

Path to the Throne

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The death of Edward IV after a short illness was unexpected. His son Edward was living in his own household in Ludlow under the supervision of his uncle Anthony, Earl Rivers who was the eldest brother of his mother Elizabeth.

Upon hearing news of his father's death, the young Edward V, Earl Rivers and Edward's half brother Sir Richard Grey started on the journey to London for the coronation. They were met at Stony Stratford in Buckinghamshire by Richard. Rivers and Grey were arrested and later executed. Richard, who had been named as Lord Protector, took Edward to London where he was housed in the Tower of London together with his brother Richard, Duke of York, aged 9.

June 1483 was an important month. On June 13th William Hastings was suddenly executed without a trial after being accused of plotting to kill Richard. This may be evidence of Richard's increasing paranoia, or he may simply have wanted to eliminate Hastings before taking the next step.

Later that month Edward IV's children were declared illegitimate because of an alleged prior contract to marry Lady Eleanor Butler. This meant his marriage to Elizabeth was invalid so his children could not accede to the throne. Richard was crowned King on 6th July and subsequently declared by parliament to be the legitimate king early in 1484.



Edward V. Source: National Portrait Gallery.



Coronation of Richard III.
Source: British Library Manuscripts.



Earl Rivers (second left) and William Caxton presenting the first book to be printed in England to Edward IV, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Edward, 1477.



Groby Old Hall by John Flower, 1826.
Sir Richard Grey was the son of Elizabeth Woodville by her first marriage to Sir John Grey of Groby.