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The King's Grave

The Search for Richard III

Written by Philippa Langley and Michael Jones

Published by John Murray

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The King's Grave

The Search for Richard III

PHILIPPA LANGLEY AND
MICHAEL JONES

JOHN MURRAY

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To all those who saved the Dig, and to all those whose researches have illuminated Richard III as man and king

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Preface

On 22 August 1485 two armies faced each other at Bosworth Field in Leicestershire. King Richard III, of the House of York, lined up in battle against his rival to the throne, Henry Tudor – a clash of arms that would determine the fate of England. It was Tudor who won the victory. Richard was cut down after leading a cavalry charge against his opponent and killed in savage fighting, after being only a few feet away from Henry himself. He was the last English king to die in battle.

That year marks a pivotal date in our history books: the ending of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern era. The House of Tudor became one of our most famous ruling dynasties – and its 118-year triumph culminated with William Shakespeare's history plays. Within them, Richard III emerged as one of England's most consummate and appalling villains, a ruthless plotter, an outcast from his own family, deformed in body and nature, who murdered his way to the throne. The most horrifying of these crimes was the killing of the young nephews placed in his care, the Princes in the Tower. In Shakespeare's *Richard III*, the king's own death at Bosworth is powerfully portrayed – alone, with no means of escape and surrounded by his enemies, Richard calls out: 'A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!' His despairing cry is not heeded and he is overpowered and slain. It is the judgement of God upon his wickedness.

Shakespeare's drama was based on a series of Tudor histories

that progressively blackened Richard's name. The principal charge against him in the reign of Henry VII was that he had seized the throne by killing his nephews. That ghastly accusation – believed by many – should have been enough to consign him to the scrapheap of history. But by the reign of Henry VIII he had already been accused of a number of additional crimes, including disposing of his brother, George, Duke of Clarence, in the most startling fashion, drowning him in a large vat of malmsey wine. By the reign of Elizabeth I it was commonly believed that he had poisoned his own wife. It is striking how the Tudors kept adding to Richard's tally of victims. Alongside this was an almost compulsive need to distort his appearance. A physical characteristic, where one shoulder was raised higher than the other, was deliberately exaggerated in a succession of Tudor portraits to depict the king in increasingly sinister fashion.

By the time of Shakespeare this propaganda had reached its zenith. Richard had now become a crouching hunchback, whose bent and distorted body mirrored the hideous depravity of his crimes. By then, the king's actual body, buried hastily in Leicester in the aftermath of the Battle of Bosworth, had disappeared from view. It was widely believed that the disgraced monarch's humble grave, in the Church of the Greyfriars, had been lost at the time of Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries – its contents even emptied into the River Soar. With the king's remains seemingly absent, the Tudors further twisted his historical reputation. He grew into a dark Machiavellian figure, an outcast from all sensibility – whose life and death provided a terrible moral warning.

It was a damning indictment - yet some were suspicious. Early in the reign of James I a number of attempts were made to present an alternative, redeeming portrait of the vilified king. Such efforts have persisted to this day, with the founding of the Richard III Society, determined to present a more human and

sympathetic picture of Richard as man and monarch. More recent academic studies have modified the Tudor legend in some respects. Yet, despite all these efforts, Shakespeare created a play so sinister and darkly seductive that it still remains the portrait most are drawn to. Shakespeare's powerful and unsettling depiction, of a man beyond the moral pale, gained new currency when it was transformed into the Sir Laurence Olivier film in 1955. It has been long recognized that only a discovery as important as Shakespeare's drama is compelling would provide a counterpoint to the Tudor villain the playwright portrayed. Now – in a municipal car park in Leicester – that discovery has been made. The grave of Richard III has been found – with the king's body still within it. It is one of the most significant archaeological discoveries of recent history.

This book reveals the remarkable series of events that led to this astonishing find. It tells of a search for Richard's remains – and also, accompanying it, the search for his real historical reputation. For, before the remnants of his body were uncovered, permission was obtained by Philippa Langley for them to be laid to rest – in a proper and fitting reburial – in Leicester Cathedral. Here at last was an opportunity to step beyond Shakespeare and make peace with the most vilified of our rulers. Not to condemn him, nor to sanitize his actions, but to place him firmly back in the context of his times.

As Richard's bones were painstakingly examined, it was found that he had scoliosis, a curvature of the spine that would have left one shoulder higher than the other. It also quickly became apparent that his body was racked with battle injuries. A time capsule had been opened, showing the last moments of Richard's bloody fight at Bosworth: the king's head shaved by the glancing blows from a halberd or sword, the back of his skull completely cleaved off by a halberd – a two-handed pole weapon, consisting of an axe blade tipped in a spike. And then, as his face was

powerfully reconstructed from the skeletal structure around it, we at last had the opportunity to see him as he really was.

This is the story of one of history's most infamous kings – now restored to us – and the man behind the Tudor myth.

Philippa Langley and Michael Jones
July 2013

Introduction
The Inspiration

I SUPPOSE I had always known about Richard. Shakespeare's villain must have registered somewhere in the recesses of my mind, but he didn't strike a chord with me. When I was growing up in the northern market town of Darlington, history had been my favourite subject. We had studied the Viking period through to 1066, our teacher bringing history vividly to life, and I'd revelled in the characters that formed our island nation. Oddly enough, we were never taught about Richard III and the Wars of the Roses, the conflict that tore the country apart. And there was another mystery that I discovered years later: Richard, Duke of Gloucester's home at Middleham Castle lay a short drive away yet there had been no school trips to see the history right on our doorstep.

I began to take an interest in Richard after I read Paul Murray Kendall's biography, *Richard III*, in which he questioned Shakespeare's interpretation of the king, proposing a different character altogether. Kendall drew on the testimonies of those who had known Richard intimately, such as the city fathers of York who, the day after Richard's death at Bosworth, had written: 'King Richard, late mercifully reigning upon us . . . was piteously slain and murdered, to the great heaviness of this city . . .' noting he was 'the most famous Prince of blessed memory'. Richard's life had everything: politics, power,

romance, intrigue, mystery, murder, self-sacrifice, loyalty and incredible acts of bravery. I was intrigued to know more about the man and why it had been so necessary for the Tudors to rewrite his story.

As I learned more about him I was puzzled as to why Richard had always been represented one-dimensionally on screen. The malevolent, crooked, Shakespearean figure has been rolled out since the dawning of the film industry with Hollywood portraying a tyrant in its first-ever full-length feature film, *Richard III*, in 1912. No one seemed interested in rendering a more complex, nuanced portrait while, perversely, Tudor history has been extensively filmed, television companies favouring exciting modern dramas about the Tudor monarchs who succeeded Richard III. *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, starring Keith Michell, was screened in 1970, quickly followed by Glenda Jackson's *Elizabeth R* and many other similar programmes. It would seem that little has changed today. HBO's critically acclaimed *Game of Thrones* is loosely based on the Wars of the Roses but is a fantasy, and the BBC has a forthcoming modern, glossy series about the women of this period, *The White Queen*, adapted from Philippa Gregory's trilogy, with Richard sidelined to a supporting role. Cinema, too, has recounted almost every story concerning the Tudors, but has yet to bring the actual Richard to life.

I was baffled by the industry's apparent desire to avoid putting King Richard III's more subtle persona centre-stage on the screen. Was this because of a general lack of interest in the character or something more profound? Perhaps Richard was too complex, and it was too difficult to find his voice. Or perhaps the establishment was happy to maintain the Tudor version of his story, in which case there was little need to reinterpret his life. After all, Shakespeare had already presented the Tudor account. Many modern works claiming to reveal the real King Richard were simply rehashes of the Tudor Richard. Villains sell.

Some independent voices, using contemporary sources who had known Richard, described a different man but they were lost among the Tudor histories. However, I was persuaded by the evidence for the real, human Richard. By now I had joined the Richard III Society, the oldest and largest historical society in the world. Its Ricardian statement of intent resonated with the 'many features of the traditional accounts of the character and career of Richard III' being 'neither supported by sufficient evidence nor reasonably tenable'. Since 1924, its work has provided the platform for leading research on the man and his times. Moreover, the view of the society's patron, the Duke of Gloucester, and his moving dedication address in 1980 in defence of 'something as esoteric and fragile as reputation' captivated me.

I started to write my own screenplay about Richard but, try as I might, I couldn't make the Richard I'd found in all the primary sources square with all the deeds he was supposed to have done. I could portray Richard, the loyal, dutiful son and brother living happily in the north, undertaking the tasks he is known to have performed there – and this matched what I knew about his character – but I couldn't make the quantum leap of propelling him on to the throne. I was confronted by a giant jigsaw puzzle where many pieces fitted together easily, reflecting Richard's character, but the key moments remained opaque. King Richard III was an enigma. I was by no means the first writer to have this problem. There are many accounts of historians being unable to understand his actions at important points, particularly in 1483 when he took the throne. But I was approaching him from a different perspective. I had to be familiar with his character before I could put into context the many challenges of his life, rather than the other way round. The later events of Richard's life did not define him; his character had been formed before they took place.

I wasn't interested in creating a saintly, one-dimensional

figure; that would have been as nonsensical as the sinister person presented to us for so long. And yet I couldn't make sense of the jigsaw before me.

I was about to give up when a new book on Richard was published: *Bosworth 1485: Psychology of a Battle* by the historian Michael Jones (and co-author of this book). It was acclaimed as a seminal work on the battle itself and on Richard's character, placing him in the context of his family, unlike Shakespeare and the Tudor writers who had separated him from it. But what changed everything for me in *Bosworth 1485* was the startling new evidence relating to Richard and his family, and new insight into the battle that would come to define him. The jigsaw of Richard's life and its key moments were beginning to come together.

By this time I had formed the Scottish Branch of the Richard III Society and was keen to meet this writer to hear about his research and his new evidence. When we met we discovered that we shared a similar view of Richard and the pivotal events of his life. With Michael Jones's book underpinning my screenplay, I immersed myself in the world of Richard III, devouring all I could on the king, visiting every place that had held meaning for him. In May 2004, my initial research complete, I travelled to the site of the Battle of Bosworth, which was both affecting and fascinating. The lie of the land in this small corner of Leicestershire seemed to suggest a battle fought over a much wider area than previously realized.

After Bosworth, I headed to Leicester. I wanted to explore the city and see it as Richard might have done. To view the remains of the castle, visit the site of the Blue Boar Inn, walk the Western Gateway and cross Bow Bridge over the River Soar, returning via Richard's statue and the cathedral and, finally, to the New Street car park, where it was rumoured that Richard's grave might once have been from a fragment of medieval wall that

remained there. After visiting the cathedral, and laying my Yorkist white rose on the ledger stone to his memory in the choir, I wandered over to New Street, a small lane opposite. As I crossed St Martin's the street names around it bore witness to the friary precinct that had once existed nearby: Richard had reputedly been buried in the Church of the Greyfriars in 1485; Friar Lane ran along New Street's southern end, with Grey Friars Street running off to the east.

New Street car park is a tarmacked expanse of wasteland accommodating a hundred or so vehicles. That warm afternoon it lay almost empty and quiet, giving me the opportunity to walk its length and ponder what might lie beneath the unpromising surface. As I approached the parking attendant's hut by an old beech tree, I could see the section of medieval stonework lodged in the wall. I tried to get a feel for what it would have been like in Richard's day, how it might have looked, but nothing remained here of the past. I felt no resonance with Richard's life, or death.

Leaving New Street to head home, I spotted another car park almost directly opposite. I hadn't noticed it before, but I'd been so intent on getting to the first car park that I must have walked straight past it. This one had high green gates with a barrier over the entrance and a sign marked 'Private'. I was going to move on but experienced an overwhelming urge to enter. I slid around the barrier and into the car park which, again, was pretty much deserted apart from a few scattered vehicles. It was a large open space for seventy or more vehicles, surrounded by Georgian buildings with a large red-brick Victorian wall running north to south straight ahead of me. I found myself drawn to this wall and, as I walked towards it, I was aware of a strange sensation. My heart was pounding and my mouth was dry – it was a feeling of raw excitement tinged with fear. As I got near the wall, I had to stop, I felt so odd. I had goose-bumps, so much so that even in

the sunshine I felt cold to my bones. And I knew in my innermost being that Richard's body lay here. Moreover I was certain that I was standing right on top of his grave.

Back home and trying to comprehend what I had experienced, friends and family told me not to dismiss it. A year later, after completing the first draft of my screenplay, I returned to the car park, questioning if what I had felt that day had been real. As I walked to the same spot and looked at the Victorian wall, the goose-bumps reappeared. I stared down at my feet. Slightly to my left, on the tarmac, there was something new – a white, hand-painted letter 'R', denoting a 'reserved' parking spot, but it told me all I needed to know.

My return visit to a Leicester car park was intended to mark the end of my investigation into Richard's story but would now mark the beginning of an entirely new search to uncover the real Richard III.

My quest for the king's grave had started.

I

The Road to the Dig

If my gut instinct was correct, how did the medieval Greyfriars Church become a modern car park? Most historical sources agreed that following his death in 1485 at the Battle of Bosworth, King Richard III had been buried at the Church of the Greyfriars in Leicester, and ten years later Henry VII had paid for a tomb. Further investigation revealed that in 1538 at the Dissolution of the Monasteries the church was closed and fell into ruins. By 1611, the map maker John Speed reported the place was 'overgrown with nettles and weeds' and King Richard's grave 'not to be found'. But it is also known that Robert Herrick, a former Mayor of Leicester, had bought part of the Greyfriars site and built himself a mansion. In 1612 Christopher Wren, father of the famous architect, noted that in Herrick's garden there was 'a handsome stone pillar', three feet tall, inscribed with: 'Here lies the body of Richard III some time King of England'. The Greyfriars site subsequently passed through several owners until, in the early twentieth century, it was tarmacked over to become car parks. Later, part of it was sold to Leicester City Council Social Services Department and it had been in its car park that I had had my unsettling experience.

As I continued to flesh out Richard's character for revised drafts of my screenplay, the conclusion to his story started to frustrate me. He was the last English warrior king, but had no known grave. Any search for that grave would be fanciful and

irrational, particularly since stories abounded about his bones being removed at the Dissolution of the Monasteries and thrown into the River Soar. There was also the question mark over the Greyfriars Church: where was it? Furthermore, supposing human remains were found, how could they be identified as those of Richard III?

Then, everything changed.

Dr John Ashdown-Hill, historian, genealogist and member of the Richard III Society, made a most remarkable discovery. Having traced an all-female line of descent from Richard's elder sister, Anne of York, to Joy Ibsen, an elderly lady living in Canada, he identified King Richard's mitochondrial DNA sequence. It was a rare one. Only 17 per cent of the population had haplogroup 'J' for Jasmine, but, further, only 1.5 per cent had this particular haplotype, J1c2c.

The science was compelling. Female mitochondria are the most plentiful DNA in the human body. Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is the hereditary material present in all cells of living organisms and the main ingredient of our chromosones, giving us our distinctive genetic characteristics. We each receive our mtDNA from our mother but it is only passed on through the female line, from mother to daughter. Having the mtDNA sequence of Richard III was crucial, since it represented the best opportunity for the survival of DNA within ancient remains because of its quantity, and also offered the greatest potential for a positive identification. The fact that it was a rare type of mtDNA was an added bonus. In addition, the female line of descent is generally considered more trustworthy than the male, because the official, named mother of a child is usually the child's authentic biological mother.

But how, and why, had the DNA discovery come about? Ashdown-Hill had been working with leading DNA expert Professor Jean-Jacques Cassiman at the Centre for Human

Genetics, University of Leuven, Belgium, to try to establish whether bones found in Mechelen in the mid-twentieth century could be the remains of Margaret of Burgundy (1446–1503), an elder sister of Richard III. In the mid-twentieth century, three sets of bones had been discovered and Ashdown-Hill's research had concluded that one of these might be those of Margaret. He now needed to compare Joy Ibsen's mtDNA with that in the ancient bones; a match would confirm the remains as those of Richard's sister. There was only one problem: some time in the past, one set of bones had been coated with varnish as a preservative, making it impossible to isolate DNA, while the other sets may have been contaminated by handling over the years.

Although Ashdown-Hill was unable to extrapolate the ancient mtDNA from the Mechelen bones to identify them, it was a game-changing discovery. I now knew that if we did go in search of King Richard's body, we would be able to identify him. In autumn 2005 I contacted Ashdown-Hill, and suggested he write to *Time Team*, the archaeological TV show, proposing a search for Richard's grave in the Social Services car park. *Time Team* replied that their three-day dig format was not compatible with a search of such a large area. Of course, I couldn't tell them (or Ashdown-Hill) why I felt that three days might just be enough.

Then, in late summer 2007, an archaeological excavation took place in Grey Friars Street in Leicester where a small single-storey 1950s extension at the NatWest/Pares Bank site was being demolished to make way for a block of flats. Undertaking the archaeology was University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS), and what they discovered or, more precisely, what they did not discover, changed my plans irrevocably.

The dig was in the Greyfriars area, but the only find that suggested there might have been a medieval church in the vicinity was a fragment of a stone coffin lid found in a post-medieval drain. The dig was dismissed locally as of little importance, but I

disagreed. It suggested that the Greyfriars Church was located further to the west of the Greyfriars area than had been assumed, away from the heavily developed eastern part towards the car parks, open spaces ripe for archaeological investigation.

I wrote to Leicester City Council's archaeologist, Chris Wardle, requesting further information on the dig, but received no response. However, after I encouraged the Richard III Society to make contact, Wardle was persuaded to write an article for the society's *Ricardian Bulletin*, which gave me a much clearer picture of the Greyfriars area.

It had previously been asserted that Richard might have first been buried in the Church of the Annunciation in the Newarke in Leicester, but in 2008 John Ashdown-Hill found more evidence to support the Greyfriars Church burial. And in her book *Richard III: The Maligned King*, Annette Carson examined sources contemporary with Richard III (i.e. pre-Tudor) with the aim of uncovering the man behind the myth, and proved that it was possible to discover the king's real character. *The Maligned King* suggested that the king probably still lay undisturbed where he was originally buried in the Greyfriars Church, which was most likely situated under the private car park of the Department of Social Services. It was the first book I had read to make this claim.

The next piece in the jigsaw once more came from John Ashdown-Hill. While researching Richard's burial, he discovered that it was John Speed who had started the story about the removal of Richard's remains, as a means of explaining why he could find no trace of Richard's grave. But Speed's map showed that he had been looking for the grave in the wrong place. He had been looking in the Blackfriars (Dominicans) site, not the Greyfriars (Franciscans), and it was the Blackfriars site he had reported as overgrown with nettles and weeds. Ashdown-Hill concluded that the body of Richard III had not been dug up in 1538 and was therefore still at the Greyfriars site.

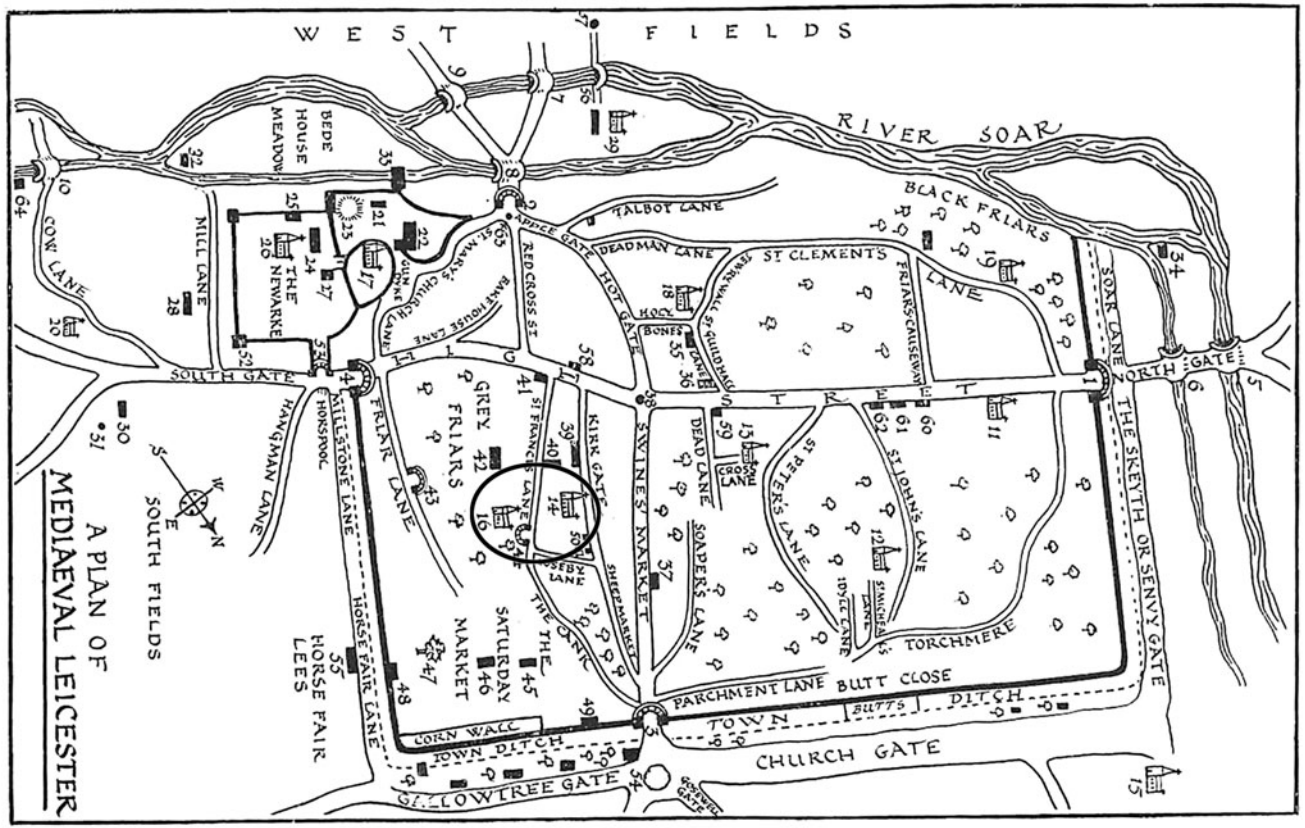
So the question remained: where was the Greyfriars Church? The street names and the recent dig in Grey Friars Street appeared to confirm my instinct that the burial place was on the northern side of the Social Services car park where I had had my experience. But I needed evidence, without which no one could be expected to take me seriously.

Then, researching in the Richard III Society's archives, I found a copy of a medieval map from Leicestershire County Council records. This showed the Greyfriars Church opposite St Martin's Church (now Leicester Cathedral) at what is now the northern end of the Social Services car park. I had my smoking gun (see map on p. 12).

In February 2009 I invited Ashdown-Hill to Edinburgh to give a series of talks to the Scottish Branch of the Richard III Society about his mtDNA discovery and the history of Richard's burial place in Leicester. His research into priory churches, particularly mendicant orders reliant upon begging such as the Greyfriars, showed their churches were located alongside major roads. The Greyfriars Church must, he said, be on the northern side of the Social Services car park.

We broke for lunch at the Cramond Inn where I announced my intention to search for King Richard's grave. I would need the permission of Leicester City Council (LCC), the car park landowners, and would have to commission, and pay for, a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey that would use radar pulses to locate subsurface anomalies, and the archaeological dig to follow. Dr Raymond Bord, the branch's treasurer, had a contact in Leicester, while Dr David and Wendy Johnson had details for one of the key *Time Team* members. I also urged John Ashdown-Hill to write to ULAS, the local archaeological team.

Time Team confirmed their lack of interest, and ULAS didn't respond. It was a blow, but I was undaunted. As Ashdown-Hill left to take up a university post in Turkey, the recession hit hard.



Philippa Langley's smoking gun. The Church of the Greyfriars (16) is depicted directly opposite St Martin's Church (14), now Leicester Cathedral, in what is the northern end of the Social Services car park.

My priority had to be to get LCC behind a search for the grave. I needed some powerful means of persuasion: I needed television.

By September 2010, having sounded out the TV industry, I approached Dr Bord's Leicester contact (retired lawyer Paul Astill) who put me in touch with local councillor Michael Johnson, and through him I contacted Sheila Lock, LCC's chief executive. I proposed a TV documentary special, *Looking for Richard: In Search of a King*. UK archaeological units had confirmed that archaeological practice was to reinter as close as possible to the point of discovery, so Leicester Cathedral (situated directly opposite the projected area of exploration) was proposed in the pitch as the place for reburial. Within weeks, Lock had written to confirm LCC's interest.

I now commissioned the Johnsons, founding members of the project from its inception at the Cramond Inn and who were supporting my search, to design a tomb for Richard. Historian David and his artist wife Wendy had over forty years' experience in researching Richard III. My own research now widened to include the law on burials and exhumation, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) policy, and the funeral customs of medieval kings. I would be searching for the mortal remains of an anointed King of England, an unprecedented goal, for which no guidelines existed. I would use desk-based research to underpin what principles I could, together with advice from the relevant authorities.

The law on the exhumation of named individuals with living relatives sets out the decency and privacy with which the exhumation must be carried out. Exhumations of, and archaeological reports on, dead soldiers from the two world wars, for example, carry an important prohibition: archaeologists are not free to publish photographs of the remains unless surviving relatives give their permission. However, there is no law protecting

the remains of named individuals dating from more than 100 years ago. The only case that gave any clues as to seemly conduct was the discovery of the remains of Anne Mowbray, Duchess of York and Norfolk, who died in 1481 aged eight. Her coffin had been discovered by workmen clearing the site of a church in east London in 1964 and an archaeologist began an investigation of the remains, but without obtaining any proper consent. After questions in the House of Lords, Mowbray's relatives closed the investigation, but their action came too late to stop pictures of the remains being published in the newspapers. It was a lesson in what not to do, as I pointed out to the authorities.

The Reburial Document was ready. Drawn up by Dr David and Wendy Johnson, its purpose was to convince potential partners that the Looking for Richard project was serious and viable. Its eleven pages, together with the pitch document, set out the ethos behind the project, which would have two main aims:

- to search for the grave of Richard III, and, if found, honour him with a reburial and tomb;
- to attempt to bring to life the real man behind the myth.

I wanted my project to be a unique attempt to get to the truth. Furthermore, the search for an anointed King of England was incredibly sensitive, in Richard's case particularly so. After the Battle of Bosworth, his naked body had been slung over a horse, taken into Leicester, and placed on public display. In the retelling of his story, I did not want Richard III subjected to public humiliation again.

The project would also honour Richard with a tomb, and the Reburial Document included the first sketches of the design. Two ceremonies were proposed: a solemn Vespers for the Dead at the reinterment, followed by a later Service of Celebration.

All this was jumping the gun. We still didn't know the precise site of the Greyfriars Church, but there was one key fact in our

favour. Research had yielded only seven other potential named burials inside the church, of which only one, Sir William Moton of Peckleton, could be said with any certainty to have been buried there. It seems the vow of poverty taken by the Greyfriars (followers of St Francis of Assisi) and a treasonous rebellion by some of the order in 1402 against Henry IV might have kept the burials inside the church to a minimum, and so reduced the likely number of graves.

I had obtained the TV rights to John Ashdown-Hill's book, *The Last Days of Richard III*, which provided the research behind the project, to protect it from acquisitive producers. Now I put in a confidential call to Dr Phil Stone, chairman of the Richard III Society, who offered whatever help the society could provide. Over the coming months he would become my mentor and guide, his quiet determination adding a backbone of steel to the project's endeavours. Dr Stone suggested that he take me to the office of the society's patron, since he thought that Richard, Duke of Gloucester might be interested in a search to find the grave of his medieval namesake. At the meeting, it was confirmed that I would be the nominated point of contact for the duke for the project and keep his office informed of any developments.

The Reburial Document was given to the MoJ, Leicester City Council and Leicester Cathedral, who were all satisfied that the precautions set out in the document would protect Richard's honour and dignity. At the MoJ, we discussed the Anne Mowbray case and how an exhumation would ensure that all decency be afforded King Richard upon discovery of his remains. The concerns of relatives (as with those of any other remains having known living relatives) would be taken into account in the drafting of the Exhumation Licence. However, the MoJ warned that it could not act in this by itself, and the protections and protocols I required for the remains should be inserted into my agreements with the local authorities.

In Leicester it had been agreed that the Looking for Richard project would receive LCC's support and backing through the office of its CEO, and the council would work directly with me as the originator/client. However, due to the recession, it would not be able to provide any direct funding, but would act as the project's main facilitator. This would allow me access to the council's experts, including their museum services who would advise on all aspects of the dig, with particular reference to the care of ancient artefacts, and the highways department who would reinstate the car parks, and also offer introductions to local businesses and funding bodies. LCC also confirmed that it would give me permission to dig in its car park on the understanding that, if found, King Richard III would be reburied in the nearest consecrated ground, Leicester Cathedral.

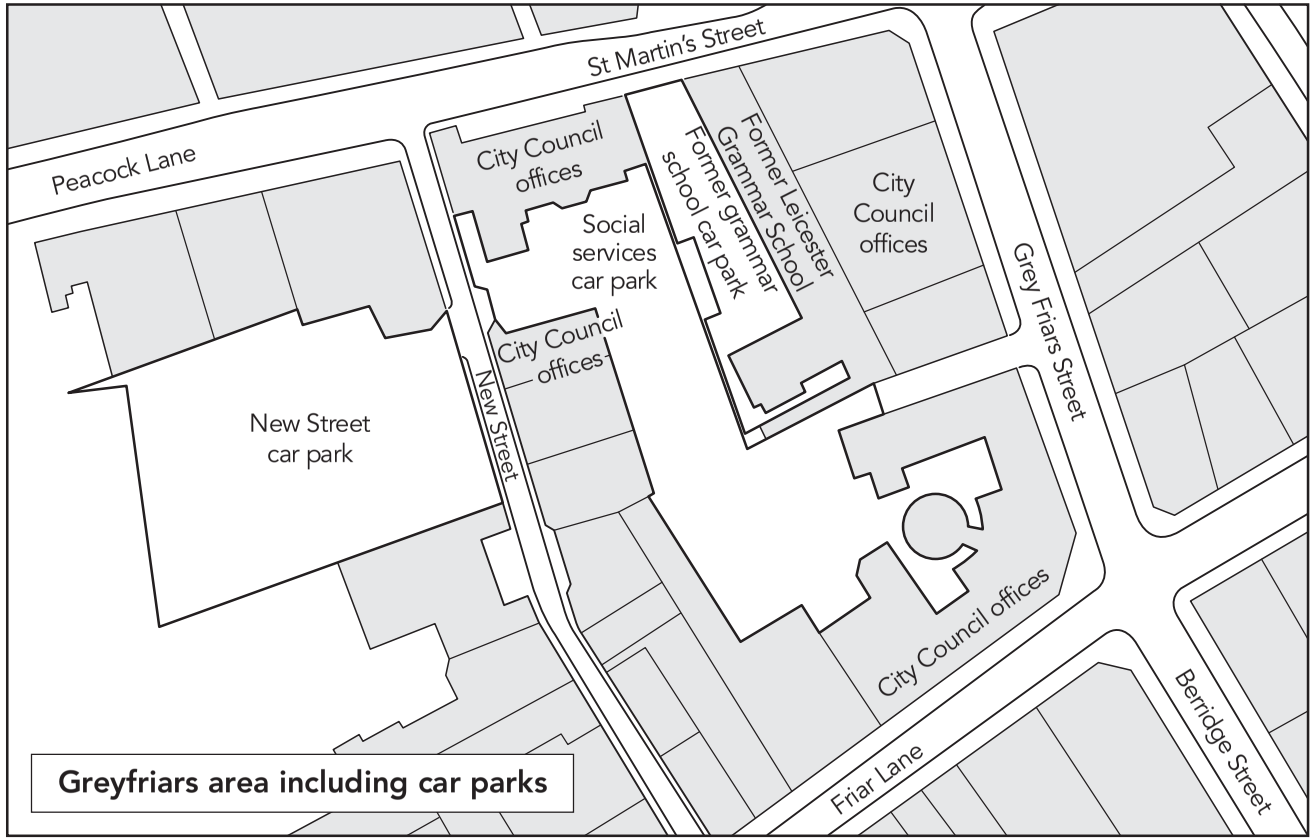
To have any hope of getting the project under way, I now needed funding, and a recognized archaeological team willing to do the dig, as well as the costing. Finding the right team would be crucial. The UK archaeological teams I had contacted had been sceptical about the search, and didn't know the terrain. However, LCC had recommended a local archaeologist with whom it had worked: talented and sensitive, Richard Buckley, co-director of ULAS, might be just what the project needed, and his colleague, Harriet Jacklyn, was an equally experienced osteologist. I recognized the ULAS name immediately as the team that had undertaken the Grey Friars Street dig but hadn't responded to Ashdown-Hill's previous proposal to search for Richard III's grave. They were a leading archaeological unit with a considerable reputation and wouldn't want to be seen setting off on any wild-goose chase so it would be a difficult sell. In January 2011 I telephoned Richard Buckley, who was intrigued by the project, but not convinced. He knew where the sizeable Greyfriars precinct was and the potential the car parks offered, but said he would have to do further research and only if this

came up with anything would he be interested in taking matters further. I duly sent him the pitch and Reburial Document. In March 2011 I met Sarah Levitt, Head of Arts and Museum Services and lead on the project for LCC. She understood the sensitivities surrounding the search for the remains of a named individual and would be happy to include protections within our agreement. An agreement, however, was a long way off. Once we had archaeologists on board (she also recommended Buckley) she would help with introductions to local funding bodies.

At an on-site meeting at the Social Services car park I spent time with Councillor Michael Johnson whose enthusiasm for the project had opened the door to LCC. Walking with me towards the northern end of the car park, he asked where I believed the church might be. As I told him about the GPR survey I planned to commission to attempt to reveal its walls beneath the tarmac, we walked on to the same spot where I had my intuitive feeling, and I experienced the same powerful reaction once again.

Much rested on my next meeting, at ULAS, where Richard Buckley had agreed to meet me. If I could get him on board, the project would have a chance of securing the local funding it desperately needed. Buckley quickly put me at my ease; he had done his research and wanted to show me something. In one of their finds rooms, on a wooden table stretching almost the full length of the room, was a series of maps. Buckley started at one end with a map from 1741 by Thomas Roberts, and pointed to the 'Gray Fryers' area marked on it: it looked like an orchard, and was situated directly opposite St Martin's Church (Leicester Cathedral), right where the car parks are now.

On the south side of the 'Gray Fryers' was the outline of a building that Buckley said looked like a gatehouse, and could be a marker for the remnants of Herrick's mansion house. As I looked, I could see a formal garden to the north with four pathways leading to a central area. I couldn't believe my eyes. Could

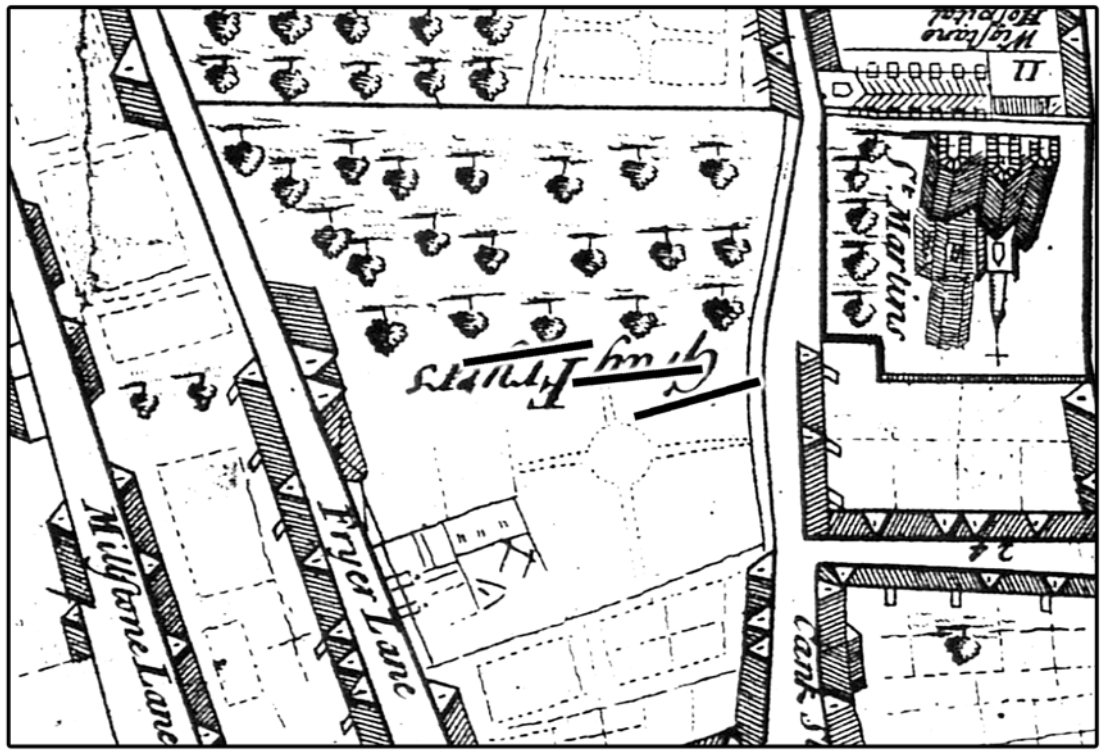


The three car parks of the Greyfriars area of Leicester where the Ground Penetrating Radar Survey was undertaken on 28 August 2011. The survey was commissioned by Philippa Langley and funded by the Richard III Society, founding members of the *Looking for Richard* project, members of the Scottish Branch and private investors.

this central area be where Herrick's stone pillar had stood? I put forward my theory. My reasoning was simple enough: if you have the grave of a king in your garden and erect a 'handsome stone pillar' to mark it, wouldn't you lay out your paths to lead towards it? It seemed logical to me. However, Buckley was focused on working through the ages, showing me on each map how the land use had changed over time. After the Dissolution, the 'Gray Fryers' land was gardens, but was finally covered with tarmac to become car parks in the 1930s–40s. It was archaeologically virgin ground, only built on at its outer edges and never investigated.

But it was clear Buckley wasn't convinced. 'Archaeology is not about going in search of a famous person, it's not what we do,' he said. For one thing, there was the story of Richard's bones being thrown into the River Soar. As I explained that this had been refuted by John Ashdown-Hill's researches, I knew I was losing him: the River Soar tale was just too powerful. What about the Greyfriars Church, might that be of interest? I brought out my copy of the medieval map showing the Greyfriars Church opposite what was now the cathedral, and told him why I thought this would be at the northern end of the Social Services car park.

Buckley dismissed the map, asserting that medieval maps are notoriously vague, but he nonetheless sat up. Finding the Greyfriars Church would be of interest to him, because he could learn so much about medieval Leicester and the layout of these friary churches from it. As I pushed for my preferred site, using Ashdown-Hill's research into mendicant priories' locations beside major roads, Buckley agreed it was a possibility. After discussing the Christopher Wren report on Herrick's garden and its marker column, then the open car park spaces, ripe for archaeological investigation, and the GPR survey, Buckley declared he would be happy to look for the Greyfriars Church.



Thomas Roberts's map of 1741 with modern overlay of trenches. A formal garden is visible to the east of the three trenches, thought to be the garden of Alderman Robert Herrick.

So it was settled that, while he searched for the church, I would search for the grave of a king. Unlike Buckley, I had no reputation to lose. I asked how he rated our chances of success. He said, 'Fifty–fifty at best for the church, and nine to one against finding the grave.' He was a glass half empty kind of guy, while I was the glass half full kind of girl. He asked what I thought the chances were: I replied, 'Nine to one on for finding them both.' He laughed, asking what had driven me to this search. I told him about my screenwriting, and hopes of seeing Richard's real story brought to life. I didn't tell him about my intuitive feeling. But it didn't matter, because Richard Buckley was on board and beaming and I wanted to hug him. The Looking for Richard project had taken a giant leap forward.

However, there was still the urgent need to find funding. Buckley mentioned Leicester University and its not insubstantial research budgets. ULAS, though an independent body hiring its offices from the university, worked closely with it. Buckley called Richard Taylor, the university's Deputy Registrar and Director of Corporate Affairs, who thought the project had merit, and understood that the ULAS academic research would be in quest of the church. He asked what might be required of the university. Hesitant to bring in such a powerful player on the funding side, I asked for their specialists and expertise to be made available to the project free of charge. Taylor quickly confirmed that I had only to let him know what I needed, so I immediately mentioned the DNA unit and Professor Mark Lansdale, Head of the Psychology Department. Taylor agreed and said that if I needed extra funding once the dig was under way, the university would help. I asked how much. 'If you find the Greyfriars Church, the wallet will open,' he replied.

In March 2011, on Buckley's advice, I commissioned ULAS to undertake the Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (DBA). This is the preliminary research document drawn up to

determine the archaeological viability of a site. It would be based on historical research, including detailed map regression, and analysis of any potential ground disturbance, together with the location of gas mains and electric and fibre-optic cables. The DBA would provide me, as the client, with the necessary professional green light to enable the dig to go ahead. I gave ULAS what information I had on the Leicester Greyfriars site. The cost of the DBA was £1,140, so I called Phil Stone because the Richard III Society had a bursary fund for original research to which I could apply. The joint secretaries, Sue and David Wells, helped prepare the request document, which Phil Stone gave to the Executive Committee who passed it immediately.

In April 2011, with the DBA completed, I asked ULAS where it intended to dig the first trenches. Richard Buckley explained that in order to pick up any trace of the east–west church walls beneath the surface, two overlapping thirty-metre trenches would run north–south which he hoped would bisect the walls. The trenches would also have to be positioned to maximize the remaining parking on site to help with costs. I pressed again for the northern end of the car park and Buckley confirmed that Trench One would cover the exact area I wanted; it ran right over the letter 'R'.

The greatest expense of the dig was going to be the reinstatement work, turning the site back into a car park. I also had to find, and fund, interim parking for the Social Services for the duration of the dig, which we agreed would last for two weeks. Richard Buckley assured me it would be possible to dig three trial trenches in that time. I proposed the dig should take place over the Easter holiday period, April–May 2012, as this would give me time to get the funding, and broadcaster, on board. It would also reduce the cost of the off-site car parking. But in the meantime I had to raise an estimated £35,000.

Sarah Levitt told me that I would need permission from the

team at the Greyfriars Social Services for the dig and the disruption it would cause. Their consent was vital; Levitt would not be able to overrule them if they refused. I was tense for my meeting with Mick Bowers, Head of Greyfriars Property Services. Bowers understood the dig would cause major headaches, but he'd spoken to his team, who were willing to take on the extra workload involved because, they said, the search for Richard was a worthy one. Bowers would be in charge of matters at their end. It was a huge relief, and I thanked him. 'Not a problem,' he said, and smiled. I later discovered his wife was a Ricardian.

The next priority was to finalize the TV programme. The first-ever search for the grave of an anointed King of England was a good story, so someone would bite. It just so happened I had a certain someone in mind.

I had been a big fan of the documentary filmmaker Julian Ware for many years. He insisted on meticulous research, a sensitive approach and top production values. He was joint creative director of the award-winning Darlow Smithson Productions (DSP), which had just made *WW1: Finding the Lost Battalions* (July 2010), about amateur historian Lambis Englezos's search for the lost graves of the 1916 Battle of Fromelles in France. Ware confirmed his interest in the Looking for Richard project, to be headed up by DSP's Acting Head of Development, Simon Young, an archaeologist who had produced *Finding the Lost Battalions*.

A few weeks later, however, the project's future was up in the air again. Sheila Lock (CEO of LCC) was ill, Chris Wardle, the City Archaeologist, was not convinced of its viability, and to cap it all Leicester was about to vote for its first elected mayor, the person who would then run LCC and therefore be able to kill the project stone dead.

Or not. In May 2011 Sir Peter Soulsby was elected Leicester's mayor. He valued history and heritage (it was in his manifesto),

so it was with some relief that a few weeks later Sarah Levitt confirmed he'd given the Looking for Richard project the green light. We were back on.

At the cathedral, the dean, the Very Reverend Vivienne Faull, welcomed the Reburial Document and expressed the cathedral's readiness to accept the remains of King Richard into its care, should he be found. Taking me to the sanctuary, the dean proposed that the tomb should be close to its northern wall. As I looked at the great east window dedicated to the fallen in battle, I felt her suggested place would be a fitting tribute and final resting place for England's last warrior king.

But I still had to raise the necessary funds. Sarah Levitt put me in touch with Martin Peters, Managing Director of Leicestershire Promotions Ltd (LPL), responsible for marketing the county and city. With DSP on board, and a TV special in the offing with Channel 4, Peters understood the venture's potential, and so agreed to fund the Looking for Richard project.

By early August 2011, with the £35,000 I needed, I had agreed terms with LCC as the landowner and ULAS as the contractor. As the client, my agreements repeated the Reburial Document's ethos for the project: if we discovered Richard III's remains, the science and analysis would be completed at the earliest opportunity. The two partners were aware that I was searching for a named individual with living relatives, and even though he had been dead for over 500 years, I wanted him granted the same decency and privacy as is laid down by the law governing exhumations of those who died less than a hundred years ago.

The agreement also made it clear that as named custodian of the remains after identification, I would take Richard to a Catholic place of sanctity and rest where he would be prepared for his reburial in the (Anglican) cathedral. It was important that this should be in a spiritual environment and the king's faith taken into consideration if he were finally to be laid to rest.

Everything appeared to be going well but there was a clock ticking. I had commissioned a GPR survey from Stratascan to cover the three car parks: New Street, the Social Services and, crucially, the former grammar school site, which was immediately adjacent to the Social Services. But the former grammar school was up for sale for redevelopment. A new owner might not give us permission to dig, yet if John Ashdown-Hill's research (and my intuition) and Richard Buckley's maps were correct, it could be critical to the success of the project. Buckley told me to take heart. In a recession there might not be a developer interested in buying the grammar school.

I asked Buckley about the potential of the GPR survey. Having previously undertaken three on city centre sites, he was sceptical, since all had proved inconclusive and failed to reveal any structures that later digging had uncovered. In this case, however, with it being virgin ground, he felt it might be worth a go. However, he warned me that the church might be in the south of the precinct, and if this were the case it would be game over for my search because the south was heavily developed, which meant that King Richard's grave would be under a building. The cost of the survey (just over £5,000) would be met by the Richard III Society and founding members of the Looking for Richard project.

On Sunday, 28 August 2011 Stratascan began the GPR survey, using a powerful MIRA scanner. Annette Carson, an international award-winning copywriter as well as a biographer, had helped put together a short promotional script for DSP to film. She understood that the prospect of major media attention might keep the local authorities on board in difficult times. Richard Buckley, Phil Stone and John Ashdown-Hill (back briefly in the UK) were to be interviewed along with Carson, whom, at last, I finally met. Also coming along were local Richard III Society members Sally Henshaw, secretary of the Leicestershire Branch,

and Richard Smith, their chairman, who had both been helping the project with research. Giving up his time on the bank holiday weekend too was Assistant Mayor, Councillor Ted Cassidy, representing LCC in Sir Peter Soulsby's absence and who spoke powerfully to camera. With filming under way, the assembled team asked why I was so determined to search for Richard's grave. I pointed to the 'R' on the tarmac, and told them my story.

DSP were filming in the cathedral as I again met the Reverend Faull, together with Dr John Ashdown-Hill. The dean repeated her view that the tomb would be best situated in the sanctuary. Later, Dr David and Wendy Johnson showed her the first detailed computer-generated images (CGI) of the tomb design, its imagery of the boar, white rose of York and cross of St Cuthbert displaying what had been important to Richard, both as duke and king.

A few weeks later, Richard Buckley's scepticism of the GPR survey proved justified. The results were inconclusive, and alarming. A layer of apparent 'made' ground, or demolition debris, close to the surface had skewed the results, or was hiding the archaeology beneath. We couldn't see any walls, and only with my prompting could Stratascan identify two or three potential gravesites, none of which was in the northern end of the Social Services car park near my 'R'. The survey was a disaster for the project. Channel 4 was wavering, which meant Martin Peters at LPL was too, with his budgets constrained in straitened times. By March 2012, without the guarantee of a TV documentary, and with deep regret, LPL pulled its funding. The Easter dig was cancelled.

Despite these setbacks, I couldn't give up now. Sarah Levitt had offered us new dates in 2012: the August bank holiday weekend would work for LCC. Phil Stone, at the Richard III Society, told me to grab them, saying we couldn't afford to lose another

opportunity and we would make the new dates work. He offered to give £5,000 to kick-start the new funding round. Martin Peters was next. He said that, if we could guarantee a film for his website, LPL would put in up to £15,000, while Michael Johnson gave £500 from Leicester Adult Schools.

By the end of April 2012, I considered re-mortgaging my home. Phil Stone had confirmed that we were too late to launch an appeal in the society's *Ricardian Bulletin*, so I rang Leicester University. After some negotiation, Richard Taylor agreed the university would put in £10,000, plus £2,000 VAT (if needed) and a further £2,000 if Richard III was found (to cover the cost of the coffin and pall). Now Richard Buckley and I worked to reduce the cost of the dig. Thanks to his carefully revised layout for the first two trenches, allowing for more parking during the dig, I managed to shave over £2,000 from the cost of the off-site parking for the Social Services staff. The August dig could go ahead without my desperate re-mortgaging plan. Sarah Levitt confirmed the deadline of 1 August for all monies to be paid into the ULAS account. Miss it, and the dig was over.

With a few weeks to go before the deadline, LPL gave us devastating news. Due to problems with their own funding, they could only put in £5,000. They would secure this funding, but I was £10,000 short. I trawled every local business and worthy to make up the shortfall. Martin Peters at LPL stepped in to help as did Martin Traynor, Group CEO of the Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce. It was a valiant effort, but in the worst recession in living memory local businesses could not see any investment potential in an archaeological dig; even one that was in search of a king. Further, the research grant I had hoped for from Leicester Archaeological and Historical Society was refused. The society said it couldn't support an archaeological project in search of King Richard's grave, citing the River Soar story as evidence of its likely outcome. At my request, John Ashdown-Hill put

together a two-page document outlining his research repudiating the story, to no avail. The search for Richard would be cancelled. In desperation I called Phil Stone, who authorized an immediate appeal to the membership of the Richard III Society – worldwide. Annette Carson agreed to design and write a two-page International Appeal leaflet.

The appeal went out by email. Within moments, pledges of money were pouring in from the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium and throughout the UK. Some who contacted me were out of work and struggling to feed their families but wanted to give what they could. The response was overwhelming, moving me to tears. In three weeks, the appeal raised just under £13,000 and gave the Looking for Richard project its mandate. The donors told us:

'Search for him. Find him. Honour him.'

On 1 August 2012 all monies were paid into ULAS's account (see full funding below).

Looking for Richard: In Search of a King – Two-Week Dig

	£	%
Richard III Society and members	17,367*	52.84
University of Leicester	10,000	30.43
Leicestershire Promotions Ltd	5,000	15.21
Leicester Adult Schools	500	1.52
Total	32,867	100

* Includes £100 donation from the Society of Friends of Richard III in York, and donations from some members of the Richard III Foundation Inc.

The remaining funding of £716 from the International Appeal was paid to ULAS at the end of the dig for costs including the exhumation.

The tomb designers, Dr David and Wendy Johnson, had brought in graphics specialist Joseph Fox from Lost in Castles. With the tomb design nearly ready, Fox was working on the final renders, while award-winning local sculptor Graeme Mitcheson was interested in taking on the tomb commission. And Michael Ibsen (son of Joy), a furniture maker who sources his wood from the estate of the Prince of Wales and lives in London, said he would be honoured to make a coffin for his ancestral uncle, King Richard III.

On 6 August 2012, at the pre-dig meeting, Richard Buckley confirmed the location of the first two trenches in the Social Services car park. The dig would begin on 25 August, which I told the team would be the anniversary of Richard III's interment in the Greyfriars. The media pack was ready. Annette Carson had stepped in to organize it, but LCC admitted they were short-staffed and not ideally placed to handle communications. However, Leicester University, our new partner, with much experience in the media, asked to take it on.

Three and a half years after the first meeting in the Cramond Inn, Edinburgh, my search in Leicester for the grave and mortal remains of King Richard III was on!