



## NEWSLETTER 17

July 2014

*This newsletter contains links to information and articles on the website. Hard copies of these individual articles are available for members who do not have internet access. Ring Hugh Wood on 01584 876901*

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### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

#### **Saturday 16th August - Revised visit to Stapleton Castle**

*We apologise for postponing the event planned for 19th July but uncertainty about the weather and the implications for catering made it necessary. We have decided to change the format to an afternoon event with tea.*

Stapleton Castle was originally built during the 12th century. It came into the ownership of Robert Mortimer of Essex, founder of the Richards Castle Mortimer line, when he became the third husband of Margaret Say in 1210. The Castle was 'slighted' in 1643 to avoid it being used by the Parliamentarians.

The visit includes a tour of Stapleton Castle with Trefor Griffiths, the castle's owner and an MHS member. This will be followed by afternoon tea and a chance to wander around his beautiful garden. The postcode for Stapleton Castle is LD8 2LS. Meet 2.30pm. Cost: £7.50 for members (£10 for non-members). For reasons of catering it is essential to reserve your place. Please contact: Stella Mason on 01584 810505 or by emailing [stellamason1@btinternet.com](mailto:stellamason1@btinternet.com)

#### **Saturday 6th September - Mortimer Heritage in the Welsh Borders**

A fairly energetic field trip taking in the Mortimer castles of Knucklas and Huntington and visiting the ancient church at Old Radnor. A day for active Mortimer enthusiasts, for all who love exploring old castles and for anyone interested in heraldry. In Old Radnor church is an incised floor slab supposedly commemorating Hugh Mortimer, brother of Roger Mortimer, Earl of March who was Rector of Old Radnor.

The church also boasts an excellent collection of 18th and 19th century heraldic funeral hatchments. [NB Old Radnor is not to be confused with New Radnor nearby, to which Paul Remfry led a field trip in 2011].

Travel is by private vehicles; bring a picnic or have a light meal at the Harp Inn at Old Radnor. There is no charge but we hope participants will donate £5 a head to the Knucklas Castle Community Land Project.

Leader: Hugh Wood (whose main interest is in heraldry but who'll mug up on the castles!).

If you are interested in coming, contact Hugh on 01584 876901 or at [hugh@hughanddoris.co.uk](mailto:hugh@hughanddoris.co.uk) for full directions.

### ***Itinerary***

*Knucklas is in Powys, 2-3 miles north-west of Knighton on the B4355*

The construction of Knucklas Castle appears to have been supervised by the young Roger Mortimer (d1282) on behalf of his father Ralph (d1246).

MHS Member Janet Lewis will meet us at Knucklas and introduce us to the Knucklas Castle Community Land Project. After showing us the newly created orchard and allotments, she will lead us on the ascent to the castle. This is a steep climb, only suitable for the able-bodied with good footwear. The climb is worth it, however, as there are stunning views from the atmospheric castle site.



*Old Radnor is in Powys about 12 miles south of Knucklas*

This church is situated high above the valley floor with excellent views. Apart from the ancient inscribed tomb slab, the church has much else of interest. In particular there are 18th-19th century funeral hatchments relating to the local family of Lewis of Harpton Court and to the Cornwall, Antrobus and Duff-Gordon baronetcies. There is also a most interesting link to the sinking of the Titanic!



*Huntington is in Herefordshire on the border with Powys, 6 miles south of Old Radnor*

After the execution of 'Black' William de Braose in 1227, his castle of Huntington, with many other holdings, was awarded to the Bohuns but contested by the Mortimers. In 1263 Prince Edward (later Edward I) awarded it to Roger Mortimer (d1282) along with Brecon and Hay castles, causing great dissatisfaction to the Bohuns and thereby contributing to the start of the Barons Wars.

Though well hidden away, this castle is close to the road. Access is relatively easy but the site is rather overgrown. Good footwear and nettle-proof trousers are advisable.



## **Saturday 4th October - Richard III, Ludlow and the House of York**

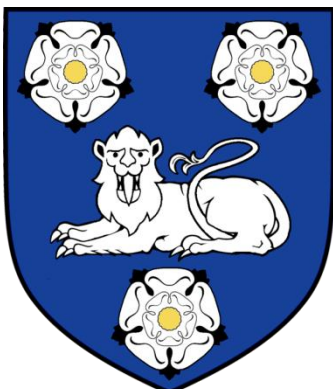
A day conference organised by the Conservation Trust for St Laurence, Ludlow in association with the Mortimer History Society.



Image of Richard III reconstructed from his remains found at Leicester



Ludlow Castle



Coat of arms of Ludlow with the white rose of York and the lion of Mortimer

### **Programme**

- *The Wars of the Roses and the Yorkist Kings*  
Michael Hicks (Prof. of Medieval History, University of Winchester)
- *The Mortimer Earls of March and the House of York*  
John Grove (Founder of the Mortimer History Society)
- *Armour and Weapons during the Wars of the Roses*  
William West (Englyshe Plate Armourie)
- *Shakespeare and the Remains of Richard III*  
Philip Schwyzer (Prof. of Renaissance Literature, Exeter University)
- *Music for the Plantagenet Kings*  
Sebastian & Vickie Field (*Sine Nomine*) and Jessica Bruno (lute)
- *Ludford Bridge avenged: the Battle of Mortimer's Cross 1461*  
John Barratt (Ludlow Historical Research Group)

### **Choice of Tours or Discussion Panel**

- *Medieval Ludlow and the scene of the Battle of Ludford Bridge 1459*  
Clive Richardson (Ludlow Historical Research Group)
- *The 15th century History and Architecture of St Laurence's Church*  
Shaun Ward (Clerk of Works, St Laurence's)
- *The Heraldry of the Mortimers and the Yorkists in St Laurence's*  
Hugh Wood (Conservation Trust and the Mortimer History Society)
- *Discussion Panel*  
K E Martin (books, novels & biographies on Richard III)  
Amy Licence (Anne Neville and Cecily Neville)  
Susan Fern (The man who killed Richard III)

### **Details**

Venue - Ludlow Assembly Rooms

Timing - 9.00 to 5.00

Lunch - participants make their own arrangements

Price - £35 (NB £45 combined ticket including evening concert)

Booking - Ludlow Assembly Rooms in person or click [here](#)

### **Music From the Age of Richard III**

At 7.30 - after the conference - in St Laurence's church, performed by *Sine Nomine* with a narrator who will set the music within the context of the War of the Roses and the life and death of Richard III.

Price - £15 (Combined ticket £45)

Tickets through Ludlow Assembly Rooms in person or online, or on the door.

### **17th-20th October - Visit to Dublin and the Mortimer Castle of Trim**

Two places have become available. If interested contact Stella Mason (stellamason1@btinternet.com or 01584 810505)

Click [here](#) for more details

### **RECENT EVENTS**

#### **Spring Conference - Britain & Ireland 1200-1500: Conquest and Colonisation**



Colin Veach, Beth Hartland, Ian Mortimer, Jessica Lutkin, Paul Drybugh & Brendan Smith

#### ***Session 1***

##### **Dr Brendan Smith (University of Bristol) - The Mortimer Family and Medieval Ireland**

The Mortimers of Wigmore first acquired estates in Ireland when Roger Mortimer (d1282) married Matilda de Braose, the granddaughter of William Marshal. The first Lord of Wigmore to actually visit Ireland, however, was Roger's grandson Roger, later 1st Earl of March (d1330). In 1308 he acquired substantial holdings in Ireland, notably in Meath, through his marriage to Joan de Geneville. All the later Earls of March were involved in Ireland to a greater or lesser extent, yet over the whole period from 1347 to 1425, there was a Lord of Wigmore present in Ireland for only about 10 years. Read the report of Brendan's talk [here](#)

#### ***Session 2***

##### **Dr Colin Veach (University of Hull) - The Lacys and the Conquest of Ireland**

In 1172, at the end of a very powerful and successful excursion to Ireland, King Henry II transformed the fortunes of the Lacys in Ireland by awarding the substantial county of Meath to Hugh de Lacy. The king did this for good defensive reasons. Lying just beyond the vitally important city of Dublin it was needed as a buffer zone to protect the north side of Dublin against incursions by the Irish. Dr Veach described the way Hugh de Lacy set about the task of transforming this part of Ireland into a modern Norman state like those in England and France. Read the report of Dr Veach's talk [here](#)

#### ***Session 3***

##### **Dr Beth Hartland (Victoria County History) - Geoffrey de Geneville: one man, two kings & three countries**

A younger son from the Champagne region of France, Geoffrey came to the English court as one of the Savoyards, in the wake of Henry III's queen, Eleanor of Provence. He acquired Meath in Ireland through his marriage to the heiress Matilda de Lacy and was a trusted courtier and diplomat, undertaking international assignments on behalf of his monarch well into old age. See the report of Dr Hartland's talk [here](#)

## Session 4

### Dr Jessica Lutkin (University of York) - England's Immigrants 1330-1550: The Irish Immigrants

Dr Lutkin described the *England's Immigrants* project in some detail. The main information about Irish immigrants comes from the alien subsidies, a tax imposed on aliens in the 1400s to control trade and employment. The quality of the records is variable, depending on the professionalism of those recording and the area coverage is rather patchy, but useful information has emerged. It is clear that the majority of Irish immigrants in 1394 were either professionals (including clerics) or craftsmen rather than unskilled navvies. Read the report of Dr Lutkin's talk [here](#)

### Using History for Fact and Fiction - A day workshop

What is the line that divides fact from fiction? Writing biography and history – how to choose what is closer to what really happened? Are historical facts really solid and provable? These were some of the discussion points at an interesting study day at Ludlow in June. The day was led by MHS member Fran Norton and by Ina Taylor. Fran is now writing her third historical novel. Her first book, called *In the Shadow of a Tainted Crown*, was published by Ellingham Press in 2010. Set mainly in Ludlow, it is a story about Roger Mortimer and Queen Isabella at the turn of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. For a fuller report click [here](#)

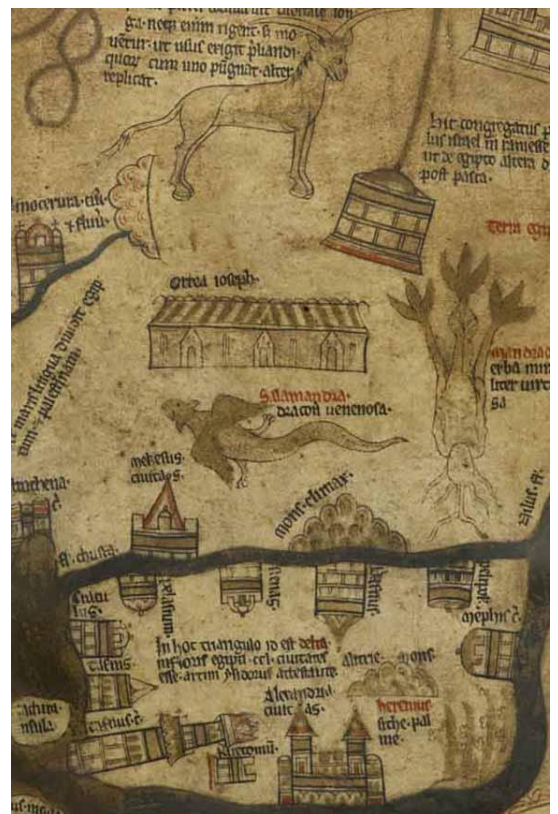
## NEW ARTICLES ON THE WEBSITE

To access these articles, first log on to the website and then go to the 'Articles' tab.

- *Roger de Mortemer (active 1054-1078)*  
by MHS member Ben Baillie
- *The Secret Life of Blanche Mortimer (1315-1347)*  
by MHS Founder John Grove (see article below)
- *The Mortimers of Scotland*  
by MHS member Dr John Mortimer
- *The Hereford 'Mappa Mundi'*  
by MHS member Andrew Bent

and fuller reports on the four papers given at the Spring conference.

- *The Mortimer Family and Medieval Ireland*  
by Dr Brendan Smith
- *The Lacys and the Conquest of Ireland*  
by Dr Colin Veach
- *Geoffrey de Geneville: one man, two kings & three countries*  
by Dr Beth Hartland
- *England's Immigrants 1330-1550: The Irish Immigrants*  
by Dr Jessica Lutkin



Detail of the *Mappa Mundi* by kind permission of the Hereford Mappa Mundi Trust and the Dean and Chapter of Hereford Cathedral

## AN APPEAL FOR HELP

Stella Mason is looking for someone to help her with the administration of events and activities. It is not necessary to join the committee. If you can spare some time to help us, please ring Stella on 01584 810505 or email [stellamason1@btinternet.com](mailto:stellamason1@btinternet.com).

## CELEBRATING BLANCHE MORTIMER'S RESTORATION



MHS Chairman, Jason O'Keefe and MHS Founder, John Grove in front of Blanche's tomb

There was a splendid reception at St. Bartholomew's Church, Much Marcle on July 8th, to celebrate the newly-restored tomb of Blanche Mortimer, Lady Grandison. The work has taken some 4 years, and cost in the region of £50,000. The tomb was suffering badly from water absorption from floor and walls and was in danger of partial collapse.

During the excellent restoration by conservator Michael Eastham and his team, old repair work involving the use of Portland cement was removed. Then stainless steel clips and a beam were used to strengthen and stabilise parts of the tomb, and the paint work on the shields was treated and restored. There are 15 Mortimer shields and 8 Grandison shields. Blanche herself was dried out, and lightly cleaned. The highlight of the restoration was the totally unexpected discovery of the remains of Blanche in a wrap-around lead 'coffin' in the tomb chest. The monument certainly lives up to its reputation as one of the finest medieval tombs in England.

Tributes were paid to all who had contributed to the restoration by Rev. Paddy Benson, archdeacon of Hereford, and a full explanation of the restoration was given by conservator Michael Eastham. The Mortimer History Society was represented by chairman Jason O'Keefe, and founder John Grove.

## THE SECRET LIFE OF BLANCHE MORTIMER (1315 - 1347)

Little is known for certain about the life of Blanche Mortimer, youngest daughter of Roger Mortimer of Wigmore, 1st Earl of March (d1330), but much can be surmised by studying the events that were happening around her. In this short article John Grove has created a vivid impression of Blanche's life, of the stable and happy times and also the periods of anxiety and loneliness. She was only about 32 when she died and John has split her life into four phases:

- aged 0 - 7 a privileged upbringing
- aged 7 - 11 a troubled childhood
- aged 11 - 15 an exciting adolescence
- aged 15 - 32 a stable marriage

John's article can be seen by logging into the website and going to the Articles tab.

## MORTIMER HERALDRY

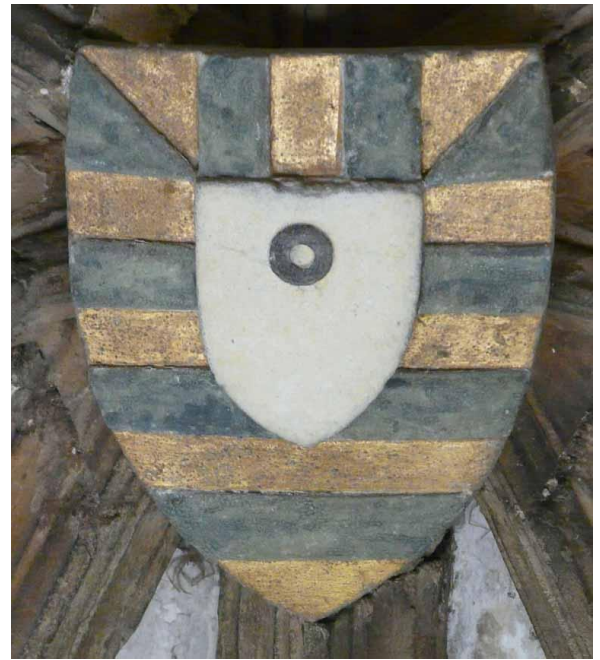
The basic Mortimer shield comes in various forms: the number of horizontal bars differs as does the number of vertical 'pallets' on the 'chief' at the top. Sometimes the colours are reversed, the blue and yellow swapping over. These changes may, or may not, be significant and it will take years of serious research to come up with any firm decisions.

One of the areas of greatest interest, however, is the question of 'cadency marks': changes made to the basic shield to distinguish different members of the Mortimer family from each other. We know that Roger Mortimer of Chirk (d1326), uncle to Roger Mortimer, 1st Earl of March, changed the tincture of the shield in the middle of the Mortimer arms from 'silver' to 'ermine' to distinguish his arms from those of his brother Edmund, Lord of Wigmore (d1304).

Frequently, however, we come across interesting cadency marks but have no idea who might have borne these arms. Here are two unusual examples. If anyone can shed any light, please contact the Heraldry group.



From the Swan Inn, Clare, Suffolk  
photographed by MHS member John Dixon



From the vaulting in the cloisters  
at Canterbury Cathedral

### **SIR REGINALD DE COBHAM (c1295-1361)**

The tomb of Sir Reginald de Cobham, 1st Baron Cobham of Starborough, is in Lingfield church, Surrey. He married Joan Berkeley, daughter of Thomas, Lord Berkeley (d1385) and Margaret Mortimer. Margaret was a daughter of Roger Mortimer, 1st Earl of March.

Reginald was a great man under king Edward III. He was one of three knights under whose charge the 16-year-old Black Prince fought at Crécy in 1346. He was 'Marshal of the Host' in the English army at the victory at Poitiers.

He also had a successful diplomatic career, being made ambassador to Brabant and to the Pope. He was called to parliament as a baron from 1342 to 1360.

In 1344 he was made Admiral of the Fleet and became Captain of Calais in 1353.

He was invested as a Knight of the Garter in 1352, just four years after the order was founded, joining his wife's cousin Roger Mortimer (d1360) 2nd Earl of March who was one of the founder knights of the order.



Reginald's tomb was largely refurbished by his grandson Reginald, the 3rd Lord Cobham. His grandfather is shown wearing the Cobham arms: *gules on a chevron or three estoiles sable pierced*.

Around the sides of the tomb have been placed the coats of arms of several other families connected to the Cobhams, including Mortimer, Berkeley and Badlesmere. The other coats of arms included on the tomb were not actually related to the 1st baron but to his grandson. These include Bohun, Fitzalan, Ros & Vere.



## LORD COBHAM'S CONNECTION TO THE MORTIMERS

**Roger Mortimer**

(1287-1330)

**1st Earl of March**

m. Joan de Geneville

**Edmund Mortimer**

(d1332)

m. Elizabeth Badlesmere

**Roger Mortimer KG**

(1328-1360)

**2nd Earl of March**

m. Philippa Montague

**Margaret Mortimer**

(d1337)

m2 Thomas, Lord Berkeley,

**Joan Berkeley = Reginald de Cobham, 1st Baron Cobham KG**  
(c1293-1361)