

22nd August 1485 – Early Morning

Cannoballs hurtled through air. Arrows arced into the sky, then screamed into armour, flesh and bone. Foot-soldiers advanced, killing and maiming with sword or poll-axe, battle-lines blurring into a mass of fighting, desperate men. Suddenly, audible above the screeching clash of weapons, shouted orders, curses and screams, came the sound of hooves – hundreds of them, perhaps more – drumming on sun-hardened ground. Maybe the foot-soldiers paused, mid-combat, to watch the nerve-jangling, thrilling onrush of highly trained horses and armoured knights. At their head, now at full gallop, rode King Richard III, his banner displaying the royal Cross of St George and his personal badge, the white boar.

CRASH! Richard and his knights careered into the bodyguard of their enemy, Henry Tudor. Richard's own lance killed William Brandon, Henry's standard-bearer. John Cheney, a 'giant of a man', blocked Richard's path but was hurled to the ground. A few seconds more and Henry would be dead or a prisoner and then...

And then Richard and his knights realised they too were under attack as a third force charged in to defend Henry. Suddenly Henry was surrounded by protectors and out of reach of Richard. Now it was Richard fighting for his life. Around him his knights were isolated and killed – his long-time friend, Robert Percy, his close advisers, Richard Ratcliffe and Robert Brackenbury, and other northern supporters. Then Richard himself was dragged or knocked from his horse. No surrender. No mercy. The thrust of a dagger or a crushing blow from a poll-axe ended the life of Richard III.

And far away from the battlefield, families waited, not knowing if they would ever see husbands, fathers or sons alive again. The battle of Bosworth did not simply add a new name to the list of English kings. It transformed the lives of wives, mothers, sons and daughters, friends and lovers – and ended the lives of those left lying in the bloody dust of the battlefield.

Task 1:

Research 5 weapons mentioned in the passage above and write 2 sentences about each – ensure they are from the late medieval period please. (Pictures are welcome!)

Task 2:

Read the attached article on Henry VI. Using the information gathered you are to write a paragraph about what character from TV/film/books best represents him and why.