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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Thursday 2nd March - The Mortimers - Our most famous local Family

7.30pm A talk by Philip Hume organised by Tenbury Wells History Society. In the Pump Rooms, Teme Street, Tenbury Wells WR15 8BA. Non-members £2.

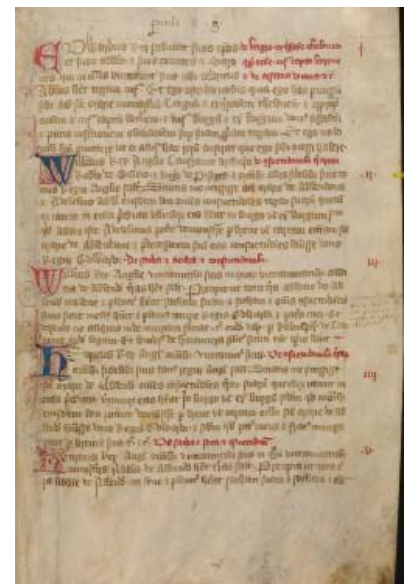
Saturday 11th March - MHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

To be held at the new Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre (HARC) at Rotherwas just south of Hereford. 09.30 for 10.00. Everyone welcome - no charge. Finishes about 13.00. HARC is on Fir Tree Lane, Rotherwas, HR2 6LA

After the AGM, Barbara Wright will speak about her extensive research into the *Mortimer Cartularies* including *The Black Book of Wigmore* of the 14th century. A cartulary is a collection of copies of documents or abstracts. Typically these were produced by ecclesiastical establishments to keep together copies of charters of their foundation, gifts they have received, land transactions etc. The Black Book of Wigmore is unusual in being a secular cartulary. It was created for Edmund Mortimer, 3rd Earl of March and relates to Mortimer land transactions, some of them going back for centuries. A second cartulary contains details of charters relating to Edmund's wife, Philippa, Countess of Ulster and granddaughter of king Edward III. Together these two collections of charters represent possibly the most complete set of records of any medieval family.

Barbara Wright has spent many years transcribing and translating these important documents. Where there are inconsistencies or gaps in the information, she has consulted other available documents in her quest to build as accurate a picture as possible. Some fascinating glimpses of medieval life emerge, including marriage contracts of children.

We will also have the opportunity to tour the Centre and inspect some of its documents. See more about Barbara Wright and the Black Book of Wigmore [here](#)



A 14th century cartulary of
Abingdon Abbey

Tuesday 14th March 2017 - Sir Henry Sidney and the Ludlow Castle Heraldic Roll

A talk in the Ludlow Lectures series by MHS members Rosalind Caird and Hugh Wood. Ludlow Assembly Rooms between 10.00 and 12.00. £5 on the door.

Commissioned around 1576 by Sir Henry Sidney, Lord President of the Council of Wales and the Marches, the roll displays the coats of arms of 42 people associated with the castle including Mortimers and Yorkists. In her lecture Rosalind will talk about the roll and about the colourful person who commissioned it. Hugh's contribution will concentrate on the heraldry. MHS members are very much involved in raising money to secure this important document and make full use of it. A facsimile of the roll will be used to enhance our existing programme in primary schools. To learn all about it, what we plan to do with it and whose coats of arms are displayed [click here](#)



The 15-foot heraldic roll

Tuesday 14th March 2017 -

Public Display of the newly-discovered Ludlow Castle Heraldic Roll

See above. At Oscars in Ludlow Assembly Rooms between 12.30 and 3.00. No charge. All welcome

Saturday 13th May 2017 - MHS SPRING CONFERENCE - THE MEDIEVAL WELSH MARCHER LORDSHIPS

9.30 for 10.00 in the Auditorium at Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Mill Street, Ludlow

This important conference will study the Marcher Lordships from a variety of different standpoints. Confirmed lectures include:

The Development of the Welsh Marcher Lordships from 1066 to the Edwardian Settlement

by Dr Max Lieberman, University of Zurich

The Welsh Perspective on the Marcher Lordships

by Dr David Stephenson, University of Bangor

The Marcher Lords and the Politics of the English State

by Dr Timothy Venning

Author of 'Kingmakers: how Power in England was won and lost on the Welsh Frontier'

The Marcher Lordships in Decline?: Politics and Power in the century to 1536

by Prof. Tim Thornton (University of Huddersfield)

Members £27.50, non-members £32.50 which includes a 3-course buffet meal

Further details of the programme and speakers and how to book your place can be found [here](#)

Tuesday 11th July 2017 - MHS Summer Lecture - Rebellion in the Marches

by Prof. Matthew Strickland (University of Glasgow)

Evening lecture at Grange Court, Leominster. More details later

Details of Prof. Strickland's recent book *Henry the Young King 1155-1183* are given in Rollo's Books at the end of this edition.

Saturday 7th October 2017 - MHS Autumn Symposium

An all-day symposium on a variety of subjects held in Oscars at Ludlow Assembly Rooms. This was a very popular event in 2016 so note the date. Full details later.

NEWS ITEMS

'Mortimer Matters'

Those of you who have been members for several years will have noticed that what started out as just a newsletter now includes short popular articles, often contributed by members of the Society. As it is no longer strictly a newsletter we have renamed it as *Mortimer Matters* which gives us the freedom to put in whatever we like.

The bulletin often contains links to articles on our website or elsewhere. If you don't use a computer but would like to follow a particular link, contact the editor - details are at the top of the first page.

We are aware that many of our newer members may not have a clear picture of the history of the Mortimer family, so we're going to tell that story in a series of basic articles in the next few issues of *Mortimer Matters*. The next issue will include an article on the beginnings of the Mortimers in Normandy and their early years in England.

The 2016 MHS Essay Competition and the Mortimer Journal

We were delighted to receive nine entries for the Essay Prize in its first year. The judges, under the chairmanship of Prof. Chris Given-Wilson, were very impressed by the general quality of the entries.

First Prize (£750)

Miraculous Marches: The Cult of Thomas de Cantilupe and the Mortimers
by Ian Bass

Second Prize (£300)

Legal Culture in a medieval Marcher Lordship: a comparative analysis of the Dyffryn Clwyd court rolls
by Angharad Jones

Commended

Heartless, Witless, Graceless, Thriftless: Roger Mortimer and the Scots 1326-1328
by Ethan Gould

Commended

How to make an Entrance: an overlooked aspect of native Welsh masonry castle design
by Craig Jones

Commended

Networking the March: A History of Hereford and Its Region from the 11th to 13th centuries
by Matthew Lampitt

To read synopses of these articles and biographies of the authors [click here](#)

The prizewinning entries, together with some of the others, will appear in the 2017 edition of the *Mortimer Journal* which is being re-established on an annual basis. All five authors listed above have been given three years honorary membership of the Society. As it has been so successful, the MHS Essay Prize is being run again this year.



The tomb of St Thomas Cantilupe in Hereford Cathedral

Charity Status

After lots of hard work by successive secretaries and our treasurer, we are now a *Charitable Incorporated Organisation* with registration number 1171392. This enables us to claim gift aid on all subscriptions and donations from UK tax payers without it costing members a penny. Gift aid means that your subscription or donation is increased by 25%, a huge boost to the Society, turning a £12 subscription into £15. We will shortly be sending out gift aid declaration forms and ask all UK taxpayers to indicate their agreement.

New Members

We welcome the following new members who have joined the Society since the last edition.

John Barratt, Ludlow, Shropshire UK

Ian Bass, Hereford UK

Di Bryan, Birmingham UK

Alan & Bev Dowdy, Leinthall Starks, Herefordshire UK

Bev Farnell, Whitton, Shropshire UK

Robin Garcia, Easley, South Carolina, USA

Peter Van Geersdaele, Halesowen, West Midlands UK

Ethan Gould, Cook, Canberra, Australia

Chris Gray, Tredegar, South Wales UK

Mandy Gunter, Little Wenlock, Shropshire UK

Lavinia & Michael Hardwick, Droitwich Spa,
Worcestershire UK

Jonathan Hopkinson, Leintwardine, Herefordshire UK

Iwan Hughes, Neen Savage, Shropshire UK

Julia and Anthony Jacobus, Staunton-on Arrow
Herefordshire UK

Angharad Jones, Oxford UK

Craig Jones, San Jose, California USA

Matthew Lampitt, Lyonshall, Herefordshire UK

Kenneth Mortimer, Wellington, New Zealand

Caroline John, Neenton, Shropshire UK

Craufurd & Edwina Matthews, Petersfield, Hampshire UK

Betsy Mortimer, Annapolis, Maryland, USA

James Mortimer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire UK

Jolene & Jim Neri, Hillsborough, North Carolina USA

Val Proctor, Ludlow, Shropshire UK

Judith Ridley, Wokingham, Berkshire UK

Stephen St Clair, Berkeley Heights, New Jersey USA

Roy and Lois Thwaites, Ludlow, Shropshire UK

Changes to Subscription Arrangements

The increasing size of the Society means that reminding members to renew their subscriptions is becoming quite a chore for the Membership Secretary. At a recent meeting the trustees considered a number of measures to encourage timely membership renewal. It was agreed that members who are late in renewing will no longer be eligible for members' discounts at events or receive the Mortimer Journal, until they have renewed. It was also agreed that members whose subscriptions have lapsed for over 3 months should be removed from membership. Of course the most helpful thing you could do is set up a standing order either with your bank or via Paypal. Many thanks to all our members who already do this - it really helps.

A Reluctant Traitor? Sir Edmund Mortimer and the Battle of Bryn Glas (1402) - by John Barratt

In this article MHS member John Barratt tells the story of Sir Edmund Mortimer as far as it is known and enlivens the bare facts by offering informed suggestions about what may have occurred at various times and why. John is currently Secretary of the Ludlow Historical Research Group. Following a career as a librarian he now researches and writes on a variety of historical subjects, with the medieval period and English Civil War being particular interests.

Shakespeare, in his *King Henry IV - Part 1* has the king voice an opinion of Sir Edmund Mortimer which has been current ever since:

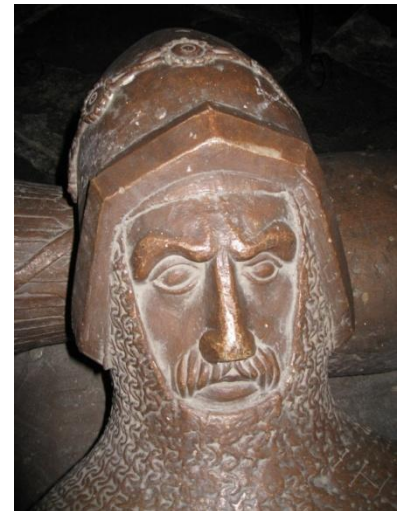
'...the foolish Mortimer;
Who, on my soul, hath wilfully betray'd
The lives of those that he did lead to fight
Against that great magician, damn'd Glendower...'

Sir Edmund has a good claim to be regarded as one of the unluckiest of the Mortimers. Defeated in both of his recorded military actions, he is usually portrayed as an unsuccessful commander and failed rebel against the Lancastrian regime of King Henry IV. But is this view entirely fair? An examination of the evidence perhaps suggests the need for a re-assessment.

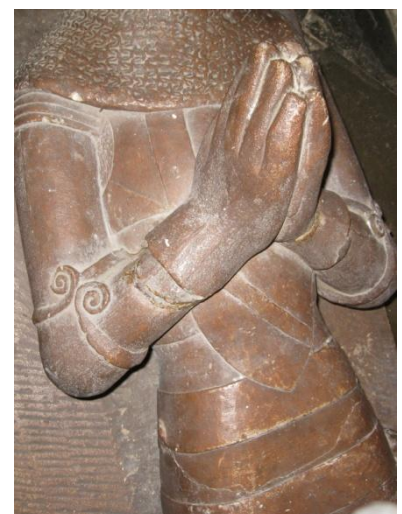
Born on 9 November 1376 in Ludlow, Edmund was the youngest son of Edmund Mortimer, third Earl of March, and his wife Philippa. Legend would later suggest that Edmund's birth was marked by various ominous portents, but his early life held little suggestion of the drama which lay ahead. His father died when Edmund was aged five, but he left him well-provided for and he was on close terms with the new Earl of March, his elder brother, Roger.

By the time Sir Edmund reached manhood, the Hundred Years War with France was in one of its quieter phases, and he would have had little opportunity to gain military experience in Europe. However he served as Roger's lieutenant in Ireland in 1397, which may have given him some 'feel' for the kind of guerrilla-style conflict he would later encounter in the Glyn Dwr revolt.

Earl Roger died on 15 August 1398, and Edmund became guardian of his infant nephew, Edmund, fifth earl of March, and administrator of the family estates, as well as his own possessions. It was said, though definite proof is lacking, that King Richard II had nominated Roger Mortimer as his heir-apparent. Many contemporaries believed this to be the case, but despite the Mortimer claim to the English throne, Sir Edmund apparently made no effort to oppose Henry Bolingbroke's return to England in 1399, submitting to him at Hereford on 2nd August. Neither does he seem to have voiced any objection to the deposition of Richard II and Henry's accession to the throne. Sir Edmund evidently spent the next few months administering the Mortimer estates in the Marches and Wales, based at Ludlow and perhaps Wigmore. However the outbreak of Owain Glyn Dwr's rising in September 1400 soon placed the Mortimer estates in the forefront of conflict. Sir Edmund may be assumed to have taken part in King Henry's abortive expeditions into Wales in 1400 and 1401, and in the autumn of 1401 he apparently acted, with the king's approval, as a go-between in the unsuccessful peace talks held between Glyn Dwr, the Earl of Northumberland, and the earl's son, Sir Henry Percy ('Hotspur'), who was married to Sir Edmund's sister, Elizabeth.



A partially-remodelled effigy in Montgomery church thought by some to represent Sir Edmund Mortimer.



His surcoat bears the Mortimer arms but the central escutcheon has been differenced with a bend, indicating a younger son



Statue of Owain Glyn Dwr in Corwen, Denbighshire

It may have been because of these on-going negotiations that the Mortimer estates around Denbigh were spared Welsh raids. It has been suggested that the Percies and Mortimer began actively conspiring with Glyn Dwr at this time, and that for this reason the Mortimer estates around Denbigh were largely spared from attack, but there is no clear evidence to support this theory. However this apparent immunity would later be used by Sir Edmund's enemies as evidence of his duplicity. With the breakdown in peace talks, the Welsh rebellion spread rapidly in the spring of 1402, and Mortimer possessions were no longer immune from attack. May and June 1402 witnessed Welsh raids on a wide scale in Maelinydd, the Mortimer territories in mid-Wales roughly corresponding to present-day southern Powys. Attacks also penetrated into western Shropshire. The raiders set light to churches in the region which had been paying tithes to the English, fired farms and carried off livestock. It was a challenge which Sir Edmund, currently in Ludlow, could not ignore. It may be that the final decisive act was a raid on the town of Knighton, where some destruction apparently took place at this time.

Sir Edmund's response was to call out 'almost all the militia of Herefordshire', reinforced by his household troops from Ludlow, and the retainers of some minor local gentry. Contemporary accounts probably exaggerate the number of men Mortimer was able to muster; he most likely had no more than 2,000 troops, perhaps fewer. There is no complete listing of the local gentry who joined Sir Edmund, but they included Sir Walter Devereux of Weobley and Lyonshall, Sir Robert Whitney of Whitney on Wye, Sir Kinnard de la Bere of Kinnersley Castle near Weobley and Sir Thomas Clanvowe of Pychard Cusop and Hergest. Mortimer seems, in fact, to have collected what reinforcements he could along his line of march. In the process he was joined by a significant number of Welsh tenants from his Maelinydd estates.

It is usually said that the Welsh forces operating in the area were led by Owain Glyn Dwr in person, but there is no confirmation that he was present. A story that he prayed in St Mary's Church at Pilleth before the battle is cast into doubt by evidence that it was on fire during the action, no doubt set ablaze by the Welsh for the same reasons as other churches in the area. The Welsh may in fact have been led by Rhys Gethin, one of Glyn Dwr's ablest commanders. There is some uncertainty about the opening moves of both forces. Mortimer left Ludlow probably on the morning of 21 June, at which point the Welsh could still have been in the vicinity of Knighton. On receiving news of Mortimer's advance, they may have moved at once to the Pilleth area. There is equal uncertainty about Mortimer's line of march. He may have gone via Wigmore, in order to pick up troops from there, and then to Lingen and on to Knighton and Stapleton Norton. However, given the locations from which he collected reinforcements, it is perhaps more likely that Mortimer's route was directly from Ludlow to Richard's Castle and thence via Shobdon and Rodd to Presteigne, where the English force may have halted for the night.



St Mary's church on the hillside at Pilleth

It was probably quite early on the following morning, 22 June, having crossed the River Lugg, that Mortimer sighted the enemy on the slopes of Bryn Glas, which rises to around 330 metres, just west of the hamlet of Pilleth. It is possible that Mortimer was ambushed, a circumstance which would lend credence to the claims that he had deliberately led his men into a trap. However most authorities assume that a regular battle took place. Mortimer could see some of Rhys Gethin's men on the upper slopes of Bryn Glas, and they may have begun an archery barrage on the English troops. The English commander had little option but to order a general advance up the steep eastern slope of Bryn Glas towards the enemy.

Battle may have been already joined when a force of Welsh spearmen hidden in a wooded gully hit Mortimer's men in a flank attack. Many of Mortimer's Welsh archers apparently changed sides, and attacked their erstwhile comrades. The bulk of Sir Edmund's men routed and fled down the slope back towards the River Lugg. Sir Edmund himself, and the knights with him, presumably with their household troops, fought on in a fierce struggle whose savagery is evidenced by the fact that, of the known English leaders, only Sir Edmund, possibly wounded and spared because of his ransom value, and Sir Thomas Clanvowe, who had Welsh ancestry, were taken alive.



The hill of Bryn Glas with Pilleth church on the right

Some of the fugitives were cut down on the slopes of Bryn Glas, or in the valley of the Lugg. Contemporary estimates of the dead vary between 200 and 1,500. The latter figure is probably too high, and it may be that the actual total was around 400. The contemporary chronicler John Capgrave, backed by Holinshed writing 40 years later, wrote of the mutilations of the English dead carried out by Welsh women who were with Rhys Gethin, though some modern writers have discounted these allegations.

The captive Sir Edmund was taken to Glyndwr's heartland in North Wales. Normally he could expect to be ransomed, and both he and his brother-in-law, Hotspur, anticipated that this would happen. But, although the other important prisoner, Sir Thomas Clanvowe, obtained his ransom without difficulty, this did not happen in

the case of Sir Edmund. By late October Hotspur was angrily pressing King Henry to agree to Mortimer's ransom in the same way as he had that of Lord Grey of Ruthin, captured by Glyn Dwr in April. But the king refused, claiming at first that he had no intention of financing the Welsh rebellion by allowing Mortimer's ransom to be paid. He went on to accuse Mortimer of deliberately leading his army into a trap, resulting, according to one account, in an angry retort from Hotspur: 'Shall a man expose himself to danger for your sake, and you refuse to help him in captivity?'. The Percies were again involved in abortive negotiations with Glyn Dwr that autumn, and will have been able to apprise Mortimer of the king's attitude.

It seems to have been this which caused Sir Edmund to throw in his lot with Glyn Dwr. In December, in what may have been a romantic attachment, but which certainly had political implications, Sir Edmund married Glyn Dwr's daughter, Caitlin. At the same time he issued a proclamation to his tenants in Maelinydd, calling on their support to restore King Richard, if he were still alive and, failing that, to recognise his nephew Edmund, Earl of March as rightful king. Mortimer's demand seems to have met with little response. Indeed, one of those to whom it was addressed, Sir John Grendor, was an English leader at the battle of Grosmont in 1405, where Rhys Gethin may have been killed.

Sir Edmund henceforward slips into relative obscurity. He apparently played no part in the rebellion of July 1403, which culminated in Hotspur's defeat and death at the battle of Shrewsbury. He was one of the participants in the Tripartite Indenture of early 1405, in which Glyn Dwr, the earl of Northumberland and Sir Edmund theoretically divided England and Wales between them. An attempt was made to rescue the young Earl of March from what was effectually house arrest at Windsor and to bring him and his brother to Wales to join the rebellion. The recapture of the boys by the king was a blow to the rebels' already fading hopes of overthrowing the Lancastrian regime.



Harlech Castle on the Welsh coast

Little more is heard of Sir Edmund until the later stages of the rebellion in 1408-9, when he and his wife and children were in the garrison of Harlech Castle whilst it was under siege by English government forces. Sir Edmund died in the course of the siege, and his wife and children were taken to captivity in London, where they too died, possibly of plague in 1413.

Opinions differ on Sir Edmund Mortimer's ability. He had little success as a soldier, though evidently he was personally brave. He seems however to have had minimal influence on political events after joining Glyn Dwr in what was primarily a Welsh uprising. Sir Edmund has gone down in history as the 'traitor' portrayed by Shakespeare. Some might feel that to be a harsh judgment on a man at the mercy of events.

Maud FitzAlan and Scottish Monarchy by Fran Norton

In this article MHS member Fran Norton looks at the life of Maud FitzAlan, daughter of John FitzAlan, de jure Earl of Arundel, and Isabel Mortimer, daughter of Roger Mortimer (d1282) and Maud de Braose.

In 1283 the marriage took place between Maud FitzAlan and Sir Philip Burnell, the first of her three marriages. Maud was the granddaughter of Maud de Braose and the late Baron Roger Mortimer who had died the previous year. Like most marriages between noble families, money and land were involved and Maud's marriage was no different: her brother Richard FitzAlan, Earl of Arundel had paid 4000 marks as part of her dowry, a huge financial incentive. The fact that Sir Philip was nephew and heir of Robert Burnell, Bishop of Bath and Wells and long-time friend and advisor to Edward I, probably played some part in this arrangement, as Robert had amassed a great deal of wealth and lands throughout the kingdom over his long years of service. Robert Burnell had illegitimate sons but they had all died during the Welsh Wars.



Acton Burnell church and the ruins of Chancellor Robert Burnell's great house

Philip and Maud had two children, a daughter christened Maud, and a son, Edward. During the year 1292, the deaths occurred of Alicia de Saluzzo, her sister-in-law, wife of Richard FitzAlan, and of their mother, Isabella Mortimer. Robert Burnell, England's Chancellor, also died at Berwick on his way to Scotland. The latter's death meant the vast fortune of eighty four properties and lands which spread across nineteen counties now passed to Sir Philip. Throughout Robert Burnell's time in office he never forgot his home at Acton Burnell, which lies close to Shrewsbury. He had obtained a licence to have the fortified manor house crenellated and there is a plaque, which records the 'first' parliament being held there in 1283.

Records show that in 1295 Maud took as her second husband, Robert de Brus or Bruce. Although still styled Lord of Annandale and Earl of Carrick these titles had, in fact, already been renounced in favour of his son Robert - later to become the famed king of Scotland. This transfer of titles was an expedient measure undertaken so that the older Bruce could ignore the summons of John Baliol, acting king of Scotland, to swear fealty for his lands in Annandale. The decision of the senior Bruce to forego his titles also served another important purpose: to avoid jeopardizing the legitimate claim of the Bruce family to the Scottish throne. Immediately after their marriage in September of 1295, Bruce the elder was made Constable of Carlisle Castle and subsequently accompanied Edward I into Scotland where he fought in the Battle of Dunbar in April 1296.



An atmospheric view of the remains of Dunbar castle

Soon after the battle, Bruce again swore fealty to the Plantagenet king, which underlined the loyalty of the Bruce family to the English crown. However, when Edward refused to uphold the claim of the Bruce to the Scottish throne, he retired to Broomshawbury, in Essex, obviously in high dudgeon. No doubt, Maud would have been privy to many of the intrigues pertaining to the Bruce family during this period. It was soon after this time, that the loyalty of the Bruce family to the English king began to falter. But Maud was destined to play no part in the future of the Bruce family for, by 1299, her marriage to the Scottish lord had been dissolved. The eminent author and

genealogist, Douglas Richardson, has been unable to trace any documentation showing why the marriage ended. The two were both directly descended from William Marshal, 1st Earl of Pembroke (d1219), but as second cousins, once removed, their kinship seems an unlikely reason for an annulment.

Whether divorced or annulled the marriage had definitely legally ended, as Alianore (Eleanor), was recorded as being Robert the Bruce's widow at his death sometime in 1304. Soon after this time Lady Maud reverted to her former title of Lady Burnell and sued in plea of dower regarding a messuage and lands in Gunton, in Norfolk, at the same time as suing Robert Springhose for a third of messuage of land, and £10 of rent in Wolverhampton. In 1309, William Mortimer sued Maud in the Court of Common Pleas for £10 and in that same year a writ was issued by Henry de Erdington, against her and her son Edward regarding a manor at Wellington in Shropshire.

In 1316 Maud married Simon de Criketot without first gaining a licence from Edward II. By this time she had inherited the greater part of her son's estates, as Edward had died in 1315 leaving no heirs, just a widow, Aline the eldest daughter of Hugh Despencer the Elder.

Maud died in 1326, but it is fascinating to think that, for a few years at the end of the thirteenth century, through her marriage to her kinsman, Robert de Brus, she was right at the heart of that family at the inception of their fateful decision to join Scotland's fight for the Scottish crown. Curiously, for this short period, she was stepmother to Robert the Bruce, the famous Scottish hero, whose daring exploits are now legendary and whose statue stands proudly in defiance, celebrating his overwhelming victory at Bannockburn. After years of dogged warfare he finally achieved his goal to become the recognised king of Scotland.

A Mortimer Effigy in Kings Pyon church, Herefordshire?

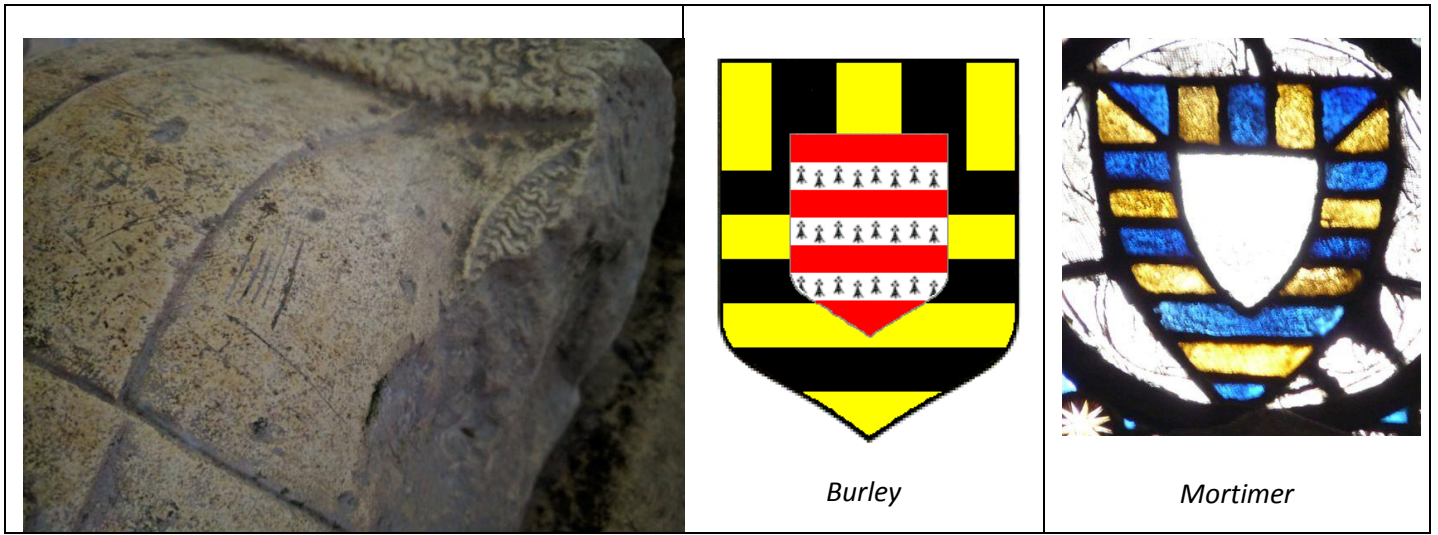


In Kings Pyon church is the damaged effigy of a knight wearing 14th century armour. He is lying next to the effigy of a lady, but it seems that they are placed side-by-side for convenience rather than because they were husband and wife.

The knight is usually identified as a Mortimer and one can immediately see why. There are horizontal bars behind the escutcheon on his surcoat and there are vertical pallets above the escutcheon, just like the Mortimer shield.

But something fundamental to the coat of arms of Mortimer is missing.....





Burley

Mortimer

Here's a close-up of the top right corner of the coat of arms, where his left shoulder would start if it was still there. The coat of arms of Mortimer of Wigmore always has a triangular *gyron* in the corner, but there isn't one here.

MHS member Andrew Brown has confirmed that, as well as the Mortimers, the Burley family owned land in the village at that period. The Burley coat of arms is superficially similar to that of the Mortimers as you can see, but there are no gyrons in the corners. We are missing all the colours, of course, so it is impossible to be sure about the Burley connection, but it's reasonable to assert that the effigy probably isn't that of a Mortimer after all.

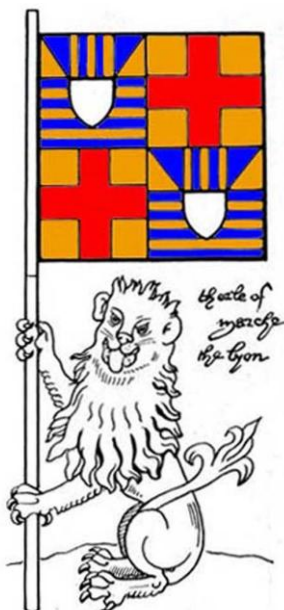
Earl Mortimer?



In Leominster, Herefordshire, is a school named *Earl Mortimer College*. On several occasions, the Society has used it for its conferences.

The expression *Earl Mortimer* will have puzzled many members. We know of five Mortimers who were Earls of March and two of them were also Earls of Ulster, but what is meant by *Earl Mortimer*? Well, there is a very big clue in the picture - the white lion.

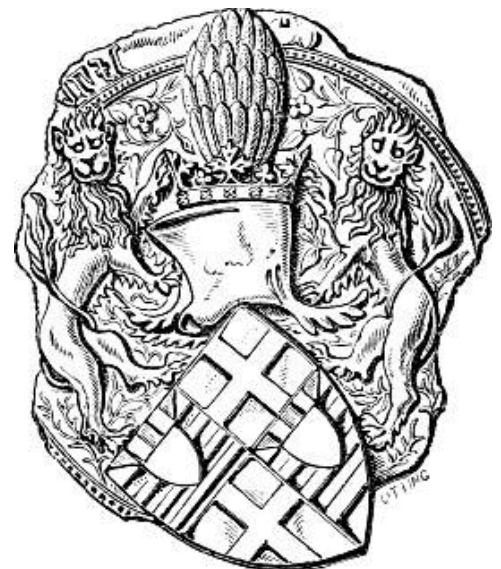
The white lion is a well-known badge of the earls of March, so those who named the college just made a mistake. They were referring to the Earls of March.



But that's not the only mistake they've made. The white lion of March has its tail between its legs. In heraldry it's called a *lion coward*.

You can see this clearly in the two illustrations here relating to the 3rd & 4th earls.

But there's more.....



The Harleys are an ancient family that still live in their ancestral home at Brampton Bryan in North Herefordshire. At the time of the Civil War in the 17th century they were the owners of Wigmore castle. The most famous Harley was Robert Harley, the great statesman at the time of Queen Anne. In 1711 she created him Earl of Oxford, but there was one problem.

The title *Earl of Oxford* had previously been held by the de Veres, but when the 20th de Vere Earl of Oxford died without a male son the earldom went into abeyance as there was no obvious heir. Because of the possibility of a successful de Vere claimant to the earldom emerging in the future, Queen Anne made a distinction between the original earldom of Oxford and the new one. She created Robert Harley the **1st Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer**. This form is said to be unique in the peerage as it is one earldom, not two. In everyday life the Mortimer bit was dropped and Harley was just known as the Earl of Oxford.

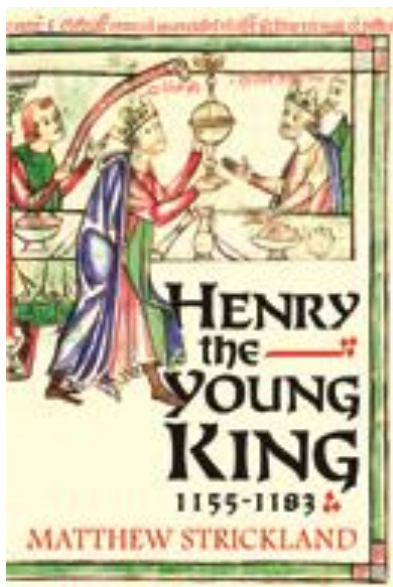
The 2nd earl developed a large part of the West End of London and that's why we have Oxford Street, Harley Street and Wigmore Street. The title became extinct in 1853 with the death of the 6th Earl.

So there was an Earl Mortimer after all.



This is a portrait of Lady Henrietta Harley, Countess of Oxford and Countess Mortimer, wife of the 2nd earl, by John Wootton. It sold recently for £81,250

ROLLO'S BOOKS



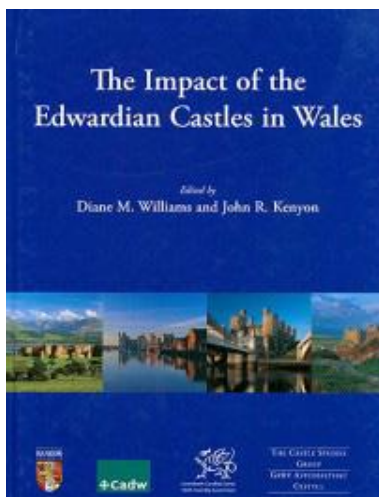
Henry, the Young King 1155 - 1183

by Prof. Matthew Strickland of Glasgow University

Yale University Press (2016) £30 ISBN 9780300215519

This first modern study of Henry the Young King, eldest son of Henry II but the least known Plantagenet monarch, explores the brief but eventful life of the only English ruler after the Norman Conquest to be created co-ruler in his father's lifetime. Crowned at fifteen to secure an undisputed succession, Henry played a central role in the politics of Henry II's great empire and was hailed as the embodiment of chivalry. Yet, consistently denied direct rule, the Young King was provoked first into heading a major rebellion against his father, then to waging a bitter war against his brother Richard for control of Aquitaine, dying before reaching the age of thirty having never assumed actual power. In this remarkable history, Matthew Strickland provides a richly colored portrait of an all-but-forgotten royal figure tutored by Thomas Becket, trained in arms by the great knight William Marshal, and incited to rebellion by his mother Eleanor of Aquitaine, while using his career to explore the nature of kingship, succession, dynastic politics, and rebellion in twelfth-century England and France.

An expert on political culture, chivalry, and medieval warfare, **Matthew Strickland** is professor of medieval history at the University of Glasgow, Scotland, and the author of numerous works including *War and Chivalry* and *The Great Warbow*. Prof. Strickland is giving the MHS Summer Lecture in Leominster on Tuesday 11th July.



The Impact of the Edwardian Castles in Wales

edited by Diane Williams & John R Kenyon

Oxbow Books (2016) £38 ISBN 9781785704697

This book publishes the proceedings of a conference held in 2007, a year that marked the seventh centenary of the death of King Edward I. The conference set out to review recent scholarship on castles that he built in north Wales after two wars, in 1277 and 1282-83 and a Welsh uprising in 1294-95, and to rethink the effect that their building had upon Wales in the past, present and future.

New approaches to castle studies are encouraging a more holistic understanding of the Edwardian castles and their context, and to this end papers consider their impact on Welsh society and its princes in the thirteenth century, notably Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (Fawr, the Great) and his grandson, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, prince of Wales. Their symbolism and meaning through the words of Welsh poets and the mythology behind Caernarfon Castle are also examined, so too is the role of Welshmen in Edward I's armies.