

The discovery of the grave of King Richard III underneath a council car park in Leicester is one of the most extraordinary stories of recent times.

The king’s death in the War of the Roses changed the course of British history and his body was thought to have been lost for good until archeologists excavated the site in 2012.

The story culminates next week with a series of events to mark the king’s life and death ending in a formal reburial service on Thursday 26 March.

A cortege will transport Richard’s remains past Bosworth Field, the site where he fell at the hands of Henry Tudor’s armies, and then on to Leicester Cathedral for the ceremony.

HLF are playing our part. We’ve given a grant of £94,000 to help ensure as many people as possible can find out about the reburial when they visit the Cathedral in the future. The money has paid for information boards, a guide book and to train volunteers to provide regular guided tours. A new exhibition space will be created telling the story of the life and death of this once lost king and reflecting on how the politics, history and faith of his times are relevant for us today.

It’s sure to be a week that will live long in the memory of the people of Leicester as the eyes of the world turn to their city. Beyond the reburial service, HLF’s investment in the new exhibition space will help attract more people to Leicester in future.

This is just one of the ways that heritage is being used to regenerate the city, helped by National Lottery funding. The Old Town area around the Cathedral, where Richard's remains were found, has benefitted from a £1.1million HLF grant to restore over 20 historic buildings. The exact location of the Bosworth Battlefield itself was discovered as part of an HLF-funded scheme which also rejuvenated the heritage centre at the site. Nearly 50,000 people now visit every year.

Vanessa Harbar, Head of HLF East Midlands, said the new exhibition will help "us to reflect on a tumultuous period in our history and what it means for our own times".