

## Topic One: On some 'Radcliffe' genealogies

### November 2000 William Radcliffe---Rouge Croix?

À propos Rictor Norton's amazing *Mistress of Udolpho*, a query regarding the identity of Ann Radcliffe's husband, William Radcliffe:

W. L. Renwick, in his *English Literature 1789-1815* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963) pp. 85-6, writes of *Gaston de Blondville*: 'This was written to amuse her husband, now Rouge Croix Pursuivant in the College of Heralds and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries ...'. Bonamy Dobrée, in his introduction to his 1966 edition of *Udolpho*, also mentions these distinctions, as well as William's proprietorship of the *English Chronicle*.

Although Norton alludes to William's 'antiquarian' interests in his chapter on *Gaston*, he doesn't mention the Rouge Croix – not even to dismiss it out of hand as erroneous, as he does with the 'farago of nonsense' that William had given up his employment in the British Embassy in Italy to enter journalism. There's no mention of the Rouge Croix & Society of Antiquaries in Robert Miles' *The Great Enchantress* either, or in Deborah Rogers' books on Radcliffe. Why has reference to these alleged offices held by William apparently disappeared into oblivion?

### January 2001 William Radcliffe Rouge Croix – a horrid mystery?

A report of William Radcliffe's initial appointment by King George III to the office of Rouge Croix appears in *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, Vol. III, No. 22, Sat. June 4. 1803, p. 861, as having been announced at Whitehall on May 12. This Radcliffe is said to be 'of Barnsley in the County of York'.

But, oh my ... there's also this report in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. 90, Jan. – June 1820, p.268. In March 1820, a Mr William Radcliffe, who had been appointed by the king in 1803 to the Office of Rouge Croix Pursuivant of Arms in the Herald's College, '... was tried at the York Assizes, upon an indictment charging him with having in the year 1801, forged in the Parish Register of Ravensfield, in that county, an entry, purporting to be the marriage of Edward Radclyffe and Rosamunde Swyfte, 24th Feb. 1640; and with having set forth such false entry in a pedigree presented to him by the Herald's College, whereby he had pretended to show his own descent from the ancient family of Radcliffe, formerly Earl of Derwentshire ...'.

This article is quite detailed. In 1802 the then curate of the parish had attested to the forgery, and the fact that it was Radcliffe's handwriting had been 'proved' later by 'the persons who had custody of the Register'. In the intervening years Radcliffe had also made claims on those in whom 'the forfeited estates of that noble family were vested'. He was found guilty, and sentenced to a fine of £50 and imprisonment in York Castle for three months. Why a prosecution had not been made years earlier is not clear.

According to Norton (pp. 54-5), Ann Radcliffe's husband was the son of haberdasher William Radcliffe and his wife Deborah, and christened in Holborn in December 1763. On p. 56, Norton speculates that William's paternal uncle was Ebenezer Radcliffe, a Dissenting minister from Yorkshire, and that William had relations there whom they visited periodically. Having entered and then left Cambridge, 'he was admitted as a commoner to Oriel College, Oxford, on March 25, 1783,

and almost immediately committed an offence' for which he was cautioned and fined £15. He graduated from Oxford in 1785, but although he had spent some of his terms in the Middle Temple, he went into journalism. In January 1793, on less than amicable terms with his employers, he left the radical London newspaper, *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, where he had been editor, and he does not seem to have resumed work until 1796, when he became editor of the *English Chronicle* of which he later became proprietor. He married Ann Ward in January 1787. That William was not trusted by Ann's mother is obvious from the latter's will of 1799 (Norton, p.188) which stipulated that he was not to expropriate Ann's property in any way. We also know that William merged his paper, the *English Chronicle*, with another paper in February 1802, but don't know why, and in what capacity he continued to work at it. Was he editor as well as proprietor, or was he relieved of some of his duties to pursue other interests? From 1812-15 Ann lived apart from him, at Windsor, and some time after 1815 he appears to have given up *The Chronicle*. The years of 'retirement', presumably at Stafford Row, Pimlico, up to Ann's death in 1823, are a virtual blank, but by 1826 he had married his housekeeper. Around about 1828, Norton seems to lose track of him (p. 249 – the new housekeeper/wife could have lived on alone at Park Place), and he states that 'for reasons unknown' Radcliffe sailed to France late in 1829 or early 1830, where he died shortly after in Versailles. In support of this Norton quotes a document of administration of 1830, in which Radcliffe is said to have been 'formerly of Park Place, Paddington ... but late at Versailles in France', and his 'Goods, Chattels and Credits' -- an estate worth £8,000 -- granted to his wife Elizabeth. Both his and Ann Radcliffe's papers seem to have disappeared due to his death abroad.

Despite the apparent overlapping of some significant dates, these two William Radcliffes can't be one and the same person. The alternative, of a double life led by the newspaper proprietor in London, and Rouge Croix antiquarian in the country is, to say the least, wild(ean). The name 'Radcliffe', 'Ratcliffe' etc was quite common. A John Radcliffe took his master's degree in 1787 at Brazenose College, Oxford, and later became keeper of the public library at Manchester. A William Radclyffe prospered as an engraver in Birmingham, and a more historically well known William Radcliffe, the cotton manufacturer at Stockport, in Cheshire, published tracts in 1811 about the causes of distress in the cotton industry.

### March – April 2007     *Some answers regarding the mysterious WR Rouge Croix*

William Radcliffe Rouge Croix sold his heraldic manuscripts to the Rev. W. G. Fletcher in 1826, and his widow (Elizabeth) sold his manuscript collections to the College of Heralds in 1833. A Thomas Thorpe Catalogue of 1834 also lists an assemblage of stuff of 'the late William Radcliffe Esq., Rouge Croix ...', including 'some highly interesting metrical romances'. The Yorkshire Archeological Archives, which now holds quite a lot of his manuscripts, including his pedigree of the House of Radclyffe, gives the date of his death as 1828, but no birth date.

Most informative is the chapter 'Rex v. Radclyffe' in Sir Anthony Wagner's *Heralds of England* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1967):

William Radcliffe, born in 1770 at Wath in Yorkshire of a family settled for some time at Barnsley in that county, was bred up to the trade of pastrycook and confectioner and kept a shop of that description for several years in Oxford Street from Christmas 1790 until in 1795 his sister Elizabeth married as his second wife John Sawley, of Richards Castle, Herefordshire, an old gentleman of considerable fortune who about Christmas 1799 enabled Radcliffe to retire from the confectionery business and to gratify a natural taste for heraldry and genealogy. Through Edmund Lodge, Leicester Herald, he obtained access to the records

of the College, where he took to paying visits almost daily for the study of heraldry in general and the investigation of his own pedigree in particular (p. 450).

Radcliffe's intent was to establish his descent from the Derwentwater family, and in 1801 he managed to have the College record his pedigree 'deriving him from Anthony Radclyffe of Blanchland, Northumberland, second son of Sir Cuthbert Radclyffe of Dilston, ancestor of the Lords Derwentwater'. About this time he also changed the spelling of his name to 'Radclyffe'. Lord Newburgh accepted him as his kinsman, and recommended him to the Duke of Norfolk who in 1803 nominated him Rouge Croix Pursuivant, an office he upheld with competence for more than twelve years before the first suspicion was raised against him in 1816, and his pedigree was reexamined.

In March 1817 Radcliffe's supposed proof for the pedigree was found to lack authenticity and it was struck out. Within a month, applications he had made on the basis of his descent from the noble family of Radclyffe and his blood relationship to the now deceased Earl of Newburgh, also came to light. In November 1810, as William Radclyffe of Darley Hall in the County of York Esquire, he had applied to the Commissioners and Governors of Greenwich Hospital in whom the Derwentwater estates were vested, for 'the grant of a lease of the manor of Dilston, with the site of the ruin of Dilston Hall, the Island on the Derwent Lake called the Lord's Island and such portion of the adjoining land as might be held convenient ... (p.452)'. When this was refused, he had applied again in July 1816, giving his address as both Darley Hall and the College of Arms, London. Subsequently the Commissioners and Governors had asked for a complete genealogy of the Derwentwater family to be prepared by the College. The ensuing investigation had uncovered the forgery of an interpolated marriage entry in the parish register at Ravensfield. It was also discovered that WR Rouge Croix had some time before purchased some land near Barnsley and a modest house which he had named 'Darley Hall', even though it was known that Mr Bowns was 'the owner of an estate so called by himself and all the neighbourhood' (p.455).

But this was not all. When a son had been born to the third wife of Radcliffe's father shortly after the pedigree of 1801, the child had been christened 'Derwentwater Radclyffe'.<sup>1</sup> Not long after this WR Rouge Croix had committed a further offence in producing another pedigree showing this half brother to be founder's kin to King Edward the Sixth, Founder of Christ's Hospital. His intent here was to support his stepmother in her petition for the admission of Derwentwater to that foundation, but his appropriation of a patent belonging to the Radclyffes of Foxdenton in Lancashire, whose pedigree he had prepared in 1802-3, was discovered, and he was required to return the patent to its owner.

Further delays in WR's prosecution occurred due to the collection of further evidence by the College in order to account for some discrepancies in their information and to counter Radcliffe's apparently water-tight alibi regarding his whereabouts when the 1801 register forgery was said to have occurred. Radcliffe was also very elusive in the face of physical identification by potential witnesses from that time, and so his trial did not occur until 17 March 1820. Moreover, it was not until June 1823, three years after his conviction, that he was notified of proceedings that would require him to vacate his letters patent. Although he surrendered these immediately, he did not vacate his College house on Peter's Hill until after July. He survived for only 5 more years, dying on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1828.

The date of his death plus his antiquarian interests can be the only reason why some past scholars confused him with the husband of Ann Radcliffe.

An enlarged copy of a miniature presented to the College of Arms by the National Art Collection Fund in 1958 (Plate XLIII, on p. 444) depicts Radcliffe as a distinguished looking fellow, with greying hair, thinning on top, a patrician nose and full lips, splendidly outfitted in his Rouge Croix garb. Wagner (p.467) concludes that 'it does not seem possible to doubt that he committed (or, conceivably induced someone to commit for him) the forgery of which he was convicted ... and to avail himself of the credit of such alliance for the promotion of objects of personal interest. Yet it seems possible that in this, as in more than one similar case, the sheer pleasure in the splendour of the pedigree supplied an important part of the motive, even though that the pedigree was known to be a fiction'.

Perhaps this pleasure is akin to the vicarious satisfaction experienced by writers and readers of eighteenth-century Gothic romances when the seemingly low born hero or heroine finally discovers and reclaims his or her noble alliance and inheritance?

1. Derwentwater Radcliffe was christened in the parish church at Doncaster in 1802. His parents are named as Edward Radcliffe and Sarah Hall. Edward Radcliffe of Barnsley was born in 1728 and married Sarah Hall, co-heiress of Samuel Hall of Filingham, Lincolnshire, in July 1797. Derwentwater Radcliffe appears to have become a surgeon. He died in 1859 at Middlesex. See *Radcliffe Genealogy Forum*, 'Radcliffes 1700's', posted by Kenneth Frank Hughes, Chester, on December 9, 2001, and by Tony Mills on January 13, 2003 at

<http://genforum.genealogy.com/radcliffe/messages/1609.html> >

### **June 2008**     *Mary Anne Radcliffe and the Derwentwater connection*

Another line of enquiry in all this concerns the memoirist, and perhaps novelist,<sup>1</sup> Mary Anne Radcliffe who in 1761, when she was barely 15, married Joseph Radcliffe 20 years her senior, and in quick succession bore him 8 children. Norton (p. 215) mentions that, on the grounds that her husband was descended from James, Earl of Derwentwater, Mary Ann 'made a visit to the Duke of Rutland at Belvoir Castle, where she entered into (fruitless) negotiations with him concerning the exchange of land, upon which she hoped to build as a speculator in order to retrieve her financial situation'.

Joseph Radcliffe's parents are described in Letter III of the *Memoir* (Edinburgh, 1810) as living in Yorkshire, and a 'good old couple' who were 'quite overjoyed' 'at seeing their only surviving son so comfortably provided for' (p. 40). Mary Ann's first mention of her Roman Catholic Mr R's Derwentwater noble ancestry occurs when she lists her sons:

and next Joseph, so named after his father, James, in memory of my father, and the unfortunate Earl of Derwentwater, who forfeited his life in the rebellion of 1715, and Charles after the brother of the Earl of D--, who fell martyr to the same cause, in 1745, from which family I was always told, my husband was a descendent (p.42).

Letter IV contains the description of her interview with the Duke of Rutland, which seems to have occurred sometime in the early 1770s:

the Duke ... with the greatest urbanity and condescension, informed me, he had not the smallest objection on his part; but the land had formerly been a gift from the Crown, and without an act of parliament, it was not in his power either to exchange or sell; and his advanced age not admitting of any trouble on his part, he was doubtful anything could be done in the affair to answer the advantages I pointed out; but if I thought it worth while to be at the trouble and expence and would put the business into proper hands, he should not have

any objections.

So here at once my great expectations vanished ...

Radcliffe's desperation to support her family was continuous. She describes her many efforts during the 1790s in London, where she took up residence in April 1789. Of particular interest is her description in Letter XVIII of the decision of her second eldest son, to become a confectioner, seemingly sometime in 1791:

James ... fancied the business of a *confectioner* very desirable. But whether this choice of occupation originated with the expectation of its being most profitable, or most palatable, I cannot say; however, in hopes he might the sooner settle to business, were it his own choice, I meant not to oppose his inclination, even had it been in lower occupation, provided he would fix steadily to anything.

Accordingly, away we went early in the morning (in order to get a long day), up one street and down another, calling in at every confectioner's and pastrycook's-shop in the way, but to little effect, until we each grew weary of the pursuit – so again I advertised for him also, not withstanding, I had been so unsuccessful for myself ...

... in this I was rewarded both for my trouble and expence, by procuring for him a master, who was not only a first rate hand in his profession, but a very industrious good kind of man, to whom I got him bound without delay, for five years (p.298).

An intriguing possibility is that the respondent to Mary Ann's advertisement was William Radcliffe, later Rouge Croix, who kept a confectioner's shop in Oxford Street from 1790 to 1799, and who, like Joseph Radcliffe, was also from Yorkshire. At any rate, the confectioner was obviously more than a little interested in her and her family, inviting her to dine with him and his wife after her return from a sojourn with her mother, and conveying news about two of her sons:

I accepted the invitation, and along with my daughter was received by the gentleman and his wife with the greatest cordiality and sympathy; for among the rest this gentleman had also been one of my advisers with regard to Charles, nor was he long in trying to gladden my heart, by informing me of his entire satisfaction with James, who, he said was all attention to business and everything he could wish (p. 312).

Mary Ann refers to him once as Mr 'R – d', and later as 'my good friend Mr R'. There could be many reasons, including the point of her anecdote – another major crisis in regard to Charles who had now deserted Chatham Barracks – why she chose not to reveal that her son James shared a surname with his employer. This Mr R, whom she also calls 'a real philanthropist', assisted Mary Ann in getting Charles away promptly aboard a ship to Calais, dangerous though France had become at this time. It seems that James also remained with Mr R for the period of his indenture in the confectionery business, and perhaps beyond, but by 1802, he had been taken by the French while on his journey to the West Indies, and had been detained in a French prison for nearly three years (Letter XXI, p. 477).

If Mary Ann's good friend *was* William Radcliffe, undoubtedly they would have discussed her Derwentwater connection. One can even wonder whether the letter to the *Morning Herald* for 17<sup>th</sup> August 1798, written by a male correspondent 'W R' about his encounter with a multi-lingual female mendicant, and incorporated in full in *The Female Advocate*,<sup>2</sup> was not also from the pen of

Mary Ann Radcliffe's 'real philanthropist'.

1. Mary Anne Radcliffe makes no mention of having written a novel in her *Memoir* and it seems likely that she was not the author of *Manfroné; or, The One-handed Monk. A Romance* (1809). Her authorship of *Radzivil, A Romance* (1790), and also *The Fate of Velina De Guidova* (1790) is also in doubt. See the detailed discussion in the Afterforward of Dale Townshend's excellent edition of *Manfroné* (Kansas City: Valancourt Books, 2007), pp. 265-294, which makes use of the ongoing research done by Peter Garside, with Sharon Ragaz, Jacqueline Bellanger and Anthony Mandal for *The English Novel, 1780-1829* – full citation p. 295 – < <http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk/guide/update4.html> >
2. Written in 1799, this is incorporated as a very long 'digression' in Letter XXI of the 1810 *Memoir*.

### **February 2015**

I came across this referenced Wikipedia entry which adds weight to the idea that Mary Ann Radcliffe was known personally to William Radcliffe Rouge Croix:

Of Mary Ann and her husband, William Radcliffe the [Rouge Croix Pursuivant](#) writes "Joseph Radclyffe of Coxwold, born in 1726, married the heiress of James Clayton of Nottingham. "Having some little fortune of his own, which was improved by that of his wife, he soon after his marriage kept a house in Grosvenor Square, with a coach and four, and kept it up as the means lasted. His widow, a clever sensible woman, kept a ready-made shoe shop, in about 1795, in Oxford Street, and is now (1810) in Edinburgh, on the bounty, I believe, of some old female acquaintance."

[The editor] (1810). [Heirs-general to Radclyffe of Derwentwater and the Heirs-male to Dacre of Greystock](#), in *Archaeologia Aeliana, or miscellaneous tracts relating to Antiquity*. Newcastle: Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. NS II: 138.

[Radcliffean Romance](#)