

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



UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 16.00 SUNDAY 22 MARCH

RICHARD III: THE WARRIOR KING

- **Dr Phil Stone's address at the Service of Remembrance to mark the Death, Discovery and Re-interment of King Richard III at the Sundial Memorial, Bosworth on 22 March**

To be successful, a medieval king needed to be a warrior and, in the House of York, this was never more true than with Edward IV and Richard III.

Writing to his master, Angelo Cato, Archbishop of Vienne, in 1483, shortly before the death of Edward IV, the Italian, Dominic Mancini, wrote of Richard of Gloucester, soon to be King Richard III, "Such was his renown in warfare that, whenever a difficult or dangerous policy had to be undertaken, it would be entrusted to his discretion and his generalship."

Richard's early military training followed the usual pattern for someone of his status and, at the age of nine, he joined the household of his cousin, Richard, earl of Warwick. We know that in later life, he owned a copy of 'De re militari' by Vegetius, the military textbook of the day.

At the age of seventeen, Richard was given his first independent command, and such was his expertise that, a year later, he was entrusted with commanding a wing of Edward's armies at the battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury.

Edward IV gave his young brother great responsibility in the north of England and, in 1482, when relations with the Scots broke down, Richard led an invasion, recapturing Berwick-upon-Tweed, which has remained English ever since.

Richard was a successful general, winning all his major military engagements except one, the last, fought a few miles from where we are now.

King Richard believed in chivalric values and had great concern for those who died fighting with and for him. He endowed Queens' College, Cambridge, with priests to pray for their souls. That we have a College of Arms today can be traced back in part to him. He gave the heralds a charter of incorporation and provided them with a home. All was revoked by his successor, but the heralds have never forgotten their early benefactor.

The achievements of his short reign have been overshadowed by historical myths and Shakespeare's monster, but these achievements were real and had lasting impact. His legal reforms continued long after his death, with some still embedded in our laws today. He developed an early form of Legal Aid, which provided support for those unable to afford lawyers.

As king of England, Richard III was the first to use English to swear his coronation oath and to record acts of parliament. He stressed that his laws were to be administered without delay or favour. His only parliament was notable for legislation which helped the lower classes as much as the gentry and merchants. He did much to promote the embryonic book trade.

But, of course, it all ended on that fatal day in August 1485. There are several contemporary accounts of the battle we now call Bosworth and all agree that King Richard fought courageously. Far from calling for a horse, he fought on to the very end and fell fighting on the field. He was the last king of England to die in battle, his defeat due mainly to bad luck and a misplaced trust in some of his more treacherous allies.

We are here today to honour Richard III but, as we do, let us remember all who fell on that August morning. For many, their names are lost but they would have been fathers, husbands, brothers and, certainly, they were all somebody's son.

As we begin a week of commemoration during which his mortal remains will be reinterred with honour in Leicester Cathedral, let us remember Richard III, king of England and France and lord of Ireland, as a man of integrity, a man who cared for his subjects and those who had his trust.

Let us remember Richard III, the good king, the warrior king.

-ENDS-

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*.

Visit: www.richardiii.net

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The reinterment of King Richard III – with dignity, honour and solemnity