

The Provisions

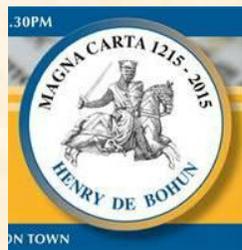
The official newsletter of
Simon de Montfort 2014

April 2015

It was on 1 April that Simon de Montfort and his retinue left Odiham, the last time he and Eleanor saw each other. There was no suggestion of it at the time, so there's no sense reading more poignancy in the moment than there could have been. And let's not forget that, despite a marriage of twenty-seven years and seven offspring, historians have never been inclined to see Simon and Eleanor as a love match, nor the firm bond with their children as anything more than a racket. He had vied for two other widows early on and Adam Marsh thought she was too flamboyant and insubordinate. All this grist for the charges of self-interest that have plagued the Montforts ever since Thomas Wykes worked himself up into one of his uncontrollable fits. If we praise the Montforts together, it's for the formidable team they made in bringing him to power and keeping him there. Henry III and Queen Eleanor were romantics for sure, talking about troubadours and King Arthur. Even Edward, of all people, gets a nod to romance when talk turns to his Crosses. But with Simon and Eleanor it's always business, no doubt thanks in large part to the survival of his depositions and her accounts. Maybe their last morning was spent discussing how much was spent on stores during those two weeks in Odiham. 'Mind the servants, my lady. They drank too much beer this time.' And like that, with a wave of the hand, he was gone, never to return...



Eleanor de Montfort –
long criticised for
being her own person



The Bohun family –
torn between Simon
and Henry

If all this seems cynical, blame it on the Richard III reburial hype that gets rawer the longer this thing is allowed to drag on. Nothing against him personally, and the modern public always loves a good Kennedyesque funeral, especially for the anointed ones. But the fact that it's taking place in Simon's backyard, stealing his thunder as it were and casting an ever gloomier pall over what should have been celebrations marking a truly wondrous occasion in the history of this country, with professional academia either complicit in or silent on this charade, well, it absolutely beggars belief. If this is the British idea of historical romance, then give me Eleanor's accounts any day. Fortunately, there will be no denying the upcoming 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, and Trowbridge for one will be marking the return to sanity with a [conference](#) on 25 April, the date incidentally of Simon and Eleanor's return from exile in France in 1263.