

Sources Used for Wars of Roses Presentations **OLLI Spring 2026**

"One thing the 15th century is not short of is excellent manorial, legal and monastic records."

— Paul L Dawson

Follow his FB postings about his current research into the battles of Wakefield and Lawton (if you use Facebook). Read the comments too.

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Paul-L-Dawson-Historian-and-Writer-61568635475665/>

"A Short History of the Wars of the Roses," by David Grummitt, Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2025. Revised edition. Grummitt also has a Substack account with interesting reflections on medieval and military history.

"Richard Duke of York: Father of Kings. The origins of Tudor England," by Paul L Dawson, Frontline Books, Yorkshire, 2025. Content is excellent but the editing and writing are not.

"The House of Dudley: A new history of Tudor England," by Joanne Paul, Pegasus Books, New York, 2023.

Wikipedia — mostly very good. For this type of subject it is the place to start (especially for key players). But double-check things that sound like speculation (e.g., motives). I use Wikipedia to seek out the background reference sources.

"Luminarium Encyclopedia Project"

<http://www.luminarium.org/encyclopedia/warsoftheroses.htm>

This site has an index on the right side of the page that lists major figures, battles and topics. Click on one and you are sent to a page with details (sometimes scanty, sometimes overdone) on the subject. I have found a few discrepancies in it, so double check with another source.

"The History of England" podcasts

(thehistoryofengland.co.uk).

Wars of the Roses starts at episode 163. David Crowther is an amusing bloke (as he would say) and gets a lot of history right. I always double-check him too, and scan the comments section because corrections are sometimes noted by other listeners. I have found a few errors in his very useful family trees, which I have corrected in the handouts.

"In Our Time" on BBC Radio 4. Melvyn Bragg discusses various topics with a panel of academics. Sometimes rather lively disagreements ensue. Reading lists are almost always included for each topic.

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00546sp> for an overview of the Wars of the Roses.

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0b39v6r>

The discussion of Margaret of Anjou is very good.

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0000nd9>

"Is Shakespeare History: The Plantagenets"

K.B. McFarlane. The Nobility of Later Medieval England.

Oxford University Press, 1973

A series of his lectures published after his death with the most opaque footnotes I have ever seen. McFarlane is known as having been a contrarian about the impact of the Wars of the Roses. He spent a lot of time with ancient documents tracing properties, dowries, incomes, and other aspects of the English aristocracy's power base.

Peter A. Hancock. Richard III and the Murder in the Tower.

Stroud: The History Press, 2009.

This is **not** about the Princes in the Tower. It is about the sudden execution of Lord Hastings at a Council meeting in June 1483, as Richard (then Lord Protector for Edward V) was ostensibly planning for Edward V's coronation. Hancock is a Richard III Society member (they are called Ricardians and are quite lively!).

He has done a lot of research into the “prior contract” of Edward IV with Lady Eleanor Butler, searching out who knew about it, when Richard found out about it, etc. The footnotes are about as long as the text itself.

Richard III Society

www.richardiii.net

Wonderful site summarizing history of the 15th C; good maps; links to other sites with enriching materials

Debrett's

<https://www.debretts.com/expertise/essential-guide-to-the-peerage/>

THE source for aristocratic ranks, precedence, etiquette (and has been for a century) — more than you want to know unless you're hosting a British gala.

Richard III Visitor Center

<https://kriii.com/>

Interesting commentary on badges used by nobles in Wars of the Roses

www.timeref.com Great site about English history with all sorts of animations and explanations about things like castle structures, how some war machines worked, and battles.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/timeline/middleages_timeline_noflash.shtml

<http://www.battlefieldstrust.com/resource-centre-entrance/> Pictures, descriptions of battles, etc. for major (and some minor) battles that took place in Britain.

<https://www.thoughtco.com/wars-of-the-roses-an-overview-2360762>

I found the overview a bit facile, but still somewhat useful. In general, [thoughtco.com](http://www.thoughtco.com) is a useful place to look for overviews of many topics, by the way.

warsoftheroses.com includes a map and timelines, but I didn't look at info on major players and summaries of each battle -- I used the Richard III Society for that

<http://www.lordsandladies.org/lambert-simnel.htm>

Some fun summaries apparently oriented to kids (?! — I mean, how many kids do you know who want to look up info on Lambert Simnel?)

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Perkin-Warbeck-English-pretender>

http://www.englishmonarchs.co.uk/tudor_27.html

Summary of Perkin Warbeck's life. Source of sketch of him.

<http://www.threetwoone.org/diagrams/wars-of-the-roses.gif>

The designer of this site is a systems analyst who creates graphic representations of inter-related events, and he apparently did the Wars of the Roses (and also a Star Wars movie) as an example of what he can do.

Pagliaccio, Sarah. 2016. In Defense of Shakespeare's Queen Margaret of Anjou. Master's thesis, Harvard Extension School.

<https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/33797294/PAGLIACCIO-DOCUMENT-2016.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

If you know Shakespeare's Richard III fairly well, you might appreciate this Masters thesis. Margaret of Anjou has very few lines (and they're often cut by directors) but this thesis makes a good argument for calling Margaret of Anjou one of Shakespeare's strongest female characters. It is not, however, historically accurate.

<https://catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2013/10/15/the-wars-of-the-roses-must-not-be-rebranded-as-the-cousins-war/>

An interesting discussion of the religious symbolism of the roses — and a bit of a “sweetness and light” analysis of the Tudor takeover.

<https://www.livescience.com/38935-king-richard-iii-facts.html>

<https://www.historyextra.com/period/medieval/myths-facts-richard-iii-murder-princes-tower-shakespeare-york-leicester-car-park/>

Shakespeare's plays:

Note the timing and sequence in which he wrote the plays. I have listed the plays in the order of the historical chronology, but Shakespeare tackled the Wars of the Roses and Richard III several years before returning to English monarchs.

Richard II	1595-6
Henry IV pt 1,2	1596-7, 1597-8
Henry V	1599
Henry VI pts 1,2,3	1591
Richard III	1592

<https://peeragenews.blogspot.com/2018/05/duke-of-beaufort-marries-georgia-powell.html>

The Dukes of Beaufort are the direct descendants of the Wars of the Roses' Beaufort Dukes of Somerset. (Except they are not, per recent DNA tests.*) Current Dukes of Somerset are a later creation.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/ncomms6631>

"Identification of the remains of King Richard III" — Nature Communications, 2 December 2014

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-leicestershire-41174229>

How the discovery of Richard III's bones changed some lives

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_CcB2-zUMk

A modern Brit with the same spinal issues as Richard III learns to ride and fight, helping scientists understand how Richard III functioned with the disability.

<http://www.multiwords.de/genealogy/Battles%20of%20the%20War%20of%20Roses.html>

More info on the battles than you could ever want — and being superseded as we speak

"The Use of Gunpowder Weapons in the Wars of the Roses" by Kelly DeVries, medieval history professor at Loyola College of Maryland

<https://www.medievalists.net/2013/01/the-use-of-gunpowder-weapons-in-the-wars-of-the-roses/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Waynflete

A very flexible Bishop of Winchester.

<https://www.countrylife.co.uk/news/great-british-architects-john-cowper-1453-84-23423>

Country Life article about John Cowper, mason for Waynflete Manor

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Nibley_Green

Description of last battle of private armies in England

<https://web.archive.org/web/20051226030956/http://www.r3.org/bookcase/croyland/croy9.html>

Croyland Chronicles, written by monks in an abbey near Lincoln. Contemporaneous.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loveday_\(arbitration\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loveday_(arbitration))

A "Loveday" was really a thing!

<https://www.bloreheath.org/>

Armaments used in battle described

<https://le.ac.uk/richard-iii>

Gresham College lectures on finding and identifying Richard III remains

<https://www.gresham.ac.uk/watch-now/richard-iii-bones>

The Death of Richard III: CSI Meets History

<https://www.gresham.ac.uk/watch-now/king-car-park-discovery-and-identification-richard-iii>

The King in the Car Park: The Discovery and Identification of Richard III

Warning: Gresham College's trove of online free lectures on virtually every subject can be addicting.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constance_of_York,_Countess_of_Gloucester)

[Constance of York, Countess of Gloucester](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constance_of_York,_Countess_of_Gloucester)

Interesting account of a well-connected woman's life. After her husband's death, Constance was either betrothed to or lived as the mistress of Edmund Holland, 4th Earl of Kent (1383–1408), by whom she had an illegitimate daughter, Eleanor Holland, who married James Tuchet, 5th Baron Audley, who died in 1459 at Blore Heath, leading the Lancastrian army. His son John Tuchet flipped to York side after he was captured by Warwick at Calais in 1460.

<http://www.primitivism.com/facets-myth.htm>

Source of quotation "Progress is the myth that assures us that full-speed-ahead is never wrong. Ecology is the discipline that teaches us that it is disaster." By Kirkpatrick Sale.

<https://www.thebubble.org.uk/culture/history/when-was-the-new-monarchy-in-medieval-england/>

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/periods/medieval>

Great source for the development of the role of Parliament, especially the Commons.

<https://www.towton.org.uk/the-battle-of-towton/>

Singular in its excess, Towton was also singular in its import. To be undergoing major revisions soon!

<https://www.battlefieldstrust.com/resource-centre/warsoftheroses/battleview.asp?BattleFieldId=46>

Ferrybridge and Sherburn-in-Elmet Contemporary estimates of some 30,000 casualties were likely gross exaggerations, and it seems unlikely that either side could have mustered more than 10,000 men each for the Palm Sunday campaign. The royal family and the dukes of Somerset and Exeter, along with a sizeable part of the Lancastrian army, escaped the battles at Ferrybridge. Sherburn-in-Elmet and on Towton Dale. Within weeks of the defeat, they were again mounting organised resistance to the Yorkist regime in the north of England and attempting to enlist French and Scottish help. Although Edward IV was crowned in Westminster on 26th June 1461, Lancastrian resistance in the north of England was not extinguished until 1464.

Video examining role of women in middle ages:

FEMINA: A NEW HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE AGES

JANINA RAMIREZ

Chronicles written during the Wars of the Roses include:

- Benet's Chronicle
- Gregory's Chronicle (1189–1469)
- Short English Chronicle (before 1465)
- [Hardyng's Chronicle](#): first version for Henry VI (1457)
- Hardyng's Chronicle: second version for Richard, duke of York and Edward IV (1460 and c. 1464)
- Hardyng's Chronicle: second "Yorkist" version revised for Lancastrians during Henry VI's Readeption (see Peverley's article).
- [Capgrave](#) (1464)
- [Commynes](#) (1464–98)
- Chronicle of the Lincolnshire Rebellion (1470)
- Historie of the arrival of Edward IV in England (1471)
- [Waurin](#) (before 1471)
- An English Chronicle: AKA Davies' Chronicle (1461)
- Brief Latin Chronicle (1422–71)
- [Fabyan](#) (before 1485)
- [Rous](#) (1480/86)
- [Croyland Chronicle](#) (1449–1486)
- [Warkworth's Chronicle](#) (1500?)

https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-457-1/dissemination/pdf/vol03/vol03_10/03_10_270_273.pdf

<https://manyheadedmonster.com/2024/04/30/commonplace-legal-knowledge-in-fifteenth-and-sixteenth-century-england/>

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/camden-record-soc/vol17/pp210-239>

<https://thewarsoftheroses.co.uk/battle-of-towton/>

<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/58147/pg58147-images.html#page81>

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/48578453>

<https://www.battlefieldstrust.com/resource-centre/fullbattleslist.asp>

<https://thewarsoftheroses.co.uk/timeline-of-the-wars-of-the-roses/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Stoke_Field

<https://historyofparliament.com/2015/07/08/william-lucy/>

<https://historyofparliament.com/2023/07/04/treachery-of-edmund-lord-grey-of-ruthin-and-the-battle-of-northampton-10-july-1460/>

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3917436/> (pop of England)

**[https://www.scribd.com/document/459162138/
UseOfGunpowderWeaponsWarsOfTheRoses-08](https://www.scribd.com/document/459162138/UseOfGunpowderWeaponsWarsOfTheRoses-08)**

<https://www.bloreheath.org/>