

# Mortimer History Society

Newsletter No.5 January 2011



**MHS 2nd Annual  
General Meeting  
10.30 am on  
Saturday February 12, 2011  
Earl Mortimer College,  
Leominster**



*Leominster Priory - and details of medieval Herefordshire School Romanesque carvings above the Priory doorway. Photos from Joe Hillaby's tour of the Priory in October 2010 - part of the celebrations of the Leominster 1350th anniversary of the founding of a church by St. Edfrith.*

## Field Visits - MHS members visited to Much Marcle Church last September



**Effigies at Much Marcle Church** - (besides Blanche Mortimer's; Blanche's mother was Joan de Geneville - see item below):

**The Kyrle Chapel:** late 14th century effigies presumed in Duncomb's 'History and Antiquities of Herefordshire 1882 Vol.III' to be Hugh, Lord Audley and Isolda, Lady Audley but this is not possible as the tomb is dated 1390-1410. It is probably the tomb of Thomas Bruge (died 7 April 1408) Blanche Mortimer's grandson, and his wife Alice Berkeley (died 1414). The other tomb in the Chapel is mid-17th century - Sir John Kyrle (died 1650) of Homme House and his wife Sybil Scudamore. Sir John was the ancestor of John Kyrle, the Man of Ross. His marble feet rest on the family (& Ross-on-Wye) mascot - the hedgehog.

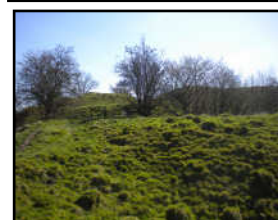


## Field Visit plans for 2011

During 2011, Paul Remfry will be leading field visits to Brampton Bryan castle, near Leintwardine or to Radnor castle and church.



*Above: Brampton Bryan Gatehouse. In the 12th century Bramptons were tenants of the Wigmore Mortimers; the Harley family have owned the castle since 1294.*



*Above: New Radnor castle walls and view from there across the town.*

## Joan de Geneville - a Medieval Noblewoman

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1301 in the small Norman church at Pembridge, the marriage took place between Joan de Geneville and Roger Mortimer. He was 14



and she was 15. There is every indication that it was a happy marriage. She was vivacious and attractive; and she accompanied her husband most of the time in the next twenty years, bearing 12 children – four boys and 8 girls. Eventually, Roger became *de facto* Regent of England and lover of Queen Isabelle. Joan still had a real claim on his love, and she lived on to provide memorials to her executed husband, and to administer Ludlow Castle for another twenty years.

Joan de Geneville's dramatic story will be one of the themes of the MHS 2011 programme: as an extended article on her will appear in the **Mortimer Chronicle**; in a Spring edition of *Herefordshire Life*; she is the subject of a talk to Ledbury U3A in February; and will be mentioned significantly at our major Spring and Autumn conferences.



**MHS SPRING CONFERENCE** 21 May 2011 Ludlow Assembly Rooms 10am-4pm  
**THE MORTIMER ROYAL CONNECTION** Tickets: Members £20 Visitors £25 inc. buffet lunch  
From: Ludlow Assembly Rooms - by post, telephone or online <http://www.ludlowassemblyrooms.co.uk>

# Wigmore Abbey in Leintwardine Church

## MHS AUTUMN CONFERENCE

8 OCTOBER 2011

EWYAS HAROLD MEMORIAL HALL  
10 am - 3.30 pm

**From: Prebendary Andrew Talbot-Ponsonby**

When I was Rector of Leintwardine, I was very much aware of being in a long tradition of parish priests of the ancient parish church of St. Mary Magdalene; the chancel was built by Roger Mortimer (1287-1330) 1st Earl of Wigmore, who endowed it with nine chantry priests employed to say masses for the souls of the King (Edward III), the king's wife Queen Phillipa of Hainault, his mother Queen Mother Isabella, Henry Burghersh (Bishop of Lincoln), Roger himself and his spouse Countess Joan de Geneville.

Carrying on that tradition, and being mindful of the church's history, I always added these names to the list of souls that we prayed for on every *All Souls' Day* (November 2nd).



Parts of the church of St Mary Magdalene date from the 12th century and have been added to through to the 19th. On either side of the main east window are remains of a late mediaeval reredos and stalls probably brought here from Wigmore Abbey. At the time of Domesday 1086, Leintwardine manor was owned by Ralph Mortimer of Wigmore. Nearly 100 years later (probably 1172), Hugh Mortimer gave the church to Wigmore Abbey. Hugh died in 1181.



*Drawing of Kilpeck Church*  
Drawing before the 1848 restoration, showing the porch which probably helped to preserve the magnificent doorway carvings.  
From John Leonard's 'Churches of Herefordshire and their Treasures'

- am Dr Paul Dryburgh  
*Mortimer Ladies - a new study*  
Steven Blake  
*The Herefordshire School of Sculptors and the Mortimer connection*  
Buffet Lunch
- pm **At Kilpeck Church**  
Steven Blake  
*The Herefordshire School of Sculptors in action*

### SOME MORTIMER CASTLES

colour booklet listing 20 castles connected to the Mortimers, plus a short overview of Wigmore Mortimer history and family tree. 24 A5 pp  
Price: £3.50 + 50p postage  
in aid of Mortimer History Society

### STORY OF AN ENGLISH MEDIEVAL KNIGHT - Sir John Cornwall KG 1364-1443

#### Mortimer Connections:

Sir John's great grandfather was Sir Geoffrey Cornwall, who married Margaret Mortimer - daughter and co-heir of Hugh Mortimer. This Hugh belonged to the Essex branch of the Mortimers. He owned estates in the Marches and was 1st Baron of Burford on Teme, which passed to Cornwall through marriage to Margaret. Cousin Richard lived at Stapleton Castle, part of the barony, until Sir John, Princess Elizabeth and their son John made it their home in the Marches in the early 1400's. Stapleton was probably Sir John's headquarters from where he directed military action against Glyndwr's rebellion until 1408. Princess Elizabeth was Sir John's second wife, daughter of John of Gaunt, brother of Henry IV. She was also related to the Wigmore Mortimers. One of her father's many brothers was Lionel of Antwerp 1338-63, second son of Edward III and Philippa of Hainault - ancestors of the Mortimers.

by David V. Clarke

£3.50 + £1 p&p - 44 A5 pp: in aid of Amptill War Memorial

Both booklets can be ordered from:

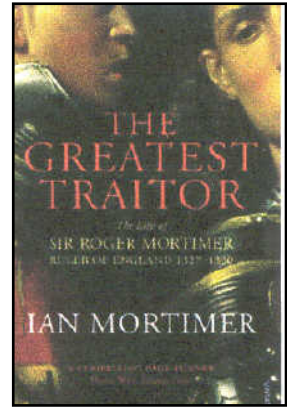
**margotmiller@live.co.uk**  
**25 Nover Wood Drive, Fownhope**  
**Herefordshire HR1 4PN**





Speakers at  
the Spring Conference  
Ludlow: 21 May 2011

Morning:  
**IAN MORTIMER**



Dr. Ian Mortimer, President of the Mortimer History Society, eminent historian, qualified archivist, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and since 2003 - self-employed writer of fiction and non-fiction historical books. The author of a sequence of medieval biographies, one per generation, telling the story of political power in England from 1300-1415:

***The Greatest Traitor: the life of Sir Roger Mortimer***    ***The Perfect King - the life of Edward III***

***The Fears of Henry IV***

***1415: Henry V's Year of Glory***

To be published probably 2013: ***The Warrior of the Roses: the life of Richard, Duke of York***

Some of Dr. Ian Mortimer's best selling and most innovative historical work is ***The Time Traveller's Guide to Medieval England***, and he has nearly finished work on the next ***Traveller's Guide to Elizabethan England***. These guides are written in the present tense and address the reader as if they are visiting the period. Ian Mortimer's many books, articles and essays are sometimes controversial; he challenges historical facts and fictions, delves deeply into medieval intrigues as well as developing an historical research methodology. In September 2010 he wrote on his website: "Some readers will realise that the information-based approach I put forward [in ***Medieval Intrigue: decoding royal conspiracies*** just published] in Chapter One '*Objectivity and Information*' is common sense, entirely logical and actually a way to root all historical enquiry in the reality of the past. I am very proud of it, and very glad to have carried on questioning received wisdom when so many traditionalists were trying to get me to shut up. I hope that will outlast me, and inspire others."

In an interview with Jason O'Keefe for the emagazine "*The Re-enactor*", Dr. Ian Mortimer answered a question from Paul Remfry about historical methodology:

**Which historical character has most interested you, and what effect has that had on your research?**

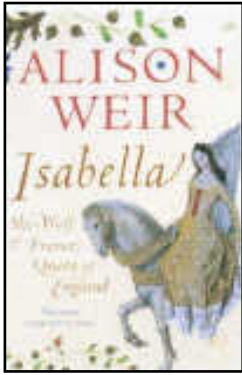
The most powerful effect on my work has been the string of consequences of my rethinking the death of *Edward II*. It is because of that question that I sharpened up my research skills no end, learnt much more about historical methodology than I ever thought anyone would need, and realised there are ways of proving aspects of the past. So it could be said that *Edward II* has had an impact on my understanding of how we can do history – and these lessons I have applied to disparate questions - such as whether John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, kidnapped the French envoys in 1415 (*yes he did*), whether Edward III raped a countess (*no he didn't*), and whether Henry IV murdered his cousin Richard II (*yes he did*). Not a word of *Medieval Intrigue: decoding royal conspiracies* (2010) would have been written if I had accepted the traditional account of Edward's death; and two books at least – *The Greatest Traitor* and *The Perfect King* – would have turned out very differently if the information-based methods I developed had allowed the tradition to remain a possibility. Therefore there is no doubt which character has had the greatest effect on my work.

**The most interesting character - Henry IV**

However, I don't find Edward II the most interesting. As to whom that might be... Hmm. Narrowing the question just to people I have written about, either directly or indirectly, I suppose I have got to answer Henry IV. So well travelled, so capable, so intelligent, so human – and yet such a political struggle. I have huge sympathy for him. Currently I'm reading more about Elizabeth I; and she is cold-hearted and brutal by comparison with Henry IV. And the fascinating thing about him is that few people see it; everyone sees Richard II in a sympathetic light because of Shakespeare, and judges Henry IV accordingly. They also compare him with the 'glorious' son he produced, little realising how much of the Henry V legend is down to propaganda. Henry V was really a brave man; but what he did would have been impossible without his father weathering all the storms of his reign.



*Pictures: Postage stamp of Henry IV; an illustration of his coronation  
Below: Kenneth Branagh as Henry V at the Battle of Agincourt.*



## Speakers at the Spring Conference Ludlow: 21 May 2011

Afternoon:  
**ALISON WEIR**  
on 'Isabella, She-Wolf of France,  
Queen of England'



Before becoming a published writer in 1989, Alison Weir was a civil servant, then housewife and mother. From 1991-1997, whilst researching and writing books, she ran her own school for children with learning difficulties, before taking up writing full-time. When she was 14 years old she was inspired by reading historical novels, and by the time she was 15, had written a three-volume reference work on the Tudors, a biography of Anne Boleyn, several historical plays, and had begun research for what would later be her first published book *Britain's Royal Families*.

In 1988 she found a publisher - Bodley Head - now part of Random House. In 2006 Alison published her first historical novel *Innocent Traitor* - with another Random House imprint - Hutchinson. She writes on her website: "History is full of wonderful stories and amazing characters. I feel very privileged to be able to bring them to life in both my non-fiction books and my novels. ... We can all learn from a study of the past. We can discover more about ourselves and our own civilisation." Alison published "*Isabella, She-Wolf of France, Queen of England*" with Cape in 2005; the book was reprinted by Pimlico in 2006.

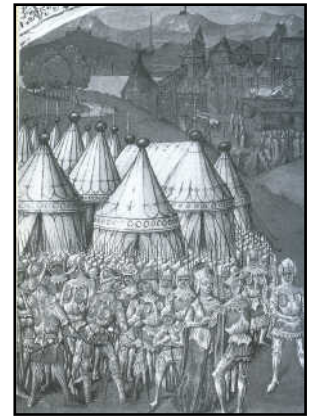


### Medieval Music by "The Border Waites"

- sackbuts, shawms, crumhorns, viols,  
fiddles, recorders, bagpipes -



based on the town bands of Europe common between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. For the Mortimer History Society, they are exploring new territory, and will be presenting a unique concert. The *Waites* are drawn from principle theatres and early music ensembles such as the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, the Globe Theatre, the Correlli Orchestra, the King's Consort and the Gabriela Players. They combine expertise on a great variety of wind and string instruments of the period with a flair for witty and entertaining presentation. Their fiery enthusiasm for Early Music never fails to leave audiences charged with the desire to explore further this remarkable sound world.



Roger & Isabelle - illustration from  
Dr. Ian Mortimer's "*The Greatest Traitor*"

## SPRING CONFERENCE 2011

Ludlow Assembly Rooms  
21 May 2011 10am to 4pm



### THE MORTIMER ROYAL CONNECTION

10am Welcome coffee

- |         |  |            |  |
|---------|--|------------|--|
| 10.30am | Speaker: <b>Dr. IAN MORTIMER</b><br>'Mortimers and the Royal Family'<br>- new research concerning the<br>succession in 1376-1460 | 2pm<br>3pm | 'The Border Waites' Concert<br>Speaker: <b>ALISON WEIR</b><br>Isabella, She-Wolf of France'<br>Author of 'Isabella - She-Wolf of<br>France, Queen of England.'<br>Book signing |
| 11.30am | 'The Border Waites' talk with musical<br>Demonstrations - medieval music at<br>the Royal Court and Castles                       |            |  |

12.30 **Buffet lunch**

Tickets: Price includes a welcome coffee and buffet lunch

Members £20 Visitors £25

Bookings: Ludlow Assembly Rooms, 1 Mill Street, Ludlow SY8 1AZ

Box Office phone: 01584. 878141 or online <http://www.ludlowassemblyrooms.co.uk>