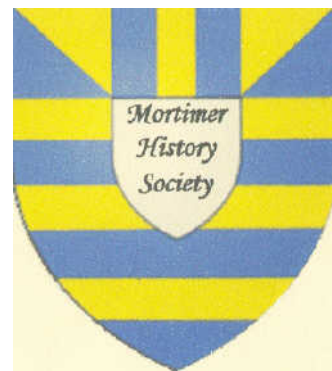


Mortimer History Society



Newsletter No.2 January 2010

Message from John Grove Chairman - Mortimer History Society

Dear Friends.

Thanks to the generosity of our Founder Members, and to the commitment and hard work of our new committee, the Mortimer History Society has been launched into the world. We hope it will become a lively focus for looking at the whole of British mediaeval history, and especially that of the Welsh Marches.

Thanks also to the untiring efforts of Margot Miller and Paul Remfry our webmaster, we have set up an excellent newsletter and website. We want the Society to be genuinely inter-active, so we invite all members to contribute to the news, and activities of the society. Of particular interest will be the Gazetteer which promises to list and describe everything above ground, that is related to the Mortimers, and that depends on your cooperation and entries.

However the MHS is for everyone, and the newsletter and important articles and notices will be sent by post to all members without a computer.

We hope to see you all at the first national conference in May to be held at Ludlow. We welcome your comments and ideas on our way forward

- John Grove

Future Activities

MHS members live in three broad areas, each group comprising about 30% of the present membership:

National:

Devon, Birmingham, Evesham, Lincoln, Rugby, Sussex, Yorkshire, Wales, Scotland, Spain, Hungary.

Hereford and North:

Ludlow, Leominster, Leintwardine, Wigmore

Ross – Ledbury:

Fownhope, Tedstone Wafre, Malvern, Much Marcle.

Suggested activities:

National -

- The interactive website*
- Newsletter and occasional papers
- Postal contact with members without email and internet
- Two annual conferences - the first to be on 8 May 2010, the second on 18 September - both in Ludlow
- One or two field visits each year to Mortimer places - the first in June or July to Maelienydd, mid-Wales
- School outreach - perhaps arranging projects on mediaeval history and art
- Possibly a social event involving mediaeval music, fashion etc.
- Specific email groups sharing Mortimer and mediaeval themes.

Local Groups - Hereford and North, Ross – Ledbury

Each area might be able to set up a local group, where members could suggest themes and come to each others' houses for evening or weekend sessions two or three times a year, to share Mortimer and other mediaeval enthusiasms as well as their own local fields of interest.

Members who are particularly interested in helping to organise any of these suggested activities, would be very welcome.

Contact: *John Grove, MHS Chairman at Ledbury
9 Preston Brook Close, Ledbury, HR8 2FL
or email - johnusk@supanet.com*

*MHS interactive website

<http://www.mortimerhistorysociety.org.uk>

The website is now up and running, although more details are to be added to it over the coming months.

A short gazetteer on Mortimer castles and the Mortimers of Normandy are available.

Further gazetteers will appear as soon as possible.



Introducing Members

From: **Roger F (Frank) Mortimer**, Selby, Yorks.

I am very interested in the mediaeval history of the Mortimer's. About twelve years ago, I moved from Kent to Yorkshire and was surprised by the number of Mortimers in the greater Yorkshire County, East, West, and North Ridings. We found we lived not far from the battlefield of Towton where in the War of the Roses 1461 more men died than in any other battle on British soil. It appears that Mortimers travelled northwards to support the Yorkists, against the Lancastrians and may well have left some offspring to be raised in the north.

My own family tree goes as far back as Samuel circa 1670 and Martha Newman who married at Seend, Wiltshire on 1st July 1705. I am busily trying to update the tree - filling in all the gaps, and I am looking to see if I can get back beyond 1670 to the historical tree. I shall be please to receive by e-mail any information about the Mortimer dynasty even if it does not look as though it has a direct link. Of course, I shall be please to share this information with any descendants who contact me.

I am currently doing a sculpture course, where my interest continues in that I am attempting to sculpt the "Lion of Mortimer" but no commissions taken as this is my first year and we will need to see how it turns out.

Roger F Mortimer

Howard Kimberley & Kathryn Pritchard Gibson

are very interested in and knowledgeable about the Welsh Mortimer connections. The Mortimers, the house of Gwynedd and the de Braoses are inexorably linked.

Kathryn has spent over twenty years researching the Llywelyns. The MHS will invite Howard and Kathryn to share their store of Welsh history.

Blanche Mortimer's tomb at Much Marcle

This superb medieval tomb of Blanche, wife of Sir Peter Grandison and daughter of Roger Mortimer 1321 -1347 is in need of restoration. Preliminary enquiries have been initiated by the Friends of St. Bartholomew's Church with the Church Monuments Society, and an early report has been received. More news to come!

The carving is superb, with the folds of her gown crisp and clean. Lady Grandison holds a rosary in her hands, and a wimple is upon her head. In his book 'England's Thousand Best Churches', Simon Jenkins calls Lady Grandison's effigy -

"an image as lovely as any bequeathed us by a mediaeval church.. a work of supreme craftsmanship".



Spring Field Trip June or July 2010

The first MHS field trip, led by Paul Remfry, will visit the Mortimer castles of Cefnlllys and Tinboeth in Maellienydd, mid-Wales in late June or early July 2010. The meeting place will be at the Crossgates petrol station where there is a café. We will have a picnic lunch on Cefnlllys hill, so bring a packed lunch and wear stout walking shoes.

(Date, times, charge etc - yet to be set.)

The Mortimers and Orleton Manor

From: **Andrew Stobart**, Orleton

In 1074 Ralph Mortimer, son of Roger Mortimer took possession of many manors in the Welsh Marches, a list can be found in the Domesday Book. According to the present owner of Orleton Manor, when they came Wigmore castle did not exist – except possibly as the remains of a Roman signal station along the main road between Caerleon and Deva. So the Mortimer family had a temporary base at Orleton Manor which still contains within the present fabric the remains of the re-build of 1074.

The Manor stayed in the family until the male line died out in 1425, but continued in the ownership of the female line, Dukes of York and ultimately in Edward Earl of March, the victor of the Battle of Mortimer's Cross in 1461 Yorkist Kings of England. Either before or after the Battle of Mortimer's Cross [possibly both] Edward Earl of March fed his army near what is still called Kitchen Hill, the Manor at that time being held by his Mother. Orleton Manor was part of the Widows Portion, of the Mortimer Lords and Earls, and various widows drew income from it, and probably lived there, hence the Bower [Dower] House in the centre of the old village.

The de Orleton family, a turbulent lot, were quite likely bastard Mortimer. Certainly Adam de Orleton Bishop of Hereford, Worcester and Winchester was very close to the family, He enlarged Orleton Church somewhere around 1330, adding stone head effigies of his patron Roger Mortimer 1st Earl of March, Isabella, Princess of France, Queen of England and Roger's mistress, her husband Edward II King of England, Piers Gaveston, John Prior of Wigmore and Adam himself. The Church is basically structurally unaltered since.

Before Domesday Orleton Manor was a seat of Royal local government, with a Reeve, and part of the original Manor was granted to Richard le Scrob by Ralph Earl of Hereford – Edward the Confessor's nephew – in about 1053 for the building of Richard's Castle, Ludlow castle's predecessor, the site of Ludlow being a field until a de Lacy started the present castle and town

Andrew Stobart is a consulting engineer, with traceable descent from Roger Mortimer 1st Earl of March. He is still very active in the Sustainable Technologies field, albeit at 82 'officially retired'.

"Medieval Tedstone Wafre and the Mortimer Connection"
at Bromyard & District Local History Society
Talk by Dr Martin Toms, Deputy Chairman of Mortimer History Society
at the Conquest Theatre, Bromyard on Wednesday 13 January 2010, 7.30 pm
Members of the BDLHS - free; Non-members - £2.00

"The Mortimers and Edward II"
at Friends of the Ludlow Museum
Talk by John Grove - Chairman of Mortimer History Society
at 7pm for 7.30 on Monday 15 February
The Friends of the Ludlow Museum (visitors £2) meet at the Bishop Mascall Centre
(now re-invented under the title 'The Conference Centre') in Lower Galdeford, Ludlow
which is central to the town. There is a small car park at the centre and also a main town
one just below the Mascall Centre, about 4 minutes walk away.
Any queries - Eileen Russell 01584 876758

Mortimer History Society visit to Wigmore Castle, inaugural AGM and members' Dinner - 26 Oct 2009



*Members on the steps of
Wigmore Castle.
MHS Chairman -
John Grove in the centre*

*Members listening to the story
of Wigmore Castle told by
MHS Deputy Chairman,
castles expert Paul Remfry;
(at the back of the
picture with arm raised)*



Mortimer History Society
 First Annual General Meeting 2009
 Saturday October 24th at Wigmore



Tour of Wigmore Castle:

The afternoon began with about 40 people assembling for a guided tour of Wigmore Castle, the Mortimer ancestral home. The crowd included friends from Spain, Scotland and Wales, as well as a strong local contingent. Everyone enjoyed a short but erudite commentary from Marcher castle and history expert, Paul Remfry, in the autumn sunshine.

Annual General Meeting: The numbers grew for the inaugural AGM, held in the Teme Valley Resource Centre. After a welcome from Paul Dryburgh of London University, the first chairman John Grove was elected, followed by the election of a full committee. The constitution was adopted.

MHS Future Plans:

The new chairman opened with Shakespearean sentiments of *'Nothing but Mortimer'* and went on to outline the aims of the society – to be academic and practical, to study Mortimer artefacts and Mortimer lines, both main and branches, and to have wide and diverse interests with an educational function. The proposed inter-active nature of the Society was stressed, calling on members to contribute to the website, to write articles, and to set up study groups, and offer services to local schools. The society now has 37 Founder Members, and there will be a membership drive soon, based on the beginnings of a high-quality web site.

Ian Mortimer: The formal meeting was brought to a conclusion by a splendid talk from the author and historian, Ian Mortimer. Using the theme of *'What have the Mortimers done for us?'*, he gave a stirring outline of their contribution to the survival of mediaeval society, and the way in which their story gives us a wonderful focus for exploring both English and Welsh history.

MHS Dinner: The inaugural dinner was attended by 24 members, and the excellent fare was accompanied with good conversation, and a toast to the future success of the Society.

Henry IV, Part I

Act 1, Scene III

Westmoreland:

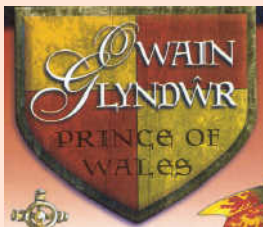
*A post from Wales loaden
 with heavy news;
 whose worst was,
 that the noble Mortimer,
 leading the men of
 Herefordshire to fight
 against the irregular
 and wild Glendower,
 was by the rude hands
 of that Welshman taken,
 a thousand of his people
 butchered;*

.....

Hotspur:

*He said he would not
 ransom Mortimer;
 forbad my tongue to
 speak of Mortimer;
 but I will find him when
 he lies asleep,
 and in his ear
 I'll holla "Mortimer!"
 Nay, I'll have a starling
 shall be taught to speak
 nothing but "Mortimer",
 and give it him,
 to keep his anger
 still in motion.....*

William Shakespeare



**MORTIMER HISTORY SOCIETY
 CONFERENCE - MAY 8, 2010**

Ludlow Assembly Rooms

**Prince Llywelyn, Owain Glyndwr
 Shakespeare and the Mortimers**

10 am Coffee & registration
 10.30 Dr David Stephenson
 11.30 Paul Remfry

Prince Llywelyn & the Marcher Lords
 The Battle of Bryn Glas – Pilleth, 1402
 Edmund Mortimer* & Owain Glyndwr

12.15 Lunch
 13.30 John Grove

The Battle of Usk – Pwll Melyn, 1405
 Glyndwr's forces attack a Mortimer castle

14.15 Ian Barge, and the Teme Players

Shakespeare's Glyndwr & the Mortimers
 In *Henry IV Part One*

15.30 Conference ends

Tickets: Members £8, Non-members £10., 18 and under - free

Please send cheques, and sae to Peter Crocker, New Garth, Kent Avenue, Ross on Wye, Herefordshire HR9 5AH (including tea / coffee – make your own lunch arrangements)



Edmund Mortimer*

A memorial of two mediaeval knights in St Nicholas's Church, Montgomery, one of which may represent Sir Edmund Mortimer, who once served as Constable of Montgomery Castle. After his defeat at the battle of Pilleth, Edmund became Owain Glyndwr's son-in-law when he married Catrin Glyndwr. He died during the long siege of Harlech Castle in 1409.