

# The Richard III Society

Promoting research into the life and times of Richard III since 1924

**Patron: HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO, Founder S Saxon Barton**

**STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01 13 February 2013**



## RICHARD III SOCIETY UNVEILS DESIGNS FOR TOMB OF KING RICHARD III

- Society presents the proposed design for tomb of King Richard III
- Tomb to be funded by Richard III Society
- Society respects views of those who would see King Richard III buried elsewhere

Following confirmation that the human remains of King Richard III are to be reinterred in Leicester, the Richard III Society today reveals plans for how it would like his tomb to look.

The tomb design was commissioned by Philippa Langley in September 2010 at the very beginning of the *Looking For Richard* project. It is based on Richard's life, and what was important and meaningful to him, and the design was undertaken by a team of specialists with over 40 years of research into Richard III. The design, first proposed to the partners in drawing form in September 2010, and the preliminary CGI images presented in August 2011, has been welcomed by them.

The Richard III Society is working in partnership with Philippa Langley, the Originator of the search for King Richard III, together with Sally Henshaw (secretary) and Richard Smith (chairman) of the East Midlands Branch, under the leadership of the Society's chairman Dr Phil Stone.

The proposal outlined with all parties includes the following:

- The royal tomb will be sited inside the cathedral in a light and bright area suited to the cathedral's revised design and layout, such that it will not impact on services nor will pedestrian flow be impeded through the cathedral and around the tomb itself.
- The tomb's structure, already agreed in principle, has been designed with local input to ensure its appropriateness and historical accuracy. (see Media pack)
- The full cost of the rectangular tomb, which is to be 7ft long, 3ft 6in wide and 2ft 3in high and executed in a light honey-coloured stone (Magnesian Limestone is proposed), will be funded by the Richard III Society via an appeal for donations (65% of the cost has already been donated).
- The tomb is a gift to the people of Leicester and as a tribute to them following the earlier gifts by the Society of the Richard III Statue in Castle Gardens (1980), the memorial stone in the cathedral (1982), and Richard's standard and banner, proposed to hang above the tomb (2013).

The objective of the proposed tomb is to honour the king's mortal remains with a memorial in keeping with the cathedral's interior space and ambience, while reflecting mediaeval royal tomb designs.

The Society is looking forward to working with the Cathedral and Leicester City Council to honour the return of the king. It is understood that the tomb design will be put forward to the Cathedrals Fabrics Commission for England (CFCE) and Fabrics Advisory Committee (FAC) for approval.

No date has yet been set for the reburial, which is expected in the spring of 2014, and will comprise, the Society understands, of two events: the first, a dignified and respectful reburial service and entombment, and the following day, an official unveiling of the tomb at a public service of joyful commemoration.

The Society places on record that it fully and sympathetically recognises the views of those who would have preferred King Richard III to be laid to rest elsewhere.

The Richard III Society is proud to be working in partnership with Leicester Cathedral, Leicester City Council and the University of Leicester in the next stage of the *Looking For Richard* project - the Reburial of King Richard III

## **Proposed Tomb for King Richard III**

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- Tomb design is constructed of Magnesian Limestone. Its smooth, bright, honey-coloured appearance enshrines the light and optimism of a new future for Richard, but also because it is the stone in which York Minster is built, and is still used to this very day for repairs, maintenance, and rebuilding. Thus Magnesian Limestone represents Richard's journey from darkness to light and also his important connections with Yorkshire and the City of York.
- Design incorporates the medieval past and the present day, acknowledging Richard's life as a fifteenth century nobleman and king, but without being inappropriate in a twenty first century cathedral.
- Design incorporates features representing Richard's family (White Rose of the House of York), Richard's devotion to the Christian faith (Cross of St. Cuthbert), and Richard's personal emblem (White Boar). These personally significant motifs are depicted in medieval style, decorating the sides and end of the monument, and creating the impression of a fifteenth century tomb in both feel and appearance.
- More modern aspect has been attempted with the upper surface of the monument. The design presents a smooth open plane of bright honey-coloured stone, punctuated by a royal coat of arms inlaid in gold metal at the head, and a gold metal plaque and carved motto at the foot. In addition the gold metal plaque serves to bridge the gap between the king and the man by including Richard's full name as well as his title as duke of Gloucester.
- Cost of the proposed design is £28-30K.
- Design will take four months to construct.
- CGI Images of the Tomb Design Produced by Joseph Fox of 'Lost in Castles'
- Full details of the team behind the design will be made available at the Society's Conference in Leicester on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March when photographs of the tomb design will be displayed, and the design team available for interviews.

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### **Background**

Richard III was an innovative king of England; initiatives such as the Council of the North, an early example of devolution, lasted until the mid-seventeenth century; his legal reforms continued long after his death, with some still embedded in our laws today. Noteworthy aspects of his reign include:

- being the first king to use English to swear his coronation oath and to record acts of parliament.
- a commitment to fair play in the judicial system: his actions and proclamations stressing that his laws were to be administered impartially without delay or favour., thereby helping to establish the legal principle of 'blind justice.'
- development of an early form of Legal Aid, which provided support for those unable to afford lawyers by allowing people to make direct petitions to the Royal Council. Under Henry VII this became the Court of Requests.
- introduction of bail, thereby initiating the legal principle of 'presumption of innocence'.
- active encouragement of the fledging book printing industry, a policy reflecting the king's own personal interest in books.

Having been missing for over 500 years following the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, King Richard III's remains were found in Leicester in 2012. The discovery made world-wide news in early 2013 when the identity of the skeleton was confirmed.

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**About the Richard III Society**

With a worldwide membership and local branches the Society is actively engaged in original research through its own initiatives and through collaboration with other institutions bodies and scholars. Through the Richard III and Yorkist History Trust, a charitable body established by the Society, it publishes important academic works and make research grants.

The Society publishes an annual journal, *The Ricardian*, with original articles on Fifteenth Century history and a quarterly members' magazine the *Ricardian Bulletin*.

Members of the Richard III Society are available for media interview on any topic concerning the life and times of Richard III, the Leicester dig or any related matter.

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