



NEWSLETTER 21

April 2015

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Mortimer Cadency - The sons of Roger Mortimer of Wigmore (d1282)

Rollo's Books

CONFERENCE REMINDER - LAW & ORDER IN EARLY MEDIEVAL ENGLAND: THE ROAD TO MAGNA CARTA

Saturday 16th May 2015 - day conference at Hereford Academy

Sunday 17th May 2015 - visit to the Magna Carta Exhibition in Hereford Cathedral

Our Spring Conference is the event of the year and the line-up of outstanding speakers will ensure that this year's event is as stimulating and educational as ever. This is obviously a popular subject in this Magna Carta year and bookings are going well. We can't promise that there will be sufficient catering if you just turn up on the day, so secure your place now.

Venue: Hereford Academy, Marlbrook Road, Hereford HR2 7NG

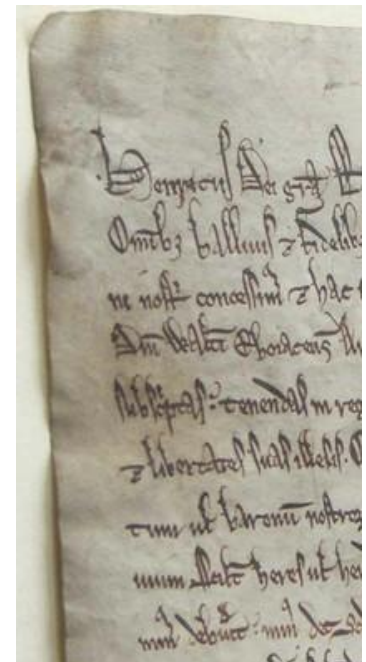
Cost: MHS members £25, non-members £30

Timings: 09.30 for 10.00 till about 16.30

On Sunday afternoon the Magna Carta exhibition at the cathedral is being opened specially for us between 1.00 and 3.00 at a discounted price. It includes Hereford's own copy of Magna Carta, one of only four copies of the 1217 revision issued by king Henry III. Also included is a visit to the Chained Library and the Mappa Mundi. Knowledgeable stewards will be on hand to assist. Pre-booking is essential.

For full information and booking arrangements [click here](#)

If you don't have computer access and would like to book please phone Jason on 01432 352755



Part of Hereford's Magna Carta

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear MHS Members

I am delighted to report that the Society is in good shape and going from strength to strength. Over the past 15 months the number of members has grown by over 40% and we're hoping to pass the 200 mark in 2016. At our recent AGM, we elected four new committee members: Clive Jupp is the new Treasurer and Katherine Prawl will be acting as Membership Secretary working remotely from her home in Texas. These new appointments free Hugh Wood to concentrate on developing the website and on producing the newsletters. Also appointed to the committee were Stanton Stephens of Castle Books in Ludlow and Philip Hume, a new member, who will be doing much of the donkey work for the creation of the Mortimer History Trail through North Herefordshire and Ludlow, the project initiated by our founder, John Grove. Since the AGM, we have also co-opted Andrew Colby, a former treasurer, who is now able to rejoin the committee. So we have a good team in place to take the Society forwards.

The Society is increasingly being represented at events throughout the Marches, including battlefield re-enactments, conferences and meetings. Margot Miller has done sterling work in this area, but we need to increase the number of members who are willing to help. You may feel that you don't want to be on the committee but, if you are local, could you help us build an effective team of members who can help at events like these? Don't worry - you don't need any specialist Mortimer knowledge. Just a willingness to chat to people about the Society.



Margot Miller manning the MHS stand at the Tewkesbury Event



The 12th century tympanum at Pipe Aston church
part of the Mortimer History Trail

Here is another opportunity for members who live in, or around, Herefordshire. The Mortimer History Trail is a major undertaking sponsored by MHS and supported by the ten local councils involved. Philip Hume is setting up a Steering Group to manage this development and he is looking for local members who are interested in the idea to join with himself, John Grove and representatives of the villages themselves.

Quite a high proportion of our members from across the world have a family connection with the medieval Mortimers. We would like to offer these members the opportunity of forming a Mortimer Family History Group within MHS. Members who join the group will be able to communicate directly with each other by email and the group will have its own section of the website where individual family trees can be shared. To get this started, we need to identify a small group of enthusiasts. If this interests you, and you are prepared to work with a couple of others to set it up, please let us know.

Finally, let us know what you think of the newsletter. Hugh Wood is aware that, at present, the content tends to reflect his own interests of medieval genealogy and heraldry. Would you like to see more articles on other subjects and, if so, are you able to contribute anything yourself? Suitable articles that appear in the newsletter are often added to the website later.

To respond to any of the above, please contact me at jason.okeefe@btopenworld.com or telephone 01432 352755.

Jason

FORTHCOMING MHS EVENTS

Saturday 20th June 2015 Field Visit to Dolforwyn with Paul Remfry



The extensive remains of Dolforwyn Castle are situated close to the River Severn, north-east of Newtown. The castle was built between 1273 and 1277 by the Welsh prince, Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, as a defence against incursions into mid-Wales by the English. It was captured by Roger Mortimer (d1282) in 1277 and remained in the hands of the Mortimers for some time. Rather than develop the site, however, Roger chose a more suitable place nearby and in 1279 he founded a new town at.....Newtown.

Rendezvous at 11.30 - Cost £5

We are delighted that castle expert Paul Remfry has agreed to lead this visit. Dolforwyn Castle is signposted from the A483 near Abermule, about 4 miles north-east of Newtown. After leaving the A483 and passing the Dolforwyn Hall Country House take the left at the junction (there is a CADW green sign). Then follow your nose along and up till you reach the car park. There is only room for 5 cars in the car park so you may have to find another spot. From the car park there is a steep climb to the castle - but it's well worth it. To access a local map showing the position of the car park [click here](#)

There is not much left in Newtown from medieval times, but there is a motte and bailey and a ruined 13th century church.

NB If you would like to come on this interesting field trip please contact Stella on stellamason1@btinternet.com or telephone her on 01584-810505.

Saturday 26th September 2015 Art Workshop at Kilpeck



This event will focus on the work of the 12th century Herefordshire School of Sculpture. It will be held at Kilpeck village hall, close to Kilpeck church, Herefordshire, that contains some of the finest examples of their work.

For more information [click here](#)



OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Thursday 21st May 2015 King John - Treachery, Tyranny and the Road to Magna Carta

Marc Morris will be speaking on this subject in the Methodist church, Broad St, Ludlow starting at 7.00pm. Tickets £5 on the door. Marc is an excellent speaker and writer and he'll be signing his new book with the same title. See Rollo's Books [below](#)

Saturday 6th June 2015 The Fatal Quarrel - Simon de Montfort and Roger Mortimer

This year is the 750th anniversary of the Battle of Evesham where Simon de Montfort met a bloody end. John Grove, founder of MHS will be speaking on this subject at the Leominster Festival. He will trace the events leading to the battle and look at the reasons for the fatal quarrel which ended in Roger sending Simon's head as a trophy to his wife in Wigmore Castle. The talk takes place at 7.30pm in the John Abel room at Grange Court in Leominster. For information about the festival [click here](#)

Friday 12th June 2015

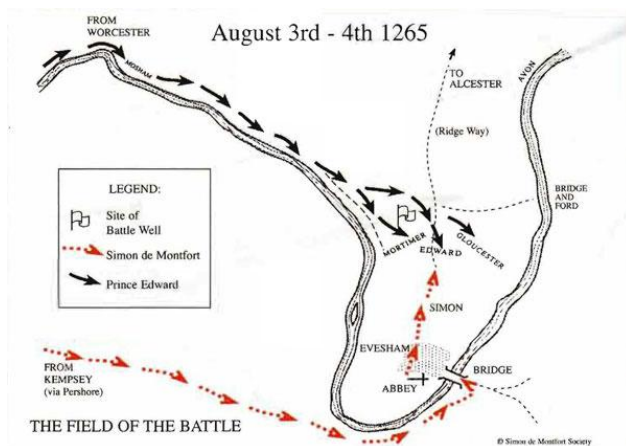
**The Mortimers of Wigmore: twelve generations of violent revolt
(and even more violent loyalty) 1075-1425**

Our President, Dr Ian Mortimer, will be speaking on this theme at the AsparaWriting Festival in Evesham, an event specifically designed for aspiring writers. For more details and booking [click here](#)

Saturday & Sunday 13th & 14th June 2015 Leominster Medieval Pageant

Organised by MHS Member, David Fenimore, this is a free event running over the two days. It is based around the site of the medieval monastery by the priory church and begins with a procession at 10am on Saturday which starts at the Grange. The pageant will feature a living history encampment, displays and demonstrations, skirmishes, medieval dance and music and a medieval-style market.

August 1st-14th 2015 Celebration of the 750th anniversary of the Battle of Evesham 1265



Roger Mortimer (died 1282) is said to have been personally responsible for killing Simon de Montfort in the battle and to have sent Simon's head to Wigmore Castle for his wife to see. A fortnight of events at Evesham include key speeches by Professor David Carpenter and Dr David Cox, both patrons of the Simon de Montfort Society. You can hear David Carpenter speaking on the Magna Carta Project at our own conference on 16th May.

Monday 10th August 2015 Katherine Ashe speaking on Simon de Montfort at Evesham

As part of the 750th anniversary celebrations of the Battle of Evesham in 1265, MHS is joining with the Simon de Montfort Society to host an evening at the Evesham Hotel. We're delighted that American author and MHS member, Katherine Ashe is returning to the UK. The author of a 4-volume fictionalised biography of Simon de Montfort, Katherine was an inspiring speaker at our Spring conference in 2012. This event starts at 7.30 with a buffet meal before Katherine's talk. The venue is the Evesham Hotel in Coopers Lane off Waterside, Evesham WR11 1DA. Waterside runs between the two bridges in Evesham on the opposite side from the town centre. The cost is £18 and tickets are only available to members of the two societies. Numbers for this event are restricted. MHS members should send a cheque made out to the Mortimer History Society to Jason O'Keefe, 151 Belmont Road, Hereford HR2 7JR

NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined since the last newsletter:

- Joan Burton (Herefordshire UK)
- Michael Elliman (Worcestershire UK)
- Brian Holley (Herefordshire UK)
- Jason Mortimer (Gloucestershire UK) who is interested in researching Mortimer liveries & crests
- Virginia Mortimer (Twickenham, London UK)
- Stephen Mills (Cambridgeshire UK) whose mother is a Mortimer from Westmeath, Ireland
- David Pearn (Somerset UK)
- Christine Turner (Shropshire UK) who thinks she may be linked with the Mortimers

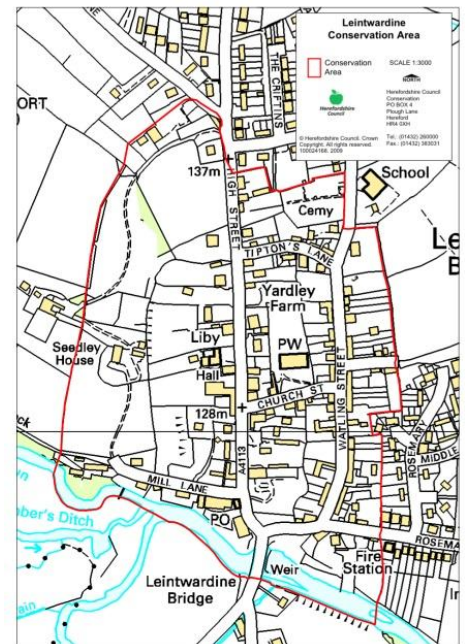
LEINTWARDINE AND THE MORTIMERS

Leintwardine is situated on the river Teme in the north-west part of Herefordshire, less than 4 miles from Wigmore Castle and even closer to Wigmore Abbey. After crossing the river, the ancient Watling Street goes north, climbing gradually through the centre of the village. Leintwardine was an important place in Roman times, situated midway between Caerleon to the south and the major town of Wroxeter to the north. There are several reminders of those distant times, including traces of the 'vallum' - the defensive rampart built around the settlement. Indeed, the east end of the church of St Mary Magdalen is built over the vallum, resulting in the floor of the chancel being much higher than that of the nave.

For the student of the Mortimers, Leintwardine is a fascinating place. Though we know little for certain, we've been left with several unanswered questions which encourage us to speculate and form our own theories. Being so close to Wigmore, it is not surprising that the Mortimers played a part in its history. In December 1328, Roger Mortimer, 1st Earl of March endowed a chantry chapel here with nine chaplains. They were to say daily masses for the souls of King Edward III, Queen Philippa, Isabella (the Queen Mother), Roger himself, his wife Joan and their children and also Henry Burghersh who was Bishop of Lincoln, Lord Treasurer and then Chancellor of England. The site still exists as a large chapel on the north side of the chancel.

Unfortunately it is now rather disappointing as it retains very little to connect it to its past. But why did Roger choose to establish this chantry in Leintwardine rather than in the church of St James in Wigmore itself?

Later in the 14th century, Leintwardine was to have not one but two enigmatic royal visits, but we need to look back 25 years, or so, for the background to these. Appalled and alienated by Edward II's preferment of Hugh the Despencer, Roger Mortimer and Queen Isabella 'invaded' England in 1326 with a force from the Low Countries. They met with no resistance and soon secured the deposition of the king. The new young King Edward III was looked after and controlled by his mother and Roger, who ruled in his name. In 1330, however, while still only 17, Edward had Mortimer arrested and he was tried and executed, effectively for usurping royal powers.



The conservation area outlined in red shows the extent of Roman Leintwardine. The High St running up from the bridge is Watling St, not the one marked Watling St to the east.



The church of St Mary Magdalen showing the chancel roof to be much higher than that of the nave. The separately-gabled Mortimer chantry chapel can be seen on the right of the chancel

It must have become irksome for the growing king Edward III, as a teenager, to be treated as a mere boy, given little or no power or autonomy and expected to agree with and rubber-stamp whatever Mortimer and his mother chose to do. Then there was the question of the fate of his father. The popular belief was that he had been murdered on Mortimer's orders in Berkeley castle and, if true, this was surely enough of a reason for Edward to turn against Mortimer. It is now believed, however, that the death of Edward II was a convenient fiction and that he survived in obscurity for many years. How much did his son know and what did he think of it?

What is not in any doubt is that King Edward III came to visit Leintwardine in September 1353 when he was 40. He was a religious person, frequently going out of his way to visit important shrines and chapels, but he must have had a very special reason for coming to a spot so far off the beaten track.

It must be significant that Leintwardine church housed the Mortimer chantry, founded by the man whom he had executed 23 years previously. Had those intervening years caused him to rethink Roger Mortimer's role and his contribution to the country? Queen Isabella was still alive; had she managed to get him see things differently? Did he now feel guilty about the summary way Roger was tried and executed? With hindsight, he must have seen that king Edward II had to go, for the good of the country. Was Edward III now more aware of the care that had been taken to look after his father in secluded retirement while ensuring that his own crown was not threatened by his father's survival?

The evidence suggests that this may be the case. Edward III presented a cloth of gold to the statue of the Virgin in Leintwardine church and it is believed that he made a second visit in November of the same year.

Even more conclusive is the fact that, in the following year, Roger's grandson, another Roger, was successful in reclaiming most of his grandfather's lands and titles. The younger Roger had proved himself a loyal supporter of Edward and it was natural that the king would want to reward him. But the grandfather was an arrogant and warlike person who had himself created Earl of March, so one might expect the king to hate that title. However he reinstated the grandson as 2nd Earl of March when he could quite easily have given him some other honour.



The effigy of Edward II in Gloucester Cathedral

There is a tomb effigy of Edward II in Gloucester Cathedral, but his funeral there seems now to have been part of an elaborate charade, to cover up the fact that he was still alive and dissuade malcontents from trying to put him back on the throne. The visit of Edward III to Leintwardine has led to some speculation that Edward II was ultimately buried there but, so far, there is no concrete evidence for that.

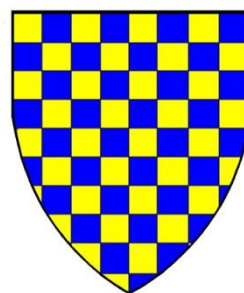
Main Sources

- Ian Mortimer: The Greatest Traitor
- Ian Mortimer: The Perfect King

THE MORTIMERS AND THE WARENNES

The Warenne family have an illustrious history in England. A William de Warenne fought with William the Conqueror at Hastings and was later created Earl of Surrey, a title held by the Warennes till 1347 when the male line failed. Despite this, their coat of arms checky or and azure has been passed down as a quartering, even to our own time, in the arms of the Duke of Norfolk.

It is, perhaps, not always appreciated that the Mortimers and the Warennes were branches of the same family. In his Outline Genealogy of the Mortimers on our website, Ian Mortimer explains the origin of the Mortimer surname. Here is his entry for Roger de Mortemer.



The arms of Warenne. Interestingly, in colour and design there is some similarity to the Mortimer arms



The arms of the Duke of Norfolk - quarterly 1 Howard, 2 Brotherton, 3 Warenne & 4 Fitzalan

Roger de Mortemer (fl. 1054-78), seigneur of Mortemer-sur-Eaulne, in the Neufchâtel region of Normandy, was the first to use the name. He was the son of Ralph I de Warenne (fl. 1035-50) and Beatrice de Vascoeuil, whose mother was a niece of Gunnor, the wife of Duke Richard I (933-996). Thus Roger de Mortemer was a third cousin to Duke William of Normandy. His elder brother, Ralph II de Warenne, married Emma and had sons Ralph III de Warenne and William I de Warenne (d. 1088). When Roger released his own feudal lord and Duke William's enemy, Ralph de Montdidier (d. 1074), later count of Valois, whom he had captured at the battle of Mortemer in 1054, Duke William

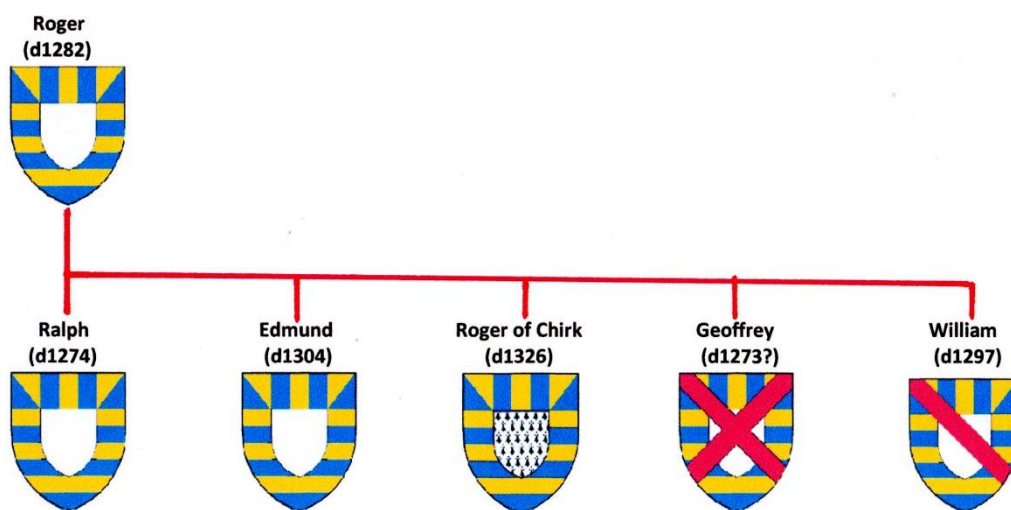
seized Roger's estates. They were later restored, with the exception of Mortemer itself, which was bestowed on Roger's nephew, William I de Warenne. Thereafter Roger's seat was at Saint-Victor, twenty-five miles to the west. The reference by Wace to one 'Hugh de Mortemer' spurring his horse and charging the Saxons at Hastings in the company of the lords of Auwilliers, Les Oubeaux and Saint-Clair, should be taken to refer to Roger (as far as it can be taken to refer to any historical personage), as there was no other male member of the de Mortemer family of full age in Normandy at that time. In 1174 Roger and his wife Hawise petitioned William I of England and John, archbishop of Rouen, for the recently founded priory of Saint-Victor to be made into an abbey. Roger was still alive in 1078, for he was one of the witnesses of his nephew William I de Warenne's charter for Cluny, which can be dated to 1078x81. It is safe to presume that he was dead by 1086, as he does not appear in Domesday. He was survived by at least one son.

THE MORTIMER COAT OF ARMS - DIFFERENCING FOR CADENCY

Over 100 variations of the basic Mortimer of Wigmore coat of arms have been identified and some of the most interesting are those where the shield has been differenced in some way to distinguish the holder from other members of his family - differencing for cadency.

The best known example is that of Roger Mortimer of Chirk, younger brother of Edmund Mortimer of Wigmore (d1304) and uncle of Roger Mortimer 1st Earl of March (d1330). Roger of Chirk differenced his arms by changing the escutcheon in the centre of the Mortimer shield from *argent* (silver) to *ermine*. Ermine is the name given to the stoat in winter when its coat is white all over apart from a black tip to its tail. When made up into a garment these black tails give ermine fur its characteristic appearance and they are represented in heraldry by a regular array of stylised black marks on a white background. This difference in Roger of Chirk's arms is particularly important as it survived for centuries as a quartering in other coats of arms, notably those of the Dudleys. None of the other changes seem to have survived for any time. We can see examples on medieval tiles like those in the church at Bredon in Worcestershire but we don't usually know to whom they belonged.

Generally speaking, the best sources for cadency differences are the heralds' rolls of arms, though their descriptions of the basics of the Mortimer coat often leave something to be desired. A personal study of early Mortimer arms in stained glass windows and in the Wigmore Chronicle is suggesting that, at least up to 1330 or so, the shield had a fairly standard number of horizontal and vertical divisions and a standard colour scheme. The heralds rolls tend not to bother with such details, just stating the two colours *or* and *azure* and saying *barry* without saying which colour went where or specifying the number of bars. They clearly didn't consider these vital when distinguishing coats of arms at tournaments or on the battlefield. Quite a few of these heraldic rolls survive from the 13th and 14th centuries. Some contain hundreds of coats of arms but they vary considerably in reliability and coverage. Two brothers may appear in one roll, but only one of them in another almost-contemporary roll. There is, however, pretty solid evidence to assign cadency differences to some of the sons of Roger Mortimer of Wigmore (d1282)



It is quite clear that the shield of the head of the family of Mortimer of Wigmore included a small central shield (escutcheon or inescutcheon) coloured white or, more correctly, silver - *argent*.

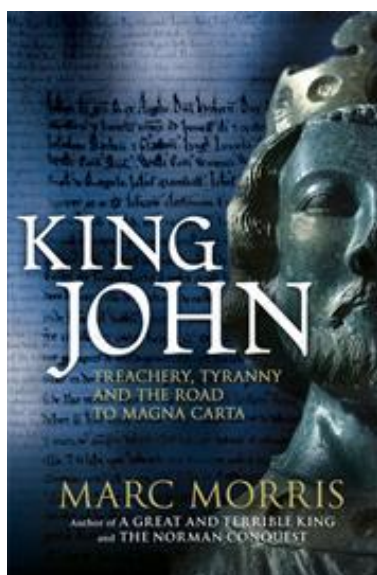
The father Roger (d1282) certainly appears to have used this coat of arms.

1. Roger's eldest son Ralph died in his father's lifetime while still in his twenties. We don't have any real evidence for the coat of arms he used.
2. We don't know what coat of arms his second son, Edmund (d1304), used during his father's lifetime but he certainly used the *inescutcheon argent* when he was head of the household, as shown by his seal on the Barons' letter to the Pope in 1301.
3. As previously noted, Roger of Chirk (d1326) changed the inescutcheon from *argent* to *ermine*.

For the differences displayed by the younger sons Geoffrey and William we are totally reliant on the heralds rolls.

4. One variation of the Mortimer shield is differenced with a red diagonal cross - *overall a saltire gules*. These are attributed in the Heralds' Roll of 1270-80 to a Geoffrey de Mortimer (d1273). Roger Mortimer (d1282) certainly had a son Geoffrey who died before him though, if this is he, he can only have been a teenager at the time of his death. However, we know of no other Geoffrey Mortimers of Wigmore at this time. The same arms were included in the St George's Roll of c1285, by which time Roger's son Geoffrey was dead, but this roll is known to contain other examples of posthumous coats of arms.
5. We are on safer ground with William who lived longer. The arms of Mortimer with a red diagonal line - *overall a bend gules* - are attributed to William Mortimer (d1297) in four separate rolls: the Heralds Roll (1270-80); St George's Roll (c1285); Collins Roll (c1295) and the Lord Marshall's Roll (temp. Edward I).

ROLLO'S BOOKS

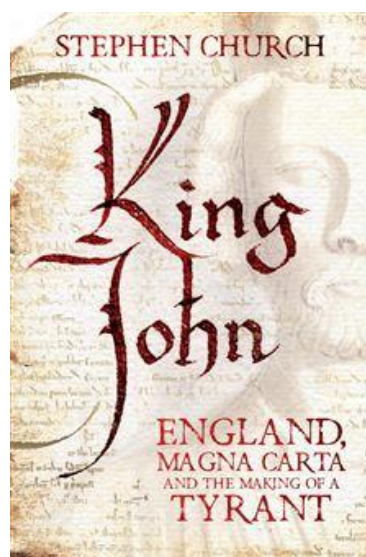


Marc Morris is speaking on this subject in Ludlow on 21st May [see here](#)

King John: Treachery, Tyranny and the Road to Magna Carta *by Marc Morris*

Hutchinson 2015; ISBN: 0091954231; 400pp; Hardback £17; ebook £13.99

John was dynamic, inventive and relentless, but also a figure with terrible flaws. In two interwoven stories, we see how he went from being a youngest son with limited prospects to the ruler of the greatest dominion in Europe, an empire that stretched from the Scottish border to the Pyrenees. We discover how, having lost most of his lands in France, he battled for the rest of his life to win them back. His rise to power involved treachery, rebellion and murder. His reign saw oppression on an almost unprecedented scale: former friends hounded into exile and oblivion; Wales, Scotland and Ireland invaded; harsh fines and huge taxes, the greatest level of financial exploitation since the Norman Conquest. A quarrel with the pope led to the king being excommunicated and England being placed under Interdict; for six years, the church bells remained silent and the dead were buried in unconsecrated ground. John's tyrannical rule climaxed in conspiracy and revolt, and his leading subjects famously forced him to issue Magna Carta, a document binding him and his successors to behave better in future. The king's rejection of the charter led to civil war and foreign invasion, bringing his life to a disastrous close. *Contains a translation of Magna Carta: 1215*



King John: England, Magna Carta and the Making of a Tyrant *by Stephen Church*

Macmillan 2015; ISBN 0230772455; 352pp; Hardback £17; ebook £11.29

The youngest of the five sons of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, the empire builders of the Angevin dynasty, John had small hope of securing any significant inheritance. Then, in 1199, on the death of his older brother Richard, John took possession of the vast Angevin lands in England and on the continent. But by his death in 1216, he had lost almost all that he inherited, and had come perilously close to losing his English kingdom, too.

Drawing on thousands of contemporary sources, Stephen Church tells John's story - from boyhood and the succession crises of his early adulthood, to accession, rebellion and civil war. In doing so, he reveals exactly why John's reign went so disastrously wrong and how John's failure led to the great cornerstone of Britain's constitution: Magna Carta. Vivid and authoritative, *King John: England, Magna Carta and the Making of a Tyrant* is history at its visceral best.