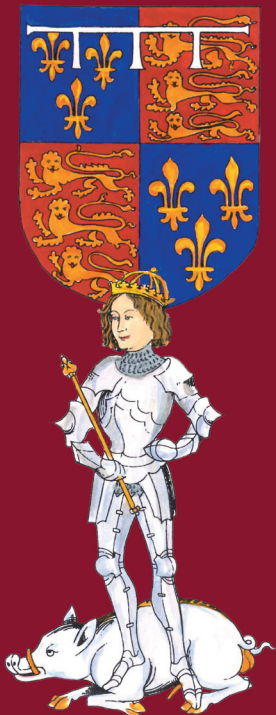




RICHARD III
SOCIETY



Edward of Middleham, Prince of Wales (1476-1484)

Richard III Society Founded 1924
RESEARCHING & REASSESSING RICHARD III

Who was Edward of Middleham?

Edward of Middleham was the son and heir of Richard, Duke of Gloucester (later Richard III) and (Queen) Anne Neville, the youngest daughter of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, known as ‘the Kingmaker’.

Richard and Anne were married in January or February 1473 with Edward conceived shortly after Richard’s return from campaign in France in October 1475. Christened after his Godfather, King Edward IV, Edward was born at Middleham Castle in July or August 1476. Although the records reveal a very close bond between his parents there is no record of them having any other surviving children together.



Middleham Castle, North Yorkshire. Home of Edward of Middleham. Prince’s Tower (far left)
Image: Amanda Geary

What do we know about Edward of Middleham?

Edward lived at Middleham Castle. The Prince’s Tower in the south-west corner is sometimes known as the Nursery Tower, with the spacious apartments of the Lady Chamber nearby.

Edward’s wet-nurse was Isabel Burgh. Others were Jane Collins and Agnes Cooper, and his chaplain was Thomas Brownlees. The little Prince was also entertained by ‘Martin the Fool’. An important person in his life would have been Anne Idley, the mistress of his nursery.

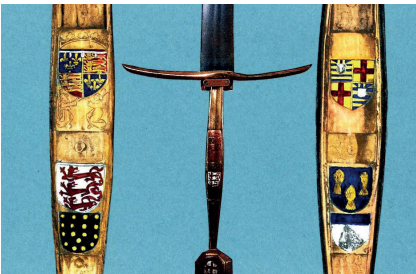
As a young child Edward travelled locally and visited shrines, making offerings. Richard described his son as:

‘our dearest first born son Edward, whose outstanding qualities, with which he is singularly endowed for his age, give great and, by the favour of God, undoubted hope of future uprightness, as prince and earl ...’

Edward, Prince of Wales

Following the unexpected death of Edward IV on 3 April 1483, on 26 June a petition was presented to Edward's father Richard asking him to accept the throne. It stated that the Three Estates of Parliament, assembled in London, had investigated the parentage of Edward IV's children, and found them illegitimate under the complex laws of the Catholic Church. On Sunday 6 July 1483, Richard and Anne were crowned in Westminster Abbey.

Edward of Middleham's father was now King Richard III of England, and Edward was heir apparent to the throne. In 1478 Edward had been made Earl of Salisbury. He was now Duke of Cornwall, and would be invested as Prince of Wales. On 19 July at Westminster, King Richard created his little son Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Edward's importance was also recognised nearer home, by the City of York with the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors riding to Middleham 'to my Lord the Prince' with gifts including wine and fine white bread.



Sword of State for Edward's investiture as Prince of Wales in York on 8 September 1483. Sword measures 5ft 8in. Includes his enamelled heraldic arms. Image: Geoffrey Wheeler

On 27 August 1483, Edward rendezvoused with his parents at Pontefract, making the round trip from Middleham of around 50 miles by carriage. Edward's entourage included three wagons and his horse. From Pontefract the family entered York on 29 August surrounded by splendour and pageantry. On 8 September, Edward's investiture started with a grand procession. The ceremonies began in the Minster, where Mass was celebrated by the Bishop of Durham. Then the King and Queen, preceded by the clergy, emerged with Edward, from the west door of the cathedral for the investiture ceremony. Edward, age 7, was invested Prince of Wales at the Palace of the Archbishop of York. The following day, the young Prince was knighted by the king.



8 September 1483. King Richard, Queen Anne and Prince Edward, age 7, emerge from York Minster after celebrating Mass. Image: Graham Turner - www.studio88.co.uk

Edward, Prince of Wales, was summoned to Parliament for its session in January 1484, but there is no record that he was present when the formal Act of Succession was passed, known as *Titulus Regius*, in which he was confirmed as heir apparent. The next month King Richard gathered together a large number of Lords Spiritual and Temporal and other notables at Westminster Palace where they swore an oath, that if anything happened to the king they would take his son and heir, Edward, in his place.

What do we know about Edward's death and burial?

Sadly, on or around 17 April 1484 all such hopes were dashed when Edward died without reaching his eighth birthday. A close contemporary chronicle reported his parent's unbearable grief:

'You might have seen the father and mother, after hearing the news at Nottingham where they were staying, almost out of their minds for a long time when faced with the sudden grief.'

Edward had died after a short illness. It is not known what this was. John Rous, a contemporary writer with close connections to the family, recorded:

'the child died before his parents and is committed honourably to burial at Middleham.'

The tragic story of Edward of Middleham is one of deep grief that King Richard and Queen Anne share with all grieving parents.

The Church of St Mary and St Alkelda's invites you to say one of the prayers below if either you yourself are grieving in this way or you know someone who is.

A Prayer for grieving parents to say

Heavenly Father, our hearts are heavy with deep sorrow. Please carry us, for we are overwhelmed by the pain of our grief. Words cannot express the depth of our loss. Draw near to us in our sadness and help us in our tears and pain to know you standing alongside us and to experience your love.
Amen.

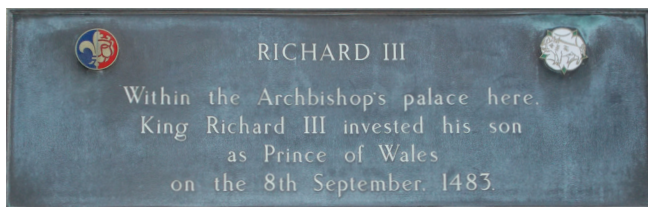
A Prayer for parents who have lost a child

Lord, we ask that You, the God of all comfort, would wrap Your arms of love around parents. Be their refuge and strength. Let Your presence be a source of comfort and grant them the courage to face each day.
Amen.

Psalm 34:18: "The LORD is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit".



The Royal Window, Church of St Mary and St Alkelda's, Middleham. Image: Philippa Langley



Investiture Plaque, York
Image: Philippa Langley

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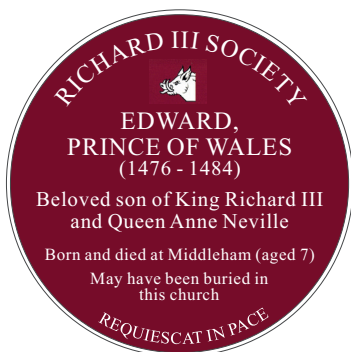
St Mary and St Alkelda's Church, Middleham
Image: Philippa Langley

The Church of St Mary and St Alkelda's in Middleham is a Grade 1 listed building dating to the thirteenth century. In 1477, it was made into a collegiate church by Duke Richard. The collegiate body of the church was made up of a Dean, six chaplains, four clerks and six choristers.

The church also became a Royal Peculiar, subject only to the direct jurisdiction of the monarch. This may have taken place sometime after Richard's coronation. In 1856, during the reign of Queen Victoria, the royal status was removed and the Dean replaced with a Rector.

In 1934, the Richard III Society commissioned a stained-glass window in commemoration of the royal family. In 2026, as part of the 550th anniversary celebrations of the birth of Edward, Prince of Wales, a Society plaque was dedicated in the church to the young Prince.

Edward of Middleham is no longer our 'forgotten Prince'.



Plaque in memory of Edward of Middleham,
Prince of Wales, Church of St Mary and St Alkelda's, Middleham.
Image: Richard III Society

Our Mission Statement

In the belief that many features of the traditional accounts of the character and career of Richard III are neither supported by sufficient evidence nor reasonably tenable, the Society aims to promote, in every possible way, research into the life and times of Richard III, and to secure a reassessment of the material relating to this period and raise awareness of the role in history of this monarch.



Front Cover: Contemporary image of Edward of Middleham, Prince of Wales, by John Rous. Image: Geoffrey Wheeler

For more information about Richard III and the Richard III Society, and for a timeline of the period, find us at www.richardiii.net



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