

An Extraordinary Discovery

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On 4th February 2013, after a five-month scientific and archaeological investigation, university experts announced that they had indeed found the remains of Richard III. Overwhelming scientific evidence confirmed the strong circumstantial evidence.

- DNA matched two maternal line descendants of Richard's sister, Anne of York – including Canadian-born furniture maker, Michael Ibsen.
- Richard was killed by one of two fatal injuries to the skull, possibly from a sword and a halberd.
- The skeleton had ten wounds and parts of the skull were sliced off.
- The age at death and the time period were within the identified ranges (Richard was 32 when he was killed in 1485).
- A high protein seafood diet meant this was a person of high status.
- The spine showed severe scoliosis. Richard was around 5' 8" (1.72m) tall, but may have stood much shorter. His right shoulder may have been higher than the left and his build was very slender.
- The feet had been lost a long time after the burial.
- His corpse had received 'humiliation injuries', including a sword through the right buttock.
- The grave was hastily dug and not big enough, with no sign of a shroud or coffin (there were stories that Richard had a stone coffin which was dug up and used as a drinking trough, but stone coffins were rare after c.1400).



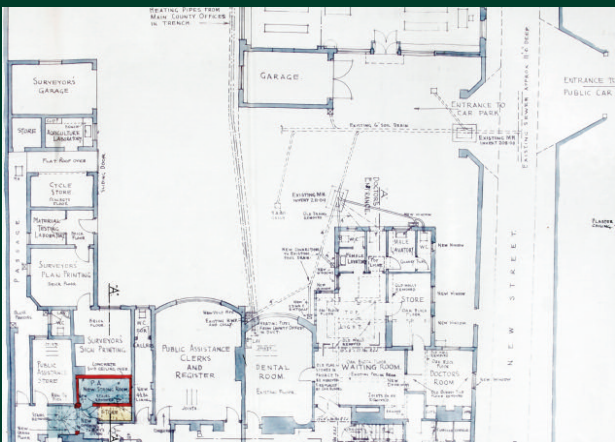
Richard III in the grave. His skull was propped up awkwardly because the grave had been dug too short for him. (Credit: University of Leicester).



Artist's reconstruction of the choir of Greyfriars church looking west, showing the alabaster slab laid over the burial place of Richard III (Credit: Jill Atherton)

The discovery of Richard III is an astonishing triumph for everyone involved. Fate and fortune played a part, but little could have been achieved without the survival of the archives, the skills of the archaeologists and the commitment of all those who have kept Richard's memory alive.

Plan of alterations to Leicestershire County Council offices, 1936. Richard's skeleton was found very close to the site of the surveyor's garage and other outbuildings on the left (east side). It is remarkable that it survived the construction and later demolition of two sets of buildings on this spot; in fact his feet were lost probably as a result.



The skull of Richard III (Credit: University of Leicester).



Facial reconstruction produced by the University of Dundee and funded by the Richard III Society (Credit: University of Leicester).



The complete skeleton showing the curve of the spine (Credit: University of Leicester).

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