

Robert Bolling's Petition to Edward IV

Sire, Sovereign Lege Lord, I humbly beseecheth your Hignes, your true liege Mann, Robrt Bollyng, in the shire of York, Gentleman, that when in your Parlement hlden att Westminster, the 4th day of November, the 1st yeare of your noble reign, I was convicte and attainted of High Treason, whereby it was ordeyned that I shulde forfeit all Manors, Landes, Tenements, Rents, Possessiones, &c., whatsoever which I hadde on the 4th March last past, let your Highnes of your speciall grace be credibly enfourmed that your suppliant was never ayenst your Highnesse in any feld or journey except on that drad Palme Sunday, the Firste yeare of your most Noble reign, whereunto hee was Driven not of hys propre wyll ne of malic towards youre good Grace, but oonly of Compulsion and by the most Drad Proclamation of John, then Lord Clifforde, under whose daunger and distresse the livelode of your seid suppliante lay. By you're gracious letters of pardon, under your grete Seale, Beryenge date 17th June, ye thyrde yere of youre noble reign, I was for the enabled to your lawes, as in ye seid letters of Pardone doth appeare. Albe itt that by youre mosste Gracious commaundemonte of your tendre Pitee, and Benigne Grace his merites towards the same, sith the seyde Palme Sunday by youre Hines considered youre seid suppliant enjoyeth not the possessions of hys seid livlode without interrupcion which woulde be to the gret releve and socore hym hys wyf and ther ten pore children which afore lyffed in poverté and misere.

King Edward IV writes "Let it be done as desired, 26th January." (1475).

On the back of the document, there is an endorsement "Delivered by the hand of the Duke of Gloucester." Gloucester became later, of course, Richard III.

So, Robert was pardoned after his attainder for his role Towton but did not get his lands until fourteen years after the event. He displayed remarkable persistence. He must have been a skilful negotiator. I am not aware of anyone else getting such a reversal from Edward IV. Was Robert's hand really forced by that of John Clifford as he says? I think that is doubtful. His son Tristram was very probably a keen supporter of Clifford, serving in the Flower of Craven. For Robert to move adeptly between the houses of Clifford and York, he must have had great diplomatic skills.