

# Factsheet

## Richard III - Monstrous Monarch?

Richard Plantagenet was born on 2 October 1452 at Fotheringhay Castle, Northamptonshire. He married Anne Neville some time after Easter 1472 and she bore him a son, Edward, who died in 1484. On 26 June 1483 Richard received a petition from Parliament to take the throne of England and become Richard III. He died on 22 August in battle near Market Bosworth, Leicestershire following defeat at the hands of Henry Tudor, soon to be Henry VII. He was 32 when he died.

- Controversy surrounding Richard III started even in his lifetime. The Chancellor of France said: "Look what has happened in England since the death of King Edward; how his children already big and courageous, have been put to death with impunity and the royal crown transferred to their murderer".
- Richard III's most infamous alleged crime was the murder of his nephews, the deposed Edward V and his brother Richard of York. Since there is no real proof of the crime, a healthy debate still exists as to his involvement. The Richard III Society and Fellowship of the White Boar are convinced he is innocent.
- The one certainty about all this is that the two princes were taken to the Tower in 1483, some time between April and June. They were never seen again outside the Tower and Richard became King at the end of June.
- In 1677 Francis Sandford wrote 'A Genealogical History of the Kings and Queens of England'. In it he describes the discovery in 1674 of bones at the Tower, "Some men were digging down the stairs which led from the King's lodgings to the Chapel in the Tower. Suddenly they found the bones of two youngsters in a wooden chest about 10 feet underground... Presuming that these are the bones of the princes, King Charles II ordered that the bones should be put in a marble urn and placed in the Chapel of King Henry VII in Westminster Abbey".

- Writers under the Tudor dynasty are largely responsible for the exaggerated tales of his supposedly evil character. It reached its pinnacle in the history plays of Shakespeare where Richard is portrayed with a twisted body and mind committing a variety of heinous crimes in the space of a few weeks. In fact the events contained in the play would have taken place over a period of some 14 years.
- Was Richard III deformed? Even this is doubted as no one appeared to notice it when he was alive. Additionally, x-radiography has clearly demonstrated that one of his early portraits was at some time over-painted so that his level shoulders were made crooked!
- Search under his name on the internet and a whole range of amazing pages on the subject will provide hours of fun!