

Good evening Tamise!

Claire Ridgway23:52

Good evening Matthew!

Claire Ridgway23:52

Hi Teri and RealTudorLady!

Claire Ridgway23:52

I'm looking forward to this one tonight!

Matt Lewis23:52

Hi Claire! I'm here and ready for questions!

Teri Fitzgerald23:53

Hello all!

Claire Ridgway23:53

We'll wait until the o'clock but thank you so much for joining us and for your brilliant talk. It left me with lots to consider.

Claire Ridgway23:54

I like talks like that, when they provoke you and make you open your mind to new possibilities.

Sorry got logged off. Evening everyone.

Matt Lewis23:54

Thank you. I don't claim to have answers, just some angles that I don't think get enough attention.

Teri Fitzgerald23:55

Hello Tamise!

RealTudorLady23:56

Hi Matt and Claire, looking forward to this evening.

RealTudorLady23:57

Hi Teri and Tamise

Matt Lewis23:57

Hi RealTudorLady. I'm looking forward to it too - I'm expecting lots of awkward questions!

Claire Ridgway23:58

OK, I make it time. Welcome everyone to tonight's live chat and a big thank you to Matthew for joining us, and for his excellent talk. Please feel free to ask Matt questions about his book, his talk, research, or anything related to the Princes in the Tower. Feel free also to share your own views. Let's get going!

Claire Ridgway23:59

I'll get a quick question in. Matt, what drew you to the Princes in the first place?

Tamise Hills00:00

Do you think that any of the imposters that challenged Henry VII were either of the princes?

RealTudorLady00:01

In your book you propose that John, Earl of Lincoln would support Edward V rather than Edward of Warwick in 1486, but what about the illegitimate status of the sons of Edward IV?

Teri Fitzgerald00:01

Hi Matt, it's lovely to meet you. What do you make of Jack Leslau's theories? Was he brilliant or just an eccentric? In any case his ideas are fascinating.

Matt Lewis00:01

To kick things off, I'm still looking into the possibility that Lambert Simnel might have claimed to be, or was, Edward V. There's an entry in Henry VIII's state papers from 1526 about an affair in Ireland that describes the Lambert Simnel Affair as being in favour of 'an organ-maker's son named one of king Edward's sons'.

Matt Lewis00:03

Hi Claire. I've long been interested in Richard III, and the Princes form a core part of any examination of him because the belief that he had them killed is the worst crime he's accused of. The more I looked at it, the less sense it made that his first instinct would have been to murder his nephews.

Claire Ridgway00:04

Thank you!

Tamise Hills00:04

What do you think his first instinct would have been?

Matt Lewis00:04

Hi Tamise. I've always thought there is a strong possibility that Perkin might have been genuine, though obviously it can't be proven. I'm getting more and more convinced that the 1487 Lambert Simnel Affair might have been an attempt in favour of Edward V, not Warwick. It makes much more sense of the actions of others.

lizabeth Goodman00:06

Good evening Claire!

RealTudorLady00:06

If Richard III moved the Princes where are the most likely places and who would he trust for their care?

Matt Lewis00:06

Hi RealTudorLady. The Princes had been re-legitimised by Henry VII so that he could marry their sister, removing the act that prevented their succession. Some Ricardian Yorkists may have been concerned at ignoring the entire basis for Richard III's assumption of the throne, but most, at least by 1487, were Edwardian Yorkists who have flocked to Edward V (if he is still alive!).

Tamise Hills00:06

Thanks Matt. Because Edward of Warwick was barred because of his father's treason?

Matt Lewis00:08

Hi Teri. I love Jack Leslau's theory. It was the basis of my first historical fiction novel and I've been obsessed with it for years. Some of the connections he makes are really compelling, without being conclusive. I wonder though whether John Clement might have been one of Perkin's children?

RealTudorLady00:09

Thanks Matt, yes, that makes sense. Had young Warwick been successful in a bid for the crown do you think he was capable of ruling?

Ceri Creffield00:10

It always seemed odd to me that Simnel posed as Warwick when the real Warwick could be and was produced to disprove the claim. What do you think of that, Matt?

Matt Lewis00:11

Hi Tamise. If Richard were to look about for recent examples of what to do with his nephews, he might have found some instruction in Henry IV's actions when he took the throne in 1399. There were two young boys who had been considered the heir presumptives to Richard II - the Mortimers, Edmund and John. They were taken into a loose custody, soon abducted, quickly recovered and then disappeared for over a decade. When Henry V succeeded his father, he released the grown men and Edmund took up his earldom of March. It had worked for the House of Lancaster.

Ceri Creffield00:12

That is a very interesting parallel.

Tamise Hills00:12

Thanks Matt.

Matt Lewis00:13

Hi RealTudorLady. Richard had several castles in the north of England - particularly Middleham, Sheriff Hutton, Pontefract and Sandal Castle where he had been in power for more than ten years. He would have had men there who he trusted completely and who could keep his secrets. The other alternative is his sister Margaret in Burgundy, and separating the boys was certainly an option. They had not been brought up together - Edward had been in Ludlow and Richard at court - so they weren't necessarily close.

Roland Hui00:13

Was Perkin Warbeck known to have spoken perfect English (like a native English speaker)? As only the English spoke English back then, this would indicate he might have indeed have been Edward V or Prince Richard. But if he spoke English with a Flemish or French accent, that would have signified he was an imposter.

RealTudorLady00:13

Do you think it is possible that Buckingham kidnapped Edward V (or Lord Edward as he now was) and he could have been killed by him as some sources suggest?

Teri Fitzgerald00:15

I love Jack Leslau's theory, and it has fascinated me for years - exactly, it is so compelling without being conclusive. That John Clement might have been Perkin's son - hmm, tantalising!

Matt Lewis00:15

Yes Tamise - Warwick remained barred by his father's attainder, which specifically prevented any of his descendants from inheriting for the rest of his life. It could have been overturned at some point, but it never was. If the Princes were dead and Warwick barred, then in 1487, John de la Pole was the senior Yorkist claimant, but he backed Lambert, who we are told was a boy from Oxford pretending to be Warwick. I struggle to see why John might have backed that plan.

Matt Lewis00:15

RealTudorLady - it's hard to know how Warwick might have got

RealTudorLady00:16

Thanks Matt

Matt Lewis00:17

Oops. It's hard to see how Warwick might have got on as king. He had been orphaned young and had no natural support or powerbase. He would surely have been a puppet for others. The later story that he might have been mentally incapable seems to rest on a misreading of Hall, who commented that Edward's education had been neglected during his long time in custody.

Claire Ridgway00:17

I always thought that people can't just disappear, well, not in those days, but your point about Henry Clifford disappearing for 24 years was very interesting.

Matt Lewis00:19

Hi Ceri. That is a big part of the problem. If Lambert actually claimed to be Edward V, the use of the name Edward might have allowed the Tudor government to make a joke of the whole affair by claiming it favoured Warwick, who was displayed at St Paul for senior nobles to question. It was almost immediately after John de la Pole spoke to Warwick there that John fled the kingdom to Burgundy and joined the Lambert Simnel conspiracy. I don't know how we make sense of that to be honest!

RealTudorLady00:19

Margaret of Burgundy certainly seems to have genuinely accepted that Richard of England or Perkin Warbeck was indeed her nephew, Richard, Duke of York. He certainly looked the part, was backed by half of Europe, was referred to in official diplomatic letters as the Duke of York and Henry VII was desperate to find out the truth or invent it.

Ceri Creffield00:21

So Lambert Simnel may have been a stalking horse.

Matt Lewis00:21

Hi Roland. That's a great question. Perkin was in Ireland, France, Burgundy, with Margaret of York, and Scotland and nowhere was his command of English or even his accent questioned. In his confession, he claimed he had been forced to learn English after arriving in Ireland in his late teens. That seems improbable - English is hard enough to learn when you want to! His handwriting has been analysed too and it was described as being a strongly English style of writing.

Matt Lewis00:23

RealTudorLady - Buckingham's part is entirely plausible in some form or other. Did he try to save the boys from Richard, or did Richard try to save them from Buckingham? As many contemporary and near contemporary sources blamed Buckingham, for example for starving the boys, as blamed Richard.

Ceri Creffield00:25

Buckingham always seemed a likely candidate to me.

Matt Lewis00:25

Hi Claire - Yes - Henry Clifford, although maybe not a royal prince, vanished and evading capture for 24 years at the very time we are talking about Richard being able to hide his nephews. The fate of the Mortimer boys 80 years earlier shows that it could be achieved for higher profile people too. It seems to me entirely possible and I struggle to accept the idea that there was no way they could have been hidden in the north or on the continent.

Roland Hui00:25

Weren't there other sets of bones found in the Tower of London, besides the ones later buried in Westminster Abbey?

RealTudorLady00:25

Thanks Matt. And Buckingham had his own motivation to blame Richard and hope his rebellion succeeded as he had his own claim to the throne and was caught up with a support for Henry Tudor.

Matt Lewis00:27

RealTudorLady - Margaret's position is very interesting. It is often asserted that she supported any and all pretenders to cause trouble for Henry, but her true aim was surely the restoration of the House of York. She would not achieve that with imposters. She had legitimate nephews - notably the de la Pole brothers, who only came to prominence after Perkin's execution. The timing of the switch to the de la Pole claim might well be instructive.

RealTudorLady00:29

Yes, the de la Poles only resurfaced as a potential threat after Warwick and Richard/Perkin had gone.

Laurie Duerr00:29

Hi Matt, I very much respect your theories on RIII and the Princes, even if I may not completely agree! What about the awkward position that E of York was in, likely having mourned the loss of her two brothers years earlier, and then with these pretenders arising when she was married to their "rival"?

Matt Lewis00:30

Hi Roland. There have been loads of bones found in the Tower that have been claimed to be the Princes. Aside from those found in Charles II's reign, there were some found in Elizabeth I's reign, supposedly bricked up in a room on a bad, but then lost. One set of bones confidently claimed to belong to Edward V found high in one of the towers turned out to belong to an ape that had escaped from the menagerie. When the moat was drained in Victorian times, many more bones were found, some of which it was suggested were the Princes. The problem with the bones in the urn is that they could be Roman, Anglo Saxon, two girls and different ages than the 1933 examination concluded.

Matt Lewis00:31

RealTudorLady - I have a biography of Richard III due to be released in September and the October Rebellion is an interesting episode. Was it really one, co-ordinated assault on Richard, or did Buckingham see an opportunity to further his own claim, which was way better than Henry's?

Ceri Creffield00:32

E of York had children by the time of Perkins Warbeck and she must surely have wanted to protect them above all else.

Matt Lewis00:34

Hi Laurie. I don't claim to be right - only to have theories that I think warrant consideration, so we can happily agree to disagree 😊. EofY is fascinating in all of this. She kept a book that had belonged to Richard III and wrote her own name underneath his. This would be odd if he had murdered her brothers. She was never allowed to meet Perkin, even when he was at court and her testimony could have definitively rubbished his claim. It's hard to see why Henry would avoid her resolving the matter in his favour. She, like her mother, never openly accused Richard of murdering the Princes, even after he was dead and when it would suit her husband and later children to confirm that they were dead at Richard's hands.

Claire Ridgway00:35

How much store do you put into the idea that Edward Guildford could have been Edward V?

Matt Lewis00:36

Hi Ceri - Elizabeth must have been conscious of the need to protect her children, but she never accused Richard III of murdering her brothers, even though it would help achieve that end. She may have been wary of perjuring herself and risking her soul, so kept quiet instead.

Laurie Duerr00:37

Thanks Matt! its all so interesting to consider!

Matt Lewis00:38

Claire- I love the Edward Guildford story. As part of Leslau's Theory it is another tantalising strand, and the connections between More and the Guildfords are interesting. Edward Guildford may be buried in More's Chapel at Chelsea Church. His daughter Jane certainly is, and her tomb monument describes her as a Princess - how can that be? And how was she able to be described that way in Tudor England?

RealTudorLady00:38

Thanks Matt, looking forward to that. I also feel sorry for Elizabeth of York. Whether or not she knew anything about the fate or survival of her brothers, her heart must have been broken and it must have been very hard for her. She had legitimate children to fight for, her husband was from the enemy side, her brothers could not be alive or everything was lost, she was a Princess and she had accepted what must be and now her potential brother is housed in her palace. She must have asked questions. Henry was very very careful to keep her from seeing Warbeck and from being around him. It could have upset a lot of apple carts.

Ceri Creffield00:39

It must have been very hard for her.

Matt Lewis00:41

The discovery of a mtDNA link to the Princes grandmother, Jacquetta of Luxembourg, opens the possibility of examining some of the theories and finding out whether they hold water or not. The problem is that Perkin's remains are believed to be lost. Richard of Eastwell might be recoverable, as might John Clement. Edward Guildford's burial place is not known for certain, but there are a few possible locations, including Chelsea Church. DNA could now prove or disprove some of these theories, though the 'biggie', the urn in Westminster Abbey, remains beyond reach while the queen continues to refuse to allow it to be examined again.

RealTudorLady00:43

Do you think the present royal family know the truth and that is why they won't open the urn? They know they are not genuine.

Roland Hui00:43

Matt - do you think RIII was able to convince Elizabeth Woodville he did not kill her boys, as she subsequently entrusted her daughters in RIII's care. Or maybe she did believe RIII killed her sons, but Elizabeth surrendered her girls nonetheless to make the best of a bad situation. RIII did promise under oath not to harm the girls but to provide well for them.

Matt Lewis00:46

RealTudorLady - Ricaridans are capable of seeing a conspiracy anywhere - it's our special power!! The urn raises a particular set of problems - what if they aren't genuine: should they then be removed from the Abbey as being somehow worth less? They are still human remains. If it is them, it doesn't answer who actually killed the, though it would narrow the options for their fates. It is possible that somewhere there is an archive that answers the question but which is kept secret.

Laurie Duerr00:47

Matt, given the reasons you mention that support the position that RIII didn't murder the boys or have them murdered, how would you explain the unnecessary and sudden murders of Anthony Rivers and Richard Grey, as well as William Hastings? It just seems that if he could be as unpredictable as he was in calling for their murders, and determined to make himself king at that point, what would keep him from killing the boys too?

Matt Lewis00:48

Hi Roland. Elizabeth Woodville's decision to send her daughters to Richard is really hard to understand if she knew, as we are told she did, that Richard had killed her sons. It makes far more sense if she found out that she had been duped into supporting the October Rebellion and that Richard was able to prove to her that the boys were still alive (or at least that he was not responsible for their deaths).

Matt Lewis00:49

It is often argued that Elizabeth had no choice, but that is not true. She could stay where she was indefinitely and she was still nominally involved in Henry Tudor's plan to unseat Richard. No reason would cause me to hand several children over to someone I knew had killed two already.

RealTudorLady00:51

Matt...you speculated that Henry Viii might put up with a York grandchild as a son of Richard of England would be, and yes the young nice Henry may if he remained loyal and quiet, yet, he had Edmund de la Pole executed in 1513 before he went to France. Of course the boys in the urn are human beings and we must respect them and treat them with care. The identity of these boys has been denied them and that is very sad. We won't know who killed them, if anyone did, but we may know if they are two Princes or not and perhaps a new service to lay them to rest held.

Matt Lewis00:51

Hi Laurie - The Woodville and Hastings executions are an interesting minefield. There was documented chaos in London after Edward IV's death, with armed men in the streets from both sides. That was precisely why Richard was called to act as the head of his nephew's government. He didn't cause trouble. Trouble was already in London and Richard was seen as the solution.

Matt Lewis00:52

If Edward IV had understood that the deaths of Anthony Woodville (who at points Edward seems to have disliked) and Hastings (even though he was his best friend) were what was required to secure his son's succession, would he have flinched?

Matt Lewis00:54

There is some evidence that the Woodvilles were plotting, though it is often dismissed too quickly. There is more evidence that Hastings was plotting, even from More (who has Catesby telling Richard that Hastings plans to kill Richard) and Vergil (who has Hastings holding a meeting at St Pauls to turn Londoners against Richard before Richard even arrived in the capital.

RealTudorLady00:54

Didn't Richard believe his own life to be in danger and Hastings of being a traitor?

Ceri Creffield00:55

I often wonder if pain made Richard lash out at Hastings. He must have been in regular pain from his back and his poor teeth and pain often makes people savage.

Matt Lewis00:56

Richard had, since 1469, been Constable of England. One of the main responsibilities of that post was to oversee the Court of Chivalry, or Court Martial. Edward IV had given the role draconian powers to summarily try case of treason and pass sentence with no right of appeal. It is inequitable, but perhaps seen as necessary during the Wars of the Roses. If Richard was using these powers, they were not murders, but judicial executions. He (literally) cut the heads off the two snakes causing disruption in London.

Matt Lewis00:56

The claim that Richard was campaigning for Anthony Woodville to be executed appears only in Mancini, whose information on such detail is suspect.

Laurie Duerr00:57

Thanks Matt, I do appreciate the very thought-provoking points.. its crazy how much of a stir was caused in those times by the transfer of power from one monarch to another...

RealTudorLady00:57

I find it interesting that Spain, because of the jeopardy to their alliance with Henry VII and marriage of Arthur to Catherine seem to have put pressure on Henry to sort out the Warbeck mess and possibly to kill him and Warwick. I also think they too thought he was Richard of York.

Ceri Creffield00:58

I look forward to your new book on Richard, Matt. It's going to be fascinating.

Matt Lewis00:58

It's interesting that almost every succession since the Conquest had been a cause for others to chance their arm or try to disrupt the succession. Few had an easy time!

Claire Ridgway00:58

It's just coming up to the o'clock. Thank you, everyone, for joining in tonight. It's been a fun one, and there have been some wonderful questions. A big thank you to Matt for being so generous with his knowledge and time. Teri Fitzgerald is tonight's winner and she wins a copy of Matt's "The Survival of the Princes."



Ceri Creffield00:59

Thanks Matt and Claire and congratulations Teri.

Matt Lewis01:00

RealTudorLady - One of the most interesting factors about Spain's involvement is that when the code they used to communicate with ambassadors was deciphered, the code used for Perkin Warbeck appeared in the section of European royalty marked against Richard, Duke of York. Throughout the 1490's, the Spanish referred to Perkin as Prince Richard. I wonder whether it was Perkin they wanted rid of in 1399 even more than Warwick.....

RealTudorLady01:01

Thanks Matt and Claire for a great discussion. Congratulations Teri.

Matt Lewis01:01

Thank Ceri - I hope it will be well received, though it's sympathetic to Richard, I think it follows the evidence.

Matt Lewis01:01

Thank you for having me everyone. I've really enjoyed this chat!

Laurie Duerr01:01

Thank you Matt! Really enjoyed the friendly debate!!

Teri Fitzgerald01:02

Thank you Claire and Matt! Goodnight everyone. 😊

RealTudorLady01:02

Night all! YNWA

Claire Ridgway01:02

Good night everyone, sleep well and have a lovely weekend. Next month we have Sarah-Beth Watkins on Margaret Tudor.

Ceri Creffield01:03

Goodnight all.

Matt Lewis01:03

I hope we can hold different views and be reasonable about it. I don't claim to hold the truth - no one knows the answers to some of these questions. We can't see what happened behind doors closed more than 500 years ago.