

Hunt for Richard III: woman's skeleton found by archaeologists

Mystery surrounds the identity of a woman's skeleton found by archaeologists searching for the remains of King Richard III.



Richard III had plans for burial with much ceremonial in York Minster Photo: ALAMY

By [Telegraph reporters](#) 30 Oct 2012

The team carrying out the dig under the car park in Leicester city centre, which is thought to have been the site of the monarch's last resting place at the Church of Grey Friars, are examining the second set of remains.

Mathew Morris, from the University of Leicester Archaeological Services, said the identity of the woman may never be uncovered.

"We know of at least one woman connected with the friary, Ellen Luenor, a possible benefactor and founder with her husband, Gilbert," he said.

"However, the friary would have administered to the poor, sick and homeless as well, and without knowing where Ellen Luenor had been originally buried we are unlikely to ever know who the remains are of, or why she was buried there."

Researchers are carrying out rigorous laboratory tests on the second set of remains.

The team is also analysing another set of human bones, believed to belong to Richard III, the last Plantagenet king, who was killed at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485.

It was the site of the last major clash of the War of the Roses, fought between the Houses of Lancaster and York.

Archaeologists discovered the remains in what is thought to be the choir of the Grey Friars church, which is suggested in historical records to be the spot where the monarch was buried.

The skeleton has apparent battle wounds and curvature of the spine, researchers said.

A spokesman added: "The university has made it clear that it is not saying it has found Richard III - rather that the skeleton has characteristics that warrant extensive further detailed examination and that the search has moved from an archaeological to a laboratory phase."

The bones caused a row between MPs in the Commons last week - with a handful vying for them to be housed in their constituencies.

Labour MP John Mann (Bassetlaw), Labour colleague Jon Ashworth (Leicester South) and Labour's Hugh Bayley (York Central) openly bid for the monarch's remains - if tests prove they are his.

However justice minister Helen Grant said the skeleton would be interred at Leicester Cathedral if tests proved positive.

The University of Leicester, in association with Leicester City Council and the Richard III Society, is leading the Search for Richard III.

DNA results on the bones are being compared to that of living descendants of Richard's eldest sister, Anne of York.

The outcome of the investigation is expected in January.