

THE RIVERSIDE
At Aymestrey

THE WIGMORE CIRCULAR

500-1000 ft
MODERATE

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WIGMORE CASTLE

Wigmore Castle, a formidable ruin in North Herefordshire, boasts a rich and often turbulent history. Originally a simple earth-and-timber motte-and-bailey fortress, it was established by William

FitzOsbern shortly after the Norman Conquest to control the Welsh Marches. It quickly became the

ancestral seat of the powerful

Wigmore Castle ruins today.



Mortimer family, who transformed it into a mighty stone castle, strategically vital in the Anglo-Welsh conflicts and a centre of their vast estates. Roger Mortimer used Wigmore as a base for his considerable influence, shaping medieval English politics for centuries. In its ruinous state one can still imagine here whispers of the restless spirits of the executed prisoners or ghostly knights from its warring past.

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DIRECTIONS

1 TL from the Riverside's front door, cross the River Lugg and then turn left on the lane following signs to Lower Lye (this is the Mortimer Trail however there are occasional cars still on this minor road).

Continue up this minor road passing a small weir on your L and keeping Garden House Wood on your R until you reach a left bend in the road below Ballsgate Common.

2 Continue on around the bend as it then curves R and pass Ballsgate House (this is where the Mortimer Trail turns off your route).

Continue on along the minor road until you reach the hamlet of Lower Lye. Pass Netherlye Farm on your L and continue until you reach a turning on your R opposite a large wooden barn.

3 TR up the track bearing left on the main track. Continue along up track, bear R at small junction of tracks and continue along on a contour/level to the gate at the end (this track can become overgrown in the summer months).

Go through/over gate (this may be chained) and keep R along field edge towards edge of Oakley Hill Wood to stile. Continue over stile up this quiet valley until you reach a further stile at a minor road.

4 TR here on to minor road and along and up as it curves R. Continue until you pass Barn Farm on your L.

5 After the farm TL over stile into open field and bear slightly R as path goes downhill through trees to FB over stream. Go straight up steep field ahead to next stile (cattle occasionally grazed in this field).

Cross minor road to path opposite and continue along shaded path until you see stile on R. Cross stile and follow path around L and down to minor track. TR here and quickly

TL to follow path to minor rd (Castle St). TR here to church.

6 TL before church and follow track around L. This becomes a path eventually and leads along and down to the gate and information board at the Castle (please take time and care here as it is a ruin if you visit). From gate to c asteel TL and follow path to another stile, go over and up an open field through a little wood and bear L up a covered path to a stile. Continue over stile and bear R up over open common land to gate/stile and minor road.

7 TR here and continue down and along Barnett Lane (occasional traffic on this lane). Keep Brick Kiln Coppice on your R until you reach small junction of lanes.

8 TL at lanes junction and walk up past Rose Farm (on your R). Continue along and then eventually down over stream and up to junction with Ongar Street. TL here passing Dickendale on your L and down and then up to small turning on R into Oakley Wood.

9 TR here pass the gate and along into lovely quiet woodland on clear track. Continue along track keeping Oakley Wood on your L. Track reaches small paths junction, TL here and follow track (this may be overgrown in summer) along and bear L down to minor lane - or you can continue down to minor Lane and Rose Cottage and then TL (please beware here, Cottage has big guard dogs behind their gate on to road).

9 TL on to lane and continue along to Lower Lye passing Lye Court on your R.

Continue along and retrace your steps back past Ballsgate House, Garden House and finally back to the Riverside.

ROGER MORTIMER



Roger Mortimer, 1st Earl of March, was arguably the most powerful and controversial figure to emerge from Wigmore Castle. Born into the influential Mortimer family, lords of the Welsh Marches, he inherited a formidable power base. His ambition, however, led him far beyond border skirmishes.

Mortimer rose to prominence through his affair with Queen Isabella, wife of King Edward II. Together, they orchestrated a successful invasion of England in 1326, leading to Edward II's deposition and eventual murder. For a brief period, Mortimer effectively ruled England as the de facto regent for the young Edward III, wielding immense power from his stronghold at Wigmore. He amassed vast wealth and titles, but his arrogance and perceived tyranny alienated many. In 1330, Edward III, asserting his own authority, launched a swift coup, capturing Mortimer at Nottingham Castle. He was subsequently executed for treason, bringing an end to his dramatic ascent and cementing Wigmore Castle's place in a pivotal moment of English history.