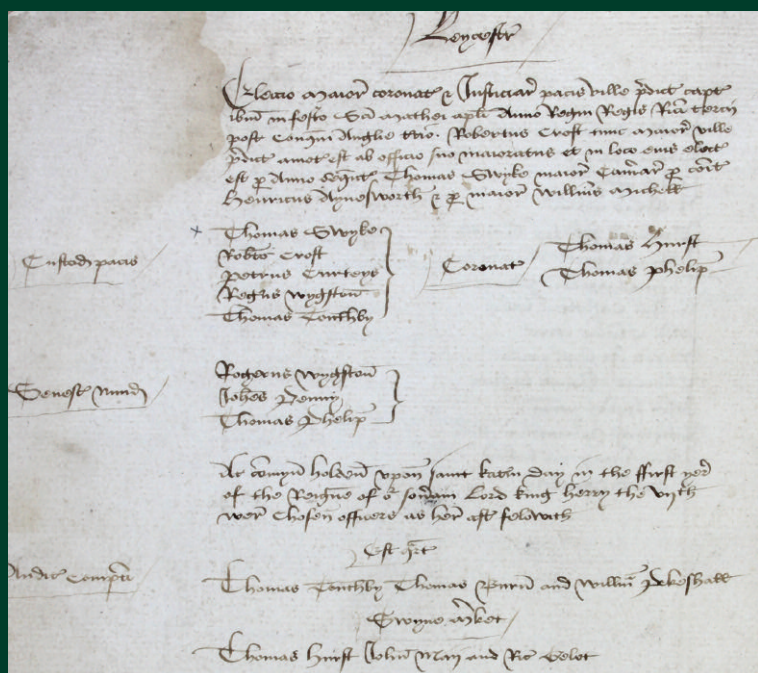


# Burial in Leicester

## Burial in Leicester

Leicester's Grey Friars were charged with disposing of Richard's remains quietly and quickly. The chronicler John Rous wrote that he was buried in the choir of the Franciscan friary church and there are records that Henry VII had an alabaster memorial made in 1495. The church was destroyed in 1538 at the dissolution of the monasteries and by the early 17th century, a former mayor of Leicester, Robert Herrick, had built a large house in the grounds of the ruined friary. The memorial had been destroyed, but the location of Richard's grave was still known; in 1612 Christopher Wren, the father of the famous architect, wrote that he was shown a stone pillar in the garden, with an inscription 'Here lies the Body of Richard III, some Time King of England'.



Leicester Borough 'Hall Book', 1485. This record of meetings of the town's governing body gives no hint of the momentous events. It simply mentions the election of the mayor and officials in the third year of the reign of Richard III, followed by the same in Henry VII's first year.

Within the towne was an house of *Franciscan* or *Grey Friars*, but by whom built I am not ascertained, whether (after *Bosworth* field) the dead body of *R. Richard* the third (naked, trussed behind a Pursuant of Arms, all dished with mire and bloud) was brought, and there homely buried; where afterward King *Henry* the 7. (out of a royall disposition) erected for him a faire Alabaster Monument, with his picture cut out, and made thereon. About the latter end of the reigne of King *Henry* the sixt (as I

Account of Richard's burial and monument in *The Description of Leicestershire* by William Burton, 1622.



Illustration of a Leicester Grey Friar, so called because of the colour of the garments.

The old Bow Bridge in 1861, shortly before its demolition. There was a tradition that Richard's remains were dug up after the dissolution and thrown into the River Soar near this bridge.



In 1611, the story was perpetuated by the historian John Speede, who could not find the grave in an overgrown area. It is now thought that he was looking in the wrong place, as his map incorrectly marks Black Friars as 'Grey Friars'! The photograph shows a stone plaque noting the legend, now relocated near the modern bridge. There was never any real evidence for the story, which was contradicted by Wren's visit to Herrick's garden in 1612.

Another plaque on the present bridge tells the legend of an old woman's prophecy before Richard marched to Bosworth. She told him 'where your spur should strike on the ride into battle, your head shall be broken on the return'. On the way his spur struck the bridge stone; as the horse carried his naked corpse back, his head struck the same stone and broke open.



Wall of Greyfriars Friary on the south side of Peacock Lane, still surviving around 1920. The Friary itself is believed to have been founded in 1255 by Simon de Montfort.

The Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland



Working in Partnership with



Leicestershire County Council