



The Main Feature

Season 43 – Issue 5 – Screening 9 November 2023

The Lost King

UK 2022

109 mins. Certificate 12

Director

Stephen Frears

Screenplay

Steve Coogan and Jeff
Pope, based on the book
by Philippa Langley and
Michael Jones

Cinematography

Zac Nicholson

Music

Alexandre Desplat

Cast

Sally Hawkins

Philippa Langley

Shonagh Price

Kelly

Helen Katamba

Awusi

Lewis Macleod

Tony

Steve Coogan

John Langley

Harry Lloyd

Richard III/Pete



On the whole, Richard III (1452 – 85) gets a bad press, especially when you consider he was on the throne for just 26 months. The chronicler John Rous described him as coming into the world after two years in the womb, with teeth, long hair to his shoulders, a humped back, and his right shoulder higher than his left. And there was his usurpation of the throne, as well as the nasty business of the Princes in the Tower where Richard's responsibility for their disappearance is still contested. His reign was 'short and unhappy' according to M H Keen, who also judged 'had it not been for the manner in which he seized the throne, he might have been a successful king'. But, say others, all this is Tudor propaganda. The Richard III Society, which features in tonight's film, argues that he was not a wicked tyrant and has details on Richard and the Wars of the Roses on its website to prove it (<https://www.warsoftheroses.com/>).

The Lost King follows the story of Philippa Langley (Sally Hawkins) who believes Richard III has been unjustly treated in history and literature. She thinks his Tudor enemies took away not just his life, but also his good name; they left his grave in obscurity marked only with a mean memorial; then at the Dissolution the house of religion in which he lay was destroyed. And in later years disparaging stories were spread that Richard's bones had been thrown into the River

Soar. Philippa Langley was convinced that Richard's grave had not been desecrated during the dissolution of the monastery, and that his remains were waiting to be discovered.



The film is based on this real story, and presents Philippa Langley as the underdog, fighting against unbelief and convention, especially in the University of Leicester.

So far, so good. But the film ran into controversy when one of the characters, Richard Taylor, former deputy registrar at the university, told the BBC¹ he had felt 'absolutely shell-shocked' by the way he was portrayed.

He said: 'I think the film is inaccurate, and I think the writers have been very reckless in how they've put it together. Anybody who knows me knows my integrity is important to me. There are lots of people I have to work with who don't know me - what are they to think, seeing a film like that?'

Mr Taylor said the film-makers had not sought to speak to him at any point. 'The film is littered with inaccuracies. It makes up a scene where I mimic Richard III's disability, and have to be told by Philippa that it's wrong to equate physical characteristics with evilness. That is the most hurtful personally and the most damaging reputationally. It is not true; it did not take place. I'd hoped my concerns would have chimed with Steve Coogan [who co-wrote the screenplay], who had his privacy invaded by newspapers over phone hacking. To see him on the other side of the fence now, doing this to me is quite frustrating. I feel kind of powerless in the way Steve would have felt.'

Mr Taylor said he had sought to engage with the producers to get changes - including the removal of one scene and a note added to the credits that the character is not based on him - but had been refused. 'I'm trying to be reasonable. I've tried to offer a way to bring this to a conclusion where they make some small changes. I have sought to engage in good faith with the producers to gain changes, but have been refused. Legal action is now likely.'

And indeed, it appears to be proceeding. According to the Sun newspaper last month², 'Mr Taylor is suing [Steve Coogan] for defamation; and is also suing Pathe Productions and Baby Cow Productions for High Court damages.'

Presumably, the Court will need to determine the difference between a fictional film, even one based on real events, and a documentary. No doubt the film makers will argue that they have artistic licence to make a coherent and compelling story. But do we really need the courts to decide the issue?

Michael Hipkins



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Club website: www.wncc.org.uk. Prefer to leave your comments on the film and your score online rather than on paper? Email to reactions@wncc.org.uk by Wednesday 15 November 2023

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-62833429>

² <https://www.thesun.co.uk/tvandshowbiz/24224337/steve-coogan-sued-leicester-university-lecturer-lost-king/>

Terence Davies: screenwriter and film director dies aged 77

British screenwriter and director Terence Davies, known for films including *Distant Voices*, *Still Lives*, has died at the age of 77.

He established himself with a trilogy of films - *Children*, *Madonna and Child*, and *Death and Transfiguration* - in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Born and raised in Liverpool, his work often has an autobiographical element.

He died peacefully at home after short illness, his manager confirmed in a statement.

His most recent work, Netflix drama *Benediction*, starring *Slow Horses* actor Jack Lowden and *Doctor Who*'s Peter Capaldi, explored the life of war poet Siegfried Sassoon.

Actress Agyness Deyn played Chris Guthrie in his 2015 adaptation of Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Sunset Song* - set after the first World War. In 2016, *Sex and The City* star Cynthia Nixon played poet Emily Dickinson in *A Quiet*

Passion, which was written and directed by Davies.

Davies worked as a clerk in a shipping office and a book-keeper in an accountancy firm for 10 years before enrolling at drama school in Coventry in 1973.

He won the Cannes International Critics Prize for *Distant Voices, Still Lives* - a film based on his memories of life in 1940s and 1950s Liverpool.

Davies also spoke to the BBC about the film being one of his most personal as it was about his family, during an episode of review show, Film 102, hosted by Claudia Winkleman.

His other films include a 2000 adaptation of Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*, in which Sex Education star Gillian Anderson played socialite Lily Bart, and a 2011 adaptation of Terence Rattigan's play *The Deep Blue Sea*, starring Rachel Weisz.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-67041682>

A mobile cinema that has been in operation for 25 years is at risk of closing.

The Screen Machine, a lorry with a small cinema inside its trailer, tours the Highlands and Islands, Argyll and Bute and North Ayrshire. The service's purpose-built vehicle is out of action due to breakdowns. A replacement has been leased until early next year, but there is no funding in place to continue the service beyond then.

Regional Screen Scotland, which operates the service, said a new mobile cinema would cost at least £1.4m and take up to 18 months to build. Fiona Fowler, of Regional Screen Scotland, said some communities were already missing out because the leased vehicle could not be transported to seven islands, including Cumbrae and Jura.

She said there were concerns about what would happen once the lease ran out in

April, adding: "With nothing in the pipeline we will be forced into winding the service down."

Bafta-winning film and TV director Robin Haig grew up with the service while living in Dornie in the Highlands. She said: "Not having the Screen Machine would be like not having your loved family member come to visit. It provides so much warmth and spirit and gives you the chance to laugh and cry together."

Customers have been asked to lobby MSPs to help secure funding for a new mobile cinema. The Scottish government said there was significant pressure on the funding of cultural organisations, but that it was working closely with the sector. A spokesman said: "The Scottish government

values the importance of our cultural organisations and their contribution to the wellbeing of the country to promote the arts, provide employment and engage with communities across Scotland."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-66739260>

Comments and reactions to: **Rams**

No of reaction slips received = 25

Average score = 6.40

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	~	~	~	1	2	2	6	9	5	~	~

Bleak and unpleasant

Sad but true. Vegan's delight!

Really enjoyed the short – thank you for finding it. In the end, we saw brotherly love

Rather more drama than comedy; and some parallels with The Banshees of Inisherin

I enjoyed the film. Unfortunately, I didn't catch some of the dialogue which spoilt the film slightly for me

Seen on TV. Brotherly love wins

Very entertaining, loved the characters. Something very different

Good performances and the sheep were excellent. Difficult situation well handled

Very relieved that no-one cut off their fingers this time. Gripping from start to finish

A slow part in the middle

Position	Film	Average score
1	Mrs Harris Goes to Paris	7.58
2	The Banshees of Inisherin	7.06
3	Rams	6.40
4	Three Colours: Blue	6.18

Forthcoming attraction: 23 November 2023 – **Decision to Leave**



Decision to Leave is a gleaming treat for anyone who likes to see policemen being bamboozled and befuddled by enigmatic women. BBC

The tale of an insomniac, married cop falling hard for a seeming femme fatale is not so much told in a narrative sense as elaborated through a lengthy suite of quick-fire scenes and artfully designed imagery; precise meanings and significations remain deliberately elusive until the tragic ending. BFI

Decision to Leave is less a whodunit than a whydunit: Although we learn the identity of the perpetrator, we are not privy to that person's reasoning. Los Angeles Times