

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 5 February 2013

FACE OF RICHARD III UNVEILED 528 YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH

- Facial reconstruction reveals face of long dead King
- A more pleasant, younger and fuller appearance than period portraits reveal
- A face far removed from the image of the cold-blooded villain of Shakespeare's play
- Opportunity to look into the eyes of one of English history's most controversial and unfairly maligned kings

The Richard III Society today unveiled the world's only facial reconstruction of the human remains found at the Greyfriars in Leicester, yesterday confirmed as belonging to Richard III. The reconstruction project, led by Professor Caroline Wilkinson, Professor of Craniofacial Identification at the University of Dundee, was commissioned and funded by the Richard III Society.

To those who have seen so many portrayals of Richard III with contorted body and facial features, this calm and apparently thoughtful face could be a shock. After his death, many portraits deliberately added narrowed eyes and mean lines. We have already discovered he had no kyphosis or withered arm - now we know he had a warm face, young, earnest and rather serious. How many scales will drop from how many eyes! This likeness is so real, it is a remarkable tribute to Professor Wilkinson and her reconstruction team. Congratulations and thanks are in order, but these words somehow don't seem adequate to recognise such art, skill and loving craftsmanship.

"It's an interesting face, younger and fuller than we have been used to seeing, less careworn, and with the hint of a smile. When I first saw it, I thought there is enough of the portraits about it for it to be King Richard but not enough to suggest they have been copied. I think people will like it. He's a man who lived. Indeed, when I looked him in the eye, 'Good King Richard' seemed alive and about to speak. At last, it seems, we have the true image of Richard III - is this the face that launched a thousand myths?"

Dr. Phil Stone, Richard III Society Chairman

"It was a great privilege for us all in the Dundee team to work on this important investigation. It has been enormously exciting to rebuild and visualise the face that could be Richard III, and this depiction may allow us to see the King in a different light. His facial structure was produced using a scientific approach, based on anatomical assessment and interpretation, and a 3D replication process known as stereolithography. The final head was painted and textured with glass eyes and a wig, using the portraits as reference, to create a realistic and regal appearance."

Caroline Wilkinson, Professor of Craniofacial Identification, University of Dundee

"As an artist, to be able to make a contribution to this project has been a real privilege. My part in the process was to paint the 3D replica of the head and was purely interpretive rather than scientific. Guided by Professor Wilkinson's expertise, I drew on my experience in portrait painting, using a combination of historical and contemporary references to create a finished surface texture. The reaction of the team when the model was unveiled made all the hard work worthwhile."

Janice Aitken, Lecturer, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, University of Dundee

"Seeing a true likeness of England's last Plantagenet and warrior king meant, for me, finally coming face-to-face with the man I'd invested four years searching for. The experience was breathtaking -- one of the most overwhelming moments of my life. I wasn't alone in finding this an approachable, kindly face, almost inviting conversation. Perhaps I may be forgiven for adding a personal impression of loyalty and steadfastness, someone

seemingly capable of deep thought. An entirely new interpretation, but to me, instantly recognisable for who he was. You must make up your own mind, but I can only say I was transfixed.”

Philippa Langley, Originator of the ‘Looking for Richard ’ project

The facial reconstruction will eventually be loaned to Leicester City Council to be displayed in their planned visitors centre adjacent to the Greyfriars site. The centre will be dedicated to telling the story of King Richard III’s life and death.

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.

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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, we publish 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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