

Roger Mortimer, 4th Earl of March  
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Roger Mortimer[4th Earl of March](#)  
[6th Earl of Ulster](#)

Remains of Wigmore Abbey, burial place of the Earls of March

Spouse(s)[Eleanor Holland](#)

## Issue

[Anne Mortimer](#)

[Edmund Mortimer, 5th Earl of March](#)

Roger Mortimer

Eleanor Mortimer[Noble familyMortimer](#)Father[Edmund Mortimer, 3rd Earl of March](#)Mother[Philippa Plantagenet](#)Born11 April 1374

Usk, MonmouthshireDied20 July 1398 (aged 24)

Kells, County Meath, Ireland

Arms of Mortimer: *Barry or and azure, on a chief of the first two pallets between two base esquires of the second over all an inescutcheon argent*

**Roger de Mortimer, 4th Earl of March and 6th Earl of Ulster** (11 April 1374 &ndash; 20 July 1398)<sup>[1]</sup> was considered the heir presumptive to King Richard II.

Roger Mortimer, born 11 April 1374 at Usk in Monmouthshire,<sup>[2]</sup> was the eldest son of Edmund Mortimer, 3rd Earl of March, by his wife Philippa Plantagenet, who as the daughter of Lionel of Antwerp, 1st Duke of Clarence, and granddaughter of King Edward III, had a claim to the crown which she passed on to her children. He had a younger brother, Edmund Mortimer, and two sisters, Elizabeth, who married Henry 'Hotspur' Percy, and Philippa (1375-1401), who married firstly John Hastings, 3rd Earl of Pembroke (d.1389), killed in a tournament at Woodstock Palace, secondly Richard de Arundel, 11th Earl of Arundel (1346-1397), beheaded in 1397, and thirdly, Sir Thomas Poynings.<sup>[3]</sup>

Roger Mortimer's mother, Philippa, died on or before 7 January 1378, and was buried at Wigmore Abbey.<sup>[4]</sup> His father, said to have caught cold crossing a river in winter, died at the Dominican friary at Cork in Munster on 27 December 1381, leaving his son to succeed to a title and extensive estates at only six years of age.<sup>[5]</sup>

According to Davies, the wardship of such an important heir was an 'issue of political moment in the years 1382&ndash;4'. Eventually, on 16 December 1383, Mortimer's estates in England and Wales were granted for &pound;4000 per annum to a

consortium consisting of Mortimer himself, the Earls of Arundel, Northumberland, and Warwick, and John, Lord Neville. The guardianship of Mortimer's person was initially granted to Arundel, but at the behest of King Richard's mother, Joan of Kent, in August 1384 Mortimer's wardship and marriage were granted, for 6000 marks,<sup>[6]</sup> to Joan's son, Thomas Holland, 2nd Earl of Kent, who has Richard's half-brother, and on or about 7 October 1388.<sup>[7]</sup> Mortimer married Kent's daughter, Eleanor Holland, who was Richard's half-niece.<sup>[8]</sup> Mortimer did homage and was granted livery of his lands in Ireland on 18 June 1393, and of those in England and Wales on 25 February 1394.<sup>[9]</sup>

King Richard had no issue, and Mortimer, a lineal descendant of Edward III, was next in line to the throne and married to his half-niece. Cokayne states that in October 1385 Mortimer was proclaimed by the King as heir presumptive to the crown.<sup>[10]</sup> However according to Davies the story that Richard publicly proclaimed Mortimer as heir presumptive in Parliament in October 1385 is baseless, although contemporary records indicate that his claim was openly discussed at the time.<sup>[8]</sup> He was knighted by the King on 23 April 1390.<sup>[11]</sup>

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Career[[edit](#)]

After he came of age, Mortimer spent much of his time in Ireland. King Richard had first made Mortimer his Lord Lieutenant of Ireland on 24 January 1382 when he was a child of seven, with his uncle, Sir Thomas Mortimer (d. before 14 March 1403),<sup>[12]</sup> acting as his deputy.<sup>[13]</sup> The King reappointed Roger Mortimer as his lieutenant in Ireland on 23 July 1392, and in September 1394<sup>[14]</sup> Mortimer accompanied the King on an Irish expedition. On 25 April 1396<sup>[15]</sup> the King appointed him lieutenant in Ulster, Connacht, and Meath, and Mortimer was in Ireland for most of the following three years. In April 1397 the King reappointed him lieutenant for a further three years.<sup>[16]</sup>

Mortimer's residence in Ireland ensured that his political role in England was a minor one. His closest relationships in England appear to have been with family members, including his brother, Edmund, to whom he granted lands and annuities; the Percy family, into which his elder sister, Elizabeth had married; and the Earl of Arundel, who had married his younger sister, Philippa.<sup>[8]</sup>

As Davies points out, Mortimer's 'wealth and lineage meant that, sooner or later, he would be caught up in the political turmoil of Richard II's last years'. On 4 September 1397 he was ordered to arrest his uncle, Sir Thomas Mortimer (d. before 14 March 1403) for treason regarding his actions at the Battle of Radcot Bridge, but made no real attempt to do so. Even more inauspiciously, when summoned to a Parliament at Shrewsbury in January 1398, he was 'rapturously received', according to Adam Usk and the Wigmore chronicler, by a vast crowd of supporters wearing his colours. These events excited the King's suspicions, and on Mortimer's return to Ireland after the Parliament in January 1398, 'his enemy, the Duke of Surrey, his brother-in-law, was ordered to follow and capture him'.<sup>[17]</sup>

On 20 July 1398, at the age of 24, Mortimer was slain in a skirmish with 'O'Brien's men' at Kells.<sup>[18]</sup> The Wigmore chronicler says that he was riding in front of his army, unattended and wearing Irish garb, and that those who slew him did not know who he was. He was interred at Wigmore Abbey.<sup>[19]</sup> The King went to Ireland in the following year to avenge Mortimer's death.<sup>[20]</sup>

Mortimer's young son, Edmund Mortimer, 5th Earl of March, succeeded him in the title and claim to the throne.

The Wigmore chronicler, while criticizing Mortimer for lust and remissness in his duty to God, extols him as 'of approved honesty, active in knightly exercises, glorious in pleasantries, affable and merry in conversation, excelling his contemporaries in beauty of appearance, sumptuous in his feasting, and liberal in his gifts'.<sup>[21]</sup>

Marriage and children[\[edit\]](#)

By his wife Eleanor he had two sons and two daughters:<sup>[22]</sup>

- Edmund Mortimer, 5th Earl of March
- Roger (born 23 April 1393, died c.1413)<sup>[23]</sup>
- Anne, who married Richard, Earl of Cambridge (executed 1415)
- Eleanor (born 1395), who married Sir Edward de Courtenay (d.1418), and had no issue

In June 1399 Roger Mortimer's widow, Eleanor, married Edward Charleton, 5th Baron Cherleton, by whom she had two daughters:<sup>[24]</sup>

- Joan, who married John Grey, 1st Earl of Tankerville, brother of Sir Thomas Grey, executed for his part in the Southampton Plot which aimed to replace King Henry V with Eleanor's son, Edmund Mortimer, 5th Earl of March. Joan was co-heiress in 1425 to her stepbrother, Edmund Mortimer, 5th Earl of March.
- Joyce, who married John Tiptoft, 1st Baron Tiptoft.

Eleanor died 6 or 18 October 1405.<sup>[25]</sup>

Footnotes[[edit](#)]

1. **Jump up** ^ Some sources give the date of his death as 15 August.
2. **Jump up** ^ Richardson III 2011, p. 195.
3. **Jump up** ^ Cokayne 1932, p. 448; Richardson II 2011, pp. 190-1; Richardson III 2011, pp. 193-5, 307, 335, 341; Holmes 2004; Tout 2004.
4. **Jump up** ^ Richardson III 2011, p. 194.
5. **Jump up** ^ Cokayne 1932, p. 448; Richardson III 2011, p. 194.
6. **Jump up** ^ Pugh 1988, p. 171.
7. **Jump up** ^ Richardson III 2011, p. 195.
8. ^ Jump up to: <sup>a b c</sup> Davies 2004.
9. **Jump up** ^ Cokayne 1932, p. 449.
10. **Jump up** ^ Cokayne 1932, p. 448
11. **Jump up** ^ Cokayne 1932, p. 448
12. **Jump up** ^ Richardson I 2011, pp. 103-4; Richardson III 2011, pp. 192-3.
13. **Jump up** ^ According to Davies, Sir Thomas Mortimer was illegitimate; however Richardson includes him among the three legitimate sons of Roger Mortimer's grandfather, Roger de Mortimer (1328-1360).
14. **Jump up** ^ Davies dates the expedition to the summer of 1394.
15. **Jump up** ^ Davies dates the appointment to 28 April 1396.
16. **Jump up** ^ Cokayne 1932, p. 449; Davies 2004.
17. **Jump up** ^ Cokayne 1932, p. 449; Davies 2004.
18. **Jump up** ^ Davies gives the place name as Kellinstown.
19. **Jump up** ^ Cokayne 1932, p. 449; Richardson III 2011, p. 195
20. **Jump up** ^ Cokayne 1932, p. 449.
21. **Jump up** ^ Cokayne 1932, pp. 449-50.
22. **Jump up** ^ Cokayne 1932, p. 450; Richardson III 2011, p. 195
23. **Jump up** ^ Pugh 1988, p. 61; Although some sources state that Roger died c.1409, Pugh states that he was made a Knight of the Bath by Henry V on the eve of his coronation on 9 April 1413.

24. **Jump up** ^ Richardson I 2011, pp. 427-8.

25. **Jump up** ^ Cokayne 1932, p. 449; Richardson III 2011, p. 195

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