

# STEPHEN PARRY

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## & COMPANY



Wigmore Castle, Castle Street, Wigmore, Herefordshire HR6 9UD

A Grade I Listed Castle believed to date back to 921AD and offering a rare opportunity to purchase an important historic castle ruin that is in the guardianship of the Secretary of State (English Heritage and thus the new owner(s) would have no liability for the repairs to the castle) and set in approximately 32 acres to include a moat, woodland, a jousting field, workshop and orchards.

## Distances

Leominster 10 miles  
Ludlow 12 miles  
Hereford 21 miles  
Birmingham 59 miles  
Cardiff 77 miles  
Bristol 83 miles  
Manchester 102 miles  
London 170 miles  
(Approximate distances)

## Location

The village of Wigmore has a range of local amenities to include a village shop, pub, primary school and secondary school. The local market town of Leominster has more extensive facilities and The Cathedral City of Hereford, 21 miles away, provides a sophisticated range of shops, restaurants and amenities and has a rail service to London Paddington. The area is well catered for in terms of schools with Moor Park at Ludlow, Cheltenham Ladies College, Cheltenham College, Alice Otley, Malvern College and Hereford Cathedral school being within easy reach. Golf courses are at Leominster, Hereford and Ludlow, and racing is at Hereford, Stratford upon Avon, Worcester and Cheltenham.

## The Property

Wigmore Castle is believed to date back to 921AD and offers a rare opportunity to purchase an important historic castle ruin that is in the guardianship of the Secretary of State (English Heritage and thus the new owner would have no liability for the repairs to the castle itself). Wigmore Castle is set in approximately 32 acres and includes a moat, woodland, a jousting field, workshop and orchards.

From the castle orchard which historically had a fishpond at its lowest point, there is a rising track through woodland to the lowest point of the Jousting Field. A second track passes through two gates and passes the



defensive ditch. The second gates define the 'Guardianship' area and includes the moat and the castle ruins. The track to the left then completes one circuit of Wigmore Castle.

## History of Wigmore Castle

Wigmore Castle is believed to date back as far as 921AD when there was a fortress on the site held by Edward the Elder. The ruin is mainly 14th Century but parts of the shell wall are Norman and the north-east tower is 13th Century. A stone castle was built by one of William the Conqueror's Captains,

William Fitzosbern, who later fell out with the King, forfeiting the castle to the Mortimer family. The Mortimers were given a lot of power - raising their own army and taxes in return for guarding the border against the Welsh. The Mortimers later increased their power base by marrying into the Grenville family who occupied Ludlow Castle. In 1075 Wigmore Castle became Ralph De Mortimer's seat in England, and his lands eventually formed the Honour of Wigmore.

Wigmore Castle is mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086, as being owned by Ralph De Mortimer, and as being built

on waste land, called Merestun, by Earl William. In 1115 Ralph was succeeded by his son Hugh, who was initially a staunch supporter of Henry the 1st, however in this year Hugh rebelled against the King in favour of his son in law Stephen De Blois. This resulted in the Mortimers being dispossessed of their land. In 1135, on the ascension of Stephen to the throne, the Mortimers were re-instated with their estates. However, twenty years later, Henry the Second demanded the return of royal castles, and Hugh was one of the Barons who violently objected to this demand, so much so that Henry sent out a royal army to deal with "The Mortimer Problem". Together, with others on the Welsh Border he laid to waste several castles, Wigmore being spared only because of its important position on the Welsh Border. An agreement was reached between the King and the Mortimers, although the King never fully trusted Hugh afterwards.

In 1181 Hugh De Mortimer died. Before his death, he began the rebuilding of some parts of the castle in stone – part of the gate house and the lower walling of the shell-keep, date to his lifetime. In 1191 Hugh's son, Roger De Mortimer, was forced into exile for a short while and his land was left in the hands of Richard the First Chancellor. Roger regained his lands before he died in 1215 and they were passed to his two sons, Hugh and Ralph. The brothers were responsible for completing the stone version of the Castle. Hugh succeeded Roger in 1215, but later died in 1227 and was succeeded by his brother Ralph.

Around 1246, Ralph was succeeded by his eldest son Roger, who became the 1st Baron Mortimer, and was famous for his loyalty to King Henry III. Roger was succeeded in turn by his son Edmund who became the 2nd Baron Mortimer in 1274 at the sudden death of his elder brother Ralph. Edmund was succeeded by his son Roger. Roger married Joan De Grenville (who was heiress of the Lacys) at the age of fourteen having been betrothed to her from a young age. The marriage brought with it extensive

estates in Ireland and Shropshire, including Ludlow Castle. In 1321 Roger became very influential over Edward the Second's wife, Isabella, and in this year led an armed rebellion against the King.

In 1327 Edward was murdered by Roger and Isabella. Isabella then ruled through Edward the Third, and Roger, who had been made Earl of March, openly continued his relationship with the Queen. However, in 1330, Edward III came of age, and he arranged for Roger to be arrested in Nottingham, and in the same year, Roger was hanged. Wigmore Castle was then granted to the Earl of Salisbury. Roger's son, Edmund, died in 1351, and his son Roger became the Fourth Baron Mortimer. Roger married the heiress of the Earl of Salisbury and regained the Mortimer estates. He also took over the Wigmore estate and became the Second Earl of March. Roger had two legitimate sons, Roger and Edmund, the former died young leaving Edmund his father's heir. Edmund died in 1380 leaving the Mortimer fortune to his son, Roger. This Roger De Mortimer (Fourth Earl of March and the second Earl of Alcester) was important in English history right up to his death in 1398. King Richard the Second, having no heir of his own, was encouraged to choose a successor and, by general agreement, he chose Roger De Mortimer, Fourth Earl of March. When Roger came of age he found the castles and mansions of the Mortimer estate in good condition, and lived a life of luxury and plenty. Unfortunately, Roger never sat on the throne because he died in Ireland in 1398 at the age of twenty-four, before Richard the Second was deposed by Henry of Bolingbroke, who later dubiously proclaimed himself King Henry the Fourth. Roger's brother, Edmund, now held the Mortimer's lands, and appears not to have shown any signs of challenging Henry for the throne. He would probably have remained that way had not King Henry refused to pay his ransom when he was captured by Owain Glyn Dwr, the self-proclaimed Prince of Wales, after attempting to fight off a raid by the Welsh in the Lugg Valley. On

hearing of the King's refusal to pay the ransom, Edmund's brother-in-law, Henry Hotspur Percy of Northumberland, was angered and when the King disallowed Edmund's relatives to pay his ransom the Mortimer family rose up in rebellion. In 1421 Edmund died in Ireland, apparently of a broken heart, and left no heir. Meanwhile, Roger, Fourth Earl of March's son, Edmund was only eight at the time of his father's death, and when King Richard was deposed and replaced by King Henry the Fourth who had a son, Edmund lost his hereditary claim to the throne, and was put into custody at Windsor with his younger brother Roger where they were treated honorably, and for part of the time, brought up alongside the King's children. Edmund's nephew, Richard Plantagenet Duke of York, inherited the Mortimer estates at the death of his uncle in 1421.

Richard Plantagenet was involved in a struggle for the throne during the War of the Roses in 1455 and returned to Wigmore Castle in order to gather a large army to meet the King at the Battle of St Albans. Richard was slain in 1460 during the Battle of Wakefield, and his cause was taken up by his son Edward. In 1460, Edward defeated Owen Tudor and the Earl of Wiltshire at the battle of Mortimer's Cross. In 1464 Edward took to the throne as Edward the Fourth and Wigmore Castle became a royal estate.

It remained this way until Queen Elizabeth I granted it to Captain Gelly Meyrick and Henry Lyndley Esquire. In 1601 the castle was sold by Elizabeth I to Thomas Harley of nearby Brampton Bryan. It was this change of ownership that sealed the fate of Wigmore Castle. Sir Thomas' son, Robert, was a strong supporter of the Parliamentary cause in a country that was predominantly royalist. In 1643, Robert's wife, Lady Brilliana ordered Parliamentary troops to dismantle the walls of the castle to prevent it from being used by opposition forces.



### **Tenure**

The properties are Freehold.

### **Services**

Mains electric and water are supplied to the site.

### **Local Authority**

Herefordshire County Council, Town Hall, St Owens Street, Hereford HR1 2PJ.

### **Wayleaves and Rights of Way**

The property is offered for sale subject to and with the benefit of all rights of way either public or private, all easements, wayleaves, and other rights of way whether they are specifically referred to or not.

### **Planning**

Wigmore Castle is Grade I listed. The property is sold subject to any development plans, tree preservation orders, ancient monument orders, town planning schedules or resolutions which may be or may come into force.

### **Sporting, Timber and Mineral rights**

All sporting rights, standing timber and minerals in so far as they are owned are included in the freehold sale.

### **Boundaries**

Any purchaser shall be deemed to have full knowledge of all boundaries and neither the vendor nor the vendor's agents will be responsible for defining the boundaries or the ownership thereof.

### **Fixtures and Fittings**

Only those items mentioned within the Stephen Parry & Company brochure are included. All other items are expressly excluded but maybe available by separate negotiation.

### **Viewing**

Strictly by appointment with Stephen Parry & Company on +44 (0) 1926 883311

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