

Give Richard III a decent burial - historian

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By Wendy Brading

A HISTORIAN who was instrumental in the discovery of Richard III's remains has called for him to be laid to rest with dignity.

Dr John Ashdown-Hill is the leader of genealogical research and the historical adviser for the Looking for Richard project.

His research proved vital in confirming beyond doubt the bones found under a car park in Leicester belonged to the infamous medieval monarch.

However, since the exhumation in 2012, debate has raged as to where the bones should be buried.

It was originally planned the king would be entombed in Leicester Cathedral.

However, the Plantagenet Alliance, who are distant relatives of Richard III, want him buried in York and have won a judicial review into the decision.

In the meantime, Dr Ashdown-Hill, who lives in Lawford, said the bones were still in a box in an office in the university's history department.

The Looking for Richard project had won agreement the university would only hold on to the bones until the scientific research had been completed.

Medieval expert Dr Ashdown-Hill said: "I understand that has now been done and I would like him taken away from the university and put in some prayerful environment.

"I think that is what Richard would have expected."

The bones were due to lie at Mount St Bernard Abbey, a community of Cistercian monks in Leicestershire.

Dr Ashdown-Hill continued: "They were happy to have him there to lie in a coffin in a chapel until arrangements for reburial were in place but it has not happened.

"I don't have a firm opinion of where he should be buried - Leicester or York or Westminster or Windsor.

"I am more bothered as to how it is handled.

"I believe he should also be buried in a tomb, as royalty would have been, and not just under slabs.

"I think it would be nice, after 500 years, including years under tarmac in a car park, if he has a different experience."

Dr Ashdown-Hill is also paying for a crown to be made which can lie on Richard's coffin.

He has commissioned a jeweller, who is a specialist in medieval reproductions, to make the crown which will be made of brass, gilded with gold and decorated with garnets and sapphires.

It will be an open crown in the style of the one he would have worn over his armour at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485.

The jewels will be set on enamelled white roses like those featured on the crown of Richard's sister, Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy.

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