

MORTIMER
History Society

MORTIMER *Matters*

A familiar treasure in our midst

Heritage project coordinator, Hannah Vernon reveals dramatic restoration plans for Kingsland – a church whose early build was overseen by Maud de Braose in the 1290s

This is the poem that launched a project! On 5 June 2018, these beautiful lines were read aloud to a group of Kingsland residents. Chummily seated around tables at the Corners Inn, sharing marker pens, post-it notes and plates of biscuits without a worry, the assembled were invited to put forward ideas for a possible heritage project at Kingsland church. A significant amount of capital work had already been identified as necessary by the church's architect, and it was obvious that external funding would be needed. As was, and still is, the case, the only funder churches can realistically approach for a sizeable, £50K+ repair grant is the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). This funder will give grants to fix the historic fabric, but quite reasonably expects to see a complementary programme of activity, so that people, as well as the building, can benefit from the investment.

*Stood silent a thousand years,
Risen huge above the tiny cottages and ancient castle mound,
The heavy oak door delivers us; inside is overwhelming; still.
What awe filled prayer is here in worship of a God who loves?
What joy or grief or longing, cast about to ease the one who lives?*

*Numberless souls have passed their lives in knowledge of this place,
Knowing its majesty in soaring, built delights,
Its holiness imaged in glass, stone, wood, and endless space.*

*A story told of village life year in year out, witnessed only by the heavens,
the graves of those who were and by the god who listens.*

This church, this holy place, this oh so familiar treasure in our midst.'



Kingsland church

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In This Issue

Features

Familiar treasure – restoration of Kingsland church	1-3
Women in Welsh law – it's a man's world	4-5
The House of Hereford – Marcher lords	5-7
Politics, policy and power	8-9

Society News

March conference – review	10
May conference – looking forward	11
International Medieval Congress – update	11
August study day	12
Keep the date	13
A Mortimer anthology	13
New society website	14
Welcome new members	14
Society Essay Prize results	16

Reviews and recommendations

Sir John Oldcastle – the real Falstaff?	15
Cecily Neville – fact and fiction	17
For your bookshelf	17



Project team – L to R: Peter King (Churchwarden); Hannah Vernon; Rev Julie Read; Jean Barbour (Churchwarden); Chris Southgate (PCC member); Fred Hamer (KODA Architects)

Our June meeting was, therefore, the first attempt at garnering local support and ideas. The poem, penned by local resident Patricia Potheary in 2014, proved a brilliant stimulant for discussion around the church's long history and its impact on generations of villagers. It also inspired the project's title, and lo, *A Familiar Treasure in our Midst* was born!

Finding funding

As anyone experienced in the NLHF's application process will knowingly smile and tell you, it takes more time and effort to prepare a funding bid than you might imagine. The two-stage application process lasted almost three years, involving volunteers (churchwardens, the incumbent, and members of the congregation) and professionals (architect, evaluation consultant, designer, fundraiser and project coordinator), paid through a development grant of £29,000 awarded in November 2018. The funded development phase was used to secure further funding and produce documents required for the final delivery grant application, which was submitted in June 2020. Three months later, to everyone's delight and relief, NLHF awarded *A Familiar Treasure in Our Midst* a grant of £500,000. Additional grants were gratefully obtained from 14

other funders, including the National Churches Trust and Herefordshire Historic Churches Trust.

Keep the church open

The overarching aim of the project is simple: to keep the church open! We want to make the building sustainable by developing its purpose and safeguarding its Grade I historic fabric and contents. The latter process will begin in April 2021: the church will close for six months as the north nave, aisle, Volka Chapel and organ vestry roofs are repaired, along with the timbers and ridging on the south porch. Rainwater goods will receive an overhaul; external

walls will be repointed where needed, and the church's beautiful interior will be redecorated. The most visible changes people will appreciate will be the removal of ugly polycarbonate sheeting on the windows, and the change of paint colour within.

Once the capital work is completed, and providing lockdown restrictions have been lifted, the Victorian north door will creak open to visitors and local people once more, and the heritage activity programme will commence. Whereas the capital work will secure the church's fabric and structure, it is hoped that the activity work will suffuse it with life once again.



A window on transformation



Overlooking the restoration

Keep the church alive

A *Familiar Treasure in our Midst*'s activity programme is designed to appeal to as wide a range of people as possible. We hope, out of the 35 different activities on offer over two and a half years, that there will be something for everyone, and that people from outside of Kingsland will participate too. We're currently recruiting a Community Engagement Coordinator to manage and deliver the activities, and we're hoping they will be supported by a team of volunteers (who in turn will receive a regular thank-you down the pub!).

The activities will enable people to learn about the rich history of both Kingsland Church and the village around it. Workshops, lectures, research projects, crafts, school sessions and tours will be offered, with the Mortimer family featuring throughout, and particularly Maud de Braose, who oversaw the beginning of the church's build in the 1290s. We are also keen to explore the story of Elizabeth Hughes, a late 18th century wonder-worker and 'Kingsland Doctress' (see chapter 19 in Norman C Reeves' *The Leon Valley*).

New interpretation inside the church will tell stories from 700 years of history and there will also be opportunities for people to learn or develop historic skills such as woodturning and embroidery. A Benefice Maintenance Cooperative will also be established: a group of volunteers who will receive training in historic building skills which can then be utilised at Kingsland and other local churches. It's impossible to properly describe the range of activities and opportunities on offer, so interested readers can learn more about the project through Kingsland Church's Facebook page, and in time, our new website. The team will also be happy to answer any questions, and we would love to hear from Mortimer History Society members who can tell us anything about this church's wonderful past! Please drop us a line at familiartreasuresinourmidst@gmail.com

About the author: Hannah Vernon is a Herefordshire-based freelance fundraiser and heritage project coordinator. She was responsible for Kingsland Church's project fundraising and the development and submission of the successful bids to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

From your editor

Hello!

When I started putting this issue together, I was worried that content was looking a little sparse. I needn't have – this has turned into a bumper issue. Thank you so much to all our wonderful contributors – We're so fortunate to have so many learned and erudite people in our midst willing to share their knowledge and insights.

There's also news of coming events and, with Covid restrictions gradually easing, the very real possibility of being able to meet face-to-face later this summer. What a relief that will be! And it's great to see our society going from strength to strength, despite lockdowns and pandemics. More than forty new members have joined our ranks in the last quarter year which, for me, is testament to the strength of our events programme, which has inspired so many of us when our options have been limited. Read all about our forthcoming events – both virtual and in person – in this issue.

We'd love to hear what you think about *Mortimer Matters*. Why not drop me a line at mm@mortimerhistorysociety.org.uk and let me know your thoughts and any suggestions for improvement? 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 in late May, so please get in touch with your ideas as soon as you can.



Women in Welsh law... it's a man's world

Dr Sara Elin Roberts reveals that, while Welsh law was more democratic, generally more equitable and even slightly poetic, it still put men on top. Surprise, surprise, says *Mortimer Matters* editor, Annie Garthwaite.



Following her fascinating presentation on women's rights in medieval Welsh law at the Society's *Cherchez la Femme* conference on 15 February, I hooked up with Sara to talk about idiosyncrasies in the old Welsh approach to justice – especially as it relates to women, marriage and the righting of wrongs.

For Sara, a doctorate in Medieval Welsh law combined with a fascination for the work of the fourteenth-century Welsh poet, Dafydd ap Gwilym – who had a lot to say about women, love *and* male potency – led to a passionate interest in the gender politics of the medieval Welsh legal system.

Crime and compensation

"The first thing to understand about Welsh law," she says, "is that its primary interest is compensation for the victim, not punishment of the criminal. It's practical – much more concerned with

solving problems than apportioning blame. It chiefly considers 'what are you going to do if this or that happens within your community? How are you going to resolve it and continue to live together equitably?'"

To someone brought up in a twenty-first century legal system, dominated still, it seems, by the principal of retribution, this requires something of a mind shift. I need to make another when Sara explains that, in medieval Wales, lawyers – who both wrote the laws and implemented them – were something akin to poets. "Laws are written in prose," she explains. "They contain stories, fables, even jokes; and they are written, it would appear, to instruct; to encourage people to take their obligations seriously and to strive for resolution."

"Give me an example," I say.

"Well," says Sara. "Let's look at what happens if a man and wife wish to separate. All their goods, says the law, must be divided equally." Sounds straightforward enough but, as ever, the devil is in the detail...

The woman can take the cart and its yoke, but not the animal to draw it. The man can take the upper stone of the quern (used for grinding the family's grain for bread), the woman the lower. The top bed covers belong to the woman, the lower to the man. "In simple terms," explains Sara, the law is saying "think twice, because life apart might be much worse than life together. One of you is going to be cold in bed, the other uncomfortable; you're both likely to go hungry."

So far so good, for women, you might think. They have at least some rights within marriage. But don't get too

excited yet. A woman can't own land, has no real, legal rights or identity and is entirely subject to her father's will before she's married, then to her husband's after.

Legally sanctioned wife beating

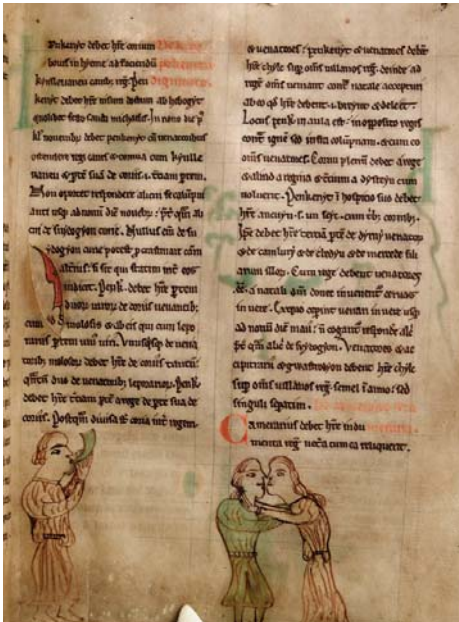
A husband has a legal right to beat his wife, and guidance is given on how that's to be done; with a rod as long as a man's arm and as thick as his finger, anywhere on the body except the head. She can be beaten if she gives away something that isn't hers to give, if she is found with another man or, intriguingly, if she wishes a blemish on her husband's beard. When I look quizzical, Sara explains that, a medieval Welsh man's beard was a symbol of his masculine potency – threaten or deride that in any way and you're in big trouble!

But, even here, the principal of compensation over punishment applies. If a husband beats his wife for a misdemeanour, he forfeits the right to bring any kind of legal case against her. He can administer a punishment or get compensation. Not both.

A virgin's oath

Medieval Welsh women had no voice in law, or any right to defend themselves. Except in one particular and very important instance.

"When a woman is married," explains Sara, "her family give surety of her virginity, in return for which the husband pays a marriage price or *agweddi*. If the man discovers on his wedding night that she's not a virgin, he must make that known immediately – leaping from his bed to declare it to his wedding guests with his manhood erect!"



Once I've had the chance to consider the practicalities of that (could be the most excruciating wedding party ever), Sara turns to what happens next.

"The woman, who must also appear before her guests, is given the option to swear an oath that she is a virgin and, if that oath is made, she cannot be gainsaid. The husband must withdraw his claim and pay the *agweddi*. Whether any marriage could survive such an ordeal, is another question!"

If the woman refuses to take the oath, her guilt is assumed, and she has only one further chance to avoid dire consequences: Her clothes are cut off to expose her genitals and she is made to hold by the tail a frisky, young bullock. She must not let go. "Oh," says Sara, "And the beast's tail is greased, just to make it super-difficult."

Right.

If she fails to hold on, the law is emphatic. "She's left with nothing," says Sarah. "No *agweddi*, no marriage, no goods, chattel or shelter. We can only assume that, in

such desperate circumstances, she would flounder and die."

"Take the oath," says I.

"Quite," says Sara. "But oath taking was such a serious business in Wales, you really wouldn't take it if it weren't true."

Better for women in Wales?

My final question for Sara is whether medieval Welsh women had a better deal in law than English women of the period.

"Not really," she says, "except in the most general sense that the law's focus on compensation rather than punishment made it less savage for either sex. Women – in Wales as in England – had little or no status in law." It's a sad note to end on.

If you missed Sara's presentation at the February conference, head over to the Society's YouTube channel or website, where recordings of the whole day's presentations are available to view.

The House of Hereford

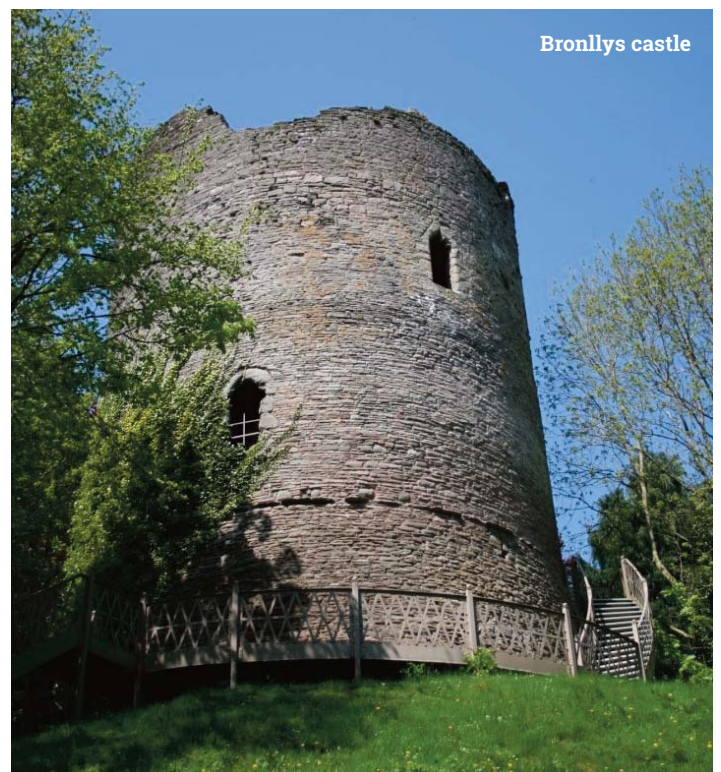
In the latest of our Marcher lordships series, Kirsten Lawton-Smith tracks the tumultuous career of the Hereford family, which rose from modest beginnings to wield significant power in the southern Marches during the twelfth century.

The man lay writhing and dying in agony, 'bemoaning his fate with tears and lamentation'. Struck from above by falling masonry amidst a terrible fire at Bronllys castle, Mahel of Hereford cursed his misfortune and the bishop he held responsible. Within days he was dead and the male line of Hereford was extinct.

This rather vivid vignette, related by the scholar and cleric Gerald of Wales a couple of decades after Mahel's death in 1165, is the last of a number of stories Gerald tells about this important Marcher family. Lords of both Brecon and Abergavenny, they came to dominate the southern Marches, as well as the counties of both Herefordshire and Gloucestershire during the Anarchy.

Origins outside the March

The Herefords' origins, confusingly, lay in the town of Gloucester, and the earlier members of the family were titled 'of Gloucester'. Roger de Pitres, a Norman in the service of William fitz Osbern, earl of Hereford (d.1071), had been appointed as Fitz Osbern's sheriff of Gloucestershire and made castellan of its new castle, possibly the first to have



Bronllys castle

been built there, to guard the strategic crossing over the Severn. After Osbern's death and his son's rebellion, the Gloucesters remained in loyal service to the crown, continuing to be sheriffs to the county and castellans under William Rufus and Henry I.

Osbern, during his time in England, appears to have rewarded the family with their first lands in the Welsh Marches, as Domesday shows them holding the small lordship of Caldicot within Osbern's holdings at Chepstow. It was split curiously in two, between the main manor of Caldicot and the detached manor of Shirenewton (the sheriff's new estate) within Wentwood. Pîtres' son, Walter was further honoured in around 1114 with the royal office of constable of England. This continued service to the crown and in particular to Henry I himself, was spectacularly recognised when Walter's son, Miles was given as his wife, the heiress Sybil de Neufmarché in 1121. Sybil was the daughter of Bernard, the lord of Brecon but also the great-granddaughter of the impressive, pre-conquest Welsh king of Gwynedd, Gruffudd ap Llywelyn (d.1063).

A spectacular rise

At a stroke, Miles of Gloucester was propelled into the leading ranks of Marcher society. He and his colleague, and seemingly close friend, Payn fitz John, wielded such enormous power and influence on the king's behalf down the middle and southern marches, that the chronicler of the *Gesta Stephani* remarked:

In King Henry's time they had raised their power to such a pitch that from the river Severn to the sea, all along the border between England and Wales, they involved everyone in litigation and oppressed them with forced services.

Between his English barony and his greatly enlarged Welsh estates, Miles could now raise close to 100 knights according to the historian David Walker, as well as draw upon a useful pool of Welsh mercenaries. It was in no way as great a number as his neighbour in Glamorgan and Bristol, Robert, earl of Gloucester, who had some 282 knights' fees, but it made him a sought-after ally. Indeed, the earl of Gloucester, the immensely powerful, illegitimate son of Henry I, deliberately courted Miles for the cause of his half-sister Matilda, as his control of Gloucester, both castle and county, was seen as vital for the Empress' immediate strategic aims in her struggle against King Stephen. Gloucester castle lay within Robert's vast barony in the west country and Miles could have provided trouble for the fledgling Angevin rebellion, had he a mind to do so. Miles had initially been loyal to Stephen on his problematic succession in 1135, however, the Welsh uprisings of the following year, which the king had failed to deal with, must have caused Miles to question this. It was left to Earl Robert and Miles to sort their own accommodations with the triumphant Welsh royal house of Gwynllŵg which had taken back Usk and Caerleon, painfully wedged between their two lordships.

A double game?

Though Miles appeared to be the most obedient crown administrator for the next few years, he was in reality in secret negotiations with Earl Robert and Matilda on the

continent, long before the Empress landed in England in 1139. On her arrival, Miles was central to the Angevin cause along with Earl Robert and their Marcher neighbour Brian fitz Count, lord of Abergavenny and Wallingford. Miles' audacious night-time attack on Stephen's forces besieging Wallingford in autumn 1139, made Brian fitz Count so grateful, that Miles received the lordship of Abergavenny from him in 1141, under very advantageous conditions. The Anarchy had provided Miles with opportunities and his tactical switch to the Angevins was validated by his elevation to the earldom of Hereford by Matilda in July 1141. From then on, the family separated themselves from associations with the earldom of Gloucester by styling themselves "of Hereford".

Unfortunately, Miles was killed in a hunting accident in the forest of Dean on Christmas Eve 1143. He was buried in Llanthony Secunda in Gloucester, a monastery he had founded for the monks of Llanthony in Ewyas when they had to flee during the Welsh uprisings of 1136. He and his wife Sybil had a large family and the Hereford brood of five sons would seem to be on course to dominate the southern Marches for years to come. However, as Gerald of Wales wrote:

By his wife, Milo became the father of a distinguished family, among them five sons, all of them famous knights, Roger, Walter, Henry, William and Mahel. Each of them succeeded to their father's inheritance, except William, yet they all died without issue: and every one of them, by some extraordinary act of vengeance or by some fatal misfortune, came to an untimely end.

The failure of five sons

Miles' eldest son, Roger inherited all his father's titles and honours. He was already married to Cecilia, the only child and heiress of Payn fitz John, Miles' old companion who had been killed by the Welsh in 1137. Cecilia was also heiress to the de Lacy patrimony through her mother Sybil, which included the lordship of Ewyas Lacy and the honours of Weobley and Ludlow.

Like his father, Roger used the turmoil of the Anarchy to further the family's territorial and political ambitions. He became the leading magnate for the Angevins after Earl Robert's death in 1147 and his retinue included the minor marcher lords Baderon of Monmouth, Walter of Clifford and others. Even William, Earl Robert's young son and the new earl of Gloucester, was the junior partner in a surprising role reversal. It was under Roger, that the Herefords reached their zenith. Problems though soon occurred. The arrival from exile on the continent of Gilbert de Lacy, caused the Herefords continuous difficulties as, like a terrier after a rat, Gilbert used the political chaos to pursue his own aims of forcibly taking back the de Lacy lands. Unfortunately for the Herefords, he was eventually successful.

Roger also had to contend with the outcome of the eventual concordance between Stephen and the future Henry II, with their agreement to return the political *status quo* back to 1135. Roger stood to lose substantially. It was said that Roger



Llanthony Secunda, Gloucester

rebelled against Henry II in 1155, but the historian David Crouch has surmised that the young king was wary of alienating his biggest supporter and they came to uneasy terms. Whatever these terms were, Roger was to meet his 'untimely end' immediately after this confrontation and died from an unspecified, lingering illness before the end of the year.

Roger's brother, Walter inherited but he was denied by a suspicious Henry II his brother's earldom and certain lands. As far as the king was concerned, this fortunate turn of events was an excuse to cut the family down to size. Walter began instead to style himself the constable, the highest honour his father had held after the earldom of Hereford. Though he served as sheriff of both Gloucestershire and later Herefordshire, he had quit royal service by 1159 and journeyed to the Holy Land, probably to become a knight templar. We have a surviving letter from him, written in Jerusalem to the king, requesting assistance with a grant of lands to Llanthony Secunda, a grant that was eventually fulfilled by his sister, Margaret de Bohun. Prominent amongst its witnesses is the surprising name of Gilbert de Lacy, the Herefords' bitter enemy back in the March. It seems in

the greater, hostile environment of Outremer, older more familiar hostilities were forgiven.

Walter, never returned to England and how he died is not known, but if Gerald of Wales is correct, it was by 'fatal misfortune' around 1160-1. The next heir was Henry of Hereford, and his death is known. He was killed by the Welsh sometime in 1165 in a violent encounter, reputedly by Seisyll ap Dyfnwal, a Welsh lord of upper Gwent. Thus the last brother, Mahel succeeded but was to enjoy his inheritance for less than a year, dying as described by Gerald at the Clifford's castle at Bronllys. He was the most cruel of the brothers, according to Gerald, but the writer is an unreliable source as the bishop Mahel was in dispute with was Gerald's own uncle, David fitz Gerald of St. David's. There is no doubt though, that this family had been formidable, opportunistic and ruthless.

Through the female line

The great Hereford patrimony now faced a split between the three remaining daughters of Miles and Sybil. The eldest daughter, and the most similar in temperament to her brothers, was Margaret de Bohun, widow of

Humphrey de Bohun, Baron Trowbridge, who had also died in 1165. If Margaret was consumed by grief, she refused to show it, as she claimed the largest share of the family's estates in England and studiously ignored her younger sister Lucy's claims to inheritance for nearly 30 years. The office of constable passed to her and her Bohun descendants, remaining in the family until their own extinction in the late fourteenth century. The small lordship of Caldicot also went to the Bohun family, marking their entry into the Welsh Marches for the first time. Later, in 1199, they would be granted the revived earldom of Hereford.

Bertha, married to William de Braose (d. 1175x9?), received the larger and more powerful Marcher lordships of Brecon and Abergavenny. De Braose, already a minor marcher lord of Radnor and Builth, suddenly found himself in possession of a large, rich and contiguous block of lands in the central and southern Marches, raising him to the highest ranks of the Marcher lords. His son and heir, also William, would understand the valuable example provided by his Hereford antecedents. Lucy fitz Herbert, the last daughter, was sorely used by her two sisters. She and her husband, Herbert, would have to fight for decades for their share of the Hereford patrimony, finally acquiring a smaller share of the English estates. The lordship of Blaenllyfni, carved out from Brecon, was created for her son Peter, by King John.

In many ways the Herefords would be a template for other ambitious families in the southern Marches. They are most similar to the Marshals, coming from a relatively unassuming background and achieving both earldoms and heiresses, as well as harnessing power through their exploitation of the Marches. They both used political upheaval in the Anarchy and the Baron's War respectively to further their ambitions. Both were to have multiple sons to inherit in quick succession and fail in the male line within a generation.

About the author: Kirsten Lawton-Smith is a trustee of the Society. She is in charge of publicity design and supports Paul Dryburgh with the society's Twitter output. She has a MA in Medieval Studies from Birmingham University and is currently writing the third volume of the marcher lordship series covering the south-east Marches, due to be published Spring 2023.

Politics, Policy and Power: the Marcher Lords and the English Crown in the March of Wales, 1254-1272.

Dr Alastair Iain Ayton's PhD thesis is a study of several Marcher lords and their lordships between 1254 and 1272 – a period of reform and rebellion across England. Here he summarises his research for *Mortimer Matters* and his conclusion that events in Wales and England were inextricably linked during this period.

With the recent and welcome exception of Philip Hume's *The Welsh Marcher Lordships I: Central and North* (Logaston Press, 2020), there has been remarkably little published in the last few years primarily focused on the Welsh March, Marcher lords, or Marcher lordships. This is particularly true in the context of the thirteenth century. It was by way of an attempt to begin to fill this gap in the scholarship that I first embarked upon my own doctoral research.



Mixed seals of the nobility, including those of two junior Marcher figures (Hamo Lestrangle and Roger Clifford), friends of the Lord Edward.

The Marchers I have studied include: the Bigod earls of Norfolk and lords of Netherwent; the de Clare earls of Gloucester and Hertford; the de Bohun earls of Hereford and Essex; and the Mortimer lords of Wigmore. As their comital titles suggest, these Marchers were simultaneously great barons (and thus subjects) of the king of England. Instead of investigating them separately (as is often the case), my thesis examines these Marchers and their Marcher lordships collectively, within

the broader political context of the March and medieval England. In practical terms, this meant identifying the territorial (and jurisdictional) powerbases of each Marcher lord in the March and nearby English border shires (Chester, Shropshire, Herefordshire, and Gloucestershire), to determine more fully the Marchers' overall position as political elites. As a result of this approach, a more complex history of the Welsh March and its lords emerges than has previously been provided. Key findings include the extent to which developments in the March were interwoven with the flow of wider events in England, as well as the crucial roles the Marchers fulfilled in shaping English politics throughout this period.

There are two key aspects to my research. First, the war in Wales between Henry III and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and, second, the expansion of royal authority in the March.

The war in Wales: Henry III, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, and the Marcher lords

The struggle between Henry III (d. 1272) and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (d. 1282) had wide-ranging implications for the Welsh March and its lords, and for the English royal court. My research reveals it was the persistent threat, if not the reality of war in Wales, which meant the March and its lords remained at the forefront of English politics. Two factors in particular support this view:

First, royal summonses to campaign in Wales (sent to earls, barons, knights, and others), were issued frequently in this

period, very often with the clearly expressed objective of further fortifying the March's defences: in 1258 (spring), 1259 (summer), 1260 (spring and summer), 1262 (summer), 1263 (summer), etc.

Second, attempts to improve Anglo-Welsh relations were affected by political divisions in England. This was a period of baronial intervention, which is to say, the baronial reform movement, when the leading barons of England (including many Marchers) seized royal power for themselves. Crucially, when the prospect of an Anglo-Welsh peace treaty was proposed in the summer of 1258, it was resisted by the Marchers at the heart of royal government.

These factors (and more besides) have typically been downplayed or glossed over by historians. Ongoing military activity in the March and declining Anglo-Welsh relations were not simply side issues; they were fundamental to the flow of wider events and even impacted the course of the subsequent civil war (1264-1267). An Anglo-Welsh truce (an official ceasefire) was, in fact, agreed and ratified instead of a peace treaty in June 1258. Far from ushering in a peaceful period in Anglo-Welsh affairs, this truce was violated within weeks of its ratification and, despite being renewed and even revised twice, it was repeatedly violated by English and Welsh alike. In this way, this truce effectively perpetuated the very instability it was designed to negate. The fact that a truce (a temporary arrangement) rather than a peace treaty (a more permanent settlement) was approved, is testament to the animosity which dogged Anglo-Welsh relations at

this time and reflects the Marchers' increased involvement in and influence over English politics.

The Welsh March and the expansion of royal authority.

Another key focus of my research, this time in the opposite direction, is the extent to which Henry III adopted a more or less consistent approach towards the March; he sought to increase his authority over the region by bringing its lords further into his orbit of power. He did this in several ways: by intervening in Marcher disputes and offering royal arbitration to all sides; by granting royal protection to Marchers travelling in his service; by employing certain Marchers as captains of his royal armies; and by using royal patronage to reward certain Marchers and their families. Henry thus attempted to assert his military mastery over the March and championed his far-reaching claims of judicial observance and political dominance.

Of course, the famous maxim that in the March 'the king's writ does not run' holds true here. Indeed, the Marcher lords repeatedly and jealously guarded the liberties and customs of their respective Marcher lordships (the right to make war; to build their own fortifications and castles; to make agreements or treaties with each other and the Welsh; to hold parliaments within their lordships; to hunt with impunity; and to resolve internal disputes at times and locations of their own choosing), which they claimed as rights and privileges. At the same time, however, it would be quite wrong to suggest that successive kings of England did not attempt to assert their supremacy, and that sometimes they did so successfully. Henry III, for example, exploited the Anglo-Welsh tensions mentioned previously to strengthen his position in the March, chiefly by installing royal commanders of his own choosing across the region. Among the most notable of these appointments, albeit they had differing rights and obligations, were the king's

sons: the Lord Edward (d. 1307) and the Lord Edmund (d. 1296). My thesis demonstrates how their installations, in 1254 and 1267 respectively, formed part of a wider impetus to retain and protect royal interests in the March as well as to expand royal influence across the region.



Obverse of Henry III's seal, attached to many charters in favour of the Lord Edmund, earl of Lancaster, including the king's grant of Dilwyn, Lugwardine and Marden in Herefordshire, alongside Rodley and Minsterworth in Gloucestershire, on 8 January 1266.

In both cases, Henry III installed his sons with the view of them functioning as Marchers in their own right, while protecting the interests of the crown in Wales. But it is also shown in my thesis how the king's promotion of the Lord Edmund in particular marked a major shift in the crown's approach towards the governance of Wales. The crown's Welsh estates were henceforth separated into two constituent parts: those in North Wales, which were retained by the crown and largely governed from Chester, and those in

South Wales, which fell under the jurisdiction of the Lord Edmund's newly created earldom of Lancaster. This arrangement survived well into Edward I's reign when the March was reorganised yet again.

Key research conclusions

- The Marcher lords and their respective concerns for their Marcher lordships strongly influenced English politics between 1254 and 1272.
- Developments in Wales were integral to the course of wider events in England, even impacting the progress of the baronial reform movement and subsequent civil war.
- Henry III, king of England, asserted his royal power with some success over the Welsh March and its lords. He ultimately changed the royal approach towards the governance of Wales, with considerable consequences for the March and for the future of English kingship.

About the author: Alastair completed his PhD at the University of St Andrews in March 2020. His thesis is entitled: *Politics, Policy and Power: the Marcher Lords and the English Crown in the March of Wales, 1254-1272*. Alastair became a member of the Mortimer History Society in February 2021. He is currently a St Leonard's Associate at the University of St Andrews.



Obverse and reverse of the Lord Edward's seal attached to a quitclaim of Grosmont, Skenfrith and White Castle in Monmouth, when surrendered to his brother, the Lord Edmund on 30 June 1267.

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'Three suns were seen in the firmament': The battle of Mortimer's Cross

A report of the conference held on Saturday 27 March



The parhelion that appeared in the sky on the morning of the battle was heralded by Edward, earl of March as a sign of God's favour for the house of York.

The Society's programme of virtual events continues to go from strength to strength, with close on 300 people attending this half-day conference that explored the origins and impacts of the battle of Mortimer's Cross. This was one of the most significant battles of the Wars of the Roses, marking the turning of the tide in favour of the Yorkists.

Fought on 2 February 1461 between the Yorkists and the forces of Jasper Tudor fighting on behalf of Henry VI and his queen, Margaret of Anjou, Mortimer's Cross was won by the eighteen-year-old earl of March. After consolidating his victory at the battle of Towton eight weeks later, he went on to become King Edward IV.

Political legacy

The first presentation, by Dr Sean Cunningham of the National Archives, described Mortimer's Cross as very much a Welsh battle, with Welshmen on both sides pitched against one another. Edward, with men drawn from his own Marcher estates, was fighting very much on his home turf with local allies. He was advantaged by both his intimate knowledge of the landscape and his

understanding of the complex loyalties of the March. Jasper, making his way north with a mixed army of Welshmen and mercenaries, lost heavily. In the aftermath of battle, Jasper's defeat seemed absolute, with the execution of his father and his own attainder. The tide would not turn again in his favour until the coming of the Tudors in 1485, when he was reinstated to the earldom of Pembroke, lost to him after Mortimer's Cross.

The Mortimer retinue 1451 to 1469

Steve David, author of *The Last Champion of York*, a biography of Francis Lovell, took a closer look at the Marcher men and families that made up the propellant forces of the Yorkist army at and in the lead up to Mortimer's Cross. He examined the close-knit relationships between families such as the Herberts, the Devereux, the Vaughans and the Baskervilles that sustained Edward and, earlier, his father, Richard, Duke of York. Steve went on to show how these families flourished in the early years of

Edward IV's reign but were grimly cut back at the Battle of Edgecote, during Richard, earl of Warwick's rebellion.

Mortimer's Cross – the elusive battlefield

One year ago, Mortimer Matters reported on a new battlefield archaeology project to locate the precise location of the Mortimer's Cross battlefield. At this conference, Anthony Rich, Regional Chair of the Battlefield's Trust reported on the project's relentless and meticulous search. He provided a fascinating account of the battle, an assessment of the pros and cons of possible sites, and a clear appreciation of the huge task the project faces. As yet, the battlefield remains elusive, but the work continues apace.

Catch up now!

If you were unable to attend, have no fear. All three talks were recorded and are now available to watch on the Society's YouTube channel. Thanks to all the speakers and Society officers for this enlightening event.

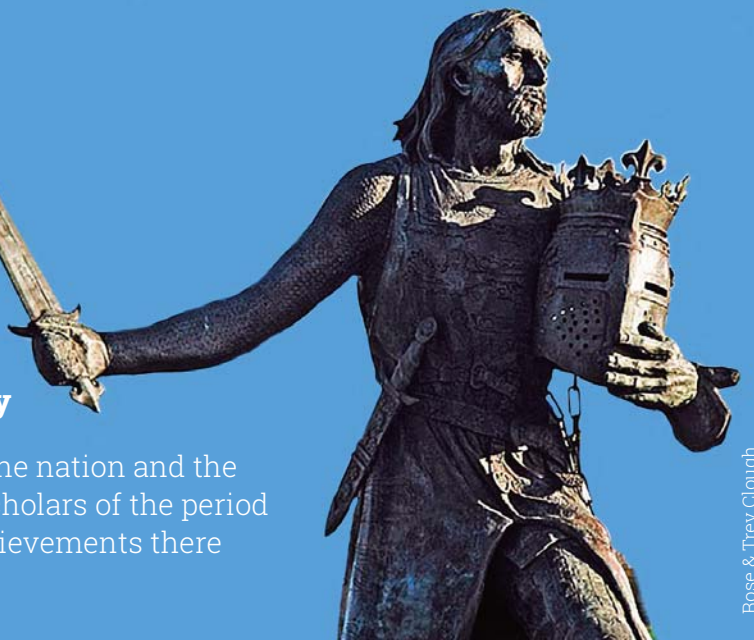


Mortimer's Cross pitched Welshmen against Welshmen

'All those things he wished to accomplish, he wisely brought to an end': Edward I, Wales and the Marches

A half-day virtual conference, Saturday, 15 May

Edward I's conquest of Wales shaped the future of the nation and the March. We've brought together three exceptional scholars of the period to assess Edward's relationship with Wales, his achievements there and his legacy of castle building.



Rose & Trev Clough



Dr Alastair Ayton

The Lord Edward's Marcher Lordship 1254 - 1272

Dr Alastair Ayton, St Leonard's Associate at the University of St Andrews and a specialist in Marcher politics and policy, looks at the future Edward I's inheritance in Wales and the March, granted to him by his father, Henry III. He'll consider how his role as a Marcher Lord developed over time and how his powerbase in the region affected wider events. Ultimately, he'll assess Edward's successes and his failures in Wales and consider whether his reputation as a 'wise and equitable commander-in-chief' was warranted.

Edward I and the Tale of Two Audiences

Dr Kathleen Neal, Lecturer in History at Monash University, Australia and author of *The Letters of Edward I*, examines correspondence between Edward I and Llywelyn ap Gruffud on the question of rights under Welsh, English and Marcher law and the extent of the king's jurisdiction. She'll show how the king's letters served a dual purpose - addressing both Llywelyn's demands and the expectations of his Parliamentary barons.



Dr Kathleen Neal



Dr Andy King

Edward I's Castles in Wales

Dr Andy King, Lecturer in History at the University of Southampton and author of *Edward I: A New King Arthur*, will explore Edward I's unprecedented programme of castle building in Wales. He'll consider the castles' military and political functions, as well as the historical symbolism used in their design and siting. He'll ask, just how innovative were Edward's castles? And can they be rightly attributed to the genius of a single, over-arching mastermind?

2021 International Medieval Congress programme now available

This July, and for the first time, the Mortimer History Society will sponsor a key strand at the International Medieval Conference (IMC). Our strand, which examines the politics, culture and law of the medieval Welsh Marches, takes place on the morning of Wednesday 7 July, and is part of a five-day programme that runs from Monday 5 to Friday 9 July.

You can view the full programme at www.imc.leeds.ac.uk/imc-2021/programme/ and book your place for the congress at www.imc.leeds.ac.uk. This is a virtual event, so you can attend easily. And you'll be in good company – this year's congress features over 500 academic sessions, fringe events, performances and workshops and expects to attract over 1,600 delegates from 57 countries!

Attendance is £120 with a concessionary rate of £75 for students, retired, unwaged and low-waged delegates. This will provide access to the full online congress during Congress week and a short period before and after the event to access all resources and recordings. Unfortunately, due to technical limitations, it will not be possible to offer single day tickets.



LEEDS INTERNATIONAL
MEDIEVAL
CONGRESS

One day, three venues

Originally planned for last July but cancelled because of Covid, our August 2021 study day tours a Jacobean house and two fine medieval churches – all with excellent Mortimer credentials. At last it appears we can go!



One of England's finest Jacobean houses

Join us on Sunday 15 August

Listed in Simon Jenkins' *England's Thousand Best Houses*, Hellens is a fine and fascinating Jacobean house, still in private ownership. Our study day will begin with an exclusive, guided tour of the house and gardens, showcasing a wealth of exceptional interiors, paintings and antiques dating from the Tudor and Jacobean periods, as well as the stories behind them. Hellens is situated within the boundaries of the medieval manor of Much Marcle, initially owned by the Mortimer family and passed down to the Audleys. Walter de Helyon, a local landowner who gave Hellens House its present name, leased the manor from the Audley family in the fourteenth century.

We'll continue on to St. Bartholomew's church at Much Marcle, the final resting place of Blanche Mortimer (d. 1347) and Walter de Helyon (fl. 1357), whose contrasting and rare tombs are displayed in the church. A short talk on Much Marcle's Mortimer associations will be given in St Bartholomew's, after which there'll be time to explore the church and its monuments at leisure and to see the remains of the medieval motte of Mortimer's Castle from the church graveyard.



Blanche Mortimer's tomb in St Bartholomew's

Our final stop will be the little church of St Mary's in Kempley. Founded by Hugh de Lacy, Marcher lord of Ludlow, Weobley & Ewyas Lacy (d.circa 1115), this jewel box of a church has some of the finest, surviving medieval wall paintings in Europe, many dating, incredibly, from the early 1120s. There'll be a brief talk about the Lacys and their connections to this church, which will reveal some surprising medieval discoveries. The day will end with time to examine the church's early medieval treasures at leisure.

All you need to know

This will be a self-drive tour and start at 10.30am. There'll be time for a decent lunch break (BYO) at Much Marcle village hall, which provides parking. We hope people will be able to car share from the village hall car park as there is limited space at St Mary's church in Kempley.



12th century wall paintings at St Mary's Kempley

Full details will be available on our website closer to the event. Tickets will be available via TicketSource and prices confirmed nearer the time. If you wish to put your name down in advance, please email Jean de Rusett at jeanderusett25@gmail.com

Keep the date!

With continued uncertainty about possible easing of Covid restrictions, we're anticipating that our events will continue to be virtual until at least late summer. We'll meet in person for the first time for our August Study Day and then for our Autumn Conference in October. Can't wait for us all to be together! Until then, all events will be free of charge and held via Zoom. We'll keep you posted – via the website, Twitter, Facebook, *Mortimer Matters* and direct emails – as the year progresses.

Saturday 15 May

Half-day conference: 'All Those Things he Wished to Accomplish, he Wisely Brought to an end'. Edward I, Wales and the Marches

Edward I's conquest shaped the history of Wales and the Marches for centuries to come. Presentations by three expert speakers explore aspects of Edward's relationship with Wales and the accomplishment of his vision. For details see page 11

Tuesday, 22 June

Annual Summer Lecture: Perceptions of the Past in the March of Wales

Huw Pryce, Professor of Welsh History at Bangor University, looks at the chroniclers and writers of the Welsh March to gain an understanding of how conquering settlers adapted to their new environment and life in the Welsh borderlands. For more information see the leaflet enclosed with this edition of *Mortimer Matters*.

Saturday, 2 October

'The Murder of Evesham, for Battle it was None': The 2nd Barons' War and the Battle of Evesham, 1258 to 66

Our first joint conference with the Simon de Montfort Society and the Vale of Evesham Historical Society will include presentations by Professor David Carpenter on Henry III, Dr Sophie Ambler on Simon de Montfort, Dr Andy King on Roger Mortimer (d1282), Louise Wilkinson on Eleanor de Montfort, and Dr Andrew Spencer on the Lord Edward. Each speaker will tell the story of the 2nd Barons' war and the battle of Evesham from the viewpoint of their character.

See future issues of *Mortimer Matters*, plus our web and social media pages for updates to our event schedule as our plans develop. We hope to hold an AGM in July and a half-day online conference in November. Watch this space for more news!

A Mortimer Anthology

Your society is bringing together the very latest scholarship on the Mortimers and the Marches.

To coincide with its celebration of the 700th anniversary of Roger Mortimer's escape from the Tower of London, the Mortimer History Society has commissioned twelve scholars to write a series of Mortimer-related essays for inclusion in a unique anthology.

The anthology, slated for publication by Logaston Press, will be launched at the Tower of London on 1 August 2023, when the Society will meet to commemorate Roger's daring bid for freedom.



Tower of London

We'll be revealing our contributors – a heady mix of eminent historians and rising stars – over future editions of *Mortimer Matters*. In the meantime, here's a flavour of the subjects they'll be tackling:

- Vivid details of Roger Mortimer's escape from the Tower in 1323
- The 'dark ages' of the Mortimer family, from 1100 to 1143
- A deep dive into the life of John Mortimer (d.1424)
- The socio-political impact of the Mortimers on the Welsh Marches in the thirteenth century
- Relationships between the Mortimers and their Welsh tenants and retainers
- Mortimer women and the Welsh frontier
- An overview of Mortimer castles
- The estates and economies of the Mortimer lordships
- The churchmen of the family – the ecclesiastical Mortimers
- The Mortimers at war
- The Mortimer affinity in Ireland during the late fourteenth century
- Family support – the Mortimers, the Crown and the management of minority
- The Royal House of York and its Mortimer inheritance

Society Secretary Philip Hume, who is spearheading this initiative, says, 'it is central to the Society's remit to advance and promote the history of the Mortimers and their impact on wider British history. This publication will be a landmark in our journey towards that goal. I'm also proud to note that eight of our contributors are already Society members, reflecting the role we're playing in facilitating academic networking and interaction.'

This Tower of London event will be one of the most ambitious the Society has ever staged. If you think you might like to go, please register your interest with Philip Hume at secretary@mortimerhistorysociety.org.uk. The venue holds a maximum of 200 people and we expect high levels of interest, so it's a good idea to signal your enthusiasm early!

New Mortimer History Society Website

Navigate your way through Marcher history at our smartly designed, easy to use new website.



Despite all the restrictions and challenges caused by the pandemic, the last year has been one of considerable achievement and progress for our Society. So much is happening: we've seen the publication of two MHS books: Nigel Saul's *Decorated in Glory* and the first in a new series on the *Welsh Marcher Lordships*; free events held on Zoom have attracted up to 200 attendees and led to a flurry of new members; on 7th July the Society is, for the first time, sponsoring two sessions at the Leeds International Medieval Congress; and plans are well-advanced for a splendid event at the Tower of London on 1st August 2023 to commemorate the 700th anniversary of Roger Mortimer's escape. To mark this later event, we've commissioned an anthology containing twelve scholarly articles on various aspects of the Mortimer story, which will be launched at the Tower.

With all of this happening, the time seemed right for an upgrading of our website. Many members will have had a chance to explore it already but, in case you haven't, please spend a few minutes browsing at www.mortimerhistorysociety.org.uk. We frequently received compliments about our previous website but, more attractively designed and very easy to negotiate, we feel that the new one is a major improvement.

It has been personally created by Society founding member Hugh Wood at minimal cost to the Society. It's been a Herculean labour and we are deeply grateful for his work and appreciative of the results.

The website has several jobs to do.

1. It must be an effective marketing tool for the Society, presenting us as a well-run, dynamic organisation that people will want to join.
2. It needs to provide clear easily-accessible information for members about forthcoming events and initiatives, and handle membership administration efficiently.
3. It should tell the fascinating story of the Mortimers and the Welsh Marcher lordships in an easily-assimilated way.
4. It should be a resource for researchers, and
5. It ought act as an archive, storing and making available the wealth of articles and lectures generated by the Society.

We hope that you agree that our new website does all these things. If you have comments or suggestions, do please contact Hugh at website@mortimerhistorysociety.org.uk.

Welcome to new members

Almost 50 new members have joined the Society since the last edition of *Mortimer Matters*. Many say they've been drawn to the Society by the excellent programme of virtual events – so that's one good thing to come out of lockdown! Total membership now stands at 449.

Welcome all! We hope you're enjoying your membership and look forward to seeing you soon. Virtual events are great, but we can't wait to meet you in person!

Kate Andrew	Abberley
Dr Alistair Ayton	Edinburgh
Catherine Boswell	Powys
Claire Boyd	Hereford
Sue Byron	Ormskirk
Pauline Clarke	Ridley
Susan Clee	East Preston
Roger Cooper	Oswestry
Brenda & David Cox	Solihull
Robert & Jennifer Davies	Ewyas Harold
Simon Doubleday	New York, USA
Mary Edley	Norwich
Deborah Gentry	Ludlow
Magred Haycocks	Aberystwyth
Ali Hill	Bromyard
Richard Hill	Ludlow
Denise Humphries	Llantrisant
William Jackson	Hereford
Julie Kirby	Hartington
Margaret Knight	Guildford
Dr Joanna Laynesmith	Reading
Debra & Rhodri Lewis	Builth Wells
Jill & Iain Maclean	Newport
Dr Judy Mayo	Chicago, USA
Brian Mills	Priest Weston
Jan Mulrenan	Cranbrook
Barbara Jane Napier	Newtown
Paul Newman	Cardiff
Maureen Nunn	Paignton
Sharon Pena	USA
Susan Philips	Havant
Denise Price	Andover
Gwyneth Roberts	Knutsford
David Seekings	Ludlow
Justin Soper	Oswestry
Vivian Stevens	Norton Bavant
David & Jan Stephenson	Powys
Rose Stimpson	Leominster
Kate Tinklin	Malvern
Christine Walmsley	Ossett
Gabriella Wildman	London
Meredith Wood	Copthorne

Sir John Oldcastle of Herefordshire. Traitor, martyr or the real Falstaff?

Andy Johnson

John Grove applauds this investigation into a life that may have inspired a much-loved Shakespearean character.

Logaston Press has again excelled in the production of this paperback. The cover alone is a startling depiction of medieval life in all its richness – the Month of January – from *Les Tres Riches Heures du Duc de Berry 1412 – 1416*, produced during the lifetime of Sir John Oldcastle ca 1370 – 1417. The scene depicts the feasting of January, the elaborate costumes of the rich nobility and the besieging army in the background with much heraldry in evidence.

It is written by the founder of Logaston Press, Andy Johnson, whose interest in Sir John has stretched over the decades, having lived close to Sir John's early family home in Almeley in Herefordshire. The author has discovered so many conflicting and bi-partisan accounts of Sir John, that he wants to set the record straight, and to present a rounded portrait of this celebrity from Herefordshire's history, including his links with Lollardy, his loyal military service for the Lancastrian kings, along with his later rebellion, and the intriguing dramatic conflation of Sir John 'my old lad of the castle', with Sir John Falstaff in Shakespeare's plays.

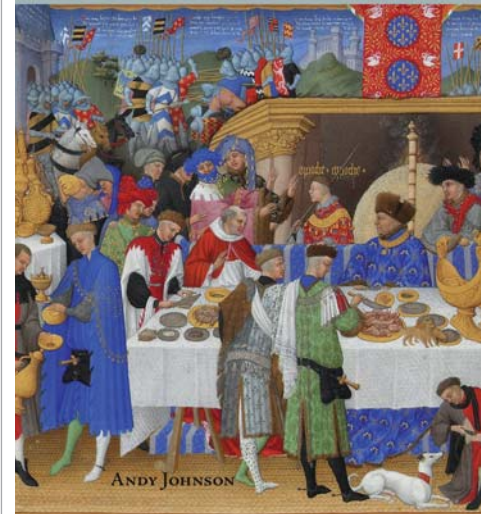
Sir John was born around 1370 and his parents, Sir Richard and Isabel Oldcastle, would have ensured their son's knightly training. Evidence shows that, in troubled times, the successful military commander was expected to travel widely, so we see Sir John after the age of 30 involved in action in Channel naval fights; in the service of Roger Mortimer, earl of March in Ireland; and in the Scottish campaign under Sir Richard Lord Grey, an ally of the Mortimers. He had a wide-ranging role in the campaign against Owain Glyndŵr,

firstly in charge of Builth Castle and then engaged at the battles of Pilleth, Aberystwyth, Pwll Melyn (Usk) and Harlech. These brought him honours, lands and a pension, along with a real friendship with the future Henry V. Johnson shows clearly how Oldcastle's second marriage gave him an enhanced status, activity in Parliament, experience of campaigning in France and, for a time, an official attachment to Prince Henry's household.

Sir John's first wife, Katherine, had given him five children and, on her death, he married Joan, Lady of Cobham. Now he was the possessor of Cooling Castle in Kent, and was summoned to attend the upper House of Parliament as Lord Cobham, a baron of the realm.

Despite Oldcastle's friendship with Prince Henry, Johnson shows, in a very detailed account, how the growth of Lollard beliefs affected Oldcastle and brought him into conflict with church and state. Eventually, these views and public disputes would lead to his trial, escape and rebellion. The book has some fascinating insights into the beliefs and growth of Lollardy, starting with John Wycliffe and the early preachers, and going on to trace Sir John's own contact with Jan Hus and Wencelas, King of Bohemia. Archbishop Arundel was the leading proponent for the beliefs, status and landed wealth of the Church. He made a public example of Oldcastle and condemned his beliefs. Sir John, like Roger Mortimer, was one of the few who escaped from the Tower in 1413 but this led, during four years on the run, to his mistaken attempt to gather knightly and wider support for the Lollard cause, and an abortive rally in St Giles Fields. There was even a second attempt at a rising in the Malvern area.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE of HEREFORDSHIRE Traitor, Martyr or the real Falstaff?



In 1417, Oldcastle was captured near Welshpool, brought to London and executed. The book gives us a good assessment of Oldcastle's later reputation in drama and history, as well as Shakespeare's possible conflation with Sir John Fastolfe of Norfolk 1380-1459. Andy Johnson is to be congratulated on his meticulous research and detailed evocation of knightly activities as well as variant beliefs in the England of this period. One unusual feature of this story is the respect and friendship shown for Sir John by Prince Henry himself, both as prince and king. Though he was dedicated to upholding the teachings and power of the church, he gave Oldcastle 40 days to reconsider his public commitment to Lollardy.

Sir John was often considered a good friend by his contemporaries. How marvellous it would be if we could sit down with him – and the author – in the Almeley village inn to resolve some of the outstanding mysteries of his life.

We will leave the final word to Shakespeare.

Falstaff: *And is not my hostess of the tavern a most sweet wench?*

Prince Henry: *As the honey of Hybla, my old lad of the castle.*

Henry IV Part 1, Act 1, Sc 2

Sir John Oldcastle of Herefordshire is available now from

www.logastonpress.co.uk. RRP £15.

About the reviewer: John Grove read economics and theology at Cambridge, and has an MA from Warwick University for his research into Scandinavian education. He has worked in education and is the founder of both Usk Castle Friends and the Mortimer History Society.

Cecily Neville – Mother, Wife, Traitor, Survivor

On Thursday, 19 August Mortimer History Society members are invited to an event in which novelist Annie Garthwaite and historian Dr Joanna Laynesmith introduce fifteenth century England's most powerful matriarch.

Annie's novel *Cecily* is 'the most anticipated historical fiction debut of 2021', says its publisher, Penguin Random House. Joanna Laynesmith's *Cecily, Duchess of York*, is the definitive biography of this much misunderstood mother of kings. They're coming together to talk about their fascination with Cecily, what they've learned about her in the creation of their books and why she's worthy of so much more attention than she's typically given.

The event will be held by Zoom at 6:30pm on Thursday, 19 August – mark your diary! Official invites with all details will be sent in June.

Cecily portrait



Annie

Annie grew up in a working-class community in the north-east of England. She studied English at the University of Wales before embarking on a thirty-year international business career. In 2017 she returned to her first love, books, and set out to write the story of a woman she had always felt drawn to: Cecily Neville. This became her debut novel, *Cecily*, published 29 July 2021.

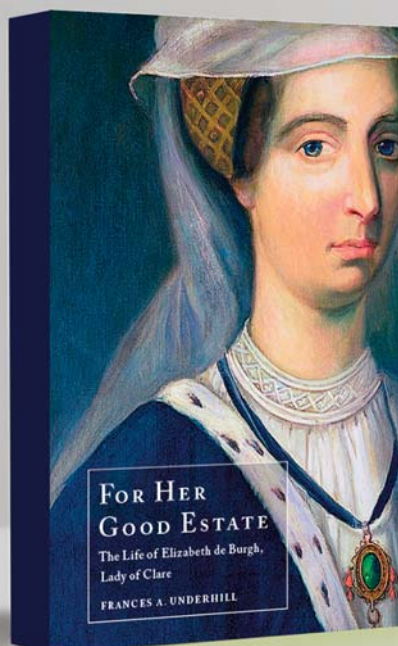


Joanna

Joanna is the prize-winning author of *The Last Medieval Queens* (OUP, 2004) and *Cecily, Duchess of York* (Bloomsbury, 2017). She has taught at the Universities of Oxford, York, Reading and Huddersfield, published numerous articles on medieval women in academic and popular journals and is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. She is also the mother of two boys, and is currently a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Reading.

For Her Good Estate

I hope you all enjoyed reading John Grove's excellent review of *For Her Good Estate: The life of Elizabeth de Burgh, Lady of Clare* in our last issue. The publisher, Moonwort Press, has asked me to make you aware of a revised URL for book orders - <https://www.clarealumni.com/pages/media/for-her-good-estate>. From there you can also link to the book's own website, where there's lots of additional book-related material for you to enjoy.



The 2020 Mortimer History Society Essay Prize

Three essays have been specially commended by the judges for the 2020 prize. They are:

Alastair Dunn for Hexham: *An Examination of a Border liberty to c.1400*

Patrick McDonagh for An Elegant Cold Collation: *A lost letters patent to Sudbury, 1397*

Andrew Shell for *Mortimer Mawr: The Magnanimity of the Mortimers of Wigmore in the Preservation of Welsh Identity*

All three essayists will receive three years free membership of the Society and their essays will be published in our 2021 Journal.

For your bookshelf

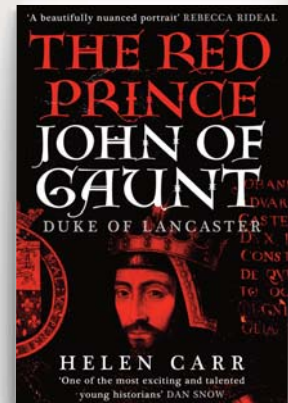
Just three for you this time – but everyone a gem!

The Red Prince

By Helen Carr, Oneworld, April 2021

Son of Edward III, father to Henry IV and Marcher Lord of Monmouth, John of Gaunt has left a complex legacy. This book seeks to answer important questions including... did he have his eye on his nephew's throne? And why was he such a focus of hate in the Peasant's Revolt. A must read!

Available in bookshops and online. RRP £20.

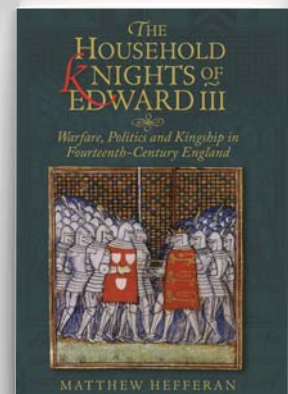


The Household Knights of Edward III

By Matthew Hefferan, Boydell & Brewer, February 2021

The first full-length study of the role of the household knight in medieval England takes as its focus those men serving during the reign of Edward III. It describes how and why the knights were retained, what functions they performed and what rewards they received for their service. In doing so, it provides a more detailed picture of Edward's kingship and answers important questions about how wars were fought and kingdoms ruled in late medieval Europe.

Purchase online at <http://boybrew.co/3aVIUhr> and enter promotional code BB899 to secure a 40% discount on the RRP of £75. Offer available till 31 December 2021.



Tradition, Reformation and Reaction in the Forest of Dean 1450 to 1600

By Joyce Moss, Lightmoor Press, 1918

Pre-reformation, the Forest of Dean was in the Hereford Diocese, firmly in Mortimer territory. This book looks at the impact of the Reformation in a single deanery, giving us an intimate view of the impacts of and reactions to the policies of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Elizabeth I, for the first time at a local level. There was clearly a wide spectrum of belief, which can't necessarily be labelled Catholic or Protestant, but which was typical of most English deaneries in the sixteenth century as the new church, established by law, was gradually accepted. The contents of Hereford court records from 1540 and Diocesan Records from 1540 to 1603 allow the lives and beliefs of Forest people to be recovered in some detail.

Purchase online at www.lightmoor.co.uk (local history section) or from Waterstones and the Chepstow Bookshop, or Rossiters in Monmouth and Ross. RRP £15.

