



Patron: HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO

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THE LOST KING

The Richard III Society is delighted that Philippa Langley's story of the search for Richard III is being told in *The Lost King*. The archaeological discovery represented a number of years of detailed research by Philippa and the *Looking For Richard Project* without which the remains of Richard III would not have been found and reburied with honour at Leicester Cathedral.

The film also acknowledges the ground-breaking work of the late Dr John Ashdown-Hill in tracing living collateral descendants of Richard III who share his mtDNA. It was this genealogical research which led to the scientific breakthrough that enabled the definitive identification of the remains, with ancient DNA work seeing resources shared between Leicester, York and Toulouse.

The Society is heartened to see the contribution of its members represented in the movie too. A Society grant enabled Philippa to commission the archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Society members and others funded the Ground Penetrating Radar survey in 2011. Via a worldwide appeal to members, sufficient funds were raised to ensure the dig went ahead, with Society members becoming Philippa's principal funding partner with a contribution of 53% of the costs. The Society's late Chairman Dr Phil Stone was the first to donate personally with a substantial sum to protect the dig. Without the Richard III Society's dedicated membership, Philippa's two-week dig for the king would not have taken place.

Local legend had suggested for centuries that Richard III's remains had been disinterred and thrown into the River Soar at the Reformation. Work by Society members Audrey Strange, historian David Baldwin, and Dr John Ashdown-Hill cast doubt on this prevailing narrative.

The location of the Greyfriars precinct was reasonably well known, but there was a consensus, led by David Baldwin in his 1986 paper on the subject, that the church, and Richard III's grave was most likely under what is now Grey Friars street, and the buildings either side of it. Philippa and the *Looking For Richard Project* challenged this notion and

uncovered the true location of the Greyfriars church in the northern end of the Social Services car park.

Sixteenth-century dramatic narratives by Thomas More and William Shakespeare, long treated as history, told us Richard III had kyphosis, a withered arm and a limp. Examination of his remains proved this to be inaccurate; with the king having a scoliosis, likely giving him one shoulder higher than the other.

Society chair Matt Lewis said: “Challenging the traditional narrative of the story of King Richard III – lies at the heart of what the Richard III Society is all about. The search, discovery, and identification of the remains of Richard III demonstrated the value of this approach and the flaws in the traditional history of this important monarch. The Society continues its work to explore the gaps in the story, encouraged by the successes of the *Looking For Richard Project*.”

Philippa Langley, who led the search for the king said: “I would like to thank the members of the Richard III Society for saving the search and becoming my principal funding partner. At the dig I was able to use the last £800 of this funding to instruct exhumation of the remains in Trench One. These, as we now know, were the remains of King Richard III of England.”

The story of the discovery of the remains of Richard III is also a great story of partnership. In the end, a number of organisations came together to contribute to this extraordinary discovery, including the University of Leicester Archaeological Services unit, the University of Leicester, Leicester City Council.

The world marvelled at what was achieved in 2012. The story is not over yet.

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Notes to Editors

1. The Richard III Society is a members’ organisation with some 3,500 members worldwide, over 20% of whom live outside the UK. The Society was founded in 1924.

2. The Society promotes research and education in a key period in history. Its Mission Statement reads:

“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.”

3. The Society’s website, www.richardiii.net contains a wealth of information on Ricardian and related matters. The Society is active on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

4. For further information, contact Matt Lewis (Society Chair) at chair@richardiii.net.