase our understanding of this fascinating subject.

Stephen Brogan

Jane Boleyn: The Infamous Lady Rochford by Julia Fox, Phoenix

This is a book about someone many have heard of but very few know much about. Jane Parker became sister-in-law to Anne Boleyn and Lady of the Bedchamber to Catherine Howard. Her life was one of extraordinary drama as a witness to, and participant in, the dramatic events of Henry VIII's reign.

Just a teenager when she arrived at court, her marriage to George Boleyn took her into the heart of royal affairs and led her to witness the tragic spectacle of Henry's marriages unfold.

It was her supposed part in the downfall of both Anne and Catherine that led to her own death and to being made a pariah of Tudor history, with her reputation tarnished by tales of adultery, incest and betrayal. Today, if she is featured at all, it is usually within the pages of a historical novel where she is usually portrayed in a very unflattering light. However, this book seeks to change perceived opinion about Jane Boylen. Using a wealth of contemporary accounts, Julia Fox argues a powerful case for a re-examination of our opinions on the infamous Lady Rochford. The Tudor age was distorted by lies and propaganda and the author expertly exposes the harsh reality of the Tudor court.

Fox successfully depicts the frightening experience of living in an age when the wrong word or action, or the beguiling whisper of a rival could lead to downfall and possible death. This is a well written book that combines a mixture of enthralling storytelling with impressive research that together provides a fascinating insight into the life of Tudor courtiers.

The author persuasively argues that Jane did not inform against her husband but merely, under pressure, confirms that Anne had made remarks about Henry's sexual inadequacies, and Fox successfully demonstrates that she was not estranged from her husband at the time of his trial. Elizabethan propagandists had to exonerate the queen's mother but obviously could not blame her father, so they needed a scapegoat, and Jane Boylen ideally fitted that position.

Jane Boylen died because she acquiesced in Catherine's adultery but not for anything else. She was innocent of any involvement in the deaths of her brother and sister-in-law and after George's death had managed, with considerable effort, to carve out a career for herself.

This is a terrific book that has certainly changed my opinion of how I view Jane Boylen. Like so much of Tudor history taught down the ages, the story of the 'wicked, vile and vicious' Lady Rochford turns out to be utter rubbish. More than any other age, this was the age of damnable lies.

John Croxon.

FICTION BOOKS

The criteria for fiction books is the same as that for non-fiction book reviews; that it deals with a subject within the Early Modern period, roughly from the Renaissance (the middle of the fifteenth century) through to the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and that the book is still in print.

John Croxon

Measuring the World by Daniel Kehlmann, Quercus Publishing

Towards the end of the 18th century two brilliant young Germans set out to measure the world. The naturalist and explorer Alexander Von Humboldt, has neither time nor inclination for relationships. He travels down the Orinoco, climbs the highest mountain then known to man, counts headlice on the heads of the natives, and explores every hole in the ground. Whilst the mathematician and physicist, Carl Friedrick Gauss, does not even need to leave his home to know that space is curved. He can run prime numbers in his head, cannot imagine a life without women and yet he is so obsessed with his work that he jumps out of bed on his wedding night to jot down a mathematical formula.

This is a truly delightful book; beautifully written, it presents two contrasting individuals, both obsessed with their professions but possessing completely different attitudes. Highly entertaining and extremely funny, this is a lovely book to read.

John Croxon.

Problem Page

Ask Agonistes: Birkbeck Early Modern Society's very own agony aunt.

Dear Aunt Agonistes,

I am expecting a baby and want to continue my studies at Birkbeck. I am very confused about childcare. Can you help?

Nadiya

Dear Nadiya,

It is vital to find the right childcare. Here are my top tips on how to choose a wet-nurse.

If a Nurse be well complexioned her milk cannot be ill. But few can tell, when they see a nurse whether her complexion be good or not. Beware you chose not a woman that is crooked or squint-eyed, nor with a mishapen Nose, or body, or with black ill-favored Teeth, or with stinking breath, or with any notable depravation; for these are signs of ill manners that the child will partake of by sucking such ill qualified milk as such people yield; and the child will soon be squint-eyed by imitation. A sanguine tempered woman is commonly free from all these distempers and her milk will be good. All the other tempers, except sanguine, as Flegm, or Choler, or melancholy, breed milk that will agree with no child. But there is one rule from the Sex; That a female child must suck the breasts of a Nurse that had a Girl the last child she had, and a Boy must suck her that lately had a Boy. Let the Nurse be sure to observe a diet that is most proper to her milk, and also to avoid all passions and venerous actions during the time she is nurse.

Good luck

Agonistes

THE SUMMER QUIZ

1. Who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1454 until 1486?

2. Who died with his father, Richard, duke of York, at the battle of Wakefield in 1460?

3. Who was married to Perkin Warbeck?

4. Which Protestant reformer was burnt at the stake in October 1536?

5. On the 13th May 1568, which queen's forces were defeated at the battle of Langside?

6. Who opened 'The Temple of Health' in London in July 1780?

7. Who painted 'Regents of St Elizabeth's Hospital'?

8. What occurred in France on the 24th August 1572?

9. Which battle was fought on the 2nd February 1461?

10. What was it claimed that two of the daughters of Richard Giles, the innkeeper of Lamb Inn in Bristol in 1701-1702 were supposed to be suffering from?

11. Who was executed at the Tower on the 19th May 1536?

12. Who did Margaret Plantagenet (sister of Edward IV) marry in 1468?

13. What did Joseph and Etienne Montgolfier do on the 4th June 1783?

14. Who was born on the 10th June 1688 to James II and Mary of Modena?

15 Who published a book in 1543 that argued that the earth did not sit at the centre of the Universe but was merely a planet orbiting the Sun?

16. What and when was the last battle of the Wars of the Roses?

17. After the death of his son, Edward, in 1484 whom did Richard III name as heir to the throne?

18. Who wrote the play 'She Stoops To Conquer' in 1773?

19. Who wrote the opera 'The Coronation of Poppea' in written in 1643

20. Which city fell to Royalist forces on the 26th July 1643 following a siege?

Answers on the following page

ANSWERS TO THE SUMMER QUIZ

1. Thomas Bourchier
2. Edmund, earl of Rutland
3. Lady Katherine Gordon
4. William Tyndale
5. Mary Queen of Scots
6. James Graham
7. Frans Hals
8. The St Bartholomew Day Massacre
9. Mortimers Cross
10. Satanic possession
11. Anne Boleyn
12. Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy
13. Demonstrated the first public hot air balloon flight at Annonay, France
14. James Francis Edward Stuart (The Old Pretender)
15. Nicolaus Copernicus
16. Stoke Field, 16th June 1487
17. His nephew, John de la Pole, earl of Lincoln
18. Oliver Goldsmith
19. Claudio Monteverdi
20. Bristol

THE BIRKBECK EARLY MODERN SOCIETY

FOUNDED 2006

This society was founded in the belief that more study, discussion and interest in the Early Modern period is required. The society aims to promote, encourage and stimulate new research and discussion into a wide range of themes, including art and images, consumption, gender roles, literature, magic, politics, religion, science, music, sexuality and, travel and exploration.

PRESIDENT

Stephen Brogan

SECRETARY

Laura Jacobs

TREASURER

Sue Dale

COMMITTEE

Karen Baston, Nigel Carter, Karen Chester, John Croxon, Nadiya Midgley, Robin Rowles

STANDING COMMITTEES

WEB SITE

Chair: Karen Baston

BULLETIN

Chair: John Croxon

EVENTS

Chair: Nadiya Midgley