



MORTIMER
History Society

MORTIMER *Matters*

Wigmore's forgotten rival

Neglected, overgrown and close to collapse, a fine Marcher castle has been rescued, rediscovered, and is being carefully investigated and conserved. No, not that one. This is Snodhill.

Britain's newest, oldest castle, Snodhill commands Herefordshire's Golden Valley from a hilltop spur. Oldest, because parts of it may date to 1067; newest, because it's never been formally excavated, and written records of its 900-year history are scant. A motte and bailey castle with impressive and sometimes unique features, it was held for over 300 years by the Chandos family, Sheriffs of Hereford, steadfast Kingsmen – and thorns in the side of at least one Mortimer.

Snodhill is one of William Fitz Osbern's chain of castles reinforcing the Norman push into Wales: a line of stone fortifications from Chepstow to Wigmore, constructed in short order between 1067 and his death in 1071.

As his castles were built, so he granted them to loyal knights. In Snodhill's case to Hugh L'Asne, who held it until his death in 1101 when the castle passed by marriage to Robert de Chandos. The Chandoses were minor Lords, but took part in major events of the day – Hastings, the Anarchy, the De Montfort rebellion, the Welsh wars of King Edward I – in all instances for the Crown.

One of Snodhill's many mysteries is how a minor Lordship family could afford to develop and maintain what

investigation is revealing to be a large and very complex castle. By the end of their tenure in 1428, it boasted a unique twelve-sided keep, at least two baileys, a 1000-acre deer park (still evident), a summer banqueting house or Pleasaunce, and a Royal Free Chapel. As far as we know, this is the only such chapel to be found in a non-royal castle anywhere in Britain. We're running an appeal for its research and conservation.

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Excavating the altar site in Snodhill's unique royal chapel

The castle was strengthened and modernised periodically, to include in the 13th century what appears to be the most complex postern gate in Britain (excavated last year); and in the 14th century a remarkable, independently fortified tower (opened to the public in 2022). But across some 900 years of turbulent history, we've found only one documented incident in which the castle is specifically name-checked.

The Mortimer moment

Edward II's reign (1307-27) was famously a time of baronial rebellion and lawlessness – and few were more rebellious than Roger Mortimer of Wigmore, a perhaps uncomfortably close day's ride away.

In charge in 1321 was Roger de Chandos V, Sheriff of Herefordshire and, as ever, a loyal kingsman. Mortimer had to neutralise the Sheriff before his planned rebellion could move eastwards, and he resorted to the traditional methods of death threat, arson and kidnap. The following account is taken from *The Profits of Violence: The Minor Gentry in the Rebellion of 1321-1322 in Gloucestershire and Herefordshire* by Roy Martin Haines:

'On the night of 19 April 1321 Hugh d'Audley, John Giffard, Henry Tyeys and Roger Maltraver came by night and stormed Snodhill Castle. Roger de Chandos was captured and the rebels stayed the night...Roger Mortimer arrived in the morning and warned Roger de Chandos to prepare horses and arms to attend the Parliament in London. Roger de Chandos replied that he was the King's liegeman but, under threat of death and the burning of his castle and manors, he unwillingly accompanied the contrarians to Kingstone and London as a prisoner. Roger de Chandos was a determined and resourceful man; he escaped and returned to Hereford where he led citizens in the guarding of Hereford city and castle against the rebellion.'

As Mortimer enthusiasts know, the rebellion failed. Roger Mortimer was imprisoned, escaped, fled abroad, returned with Edward II's estranged Queen Isabella on his arm, deposed the King in 1327 (who then died in famously inauspicious circumstances) and was in turn executed by a resurgent Edward III in 1330.

In gratitude, one imagines, for his pains, Roger de Chandos was not only reappointed Sheriff of Herefordshire but made Keeper and Sheriff of the land of Glamorgan and Morganwg, and Constable of Caerphilly Castle. He'd married Matilda de Acton who brought manors and rents as part of her dowry, but despite this apparent wealth, Snodhill Castle was surveyed in 1355 and found ruinous – possibly as a result of the Black Death, which may also have caused Snodhill village to shrink to the hamlet it has remained to this day.

Subsequent members of the Chandos family appear to have had some success in business and marriage. Thomas de Chandos was involved in the earliest recorded example of cloth dealing, and it's possible that wool wealth came the castle's way; and in 1377 Sir John de Chandos married Philippa de Bryan, who brought more manors to the estate. In May 1401 Sir John went to the relief of Abergavenny, where Thomas Beauchamp was besieged by Owain Glyndwr, and two years



The North Tower – a hugely defensible 'panic room'

later Snodhill was one of 23 Marcher castles ordered by Henry IV to be strengthened against a Glyndwr attack. It appears Chandos took the threat seriously: various expensive repairs and upgrades date from this time, the most significant being the North Tower – in effect a hugely strong ‘panic room’, it’s a standalone keep, with walls up to 4m thick, its own well, and latrine chutes reinforced against impertinent outside entry. (The keep is newly restored and open to the public). In 1403, and again in 1406, Glyndwr attacked, failing to destroy the castle but damaging the chapel - one of 14 churches recorded damaged or destroyed in Weobley Deanery.

Sir John de Chandos died in 1428, granting the castle to Richard de la Mare, Sheriff of Hereford, after whose death in 1438 it passed to Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, and thence, by various marriages, to Richard Neville, aka Warwick the Kingmaker. When Warwick was killed at the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471, his lands passed to Richard Duke of Gloucester (later Richard III) and, on his accession in 1483, Snodhill became a royal castle.

A Royal Castle – and an Elizabethan mystery

Royal ownership seems to have moved things upmarket. Henry VII appointed John Thomas as Constable of Snodhill in 1486, and in 1497 Robert Fayrfax, the celebrated Tudor composer, as chaplain. Another composer, Robert Cowper, succeeded him, from 1498 to 1514. The last known chaplain, a Nicholas Alcocke, was appointed in May 1556 by Queen Mary. The chapel is known to have still been in use up to at least 1597.

Queen Elizabeth granted the castle to Sir Robert Dudley in 1563 and he held it for four years before leasing it to Hugh ap Harry, cousin of Blanche Parry of nearby Bacton (Elizabeth’s First Lady of the Bedchamber). Dudley then sold the castle to William Vaughan, another Blanche Parry relative, and it remained with the Vaughan family until 1657. It appears that considerable high-status work was carried out on the castle prior to this period - but for what purpose is a mystery. Was it to create a secret Elizabethan love nest, as some have suggested?

Civil war slighting and demolition

Tradition has it that the castle was besieged and destroyed by the parliamentarian Earl of Leven in 1645 (and cannon balls consistent with his artillery embellish a local house). We know work was carried out to put the castle into a state of defence, but we haven’t found any evidence of its legendary fighting end.

The Vaughans sold the site to William Prosser, an apparently successful London coachbuilder, originally from nearby St Margarets. Returning to Herefordshire after the Civil War, he appears to have dismantled and sold off large parts of the castle, keeping some of the best stone to develop Snodhill Court and its magnificent barns, where various corbels and salvage are still visible.

The Prossers became Prosser-Powells and the family owned the castle until the late 19th century, perhaps planting the ring of yews that crown the motte as a landscape feature, along



Snodhill appeared in episode six of this year’s Digging for Britain series hosted by Professor Alice Roberts – seen here with Snodhill archaeologist Tim Hoverd. Catch up on BBC i-Player

with the perry pear orchard still surviving in the Outer Bailey. A notable event during this period was Kilvert’s midsummer’s day picnic of 1870, pretty much every detail of which today’s visitor can recognise, and which the Kilvert Society periodically re-enacts.

The last century records a gentle decline, until in 1979 it was bought by a group of London lawyers who attempted to peddle ‘lordships of the manor’ to a credulous public. None appear to have been taken in. The owners made no attempt at maintenance and the castle became overgrown and all but disappeared, a large fragment of curtain wall collapsing in 1997.

A happy ending - and new beginning

The castle’s dire neglect drew the attention of castle enthusiast Garry Crook, who led a tenacious campaign with English Heritage to save it, ultimately succeeding with Historic England’s 2012 purchase of a 999 year lease. This was passed on to the newly created Snodhill Castle Preservation Trust in 2016.

Since then the castle has been transformed, its site cleared, its walls repaired and its mysteries and magnificence opened for everyone to discover, wonder at, and simply enjoy. We’re delighted to invite the Mortimer History Society to come and explore this sleeping beauty of a castle - and to share in the excitement of its awakening.

But please – no kidnapping.

Visit Snodhill

In 2024 there will be expert guided tours during the Hay Festival (Thursday 23 May to Sunday 2 June) and in July when archaeological excavations resume. Conservation work on the chapel is scheduled to begin in April and other events such as a hedgerow communion (5 May), Samhain celebrations (31 October), pagan morris dancing, picnics and open days are held throughout the year. Follow us on social media and keep in touch via our contact form at www.snodhillcastle.org.

The scribe at the heart of a thriving literary culture

Ahead of his presentation at the MHS Spring Conference on 18 May, Dr Matt Lampitt introduces us to a medieval scribe based in Ludlow and the evidence his work provides of a thriving multilingual literary culture in the medieval March.



Samuel Scott's 18th century painting of Ludlow Castle with Dinham Weir

In its suggested itinerary for 'touring the Welsh Marches', *British Heritage Travel* (www.britishheritage.com/travel/touring-welsh-marches) describes a region "Far from the big city lights" which it markets to "serious Anglophiles who want to see the classic Britain of yore". The bulletin recommends visiting an array of (mainly medieval) sites, including Ludlow, "one of the prettiest market towns in the country", for its picturesque castle ruins and foodie scene. Readers of *Mortimer Matters* will surely agree that a trip to Ludlow is always worthwhile, not least for the conferences and events of the Mortimer History Society. But the provincialising tone of the *British Heritage Travel* piece is hard to miss, and is starkly at odds with the histories of the very regions it seeks to promote.

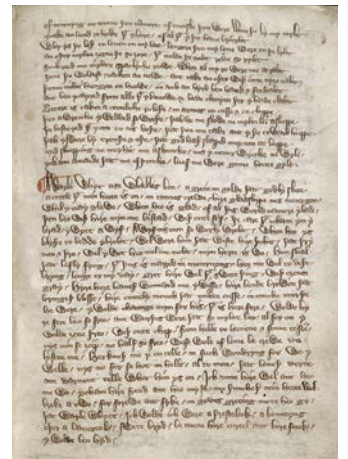
In the early fourteenth century, Ludlow was an important border centre, "capital of the Mortimer empire", as R. R. Davies puts it (*Lordship and Society*, 54). The history of the Mortimer lords will be well known to MHS members, so I won't rehash it here. Let us dwell, rather, on the vibrant literary history of Ludlow and its region, in particular on the activities of an anonymous figure known today as the 'Harley' or 'Ludlow' scribe.

Introducing the Harley Scribe

In ground-breaking palaeographic work by Carter Revard ('Scribe and Provenance'), this scribe's hand was identified in forty-one legal documents dating from 18 December 1314 to 13 April 1349, almost all of them pertaining to locations within a three-mile radius of Ludlow, and clustering in the area of Richard's Castle. Crucially, Revard showed that the same hand is also found in three manuscripts containing a wealth of literary works in French, Latin, and English. In roughly chronological order, these are: London, British Library,

Harley MS 273; London, British Library, Royal MS 12.C.xii; London, British Library, Harley MS 2253.

These manuscripts preserve an array of fascinating texts. Royal 12.C.xii, for instance, contains the only surviving copy of *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, an 'ancestral' romance in insular French prose concerning the FitzWarin dynasty of Whittington in the Shropshire March. Most of the narrative relates the outlawry of Fouke (Fulk III) who rebels against King John when he refuses to acknowledge Fouke's claim to Whittington. The outlawry episodes feature journeys, skirmishes, and close shaves across Britain, Europe, and the Mediterranean, including sojourns at the courts of Wales and France, a brush with a pirate-like band in Scandinavia, a battle with a dragon in Iberia, an interlude in North Africa, and close-run encounters in forests across Britain.



Harley MS 2253, fol. 67
© British Library

Harley 2253, meanwhile, is a treasure trove of texts. Its contents are collectively known as the 'Harley Lyrics': they number 116 items in total and include works in insular French, Middle English, and Latin. Although known as 'lyrics', the manuscript includes a wide variety of works that scholars might classify as romance, fabliau, love and political lyrics, praise and debate poetry, conduct literature, medical texts, biblical apocrypha, and hagiography.

Man (?) of mystery

Sadly, we know very little for certain about the Ludlow scribe himself (even the male pronoun is an assumption). It is estimated that he was born sometime in the 1290s, with his scribal career beginning in the early 1310s; he probably died in around 1350, possibly from the bubonic plague pandemic. His linguistic and orthographic habits seem to place his origins in or around Leominster (Samuels, 'Dialect of the Scribe'). He clearly worked as a legal scrivener, possibly while serving as a parish or household chaplain or tutor in the service of a gentry household. (Revard, 'Oppositional Thematics', 101) even ventures an identification of the scribe as Thomas or Richard de Billebury, parish chaplain of Richard's Castle.

Despite the gaps in our knowledge, these manuscripts offer glimpses into the activities not just of one scribe, but of a host of patrons, audiences, collaborating scribes, and exemplar-procurers. In Harley 273, for instance, we see the scribe at an early stage of his career collaborating with two other scribes, one of whom may have been his mentor (Fein, 'The Four Scribes'; 'The Harley Scribe's Early Career'). If the scribe was attached to a gentry household, a good candidate would be the Ludlows of Stokesay Castle, a merchant family elevated to knightly status. Another candidate favoured by some scholars is Joan Mortimer Talbot (d. 1341), lady of Richard's Castle. It is also possible that the scribe catered to the demands of multiple families at once: the scribe's piecemeal approach to copying and compilation, along with the material condition of some of the manuscripts' constituent booklets, perhaps suggest that they circulated in different households simultaneously, prior to being bound (O'Rourke, 'The Problems of Patronage').

From where and whom, then, did the scribe acquire his source texts? Recently, emphasis has been placed on the scribe's connections (or those of his patrons) to Hereford Cathedral, whose mobile ecclesiastics may have acted as a key vector of transmission for many of the materials acquired by the scribe (Birkholz, Harley Manuscript Geographies). Sometimes

transmission was fast indeed: the fastest example is *Against the King's Taxes*, a protest song in macaronic Latin–French, which was composed in c. 1338 and copied by the scribe in c. 1338–40.

The absence of biographical details for the Ludlow scribe both forecloses and invites speculation as to his own travels and connections. Various aspects of his work have led scholars to suggest that he may have spent time in Oxford (Revard, 'Oppositional Thematics'), Ireland (Fein, 'The Four Scribes'), perhaps Avignon (Corrie, 'Kings and Kingship'). So much about our scribe remains uncertain. What we do know, though, is that the manuscripts and texts associated with him open a window onto a vibrant, multilingual literary culture in the Ludlow region which – far from the pretty, provincial picture painted by British Heritage Travel – was connected to literary networks that were wide-ranging, far-reaching, and up to date.

To hear more about the Ludlow scribe and his works, come along to the MHS Spring Symposium, where I'll be looking at the landscapes represented in texts such as *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* and the Harley Lyrics.



About the author:

Dr Matt Lampitt is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of Bristol. His research is supported by the project *Mapping the March: Medieval Wales and England, c. 1282–1550* (ERC–UKRI: EP/X027880/1). His monograph, *Literary Culture in the Medieval Welsh Marches: Networks, Places, Politics* is forthcoming with OUP later in 2024.

FROM YOUR EDITOR

Warmer weather is finally here and our events season is in full swing! As well as reflecting on our best-ever-attended AGM, we look ahead to an exciting Spring Conference (page 17) and a cream tea-fuelled John Grove Memorial Lecture (page 14). Read all about these events and more in this issue of *Mortimer Matters*. We're also in a mood for celebrating, as we launch our 2024 Bursary programme and celebrate the success of our MHS Essay Prize winners.

Meanwhile, there's some interesting reading for you to get your teeth into – MHS trustee Kathy Cowell provides guidance for any visits you might make to Anglo-Saxon churches this summer (page 12), and we pay a visit to Snodhill Castle, recently celebrated on the BBC's *Digging For Britain* (page 1). And we examine the lives of two particular Welshmen, the first is the

so-called Harley Scribe, a literary character of Ludlow (page 4) and the second is William Herbert, whose life intertwined dramatically with that of Edward IV (page 6).

And, of course, we've got the regular book reviews and recommendations to keep you inspired!

We'd love to hear what you think about *Mortimer Matters* and the activities it reports on. Why not drop me a line at mm@mortimerhistorysociety.org.uk and let me know your thoughts? And, remember, this is your newsletter too, so get in touch if you're keen to:

- Recommend a topic you'd like to see covered in *Mortimer Matters*
- Volunteer to write a book review or feature
- Tell us about a news item or event you'd like us to mention



I'll then get in touch to discuss your ideas and give you some useful tips on submitting your copy. We plan to publish our next issue in July and will start planning it soon, so please get in touch with your ideas quickly!

MA Researcher re-examines a Welshman's role in Edward IV's rule

After a degree in Art History and History with the Open University, Katie Dungate has embarked on a research MA at King's College London. Her subject of study is a single Welsh man who doesn't get enough credit for his role in the Wars of the Roses or the rule of Edward IV. Here she describes the origins of her love for history and her determination to bring William Herbert into the limelight.



I have my parents to thank for my love of all things history related, as they took my brother and me to various historic venues during our childhood. At school, my most vivid memory is seeing a portrait of Anne Boleyn for the first time – something about that face, the clothes and jewellery of the Tudor period resonated. This drew me into Tudor history before branching out to medieval history and material culture.

My main area of specialism is fifteenth century British and European history, in particular the Wars of the Roses. I have been a member of the Richard III Society since 2012, through which I discovered the Mortimer History Society (joining in December 2023).

After much procrastination, I took an undergraduate degree in Art History and History with the Open University. Despite being rusty, working full-time whilst studying, and being hit with Covid restrictions in my final year, I graduated in 2021.

I'm the type of researcher who searches out different angles to traditional narratives. In this respect the Mortimer History Society was incredibly useful for my final History module, which focused on Welsh history. The traditional association of Wales with the Wars of the Roses is Tudor-centric but I was intrigued by the Yorkist kings' connections through their Mortimer pedigree. This led me to discover that Wales has a more crucial role in the conflict and stability of the Yorkist kings than is usually credited. My dissertation was of a standard good enough to be published on the Open University's research website. Read it here <https://oro.open.ac.uk/78841/>

Not content with a BA, I decided to apply for a Masters in Medieval Studies

at King's College London, the final year of which I am now entering. This time round, whilst studying, I am working part-time as an administrator based at Hampton Court Palace, which is a very nice office to have!

The Lancastrian who came to York's side

I'm heading back to Wales for my Masters dissertation as one name kept surfacing during my previous research, that of William Herbert, earl of Pembroke (c.1423-1469). For all I had read over the years about the Wars of the Roses, this man had completely passed me by and yet it seems he was one of the most powerful people of the first reign of Edward IV.



Sir William Herbert and his wife, Anne Devereux, kneeling before Henry VI.
©British Library, London.

William Herbert was born in Raglan, south Wales to William ap Thomas and Gwladys Ddu in c.1423. His father's judicious marriages brought him land

and wealth, upon which his son would later build spectacularly. His mother was the daughter of the infamous Dafydd Gam, a Welshman who fought *against* Owain Glyndwr, and later died at Agincourt. Through his connections, William ap Thomas and his son entered the service of the Beauchamp family, and through them into the service of firstly, Richard Neville, earl of Warwick and onwards to Richard, duke of York, in both instances managing their Welsh estates. Despite this, it seems William Herbert was a liegeman of Henry VI for much of his reign, only changing late in the 1450s. DH Thomas posits the trigger may have been Herbert's first-hand experience of the mismanagement of England's French interests, having fought in at least two battles on the continent, both of which resulted in defeat. The Lancastrians were still courting Herbert even as it was clear that he had switched to the Yorkist camp, indicative of the power they assumed Herbert possessed.

A stratospheric rise to power

After the death of the duke of York in 1460, Herbert moved into the service of York's son Edward, and this is where his career went stratospheric. He fought by Edward's side at Mortimer's Cross in 1461 and must have done some valiant service there as, once Edward had been declared king, Herbert was made a Baron and given too many gifts of lands and rights to list in this short article! Edward must have recognised that, as a Welshman, Herbert was the best choice for the 'smashing' (his words) of Wales. Peeling the Welsh from the Lancastrian cause was crucial to the stability of the fledgling York dynasty and, between 1461 and 1468, this is what William Herbert did with the utmost effectiveness. As a result he is to some a valiant hero, to others he was the 'devil from Gwent'.



Raglan Castle, showing the gatehouse with its flared 'machicolations', one of the many additions commissioned by Lord William Herbert. ©Visit Monmouthshire.

A stratospheric rise – a catastrophic fall

The apex of Herbert's career came in 1468 when he was created earl of Pembroke in recognition of his capture of Harlech Castle, the final Lancastrian stronghold in Wales.

Such success breeds jealousy. Herbert's rise to pre-eminence coincided with the earl of Warwick's seeming cold-shouldering by Edward IV, which elicited strong feelings of betrayal from Warwick.

In July 1469, a rebel group left the north of England led by 'Robin of Redesdale', accompanied by a manifesto containing what was known to be Warwick's list of grievances to the king. Named alongside the Wydeville family as corrupters of the king is William Herbert. Edward IV commissioned Herbert and the earl of Devon to head off the rebels en route to Northampton. After an altercation between the two commanders, and possibly meeting the rebels earlier than planned, Herbert's forces were defeated at the Battle of Edgcote near Banbury.

In some reports, the Welsh casualties numbered in the many thousands. Herbert was taken to Northampton and there executed on the orders of Warwick. His body was taken for burial at Tintern Abbey.

From this brief overview, you can hopefully see that Herbert was an important foundation stone of Yorkist power in the 1460s. A mere back-number does not get described as a 'master-lock' or 'virtual viceroy' of Wales, nor attract the fatal jealousy of someone as powerful as 'the Kingmaker' earl of Warwick. My dissertation is seeking to build upon the good works of HT Evans in the 1900s, and DH Thomas, GHR Kent and Charles Ross in the 1960s and '70s, by (re)positioning William Herbert as a key political figure of the Wars of the Roses.

Herbert the Kingmaker?

The main crux of my research will focus on the earl of Warwick's enmity towards William Herbert. Warwick's manifesto will create a foundation line mirroring his 'grievances', applying that

to Herbert's career and charting the flash points that may have contributed to Warwick's resentment of him.

This will also be a contextualised history, considering Herbert's position as a Welshman at an English court still reeling from the Glyndwr uprisings of the generation before. In the wake of those, penal laws had been imposed on the Welsh by Henry IV, effectively disbarring them from holding offices or land in England. Yet Herbert was showered with gifts of land, offices and the creation of the Marcher Lordship of Raglan (1465) especially for him by a grateful Edward IV.

Additionally, my research will question who truly deserves to be called the 'Kingmaker': Herbert, Warwick or both? By considering the ripple effects of Herbert's actions in life that secured the throne for Edward IV versus that of Warwick, Herbert's wardship of Henry Tudor and what his death at Edgcote did for Welsh support of Yorkist power, can Herbert be considered more deserving of the 'Kingmaker' moniker?

The Winners! 2023 Mortimer History Society Essay Prize

This year we celebrate success for four essayists, awarding a first and second prize plus two well-deserved commendations.

First prize goes to Dr Ian Bass, Honorary Research Fellow in Medieval History at the University of Wales, Trinity St David, Lampeter, whose essay *An Ecclesiastical Mortimer*, explores the church career of Edmund Mortimer (d. 1304). Though Edmund began as a churchman, he became Lord of Wigmore on his father's death, since his elder brother had pre-deceased him. The judges applauded the essay's brilliance, describing it as a "much-needed critical appraisal" of Edmund's early experiences in the church and their subsequent impact on his lordship.

As well as applauding the Society's international reach and reputation which, he says, "gives the essay prize such prestige", Ian dedicated his essay, and his success, to his father, Keith Bass, who passed way suddenly in January. "My dad was my greatest proof-reader and peer reviewer, having read every dissertation, thesis chapter (and the whole 100,000 thesis in full), and every draft and published paper," he said. "His interest in history sparked my own, and it is thanks to his (and my mother's!) love and encouragement that I have made it this far – it is the last paper of mine he read."



Our winner – Dr Ian Bass

I am sure this is a sentiment that many of us, whose love of history has been ignited by a parent or family member, will appreciate and commend.

Second prize goes to Ali Al-Khafaji. His essay throws new light on a document, housed in the National Archive and understood to relate to Richard II as the 'Prince of Cestre'



Second prize goes to Ali Al-Khafaji

(Chester). Ali argues that it has been wrongly dated and in fact relates to the Black Prince in that role. The judges congratulated the essay's "documentary detective work" and Ali, a fourth year PhD student at the University of Bristol, described his success in the competition as, "A huge confidence boost as I buckle down for the final months of thesis-writing."

The first commendation is given to Caroline Bourne, a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Reading, for her essay, *A Prize Worth Conquering For?* which examined the importance of cattle in the 12th century Marcher lordship of Gower. The wealth of its cattle-based agriculture, she argues, made Gower a target for Norman military activity. The second commendation goes to Catherine Clarke, a second year PhD student at the University of Keele, for her essay *I am Pope, I am King, I am Bishop and Abbot in My Land* – a reassessment of John Cherleton, first lord Charlton of Powys. "He was a man," says Catherine "little known but much involved in many of the key issues of Edward II's reign and a significant figure in the Welsh March into the reign of Edward III."

Ian and Ali will receive £750 and £300 respectively. All four essayists are also granted free membership of the Society for three years and their essays will be published in vol 7 of the Society's Journal, due out later this year.

Watch out in the next issue of *Mortimer Matters* for details of the 2024 Essay Prize.

Mortimer History Society to offer two bursaries in 2024

In its second year, our Bursary Programme will offer not one but two £1,000 bursaries to students undertaking post-graduate doctoral research or research-led Masters programmes in the history of the Mortimers, the medieval Welsh March or its lordships. Applications will open on 16 May for the academic year 2024 to 2025. Thank you to everyone whose donations have made this possible – it's fantastic that we've doubled our fund raising achievement this year and, of course, doubled our contribution to scholarship.

The bursaries will support two students whose studies will help develop knowledge and understanding of the Mortimers and the Marches, covering any aspect of their history – social, religious, linguistic, cultural, artistic, legal or political. Applications will be judged by a panel of historians and Society trust and the successful candidates will be announced by the end of July.

Yve James, Chair of the Bursary judging panel and MHS Trustee, says, "We all know how hard it is to be a student these days and to finance long periods of study. The amazing generosity of Society members and friends means that this difficulty will be alleviated for two lucky students – and that our knowledge of Mortimer history will be enriched by their work."

Under Yve's chairwomanship, our Bursary panel is made up of Helen Fulton, Professor and Chair of Medieval Literature at the University of Bristol, and Janet Burton, Professor of Medieval History at the University of Wales Trinity St David, alongside Society trustee Annie Garthwaite.



Yve James, Chair of the Bursary Judging Panel

How to apply

If you're a student – or planning to become one – you can find everything you need to know about applying for the MHS Bursary at www.mortimerhistorysociety.org.uk/bursary. Remember, applications open on 16 May and you'll need to have submitted your application by 30 June. Good luck!

Welcome to new members

Twenty-one new members have joined since the last edition of *Mortimer Matters*. Welcome all! We hope you're enjoying your membership and look forward to meeting you soon!

Angela and Nigel Archer	Yarpole	Min and Frank Grimshaw	Wigmore
Janet Bailey	Lidney	Jack Hanbury	Pontypool
Caroline Bourne	Henley-on-Thames	Catherine Hunt	Worcester
Sue Byron	Ormskirk	Duncan James	Presteigne
Sue and Jonathan Chalstrey	Sale	Gloria Johnson	Shrewsbury
Susan Clew	East Preston	Holly Klein	Pittsburgh, USA
Angela and Paul Collett-Jobey	Burton-upon-Trent	Richard Lewis	Newtown
Alison Denton	Abergavenny	Sheila Smith	Toronto, Canada
Katie Dungate	Reigate	Deborah and Alexander Urka	Ludlow
Nick Faris	Northampton	Susan Weber	Arnold, USA
Surrey and Susannah Garland	Dorstone	Brenna Wilejeto	Edmonton, Canada



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heraldry@mortimerhistorysociety.org.uk

MHS supports Wars of the Roses Memorial Project



The Mortimer History Society is working with several other organisations to create a free-to-access online database of memorials associated with the Wars of the Roses – which brought a Mortimer heir to the throne. This innovative project is now entering a test stage. Find out here how the project will work, and how you can help.

The project aims to record as many memorials as possible of individuals and places that played some part in the Wars of the Roses – the intermittent periods of war and rebellion which occurred in England in the second half of the fifteenth century. The aim is to create a heritage resource for use by everyone interested in this period.

The scope of the project covers memorials related to events, places and individuals associated with the Wars. For this purpose, the Wars of the Roses are defined as the series of rebellions and civil war, including local feuds (such as the 'Battle' of Nibley Green in 1470), that took place in England, Wales and the island of Ireland between 1450 (Cade's Rebellion) and 1499 (the execution of the earl of Warwick).

Such memorials can be extant or non-extant and are not limited to those in the UK. They can include tombs, buildings, landscape features, commemorative monuments, plaques, stained glass windows, and more modern information boards and signs. They include both contemporary memorials (such as the funeral monuments of men and women associated with the Wars) and later ones (such as information boards or stained glass windows).

The project will rely on submissions from members of the public to populate the database. But first, we're entering into a test phase, where we will find out if the database

structure that we have created works and what the level of submissions is likely to be.

How you can help

As part of this test phase, we're asking members of the MHS to make submissions of memorials. The members of the other partner organisations will be doing the same. We would therefore be grateful if, where you are aware of a Wars of the Roses memorial, you could submit it for inclusion in the database using the form at <https://forms.office.com/e/YcYNUHHpH2>. The form, which is held securely in the Battlefields Trust's Microsoft cloud, can be filled-in by anyone. As we only wish to pilot this with memberships of project organisations, it should not be distributed further at this stage.

This project is led by The Battlefields Trust and our other project partners include the Northamptonshire Battlefields Society, the Richard III Society, Tewkesbury Battlefield Society, Towton Battlefield Society, and the Yorkist History Trust. For more information about the project please contact wotrmemorials@battlefieldstrust.com



Obituary for John Robert Kenyon, FSA, historian, academic and friend

The world of castle studies, fortifications, Welsh history and archaeology has suffered a major loss by the death of John Kenyon on 8 February. He was 75. Friend and colleague Andrew Pike FSA reflects on his life.

John was born into an army family and grew up in various places in the world as his father was stationed in different countries. His UK base, though, was on the family estate in north Shropshire which his father had inherited. He was educated at St Edward's School, Oxford. On leaving, he intended following his father into the army but, seeing a vacancy for library assistant at the Society of Antiquaries (which I had just vacated, having secured another post elsewhere) was appointed in early 1970 to work with librarian John Hopkins. Maybe he was influenced by two of his forebears: Sir Frederick Kenyon, former Director of the British Museum, and Dame Kathleen Kenyon, distinguished archaeologist who worked in the Middle East and in Leicester. Both were Fellows of the Society. During his time at the Antiquaries, John studied part-time for the Library Association diploma and became an Associate of the Association. One of his fellow students was Chris Green, whom he went on to marry. Having worked at the Antiquaries for a few years, John decided to pursue his growing interest in archaeology, registering as a mature student at Southampton University.



John with wife Chris at Castle Howard, they met as students

Having graduated from Southampton in 1977, John obtained a post in the library of the history faculty at the University of Oxford and, in due course, moved to Wales to become librarian of the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. His knowledge of the literature pertaining to Welsh history and archaeology was encyclopaedic – John was often able to lay his hands on the most obscure article in a little-known journal or book.

John's output was prodigious, writing books, contributing articles to journals and providing several guidebooks to castles for English Heritage and Cadw. One of his earliest publications, making use of his librarian's training, was *Castles, Town Defences, and Artillery Fortifications in Britain: A Bibliography 1945-74* published by the CBA in 1974 (two further volumes appeared in 1983 and 1990). 1987 marked the publication of *Castles in Wales and the Marches: Essays in honour of D J Cathcart King* jointly edited by John Kenyon and Richard Avent.

In 1990 he produced *Medieval Fortifications*, the first in a series entitled *The Archaeology of Medieval Britain* published by Leicester University Press. 2003 saw the publication of *The Medieval Castle in Ireland and Wales: Essays in honour of Jeremy Knight* edited by John Kenyon and Kieran O'Connor; and in 2010 John wrote *The Medieval Castles of Wales* published by the University of Wales Press. John contributed to several volumes of the *Buildings of Wales* and *Buildings of England* series. As its librarian, John produced the *Catalogue of the Library of the National Museum of Wales: Books printed before 1701*.



John – hard at work as ever

John was Journal Editor and long-standing committee member of the Castle Studies Group and was very pleased to be elected President of the Cambrian Archaeological Association – he organised and led many of their outings. He was also involved with the Welsh Antiquaries: indeed, the last time I met him was at the Study Weekend on Gower in October 2023.

John and his family lived in Llandaff for all the time he was at the National Museum and during his retirement. He was much involved with the life and work of Llandaff Cathedral, being Churchwarden and Head Server for many years. He was Cathedral Archivist, so was well qualified to write the cathedral's new guidebook, published in 2020.

John was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1984. In 2010 he was awarded a PhD by Cardiff University in recognition of his published work. He also held the Honorary positions of Research Fellow of the National Museum and Lecturer in the School of History, Archaeology and Religion at the University. John always regarded Shropshire and the Welsh borders as his spiritual home and was a keen member of the Mortimer History Society, participating in many of their meetings and leading tours to Marcher castles.

John is survived by his wife, Chris, their daughters Pippa and Jo and grandchildren Beatrice and Toby. His brother Richard lives in New Zealand.

John's contribution to the MHS

Chairman Philip Hume reflects on John's passion for the Mortimers

Like many members of the MHS, I had enjoyed reading and learning from the various books written and edited by John, so it was a particular thrill when he joined the Society in 2017. Even more so when, from the outset, John was happy to generously share his encyclopedic knowledge and experience with members of the Society. He was a popular speaker at MHS conferences on any aspect of the castles of Wales and the Marches, and helped to organise and lead the very well received interactive study day on Ludlow Castle in 2022. Further, when I tentatively raised with him, back in 2017, whether he would be interested in contributing an essay on the castles of the regions to each of our 3-volume series on the Welsh Marcher Lordships, not only was John happy to do so, but also became a valued supporter of the books.

Most recently, John contributed an essay on the Mortimer castles to the important new anthology that was published in 2023 by Logaston Press for the Society (*The Mortimers of Wigmore 1066-1485: Dynasty of Destiny*, eds. P. Dryburgh & P. Hume). For many of us, the last time that we saw John in-person was at the Tower of London on 1st August last year when we held a conference to mark the anniversary of Roger Mortimer's escape from the Tower and to celebrate the launch of the anthology. Seeing John, the great expert on castles, signing copies of the book and sharing his knowledge with people in the magnificent surroundings of the Tower of London, is a good memory of a scholar who was happy to share his knowledge.

What to look for when visiting Anglo Saxon churches

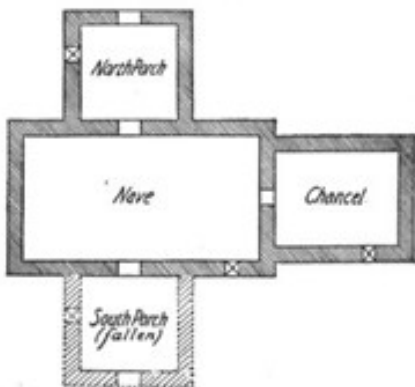
In the first of a series about interpreting what we see when visiting historic churches, Society Trustee Kathy Cowell dives deep into the idiosyncrasies of the Anglo Saxon period – 410 to 1066.

When visiting churches that have been in continuous use over a very long period of time, it can be very difficult to spot early features, as they are likely to have been obscured by later additions and alterations to the building. However, it is still possible to see evidence of Anglo Saxon origins in our churches, providing you know what to look for.

Most Anglo-Saxon churches were built of stone, but we know that some were built of wood and didn't stand the test of time so well. One noticeable exception is St Andrews Church in Greensted near Chipping Ongar in Essex, which boasts of being the oldest wooden church in the world, dating back to the 6th and 7th centuries.

Most surviving stone-built Anglo-Saxon churches were built in the form of a basilica and typically feature the following: large stone quoins, blank arcades, pilaster shafts, and triangular-headed windows (although in the period just before the Conquest, rounded Romanesque arches were used).

The basilica was rectangular in plan with other rectangular spaces added. In the example below of St Laurence's Church, Bradford on Avon, the basilica is formed of two rectangular spaces, one for the nave, and the other for the chancel, although it had, in addition, two porches to the North and South.



Plan of St Laurence's church, Bradford on Avon, showing a simple basilica with two porches, of which only one survives.

Quoins, external cornerstones used to stabilise the angle of joining walls, are a distinctive feature of Anglo Saxon

churches. They are often two or three courses of stone high and are alternately long and short on each side, effectively 'locking' the adjoining walls together.



Example of a quoin based on illustration from *AngloSaxon Architecture* by H M and J Taylor

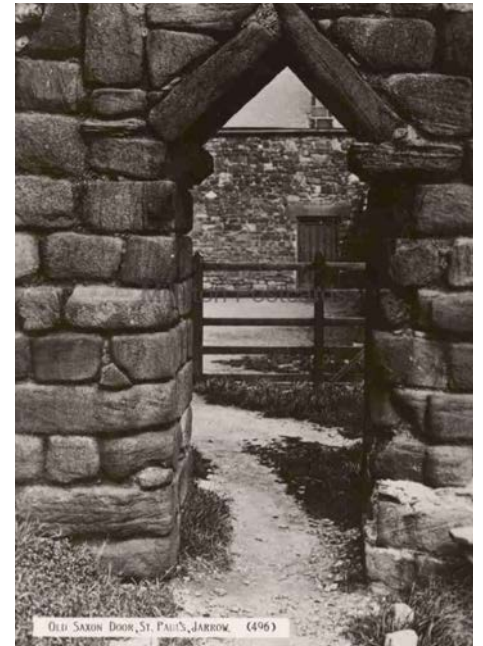
A blank arcade is a form of decoration applied to a wall of a building. It has no function – the arcade has no openings, contains no doors or windows and is not a supporting structure. In the Saxon period, blank arcades are typically quite plain, employing the rounded arches typical of the time. More ornate, complex form became fashionable post-Conquest. So, a simple guide – the more ornate a blank arcade is, the less likely it is to be Anglo-Saxon!



The blank arcade at St Laurence's Church, Bradford on Avon is characteristically simple.

The formation of the triangular-headed windows and doors was probably developed from earlier timber construction techniques. Stones were carved into trapezoidal shapes, so that they could be made to lean against each other to form an apex. While this form of construction was commonly used in the

making of early Saxon windows, it was also used in the making of doors. If you find these in a church you're visiting, you'll know it's early. In the later Anglo-Saxon period, Roman arches were used instead.



A triangular headed doorway at St Paul's Abbey, Jarrow. The construction of the abbey began in the 7th century – early in the Anglo-Saxon period.

One of the best-known Anglo-Saxon churches can be found at Earls Barton in Northamptonshire. The tower of All Saints contains wonderful examples of long and short quoins at its corners, but most noticeable are the stone pilasters that decorate its sides. These were long strips of vertical stone, often appearing in a simple criss-cross pattern. All Saints also boasts small triangular-topped windows that can be seen about halfway up the side of the tower and above the clock.



The tower of All Saints Church, Earls Barton displays limestone pilasters and long vertical quoins. Above the clock you'll spot a triangular-headed window.

Returning to MHS heartlands, you'll find several churches in the Welsh Marches that display wonderful Anglo-Saxon features and are well worth a visit.

The external walls of St Peter's Church in Stanton Lacy, which is believed to date to the 11th century, bear magnificent examples of the pilasters (or lesenes) used to decorate the building.



The north wall of St Peters, Stanton Lacy, showing decorative pilasters



Detail of the north door where the Romanesque arch has been framed by characteristic Saxon moulding



Distinctive herringbone pattern in the north wall of St Peter's Church in Diddlebury

Travel to another St Peter's, this time in Diddlebury, and you'll find another impressive – and easy to see – characteristic of Anglo-Saxon church building. In the whole of the north wall the stones have been laid in a highly decorative herringbone pattern. The wall also contains a small window and door that are typically late Anglo-Saxon with Roman arches. The windows at the extreme ends of the picture below are clearly of a much later date.

The Saxons were good carpenters and used wood in the construction of their vernacular buildings, typically saving the use of stone for churches and monastic buildings. Because of their carpentry skills, however, most of their church roofs were built in wood. As a result, it's rare to find stone vaulting in Anglo Saxon churches. However, there is a clear example of it at St Peter's Church in Monkwearmouth, Tyne and Wear. The vaulting is simple, replicating the barrel vaulting style of earlier Roman buildings. The development of more complex forms of vaulting would not begin until the arrival of the Normans.

England's Anglo-Saxon stone churches can be difficult to spot. Because they've usually been in consistent use for over a thousand years, their distinguishing features have often been destroyed or are no longer visible. But, where they do survive, they give us a tantalising glimpse of the Saxons' skill and love of surface decoration. With the arrival of the Normans in 1066, everything would change. Their need to dominate the Saxons after the Conquest necessitated

the building of highly fortified castles, while many existing abbeys and churches were extended and new ones built. Consequently, there are far more surviving buildings that display the skills of Norman masons, as they adapted the Romanesque and developed what has become known as the early English style of architecture that would follow.



The porch under the west tower of St Peters in Monkwearmouth shows a vaulted roof of the simplest form.

In the next issue of *Mortimer Matters*, Kathy will give us a guide to Norman and early English church styles.

John Grove Memorial Lecture focuses on Henry III's relationship with Wales

The 2024 John Grove Memorial Lecture will be given by Professor David Carpenter on the evening of Wednesday 19 June at the very lovely Grange Court at Leominster. It will explore the sharp contrast between Henry III's policies in Wales and those of his son, Edward I. And, as if a lecture by one of the UK's most eminent 13th century historians isn't enough, it will be preceded by an indulgent cream tea with jam, scones and all the works!



Grange Court

The evening will begin with tea at 6pm before Professor Carpenter's lecture at 7pm dives deep into Anglo-Welsh politics. While Edward I's policy towards Wales was dominated by conquest, that of his father favoured co-existence. Henry III's campaigns in Wales were limited in their objectives and pursued only as last resorts. In 1267, in the Treaty of Montgomery, Henry went so far as to recognise Llywelyn ap Gruffudd as prince of Wales. Professor Carpenter will reflect on whether this settlement offered a viable future for Wales.



David Carpenter is Professor of Medieval History at King's College London and a leading authority on the history of Britain in the central Middle Ages. He has previously held lectureships at Christ and St Hilda's colleges in Oxford, the University of Aberdeen and Queen Mary College, London. David was Principal Investigator of the 'Henry III Fine Rolls Project' (2005-2011) and is currently a Co-investigator on two further projects, 'The Breaking of Britain Project' about Scottish political culture before the Wars of Independence and the 'Magna Carta Project'. His two-volume biography of Henry III is published by Yale University Press.

Tickets can be secured at www.mortimerhistorysociety.org.uk. For £6 (£9 non-members) join us for the lecture at 7pm. If you'd like to join us at 6pm for the cream tea (which will also include sandwiches) there is a further charge of £8.50. Please clarify your choice when booking and, if coming to tea, let us know if you have any specific dietary requirements. Bookings for tea must be received two weeks before the event. It's also possible to attend the lecture only via Zoom for £3 (£4.50 non-members).

Spring has certainly sprung and our events season is hotting up – with lots of opportunities to meet face-to-face over the coming months. Take a note of these vital dates for your diary and watch out for more news to come!

Saturday, 18 May Spring Conference: Landscapes of the Marches

Our first major conference of the year will be held at Ludlow Assembly Rooms and feature presentations from archaeologists, landscape historians and castle experts. See page 17 for details.

Wednesday, 19 June John Grove Memorial Lecture

Join us at Grange Court in Leominster where Professor David Carpenter will take us on an investigation of Henry III's relationship with Wales. See page 14 for details.

Saturday, 7 September Study Day – The Battle of Evesham

Including talks about the battle of Evesham during which Roger Mortimer (d.1282) delivered the blow that killed Simon de Montfort, and visits to some of the key sites in Evesham associated with the battle.

Saturday, 5 October

Autumn symposium focused on the research interests of Society members. Details to be confirmed.

Saturday, 16 November November – date and venue to be confirmed Wales and the Wars of the Roses

This half-day online conference will examine how the Wars of the Roses were affected by Welsh politics, loyalties and divisions.

KEEP
THE DATE!

Best attended AGM ever!

23 March was a day of celebration. With more than sixty people gathered in St James' church, Wigmore, and reporting higher membership numbers than ever before, this year's AGM revealed an MHS enjoying rude good health and a heightened reputation for excellence.

This growing success is testament to the incredible progress made by the Society during 2023. Chairman Philip Hume reminded us of some of the year's highlights, including: our sell-out conference at the Tower of London to celebrate the 700th anniversary of Roger Mortimer's famous escape from the fortress; the publication of two books, including the landmark *The Mortimers of Wigmore: 1066 to 1485*, which continues to sell well; the launch of our Research Bursary to encourage early-career scholarship in our area of history; ongoing participation in the Leeds International Medieval Conference, and the launch of an online seminar group designed to support information exchange among the academic community. All of this, plus an ever-growing programme of events supplemented by our quarterly ezine and annual academic journal. Philip then talked us through our busy events programme for 2024 – see *Keep the Date* on page 14 to make sure you don't miss anything.

Mike Beazley followed with the treasurer's and membership reports, signalling both a healthy balance sheet and our highest ever membership number – more than 450 at the end of the 2023 and grown again to 473 on the day of the AGM!

Reconstruction drawing of Wigmore Castle – work in progress

Philip then introduced our speaker for the day, Chris Jones-Jenkins, an architect and castle reconstructionist who has been commissioned by the MHS to bring Wigmore Castle – seat of the Mortimer family – back to life with a highly accurate reconstruction drawing.

Chris' work has begun, he explained, with a detailed study of artist's illustrations of the castle from previous centuries that reveal details missing today, but evident in times past. This, he reported, is always the starting

point for projects of this kind and can be highly revealing. He has also studied the topography of the site, as recorded by various authorities, including English Heritage. Next, using complex engineering software, he's begun 'rebuilding' the castle as it would have appeared in its heyday. He was able to show us progress on the south, southwest and east towers where, in each case, he has already identified surprising features that have not been guessed at by past reconstructionists. He'll now turn his focus to the castle's gate and the complex of buildings that surround it, eventually working his way towards the keep.

I think it's safe to say that audience members were enthralled. We are all now beyond eager for him to complete the project and reveal Wigmore, which for a time in history was the governmental centre of England, in all its glory!



1873 engraving by the Bucks brothers – most informative

Unveiling Wigmore's history

Following the AGM, and as guests of the Friends of St James Church, we were able to witness the official unveiling of a new interpretation display about Wigmore Castle, church and the wider village community.

The ribbon was cut by Edward Harley, Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire, who applauded the work of both The Friends and the MHS for doing so much to raise the profile of Wigmore and revive awareness of its historical significance.

MHS trustees Philip Hume and Ruth Butler worked closely with The Friends in compiling information for the Mortimer-focused elements of the display.

For more information on the work of The Friends go to www.friendsofstjameswigmore.org.uk – or take a look at the January 2024 edition of Mortimer Matters, which includes a detailed article about the group.



Chris Jones-Jenkins relaxes after his presentation



Edward and Mrs Harley admire the new interpretation display



New display evokes history of Wigmore

Thanks Hugh!

During the AGM MHS founder Hugh Wood was thanked for his fifteen years of service to the MHS as he stands down as Chair. He'll continue to be involved in the Society, primarily by heading up a new Heraldry Group and designing an eight-module Teach Yourself Heraldry course, which will be accessible to all members.

Appropriately, Hugh was presented with a replica Mortimer coat of arms by MHS President, Paul Dryburgh and new Chairman, Philip Hume.



Our Spring Conference examines the landscapes of the March; how they have changed over time, and how they've both affected and been affected by conquest, conflict, religiosity and politics.

Ludlow Assembly Rooms

Saturday, 18 May 2024, 9:15am to 4:45pm

Landscapes of the Medieval Marches

Our eminent historians



The early medieval landscapes of the Marches: some reflections

Keith Ray, Senior Research Fellow at Cardiff University, will examine what we know of the post-Roman and pre-Norman land use and settlement in the Marches. With surprisingly little archaeological evidence to go on, he'll posit potential ways forward for understanding the early medieval landscape.



The impact of the Normans on the Welsh Marches

Dr Trevor Rowley, Emeritus Fellow at Kellogg College, Oxford and author of many books on landscape history and the Normans, will show us how the Norman impact was felt before 1066 and continued post conquest. He'll focus on Roger de Montgomery, earl of Shrewsbury – how he took over Shropshire as a base for territorial expansion into Wales



Monastic houses of the Welsh Marches and their landscapes

Janet Burton, Emeritus Professor at University of Wales Trinity St Davids and Director of its Monastic Wales project, describes how the foundation of religious houses was formed by spirituality linked to landscape, and how those houses transformed landscape through economic activity and the exercise of power.



Imagining landscapes in medieval Ludlow

Matt Lampitt, a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Bristol working on 'Mapping the March', will focus on the literary works of the Harley Scribe, active in Ludlow in the early 14th century. He'll show how landscape operated in these narrative worlds in politically meaningful ways.



Marcher echoes along the Welsh border

Author Mike Parker has recently published *All the Wide Border*, a personal journey through the border land and a timely meditation on identity and belonging. He'll take us on that journey, and reflect on how much of the Marcher identity has survived 500 years after its official abolition.

Attend in person or via Zoom

This much-anticipated conference can be attended in person or via Zoom – though we hope you'll relish the opportunity to meet with your fellow history buffs! For details of ticket prices and to reserve your place, please go to www.mortimerhistorysociety.org.uk/events.

The King's Mother is coming

Philip Hume writes: I know many members enjoyed reading Annie Garthwaite's novel *Cecily* and have been eagerly awaiting her next. So, with publication of *The King's Mother* now only a few months away (11 July), and with exciting news about a TV option for *Cecily*, to spare your editor's blushes and reticence, I've obtained information from Annie's editor, Rosa Schierenberg of Penguin Viking, about what's in store for readers as the dramatic story unfolds.



Civil war returns to England – and Cecily's family is tearing out its own throat. Fire-born Edward IV has ascended England's throne – king by right and conquest – eighteen years old and unstoppable. As his mother, his champion and his fiercest defender, Cecily has achieved the apotheosis of power. But to win a crown is not to keep it. And the deadliest enemies may come from within.

As the Wars of the Roses reach crisis point, brother turns against brother, trusted cousins turn treacherous, and determined mothers – Marguerite of Anjou, Elizabeth Woodville and Margaret Beaufort – rise up to fight for their sons. While Shakespeare saw these women as peripheral, and a male-dominated historical tradition has played down the parts they played, Annie shows how – whether driven by fear, ambition or a desperate determination to secure the survival of their children – they shaped the Wars of the Roses and wielded words with no less deadly effect than men wielded swords. Through cunning wit and barbed tongues, the dialogue between these women leaps off the page and brings to life a dynamic so little seen in historical fiction.

By focusing on what women wanted, suffered, knew and did, Annie gives a fresh take on some of English history's most enduring mysteries: Was Edward IV's marriage bigamous and his children bastards? Why did he order the execution of his brother George, years after forgiving his treason? And did Richard III murder his brother's children, the Princes in the Tower? The women were there – and they know the truth. Annie Garthwaite's vivid recreation of the Wars of the Roses is born out of decades of historical study and a lifetime's experience of how men and women operate within the power-driven frameworks of families and business. All complemented by a rich storyteller's art and the ability to make the distant past as urgent and real as the present. We are proud to publish this new work – important, informative and entertaining in equal measure.

"From the Wars of the Roses to the dawn of the Tudor age, this is a story of mothers and sons; of maternal ferocity and female ambition – of all they can build and all they can destroy."

Rosa Scheirenberg

Secure your copy

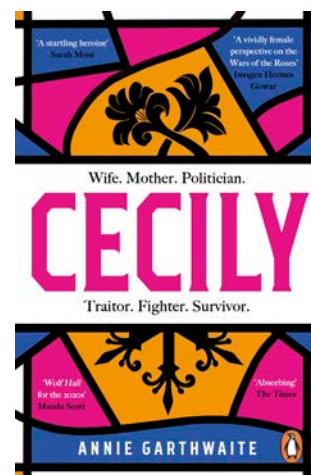
The King's Mother is available to pre-order now from the usual online retailers and from good bookshops nationwide – including our own favourite, The Castle Bookshop in Ludlow – just call **01584 872562** or email castlebookshop@btconnect.com).

And you'll be able to see Annie and hear her talk about the book at a series of events around the country from July through to the Autumn, including Raby Castle (8 July), Alnwick Castle (9 July), Waterstones Tottenham Court Road, (11 July), The Blue Bear in Farnham (12 July), The Castle Bookshop, Ludlow (17 July), The Richard III Visitor Centre (27 July) and Southwark Cathedral (15 August). For a full list of all *The King's Mother* events and to book tickets, go to www.anniegarthwaite.com/events

Cecily optioned for television

And in other news, Annie's first novel, *Cecily*, has been optioned for television by Just John Films, a production company that creates diverse, compelling stories for film and TV that lean towards unknown stories of incredible women.

Amber Anderson of Just John Film says: "I was bewitched by *Cecily* as soon as I read the first page. A figure from history often wrongly dismissed as inconsequential, Cecily was anything but, and finally through Annie's masterful writing and diligent loyalty to historical accuracy, we have her singing through the pages with her wit, her intelligence, her courage, her grief. This period of history, The Wars of the Roses, has been told a million times with a huge missing piece - the perspective of the woman who was at the very heart of it all. We are honoured to have been entrusted with this powerful story, and know it will be as enthralling and important on screen as it is in print."



We'll keep you posted on Cecily's journey to the screen in future editions of *Mortimer Matters*. Watch this space!

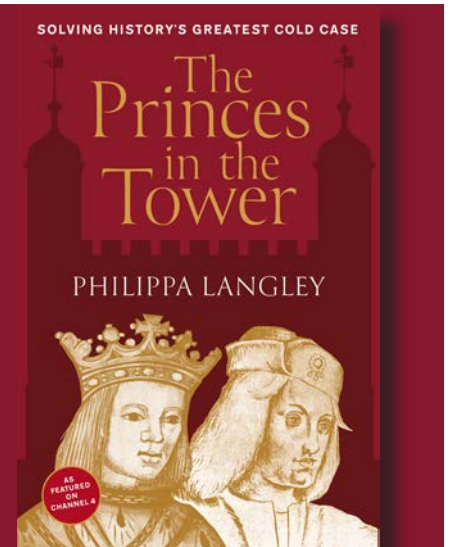
**Amber Anderson of
Just John Films**



The Princes in the Tower: Solving History's Greatest Cold Case

Philippa Langley

Joanna Laynesmith assesses new evidence regarding the survival of the Princes in the Tower



This is the 'five-year interim report' of an unprecedented research project. Inspired by a Daily Mail headline at the time of Richard III's reburial – 'it's mad to make this child-killer a national hero' – Philippa Langley launched The Missing Princes Project. Its goal was to crowdsourcing evidence of what really happened to Edward V and Richard duke of York - the sons of Edward IV whose last certain location was the Tower of London in the late summer of 1483. Some 300 volunteers from many backgrounds engaged with the search. A small number have authored some of the book's chapters. Langley does not claim to be a historian; on the contrary, she presents this as a cold case police-style investigation that would **A**ccept nothing, **B**elieve nobody and **C**hallenge everything.

It is almost 500 pages long, with substantial appendices and notes, nicely illustrated with fourteen pages of colour plates. Most chapters are short and all are helpfully broken down into bite-sized pieces of information. The boys themselves are put at the centre of the story with an opening chapter on what is known of their lives. A chapter on the summer of 1483 then gives a detailed chronology of the circumstances leading to their disappearance. This is well furnished with endnotes so that anyone familiar with the more widely accepted narrative of this period can check up on the reasons for the variations here, and decide for themselves how persuasive they find them.

Part Two opens with a substantial chapter surveying familiar sources on the boys' fate. It argues that references to 'the Lord Bastard' riding to Calais in the autumn of 1484 must refer to Edward V on the grounds that Richard III's bastard son, John of Gloucester – who is usually identified as the bastard in question – was not a lord (although he was soon to become Captain of Calais). It is improbable this refers to Edward:

kings' sons were typically called 'lord' from birth and one of Edward IV's bastards, probably Arthur, was called 'the lord bastard' in 1472, long before he became Lord Lisle.

Having noted the various Continental rumours of the boys' deaths, Chapter Five concludes that no surviving source from England mentioned that the princes were dead until after the accession of Henry VII, 'suggesting that during Richard III's reign both boys were alive'. There is no discussion of the possibility that people in England might have had good reason not to commit incriminatory speculations about the boys' fate to writing.

Chapter Six considers the means, motive, opportunity, and 'proclivity to kill' of six people who have been presented as 'suspects' for the murder either by modern writers or in medieval sources. The following chapter presents the traditional Ricardian case for Richard III as a legitimate king who therefore 'had no clear motive to murder his nephews'. Part Three adopts Matthew Lewis's suggestion that the survival of the Mortimer heirs in castles away from the public eye might have been a 'blueprint' for responding to such political inconveniences.

At page 173 we reach the exciting new evidence that the project has uncovered. The first - from the Lille Archives - is a receipt for pikes intended for 'Lambert Simnel's' 1487 invasion. This document describes the pretender as Margaret of Burgundy's 'nephew – son of King Edward, late her brother . . . expelled from his dominion'. Since it was written after the rebellion had failed so had no propaganda value, and was signed by leading officials who were unlikely to make a mistake about who the rebellion was supporting, this is presented as 'Proof of Life' for Edward V. The various contemporary documents

that apparently contradict this by identifying the pretender as the son of George duke of Clarence are mentioned and reasons for dismissing them are given in the endnotes – the name in the City Accounts at Malines 'may simply have been a misnomer', and a receipt at the Hague was signed by a mere clerk compared with the dignitaries who signed the Lille receipt, etc. The possibility that administrative efficiency required the receipt to use the same wording as the original, pre-rebellion, order is not considered. Nonetheless, this is certainly a fascinating find – unequivocal evidence that some of those supporting this rebellion identified its leader as one of Edward IV's sons. Its implications for understanding the rebellion's appeal, and Henry VII's response, need to be explored, as do the reasons for the different identities ascribed to this pretender.

A similarly remarkable document was rediscovered in the Gelderland Archive. It is a first-person narrative in Middle Dutch describing Richard duke of York's escape from the Tower. Unlike the similar, well-known letter sent by York/Warbeck to Isabella of Castile, this gives many names of men involved in his imprisonment and escape – astonishingly, the very man who had been given the prince's duchy of Norfolk, John Lord Howard (d. 1485), is described facilitating his escape. There is no reason to doubt that the manuscript was written shortly after York/Warbeck arrived at Margaret of Burgundy's court. Whether it is actually proof of York's survival is a different matter. Of the men who apparently helped 'York' escape, only one was possibly still alive in 1493 and his name is so common he would be difficult to trace for anyone trying to verify the account at that time. Sir Edward Brampton, who was formerly in Lord Howard's service and whose wife tried to support York/Warbeck, certainly knew enough of Richard III's

administration to have concocted this plausible backstory. Why the names were omitted from the letter to Isabella, and what light this sheds on later mentions of James Tyrell are among many questions worth investigating – ideally using a translation of this narrative by an expert in Middle Dutch.

Subsequent chapters investigate the implications of taking these documents literally for understanding the stories of other members of the princes' family, and give further information on those mentioned in the Gelderland document.

Other rediscoveries mentioned in the accompanying Channel 4 documentary are treated surprisingly briefly but modern translations appear in the appendices. The decision to interweave this interesting evidence with unrelated theories, from a cover-up surrounding Edward IV's death to the da Vinci code-esque story of Edward V's burial at Coldridge, creates an unfortunate distraction.

Indubitably the new sources presented here have exciting potential for further study, and it is to be hoped that we

might soon see some of the other Missing Princes Project material that was apparently so voluminous that it crashed multiple computers. The natural next step in this project democratising history is surely to allow everyone to access the evidence, trusting that a richer understanding of the fate of the princes, and of the Tudor rebellions, will emerge therefrom. For the time being, if we are to remain true to the commitment to Accept nothing, Believe nobody and Challenge everything, the case of the missing princes remains unsolved.

About the author: MHS member Joanna Laynesmith is the prize-winning author of *Cecily Duchess of York* and *The Last Medieval Queens*. She has taught at the Universities of Oxford, York and Huddersfield, is currently a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Reading and edits *The Ricardian*, the Journal of the Richard III Society.



Mortimer History Society examines Wales in crisis at International Medieval Congress

Once again the Mortimer History Society is to sponsor the International Medieval Conference (IMC), as Europe's biggest medieval studies conference examines the theme of crisis, says MHS Chair, Philip Hume.



In a nod to our turbulent times, this year's IMC will look back at the turbulence of the Middle Ages – how crises occurred, how they were recorded, perceived and endured. "By doing so," says IMC Director Axel Muller, "we hope to make a contribution to today's wider society." Perhaps a better understanding of the past will help societies forge their way through today's difficulties!

Your Society will contribute to the IMC's four-day programme, which runs from Monday 1 to Thursday 5 July. A key strand at the conference will focus on Medieval Wales in Crisis, a topic we can certainly have expertise in! We will sponsor two sessions within this strand. The first, on Monday 1 July, will look at how crises impacted Welsh religious expression during the Middle Ages. The second, on 3 July, will examine how the development of literacy, law and learning were impacted by crises within Wales. The two sessions will field seven speakers and be moderated on our behalf by Katherine Bader, an independent scholar and a member of the MHS Online Seminar Group, and Jennifer Bell of the School

of History, Law and Social Sciences at Bangor University respectively.

We will also sponsor, in partnership with Mapping the March Project at Bristol University, a session within the Critical Borders strand. Entitled Medieval Wales and the March in Crisis, this session will feature four speakers and cover a broad timeframe from the 12th to the 15th century. Look out for this one on 2 July.

Finally, on the evening of 2 July, I myself will take part in a roundtable discussion, sponsored by Bangor University, that will look at how the study of Welsh history itself is on the precipice of a crisis, with the financial decline of its institutions and the disjointed relationship between academic history and the public heritage sector. Given our Society's active role in promoting the history of the March, I expect to have a lot to say!

Our grateful thanks go to Amy Reynolds of Bangor University (and an active MHS member) for doing so much to organise and coordinate our contribution to this year's IMC.

Attending the IMC

The IMC operates as a hybrid event, with audiences attending in person at Leeds University or via Zoom – so there are plenty of opportunities for Society members to take part.

You can view the full IMC programme at www.imc.leeds.ac.uk/imc-2024/imc-2024-programme/ and book your place for the congress at www.imc.leeds.ac.uk/register.

Attendance in person is £288 with a concessionary rate of £156 for students, retired, unwaged and low-waged delegates. There's also a day rate of just £189 – ideal if you only want to be selective. Attending virtually is cheaper at £232 for the whole conference, with a concessionary rate of £156.

For your bookshelf

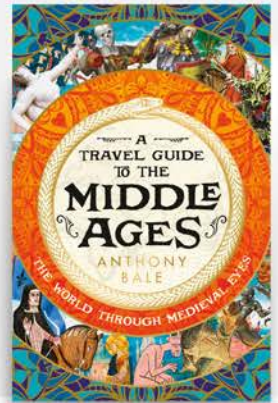
Your summer reading awaits. Dive deep into the medieval world, the life of Elizabeth I, the reigns of the Plantagenet kings and the marvels of the medieval scriptorium. Such variety!

A Travel Guide to the Middle Ages: The World Through Medieval Eyes

By Anthony Bale

This brings history alive, inviting the reader to travel across the medieval world in a journey punctuated with miraculous wonders and long-lost landmarks. Using previously untranslated contemporary accounts, the travel guide is a living atlas and an unforgettable insight into how medieval people understood their world.

Published by Penguin Viking in November 2023 and available now in bookshops or online. RRP £18.99.

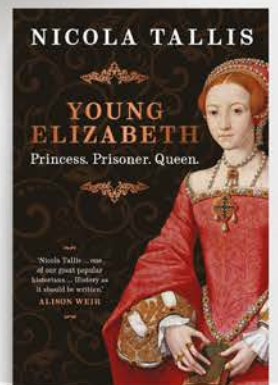


Young Elizabeth

By Nicola Tallis

If you thought there was nothing new to say about our first Queen Elizabeth, you're wrong. Nicola Tallis has uncovered new sources to cast a light on Elizabeth's life before she became queen. This colourful and immensely detailed biography explores the dangers and tragedies that plagued the early life of England's first regnant queen.

Published by Michael O'Mara, February 2024. RRP £25. Available now in bookshops or online.

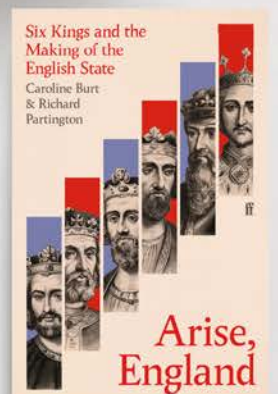


Arise, England: Six Kings and the Making of the English State

By Caroline Burt and Richard Partington

Examining the rule of six Plantagenet Kings, this book explores the development of England's emerging statehood over two centuries, creating resonance between government, international relations and the abilities, egos and ambitions of the political actors of the day. By turns impressive and hateful, these six kings stride through the story but, say the authors, the greatest character is the English state itself.

Published by Faber, April 2024, RRP £25. Available to pre-order from bookshops or from www.faber.co.uk.



The Medieval Scriptorium: Making Books in the Middle Ages

By Sara J Charles

If you've ever looked at a magnificently scribed and illuminated medieval book and marvelled, this immersive journey through the world of medieval manuscript production is a must-read. Each chapter includes a vignette of an actual medieval narrator highlighting each process – from parchment maker to scribe and illuminator. Fascinating and frankly, illuminating!

Published by Reaktion Books, 1 July 2024, RRP £16.99. Available to pre-order in bookshops or online.

