



NEWSLETTER 27

November 2016

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday 17th January 2017 - MHS Tour of St Laurence's Church, Ludlow

This is a special tour of St Laurence's church for members and their guests only.

St Laurence's is a beautiful church with strong Mortimer and Yorkist connections. It was the home of the famous Ludlow Palmers' Guild and the final resting place of several important members of the Council of Wales and the Marches. Following his untimely death in 1502 the heart of Arthur Tudor, Prince of Wales was buried in the church. The tour is led by Hugh Wood, an experienced St Laurence's guide and previously Chair of the Conservation Trust, who will emphasise the Mortimer and Yorkist connections. Please let Hugh know if you plan to come - see contact details at the top of this page.

11.00 - c.12.30 £4 including coffee and biscuits at 11.00.



A Lancastrian symbol in Yorkist Ludlow: the badge of Henry VI on a 15th century misericord in St Laurence's, Ludlow

Saturday 11th March 2017 - Annual General Meeting

To be held at the new Herefordshire Archives and Records Centre (HARC) at Rotherwas just south of Hereford. After the AGM, MHS member Barbara Wright will give a talk about her 30-year research into the *Mortimer Cartularies* including *The Black Book of Wigmore*. We will then have the opportunity to tour the Centre and inspect some of its documents.

09.30 for 10.00. Everyone welcome - no charge. Finishes about 13.00. HARC is on Fir Tree Lane, Rotherwas, HR2 6LA

Saturday 13th May 2017 - The Medieval Welsh Marcher Lordships

Our Annual Conference will be held in the Auditorium at Ludlow Assembly Rooms. The day will include lectures on:

The Development of the Marcher Lordships from 1066 - 1282

The Power of the Marcher Lords

Case Studies of Marcher Families

The Welsh Perspective on the Marcher Lordships

The Marches in the Late Medieval Period

NEW MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY

We are delighted to welcome to the Society, the following new members:

Jonathan Arnold, Kings Heath, Birmingham UK
Leigh Bullimore, Aymestrey, Herefordshire UK
Sue Byron, Ormskirk, Lancashire, UK
Brendon Clarke, Burnley, Lancashire UK
Paul Davies, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire UK
Adonis Gemini, Hangzhou, China
John Hopkins & Noriko Horiuchi, Stoke Prior,
Herefordshire UK

Barbara Joss, Pembridge, Herefordshire UK
Ian Lambert, Ludlow, Shropshire UK
Richard Millington, Solihull, West Midlands UK
Duncan & Sebastian Mortimer, Laytham, York UK
Michael Redshaw, Hilton, Shropshire UK

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THE AUTUMN SYMPOSIUM - OCTOBER 1st 2016

The main event of the MHS year is the May conference which always focuses on a specific theme - in 2017 it is the Welsh Marcher Lordships. On October 1st this year, we experimented with a second full-day event of a rather different kind. At the symposium we presented six lectures on a wide range of subjects, four of which were delivered by MHS members. The event proved very successful, with about 70 people attending.

We started the day with a talk by Dr Carol Davidson Cragoe about the development and history of Wigmore Castle. The castle has never been extensively excavated, and written records are sparse, so there are many aspects of the site about which it's impossible to be absolutely certain. Carol gave a lucid presentation of the available evidence and was able to offer ideas about how the castle developed. Anyone interested in knowing more can read her excellent chapter on the castle's architecture and history in *Wigmore Castle, North Herefordshire: Excavations 1996 and 1998 (Ratkai 2015)*.



In his wide-ranging talk, John Cherry presented miscellaneous examples of coats of arms and personal badges on old metallic items, some of which are in the British Museum where John was Curator of Medieval Objects for many years. He included, as a *piece de resistance* the beautiful Sword of State dated c1473-1483 and apparently made for Edward, Prince of Wales the son of Edward IV. It shows the Mortimer arms quartered with de Burgh, for the earldom of Ulster.



Jason O'Keefe has many years' experience as a re-enactor and has a keen interest on arms and armour. He gave an interesting talk on the English longbow and longbowman. He traced the history of the bow back to 50,000BC and brought it right up to date by telling the story of Capt Jack Churchill, a British soldier in the Second World War who when trapped with his men behind enemy lines shot a German soldier with his bow. Jason brought several bows with him and emphasised the enormous strength that was needed to draw the strongest of these. In 1242 King Henry II decreed that any man who makes 2-5 pounds per year must be armed with a bow. Also memorable was the fact that, in 1363, King Edward III took this further and decreed that all men between 15 & 60 of able body were required to practice archery, generally on a Sunday after Church and on Holidays to ensure that we always had a highly-skilled force available.

A feature of the day was the display of the Ludlow Castle Heraldic Roll of 1576. This fascinating document shows the coats of arms of owners of the castle including Mortimers and Yorkists, as well as those of the 22 members of the Council of Wales and the Marches appointed in 1570. Hugh Wood gave a presentation introducing the roll and projected large images of many on the finest coats of arms onto the screen.

Our Founder, John Grove, delivered a most interesting lecture on Margaret of York who became Duchess of Burgundy. Another highlight of the day was Dr David Stephenson's talk entitled *Resistance to Conflict: Eastern Wales in the 13th century*. These two lectures are described in more detail in specific articles later in this newsletter.

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MORTIMER HERALDRY IN A SMALL SHROPSHIRE VILLAGE

Another Mortimer Countess of Arundel

In the last newsletter, Fran Norton introduced us to Isabella Mortimer who married John FitzAlan, Lord of Clun and Oswestry. She was a daughter of Roger Mortimer, Baron Mortimer of Wigmore (d1282). Her husband was given the title of 'Earl of Arundel' retrospectively, so Isabella was, historically, *de jure* Countess of Arundel. Although Isabella was never known as the Countess of Arundel during her lifetime there was no such problem with a later Mortimer lady who became Countess of Arundel.

Peter Crocker pointed out that, unlike his father, John and Isabella's eldest son, Richard, was called 'Earl of Arundel' during his lifetime. After attaining his majority in 1289 he was called to parliament by that title. There is some confusion about the numbering of the Earls of Arundel but, as this seems like a completely new title, we'll call him the 1st Earl of Arundel (of the new creation).

Richard's son Edmund FitzAlan, 2nd Earl of Arundel, made an excellent match when he married Alice Warenne in 1305. She was *heir apparent* to the Earldom of Surrey and, as she was an heraldic heiress, her coat of arms was passed down to their son Richard who quartered them with the lion of FitzAlan.

The 4th Earl was also called Richard. He married Elizabeth de Bohun and they had seven children. After Elizabeth died in 1385, he married Philippa Mortimer. She was the daughter of Edmund Mortimer, 3rd Earl of March, and Philippa, daughter of Lionel of Antwerp, the second surviving son of Edward III. Philippa Mortimer had been widowed at the age of 14 when her 17-year-old husband John Hastings, Earl of Pembroke, was killed in a jousting accident. So Philippa became the Countess of Arundel about 125 years after Isabella Mortimer's marriage. Her new husband, Richard FitzAlan died in 1397 and she went on to marry again, but died childless at the age of just 25.

The Village of Hopesay

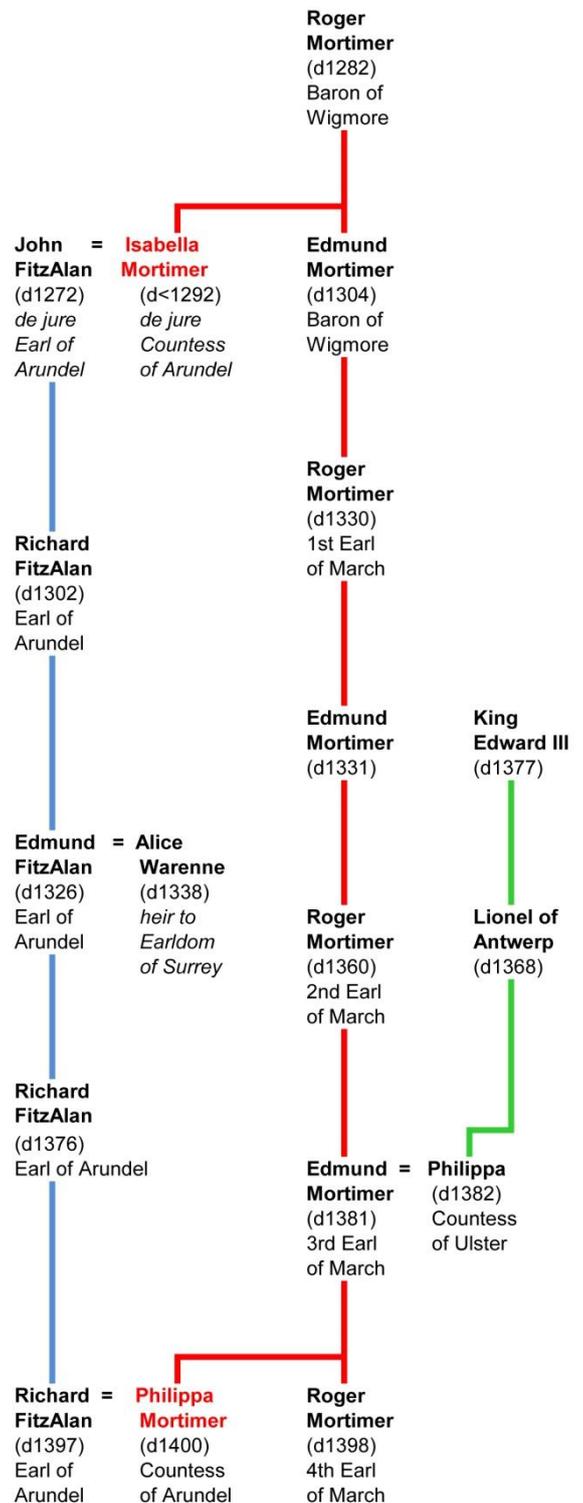
Hopesay is a small village near Aston-on-Clun about 12 miles north-west of Ludlow. It gets its name from the fact that it was granted, after the Norman Conquest, to Picot (Robert) de Say. The Say family were lords of Clun and continued as such until their male line ran out. Then in 1155 the heiress, Isabel de Say married William FitzAlan, Lord of Oswestry and so Hopesay became a FitzAlan possession.

The Hopesay Coat of Arms - Impaling or Dimidiating?



When the coat of arms of a husband and wife are shown together, the husband's arms are normally shown on the dexter side (left as we look at it) and the wife's on the sinister side. In the early days, it was common to cut each person's coat of arms right down the middle and then join the two halves together. This is called dimidiation and there is a good example of this in St Mary's church in Warwick where the arms of Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick are dimidiated with those of Katherine Mortimer, daughter of Roger Mortimer, 1st Earl of March.

The Beauchamp arms dimidiated with Mortimer on a roof boss over their monument in Warwick



Rather hidden away, in the church of St Mary in Hopesay is a faded window bearing the arms of the 4th Earl of Arundel, Richard FitzAlan, and his second wife Philippa Mortimer. It can be dated fairly accurately as they were together for only twelve years, at the most, from their marriage in or after 1385 to his death in 1397.

Unfortunately, chopping shields in half down the middle and sticking the different halves together (dimidiation) often created problems, especially if shields were not symmetrical. So the practice gradually gave way to impalement. When two coats of arms are impaled, each of the two coats is



For reference - the coat of arms of the Earl of Arundel - quarterly FitzAlan and Warenne

squeezed into half of the new shield. The really interesting thing about the FitzAlan & Mortimer shield at Hopesay is that the FitzAlan side is shown complete, but the Mortimer side has been halved, so the two shields are neither really impaled nor dimidiated.

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EASTERN WALES IN THE 13th CENTURY - WHAT WAS REALLY HAPPENING?

One of the most enjoyable and thought-provoking of the lectures at the Symposium was given by Dr David Stephenson, Honorary Research Fellow at Bangor University. We tend to think of the Welsh as being a nation oppressed by the English monarchy and the Marcher Lords, who have taken every opportunity to hit back at their oppressors - just as one would expect them to do. However, David painted a very different picture of Eastern Wales in the second half of the 13th century. The paragraphs below are not a précis of David's talk, but they seek to capture the essence of his argument.

There is plenty of evidence that the Welsh 'aristocracy' living within Marcher lordships had, over the years, become increasingly integrated within the hierarchy of their English 'oppressors'. Senior officials within these Welsh Marcher lordships were frequently Welsh themselves, and there was considerable intermarriage between the Welsh and the Anglo-Normans. Some of the Welsh gained wealth and fame and it can be argued that the ordinary Welsh people also benefitted from the orderly, peaceful and fairly benign rule imposed by most of the Marcher Lords.

Although the part of Wales not under Norman domination varied in extent over the years, the heartland of the native Welsh was Gwynedd in the north west, dominated by the Snowdon range. It was from this area that Llywelyn ap Gruffydd emerged as the 'Prince of Wales' before the devastating campaigns of Edward I. Having extended his power base in North Wales, Llywelyn attempted to negotiate a permanent peace with the English which would leave him free to govern Wales without interference, and he was willing to pay for it. Following the Battle of Lewes in 1264, Llywelyn won a very favourable agreement from Simon de Montfort which clearly evaporated after de Montfort's death at the Battle of Evesham the following year. He persevered, however, and in the Treaty of Montgomery in 1267, he was recognised by King Henry III as the 'Prince of Wales' with direct control over various lands in mid-Wales, including Builth. The agreement came at a price, however. Llywelyn agreed to pay Henry 25,000 marks at a rate of 3,000 each year, a huge sum equal to the annual income (not the disposable cash) of an English earl. Dr Stephenson made it very clear that, to many of the Welsh in Eastern Wales, the arrival of Llywelyn on the scene was not a welcome change. They probably saw the people emerging from Gwynedd as having little in common with them. Their orientation was towards the east, with England, not towards the west. To them, these Gwynedd people were effectively 'foreigners'. Not only did the coming of Llywelyn represent unwanted change, but he brought with him a crippling debt which they were expected to help to pay off. There is ample evidence that these 'English-oriented' Welsh acted as an effective spy network, keeping the English up-to-date with what was going on. When Llywelyn was ambushed and murdered near Builth in 1282, it was almost certainly with local Welsh collusion.



The monument to Llewelyn ap Gruffydd at Cilmeri near Builth

David Stephenson's new book on the medieval history of Powys has just been published - see Rollo's Books at the end of this newsletter. [link](#) [Return](#)

THE LAST OF THE MORTIMER STARS - A WOMAN

A synopsis by John Grove of the talk he gave at the Autumn Symposium.

Many Mortimer genealogies end with highlighting Edward IV, and sometimes Richard III, as the last of the Mortimer grandchildren. Little is known of the significant achievements of their sister Margaret of York, who outlived them all. In 1468, aged 22, she married Charles the Bold, and became the Duchess of Burgundy. The wedding was celebrated with the most wonderful parade and pageants in the city of Bruges, and a nine day tournament of the Golden Tree. It was called by historians 'the wedding of the century'. After all, Charles was hoping for an heir and was celebrating the Anglo- Burgundian alliance. John Paston witnessed it, and said in the Paston letters, that he had heard of nothing like it, since the days of King Arthur. Margaret was a granddaughter of Anne Mortimer, and a daughter of Richard of



Margaret of York

Philip the Bold

York and Cecily Neville. She was well trained in her mother's homes, especially Fotheringhay castle, and was the First Lady at the coronations of Edward and Elizabeth Woodville, and at their court. She was a tall imposing lady with evident determination and growing political skills. She represented and supported her husband Charles fully as he strove to expand the Duchy of Burgundy in the Netherlands and nearby, often by military means. Margaret was also an invaluable ally of the House of York, giving hospitality in Bruges to Edward in his time of exile in 1470-71, meeting him and his army in Calais in 1475, and travelling to London for 3 months in 1480 to renegotiate with Edward on behalf of Maximilian, who as Archduke of Austria, now held the Burgundian Netherlands.

After Charles's untimely death on the battlefield of Nancy 1477, she cared for and advised her step daughter Mary as the new Duchess, and helped to secure her marriage to Maximilian of Austria. After Mary's sudden death in a riding accident, she brought up Mary's children. She was highly respected by the Estates General, and the city states of Bruges, Ghent and others. From her palace in Mechelen she administered her large dower lands, supported the Church in many ways, and encouraged Renaissance artists in the production of paintings, tapestries, jewellery, and manuscripts. Indeed William Caxton was in her employ, and she sponsored the printing of the first book in English, made by Caxton in Bruges, who is seen presenting her with a copy, on the frontispiece of *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy*



Margaret's crown, now in the museum in Aachen



Caxton presenting Margaret with the first book printed in English

As Dowager Duchess of Burgundy, 'Madame la Grande' had an international reputation with the rulers of France, England and the Hapsburgs. Edward acknowledged her as 'My well beloved sister'. Maximilian relied on her support and counsel. King Louis of France regarded her as a redoubtable foe. Even Henry VII was troubled by her continuing support for the Yorkist cause and her involvement in the causes of Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck. Her tomb epitaph contained these words.

"Beneath the threshold of the doors of the choir the most illustrious princess, the lady Margaret of England, Duchess of Burgundy, ordered her body to be buried. Sister of their serene highnesses Edward and Richard, kings of England, wife of the late illustrious Charles, Duke of Burgundy, and of Brabant, Count of Flanders, and Artois etc.....a marvellous and devout patroness of justice, and of religion and reform in her dower town of Malines (Mechelen) the twenty third of November in the year of our Lord 1503. Pray for her."

Further reading

Christine Weightman *Margaret of York* Amberley 2009 (large size)

Sarah Gristwood *Blood Sisters* Basic Books 2013

Harry Schnitker *Margaret of York* Richard III and Yorkist Hist. Trust 2016

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THE TOURNEYING SOCIETY OF THE MIDDLE AGES

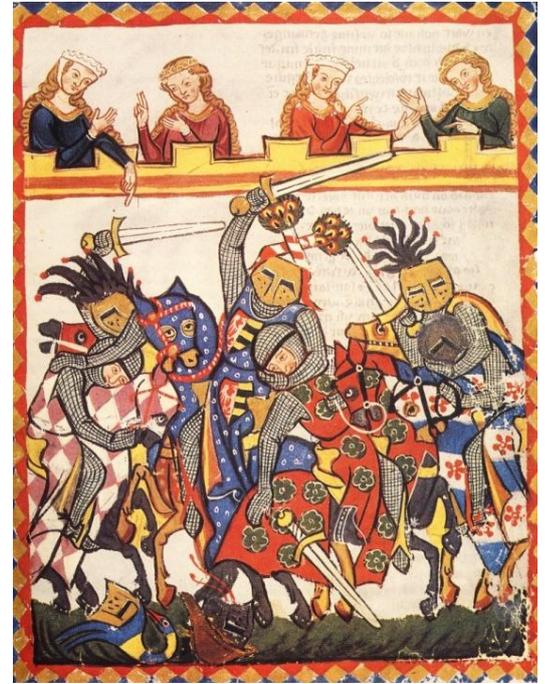
This is a report by Philip Hume on the talk given by Professor David Crouch of the University of Hull at our Spring Conference held in May 2016. In his lecture, Professor Crouch explained the origin and development of melee tournaments, their role and importance, why monarchs attempted to ban them, and their eventual replacement by jousts.

As you would expect from a prominent and ambitious family, keen to rise politically and within the nobility, the Mortimers are very evident in tournaments – participating and even being killed in them – and also in organising great tournaments. Most famously, Hugh Mortimer, lord of Wigmore died – ‘crushed and broken’ – in a tournament in 1227 held under the patronage of the Earl of Pembroke near Chepstow. This was held in Wales as Henry II had banned them in England. Later, Roger Mortimer (d.1282) organised a great tournament at Kenilworth.

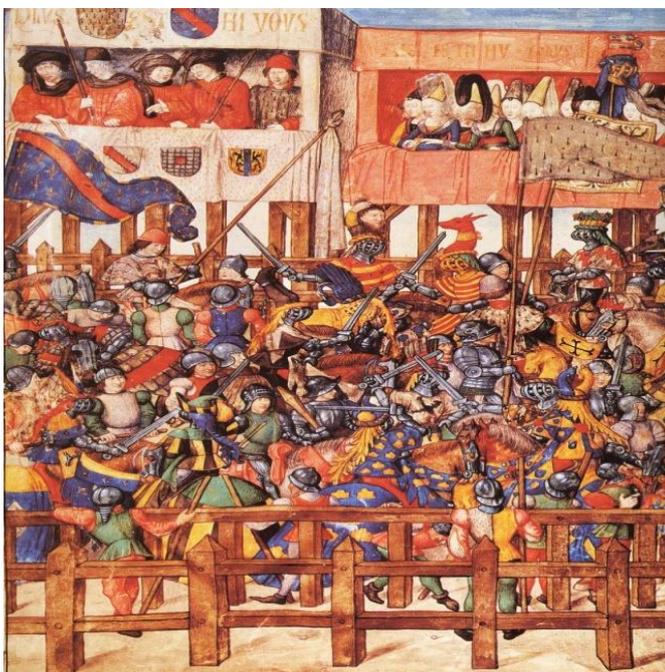
Tournaments developed in the 11th and 12th centuries and the main feature was a mock battle or melee for knights only, held at an approved site after a proclamation. The word ‘tournament’ comes from ‘torner’ = to twist or to spin around, a reference to the fact that the height of the tournament was the grand charge where knights would charge at the opposing line, then turn around before fighting one-to-one or in small groups. If you overcame someone and they surrendered, you won the prize of their horse, armour, and sometimes a ransom fee. Successful tournament knights could become wealthy, famous and embark on successful careers. Some knights who clearly knew the value of publicity, paid for their performance to be announced. Tournaments were at the centre of the life of the nobility and were greatly enjoyed. At the height of their popularity they could involve as many as 3000 knights.

In the early period, the focus of the tournament was the ‘tournee’ not jousting, though the joust ultimately killed the tournament. One-to-one jousts are as old as the tournament, initially being held the evening before the grand charge, where individual jousting took place to give young knights an opportunity to distinguish themselves in a situation where their performance was much more visible, with ‘scouts’ watching the jousts looking for people to join the main tournament teams.

The main reason why we know a fair amount about tournaments is the survival of the biography written c1225 of William Marshal, who became the best example of how a successful tournament knight could rise to the highest positions in the land. William first rode in a tournament in 1166, aged just 20, and competed for the next 17 years until he retired in 1283. His renown was such that he rose to an earldom and in 1216 to the Regency of England. One of the young knights attached to his affinity was Ralph Mortimer (d1246).



The Melée



It is thought that the origin of tournaments lies in 11th century ‘Peace Legislation’ which drove knights to borderlands to fight beyond princely or episcopal authority and there are references in early 12th century documents. There was a tournament circuit in north-east France by the 1120s and in the 1130s an English knight, Osbert of Arden, is recorded as travelling around England and the Continent in search of tournaments. By the later 12th century there were a number of identified circuits - a Rhineland circuit, an Occitan circuit in Southern Europe, the main heartland of Northern France and an Anglo-Scottish one.

Absolute chaos!

What happened at a tourney?

Tournaments were day-long formal events that followed a defined course and custom. The site chosen for a tournament was always between two towns and there were teams in the tournament representing each town in the grand charge. The field had fenced-off rest areas (lists) and stands for spectators. Tournaments began with a parade of each team in front of the lists. Average sized tournaments involved c.600 knights though the greatest ones could involve up to 3000. At the signal from the herald the 'Grand Charge' would start with the two sides charging towards each other, eyeing up opponents to strike down. Following the charge it would become a general melee with knights seeking to bring down or even carry off their opponents to be ransomed. Great lords present would be protected by the men of their *mesnie*, or household. The fighting would split up across the countryside. There was no set way for the tournament to end and it could go on into the evening. Sometimes one side would lose morale and head for the protection of their lists. Afterwards, symbolic prizes were awarded to the 'man of the match' on both sides at a 'gala dinner'.

Much of the equipment associated with medieval knights was not for battle but for tournaments, as knights took part in far more tournaments than battles. The teams of knights around a key leader had to be identifiable so the Lord provided caparisoned decoration on the horses. Streamers designed to whip out behind the knights as they rode in the great charge were used to make them look bolder and braver. Bucket helmets were very impractical in battle but useful against spear point in tournament.

There were many serious injuries in tournaments, but rarely death (the Mortimers were very unlucky). A knight could be trampled if he came off his horse in the grand charge. In the 12th century they didn't use blunted weapons, as that only happened in 13th century. By the late fifteenth century, people were aiming to avoid injury, so knights were screwed into armour, when jousting, and fixed to the saddle in very heavy and protective gear.



Jousting

Why did tournaments decline?

Tournaments continued to the late 14th century, but their decline began much earlier. Kings were usually not keen on the pastime. Tourneying knights tended to be defiant and used to making their own judgements. They could bring disorder to the roads, moving from one tournament to the next. Popes also didn't like them, seeing that Christian knights were using energy fighting each other that should be used to fight the heathen. Tournaments were banned in France during the second crusade and no king of France ever went on the tournament field. Henry II banned tournaments in England though Richard I licensed them to raise money. Henry III banned them though his son Edward I revived them and for a while made England the leading tourneying nation. But they were in decline by the 1330s and none were held in England after 1348.

Knights got round the prohibitions by emphasising the joust, which eventually replaced tournaments. Jousts often had a 'Round Table', Arthurian theme and had a great emphasis on entertainment with tents, field kitchens, food, display of the prize, dancing, receptions and invitations to attend. The entertainment was making up for the danger of the melee tournament.

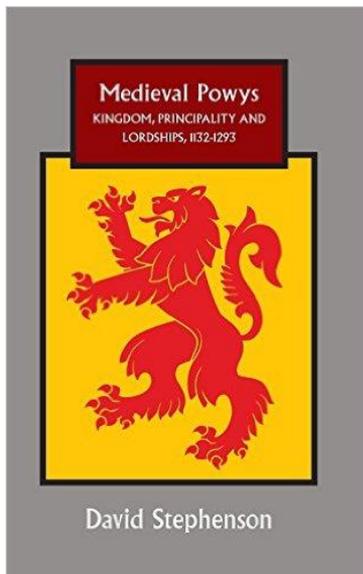
Importance of the Tournament

Medieval knights justified tournaments on military grounds, arguing that they offered elite training for war. They also functioned as a 'finishing school' for the high nobility; they were opportunities for career advancement as knights such as William Marshal could acquire employment, transfer fees and ransoms; they were an opportunity for status and diplomacy as they provided opportunities for the lords and nobles to meet at pre- and post-tournament

dinners and receptions where they could negotiate relationships and marriages; they also gave women a role as patrons of tournaments, hosts and as judges. [Return](#)

ROLLO'S BOOKS

We're grateful to MHS member Rollo Crookshank who keeps an eye out for books that may be of interest to our members.

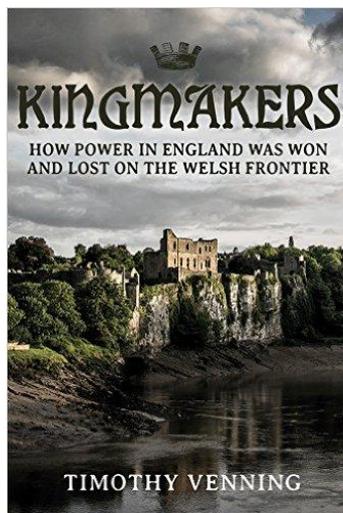


Medieval Powys: Kingdom, Principality and Lordships, 1132-1293 **David Stephenson**

Powys, extending over north-east and central Wales, was one of three great medieval Welsh polities, along with Gwynedd to the north and Deheubarth (south-west), occupying nearly a quarter of the country. However, it has been somewhat neglected by historians, who have tended to dismiss it as a satellite realm of England, and viewed its leaders as obstacles to the efforts of Gwynedd leaders to construct a principality of Wales. This book provides the first full, authoritative history of Powys in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It argues in particular that the Powysian rulers were dogged and resourceful survivors in the face of pressure from Welsh rivals and the problems of internal fragmentation; and that, paradoxically, co-operation with the English and intermarriage with marcher families underlay a desire to regain lands to the east lost in earlier centuries.

Dr David Stephenson is an Honorary Research Fellow in the School of History, Welsh History and Archaeology, Bangor University.

ISBN 9781783271405 Boydell Press(2016) £60



Kingmakers: how power in England was won and lost on the Welsh frontier **Timothy Venning**

Decentralisation and outsourcing are not new to British history. In medieval England the practical limitations of the reach of the Crown forced the king and the government to entrust some autonomy and legal powers to its regional aristocratic rulers. The Norman and Plantagenet kings relied upon these nobles for the protection of the dangerous frontiers of the realm.

In Wales, as in Ireland, the smaller size and military inferiority of the often divided neighbouring states encouraged conquest, with the seized lands enhancing the power of the aggressive English lords' domains. The great lords of the Welsh Marches were granted ever greater authority to the point where they believed they ruled like kings. They intermarried, schemed for extra lands and snatched power in a complex and often violent political process. Due to their huge resources and unparalleled military experience, they soon came to overawe weak kings and dominate national events.

The strength of the Marcher Lords would come to the fore at various points throughout history, characterised by notorious figures such as Simon de Montfort, Roger Mortimer and Edward IV. Timothy Venning showcases the mentality of the Lords of the Marches, and reveals the dramatic careers of those who prospered from their loyalty to the king, to those whose power was gained by treachery. This is their story, from the Norman Conquest to the beginnings of the Tudor dynasty.

Timothy Venning studied history at Kings College, London to PhD level, winning the London University History Prize in 1979. He has written articles for the Dictionary of National Biography, as well as a book on Oliver Cromwell and reference works on British office-holders and the chronology of the Byzantine Empire. He also contributes to major biographical publications and his research forms the basis for many other publications.

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