

The Drink Tank



Cover composed by Chris

Pg. 3 - Editorial

Christopher J. Garcia

*Pg. 4 - Editorial: Two Cinematic Stabs at the
Tower of London*

Chuck Serface

Page 6 - Word Search by Alissa McKersie

*Pg. 7 - The Eleventh Day of the Eleventh Month
Words and Photos from Colin Harris*

Pg. 11 - Two Tours of the Tower

Steven H Silver

Photos by Editor Consort Andrew Wales

Pg. 15 - Awsum Dragon Photo by

Steven H Silver

Pg. 16 - Alissa & Andrew Visit The Tower

Photographic Evidence

Pg. 22 - The Menagerie or the Cage?

Bob Hole

Photos by Alissa & Andrew

Pg. 25 - The Tower, the Zoo, and the Tortoise by

Julia Stuart

Stephanie Alford

Pg. 27 - The Lost King of England, or Maybe Two

Bob Hole

Pg. 30 - G-G-G-G-GHOSTS!!!

Christopher J. Garcia

Pg. 33 - The Tower Letters

Bob Hole

Pg. 37 - The Tower of London and an 1888

Victorian Comic Opera

Steven H. Silver

Pg. 40 - Alissa's Tower Photos



Editorial by Chris

The Tower of London, Her Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress of the Tower of London, is one of the most important of all buildings in English history, and while celebrating the turning of the odometer to 2020, I thought about the Tower. I'm not 100% sure why, but I did. I was thinking about the aborted visit I had in 2008, where I decided that fifty pounds was way too much for a visit. I thought about the Princes in the Tower, about the ghosts, about the stories of prisoners held there into the 20th Century. It is an amazing place, a place of history, a strange place.

That, and I like ravens.

There's a personnel change in *The Drink Tank* cahootery as well. You'll know him as three-time Hugo nominee, and the King of Men, Chuck Surface. He's been working with us for ages, and we figured it was time to bring him on-board as a full-fledged editor. He's pretty much the only fan I see on a regular basis, so there's that!

I'm also going to be announcing coming issues of the zines I work on in this space. What's coming up? For the *Drink Tank* there's going to be an issue on *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*. It's the best period piece on TV today. After that, there's a Sondheim issue for April, and one on the ukulele, though no date on that one yet. We're shooting for at least monthly this year.

Journey Planet? Wow. We're shooting for the moon. The ones that I'm working most on (I'm taking the lead for once!) is *Swamp Thing*. I was tempted to do it as a *Drink Tank*, but it's really something I want James and Pádraig's deep comics-world ties to help make happen! I've got a cover concept that's allowing me to team up with Vanessa in creating.

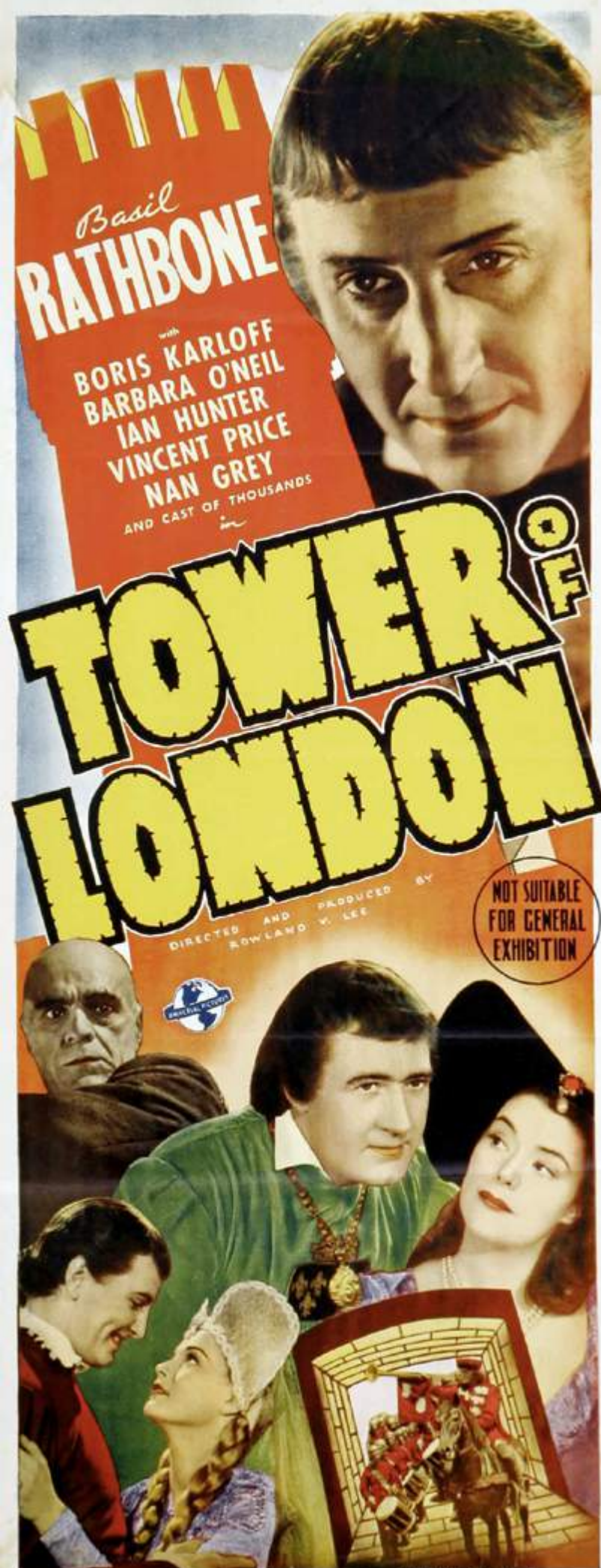
Other than that, Cinequest is happening, and while putting together this year's slate was insanely difficult, it came together wonderfully. I'll be talking about it more on *Klaus at Gunpoint*, on my podcasts, and in an issue of *Claims Department*, but the highlights include a short from Chloe Sevigny, one starring podcaster/MUFON investigator Henry Zebrowski, a short doc shot by DA Pennebaker, a documentary about Liza Minnelli's scarves, an incredible feature documentary about Jay Sebring, a lovely short comedy doc from Sam Frazier Jr, and probably the funniest take overall "what really happens off-screen in slasher movies" trope. It's going to be a great year.



The Drink Tank 421

Editors

Chris Garcia ~ Alissa McKersie ~ Chuck Surface



Editorial by Chuck

Two Cinematic Stabs at The Tower of London

Two films bear the title *The Tower of London*, both offering interpretations of events surrounding Richard III that exploit elements of horror. I saw the first forty years ago, and when Chris revealed that this issue would focus on all aspects of the Tower of London itself, I decided to not only re-watch Basil Rathbone as Richard III with Boris Karloff as the non-historical Mord, but I'd screen the Roger Corman version starring Vincent Price, which I'd never seen before, as well. I'll let you read the articles from our honored contributors for facts about the Towers, because facts in these films are like Bacon Bits on a very large salad.

The Tower of London (1939) was released by Universal Studios. Although the director and screenwriter, the brothers Rowland V. and Richard N. Lee respectively, were after historical drama, how could anything from Universal with Karloff not also be horror? Bodies caked with blood fall from iron maidens. We see Mord, the executioner and chief torturer, sharpening his ax and smiling with glee while victims scream upon the rack. Rathbone's Richard is quite the conniver too, but he's an expert swordsman and no weakling. Each time he eliminates, or has eliminated, a rival to the throne, he removes a doll representing that person from a diorama and hurls it into fire. What a menacing pair, indeed.

In fairness, the Lees do partially meet their



historical goal, with explorations of Medieval marriage customs and politics, how Edward IV lines up matches to strengthen his hold on the crown he'd taken from Henry VI. Nonetheless, thrills and chills bring Universal fans to theaters. So do dark characters and plots. However, a human element abounds like with earlier Universal pictures like *Frankenstein* or *Dracula*. Arlene Okerlund, my Shakespeare professor at San Jose State University, once stopped a classmate complaining about what he termed Shakespeare's fast-and-loose history with the following:

Shakespeare was knowledgeable about history, of course. But was he a historian? Although we refer to a portion of his work as history plays, he was after all a playwright, one who strove to illustrate human nature, character, the cost and profit of living. Shakespeare may have used history as a backdrop, but he didn't write history. He wrote about other truths.

I considered that statement while witnessing Mord, witlessly devoted to Richard, murder and maim, shielding his master from culpability at every turn. Richard Lee created the fictional Mord for this film to instill horror, but also to dramatize how schemers employ cat's paws to keep their hands clean. I found myself pitying Mord despite his twisted workings down in the dungeon. The film's end amplifies Mord's blind love tragically. Long live Henry VII.

Remember how in *Frankenstein* and *Bride of Frankenstein* Karloff's Monster terrified us and evoked sympathy? He scores again!



In 1962, Roger Corman directed his *The Tower of London* on a shoestring, and so much for historical drama. Poisoned drinks in the first film become Woodville daggers here. Vincent Price plays Richard, a leering, bent figure who takes a more direct hand in murdering and torturing his co-stars. Ghosts enter the picture too, real ghosts, not metaphorical representations of Richard's guilt. Richard has accomplices, but no one's protecting him now, nor does he care. Rathbone delivers a skilled Machiavellian. Price gives us an I-don't-give-a-fuck Machiavellian. We've moved into schlock with Corman and Price, but who doesn't love schlock?

Price appears in both movies. In the first, he's the Malmsey-loving Clarence, a much weaker version of Clarence than portrayed in Corman's film. I love Vincent Price. I love how the smell of pork wafts from every scene. He emotes at DEFCON 1 all the time, every time. Never will he disappoint, and his excess ties both versions together nicely.

So, again, whiffs of accepted history roll through each film, but what viewers receive is two angles on the Tower of London's legendary essence, how the Tower was both home and prison, how ghosts walked its halls and heads rolled, and how events surrounding Richard III, factual or not, reinforced these notions. After reading what our wonderful contributors say about the Tower, you may want to enjoy a lazy afternoon taking in these two cinematic stabs (heh – sorry). You might not be edified, but you will be entertained.



ANNE BOLEYN
ARMOUR
BEEFEATERS
CEREMONY OF THE KEYS
CROWN JEWELS
KINGS
KOH-I-NŪR DIAMOND
MOAT

PALACE
PRISON
QUEENS
RAVENS
ROYAL MINT
THE RACK
TOWER GREEN
TOWER HILL

TRAITORS GATE
TREASON
WHITE TOWER
WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR





The Eleventh Day of the Eleventh Month by Colin Harris

It's a truism that people often don't visit tourist attractions in their home town or city. Certainly, this holds for me; and there's plenty (St Paul's Cathedral, for instance) that I finally visited only when I was showing a friend around London. It's not any lack of interest, either; I think it's rather that because these places are always here with us, there's never any urgency to see them.

And this is why I've never been inside the Tower of London, although I've passed it many times on foot and by boat. But it still fascinates me, given the way it's woven through English history and the English psyche right back to William the Conqueror. (William created initial fortifications at the site in 1066 as he consolidated his hold on London; but the structures we see today start in 1078 when construction started on the White Tower). The Princes in the Tower; famous prisoners (ending with the Kray Twins in 1952!); executions; ravens; Beefeaters; the Crown Jewels; the menagerie.

Places like this (Stonehenge; the Tower; St Paul's; the Houses of Parliament ...) link to our national identity in a way that transcends their physicality. They are a touchstone for who we are – and so the Tower was a natural focal point for WWI Centenary events.

Blood Swept Lands

The first poppies were "planted" at the Tower on 28 July, 2014 (exactly 100 years from the start of the war), more added daily until the event finished on 11 November (the anniversary of the Armistice.)

The official name of the installation was “*Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*” (the title is the first line of an obscure poem written by an unknown soldier during the war). 888,246 poppies; one for each British military fatality in the war, installed by over 21,600 volunteers. Every day at sunset, 180 names were read from the Roll of Honour (some 20,000 names in total over the course of the event), followed by the Last Post. I think so many aspects of this project were perfectly thought out (not often the case!), adding to the emotional connection so many people felt to it. Huge credit goes to Paul Cummins (the artist and creator behind the display) here ... the poppies were made by artists and people linked to the Armed Forces, and with the techniques that would have been used in 1914. And after the installation was removed, most of the poppies were sold to raise money for service charities. (Some went on a tour of the UK before being given permanently to the Imperial War Museum).

When I mention the emotional connection all of this made to people, I mean it. Of all the centenary events, this was the one that transcended history and art and captured hearts and imaginations. Five MILLION people saw it, and I’m sure it will stay with all of them.

The Last Day

It was the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 2014. I’d seen the pictures on the news and the net, as the poppies spread out across the moat in flowing waves. I’d meant to go and see for myself, but not had the chance (Loncon 3, followed by a very busy period at work ...). Then suddenly, I had a couple of hours to spare, so I walked down to the Tower. I hadn’t even realized it was the last day of the installation ...

The mass of people was quiet; respectful, like those tourists you see visiting a Cathedral when there’s no service on. But this was not religious; it was just intensely human as people communed with the installation, with their own thoughts and to a degree with each other, through a shared experience.

At times like this I find things can become very meditative (surely the intention in this case!) and very connected. Self-awareness, and awareness of one’s surroundings, increases. I was conscious of the relative quiet of the crowd around me; the low murmurings of whispered conversations; the sounds of cars and buses going by on the roads around the Tower.

The metaphor of the poppies and what they represented was at the heart of things for me and I suspect for others. We’re used to Remembrance Day poppies of course ... but knowing that there was a poppy for each life ... seeing the lost lives spread out in front of us ... gave sense to numbers that are normally too big to humanize. “Enough people to fill Wembley Stadium ten times over” might be a way to describe the lost, but it doesn’t make them real in the same way. Looking at the poppies somehow gave them focus. Each one an individual, yet when one looked at them together, a whole generation. I thought for a moment about the progressive installation of the poppies over the four months of the project, and how that paralleled the progressive loss of life over the four years of the war.

I thought about my grandfather, who fought in the later years of the war as a Lewis (machine) gunner. He survived it, but died at a young age in 1936 when my father was just a year old. I am sure most of the crowd had their own personal family stories in mind.

I’d arrived just after 10 AM. At 10:30, a small procession wound its way through the poppies. An artillery salute was fired. Then there was a reading of names from the Roll of Honour. (I’ve read that this was normally at sunset as I noted above; I assume this morning reading reflected the fact that it was the last day of the installation hm,— and Armistice Day). I was still standing there at 11:00 – as were the vast majority of the crowd, all lost in our thoughts. The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. That hour that I was there passed very quickly and with no normal sense of time. And then, along with the rest, I slowly drifted away, with my thoughts, back into the 21st century.

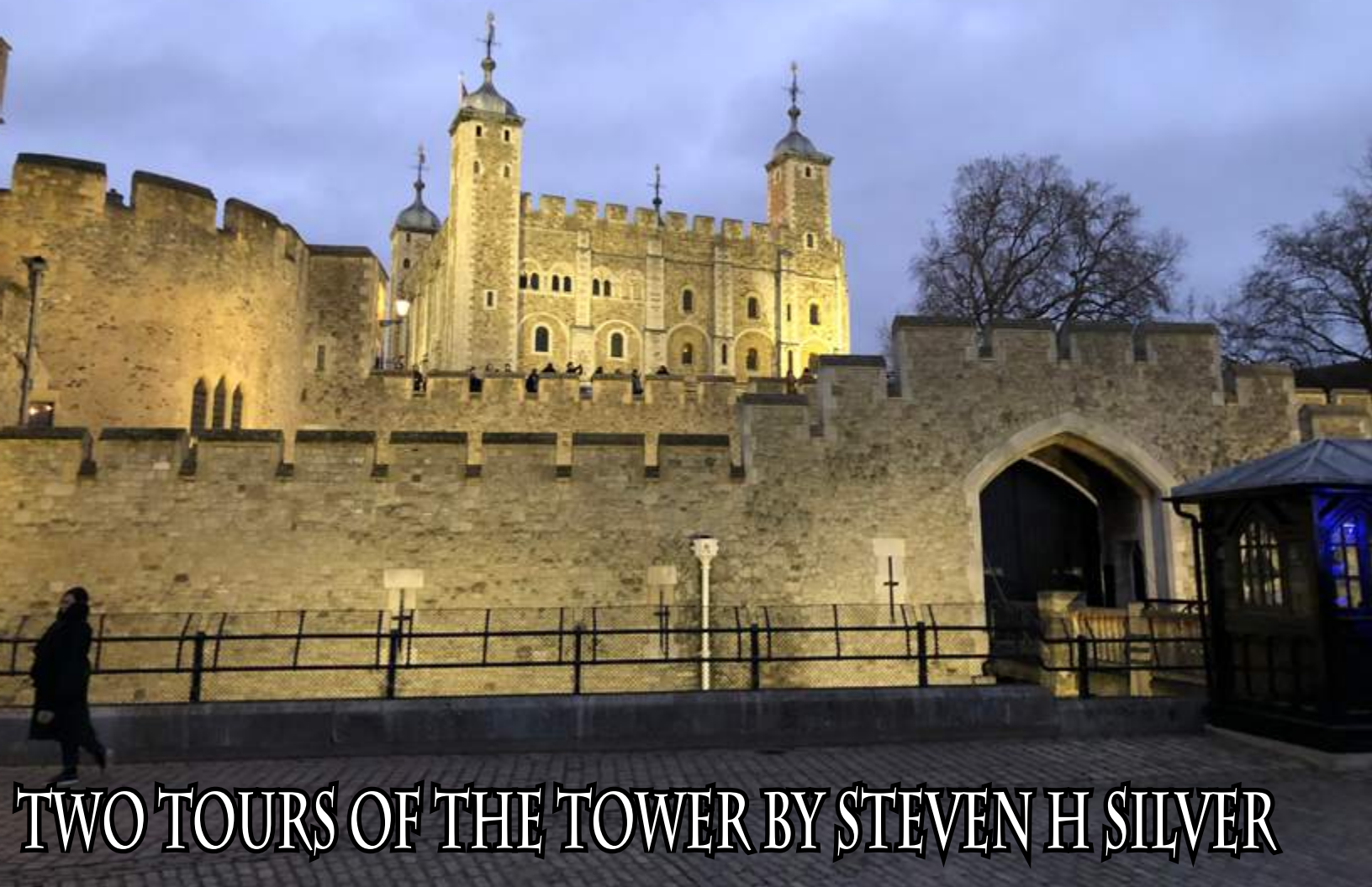
Useful Links

History of the Tower - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tower_of_London

WWI Centenary Display - <https://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london/history-and-stories/tower-of-london-remembers/#gs.vfnxtl>







TWO TOURS OF THE TOWER BY STEVEN H SILVER

When I lived in England in 1987, I was working on a research project with my advisor, Pamela Tudor-Craig, Lady Wedgwood. About midway through the term, I made plans for a trip down to London to further my research, which would include visits to the storage rooms at the Museum of London, lunch with a curator of the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Society of Antiquaries. Before all that, Lady Wedgwood arranged for me to have a special visit to the Tower of London.

I arrived at the Tower about a little before they opened and was shown into the room in which the Crown Jewels were displayed. At the time, they were in cases in the center of the room with a two-tier pathway around them for the visitors to look. When the room was open, people were shepherded through with instructions not to stop and not to take pictures.

Before it opened, however, I was allowed to wander around the room to my heart's content. I was alone, able to look at the crowns, scepters, broaches, etc. from various angles and however long I wanted. Well, I was alone except for the seven tower warders who were gathered around me to make sure I didn't take any pictures or try to touch the cases in which the jewels were displayed.

When they finally opened the jewel room to the public, it was time for me to move on. I was given a private tour of the grounds by one of the tower warders who regaled me with stories of the tower's bloody past. At one point, he was telling the story of Richard III's execution of William Hastings in 1483. I commented that the version of the story he was telling was straight out of Shakespeare, which differed from the reality of the story in many ways and completely ignored the complexity of the situation. He responded that while he knew I

was correct and understood the history of the period and the event, the crowds he usually gave the talk to weren't interested in the details and merely wanted to hear the sensationalized headlines.

He showed me around a little more before turning me over to the most interesting part of my tour of the Tower. I was allowed to tag along with a group of the Tower's trustees. The purpose of their tour was to see the areas of the Tower that were most in need of renovation, along with a discussion of the specific work that would need to be done and the timelines for the work. The tour was led by Sir Roland Gibbs, who served as the Constable of the Tower of London from 1985 until 1990.

The standard tour of the Tower of London offers a walk from the moat to the site of the executioner's block and into the chapel. With the trustees, I was given the chance to walk through the various towers: the Flint Tower, the Bowyer Tower, the Brick Tower, and see parts of the fortress which were not open to the public. Even if parts of those towers had displays, we were walking up staircases that had restrictive signs hung across them. As we walked up one set of stairs, the wear on the stone was pointed out and we paused to learn how the stairs were going to be repaired so the second floor of the tower could be made available to the general public. As



we entered each room, we were told a little bit about its historical use, usually in the guise of "Clarence was held here after his revolt against Edward IV, but this part of the Tower was rebuilt in the 19th century after the original Tower was destroyed by fire. We have no plans to renovate this part of the Tower at this time."

A year before I took this tour of the Tower, in 1986, a woman named Elaine was touring England with some friends after spending a year in Israel. It was the end of their time abroad and after making their way through Europe, they were exhausted. Upon reaching London, one of Elaine's friends discovered she had left her money belt in a cab, along with her traveler's checks, cash, airline tickets, and passport. Most of their time in London was spent traveling between the airline offices, banks, and U.S. embassy to get replacements for the missing documents.

Because of the lost money, their tourism was limited to free activities, including a picnic lunch on Tower Hill, overlooking the Tower of London. Thirty years later, this woman, now my wife, was planning a trip to London, her first since 1986. I asked her what she wanted to do when she was in London. She only had one request. Having seen the outside of the Tower, she wanted to make sure she saw the inside of the Tower.

On the Friday we were going to be in London, we planned on arriving at the Tower when it opened. We would spend the morning there before heading up to St. Paul's Cathedral and then the Museum of London before attending opening night of *The Tempest* at the Barbican Centre, which was also hosting an exhibit on science fiction.

However, to quote Robert Burns, "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men Gang aft a-gley."

We arrived at the Tower first thing in the morning. Elaine wanted to get on a tour, but I told her the first thing we needed to do was look at the Crown Jewels as there wouldn't be a line this early. We headed for the jewels and were able to go right in.

The display has changed quite a bit in the thirty years between my visits. Rather than display the jewels in a central case with two concentric raisers around them, they are now laid out in a long case with moving sidewalks carrying the public along at a set speed to make sure there is no dawdling and they can move people through quickly. At the end of the exhibit, they've displayed the cases used to transport the Crown Jewels when they are needed for purposes of state.

When we exited the exhibit, I pointed to the entrance and, sure enough, there was a long line to get in, which continued to exist throughout the day.

We did take a tour with one of the Yeoman Warders, in fact, our tour guide was Christopher Skaife, who has served as the Tower's Ravenmaster since 2011.

In 1660, King Charles II regained his father's throne after an eleven-year interregnum in which England was essentially ruled by Oliver Cromwell and his son, Richard. In the mid-1660s, London was struck by two catastrophes. A comet lit up the sky in the winter of 1664, leading many to wonder what evil it portended. In April of 1665, Londoners began to realize that the plague had reappeared in the city and raged throughout much of the year. By February of 1666, Charles II decided it was safe enough to move his court from Windsor back to London. Then, on September 2, 1666, a fire broke out in the bakery of Thomas Farynor in Pudding Lane. The fire burned until September 6, destroying more than 13,500 houses, 87 churches, St. Paul's Cathedral, and other buildings, although the loss of life was relatively small.

In the aftermath of these calamities, Charles II popularized an ancient prophecy that he seems to have invented. As long as ravens lived in the Tower of London, England would not fall. Ever since, the Tower has been home to at least six ravens (when we were there, there was a seventh to act as a spare, but an additional raven was born in 2019), and one of the Yeoman Warders is appointed Ravenmaster to look after their well-being.

Unlike the Yeoman Warder who gave me the tour in 1987, Skaife stuck to the facts, ending the tour in the Chapel Royal of St Peter ad Vincula, where many notables, including both of Henry VIII's executed wives (Anne Boleyn and Katherine Howard), Jane Grey, and Sir Thomas More are buried. Unfortunately, with the frequency of the tours, we were not able to spend a lot of time in the chapel once our official tour finished.



Near St. Peter ad Vincula is the location where executions took place within the Tower of London. Although the tower has a reputation for executions, very few have taken place here. The first was the impromptu execution of William Hastings (Earl Buckingham) in 1483. The next didn't occur until 1536, when Anne Boleyn was beheaded on Henry VIII's orders. The next three executions here were also during the reign of Henry VIII and included Margaret of Salisbury in 1541, his wife Katherine Howard and Anne Boleyn's sister, Jane, in 1542. Lady Jane Gray was executed in 1554 after attempting the claim the throne, and finally in 1601, Richard Devereux (Earl of Essex) was executed on Queen Elizabeth I's orders. Other prisoners who were executed were killed outside compound on Tower Hill.

The official tour only covers a small part of the tower complex and I began to walk Elaine through the various parts, starting with the Beauchamp Tower and working our way around widdershins to the Bell Tower and so on, eventually making our way to the White Tower, originally built by William I shortly before his death in 1087.

By this time, it was nearing lunchtime and Elaine had seen the Crown Jewels, the tour, the White Tower and we had made our way from the Beauchamp Tower to the Lanthorn Tower, only about a third of the way around the ground. Our plan had been to head out of the Tower for a bite of lunch and then to St. Paul's Cathedral, but instead we decided to grab a bite at the Tower and I would continue to give Elaine a tour, expounding on the history of what she was seeing and tying it in to England's history as a whole.

We eventually left as the Tower was closing, missing out on our planned excursions to St. Paul's and the Museum of London. We had a quick dinner at the Barbican Centre before seeing *The Tempest*.

But most importantly, Elaine had finally made it into the Tower of London for a day that made up for her missed opportunity in 1986.







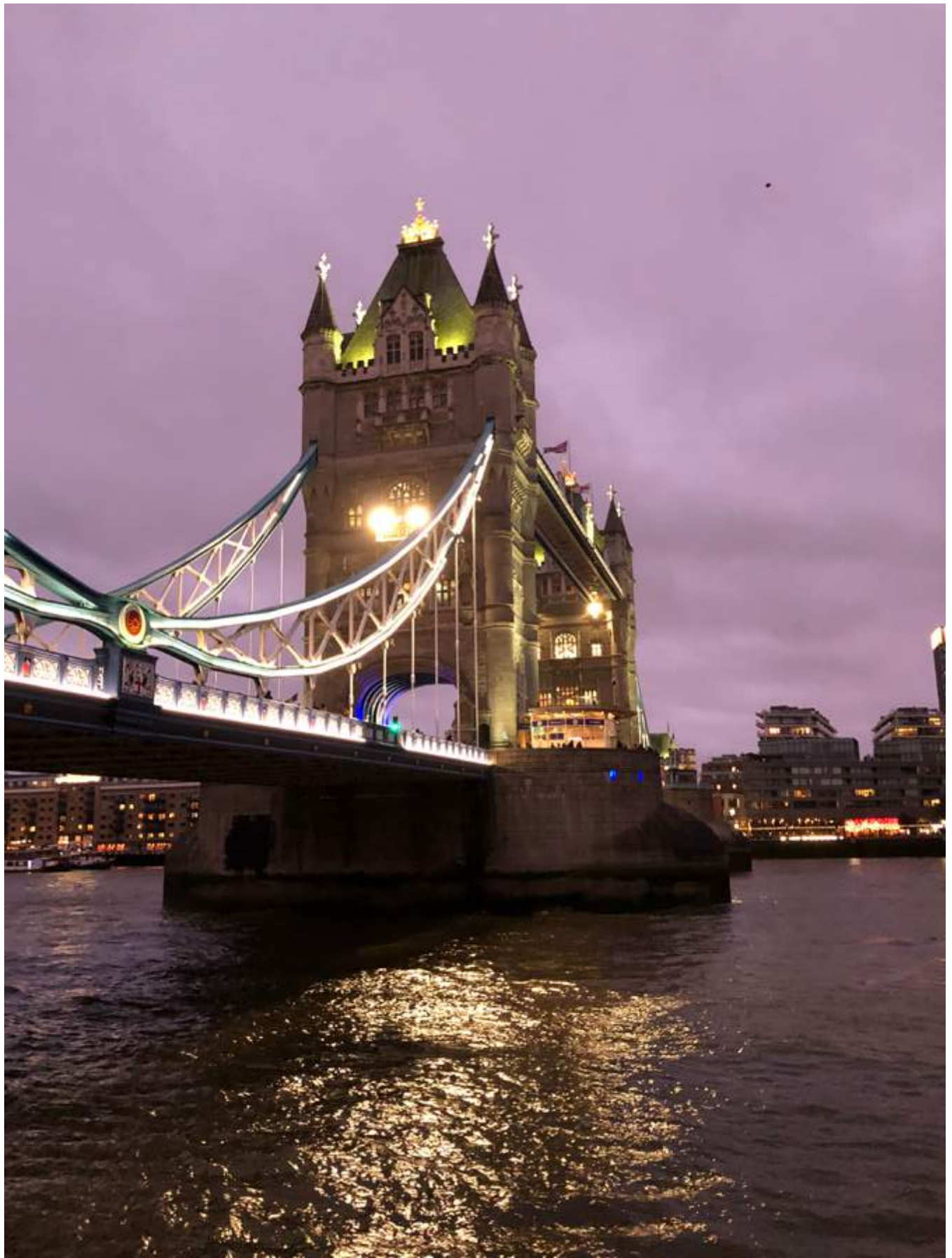
*Alissa & Andrew Visit the Tower
Photographic Evidence!*













The Menagerie !or! The Cage by Bob Hole

King John of England (r. 1199-1216) is known for several things. He is maligned as the head villain in the Robin Hood stories (he did try to take the throne from his brother Richard I), and he was the unwilling signer of the Magna Carta at Runnymede (he was forced to by the nobility after he lost a rebellion). He also began collecting a menagerie at the Tower of London. These wild animals joined the (at that time) occasional human captive.

John's son, King Henry III (r. 1216-1272), received in 1252 three lions (called leopards in the records, so it's unclear which they really were) from the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. They were the first to be seen in England. Henry installed them in the Tower of London's menagerie. They were joined by a polar bear from the King of Norway, Haakon IV (the Old), in 1252 and an African elephant from the French King Philip III (the Bold) in 1255.

The collection was not opened to public viewing until the 15th century, but they were still certainly visible to people who flocked to see the elephant, and were almost daily treated to the sight of the polar bear swimming and fishing in the River Thames, appropriately collared and tethered. At other times, the polar bear was kept muzzled and chained.

The conditions for the animals at the Tower of London were never what we would consider humane, but considering the almost total lack of knowledge for what the animals needed to survive, and lack of real regard toward them as anything but symbols (and not as animals), they did surprisingly well. The elephant did die after just a couple years, but the lions and leopards kept at the Tower bred and did well.

Of course, over the years the lack of knowledge caused other issues. Keepers were mauled and killed by the animals on more than one occasion. One early leopard, being kept in 1699, regularly urinated on visitors.

Henry's son, Edward I (r. 1272-1307), built a special tower to house the growing collection. The tower, eventually came to be called the Lion Tower for its most important inhabitants. He also established the post of the Master of the King's Lions and Bears.

King John II of France (r. 1350 – 1364) was held captive by the English from 1356 to 1360, ending his captivity at the Tower of London where he became perhaps the first known paying visitor to the menagerie. In 1360 he bribed a keeper with three gold sovereigns to be allowed to see the animals.

The lions at the Tower were sometimes named after the monarch or their family. The legend somehow grew that when a namesake lion passed away, the person would die soon afterward. Most famously, this happened in 1603 when the lioness Elizabeth died shortly before the Queen herself.

By 1622, King James I (r. 1603-1625) had added three eagles, two pumas, a tiger, and a jackal, as well as more lions and leopards. James improved upon the Lion Tower and the quarters of the lions and leopards, opening them up so visitors could better see the animals.

These viewings sometimes included lion baiting, with the big cats being forced to fight with bulls, bears, and dogs. James had a royal viewing platform installed so he could watch the fights. The lions did not always win these fights, at least one was killed in a fight with a tiger.

In 1822, a new head keeper, Alfred Cops was appointed and he tried to upgrade and revitalize the institution. Under his direction the collection grew to include over 300 animals including three kangaroos, an African porcupine, and over 100 rattlesnakes.

Other animals kept at the Tower of London included an ostrich, camels, a flying squirrel, baboons, a bearded griffin vulture, a zebra, kangaroos, an ocelot, wolves, and lynx.

Also present was a grizzly bear, named Martin, presented in 1811 to King George III (r. 1760-1820) by the Hudson Bay Company.

The Tower menagerie was closed out in 1831 under King William IV (r. 1830-1837). The First Duke of Wellington was the Constable of the Tower and he saw the menagerie as a nuisance. He was also a founding member of the London Zoological Society and oversaw the closing of the Tower menagerie and the move of 150 animals in 1831 and 1832 as the founding collection of the new London Zoo at Regent's Park.

Animals moved to the new zoo included George III's grizzly bear, twenty years after he arrived at the Tower. Martin died in 1838.

In three ways, the menagerie at the Tower of London is still alive and well, the "collection" now consisting only of ravens. There is a legend that if the ravens leave the tower, disaster will follow.

There is conflicting evidence about when the ravens were first kept in captivity there. Legend says they were kept first by Charles II (r. 1660-1685), who did order that they not be killed, but actual records seem only begin in 1883 with an illustration.

In fact, the Charles II's Royal Astronomer complained to the King about the ravens interfering with his observations. Rather than destroy the ravens, the king moved the observatory to its current location at Greenwich.

Since the 1960s the Yeoman Warder Ravenmaster has been the title of the head raven keeper at the Tower.

In addition to the Tower Ravens, visitors since 2015 can see several sculptures installed to commemorate the animals at the menagerie. The sculptures include a lion, that polar bear, an elephant, and a troop of baboons. The sculptures were made by Kendra Haste out of galvanized wire.

And finally, while the greater menagerie is no longer kept at the Tower itself, royal gifts of wild animals continue to come in from around the world. These animals are kept at the new location of the menagerie, the London Zoo at Regent's Park.



The Tower, the Zoo, and the Tortoise by Julia Stuart

~ A Review ~



It's cold and raining as the royal boat makes its way down the Thames from Queen Mary's court to Traitor's Gate at the Tower of London. Elizabeth I sits, plotting and planning, until the boat pulls up to the Gate. There, guardsmen help her off the boat and onto the stairs which lead her inside to her imprisonment at her sister's orders. Elizabeth's tolerance of Protestantism has brought her into direct conflict with Mary, who is determined to quash the upstart religion and see Catholicism become the state religion.

Never mind Mary's father, Henry VIII, declared the Church of England as state religion, the better to duck the Papal denunciation of Henry's attempt at annulling his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Mary was determined to see England back under the fold of her mother's religion. Thus, Elizabeth was sent to the Tower for her infidel ways.

So, the boat arrives. The gates go up. Elizabeth is handed out of the boat onto the stairs. And she sits down. In the river, in the rain, when it must have been extremely cold, she sits down and declares she will go no farther. This exile from court is unfair, and she knows it. She also knows it's politically motivated because of who her mother was, of the threat Elizabeth presents to the current court. She sits, straight backed, and eloquently soliloquizes about being subjected to such a punishment.

The guards stand, shivering. They can't force her in. She is royalty after all. Nor can they let her sit outside. Slowly, realizing her duty, Elizabeth I rises and takes the stairs onto the grounds of the Tower and is led to the room in which she will be imprisoned for nearly a year.

My bucket list doesn't include visiting the Tower of London, but it does include sailing up to Traitor's Gate to get a feel for what it must have been like for Elizabeth to be so humiliated and still rise above it all to become one of the best loved rulers of England.

For all that, Elizabeth I and Traitor's Gate has little to do with the charming and gentle book that is Julia Stuart's *The Tower, the Zoo, and the Tortoise*.

And while it is charming and gentle on the surface, it deals with deep, hard emotions beneath the surface. It's the stories of the people who live, and work, at the Tower.

"We might love each other in the same way, but it doesn't mean we grieve in the same way."

Meet Balthazar and Hebe Jones, parents to Milo who died at the age of eight and has been gone three years. Grief does terrible things to people, especially parents. Balthazar has turned to collecting rain samples and saving them in elaborately labeled Egyptian perfume bottles which he stores in a cabinet. Hebe knows they're drifting apart but has no idea what to do. Balthazar turns from her whenever she tries to speak of Milo.

And so, they live their quiet lives, grieving silently. Hebe goes to her job every day at London's Underground Lost Property Office. A brilliant set up for the Jones' reunion after Hebe has given up and moved out.

Hebe doesn't know Balthazar's distance is guilt eating at him over a secret which when finally told leads to a sort of, "Oh, is that all there is?" reaction. To the observer, it seems like a silly notion, but to Balthazar it is the matter of utmost seriousness driving him to unfathomable depths of shame and grief.

Next to grief is unrequited love as portrayed by the chaplain Reverend Septimus Drew, who in his spare time designs miniature instruments of torture based on blueprints from the archives, the better to trap and kill the rats which nibble on his robes, the altar cloths, and the kneeling pads. It is with great excitement the Chaplain greets each day rushing to the church to see what mayhem his miniatures have wrought.

Septimus Drew's secrets are delicious, both charming in a certain British way. In the evenings he writes erotica under a pseudonym and gives the money to a home he's established for former prostitutes. The erotica is a wonderful set up for the requiting and then unrequiting of Septimus Drew's inamorata, the one he's watched from afar, too afraid to make himself known.

Oh, and then there's lust. But first a bit about the menagerie because it plays such an important part in the depanting of a married Beefeater whose shag partner is the worst cook ever.

One day, early in the book, Equerry to the Queen (we now speak of Elizabeth II), Oswin Fielding arrives at the Tower and insists on a meeting with Balthazar. Fielding announces with great propriety that the Queen has heard of the 181-year-old tortoise Mrs. Cook, cared for by Yeoman Warder Balthazar Jones. Of course, this is precisely the qualifying skill for someone to run the menagerie.

Leaders of other countries keep sending the Queen animals as gifts. Believing a menagerie would bolster attendance numbers at the tourist attraction that is the Tower of London, the Royal Menagerie is to be reopened. Now being held at the London Zoo, the animals are to be transferred to the Menagerie at the Tower, and it is Balthazar's job to get everything ready and to look after them once they have arrived.

Hijinks ensue as you can imagine. The penguins go exploring somehow and never arrive. The cover story is they're at the vet. Birds, including a pair of love birds who can't stand each other arrive. One which is supposed to talk is suspiciously silent until ... that comes later.

So ... back to lust and the menagerie's part in it. There's a certain married Ravenmaster who makes eyes at the cook in the cafe, which tourists are warned away from because the food's so awful. Never mind, Yeoman Ravenmaster lures the lady cook into his clutches by proclaiming her food to be his favorite. The secret hideaway becomes home for the birds but that doesn't stop the amorous couple. Birds and feathers and squawking and pellets are nothing to these two. In fact, it's so much nothing that when it comes time to send all the animals back to the London Zoo, one bird can be heard quoting "F*** me, Ravenmaster!"

Stuart's writing style is clever as she weaves these stories, and more together, in a sly wink and a nod sort of a way, all the while drawing readers in closer to the shenanigans of the human heart and all its foibles. In the end, all this silliness has a sort of treacly payoff which makes readers give off an expression usually saved for puppies or babies, "D'aw!"





The Lost King of England, or Maybe Two

by Bob Hole

Sometime in the late 1400s, someone saw them for the last time, but no one living knows who, and no one living knows when. Even where is not completely certain. All that is really known is that they disappeared, perhaps died, perhaps not.

Their fate was not officially explained at the time, and has not been positively explained over 500 years later. Their disappearance is one of the enduring mysteries of British history, celebrated in story, song, on the stage, and in film.

The two boys were Edward V, King of England (born 1470, twelve-years old in 1483), and his younger brother, Richard, Duke of York (born 1473, nine-years old), who was the Heir Presumptive. They were the surviving sons of Edward IV, the King of England. Edward IV died on 9 April 1483 leaving his sons in the protection of their uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

They were that last generation of the House of York, their uncle Richard ending as the last king from that House, ultimately losing what we call the Wars of the Roses.

The young Princes were living in the Tower of London, which was then a Royal Residence, not a prison. Edward arrived at the Tower on 19 May 1483, and Richard a month later, on 16 June. They'd been sent there by their Uncle Richard. They were sent for what he said was their protection, to await young Edward's formal coronation which was set for 22 June.

That summer they were occasionally seen in the Tower's garden and were regularly seen by a doctor, probably named John Argentine, who supposedly treated at least Edward for an unknown condition.

John Argentine did not have good luck with royal patients. Somehow, he "lost" King Edward, though whether it was to illness we don't know. Argentine was also doctor to Arthur, Prince of Wales, who died in 1502 at age 15. Arthur was the older brother of Henry VIII.

Whatever the cause, the boys were not seen publicly after August 1483.

Shortly after the young Richard arrived at the Tower, specifically on 22 June 1483 (Edward V's supposed coronation day), Ralph Shaa (or Shaw), a London theologian and half-brother of the then Lord Mayor of London, preached a sermon on the illegitimacy of the marriage of King Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville, the parents of the two boys. By being the children of an illegitimate marriage, all the children of that marriage would be

illegitimate – including the Princes Edward and Richard.

Their uncle Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who may have “planted” the sermon, immediately seized on the opportunity it gave. He or his agents persuaded an assembly of commoners and nobles to declare the boys illegitimate, and to have himself declared king.

On 25 June 1483, Richard proclaimed himself King as Richard III, and was crowned on July 6.

The boys, having lost their legal importance because of the assembly’s decision, still remained at the Tower, and remained a potential focus for rebellion by anyone trying to depose King Richard, or even later, Henry VII. Regardless of their having been declared illegitimate, they were a liability to the Crown, whoever wore it. A similar assembly could as easily declare them once again legitimate, and the legal heirs to Edward IV.

The Tudors, Henry VII’s family that overthrew and killed the boy’s uncle, Richard III, decided it fit their purposes to let Richard take the blame, or perhaps force the blame on him. They worked very hard to blacken Richard in the view of the English. Thomas More, a prominent man in the Tudor Court of Henry VII and Henry VIII, wrote that the boys had been smothered with their own pillows by agents of Richard III.

Very few, if any at the time, suggested that King Richard personally killed them. The suggestions were only that he ordered their deaths.

Recent historians, without the Tudor glasses, have done a lot to rehabilitate the reputation of Richard III. He promoted many reforms and was actually a good king. Part of this rehabilitation is related to a renewed focus on him due to the discovery and reburial of his body in Leicester. Historians since the Tudors have suggested that others may have taken it upon themselves, or themselves ordered, the deed.

Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, who was both a supporter and in October 1483 a rebel against Richard III, is a leading contender for the Princes’ killer. His motive is supposed to have been to please Richard with or without the King’s knowledge, and maybe to bolster Stafford’s own possible claim to the throne if Richard died without an heir. If he had a hand in it, or knew who did, Buckingham took that information to the grave when he was executed for treason on 2 November 1483.

Henry VII (Henry Tudor), who came to the throne after killing Richard III in August 1485, has also been implicated in the death of the Princes in the Tower. The idea being that their uncle might not have had them killed, but Henry might have to make sure they could not be a focus of rebellions against him after, and to make his claim to the throne more secure.

Richard III’s 21st century reputational rehabilitation could lend some credence to the idea that he did not have the Princes killed. But the timing of events in 1483 is too good, in my opinion, for them to have survived much longer than that summer. Whether they were murdered or died of illness, their having “conveniently” disappeared from public view just a month after Richard’s coronation, is just too good (for Richard III) for them to have survived long, let alone three years or more to be killed by Henry VII.

Despite rumors and claims to the contrary, it is pretty certain that Edward V died, probably in late summer or early autumn of 1483. No credible rumors of his survival have ever surfaced (though see below). Dying of the illness John Argentine was treating him for is a true possibility. Murder is also a strong possibility. There are arguments for either, and no way to really decide between the two.

Speculating for a moment that however he died, Edward died first, even if by a few minutes, the surviving Richard of Shrewsbury could be considered, until his own death, as the actual King Richard III, rather than his uncle.

They could have died of the same illness, or they both could have been murdered. Or, Edward could have died of illness, and Richard murdered. Any combination is possible.

While Richard probably did die at or close to the same time as his brother, the possibility that he survived and escaped has been repeatedly speculated about. This was partly instigated by two pretenders during the reign of Henry VII, trying to “reclaim” the throne for the House of York.

Lambert Simnel claimed to be Richard of Shrewsbury, but then decided to claim he was the Earl of Warwick. Later, Perkin Warbeck declared himself to be Richard of Shrewsbury in 1490, publicly proclaiming it with supporters in Cork, Ireland in 1491 and repeatedly attempted to invade England until he was captured and executed.

In fiction, Richard of Shrewsbury is sometimes supposed to have survived and fled to Flanders (as Warbuck claimed) or somewhere else on the continent. One different take on Richard was presented in the TV series *Blackadder*. Richard was never put in the Tower and becomes King Richard IV after Richard III dies at Bosworth Field (where the real Richard III did die, but was succeeded by Henry VII).

Whatever happened to them, what happened to the bodies (assuming death) is also only speculative.

Bones belonging to two children were discovered in 1674, in the reign of Charles II, by workers rebuilding a stairway in the Tower. These bones were declared to be the missing Princes and they were which were placed in a sarcophagus in Westminster Abbey. The sarcophagus can be found in the north aisle of the Henry VII Chapel, near Elizabeth I's tomb.

The sarcophagus inscription reads (translated from the Latin):

Here lie the relics of Edward V, King of England, and Richard, Duke of York. These brothers being confined in the Tower of London, and there stifled with pillows, were privately and meanly buried, by the order of their perfidious uncle Richard the Usurper; their bones, long enquired after and wished for, after 191 years in the rubbish of the stairs (those lately leading to the Chapel of the White Tower) were on the 17th day of July AD 1674 by undoubted proofs discovered, being buried deep in that place. Charles II, a most compassionate king, pitying their severe fate, ordered these unhappy princes to be laid amongst the monuments of their predecessors, AD 1678, in the 30th year of his reign.

These bones were, though, found mixed with some animal bones, which has led to some consideration that even in a secret death, the Princes would not have been treated like that.

In 1789, workers repairing St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle found the lost tomb of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville. There they found also two children's skeletons. It was first thought they belonged to two other of the couple's children, but those children's skeletons were later found elsewhere. The possibility was raised that the unexplained skeletons could be those of Edward V and Richard of Shrewsbury.

Westminster Abbey had refused modern efforts to collect DNA samples from the bodies they have, and the bodies at Windsor were reburied at the time and have also not been tested. Until or unless something like DNA testing can be done the real fate of the Princes in the Tower will remain a mystery.



A lot of historical fiction has treated the Princes in the Tower, from William Shakespeare's play *Richard III*, to George R. R. Martin's fictional reference to the princes in *A Clash of Kings*, the second novel of the *Game of Thrones* (*A Song of Ice and Fire*) series.

Because of the mystery, and the large amount of research and non-fiction treatments of the story, the tale of the Princes in the Tower is ripe for further fictional treatment. Alternate history (like *Blackadder*), could a very fun way to explore this period of late Medieval history.



G-G-G-G-Ghosts!!!! by Chris Garcia

Any place that greatly impacts history is going to be haunted. If you believe in ghosts, you're correct. If you don't, you're wrong. It's that simple. We have no clue what ghosts are or why they exist, but there's no question that the phenomenon of ghosts is real. And the Tower of London is full of them!

The Tower's history goes back to at least 1066, which was when the White Tower's construction began, and many tragic and important moments have taken place within its grounds, leaving impressions. One of the most famous is the execution of Anne Boleyn. Unfortunately, Anne was married to Henry VIII at the time when he was into personal tyranny.

She was beheaded, but before she met the blade, she was held in the White Tower, the heart of the Tower complex. Two aspects of her fate were odd. First, although accused of treason and adultery, she entered not through the Traitor's Gate, but through a back-tower gate entrance. Many executions occurred for crimes including adultery or incest paired with treason, because a queen's sexual affairs could deny a king his line of succession. Secondly, Anne was placed in a cell above a chapel, and at the very last she was killed by a swordsman with a sword instead of a common executioner's axe.

Since then, the ghost of Anne Boleyn has been seen many times, and not just in the Tower. She's famously haunted Marwell Hall and Blickling Hall for ages, which is cool when you consider that Marwell Hall is now a zoo! She's also probably the most regularly seen ghost of the Tower. Most frequently, she's seen on the Tower green, near the Chapel Royal, right about where they made her head and body two distinct entities. She's also seen walking up and down the halls in front of the Chapel Royal, sometimes carrying her head in her arms. In 1864, a guard saw the ghost woman walking toward him. He raised his bayonet when she did not stop, and then he stabbed her, which did nothing to stop her, and thus the guard fainted. There was apparently a trial and it was the testimony of General Dundas, a believer who happened to be watching from above that night, that kept the guard from being court-martialed.

The most cinematic of all sightings of Anne Boleyn happened in the Chapel. Some have said that she spent much time in her final hours there, praying, but this is unlikely, since she'd have been denied that privilege after her marriage to Henry VIII had been declared null and void, and she'd been condemned to death already. One night, the Captain of the Guard saw that a candle was flickering in the Chapel. He decided to climb a ladder to peer into the Chapel, and there he saw not only Anne, but her leading a full procession down the central aisle. He described about twenty-five people, all dressed in Tudor fashion. This sighting is famous, as this particular Captain of the Guard was well-regarded.

Anne No-Head isn't the only ghost of a famous Briton sited around the Tower of London. Perhaps the oldest ghost at the Tower is Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. Becket was murdered, as often happens to impressive and important world figures His ghost was seen regularly in the 13th through 15th centuries, and was mean. A wall was being built, and Becket was spotted near it many times looking genuinely unhappy. One day, he appeared on the rubble of what had been the wall. Of course, it could have collapsed on its own, but even so, he seemed to be gloating over the wall's ruined condition. Eventually, a chapel went up on that spot, and he hasn't been seen since.

Another significant British spirit is Arbella Stuart, in my opinion one of the most tragic characters in Tower history. At one point, she was seriously considered to take over after her cousin Elizabeth I died. Instead, that honor went to James I, another Stuart. She secretly married William Seymour, which was a bad idea as she didn't have permission from the King, making it a no-no. Both were well-respected, and of the highest levels of royalty (Arbella was fourth in line for the throne; William was sixth), so she was held in the house in Lambeth, while William was held in the Tower. Arbella disguise herself as a man, he'd break out, and then they'd get away to France. She donned her disguise and waited at the rendezvous point.

And waited.

And waited.

William didn't show. He had been delayed getting out of the Tower, so she got on the next ship to France, but it was all for naught. King James's men overtook the ship, captured Arbella before she could reach Calais, and brought her back to the Tower. William? He made it to Flanders, and stayed away until after Arbella died in the Tower.

She was possibly murdered, but might well have died from malnutrition. Either way, William came back and started a new life, got married, had kids, and is the great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather of the current Queen of England.

Not necessarily a famous person, though a famous ghost, is the White Lady of the White Tower. The White Lady is seen looking out windows, or just wandering around. There's a legendary story of a worker seeing her, turning down the hall, and the Lady followed him as far as the entrance of the Tower, but she disappeared as soon as he stepped out of the White Tower.

Then there's the Bloody Tower. That's the last known address for the Two Princess in the Tower. The Princes (well, the King and the Prince . . . see other articles in this issue!) have been seen many times, including one sighting in a photo of a child who resembled how we think of Edward V looked. They are sometimes seen playing, but more often they're heard. Occasionally, they're seen cowering in their nightgowns, perhaps just like when they were murdered by order of Richard III.

It wouldn't be a haunted location in Britain without a haunted suit of armor, or, I guess, armour! Henry VIII owned an impressive suit of armour, now housed in the Tower. Guards have reported that they feel a smothering sensation when near it, and at least once it has been reported to have moved on its own. That's quality haunting, right there!

The last people held in the Tower as prisoners were a group during World War II, including the Kray Brothers, who I don't think had become gangsters yet. There have been reports of ghostly prisoners wandering about over the years. Josef Jakobs, the last man executed at the Tower, has been seen on the spot he faced the firing squad.

It's one of the most haunted places on Earth, and more importantly, it's a place of stories.

These two things are not unrelated . . .





The Tower Letters: Uncovered
by Bob Hole

In researching other issues to do with the Tower of London, I came across these interesting pieces of correspondence from Edward V King of England and one of the Princes in the Tower, to his uncle, Richard Duke of Gloucester and Lord Protector of England, the man who had placed him in the Tower after the death of King Edward IV, the young Edward's father and Richard's brother. I found these while searching a little used archive, in the back in a booth in the corner in the dark. They were written on now-crumbling and stained paper and were very difficult to interpret and read.

They're dated between 20 May 1483, the day after Edward V arrived at the Tower of London, and 17 August 1483, which is about the last time the princes in the tower were seen.

Any errors in transcription are of course my own.

20 May 1483

My Dear Uncle Richard, Duke of Gloucester:

Thank you for sending us up in the Tower Palace in London. Since my father, the King, died last month it has been quite hectic in my life. I know I didn't see him often, but I do feel his loss greatly for both our kingdom, and for myself. I'm very happy you have been appointed Lord Protector both for my sake and our kingdom's.

The servants here have been most welcoming and accommodating. The thing I most pine for is the company of my family. Even a sister would be nice to have around.

With Affection, Your Nephew,

Edward V, King of England

3 June 1483

My Dear Uncle Richard, Duke of Gloucester:

I'm settling into the Tower Palace nicely.

My days are filled with my tutors, and by them and others I'm told daily that you're doing a very good job as my Lord Protector. I'm working hard at my lessons, because as you are a Lord Protector, I hope to be a good King.

I have a slight cough, but I'm lulled to sleep at night by the sounds of the animals in the Lion Tower, and have enjoyed visiting them. I especially do like the lions, but of course, as king, I should.

I'm still hopeful for a companion from my family.

Any news on my coronation? I know it's set for 22 June, but I have neither seen nor heard of any preparation being made.

With Affection, Your Nephew,

Edward V, King of England

17 June 1483

My Dear Uncle Richard:

Thank you so very much for sending out brother Richard to us! Both of us were so glad to see each other we spent all night talking and talking about our adventures since our father the King died.

I'm so very happy. Thank you very much again.

You have our fervent support.

With Affection, Your Nephew,

Edward

20 June 1483

My Dear Uncle Richard, Duke of Gloucester:

Thank you again for sending our brother Richard, Duke of York, to us at Tower Palace. We have become quite inseparable, and despite the servants' admonishments, have continued to share my quarters.

We have been enjoying the gardens, and the Prince is settling in well. He, too, likes the lions best of all the beasts here. Perhaps it runs in the family?

Thank you also for sending us Doctor Argentine. He's treating my cough, but it seems to little avail. Since he arrived it has been getting a little worse every day. Though he says not to worry, this sort of thing often gets worse before it gets better. Fortunately, Richard does not seem to be catching it.

With Affection, Your Nephew,

Edward V, King of England

23 June 1483

My Dear Uncle Richard, Duke of Gloucester:

We have heard rumors that a certain person has preached that Our parent's marriage was illegitimate, and therefore all born of that marriage are illegitimate. We hope this rumor is untrue, and that you will see to it that it is crushed and rooted out in the fastest and most thorough way.

I ask you to do this as my loving uncle, and the Lord Protector of England.

Your Nephew,

Edward V, King of England

24 June 1483

Richard, Duke of Gloucester:

I now am hearing that there has been called an assembly of commoners and nobles to debate whether the late King and the Dowager Queen were legitimately married. I strongly urge you as Lord Protector to squash this assembly and proclaim its own illegitimacy.

Sir, We will not countenance it.

Edward V, King of England

25 June 1483

Richard, Duke of Gloucester:

What have you done sir? This illegitimate assembly has proclaimed me and mine illegitimate and you have proclaimed yourself as king in my place? How dare you? An uncle and protector I revered and cared for.

A usurper?

What have you done? What further crimes will you commit? Where will you stop yourself?

Your Undoubted King,

Edward V, King of England

7 July 1483

Richard, Usurper of the Crown:

Your actions yesterday in holding an illegitimate coronation for yourself are wholly contemptable. History, sir, will judge you poorly indeed if you do not immediately renounce this foolish action and the crown in favor of myself, the legitimate and rightful king, the son of the late King My Father.

Edward V, King of England

17 August 1483

Richard, Usurper of the Crown:

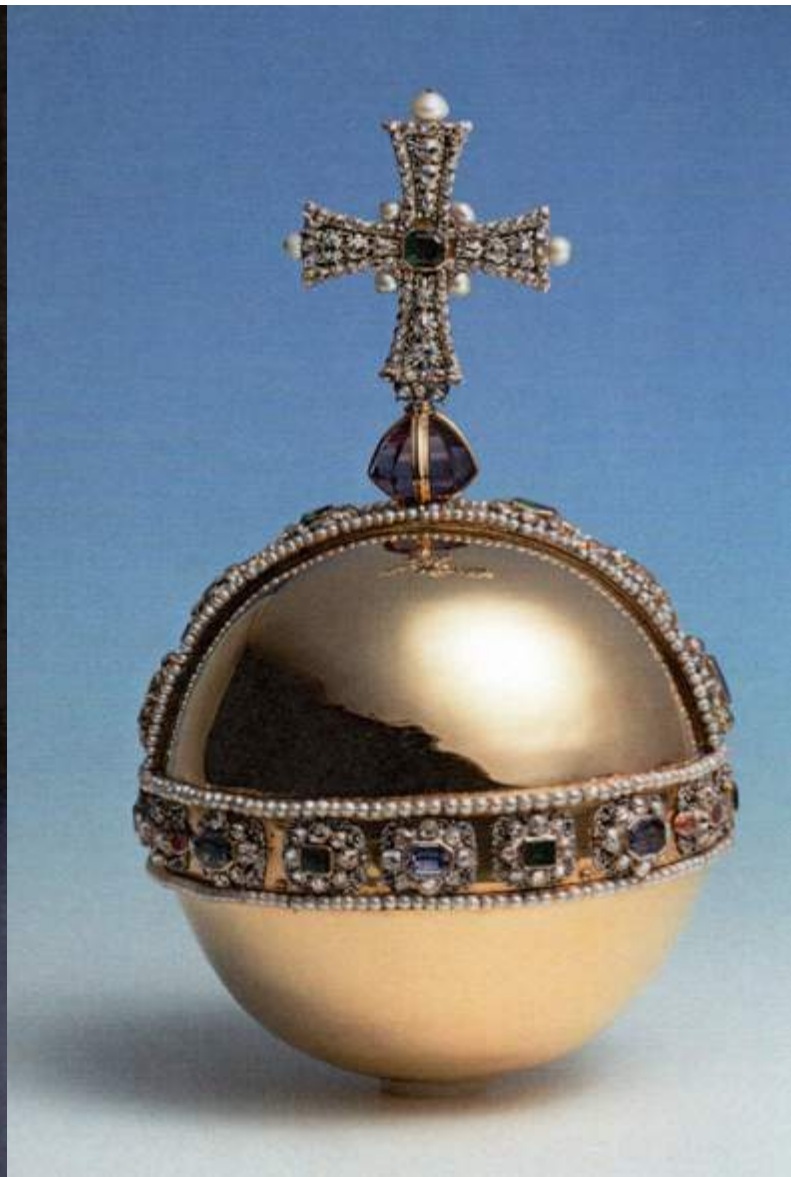
I continue, apparently in vain, to await your abdication and renunciation of your stolen crown, and return to my rightful place as King.

You have ceased to correspond with me, so failing you doing the right thing, I ask what your plans for myself and my brother are. Are we to be sent into exile or simply kept here at Tower Palace?

If you choose not to put something in writing, I ask you to send the Duke of Buckingham, a friend of my father, your brother, and yourself. He can bring me word from you, either formally or informally. I suggest if you are uncomfortable to have such a personage seen being sent to me, that you send him in the night. Duke Richard my brother still stays in my room, so he can give us both the news at the same time.

Edward V, King of England

So ends the correspondence.



THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD

by
GILBERT &
SULLIVAN



The Tower of London and an 1888 Victorian Comic Opera
by Steven H Silver

In my other article in this issue of *The Drink Tank*, I briefly mentioned the Chapel Royal of St. Peter ad Vincula. This small church, whose name means St. Peter in Chains, has stood in the northwest corner of the tower grounds since 1519, when it was built by Sir Richard Cholmondeley (also spelled Cholmeley, both versions pronounced “Chumley,” because, why not?). Earlier chapels stood on that spot dating back to the original construction of the White Tower.

Sir Richard served as the Lieutenant of the Tower of London from 1513 through 1520, when he resigned his position due to ill health. He died in March, 1521. His tenure as Lieutenant of the Tower is very important because it allows us to date the action which makes of the operetta *The Yeomen of the Guard*, by William S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan. In fact, a stage direction can help date the play even more precisely. Following the first act trio “To Thy Fraternal Care,” Gilbert notes that “The bell of St. Peter’s begins to toll.” Since the building of St. Peter’s began in 1519 and concluded in 1520 and Sir Richard retired in 1520, the action must take place in 1520.

The title itself is a bit of a misnomer. The Yeomen of the Guard was a personal bodyguard formed by Henry VII in 1485. When the Tower ceased to be a royal residence, the Yeomen of the Guard stopped serving there, although a group was split off from the Yeomen of the Guard to remain at the Tower and became the Tower Warders. As with the Yeomen of the Guard, the Tower Warders continue to wear Tudor colors and styles when on duty. The Tower ceased to be a royal residence in 1503, at least ten years before the play is set.

Richard Cholmondeley is the only historical figure to appear in any of the thirteen operettas the Victorian composer and librettist wrote. The inclusion of an historical figure is not the only thing that sets the show apart from the other dozen operettas.

When the curtain goes up to reveal the Tower Green in Act One, it reveals a woman, Phœbe Meryll sitting alone at her spinning wheel singing the opening song.

The plot of the play would seem to be in order now, but to quote Inigo Montoya, “No, there is too much. Let me sum up.”

A prisoner, Colonel Fairfax, has been sent to the Tower on trumped up charges of witchcraft by his cousin, who stands to gain his estates following his execution if Fairfax dies unmarried. To confound his cousin, Fairfax asks his old friend, Sir Richard Cholmondeley, to find him a wife. They could be wed and an hour later she would be a widow, with Fairfax’s estates denied his evil cousin. Cholmondeley agrees to help Fairfax and when a pair of traveling minstrels shows up, he approaches the female member of the troupe, Elsie Maynard, with the proposition. The male member of the troupe, the jester Jack Point, raises concerns for, “though [he] is not wedding to Elsie Maynard, time works wonders, and there’s no knowing what may be in store for us.” The promise that Fairfax is to die that day and that Elsie will earn an hundred crowns in dowry (enough to save her sick mother’s life), settles the matter and while Elsie goes to marry Fairfax, Jack auditions for a position serving Sir Richard.

So far, rather straight forward, so let’s return to Phœbe Meryll. Phœbe is excited because her brother, Leonard, is coming to join the Tower Warders that very day. Since their father, is a Sergeant in the Tower Warders, the family is to be reunited. Casting a pall over their joy, however, is the impending execution of the brave Colonel Fairfax, who, in the past saved Sergeant Meryll’s life and is a foster brother to Leonard. The Merylls hatch a plan to have Phœbe steal the keys to Fairfax’s cell from the gaoler, Wilfrid Shadbolt, who is besotted with her, free the Colonel who will shave his beard and claim to be Leonard Meryll while the real Leonard Meryll will leave the Tower. Their plan is carried out, but, of course, Elsie and Fairfax are married (but they know not to whom). The first act ends with news of Fairfax’s escape, most of the cast running off to look for him, and Elsie fainting in Fairfax’s arms, who all think is Leonard Meryll.

The operetta includes a song in tribute to the Tower of London, portraying it as an eternal sentinel that keeps watch over London (When Our Gallant Norman Foes”), as well as a song in praise of the Tower Warders (“Tower Warders, Under Orders”). Set in the 16th century, Jack and Elsie are introduced with the song “I Have a Song to Sing, Oh,” which is reminiscent of the type of song sung at the time while act two has a quartet madrigal that recounts the plot up to that time.

In addition to giving some of the history of the Tower of London, the show scatters references to the tower, dropping the name of Tower Green and the Beauchamp Tower (pronounced “Bee-cham,” built in the 13th century by Edward I, and named for Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who was imprisoned there in 1397

by Richard II). The latter is where Colonel Fairfax was held prisoner, indicating that he held a high rank. The Beauchamp Tower also contains graffiti scribbled by many of those who were held there, including Jane Gray, and her husband, Guildford Dudley.

Now, with intermission over, back to the play.

Act Two opens two days later with a dejected Jack Point, for the love of his life is married to another man who has escaped and therefore the marriage can neither be ended nor annulled. Equally dejected is Wilfrid Shadbolt, for although he is still free, suspicion has fallen on him since there was no forced escape. The two agree to help each other. Shadbolt will claim to have seen Fairfax escaping and say that he shot the criminal who then drowned in the Thames. Point will corroborate Shadbolt's account.

Dame Carruthers, who was introduced in Act One, but doesn't become important to the plot until the second act, finds Sergeant Meryll and "Leonard" and tells them that in delirium Elsie Maynard babbled that she had married Fairfax, thus allowing Fairfax to know to whom he was married. It should also be noted that while Fairfax was initially portrayed as a gentleman, from the time of his escape through the end of the play he acts as a cad toward all the women he comes into contact with.

Fairfax, still pretending to be Leonard Meryll, seduces Elsie while pretending to teach Jack how to woo her. Granted Fairfax and Elsie are married, so the Victorian mores meant they needed to wind up together, but he did so in the most hurtful way to Jack Point, as well as to Phœbe, who was in love with, or perhaps lust, definitely desire for him. Phœbe, soliloquized in too public an area and is overheard by Wilfrid Shadbolt. The price of his silence is that she'll marry him. Dame Carruthers also overhears and makes a similar bargain with Sergeant Meryll. Of course, the real Leonard Meryll shows up with a reprieve for Colonel Fairfax who publicly reveals himself while making Elsie believe that she needs to give up her new-found love for "Leonard Meryll." In the end, Fairfax and Elsie are happy, Damen Carruthers and Wilfrid Shadbolt are happy, although their respective partners, Sergeant and Phœbe Meryll are more resigned, and the play can end.

Just as *The Yeomen of the Guard* opens in a unique way, the play, too, closes in a unique way, although it is also a bit controversial. Gilbert's final stage instruction reads "Point falls insensible at their feet." The role was created by the original comic actor for the D'Oyly Carte Company, George Grossmith. When Grossmith played the role, he would collapse on stage, but as the curtain dropped, he would wriggle his feet to indicate to the audience that Jack Point had not died, he had merely fainted. One piece of evidence that this is the correct interpretation is that at the end of act one, the stage direction states, "Elsie faints in Fairfax's arms . . . Elsie is insensible in Fairfax's arms." The same word Gilbert used for Point, although he also noted that she had merely fainted.

However, when word arrived in London that Henry Lytton, who was playing the role in the touring company in Bath, would play the final scene seriously and portrayed Jack Point as actually dying, Gilbert, who generally would brook no stage-business that he didn't approve, commented, "It's just what I want. Point should die, and the end of the opera should be a tragedy." There were multiple touring companies and Lytton wasn't the first to have Point die. Two weeks before Lytton played the death scene, George Thorne had the character die in a production in Manchester.

On the other hand, Gilbert told J.C. Gordon, the D'Oyly Carte stage manager, "The fate of Jack Point is in the hands of the audience, who may please themselves whether he lives or dies."² The result of Gilbert's vagueness and Grossmith's original interpretation meant that actors playing Jack Point have a certain amount of latitude. Lytton continued to play him as dying until he left the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company in 1934, claiming that Gilbert had only toned down the character's fate to appease Grossmith. Martyn Green, who took up the mantle as the principal comedian for the company following Lytton, continued Lytton's tradition of the character dying, but played the character throughout as if he had a bad heart, going so far as to change his makeup in act two to show that the character was quite ill.³

My own preferred interpretation is for Jack Point to die at the end, although every live production I've seen of the show has him merely passing out.

1 Martyn Green, *Martyn Green's Treasury of Gilbert & Sullivan*, Fireside, 1985 (orig. 1941), p.592.

2 Ian Bradley, *The Annotated Gilbert and Sullivan 2*, Penguin, 1984, p.514.

3 Isaac Asimov, *Asimov's Annotated Gilbert and Sullivan*, Doubleday, 1988, p.760



ARMS AS ART

2

3

*Alissa's Tower
Photos!*









~ The Drink Tank 418 ~

Editors

Chris Garcia - Alissa McKersie - Chuck Serface

Next issue: The Marvelous Mrs. Maisels!

Deadline - March 1st!!!

Rest in Peace, Steve Stiles. We're gonna miss ya.