



Mortimer History Society

Newsletter No.9 June 2012

CHAIRMAN'S DIARY

What an inspiring **May Meeting!** Marc Morris and all the speakers were on good form, and several new lines of enquiry were initiated. What, for example, was the extent of the influence of Joachim and the Millenarian thinking having on fourteenth century politics? Did Roger Mortimer have a secret treaty with Prince Llewelyn? There was much to discuss and enjoy.

Sadly negotiations for the sale of **Wigmore Castle** have stalled. Herefordshire Nature Trust, English Heritage and ourselves still remain very interested in future developments.

Our next important event is a visit to the religious foundation and burial place of most of the leading Mortimers – **Wigmore Abbey** and the **Abbot's House**. This is by kind permission of our honorary Presidents – John and Carol Challis. It is open to members only and the first 50 will be able to claim tickets.

New developments are in the offing. We are reviewing the format of the website, planning Mortimer educational materials and starting a **Heraldry** group.

The second edition of our journal the Mortimer Chronicle will be published soon, the Textiles group goes from strength to strength, and Paul Remfry continues his translation work on the original *Wigmore Chronicle*. Any further suggestions for local activity will be welcome.

Both Ian Mortimer and Marc Morris have published new books - *The Time Traveller's Guide to Elizabethan England*, and *The Norman Conquest* respectively. We wish their sales well and would like members' comments.

- John Grove

DATES

15th & 16th September

Re-enactment of the Battle of Mortimers Cross (1461)
at Hampton Court Castle and Gardens
www.mortimerscross.co.uk

18th September Tuesday

MHS Visit to the Herefordshire Museums Resources & Education Centre
Friar Street, Hereford 1.45-3.00 pm
for one hour guide through medieval artefacts with Judith Stevenson, archeology curator. £4 each. Please let Margot know by 1st September if you are coming (need 10 minimum)
After - have a look at Grandison effigy in the Cathedral Lady Chapel and tea in the Cathedral cafe?
margotmiller@live.co.uk

12th October Friday : D&T Meeting

at Margot's Fownhope, 7.30 pm,
eve of the visit to Wigmore

13th October Saturday Wigmore Abbey Visit

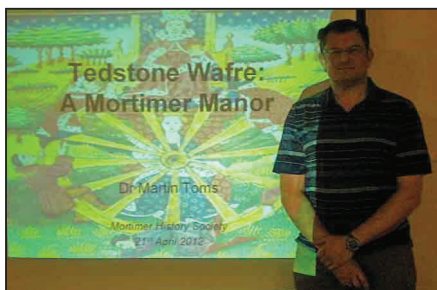


Tour of Abbot's House, Gardens and Wigmore Abbey remains – burial site of the Mortimers, scene of many funerals and some weddings as well as the religious life of a Mortimer foundation. 50 maximum. Paid-up MHS members only! Partners are welcome only if there is a joint family membership. Early booking advised Starts at 2.30 pm. £15 per head including tea

Tickets from:
Stella Mason, Hammerhill Farm
Boraston, Tenbury Wells, WR15 8LJ
enclose sae please; cheques to
Mortimer History Society

TALK AND WALK AT TEDSTONE WAFRE

led by Martin Toms & Tim Hoverd
21 April 2012



The rain held off for a while for the MHS field trip in April, when a group of members went to Tedstone Wafre to hear Martin tell about Lucy Le Wafre and Roger Mortimer (later of Chirk), and the latest developments in Martin's research of the Le Wafre medieval estates. The title slide of the talk showed the medieval wheel of fortune (see picture left), typical of the ups and downs of the Le Wafre/Mortimer story. Martin has been searching through ancient maps to find out more about the 350 acre deer park.

The wheel of fortune reached rock bottom (to mix metaphors) after 1326 when Roger Mortimer of Chirk died in the Tower of London. Roger of Wigmore managed to escape, and 'took over' his uncle's estates at Chirk and Tedstone Wafre.

Lucy might have been buried at Wolferlow Church where there is an effigy that may represent her, but Tedstone Wafre church is now a heap of rubble. The present day Lucy is a racehorse living in Australia owned by Bernard & Janet Mortimer. In April, the walk which followed the talk, was led by Herefordshire archeologist Tim Hoverd. The MHS party circled the southern part of the Le Wafre deer park, visiting the 'modern' and ruins of the old Edwin Loach churches.

MHS and Dress & Textiles Group Background Information Leaflets

LEATHER: ancient processes of tanning and currying
£1 for D&T Group

MEDIEVAL DRESS: introductory leaflet on sumptuary laws, changes in dress 10th-14th centuries, heraldic gowns
£1 for D&T Group

SOME MEDIEVAL CHURCH EFFIGIES:
Pictures of some of our collection of medieval effigies found in over 20 local churches
£1 for D&T Group

SOME MEDIEVAL COATS OF ARMS:
Booklet with coats of arms of Marcher families from around 1300
First booklet from the new Mortimer History Society - Heraldry group
£2 for MHS funds.



**All A5 booklets - available from
margotmiller@live.co.uk
Prices as above
+ 2nd class postage (or A5 sae)**

Paul Remfry's Translation of the Wigmore Chronicle

So far
the first 200 years of the *Wigmore Chronicle* up to 1306 has been translated. This leaves the last section up to 1382, which was when the text was probably copied; this will be completed this year. The work has so far shown that the original author or authors used a variety of sources to make up this chronicle: including chronicles of Torigny, Waverley, Worcester, 'Florence' of Worcester, Winchester, Margam, Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum* and Matthew Paris, plus material which seems unique to the Wigmore chronicle. The Wigmore author was a monk probably based at the abbey, as would be expected.

It is hoped that the translation will be completed by Christmas 2012 and the book will be available for the next MHS Spring meeting.



REPORT OF SPRING MEETING - 12 MAY EARL MORTIMER COLLEGE, LEOMINSTER

Edward I
pays
homage to
Philip IV
to acquire
lands in
Gascony
1296



Two main questions arose from the talks and discussions at the MHS May Meeting at Leominster. One was - to what extent did the particular personalities of Edward I, Simon de Montfort and Prince Llewelyn (the Last) affect historical events acted out on the 13th century stage? Secondly - to what extent was the overall thrust of 13th century events, a gradual reining in (*reigning in*) of royal absolute power? Not a revolution brought about by wars and massacres, but an inexorable flow which carried power slowly away from the divinely-appointed king.

Perhaps in this period of the Middle Ages, we can see the start of this long process which began in 1215 when King John signed the *Magna Carta*. The next step took place in 1258 with the signing of the *Provisions of Oxford*. The drawing up of the *Magna Carta* more or less emerged from arguments between members of an extended family, scrapping for influence, inheritance, lands, wealth and power. For, as Paul Remfry pointed out, all the actors on this medieval stage were descendants of King John - both English and Welsh. Over time, these struggles between factions of the nobility, produced the seeds which sprouted and grew over many centuries into the great trees of constitutional monarchy, parliamentary government and universal suffrage.

Edward I - Great and Terrible?

At the MHS Meeting in May, Marc Morris began by discussing the young Edward I - Longshanks, contrasting him and his character with that of his peace-loving father Henry III. But Edward I was not simply a violent, cruel duplicitous action-man as he is sometimes portrayed by past historians. Morris explained why he thought the young Edward had been perceived in such a bad light; yet in later life, Edward had achieved much - he defeated Simon de Montfort, travelled far and wide including to the Holy Land on crusade, and conquered Wales: Edward was, in the end, a great and terrible king.



Marc Morris

The defeat of Simon de Montfort

Tim Porter of the Simon de Montfort Society gave a very convincing talk, saying that although de Montfort was (like all the actors in this history) a mixture of good and bad, he was both visionary and fanatic - he did not succeed in limiting the power of the king either by force nor by negotiation. But, argued Porter, despite this failure, the process continued throughout the Middle Ages. Notwithstanding the vicious wars and massacres, as at the Battle of Evesham 1265, there were political moves towards debate (*parlement*) and compromise, first through representatives of the great noble families meeting the king; then expert commoners were called in to give advice and comments, leading eventually to chosen representatives from the shires debating with the king in an early form of parliament.

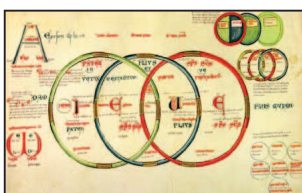


Katherine Ashe

Joachim de Fiore - the Theory of the Three

No consideration of medieval life should exclude the central matter of religion. Katherine Ashe made the point that religious fervour was an important part of Simon de Montfort's motivation and fanaticism. He was probably a follower of Joachim de Fiore - a Joachimite. Gioacchino da Fiore (c.1135-1202) was born in Cosenza, southern Italy which was then part of the kingdom of Sicily. Joachim went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem around 1159, when he experienced a conversion and spent the rest of his life as a Cistercian monk studying the scriptures and particularly the book of Revelations. He believed that there were three epochs: the Age of the Father - Old Testament times, the Age of the Son - between Christ and 1260, and the Age of the Holy Spirit - beginning in 1260, when mankind was to come into direct contact with God and therefore entry into a new 'Order of the Just' in the Church - an age of unity and justice. (For more details of Joachim's interesting life and ideas - see Wikipedia).

Gioacchino
da Fiore:
Theory of the
Three Ages -
Age of the
Father:
Age of the
Son:
Age of the
Holy Spirit



In 1200 Joachim submitted all his works to Pope Innocent III, but the monk died before the Pope had passed any judgement. The theories were widely accepted, and when the Papacy realised how revolutionary they were, Joachim's teachings were declared heretical, and St Thomas Aquinas did his utmost to suppress them.



John Davies, Abbey Cwm Hir Society

The Welsh Principality

The medieval Welsh princes' part in these political changes were described by John Davis using maps of the physical watersheds which divide the principality. The Princes Llewelyn the Great and Llewelyn the Last attempted to construct some form of independent nation which united the Welsh princelings across these watersheds. But Edward I destroyed their attempts to build a Welsh nation; the English king finally conquered the Welsh princes - most explicitly by taking control through the chain of magnificent castles of Conwy, Harlech, Beaumaris and Caernarfon.

Welsh Battlefields Trust



Painscastle

The Sunday after the May meeting five MHS members joined members of the Welsh Battlefields Trust to investigate Painscastle in Elfael - an area which the Mortimers fought to retain the portions of Wales they claimed by conquest. The castle site and the dynamics of the battle which took place there in 1198, were examined and discussed.

MHS DRESS & TEXTILES GROUP

Feltmaking: On a very bright Spring day in March, members of the D&T Group had a good time making felt at Jane Meredith's home right on the banks of the Wye at Byford. - see pictures.



D&T Group in March
Felt-making at Byford
Pieces of felt hanging to dry in the extraordinary sunshine, and the felt pots and purses we made

Background Information Leaflets produced (see page 2) on

1. **Leather**
2. **Dress and sumptuary laws**
3. **Medieval effigies in local churches**

- all available from Margot, £1 each + 2nd class postage

Blanche Mortimer Dress Project: we are moving gently along towards preparing a 'toile' of the dress; still searching for funding, but were helped by over 10 local organisations writing letters of support for our project to accompany funding proposal.



Some members are practicing making covered buttons, leather slippers and head-bands (see picture of St Dorothy below). The next picture in the middle below is of a rare medieval buttoned sleeve, part of the textiles collection at the Museum of London, and the picture on right is an idea of how a Mortimer heraldic dress might have looked.

Detail of
National
Gallery
picture of
St Dorothy

