



The Mortimer History Society

Newsletter-November 2013

PRESIDENTS: Carol & John Challis, Dr Paul Dryburgh, Dr Ian Mortimer

ACTING CHAIRMAN: Jason O'Keefe

DEPUTY CHAIRMEN: Dr Martin Toms (also membership secretary) and Paul Remfry

SECRETARY: John Atkinson

MHS JOURNAL EDITORS: Dr Paul Dryburgh and Helen Watt

WEBMASTER: Hugh Wood

COMMITTEE 2013: John Fleming, Yve James, Stella Mason



Heraldry Study Day, Ludlow.

MHS members were led gently and clearly through the intricacies and Norman French language of heraldry at an excellent Study Day in Ludlow at the Mascall Centre, a Victorian school adapted into a community centre.

Picture: Hugh Wood giving his talk

In his introduction, Peter Crocker said that heraldry had emerged during the 12th century to identify each particular knight during jousting and on the battlefield. Also, as most men of that era were illiterate, coats of arms on seals were used to authenticate charters and other documents. Coats of arms continued to identify 'one man one coat' and developed into hereditary emblems that belonged to each dynastic group.

Based on immaculate course notes, Hugh Wood and Peter Crocker gave examples of many coats of arms, teaching us how to describe (blazon) details, colours, pictures, shapes and patterns using specific words in a specific order. Peter showed us the ways in which heraldic coats were *differenced* from each other when families were connected by feudal ties and went on to discuss *cadency* where each man differenced his arms from those of his immediate family. Hugh then showed how different coats of arms were *marshalled* together in one display leading to a formalised system of impalement, inescutcheons and quartering.

In the next part of the day, Hugh showed us pictures of some of the 120 or so variations of the Mortimer shield. The MHS Heraldry group hope to search for more and try to answer many questions raised concerning the numerous slightly different Mortimer coats of arms. To end the interesting day, the group went to St Laurence's Church up the road from

the Centre in Ludlow and, using a self-guiding 'treasure hunt', walked around the church searching out and trying to 'blazon' the coats of arms – in stained glass windows, on tombs and memorials. The Great West window includes stained glass pictures and shields of Roger Mortimer, 1st Earl of March, Edmund the Good, 3rd Earl, Richard Earl of Cambridge who married the last Mortimer heir, Anne, and his grandson Edward IV and great grandson Edward V one of the *princes in the tower*.

Report of the MHS Dress & Textile Group

The Blanche Mortimer Dress Project is almost at an end, and we hope the mannequin and dress display will be part of the celebrations when Blanche's tomb is fully restored and returned to its place in St Bartholomew's Church, Much Marcle. All through the summer 2013, the re-created Blanche dress has appeared at illustrated talks and displays all over the area. This included a talk at 'Hellens' Much Marcle to 50 Friends of the Bristol Museums, and on a lovely, very hot Saturday in Wigmore Church, where, along with the Blanche display, the children made tabards and wimples, and visitors walked slowly up the hill in the heat to visit Wigmore Castle.

Blanche the Dress spent 10 days in the King Edward Gallery at Berkeley Castle, Gloucestershire, when nearly 2000 people saw her. Blanche's sister Margaret was married to Thomas Berkeley, who was probably involved with Roger Mortimer in the murder of King Edward II at Berkeley in 1327. At the end of September, Blanche spent two weeks in the library at Hampton Court Castle, Hope-under-Dinmore, when almost 1000 people saw her, including those who came to the special Coningsby weekend.

In September, the Dress & Textile Group revisited the fine medieval effigies in St Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny. One of the tombs is that of Sir Laurence de Hastings, who was married to Agnes Mortimer, another of Blanche's sisters. Laurence was captured by the French in the Battle of La Rochelle in 1344 and died two years later in a Picardy prison. Agnes and Laurence's son and heir John de Hastings was born whilst his father was imprisoned.

Committee Members Needed

The Society is run by a group of enthusiastic committee members who all wish to see the society grow, to organise bigger and better conferences, more field visits and to find out all that they can about The Mortimer Family and its illustrious history.

We are currently looking to expand the number of committee members and we would ask that if anyone within the membership is interested in joining us to please get in contact. We are based in and around The Marches and hold 3 or 4 committee meetings each year, however there are a couple of opportunities for members from further afield to be involved so don't let distance put you off.

Dates for your diary

Saturday 8th March 2014

AGM

Pembridge - a Mortimer village!

Roger Mortimer 1st Earl of March was married to Joan de Geneville in Pembridge church in 1301. Following our AGM, Duncan James will give a talk about Pembridge and lead a tour of the church and village.

Saturday 17th May 2014

Spring Conference – Britain & Ireland: Conquest and Colonisation

The theme of our Spring Conference which will include sessions on the Mortimers in Ireland. It will act as a curtain-raiser for our trip to Trim Castle in October and a projected visit to Normandy in 2015. More details later.

Saturday 19 July 2014

Visit to Stapleton Castle, Presteigne, courtesy of Trefor Griffiths

Saturday 17th-20th October 2014

Visit to Ireland

An exciting opportunity to visit Trim Castle. Built by the de Lacys before passing by marriage to the Genevilles and then to the Mortimers. More details to follow in due course.

Two new booklets are now available

'Some Medieval Effigies at St Mary's Priory, Abergavenny'

A new leaflet on these effigies with pictures and details of *who's who*
£2 inc. postage

Blanche Mortimer Dress Project Report.

A full report of the Blanche Mortimer Dress Project which includes details of how the dress was researched and made. It also includes family trees of the 14th century Mortimers and Grandisons.
£4.50 inc. postage

Both booklets available from Margot Miller, 6 Fairfield Green, Fownhope HR1 4NL.
Cheques to Margot Miller, email: margotmiller@live.co.uk

Our presence is gradually spreading through the use of Facebook and Twitter so please join us on Facebook and Twitter if you don't already and join in with the conversations.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/156236424461761/>

Twitter: @mortimerhistory