



DEVON & EXETER
I N S T I T U T I O N

Press Release

The Devon and Exeter Institution

For immediate publication

Richard III in Exeter: 9th – 13th November 1483

An Event hosted by the Devon & Exeter Institution, Saturday 18th June 2016 (Sold out)

King Richard arrived in Exeter in the second week of November at the end of three weeks during which he had faced a serious challenge to his occupation of the throne led by many former adherents of his brother Edward IV – whose son, the eldest of the so-called ‘Princes in the Tower’, had been declared illegitimate and whose fate is one of history’s greatest mysteries. Exeter was briefly a center of the rebellion with the bishop, Peter Courtenay, and Richard’s brother-in-law, Thomas St Leger amongst the leaders in the South West.

As resistance to Richard’s rule collapsed, Courtenay fled westwards, ultimately to reach safety in Brittany where Henry Tudor, the future Henry VII, was in exile. St Leger seems to have stayed behind trusting in Richard’s mercy but was quickly disabused. Tried in the Guildhall along with several others, he was beheaded in the king’s presence, probably within the castle.

We don’t know where Richard stayed during his four nights in Exeter but it is more than likely that he used the bishop’s palace. He would certainly have attended mass in the cathedral and might well have visited other religious houses in the city, including St Nicholas Priory in the Mint and the Dominican friary which stood where Debenhams is now.

As is well known, the Richard III Society exists to re-examine the facts about Richard’s life and to correct the historical record where necessary. With the rediscovery of his remains in Leicester membership of the Society has grown considerably and several members of the Devon & Exeter Institution are also Ricardians.

In September last year the two organisations came together for a day to celebrate King Richard’s stay in Exeter and in June they will come together again for a further study day, devoted to the religious life of Exeter in Richard’s time. Those attending the event will hear from archaeologists John Allan and Richard Parker, be able to see a selection of 15th Century documents from the Cathedral Archives, and in the afternoon visit sites in the city where evidence of Richard’s world survives. Further events are planned.

Bill Leedham

Event organiser

Notes to Editors

About The Devon and Exeter Institution

Founded in 1813, the DEI is a product of the Eighteenth Century Enlightenment and civic pride.

The founding vision was to promote

“the general diffusion of Science, Literature and the Arts; and for illustrating the Natural and Civil History of the County of Devon, and the History of the City of Exeter”.

The Institution occupies historic premises at the heart of Exeter in the Cathedral Close. Adapted from what was once a medieval house belonging to a canon of the Cathedral, the library of the Institution is housed in two elegant Georgian rooms which provide space for individual research and for cultural events, lectures and musical evenings. There are also two smaller meeting rooms enjoying beautiful views of the Cathedral and a popular restaurant.

The Institution is cherished by members and visitors alike for its calm and peaceful atmosphere in the midst of a busy city. Many scholarly books and articles have had their origins in its quiet spaces and a number of leading academics acknowledge the part the Institution has played in the early stages of their careers.

Further information

www.devonandexeterinstitution.org

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