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PREFACE

This reference book covers five historical periods of Great Britain. It is arranged in a thematic order: the earliest times, the early middle ages, the late middle ages, The Tudors, The Stuarts, according to the subject curriculum, and contains information about main historic events, realia, and prominent historic personalities of each period.

The first section includes reference material related to Britain's prehistory, the Celts, the Romans and Roman life, the Saxon invasion, Saxon government and society, the Vikings, and the Celtic kingdoms of those times.

The second section is dedicated to the Norman Conquest and Norman rulers, basic principles of the feudal system, the Plantagenet's dynasty and its most prominent and famous kings, Magna Carta and the decline of feudalism.

The third section comprises information about the war with Scotland and France, the age of the Black Death, the age of chivalry, the wars of the Roses, and the most significant historic personalities of that period in Britain's history.

The fourth and the fifth sections are devoted to the royal dynasties, the Tudors and the Stuarts, their kings and queens as well as their most important political, social, and economic reforms.

"HISTORY of GREAT BRITAIN: REFERENCE BOOK" gives every student the opportunities to extend their knowledge of British history and motivate to learn for themselves out of the classroom. The structure of the reference book is based on the major course "Linguocountrystudy" programme that is a part of the Bachelor's degree curriculum.

EARLIEST TIMES

Neolithic people

About 3000 BC Neolithic people crossed the narrow sea from Europe in small round boats. These people kept animals, grew corn crops, and made pottery. They came from Iberian peninsula. They were small, dark-haired and long-headed people. They settled in the western parts of Britain and Ireland.

The Neolithic saw the construction of a wide variety of monuments in the landscape, many of which were megalithic in nature. The earliest of these are the chambered tombs of the Early Neolithic, although in the Late Neolithic this form of monumentalization was replaced by the construction of stone circles, a trend that would continue into the following Bronze Age. These constructions are taken to reflect ideological changes, with new ideas about religion, ritual and social hierarchy.

The Neolithic site of Silbury Hill in Wiltshire, southern England, is one example of the large ceremonial monuments constructed across the British Isles in this period.

barrow	is a hemispherical mound of earth and/or stone raised over a burial placed in the middle. Beyond this there are numerous variations which may employ surrounding ditches, stone kerbs or flat berms between ditch and mound. Construction methods range from a single creation process of heaped material to a complex depositional sequence involving alternating layers of stone, soil and turf with timbers or wattle used to help hold the structure together. The central burial may be placed a stone chamber or cist or in a cut grave. Both intact inhumations and cremations placed in vessels can be found. Many round barrows attract surrounding satellite burials or later ones inserted into the mound itself.
chalkland people	Iberian people settled in the calklands of Wessex. After 3000 BC the "chalkland" people started building great circles of earth banks. Inside they built wooden buildings and stone circles.
henge	Basically a simple bank and ditch enclosing an area of land. The bank is outside the ditch, so they would not have been defensive enclosures, but were more likely a form of religious and ceremonial gathering place. The henges are younger than causewayed camps, with the oldest built about 3300 B.C. The

largest henges enclose up to 12 hectares. Some, though not all henges have stone circles within them, while others show remains of wooden rings.

Stonehenge

Stonehenge is a Neolithic / Bronze Age monument located on Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire, southern England. The first monument on the site, began around 3100 BC, was a circular henge earthwork about 360 feet (110 metres) in diameter, a henge in the archaeological sense being a circular or oval-shaped flat area enclosed by a boundary earthwork. This structure probably contained a ring of 56 wooden posts (or possibly an early bluestone circle), the pits for which are named Aubrey Holes (after the 17th century local antiquarian John Aubrey). Later, around 3000BC (the beginning of Stonehenge Phase II), some kind of timber structure seems to have been built within the enclosure, and Stonehenge functioned as a cremation cemetery, the earliest and largest so far discovered in Britain. Phase III at Stonehenge, beginning around 2,550 BC, involved the refashioning of the simple earth and timber henge into a unique stone monument. In the first stage, two concentric circles, (sometimes known as the 'Double Bluestone Circle'), of 80 'bluestone' (dolorite, rhyolite and tuff) pillars were erected at the centre of the monument, with a main entrance to the North East. These bluestones, weighing about 4 tons each, originate in the Preseli Hills, in Pembrokeshire, south-west Wales, and were probably transported from there to Salisbury Plain over a route at least 185 miles long (see the chapter on Preseli). Apart from the bluestones, a 16.4 foot long greenish sandstone slab, now known as the Altar Stone, was brought to Stonehenge from somewhere between Kidwelly, near Milford Haven on the coast to the south of the Preseli Hills and Abergavenny, in southeast Wale.

"Beaker" people

They were so named because of their distinctive bell-shaped pottery drinking vessels. They probably came up through the south-west coast of Britain, which at the time had rich deposits of copper and tin. The emergence of the Beaker people in Britain gave rise to what is now termed the Wessex Culture. This is the name given to a number of very rich grave goods under round barrows in southern Britain. The grave goods include well made stone battle axes, metal daggers with elaborately decorated hilts, and precious ornaments of gold and amber - these are some of the loveliest prehistoric objects ever to be found in Britain. Among the golden cups found in the graves, some were found that were so like those of the Mycenae that they are used as

	examples to prove the existence of trade between Wessex and Greece.
hill-fort	is a type of earthworks used as a fortified refuge or defended settlement, located to exploit a rise in elevation for defensive advantage. Hill forts existed in Britain from the Bronze Age, but the majority of British hillforts date from the Iron Age, when they reached their heyday, between 700 BC and the Roman conquest of 43 AD. Varying from mere mounds to huge ramparts, these Dark Age fortresses dot the British landscape, vestiges of an age of warriors, sacrifice and ritual and murderous retribution. These large defensive enclosures protected by a series of steep ditches, can usually be found occupying prominent hilltop positions. In times of attack the local population may have sought refuge within the hillforts.

Old Oswestry hillfort

was built and occupied during the Iron Age (800 BC to AD 43) and is one of the best-preserved hillforts in Britain. During this period Britain was divided into numerous tribal territories, and the hillfort was probably a stronghold and principal settlement for one of these. A fine example of a 'multi-vallate' or multiple rampart hillfort, it is one of a dense band of hillforts in eastern Wales and the Marches. It remained in use for almost 1,000 years.

Aerial view of the hillfort, clearly showing the development of the earthworks and entrances

Celts	Celt comes from the Greek word, Keltoi and means barbarians. It is properly pronounced Kelt. No one called these people living in Britain during the Iron Age Celts until the 18th century. They were simply known as Britons. Many years ago during ancient Greek times, Pytheas called these northern islands collectively, ai Bpettaviai (hai Brittaniai) which has been translated to the Brittanic Isles. He had made an explorer's voyage around the British Isles between 330-320 BC and had seen them with his own eyes. He named the peoples of the Brittanic Isles, Prettanoi, Priteni, Pritani or Pretani, which has been translated to Britons. These Britons, renamed Celts in the 18th century by historians and archaeologists, became a Romano-British population in 43 AD when the Romans invaded Britain (England) and conquered the Britons living there. During the early Roman Era the Romans named the island Britanni or Brittanni, following their conquest in 43 AD and this is where the name Britannia for what is present day England comes from. Northwest Europe was dominated by three main Celtic groups: the Gauls (in France), the Britons (in England) and the Gaels (in Ireland). Celtic Britain consisted of the Iron Age from approximately 600 BC – 50 AD and this was the age of the Celt in Britain (England) as the Celtic culture established itself throughout the British Isles. They arrived in Britain as separate tribes that migrated there and were loosely tied by a similar language, religion, and cultural expression.
Druid	Celtic: "Knowing [or Finding] the Oak Tree"), member of the learned class among the ancient Celts. They seem to have frequented oak forests and acted as priests, teachers, and judges. The earliest known records of the Druids come from the 3rd century BC. The Druids offered human sacrifices for those who were gravely sick or in danger of death in battle. Huge wickerwork images were filled with living men and then burned; although the Druids preferred to sacrifice criminals, they would choose innocent victims if necessary. The modern English word druid derives from the Latin druides (pronounced [druˈides]), which was considered by ancient Roman writers to come from the native Celtic Gaulish word for these figures. Other Roman texts also employ the form druidae, while the same term was used by Greek ethnographers as δρυΐδης (druidēs). Although no extant Romano-Celtic inscription is known to contain the form,] the word is cognate with the later insular Celtic words, Old Irish druí 'druid, sorcerer', Old Cornish druw, Middle Welsh dryw 'seer; wren'. Based on all available forms, the hypothetical proto-Celtic word may then be reconstructed as *dru-wid-s (pl. *druwides) meaning "oak-knower". The two elements go back to the Proto-Indo-European roots *deru- and *weid- "to see". The sense of "oak-knower" (or "oak-seer") is supported by Pliny the Elder, who in his Natural History considered the word to contain the Greek noun drýs (δρύς), "oak-tree" and the Greek suffix -idēs (-ιδης). The modern Irish word for Oak is Dair, which occurs in anglicized placenames like Derry – Doire, and Kildare – Cill Dara (literally the "church of oak"). There are many stories about saints,

heroes, and oak trees, and also many local stories and superstitions (called pishogues) about trees in general, which still survive in rural Ireland. Both Old Irish druí and Middle Welsh dryw could also refer to the wren, possibly connected with an association of that bird with augury in Irish and Welsh tradition.

Chariot

is a type of carriage driven by a charioteer using primarily horses to provide rapid motive power. Chariots were used by armies as transport or mobile archery platforms, for hunting or for racing, and as a conveniently fast way to travel for many ancient people.

Boudica (Bodicea)

At the time of the Roman conquest of southern Britain Queen Boudica ruled the Iceni tribe of East Anglia alongside her husband King Prasutagus. Boudica was a striking looking woman. She was very tall, the glance of her eye most fierce; her voice harsh. A great mass of the reddest hair fell down to her hips. Her appearance was terrifying. Boudica and her daughters drove round in her chariot to all her tribes before the battle, exhorting them to be brave. Boudica was not killed in the battle but took poison rather than be taken alive by the Romans. Boudica has secured a special place of her own in British folk history remembered for her courage; The Warrior Queen who fought the might of Rome. And in a way she did get her revenge, as in 1902 a bronze statue of her riding high in her chariot, designed by Thomas Thorneycroft, was placed on the Thames embankment next to the Houses of Parliament in the old Roman capital of Britain, Londinium.

The bronze statue of Bodicea

Romans

At the time of the Roman arrival, Britain (originally known as Albion) was mostly comprised of small Iron Age communities, primarily agrarian, tribal, with enclosed settlements. Southern Britain shared their culture with northern Gaul (modern day France and Belgium); many southern Britons were Belgae in origin and shared a common language with them. In fact, after 120 BCE trading between Transalpine Gaul intensified with the Britons receiving such domestic imports as wine; there was also some evidence of Gallo-Belgae coinage. Previously, the Channel, or Mare Britannicum, had always served as a natural border between the European mainland and the islands. During his subjugation of Gaul during the Gallic Wars, Caesar had wanted to interrupt Belgae trade routes; he also assumed the Britons were assisting their kindred Belgae. Later, he would rationalize his invasion of Britain by telling the Roman Senate that he believed the island was rich in silver. Although the Republic was probably aware of the island's existence, Britain, for the most part, was completely unknown to Rome, and to many more superstitious citizens, only existed in fables; traders repeatedly told of the islanders' barbarous practices. Caesar's initial contact with the islanders went poorly, and he had to quickly reorganize his army to avoid defeat. During his second 'invasion' when he was accompanied by five legions, he pushed further northward across the Thames River to meet the Briton chieftain Cassivellaunus. Although he was joined for battle by several local chieftains, to avoid crossing the Channel in poor weather, Caesar feigned growing problems in Gaul, arranged a peace treaty with Cassivellaunus, and returned to the European mainland without leaving a garrison. While many Romans were enthusiastic about Caesar's excursion across the Channel, Caesar's worst enemy Cato was aghast. The Greek historian Strabo, a contemporary of the late Republic, said the only things of value were hunting dogs and slaves. More important to Caesar was the difficulties developing in Gaul, a failed harvest, and possible rebellion. The Romans would not return to Britain for another century.

Julius Ceasar

Gaius Julius Caesar was born 12 July 100 BCE (though some cite 102 as his birth year). His father, also Gaius Julius Caesar, was a Praetor who governed the province of Asia and his mother, Aurelia Cotta, was of noble birth. Both held to the Populare ideology of Rome which favored democratization of government and more rights for the lower class as opposed to the Optimate factions' claim of the superiority of the nobility and traditional Roman values which favored the upper classes. It should be understood that the Optimate and the Populare were not political parties in conflict with each other but, rather, political ideologies which many people shifted toward and from, regardless of class in society. The concept of appealing to

	the people for support, rather than seeking approval from the Roman Senate or the other Patricians, would work well for Caesar later in life.
Claudius' invasion	With the death of Caesar and the civil war that followed, the Republic was no more, and the new empire's interest in Britannia intensified under both Emperors Augustus and Caligula as the Romanization of Gaul progressed. While Augustus's attentions were drawn elsewhere, Caligula and his army stared across the Channel towards the British Isles - the emperor only ordered his men to throw their javelins at the sea - there would be no invasion. The actual annexation fell to the most unlikely of emperors, Claudius (41 – 54 CE). In 43 CE, Emperor Claudius with an army of four legions and auxiliaries under the command of Aulus Plautius crossed the English Channel, landing at Richborough. They began the conquest of the island. Some believe the emperor's only goal was personal glory; years of humiliation under Caligula left him longing for recognition. Although he had only been there sixteen days, Claudius would take credit, of course, for the conquest with a glorious triumphant return to Rome in 44 CE.
Legion	a division of the Roman army, usually comprising 3000 to 6000 soldiers.
Caledonia	is the Latin name given by the Romans to the land in today's Scotland north of their province of Britannia, beyond the frontier of their empire. Its modern usage is as a romantic or poetic name for Scotland as a whole, comparable with Hibernia for Ireland and Cambria for Wales. Caledonia is derived from the tribal name Caledones (or Calīdones), which he etymologizes as "possessing hard feet", from the Proto-Celtic roots *kal- "hard" and *φēdo- "foot". Moffat suggests the name is related to the Welsh word caled, "hard", which could refer to the rocky land or the hardiness of the people.
Emperor Hadrian	Hadrian (76-138 CE) was the fourteenth Emperor of Rome (10 August 117 to 10 July 138 CE) and is known as the third of the Five Good Emperors (Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius) who ruled justly. Born Publius Aelius Hadrianus, probably in Hispania, Hadrian is best known for his substantial building projects throughout the Roman Empire and, especially, Hadrian's Wall in northern Britain.

Hadrian's wall	The Roman Emperor Hadrian (76-138 CE) grew tired of incursions into the Roman provinces in Britain and so, in the year 122 CE, began building a wall across the northern border of Roman Britain to separate it from the invading Pict tribes much in the same way that Shulgi built his wall almost two thousand years earlier to keep out the Amorites (as with the Great Wall of China and the Anastasian Wall). It took six years to build, stretched for 80 miles (128 kilometres) across the border between what is now England and Scotland and was, at points, over nine feet wide (2.7 metres) and twenty feet (6 metres) high. It was fortified at towers along the way and served as a symbol of Roman military might and power.
colonia	was the highest rank of Roman city. Normally all citizens of a colonia were also Roman citizens. Throughout the Empire period former legionnary bases were often converted to colonia by granting land to retired legionnaries. The thinking was that these legionnaries would raise families and provide future recruits to the legions, which were only open to Roman citizens. The first colonia established in Britain was at Camulodunum (Colchester), around 49 AD. Camulodunum was followed by Lindum (Lincoln), and Glevum (Gloucester) at the end of the first century. Each colonia was governed by an ordo (council), under the control of four quattuoviri (annually appointed magistrates).
municipium	was the second-highest rank of Roman city, following after colonia. Each colonia was governed by an ordo (council), under the control of four annually elected magistrates (two duoveri and two aediles). Unlike colonia, inhabitants of municipia were not automatically Roman citizens, but magistrates and their families did become citizens at the end of their time in office. Only one municipium is known to have been established in Roman Britain, at Verulamium (St. Albans).
civitas	Roman Britain was divided into civitas, or towns loosely based on pre-existing Celtic tribal territories. The civitates (Latin plural form of civitas) were independent administrative centres, governed by the Celts themselves, though under the supervision of Roman provincial administration based in London. These civitates generally used the same structure of government as municipia, that is, an elected council and magistrates. The Romans invited the old Celtic aristocracy to administer the civitates. By involving their conquered foes in the government, they made allies of possible enemies, and at the same time avoided the expense of administering their new province on

	their own. Thus, in a gradual way, did the Celtic aristocracy become Romanised.
villa	When the Romans invaded Britain in the first century AD they made little attempt to adapt their architecture to the traditions of their new Roman province of Britannia. Rather, they imposed their own Mediterranean style of architecture and town planning. One of the most visible remnants of that style in England is the Roman villa. In Latin the word villa means simply, “farm”, so technically villas were any form of rural agricultural dwelling built in a Roman style. In practice, though, when we speak of villas we mean the country estates of the Romanised British elite. Although at first the conquered tribal aristocracy may have been drawn into towns, it wasn't long before they began a "back to the land" movement. Most large villas are built quite close to major urban centres, generally within ten miles, so the owners were never very far from the centre of affairs. Villas were more than fancy houses, though; they were centres of rural industry and agriculture. In one complex they could hold the landowner and his family, overseers, labourers, storehouses, and industrial buildings. Although some may have been strictly the centre of large farms, others included industry in the form of pottery and metalworking. Although villas are not unknown in the north of England, by far the largest number were constructed in the fertile lowlands of the south east, particularly in Kent and Sussex.
castrum	was designed to house and protect the soldiers, their equipment and supplies when they were not fighting or marching. The largest castra were legionary fortresses built as bases for one or more whole legions. From the time of Augustus more permanent castra with wooden or stone buildings and walls were introduced as the distant and hard-won boundaries of the expanding empire required permanent garrisons to control local and external threats from war-like tribes. Previously, legions were raised for specific military campaigns and subsequently disbanded, requiring only temporary castra. From then on many castra of various sizes were established many of which became permanent settlements.
toga	A loose flowing outer garment worn by the citizens of ancient Rome, made of a single piece of cloth and covering the whole body apart from the right arm.
Roman roads	the most vital priority was the movement of troops and supplies from the channel ports of Richborough, Dover, and Lympne to the military centres at London, Colchester, and the front-line legionary forts. The

first frontier was set up along a road extending from Exeter to Lincoln, running through Bath, Gloucester, and Leicester. This was known as the Fosse Way, the first great Roman road in Britain. The Fosse Way has been largely adapted by modern highways. The next military push established a new frontier between Lincoln and York, Wroxeter and Chester, and Gloucester and Caerleon. After these "front-line" roads had been established. The Romans turned their attention to expanding the network of minor roads within their new possessions, to better aid the flow of trade. By 82AD the Romans had pushed north as far as a line between the Clyde and the Firth of Forth. During this campaign alone the army built over 60 forts and over 1200 miles of roads. The imperial posting service, used by Roman officials, maintained inns and relays of horses at intervals of 30 to 50 kilometres along the roads. The minor roads (sometimes called "economic roads") were also built by the Roman army to link economic centres, such as the Mendip lead mines and the Nene potteries, with administrative capitals like Silchester, and the coastal ports. At a best guess there were between 8000-10,000 miles of roads constructed during the first hundred years of Roman occupation. There was a third level of roads at the local level, connecting villas, temples, farms, and villages to larger roads and market towns. The full extent of this road building is apparent when you consider that according estimates by historians, no village or farm was more than 7 miles from a purpose-built road. It is a fallacy to think that Roman roads are always straight. The Roman engineers were no fools - if there was a natural obstacle in the way, the road naturally deviated to go around it. For the most part Roman roads were laid out in straight lines between sighting landmarks. Small hills were cut through, and wet ground covered by causeways, or timber embankments.

Anglo-Saxon invasion

In 449 the Jutes landed in Kent and this was the beginning of the conquest. The British natives fought fiercely against the in-vaders and it took more than a hundred and fifty years for the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes to conquer the country. Other Ger-manic tribes conquered the Roman provinces on the Continent without any se-rious resistance as the bulk of the population in the provinces occupied by the Romans welcomed the Ger-manic conquerors as their liberators. But the British Celts were free at the time and their resistance was often stubborn and pro-longed. In the South-East the Celts were soon overwhelmed, but in the western parts of the country they offered stout resistance for many years. Now and then the Celts won and the invaders were forced back. As a result Britain held out longer than the other provinces of the Roman Empire. It was only by the beginning of the 7th century that the invaders managed to conquer the greater part of the land. The final

refuge of the Celts was Cornwall and Wales — the mountainous districts of the West — and the northern part of the island (Scotland) where the Celts were still living in tribes and, later on, some independent states were formed. The Celts of Ireland remained independent too. In the course of the conquest many of the Celts were killed, some were taken prisoners and made slaves or had to pay tribute to the conquerors. Some of the Celts crossed the sea to the North-West of France and settled in what was later on called Brittany after the Celtic tribes of Britons. The new conquerors brought about changes altogether different from those that had followed the conquest of the country by the Romans. The new settlers disliked towns preferring to live in small villages. In the course of the con-quest they destroyed the Roman towns and villas. All the beautiful buildings and baths and roads were so neglected that they soon fell in ruins. Sometimes the roads were broken up, the stones being used for building material. Thus the art of road-making was lost for many hundreds of years to come. The Jutes, the Saxons and the Angles were closely akin in speech and customs, and they gradually merged into one people. The name "Jute" soon died out and the conquerors are generally referred to as the Anglo-Saxons. As a result of the conquest the Anglo-Saxons made up the majority of the population in Britain and their customs, religion and languages became predominant.

Saxons

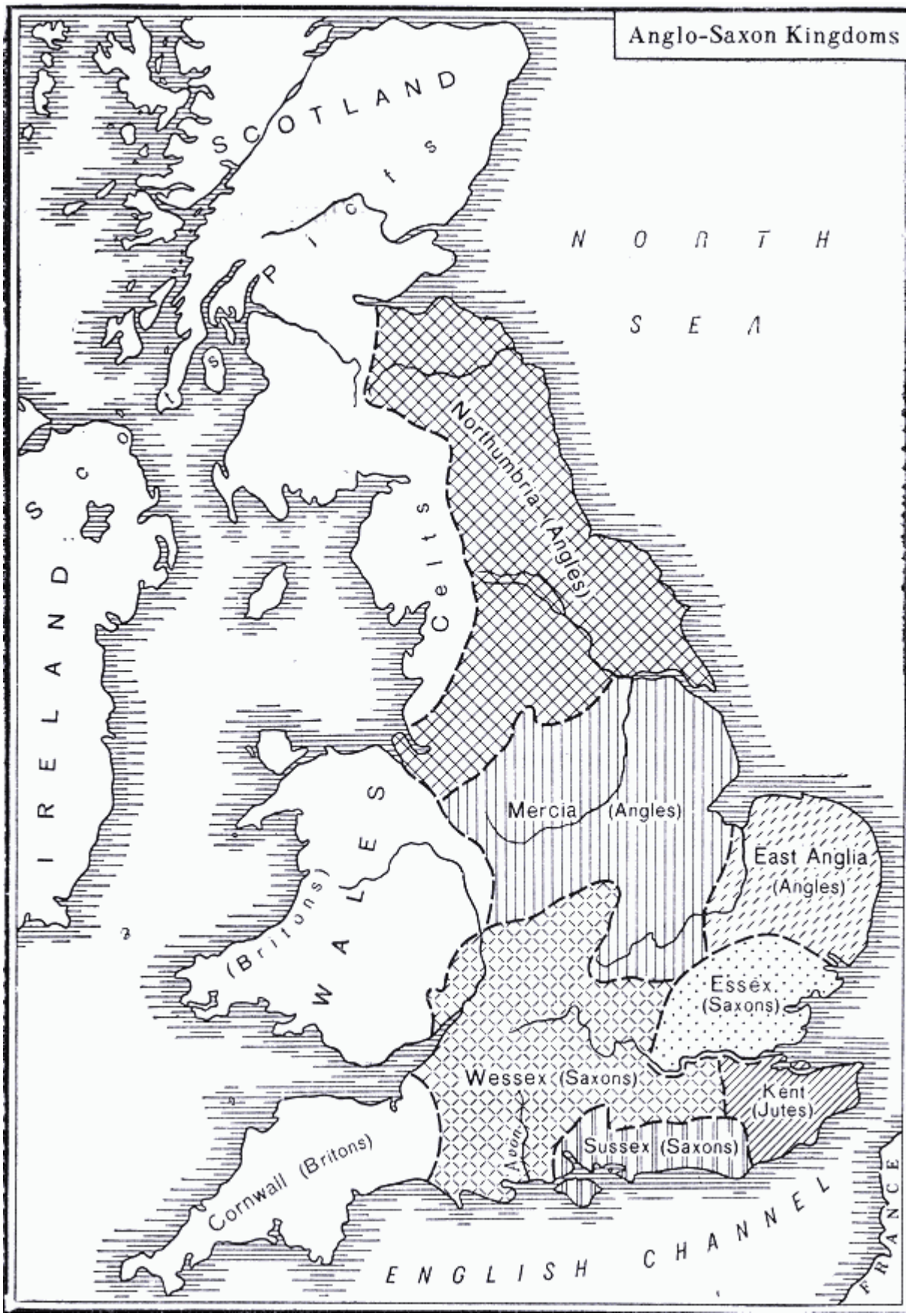
were a Germanic tribe that originally occupied the region which today is the North Sea coast of the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark. Their name is derived from the seax, a distinct knife popularly used by the tribe. One of the earliest historical records of this group that we know of comes from Roman writers dealing with the many troubles that affected the northern frontier of the Roman Empire during the second and third century CE. It is possible that under the "Saxons" label, these early Roman accounts also included other neighbouring Germanic groups in the regions such as the Angles, the Frisians, and the Jutes; all these groups spoke closely related West Germanic languages that in time would evolve into Old English.

Angles

were one of the main Germanic peoples who settled in Great Britain in the post-Roman period. They founded several of the kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England, and their name is the root of the name England. The name comes from the district of Angeln, an area located on the Baltic shore of what is now Schleswig-Holstein.

Jutes

were one of the Germanic tribes who, with the Angles and Saxons, invaded Britain in the 5th century ad. The Jutes have no recorded history on the European continent, but there is considerable evidence that their home was in the Scandinavian area (probably Jutland) and that those who did not migrate were later absorbed by the Danes. According to the Venerable Bede, the Jutes settled in Kent, the Isle of Wight, and parts of Hampshire. In Kent their name soon died out, but there is considerable evidence in the social structure of that area that its settlers were of a different race from their neighbours.


Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms
SCOTLAND
Picts
NORTH SEA
Northumbria (Angles)
Celts
IRELAND
WALES
(Britons)
Mercia (Angles)
East Anglia (Angles)
Essex (Saxons)
Wessex (Saxons)
Kent (Jutes)
Sussex (Saxons)
Cornwall (Britons)
ENGLISH CHANNEL
FRANCE

Wales (Weallas)	The Anglo-Saxon name of the Celts which means "foreigners" as they could not understand the Celtic language which was quite unlike their own. The West the Saxons called "Weallas", or "Wales", meaning "the land of the foreigners".
Tig	Anglo-Saxon God of War
Wodin	Anglo-Saxon Chief God
Thor	Anglo-Saxon God of Thunder
Frei	Anglo-Saxon Goddess of Love
-ing	The Saxon ending, means "folk" or "family". E.g.: "Hastings" – village of the family of Hasta.
-ham	The Saxon ending, means "farm". E.g.: Birmingham comes from BEORMA (a person's name) + ING (family or tribe) + HAM (farm). BIRMINGHAM means "farm of Beorma's tribe / family."
-ton	The Saxon ending, means "settlement" or "farmstead". E.g.: Alton, Luton.
king Offa	the 7th century was the age of Northumbrian ascendance, with Mercia playing second fiddle. In the 8th century these roles reversed. The most powerful and well known of the Mercian kings was Offa, who ruled from 758-796. A successful warrior (which is a given for anyone in those days who managed to hold onto power for so long), he defeated kings in Sussex, Anglia, and Wessex, proclaiming himself King of the English.
Witan	An Anglo-Saxon term that meant wise men, persons learned in the law; in particular, the king's advisers or members of his council. In England, between the sixth and tenth

	centuries, a person who advised an Anglo-Saxon king was called a witan, or wise man. A witan's basic duty was to respond when the king asked for advice on specific issues. The Witan was the great council of the Anglo-Saxons in England, comprising the aristocrats of the kingdom, along with bishops and other high ecclesiastical leaders. This council advised and aided the king in the general administration of government. The Witan attested to the king's grants of land to churches or laypersons and consented to his proclamation of new laws or new statements of ancient customs. The council also assisted the king in dealing with rebels and persons suspected of disloyalty. The king determined both the composition of the council and its meeting times. The Witan generally met in the open air in or near some city or town. Members were notified by public notice or particular summons issued by the king's select council. When the throne was vacant, the body also met without notice to elect a new king.
shire	Saxon word, means "county". E.g.: Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Gloucestershire.
shire reeve	King's local administrator of the shire. In time this name was shortened to "sheriff".
lord	master of a household, an owner of land, houses, etc., ruler, husband.
lady	mistress of a household, wife of a lord; literally "one who kneads bread".
manor	mansion, habitation, country residence, principal house of an estate, from Anglo-French "maner", Old French manoir "abode, home, dwelling place".
fyrd	In early Anglo-Saxon times, an army that was mobilized from freemen to defend their shire, or from select representatives to join a royal expedition.
alderman	Anglo-Saxon ruler, prince, chief; chief officer of a shire, of elders of the clan or tribe, but already in Old English used for king's viceroys, regardless of age. In later Old English a

	more specific title, “chief magistrate of a county”, having both civic and military duties. The word yielded under Canute to eorl (see earl), and after the Norman Conquest to count (n.). Having lost its specific sense, alderman was then applied to any head man; meaning "headman of a guild" (early 12c.) passed to "magistrate of a city" (c. 1200) as the guilds became identified with municipal government.
earl	brave man, warrior, leader, chief (contrasted with ceorl "churl"), from Proto-Germanic *erlaz, which is of uncertain origin. In Anglo-Saxon poetry, "a warrior, a brave man;" in later Old English, “nobleman”, especially a Danish under-king (equivalent of cognate Old Norse jarl), then one of the viceroys under the Danish dynasty in England.
minster	the church of a monastery, from Late Latin “monasterium”. Compare Old French “moustier”, French “moûtier”, Old Irish “minister”.
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle	chronological account of events in Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, a compilation of seven surviving interrelated manuscript records that is the primary source for the early history of England. The narrative was first assembled in the reign of King Alfred (871–899) from materials that included some epitome of universal history: the Venerable Bede’s Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum, genealogies, regnal and episcopal lists, a few northern annals, and probably some sets of earlier West Saxon annals. The compiler also had access to a set of Frankish annals for the late 9th century. the Chronicle is a rather barren document for the mid-10th century and for the reign of Canute, for example, but it is an excellent authority for the reign of Aethelred the Unready and from the reign of Edward the Confessor until the version that was kept up longest ends with 1154.
Vikings	Viking raids on England started in the late 8th century. The attack on Lindisfarne monastery in 793 was a particularly dramatic and significant event, heralding the onset of frequent raids on coastal communities, with churches and monasteries being particularly targeted for their wealth. Sporadic raiding gradually turned to larger-scale assaults, as war-bands amalgamated, and these took on a more political aim. Over-wintering in defended camps, the control of

extensive areas of land, and the extraction of “protection money” (the so-called Danegeld) became characteristic of Viking activity in England. English resistance was uncoordinated and often ineffective. England was a region of several independent kingdoms - often at war with each other - and the lack of a unified political and military structure meant that Viking war-bands could roam the countryside with some impunity. Eventually, King Alfred of Wessex was able to confront the Viking 'Great Army' at Edington, in 878, when his victory enabled him to establish terms for peace, though this did not put a complete stop to Viking activity which continued on and off for several more generations. Alfred had to concede the northern and eastern counties to the Vikings, where their disbanded armies settled, created new settlements and merged with the local populations. Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby, Stamford and Leicester became important Viking towns within The Danelaw (or “Scandinavian England”), while York became the capital of the Viking Kingdom of York which extended more or less over what we call Yorkshire. These areas were gradually reconquered and brought back under English control by Alfred's successors, but not before the Scandinavian influence had been locally imprinted to an extent which is still detectable today. After the Battle of Clontarf (1014) many of the Hiberno-Norse Vikings migrated to England and settled in the north-west, from the Wirral to the Lake District. In northern England, as a crude generalisation, the Pennine watershed represents the interface of the 'Norwegian' and 'Danish' Viking regions. The last major Viking battle took place at Stamford Bridge near York in 1066, but the threat of further Scandinavian invasion, with ambitions to conquer and rule, did not diminish until well after the Norman Conquest of 1066 and, in fact, under Canute/Cnut (c.994-1035) the realm had a Danish monarch and was part of an Anglo-Scandinavian empire.

King Alfred

Alfred, also spelled Aelfred, byname Alfred The Great (born 849—died 899), king of Wessex (871–899), a Saxon kingdom in southwestern England. He prevented England from falling to the Danes and promoted learning and literacy. Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle began during his reign, c. 890. He probably received the education in military arts normal for a young man of rank. He first appeared on active service in 868, when he and his brother, King Aethelred (Ethelred) I, went to help Burgred of Mercia (the kingdom between the Thames and the Humber) against a

great Danish army that had landed in East Anglia in 865 and taken possession of Northumbria in 867.

The Danes refused to give battle, and peace was made. In this year Alfred married Ealhswith, descended through her mother from Mercian kings. Late in 871, the Danes invaded Wessex, and Aethelred and Alfred fought several battles with them. Aethelred died in 871 and Alfred succeeded him. After an unsuccessful battle at Wilton he made peace. It was probably the quality of the West Saxon resistance that discouraged Danish attacks for five years. In 876 the Danes again advanced on Wessex: they retired in 877 having accomplished little, but a surprise attack in January 878 came near to success. The Danes established themselves at Chippenham, and the West Saxons submitted "except King Alfred." He harassed the Danes from a fort in the Somerset marshes, and until seven weeks after Easter he secretly assembled an army, which defeated them at the Battle of Edington. They surrendered, and their king, Guthrum, was baptized, Alfred standing as sponsor; the following year they settled in East Anglia. Wessex was never again in such danger. Alfred had a respite from fighting until 885, when he repelled an invasion of Kent by a Danish army, supported by the East Anglian Danes. In 886 he took the offensive and captured London, a success that brought all the English not under Danish rule to accept him as king. The possession of London also made possible the reconquest of the Danish territories in his son's reign, and Alfred may have been preparing for this, though he could make no further advance

himself. He had to meet a serious attack by a large Danish force from the European continent in 892, and it was not until 896 that it gave up the struggle. The failure of the Danes to make any more advances against Alfred was largely a result of the defensive measures he undertook during the war. Old forts were strengthened and new ones built at strategic sites, and arrangements were made for their continual manning. Alfred reorganized his army and used ships against the invaders as early as 875. Later he had larger ships built to his own design for use against the coastal raids that continued even after 896. Wise diplomacy also helped Alfred's defense. He maintained friendly relations with Mercia and Wales; Welsh rulers sought his support and supplied some troops for his army in 893. Alfred succeeded in government as well as at war. He was a wise administrator, organizing his finances and the service due from his thanes (noble followers). He scrutinized the administration of justice and took steps to ensure the protection of the weak from oppression by ignorant or corrupt judges. He promulgated an important code of laws, after studying the principles of lawgiving in the Book of Exodus and the codes of Aethelbert of Kent, Ine of Wessex (688–694), and Offa of Mercia (757–796), again with special attention to the protection of the weak and dependent. While avoiding unnecessary changes in custom, he limited the practice of the blood feud and imposed heavy penalties for breach of oath or pledge.

Danelaw

The Danelaw was established as a result of King Alfred the Great's efforts to avoid further Viking raids in the Anglian Kingdom of Wessex. He proceeded by ceding lands to the Danes who then engaged primarily in trade and built settlements. It is also known that the Danelaw consisted of fifteen shires. The territorial extent of the Danelaw comprised as such the modern day shires of York, Nottingham, Derby, Lincoln, Essex, Cambridge, Suffolk, Norfolk, Northampton, Huntingdon, Bedford, Hertford, Middlesex, and Buckingham. In Danish, the Danelaw is known as "Danelagen" and in Old English as "Dena lagu", being described in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, a collection of annals recounting the history of the Anglo-Saxons which was written during the late part of the 9th century. The term "Danelaw" can also denote, aside from its geographical meaning, a set of terms and laws as defined in several treaties between the King of the West Saxons during the 9th century, namely Alfred the Great, and the Danish war lord, Guthrum.

After nearly a decade from the Battle of Edington (one of the most significant battles of the Viking period which took place in 878), the Danish Vikings under Guthrum were given land by Alfred the Great and the boundaries of the Danelaw were drawn.

Danegeld

a tax levied in Anglo-Saxon England to buy off Danish invaders in the reign of Ethelred II (978–1016); it also designates the recurrent gelds, or taxes, collected by the Anglo-Norman kings. The word is not recorded before the Norman Conquest, the usual earlier (Old English) term being gafol ("gavel," or "tribute"). Though the Danes were sometimes bought off in the 9th century in both England and France, the word Danegeld is usually applied to the payments that began in 991 and continued at intervals until 1016. Danegeld is distinct from heregeld, an annual tax levied between 1012 and 1051 to pay Danish mercenaries. The Anglo-Norman and Angevin kings continued the geld until 1162.

king Ethelred

also spelled Aethelred, also called Ethelred II, or Aethelred Unraed (born 968?—died April 23, 1016, London, England), king of the English from 978 to 1013 and from 1014 to 1016. He was an ineffectual ruler who failed to prevent the Danes from overrunning England. The epithet "unready" is derived from unraed, meaning "bad counsel" or "no counsel," and puns on his name, which means "noble counsel." The son of King Edgar (ruled 959–975), Ethelred ascended the throne upon the assassination of his half brother King Edward the Martyr in March 978. Widespread suspicion that Ethelred may have had a part in the murder created much of the distrust and disloyalty that undermined his authority. Hence, there was no unified defense when the Danish invasions resumed in 980. Nearly all of the country was ravaged, and Ethelred's efforts to buy peace only made the invaders more furious. When they did begin to settle down in towns, Ethelred provoked further invasions by launching a massacre of Danish settlers (Nov. 13, 1002). By the end of 1013 the Danish king Sweyn I had been accepted as king in England, and Ethelred had fled to Normandy. After Sweyn died in February 1014, Ethelred's council of advisers invited him to return to the throne on condition that he agree to satisfy their grievances. At the time of Ethelred's death in 1016, Sweyn's son Canute was ravaging England. Ethelred was succeeded by his son Edmund II Ironside (ruled 1016); one of his other sons ruled England as Edward the Confessor from 1042 to

1066. Despite the overall failures of the reign, evidence from his charters and coinage suggest that Ethelred's government was more effective than was once believed.

Cnut (Canute)

By name Canute the Great, Danish Knut, or Knud, den Store, Norwegian Knut den Mektige (died Nov. 12, 1035), Danish king of England (1016–35), of Denmark (as Canute II; 1019–35), and of Norway (1028–35), who was a power in the politics of Europe in the 11th century, respected by both emperor and pope. Neither the place nor the date of his birth is known. Canute was the grandson of the Polish ruler Mieszko I on his mother's side. As a youth he accompanied his father, Sweyn I Forkbeard, king of Denmark, on his invasion of England in 1013. Canute was left in charge of the fleet at Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, and it was probably then that he met Aelfgifu, daughter of an ealdorman (chief officer) of Northumbria who had been murdered with King Aethelred II's connivance in 1006; she bore him two sons, Sweyn and Harold. Sweyn I Forkbeard was accepted as king of England by the end of 1013 but died in February 1014, and the English invited Aethelred to return. Canute and the men of Lindsey planned a combined expedition, but Canute deserted his allies at Easter and sailed to Denmark, putting his hostages, savagely mutilated, ashore at Sandwich. In 1015 he returned and began a long struggle with Aethelred's son Edmund II Ironside. Earl Uhtred of Northumbria submitted to Canute in 1016 and was murdered in his hall. After Aethelred died in April 1016, the English witan (council) elected Canute king at Southampton, but those councillors who were in London, with the citizens, elected Edmund. Canute won a victory at Ashingdon, Essex, on October 18, and the kingdom was then divided; but Edmund died on November 30, and Canute succeeded to the whole. Canute's first actions were ruthless: he gave Englishmen's estates to his Danish followers as rewards; he engineered the death of Edmund's brother Eadwig; and he had some prominent Englishmen killed or outlawed. Edmund's infant sons, however, eventually reached an asylum in Hungary. Already in 1016, Canute had given the earldom of Northumbria to the Norwegian Viking Eric of Hlathir, and in 1017 he put the renowned Viking chief Thorkell the Tall over East Anglia. Yet Canute did not rule like a foreign conqueror for long: by 1018 Englishmen were holding earldoms in Wessex and Mercia. The Danish element in his entourage steadily decreased. Thorkell was outlawed in 1021, and, during the rest of the reign, of his three most influential advisers only one was a Dane. Canute paid off

most of his fleet in 1018, and the Danes and the English reached an agreement at Oxford, one authority adding "according to Edgar's law." A draft of the treaty survives, written in the style of Archbishop Wulfstan of York, who later drew up Canute's laws, mainly based on previous legislation. It is likely that it was Wulfstan who aroused in the young Canute an ambition to emulate the best of his English predecessors, especially King Edgar. Canute proved an effective ruler who brought internal peace and prosperity to the land. He became a strong supporter and a generous donor to the church, and his journey to Rome was inspired by religious as well as diplomatic motives. He needed English support against external dangers. King Aethelred's sons were in Normandy, and Canute married their mother, Emma, in 1017 to prevent her brother, Duke Richard II, from espousing their cause. English forces helped to secure Canute's position in Scandinavia in 1019, when he went to Denmark to obtain the throne on his brother's death; in 1023, when the outlawed Thorkell was causing trouble; and again in 1026 when his regent in Denmark, Ulf Jarl, the husband of his sister Estrid, joined the king of Norway and the king of Sweden in a coalition against Denmark. Though Canute was defeated at the Battle of the Holy River, Sweden, terms were made. Scandinavian sources attribute to Canute the death of Ulf soon afterward. Canute fomented with bribes the unrest of Norwegian landowners against their king, Olaf II Haraldsson, and was able to drive him out in 1028. He put Norway in charge of Haakon, son of Eric of Hlathir, and, after Haakon's death, of his concubine Aelfgifu and their son Sweyn. Olaf attempted to return in 1030 but fell at Stiklestad. Aelfgifu and Sweyn became unpopular and fled to Denmark in 1035 before Canute's death.

Edward the Confessor

born 1002/05 — died Jan. 5, 1066, London; canonized 1161; feast day originally January 5, now October 13), king of England from 1042 to 1066. Although he is often portrayed as a listless, ineffectual monarch overshadowed by powerful nobles, Edward preserved much of the dignity of the crown and managed to keep the kingdom united during his reign of 24 years. His close ties to Normandy prepared the way for the conquest of England by the Normans under William, duke of Normandy (later King William I), in 1066. Edward was the son of King Ethelred II (reigned 978–1016) and Emma, daughter of Richard II, duke of Normandy. When the Danes invaded England in 1013, the family escaped to Normandy; the following year Edward returned to England with the ambassadors who negotiated the pact that returned

his father to power. After Ethelred's death in 1016 the Danes again took control of England. Edward lived in exile in Normandy until 1041, when he returned to the London court of his half brother (Emma was their mother), King Hardecanute. Edward succeeded to the throne in 1042 and quickly seized the property of his mother, who had plotted against his accession. Nevertheless, for the first 11 years of his reign the real master of England was Godwine, earl of Wessex, though Edward preserved his right as king to appoint bishops. Edward married Godwine's daughter Edith in 1045, but by 1049 a breach had occurred between the two men. In 1051 Edward outlawed the Godwine family and dismissed Edith. During this period Edward rapidly lost popularity by giving foreigners—particularly Normans—high positions in his government. Hence, in 1052 Godwine and his sons were able to gather large forces against the king. They compelled Edward to restore their lands and recall Edith as his wife, and they exiled many of his foreign favourites. Upon Godwine's death in 1053, his son Harold became the most powerful figure in the kingdom. It was Harold rather than Edward who subjugated Wales in 1063 and negotiated with the rebellious Northumbrians in 1065. Consequently, Edward on his deathbed named Harold as his successor, even though he allegedly had already promised the crown to William, duke of Normandy. (Edward had exploited his lack of an heir as a diplomatic tool by promising the succession to various parties.) Indeed, according to Norman accounts, Edward sent Harold to Normandy in 1064 to confirm his promise to William. While en route, Harold was captured by one of William's vassals and may have been ransomed by the duke, who then took Harold on a military campaign in Brittany. Harold swore an oath to William that he would defend William's claim to the English throne. The violation of the alleged oath was one of the justifications used in support of the Norman invasion of England. Harold was killed at the Battle of Hastings in Sussex in October 1066, and two months later William ascended the throne. In the years following Edward's death, his reputation for piety grew, in part as a result of the political needs of his successors. In the late 11th and the early 12th century, Edward's childless marriage came to be understood as the consequence of his devotion to virginity and the chaste life. In the 1130s Osbert of Clare, a monk at Westminster Abbey, where Edward had built a new church, wrote the saint's life the Vita beati Eadwardi regis Anglorum ("Life of the Blessed Edward, King of the English"). In 1161 Pope Alexander III, during his struggle with Frederick Barbarossa and the antipope Victor IV, was recognized as the legitimate

pope by England's King Henry II in exchange for canonizing Edward, and in 1163 the translation of Edward's relics was attended by secular and political leaders of the kingdom. In the later Middle Ages Edward was a favourite saint of English kings such as Henry III and Richard II.

Harold Godwinson

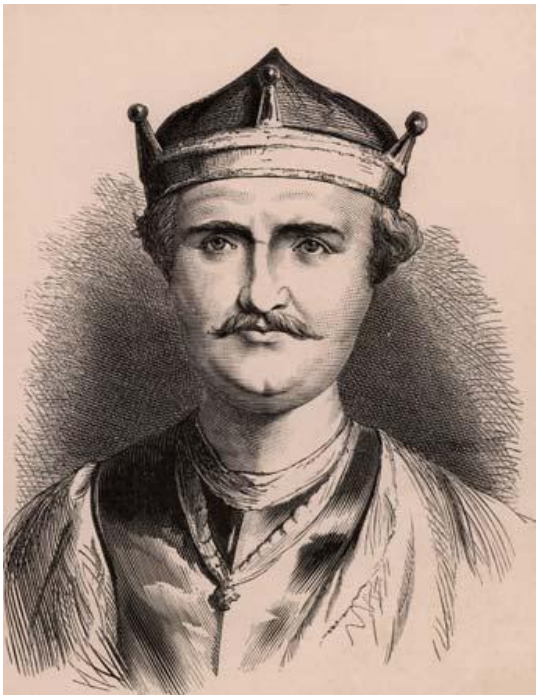
also called Harold Godwineson or Harold Godwinson (born c. 1020—died Oct. 14, 1066, near Hastings, Sussex, Eng.), last Anglo-Saxon king of England. A strong ruler and a skilled general, he held the crown for nine months in 1066 before he was killed at the Battle of Hastings by Norman invaders under William the Conqueror. Harold's mother, Gytha, belonged to a powerful Danish noble family with close connections to Canute, the Danish king of England. Harold's father, Godwine, earl of Wessex and Kent, was an important supporter of the king. Although an ally of the Anglo-Danish line, Godwine accepted the accession as king of a member of the former English royal family, Edward the Confessor (1042–66), following the death of Canute's successor. Godwine emerged as the dominant figure in the kingdom early in Edward's reign, more powerful even than the king himself. About 1044, Godwine obtained for Harold the earldom of East Anglia, Essex, Cambridgeshire, and Huntingdonshire, and in 1045 Edward married Edith, Godwine's daughter and Harold's sister. In 1051, however, Godwine refused to obey a royal command to punish the people of a town friendly to him. Both sides rallied their troops, but Godwine's rebellion collapsed when powerful nobles supported the king. Godwine and his sons were banished for defying royal authority, and Edward sent his wife to a convent and designated William of Normandy as his heir. (Exiled from 1016 to 1041, Edward had found sanctuary in Normandy. In addition, his mother was a Norman, and he had close connections to Norman churchmen.) In 1052 Harold invaded England and forced the king to restore his father and his family to their previous positions. Godwine's restoration was short-lived; he died in 1053. Harold, whose older brother Sweyn had died on pilgrimage the previous year, succeeded to his father's earldoms, becoming (as his father had been) the dominant figure in the kingdom. His hand was further strengthened in the 1050s by the deaths of Leofric, the earl of Mercia, and other rivals, and by 1057 Harold had obtained earldoms for his three brothers, Tostig, Gyrth, and Leofwine. Harold cultivated good relations with the leading clerics of the kingdom, including Stigand, the bishop of Winchester and archbishop of Canterbury, and was an active patron of

various religious houses, most notably the college of canons at Waltham. Harold faced opposition, however, from Aelfgar, the exiled son and heir of Leofric, who raided Mercia with help from a leading Welsh prince. In retaliation, Harold and Tostig subjugated Wales in 1063. Two years later Harold endured another challenge when the Northumbrians revolted against Tostig, their earl. After killing many of Tostig's supporters, the rebels offered the earldom to Morcar of Mercia, a member of the family of Leofric, and forced Harold to accept him. Tostig, declared an outlaw by the Northumbrians and abandoned by Harold, fled to Flanders. Harold, however, gained some advantage from this situation. Although he had lost the support of Tostig, he strengthened his position with the Mercians and the Welsh by marrying Morcar's sister, who had previously been married to a Welsh prince. Having established himself as the preeminent figure in England by the mid-1060s, Harold most likely expected to ascend the throne after the passing of the childless Edward. His designs, however, were complicated by events in 1064. According to contemporary Norman sources, notably the Bayeux Tapestry, Harold was sent by Edward to Normandy to confirm Duke William as the king's heir. While en route, Harold was shipwrecked and captured by Guy I of Ponthieu, one of William's vassals. The duke demanded Harold's release and may have ransomed him. Harold was warmly welcomed by William and joined him on a military campaign in Brittany. According to the Bayeux Tapestry and other Norman accounts, Harold also swore an oath of fealty to William and promised to protect William's claim to the English throne.

Battle of Hastings

battle on October 14, 1066, that ended in the defeat of Harold II of England by William, duke of Normandy, and established the Normans as the rulers of England. Throughout his reign, the childless Edward the Confessor had used the absence of a clear successor to the throne as a bargaining tool. In 1051, after a breach with Godwine, the earl of Wessex and the most powerful man in England, Edward probably designated William, a cousin, as his heir. Upon Godwine's death in 1053, his son Harold became earl of Wessex, and Harold spent the next decade consolidating his power and winning favour among the nobles and clergy. According to Norman accounts, among them the Bayeux Tapestry, Harold subsequently swore an oath of fealty to William and promised to uphold William's claim to the English throne. Nevertheless, on his deathbed (January 5, 1066) Edward granted the kingdom to Harold, who, with the

backing of the English nobility, was crowned king the next day. By this time, however, William controlled, directly or by alliance, every harbour from the Schelde to Brest. His father-in-law, Baldwin V of Flanders, was regent of France, and Geoffrey III, the count of Anjou and his only dangerous neighbour, was distracted by rebellion. With a solemn blessing from Pope Alexander II and the emperor's approval, William prepared to enforce his claim to the English crown. He persuaded the Norman barons to promise support and recruited thousands of volunteers from Brittany, Maine, France, Flanders, Spain, and Italy. The organization of supplies and transport for this miscellaneous host and the imposition of disciplined Norman cohesion upon them were probably William's supreme military achievements.



William I

nicknamed William the Conqueror or William the Bastard (born c. 1028, Falaise, Normandy [France]—died Sept. 9, 1087, Rouen), duke of Normandy (as William II) from 1035 and king of England from 1066, one of the greatest soldiers and rulers of the Middle Ages. He made himself the mightiest noble in France and then changed the course of England's history by his conquest of that country. William was already an experienced ruler. In Normandy he had replaced disloyal nobles and ducal servants with his friends, limited private warfare, and recovered usurped ducal rights, defining the duties of his vassals. The Norman church flourished under his reign, as he adapted its structures to

English traditions. Like many contemporary rulers, he wanted the church in England to be free of corruption but also subordinate to him. Thus, he condemned simony and disapproved of clerical marriage. He would not tolerate opposition from bishops or abbots or interference from the papacy, but he remained on good terms with Popes Alexander II and Gregory VII—though tensions arose on occasion. During his reign, church synods were held much more frequently, and he also presided over several episcopal councils. He was ably supported in this by his close adviser Lanfranc, whom he made archbishop of Canterbury, replacing Stigand; William replaced all other Anglo-Saxon bishops of England—except Wulfstan of Dorchester—with Normans. He also promoted monastic reform by importing Norman monks and abbots, thus quickening the pace of monastic life in England and bringing it into line with Continental developments. William left England early in 1067 but had to return in December to deal with unrest. The rebellions that began that year reached their peak in 1069, when William resorted to such violent measures that even contemporaries were shocked. To secure his hold on the country, he introduced the Norman practice of building castles, including the Tower of London. The rebellions, which were crushed by 1071, completed the ruin of the English higher aristocracy and secured its replacement by an aristocracy of Norman lords, who introduced patterns of landholding and military service that had been developed in Normandy. To secure England's frontiers, he invaded Scotland in 1072 and Wales in 1081, creating special defensive "marcher" counties along the Scottish and Welsh borders. During the last 15 years of his life, William was more often in Normandy than in England, and there were five years, possibly seven, in which he did not visit the kingdom at all. He retained most of the greatest Anglo-Norman barons with him in Normandy and confided the government of England to bishops, trusting especially his old friend Lanfranc. He returned to England only when it was absolutely necessary: in 1075 to deal with the aftermath of a rebellion by Roger, earl of Hereford, and Ralf, earl of Norfolk, which was made more dangerous by the intervention of a Danish fleet; and in 1082 to arrest and imprison his half brother Odo, who was planning to take an army to Italy, perhaps to make himself pope. In the spring of 1082 William had his son Henry knighted, and in August at Salisbury he took oaths of fealty from all the important landowners in England. In 1085 he returned with a large army to meet the threat of an invasion by Canute IV (Canute the Holy) of Denmark. When this came to nothing, owing to

Canute's death in 1086, William ordered an economic and tenurial survey to be made of the kingdom, the results of which are summarized in the two volumes of Domesday Book, one of the greatest administrative accomplishments of the Middle Ages. Despite his duties as king, William remained preoccupied with the frontiers of Normandy even after the conquest. The danger spots were in Maine and the Vexin on the Seine, where Normandy bordered on the French royal demesne. After 1066, William's Continental neighbours became more powerful and even more hostile. Fulk the Surly succeeded to Anjou in 1068 and Robert the Frisian to Flanders in 1071. King Philip I of France allied with Robert, and Robert allied with the Danish king, Canute IV. There was also the problem of William's heir apparent, Robert Curthose (the future Robert II), who, given no appanage (grant of land from the royal domain) and seemingly kept short of money, left Normandy in 1077 and intrigued with his father's enemies. In 1081 William reached agreement with Fulk in the treaty of Blancheland: Robert Curthose was to be count of Maine but only as a vassal of Fulk. The eastern part of the Vexin, the county of Mantes, had fallen completely into King Philip's hands in 1077, when William had been busy with Maine. In 1087 William demanded from Philip the return of the towns of Chaumont, Mantes, and Pontoise. In July he entered Mantes by surprise, but, while the town burned, he suffered an injury from which he never recovered. He was thwarted at the very moment when he seemed about to enforce his last outstanding territorial claim.

Cymry

Welsh people, plural of Cymro, probably from ancient combrox "compatriot," from British Celtic *kom-brogos, from collective prefix *kom- (see com-) + *brogos "district," from PIE *merg- "boundary, border" (see mark (n.1)). Compare Allobroges, name of a warlike people in Gallia Narbonensis, literally "those from another land."

Llewelyn

full name Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, (c. 1172 – 11 April 1240) was a Prince of Gwynedd in north Wales and eventually de facto ruler over most of Wales. By a combination of war and diplomacy he dominated Wales for 45 years. During Llywelyn's boyhood, Gwynedd was ruled by two of his uncles, who split the kingdom between them, following the death of Llywelyn's grandfather, Owain Gwynedd, in 1170. Llywelyn had a strong claim to be the legitimate ruler and began a campaign to win power at an early age. He was sole

ruler of Gwynedd by 1200 and made a treaty with King John of England that year. Llywelyn's relations with John remained good for the next ten years. He married John's natural daughter Joan in 1205, and when John arrested Gwenwynwyn ap Owain of Powys in 1208, Llywelyn took the opportunity to annex southern Powys. In 1210, relations deteriorated, and John invaded Gwynedd in 1211. Llywelyn was forced to seek terms and to give up all lands west of the River Conwy, but was able to recover them the following year in alliance with the other Welsh princes. He allied himself with the barons who forced John to sign Magna Carta in 1215. By 1216, he was the dominant power in Wales, holding a council at Aberdyfi that year to apportion lands to the other princes. Following King John's death, Llywelyn concluded the Treaty of Worcester with his successor, Henry III, in 1218. During the next fifteen years, Llywelyn was frequently involved in fights with Marcher lords and sometimes with the king, but also made alliances with several major powers in the Marches. The Peace of Middle in 1234 marked the end of Llywelyn's military career, as the agreed truce of two years was extended year by year for the remainder of his reign. He maintained his position in Wales until his death in 1240 and was succeeded by his son Dafydd ap Llywelyn.

Gruffyd

Gruffydd was the elder son of Llywelyn ap Seisyll, who ruled the kingdoms of Gwynedd in the north-west and Powys in central Wales until he died in 1023, when Gruffydd would have been about 16. His successor was Iago ab Idwal of an Anglesey branch of the family. Gruffydd bided his time until in 1039 he killed Iago or had him killed and took over Gwynedd and Powys. In 1041 he seized Dyfed in the far south-west, driving the king out and taking his wife as a concubine. He was a ruthless warrior and in a succession of battles he secured his hold on the whole south-west and went on to intervene in English politics. The most powerful men in England under Edward the Confessor were Earl Godwin’s sons Harold and Tostig, who succeeded in getting Aelfgar, the heir to the earldom of Mercia, sent into exile. Gruffydd made an alliance with Aelfgar and in 1055 the two of them joined forces to attack and loot Hereford. Gruffydd carried off substantial plunder and married Aelfgar’s beautiful daughter Ealdgyth. About this time he seized Morgannwg and Gwent in the south and south-east and was now recognised as the ruler of all Wales. Late in 1062 Earl Harold made a surprise attack on Gruffydd at Rhuddlan in North Wales, where he had his court. Gruffydd escaped by the skin

of his teeth, but in the following spring Harold and Tostig attacked him again. In August Gruffydd was killed somewhere in Snowdonia, according to one tradition by his own men and to another in revenge by the son of Iago ab Idwal. His head was cut off and sent to Earl Harold, who then married Gruffydd's widow Ealdgyth. Gruffydd's realm was again divided up into its traditional kingdoms. The Welsh chronicles known as the Brenhinedd y Saeson said that Gruffydd died 'after many plunderings and victorious battles against his foes, after many feasts and delights, and great gifts of gold and silver and costly raiment, he who was sword and shield over the fate of all Wales.' Ealdgyth had been Queen of Wales and was soon briefly Queen of England, but only until Harold was killed at Hastings in 1066. That would bring the Welsh up against the Normans.

Patrick

patron saint and national apostle of Ireland, credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland and probably responsible in part for the Christianization of the Picts and Anglo-Saxons. He is known only from two short works, the Confessio, a spiritual autobiography, and his Letter to Coroticus, a denunciation of British mistreatment of Irish Christians. Patrick was born in Britain of a Romanized family. At age 16 he was torn by Irish raiders from the villa of his father, Calpurnius, a deacon and minor local official, and carried into slavery in Ireland. He spent six bleak years there as a herdsman, during which he turned with fervour to his faith. Upon dreaming that the ship in which he was to escape was ready, he fled his master and found passage to Britain. There he came near to starvation and suffered a second brief captivity before he was reunited with his family. Thereafter, he may have paid a short visit to the Continent. Careful to deal fairly with the non-Christian Irish, he nevertheless lived in constant danger of martyrdom. The evocation of such incidents of what he called his "laborious episcopate" was his reply to a charge, to his great grief endorsed by his ecclesiastical superiors in Britain, that he had originally sought office for the sake of office. In point of fact, he was a most humble-minded man, pouring forth a continuous paean of thanks to his Maker for having chosen him as the instrument whereby multitudes who had worshipped "idols and unclean things" had become "the people of God." The phenomenal success of Patrick's mission is not, however, the full measure of his personality. Since his writings have come to be better understood, it is increasingly recognized that,

despite their occasional incoherence, they mirror a truth and a simplicity of the rarest quality.

Brian Boru

born 941, near Killaloe, Ireland—died April 23, 1014, Clontarf, near Dublin), high king of Ireland from 1002 to 1014. In 976 Brian became king of a small state, later called Dál Cais, and also king of Munster, whose Eóghanachta rulers had been defeated (964) by Brian's half brother. Brian destroyed first the Eóghanachta septs and then the Northmen, constructing a fleet to drive them from the Shannon. Under his rule Munster became a unified and powerful state. He invaded Ossory (983), won control of the southern half of Ireland from the high king Maelsechlainn II (997), replaced him as high king (1002), and in due course received the submission of every lesser ruler. The men of Leinster and the Northmen of Dublin united against him in 1013, enlisting help from abroad. The decisive battle at Clontarf, near Dublin, on April 23, 1014, found Brian too old to take active part, and the victory was won by his son Murchad. A little group of Northmen, flying from the battlefield, stumbled on Brian's tent, overcame his bodyguard, and hacked the aged Brian to death.

Picts

one of an ancient people who lived in what is now eastern and northeastern Scotland, from Caithness to Fife. Their name may refer to their custom of body painting or possibly tattooing.

Scots

originally (until the 10th century) "Scotia" denoted Ireland, and the inhabitants of Scotia were Scotti. The area of Argyll and Bute, where the migrant Celts from northern Ireland settled, became known as the kingdom of Dalriada, the counterpart to Dalriada in Ireland. St. Columba inaugurated Christianity among them and helped raise Aidan to the kingship of Scottish Dalriada probably in 574. The Scots then expanded eastward at the expense of the Picts, into what came to be known as the Forest of Atholl and Strath Earn (valley of the River Earn) and northward into the area of Elgin. The union of the lands of modern Scotland began in 843, when Kenneth I MacAlpin, king of the Scots (Dalriada), became also king of the Picts and, within a few years, joined "Pict-land" to "Scot-land" to form the kingdom of Alba. By 1034, by inheritance and warfare, the Scots had secured hegemony over not only Alba but also Lothian, Cumbria, and Strathclyde—roughly the territory of modern mainland

Scotland. In 1305 the kingdom was divided into Scotland, Lothian, and Galloway; in the 14th century Scotland came to be the name for the whole land, and all its inhabitants were called Scots, whatever their origin.

Britons

also known as Celtic Britons or Ancient Britons, were Celtic people who inhabited Great Britain from the British Iron Age into the Middle Ages, at which point their culture and language diverged. They spoke the Common Brittonic language, the ancestor to the modern Brittonic languages. The earliest evidence for the Britons and their language in historical sources dates to the Iron Age. After the Roman conquest of Britain in the 1st century, a Romano-British culture emerged, and Latin and British Vulgar Latin coexisted with Brittonic. During and after the Roman era, the Britons lived throughout Britain. Their relationship with the Picts, who lived north of the Firth of Forth, has been the subject of much discussion, though most scholars now accept that the Pictish language was related to Common Brittonic, rather than a separate Celtic language. With the beginning of Anglo-Saxon settlement and Gaelic Scots in the 5th century, the culture and language of the Britons fragmented and much of their territory was gradually taken over by the Anglo-Saxons and Scots Gaels. The extent to which this cultural and linguistic change was accompanied by wholesale changes in the population is still a matter of discussion. During this period some Britons migrated to mainland Europe and established significant settlements in Brittany (now part of France) as well as Britonia in modern Galicia, Spain. By the 11th century, remaining Brittonic Celtic-speaking populations had split into distinct groups: the Welsh in Wales, the Cornish in Cornwall, the Bretons in Brittany, and the people of the Hen Ogledd ("Old North") in southern Scotland and northern England. Common Brittonic developed into the distinct Brittonic languages: Welsh, Cumbric, Pictish, Cornish and Breton.

Clan

from Gaelic clann, "children") is a kinship group among the Scottish people. Clans give a sense of shared identity and descent to members, and in modern times have an official structure recognised by the Court of the Lord Lyon, which regulates Scottish heraldry and coats of arms. Most clans have their own tartan patterns, usually dating from the 19th century, which members may incorporate into kilts or other clothing.

Columba

also called Colum, or Columcille (born c. 521, Tyrconnell [now County Donegal, Ireland]—died June 8/9, 597, Iona [Inner Hebrides, Scotland]; feast day June 9), abbot and missionary traditionally credited with the main role in the conversion of Scotland to Christianity. Columba studied under Saints Finnian of Moville and Finnian of Clonard and was ordained priest about 551. He founded churches and the famous monasteries Daire Calgaich, in Derry, and Dair-magh, in Durrow. Columba and his 12 disciples erected a church and a monastery on the island of Iona (c. 563) as their springboard for the conversion of Scotland. It was regarded as the mother house and its abbots as the chief ecclesiastical rulers even of the bishops. Columba gave formal benediction and inauguration to Aidan MacGabrain of Dunadd as king of Dalriada. Columba accompanied Aidan to Ireland (575) and took a leading part in a council held at Druim Cetta, which determined the position of the ruler of Dalriada in relation to the king of Ireland. The last years of Columba’s life appear to have been spent mainly in Iona, where he was already revered as a saint.

feudalism	French féodalité, historiographic construct designating the social, economic, and political conditions in western Europe during the early Middle Ages, the long stretch of time between the 5th and 12th centuries. It is a kind of socio-political organisation which arose in medieval Europe and was based on land tenure given by the Lord to the Vassals, who served their masters in various ways. In other words, feudalism was a part of the feudal society where the subordinate subjects showed loyalty to their Lords and obtained from them a piece of land there by serving their master, in various ways seeking protection from them for their life and property. Feudalism was based on certain principles. In medieval Europe, the weak and innocent people needed the help of a powerful man. The king was very weak. He could not save his subjects from the plunders of the foreign invaders. So, the common people turned to strong and powerful leaders who were mostly the descendants of the Dukes, Counts and Margraves to make their life and property safe. The protector was variously known as the 'Lord', 'Liege Lord', 'Suzerain' or 'Seignior'. The people who sought his protection were called the 'Vassals' or 'Liege-men'. The Lord gave back the plot of land known as Tier to his vassal. In some places, instead of the word 'fief, the word 'Feud' was used from which the term 'Feudalism' was derived.
vassal	in feudal society, one invested with a fief in return for services to an overlord. Some vassals did not have fiefs and lived at their lord's court as his household knights. Certain vassals who held their fiefs directly from the crown were tenants in chief and formed the most important feudal group, the barons. A fief held by tenants of these tenants in chief was called an arriere-fief, and, when the king summoned the whole feudal host, he was said to summon the ban et arriere-ban. There were female vassals as well; their husbands fulfilled their wives' services. Under the feudal contract, the lord had the duty to provide the fief for his vassal, to protect him, and to do him justice in his court. In return, the lord had the right to demand the services attached to the fief (military, judicial, administrative) and a right to various "incomes" known as feudal incidents. Examples of incidents are relief, a tax paid when a fief was transferred to an heir or alienated by the vassal, and scutage, a tax paid in lieu of military service. Arbitrary arrangements were gradually replaced by a system of fixed dues on occasions limited by custom.

serf	a person in a condition of servitude, required to render services to a lord, commonly attached to the lord's land and transferred with it from one owner to another.
homage (to pay)	in European society, solemn acts of ritual by which a person became a vassal of a lord in feudal society. Homage was essentially the acknowledgment of the bond of tenure that existed between the two. It consisted of the vassal surrendering himself to the lord, symbolized by his kneeling and giving his joined hands to the lord, who clasped them in his own, thus accepting the surrender. Fealty was an oath of fidelity made by the vassal. In it he promised not to harm his lord or to do damage to his property. Although homage had to be rendered directly to the lord, fealty could be given to a bailiff or steward. The lord then performed a symbolic investiture of the new vassal, handing over to him some object representing his fief. The whole procedure was a recognition of both the assistance owed by the tenant to his lord and the protection owed by the lord to the tenant.
Domesday Book	compiled in 1085-6 - is one of the few historical records whose name is familiar to most people in this country. It is the earliest public record, the foundation document of the national archives and a legal document that is still valid as evidence of title to land. Based on the Domesday survey of 1085-6, which was drawn up on the orders of King William I, it describes in remarkable detail, the landholdings and resources of late 11th-century England, demonstrating the power of the government machine in the first century of the new Millennium, and its deep thirst for information. It was an exercise unparalleled in contemporary Europe, and was not matched in its comprehensive coverage of the country until the population censuses of the 19th century - although Domesday itself is not a full population census, and the names that appear in it are mainly only those of people who owned land. Used for many centuries for administrative and legal purposes, the Domesday Book is the starting point for most local historians researching the history of their area and there are several versions in print which should be available through good reference libraries. Despite its iconic significance, it has been subjected to increasingly detailed textual analysis by historians who warn us that not everything it says should be taken at face value. Providing definitive proof of rights to land and obligations to tax and military service, its 913 pages and two million Latin words describe more than 13,000 places in England and parts of Wales. Nicknamed the 'Domesday' Book by the native English, after God's final Day of Judgement, when every soul would

be assessed and against which there could be no appeal, this title was eventually adopted by its official custodians, known for years as the Public Record Office, and recently renamed the National Archives.

William “Rufus”

The future William II, third son of William the Conqueror and Matilda of Flanders, was born in Normandy in around 1056 and was educated by the saintly Lanfranc. Little is known of William's childhood, although Orderic Vitalis relates an incident when the young William and his brother Henry, bored with playing dice, decided to create mischief instead, and poured stinking water on their elder brother, Robert Curthose , from an upper gallery to the great delight of them both. A scuffle ensued with the fiery tempered Robert, which their father was forced to break up. Robert Curthose rebelled against their father William the Conqueror and attempted to take Rouen. William remained loyal to his father and fought by his side, he was by his father's side, as was his brother Henry, at his death in Rouen in 1087, Robert was conspicuously absent. In his will, William the Conqueror left England to what was believed to be his favourite son, William Rufus, Normandy he bequeathed to his eldest son, Robert. To the youngest, Henry, he left a sum of money. An elder brother, Richard, had been killed whilst hunting in the New Forest. William was a thick set and muscular man, built in a similar mould to his father, he had a florid and choleric complexion, from which derived his nickname “Rufus”, he had his father's red hair and eyes of different colours and spoke with a stutter. On his accession to the throne, William II was originally content to be advised by the saintly Anselm. Initially enjoying the favour of the English people, his first act as king was to distribute part of the royal treasure to the monasteries, churches and the poor for the benefit of his father's soul. Rebellion broke out in favour of his elder brother, Robert, now Duke of Normandy, supported by his powerful uncles, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux and Robert of Mortain. The King received strong support from his English subjects and retook the rebel strongholds of Pevensey, Rochester and Tonbridge. Rufus invaded Normandy in 1091, taking large areas of the Dukedom from Robert. Peace was eventually made between the warring sons of the Conqueror and together they embarked on a campaign to win back Maine and Cotentin from their youngest brother, Henry, After a siege which lasted fifteen days, Henry was forced to capitulate and surrender the Cotentin. Rufus began to display uncontrolled tyranny along with his chief justiciar, the despised Ranulf Flambard. Further rebellion against his rule broke out in 1095, lead by Robert de Mowbray, Earl of Northumberland, which was put down with severity. William forced Malcolm Canmore, King of Scots to accept his overlordship. Malcolm lead an uprising against him in 1093, but was treacherously killed at

Alnwick. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle puts forward contemporary views of William II: “He was very harsh and fierce in his rule over his realm and towards his followers and to all his neighbours and very terrifying. Influenced by the advice of evil councillors, which was always gratifying to him, and by his own covetousness, he was continually exasperating this nation with depredations and unjust taxes. In his days therefore, righteousness declined and every evil of every kind towards God and man put up its head. Everything that was hateful to God and to righteous men was the daily practice in this land during his reign. Therefore he was hated by almost all his people and abhorrent to God. This his end testified, for he died in the midst of his sins without repentance or atonement for his evil deeds”. William went hunting in the New Forest, probably near Brockenhurst, on 2 August 1100. In what was described as a 'hunting accident', he was killed when an arrow penetrated his lung, the circumstances of the incident are unclear. The arrow was fired by a nobleman named Walter Tirel, the earliest mention of the event is in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which blandly records that William was “shot by an arrow by one of his own men”. Later chroniclers contain the name of Tirel, along with further details. William's body was left where he fell. His younger brother, Henry, who was present at the hunt, departed in haste to seize the treasury at Winchester, aided by the de Clare brothers, Gilbert and Richard, Richard's daughter Adelize was the wife of Walter Tirel. He then travelled to London, where he was hastily crowned within day. The body of the former king was found by a local charcoal burner named Purkis and a few peasants who carried the blood stained corpse to Winchester in a horse drawn cart and he was buried under the cathedral tower there. When its badly built tower crashed to the ground the following year, there were many in that superstitious age who perceived it to be the judgement of God upon William Rufus. Whether the shot was accidental or not, Tirel panicked and fled to France.

Henry I Beauclerc

was the fourth son of William the Conqueror and Matilda of Flanders and was born between May, 1068 and May, 1069 probably at Selby in Yorkshire. He was named Henry after his mother's maternal uncle, King Henry I of France. On the death of his father, Normandy was bequeathed to his eldest son, Robert Curthose , England was left to the third son, William Rufus (a second son, Richard, had been killed whilst hunting in the New Forest) and to the youngest, Henry, he left a large sum of money. Henry seized England's crown on the death of his brother, William Rufus on 2 August 1100. He had been present on the hunting expedition in the New Forest which resulted in Rufus' death, either by accident or design and left abruptly and in indecent haste to seize the treasury at Winchester. The finger of suspicion has been pointed at Henry of

King Henry I

complicity in his brother's death, Rufus was at the time refusing to sanction Henry's plans to marry the (half Saxon) Scottish Princess Edith. Henry I was crowned at Westminster on 1st August, 1100 and granted a popular coronation charter, promising to reform the abuses of his brother's reign. He imprisoned the despised Ranulf Flambard, Rufus' chief justiciar, thereby evoking the popular support of the English people. Unlike Rufus, Henry had been born in England, which endeared him to the Saxon people. The historian William of Malmesbury leaves us with a contemporary description: "He was of middle stature, his hair was black, but scanty near the forehead; his eyes were mildly bright, his chest brawny, his body well fleshed. He was facetious in proper season, nor did multiplicity of business cause him to be less pleasant when he mixed in society. Not prone to personal combat, he verified the saying of Scipio Africanus, 'My mother bore me a commander not a soldier;' wherefore he was inferior in wisdom to no king of modern time; and I may also say, he clearly surpassed all his predecessors in England and preferred contending by counsel, rather than by the sword. If he could he conquered without bloodshed; if it was unavoidable, with as little as possible". Henry was well educated and able to read and write in English and Latin, from which was coined his nick-name 'Beauclerc, which was bestowed on him in the fourteenth century. Although he had many illegitimate children, Henry had only two children by his wife, Edith. A son, William, known as the Atheling, for his descent from the ancient Saxon Royal House, and a daughter Matilda, or Maud, who had been married in political alliance to the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry V, in childhood. She had spent most of her life in Germany. Tragedy struck when Henry's only remaining legitimate son, William, on returning from campaign in Normandy, was drowned in the English Channel in the wreck of the White Ship. William had got away in a lifeboat but went back for his illegitimate sister, the Countess of Perche, when his boat was overturned. Henry was overcome with immense grief. In the hope of begetting another male heir to secure the succession, the King married for a second time to the young and beautiful Adelicia of Louvain, but the marriage produced no issue. After the death of her husband the Emperor, he recalled his daughter, by now known as the Empress, to England. He named her as his heiress and made the barons swear fealty to her. The proud and haughty Matilda was ordered reluctantly into a marriage with the fifteen year old Geoffrey Plantagenet, son of the Count of Anjou, whom she personally loathed, a dislike which was reciprocated in full measure by her intended spouse. The marriage made an ally of Henry's erstwhile enemy, Fulk of Anjou. When the reluctant and quarrelsome pair were finally ordered by Henry I to do their duty and produce an heir to his throne, a son, the future Henry II, was born. Henry rejoiced that his dynasty was now secure and crossed to Normandy to see his new grandson, namesake and heir. The old

king was said to have doted on the child. In 1135, Henry again crossed to Normandy to see his two grandsons, Henry and his younger brother, Geoffrey, in whom the ageing king took great delight, dandling the young Henry on his knee. During his visit, he quarreled violently with the overbearing Matilda and her husband. Henry was now an ageing lion, these quarrels with his daughter affected him badly and he died in Normandy on 1st December, 1135 at St. Denis le Fermont, from food poisoning, due to over indulging of his favourite dish of lampreys, which his doctors had forbidden him. His body was returned to England and was buried at Reading Abbey. The Abbey was destroyed during the Reformation. No trace of Henry's tomb has survived.

Robert Curthose

was the eldest son of William the Conqueror, the first Norman king of England, and Matilda of Flanders, his nickname, Curthose, derives from the Norman French “Courtheuse”, was apparently acquired when his father teased him as a child for having short legs. n 1077, Robert led a revolt against his father, the result of a prank played by his brothers William Rufus and Henry, who bored with playing dice, had thought it amusing to empty a full chamber-pot over his head from an upper gallery, to the great delight of them both. A scuffle ensued with the fiery tempered Robert, which their father was forced to break up. Robert was further angered when William failed to punish the amused offenders. The following day Robert and his followers attempted to seize the Rouen Castle. The siege was a failure, and King William ordered their arrest. Robert and his followers took refuge with Hugh of Chateauneuf-en-Thymerais. They were forced to flee again when King William attacked them at Rémalard. Robert fled to Flanders, where he was given refuge at the court of his uncle, Robert I, Count of Flanders. He plundered the Norman Vexin, causing William King William to ally himself with King Philip I of France to curb his rebellious son. Relations were not helped when King William discovered that Robert's mother, Queen Matilda, was secretly sending her son money. At a battle in January 1079, Robert unhorsed King William in combat and wounded him, ceasing his attack only when he recognized his father's voice. Humiliated, King William cursed his son then raised the siege and returned to Rouen. William the Conqueror died in 1097, on his deathbed he summoned his younger sons, William and Henry. Robert Curthose remained at the court of France. England was bequeathed to his second surviving and favourite son, William Rufus and despite his bitter differences with Robert Curthose, he left Normandy to him. To Henry, the youngest son, later destined to inherit all his dominions, he left 5,000 silver pounds. At the time of their father's death the two brothers made an agreement to be each other's heir. However this peace lasted less than a year, when the barons, including Robert's uncles Odo, Bishop

of Bayeux and Robert, Count of Mortain joined with Robert against William Rufus in the Rebellion of 1088. The rebellion failed, partly because Robert never appeared to support the rebels. Rufus invaded Normandy in 1091, taking large areas of the Dukedom from Robert. Peace was eventually made between the warring sons of the Conqueror and together they embarked on a campaign to win back Maine and Cotentin from their youngest brother, Henry, After a siege which lasted fifteen days, Henry was forced to capitulate and surrender the Cotentin. In 1096, Robert embarked for the Holy Land on the First Crusade. To raise money for the crusade he mortgaged his duchy to his brother William for the sum of 10,000 marks. He fought at Dorylaeum in 1097 and was present at the capture of Jerusalem in 1099. His courageous leadership contributed to the victory at Ascalon in 1099. When William II was killed in a 'hunting accident' in the New Forest on 2 August 1100, Robert was on the return journey from the Crusade. As a result of his absence his younger brother Henry was able to seize the crown. Upon his return, Robert claimed the crown of England on the basis of the agreement with Rufus of 1087. In 1101, he crossed the Channel with an army and landed at Portsmouth in July. Henry I had expected him at Pevensey where he had assembled his troops, Robert headed towards London but was intercepted by Henry at Alton in Hampshire. Robert was persuaded to renounce his claim to England in return for a pension of 3,000 marks a year and the abandonment of any claim on Henry's part to Normandy. In 1105 Henry I invaded Normandy and In 1106, met Robert's army at the The Battle of Tinchebray. Robert was supported by William of Mortain, Robert of Bellême, Robert d'Estoutville, William Crispin and Edgar Atheling, the nephew of Edward the Confessor and the last of the royal Saxon House of Wessex. Robert's forces attacked first. William of Mortain charged Henry's lines and drove back his opponents but was surprised by the appearance of English reserves who broke the Norman army, the battle lasted less than an hour. Robert of Belleme and the Norman army fled the field, to the chants of "Hastings avenged!" from the English army. The rest of the Norman army were either killed or captured. Henry claimed Normandy as a possession of the English crown. Robert was captured along with Edgar Atheling in the aftermath of the battle and imprisoned in Devizes Castle for twenty years before being moved to Cardiff, where he learned Welsh and wrote at least one poem in the language. It contains the line 'Woe to him that is not old enough to die". Robert's only legitimate son, William Clito, Count of Flanders, was killed while besieging Aalst on 12 July, 1128. During the course of the siege he was wounded in the arm in a scuffle with a foot soldier. The wound became gangrenous and William died at the age of twenty-five on 28 July 1128. He left no children and was survived by his imprisoned father by six years. In 1134, Robert died at Cardiff Castle in his early eighties. He was

buried in the abbey church of St. Peter in Gloucester. His effigy carved in bog oak, however, lies on a mortuary chest decorated with the attributed arms of the Nine Worthies. The effigy dates from about 100 years after his death and the mortuary chest much later. The church subsequently has become Gloucester Cathedral.

Stephen of Blois

King Stephen

Henry I's nephew, Stephen of Blois, was the son of the Conqueror's youngest daughter Adela and her husband Stephen, Count of Blois. Stephen's father had been killed at the battle of Ramlah, while on Crusade and in his youth, Stephen had been sent to England by his mother, being only her third son, it was hoped he would make his fortune at his uncle's court. An affable, mild-mannered and handsome young man, he incited Henry's favour, who knighted him after the Battle of Tinchebray. Matilda the Empress, the only surviving legitimate child of Henry I, had been named her father's heir and prior to his death, the barons had sworn an oath of fealty to her as such. Stephen was among those who had sworn fealty to his cousin.who had was in France at the time of her father Henry I's death and in her absence Stephen promptly seized the throne for himself. The barons, disliking the idea of having a woman ruling over them, accepted the status quo and Stephen was duly crowned King of England on 22nd December, 1135. Stephen had a strong supporter in his loyal wife Matilda of Boulogne, the daughter of Eustace III, Count of Boulogne, and his wife Mary of Scotland, daughter of King Malcolm III of Scotland and Saint Margaret. Queen Matilda was the maternal cousin of the Empress Matilda. David I, King of Scots supported the claims of his niece the Empress Matilda, the daughter of his sister, Edith of Scotland, who had married Henry I in 1100, against those of his other niece Matilda of Boulogne (daughter of Mary of Scotland and Eustace, Count of Boulogne) who was the wife of King Stephen. David invaded northern England twice in 1138, and on both occasions he was repulsed by the armies of Stephen. In 1136, David had secured Cumberland. The following year, he agreed to a truce with Stephen after a brief campaign. That November, with expiry of the truce, David demanded the whole of Northumberland, which Stephen promptly refused to grant. In the summer of 1138 he invaded England for a third time. David's army was defeated by an English force led by William, Count of Aumale at the Battle of the Standard, fought on 22 August 1138 on Cowton Moor near Northallerton in Yorkshire. King Stephen was altogether of a different character than was usual in his family. The very antithesis of his uncle, Henry I and his grandfather William the Conqueror. According to contemporary chroniclers, he had an attractive personality and was good natured and courteous, he was also lacking in resolution, weak-willed, did not enforce law and order and anarchy was the inevitable result. The lords recognised these weaknesses and

exploited them to their own advantage. Robber barons became a law unto themselves and built unlicensed castles from which they terrorised the populace. Matilda, incensed at what she saw as Stephen's betrayal, was pregnant with her third child, William, at the time of her father's death and therefore her reaction was ultimately delayed. She did eventually invade England in 1139 and was ably supported by her illegitimate half-brother Robert of Earl Gloucester. There followed a long period during which the country was rent apart by civil war. Normandy was eventually taken by Matilda's husband, Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, but conflict in England was to remain a long and drawn out bitter struggle between the two opposing factions. King Stephen was captured by Robert of Gloucester at the Battle of Lincoln in February 1141 and imprisoned in chains by the exultant Matilda, who was then recognised as Queen. She managed to turn the tables on herself by deeply offending the Londoners by her arrogance and pride, so much did she succeed in inflaming public opinion that she was expelled from the city by an angry mob. The fickle wheel of fortune turned once more when Robert of Gloucester was captured by Stephen's Queen, also Matilda, at the Rout of Winchester. An exchange of prisoners was finally agreed upon, with no side gaining the upper hand. Matilda herself was very nearly captured while being besieged by Stephen at Oxford, but made a daring escape across the frozen river camouflaged in a white cloak. Her young son, Henry was summoned to England in the hope that his presence would breathe new life into his mother's cause. Finally, Matilda reluctantly returned to Normandy in 1148. Stephen's Queen, Matilda of Boulogne, died in 1152. The struggle with Stephen for the crown of England was taken up by the Empress' son, Henry Plantagenet, known at the time as Henry Fitz Empress.On a second expedition into England, by the young Henry of Normandy in 1153, a compromise was reached in the Treaty of Wallingford. By its terms, Stephen was to retain the crown for the remainder of his lifetime, whereupon it would revert to Henry and his heirs. Stephen's son, Eustace, was disinherited and died shortly after. King Stephen died in 1154, of an apoplexy, aged fifty-one and was succeeded by Henry II, the first of the great Plantagenet dynasty.

Matilda

Matilda was heir to the English king, Henry I, but was usurped by Stephen resulting in civil war. Matilda was born in 1102, the daughter of Henry I, King of England. In 1114, she married the Holy Roman Emperor Henry V. The death of Matilda's brother in 1120 made her Henry I's sole legitimate heir. When her husband died in 1125, Henry recalled her to England and, in 1127, he insisted that the nobles accept her as his successor. In 1128, she married Geoffrey of Anjou with whom she had three sons. A woman ruler was unprecedented and her marriage to Geoffrey was unpopular.

When Henry I died in 1135 Matilda's cousin Stephen of Blois immediately had himself crowned king. Though the church and most nobles supported Stephen, Matilda's claims were upheld by her half-brother Robert of Gloucester and her uncle, David I of Scotland. Matilda and Robert landed at Arundel in September 1139 and England descended into civil war. The war was used as a cover for the settling of local feuds, leaving much of the country in anarchy. Stephen was captured at Lincoln in February 1141 and Matilda now controlled the country. However, her perceived arrogance alienated many of her supporters and she was never crowned. Stephen was released in exchange for Robert of Gloucester. Civil war continued but in 1147, Matilda's greatest supporter, Robert of Gloucester, died. Disheartened, she retired to France the following year. She never returned. The struggle was taken up by Matilda's son, Henry, but he did not have the resources to defeat Stephen, and returned to Normandy himself. In 1153, Stephen's son, Eustace died and in the Treaty of Wallingford, Stephen agreed that Henry should succeed him. He became Henry II in 1154. Matilda spent the remainder of her life in Normandy, dying at Rouen in September 1167.

Geoffrey Plantagenet

Geoffrey Plantagenet, known as 'the Handsome' was Count of Anjou, Touraine, and Maine from 1129 and Duke of Normandy by conquest from 1144. Geoffrey's son by his wife Matilda, (the daughter and heiress of Henry I of England) was to become the first king of the Plantagenet line. Geoffrey was born on 24th August 1113, the eldest son of Fulk V of Anjou (circa 1090- 1143) and Eremburga de La Flèche ((died 1126), Countess of Maine and the Lady of Château-du-Loir she was the daughter of Elias I of Maine. He was named after his great-grandfather Geoffrey II, Count of Gâtinais. Geoffrey's nickname derived from a sprig of bloom, or Planta Genista, that he liked to sport in his helmet, an avid hunter he ordered acres of the broom (genet in French) to be planted to improve the chase. Thus was coined the surname of one of England's greatest dynasties, which ruled the country for the rest of the medieval era, although Plantagenet was not adopted as a surname until the mid fifteenth century. At the age of fifteen he was married to Matilda, the daughter of Henry I and and widow of Henry V, Holy Roman Emperor. The pair never cared for each other, their's was a union of convenience. Henry I chose Geoffrey to sire his grandchildren because his lands were strategically placed on the Norman frontiers and he required the support of Geoffrey's father Fulk, his erstwhile enemy. He accordingly forced his highly reluctant daughter to marry Geoffrey. Their marriage took place on 22nd May 1128, at Le Mans in France. In 1128 Henry I knighted his son-in-law Geoffrey and granted him a badge of gold lions (or leopards) on a blue background. The couple disliked each other

from the outset of their union and neither was of a nature to pretend otherwise and so the scene was set for an extremely stormy marriage. They were, however, finally prevailed upon by the formidable Henry I to do their duty and produce an heir to England. They had three sons, Henry, born 1133, who was to become King of England, Geoffrey, Count of Nantes (1 June 1134 - 26 July 1158.) and William, Count of Poitou (1136-1164). He also had illegitimate children, Hamelin de Warenne, later to become Duke of Salisbury, whose mother has been sometimes sourced as Adelaide of Angers, Emme, who married Dafydd Ab Owain Gwynedd, Prince of North Wales; and Mary, who became a nun and Abbess of Shaftesbury. He was also reputed to have indulged in an affair with his future daughter in law, Eleanor of Aquitaine, while she was the wife of Louis VII of France. The chronicler John of Marmoutier describes Geoffrey as handsome, red haired, jovial, and a great warrior; however, Ralph of Diceto stated his charms were shallow and concealed a cold and selfish character. The year after the marriage of Geoffrey and Matilda, Fulk of Anjou left to marry Melisende, heiress of Baldwin II of Jerusalem, leaving Geoffrey to succeed as count of Anjou. On the death of King Henry I in 1135, the English throne was usurped by Matilda's cousin, Stephen of Blois, which led to a prolonged and bitter struggle for possession of England and Normandy, known as 'the Anarchy'. Matilda was in France at the time of her father's death and in her absence Stephen promptly seized the throne for himself. The barons, disliking the idea of having a woman ruling over them, accepted the status quo and Stephen was duly crowned King of England. In 1139 Matilda invaded England to claim her inheritence, she was besieged at Arundel Castle by King Stephen. Stephen himself was captured at Lincoln in February, 1141, and imprisoned at Bristol. A legatine council of the English church held at Winchester in April 1141 declared Stephen deposed and proclaimed Matilda "Lady of the English". Stephen, however, was subsequently released from prison and had himself recrowned. Geoffrey invaded Normandy on behalf of his wife, The Norman barons initially opposed him, not through loyalty to King Stephen, who had only visited Normandy on but one occasion, but from hatred of their traditional enemy, Anjou. Norman morale was however weakened when Matilda captured Stephen in 1141, leading many Norman castles to surrender to Geoffrey, which left him in control of most of the lands between Bayeux and the Seine. In 1142 he took the Avranchin and Mortain, and in 1143 moved east of the Seine, overunning the Cotentin. He was formally invested as Duke of Normandy in 1144 following the fall of the Norman capital Rouen. Arques, the last castle opposing him, capitulated in 1145. Geoffrey held Normandy until 1149, when he and Matilda ceded it to their son, the future King Henry II. Geoffrey also put down three rebellions in Anjou, in 1129, 1135, and 1145-1151. He was not on good terms with his younger brother,

Elias, whom he had imprisoned. The threat of rebellion slowed his conquest of Normandy, and is one reason he could not intervene in England to aid his wife. In 1153, a compromise in the struggle was reached in the Treaty of Wallingford. By its terms, Stephen was to retain the crown for the remainder of his lifetime, whereupon it would revert to Henry Plantagenet and his heirs. Stephen's son, Eustace, was disinherited and died shortly after. Geoffrey of Anjou died suddenly on 7th September 1151 at the Chateau Eure-et-Loire, France, aged 38 years. John of Marmoutier records that he was returning from a royal council when he was stricken with fever. He was buried at St. Julien's Cathedral in Le Mans, France.

Planta Genista

Planta Genista, which coined the surname of one of the greatest dynasties in English history

flowering plants in the legume family Fabaceae, native to open habitats such as moorland and pasture in Europe and western Asia. They include species commonly called broom, though the term may also refer to other genera, including Cytisus and Chamaecytisus. They are mainly deciduous shrubs and trees, often with brush-like foliage, often spiny to deter grazing, and masses of small, pea-like yellow blooms which are sometimes fragrant. Many of the species have flowers that open explosively when alighted on by an insect, the style flying through the upper seam of the keel and striking the underside of the insect, followed by a shower of pollen that coats the insect.The name of the Plantagenet royal line is derived from this genus, being a dialectal variation of planta genista

Henry II

Henry II

arguably one of the most effective Kings ever to wear the English crown and the first of the great Plantagenet dynasty, the future Henry II was born at Le Mans, Anjou on 5th March, 1133. He was the son of that ill-matched pair, Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou and Matilda, (known as the Empress, from her first marriage to the Holy Roman Emperor) the daughter of Henry I of England. Henry's father Geoffrey's nickname derived from a sprig of bloom, or Planta Genista, that he liked to sport in his helmet. Thus was coined the surname of one of England's greatest dynasties, which ruled the country for the rest of the medieval era, although Plantagenet was not adopted as a surname until the mid fifteenth century. Henry's was a vast inheritance, from his father, he received the Counties of Anjou and Maine, the Duchy of Normandy and his claim to the Kingdom of England. Henry married the legendary heiress, Eleanor of Aquitaine, which added Aquitaine and Poitou to his dominions. He then owned more land in France than the French King himself. On the death of King Stephen in 1154, Henry came to the English throne at the age of 21 in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Wallingford. He landed in England on 8 December

1154 and took oaths of loyalty from the barons after which he was crowned at Westminster Abbey alongside his wife Eleanor of Aquitaine on 19 December. A short but strongly built man of leonine appearance, Henry II was possessed of an immense dynamic energy and a formidable temper. He had the red hair of the Plantagenets, grey eyes that grew bloodshot in anger and a round, freckled face. Described by Peter of Blois as: "The lord king has been red-haired so far, except that the coming of old age and gray hair has altered that color somewhat. His height is medium, so that neither does he appear great among the small, nor yet does he seem small among the great. His head is spherical...his eyes are full, guileless, and dove-like when he is at peace, gleaming like fire when his temper is aroused, and in bursts of passion they flash like lightning. As to his hair he is in no danger of baldness, but his head has been closely shaved. He has a broad, square, lion-like face. Curved legs, a horseman's shins, broad chest, and a boxer's arms all announce him as a man strong, agile and bold... he never sits, unless riding a horse or eating... In a single day, if necessary, he can run through four or five day-marches and, thus foiling the plots of his enemies, frequently mocks their plots with surprise sudden arrivals. Always are in his hands bow, sword, spear and arrow, unless he be in council or in books". He spent so much time in the saddle that his legs became bowed. Henry's voice was reported to have been harsh and cracked, he did not care for magnificent clothing and was never still. The new King was intelligent and had acquired an immense knowledge both of languages and law. Henry was faced with a new threat, this time it came from within his own dysfunctional family, in the form of his malcontented Queen, Eleanor and his unruly sons. Henry, the Young King, "A restless youth born for the undoing of many", was dissatisfied, he possessed grand titles but no real power. When Henry II tried to negotiate a marriage for his youngest son, John, the prospective father-in-law asked that John be given some property. The King responded by granting John three castles in Anjou. The young Henry promptly objected and demanded either England, Normandy or Anjou to rule in his own right and fled to the French court. Led on by his father-in -law, the King of France, who had his own axe to grind, the young Henry rebelled against his father. He was joined at the court of France by his equally turbulent brothers, Richard, Duke of Aquitaine and Geoffrey, Duke of Brittany since his marriage to the heiress Constance of Brittany. Henry's relationship with his wife had deteriorated after the birth of their last child, John. Eleanor, twelve years older than Henry, was now decidedly middle aged. She was grievously insulted by Henry's long affair with the beautiful Rosamund Clifford, the mother of two of his illegitimate sons, whom he was said to genuinely love. Eleanor was captured attempting to join her sons in France dressed as a man. She was imprisoned by her husband for ten long years. Normandy was attacked, but the French King then retreated and

Henry was able to make peace with his rebellious brood of sons. Further disputes arose between young Henry and his equally fiery tempered brother, Richard. The Young King objected to a castle Richard had built on what he claimed to be his territory. Henry, aided by his brother Geoffrey, attempted to subdue Richard and the affair provided a further excuse to rebel against their father. Richard allied himself with their father. The Young King began to ravage Aquitaine. Phillip Augustus of France was eager to play on the rifts in the Plantagenet family to further his own ends of increasing the power of the French crown by regaining the Plantagenet lands. He planted further seeds of distrust by suggesting to Richard that Henry II wished to disinherit him, in favour of his known favourite, John. Richard, who now totally distrusted his father, demanded full recognition of his position as heir to the Angevin Empire. Henry haughtily refused to comply. Further rebellion was the inevitable result. Grievously sick, Henry II retreated to Chinon to lick his wounds. The requested list arrived, the first name on it was that of his beloved John, the son he had trusted and fought for had deserted him to join the victors. Utterly crushed, he wished to hear no more. The faithful William Marshall and his illegitimate son Geoffrey Plantagenet remained by him to the end. "You are my true son," he told Geoffrey bitterly, "the others, they are the bastards" As his condition continued to deteriorate he was heard to utter "now let everything go as it will, I care no longer for myself or anything else in this world". Suffering from a perforated ulcer, he lingered semi-conscious, breathing his last on 6th July, 1189. His last words were "Shame, shame on a conquered King". King Henry II, defeated at last, turned his face to the wall and died. He was succeeded by his eldest surviving son, Richard I. The king's body was laid out in the chapel of Chinon Castle, where the corpse was stripped by his servants. William Marshall and Geoffrey found a crown, sceptre and ring, which were probably taked from a religious statue. It was then taken to the Abbey of Fontevraud, located in the village of Fontevraud-l'Abbaye, near Chinon, in Anjou for burial.

Eleanore of Aquitaine

Eleanor of Aquitaine, Henry's wife, was the daughter of William X, Duke of Aquitaine and Aenor de Chatellerault. She had previously been the wife of Louis VII, King of France, who had divorced her prior to her marriage to Henry. It was rumoured that the pair had been lovers before her divorce, as she had reportedly also been the paramour of Henry's father, Geoffrey. (The formidable Matilda's reaction to this event has unfortunately not been recorded). Eleanor was eleven years older than Henry, but in the early days of their marriage that did not seem to matter. Both were strong characters, used to getting their own way, the result of two such ill matched temperaments was an extremely tempestuous union. Beautiful, intelligent, cultured and powerful, Eleanor was a remarkable

woman. One of the great female personalities of her age, she had been celebrated and idolized in the songs of the troubadours of her native Aquitaine. Henry was possessed of the fearful Angevin temper, apparently a dominant family trait. In his notorious uncontrollable rages he would lie on the floor and chew at the rushes and was never slow to anger. Legend clung to the House of Anjou, one such ran that they were descended from no less a person than Satan himself. It was related that Melusine, the daughter of Satan, was the demon ancestress of the Angevins. Her husband the Count of Anjou was perplexed when Melusine always left church prior to hearing of the mass. After pondering the matter he had her forcibly restrained by his knights while the service took place. Melusine reportedly tore herself from their grasp and flew through the roof, taking two of the couple's children with her and was never seen again. Henry and Eleanor had a large brood of children. Sadly, their first born, William (b.1153) created Count of Poiters, the traditional title of the heirs to the Dukes of Aquitaine, died at the age of 2 at Wallingford Castle. He was buried at the feet of his great-grandfather, Henry I. Like his grandfather before him, Henry was a man of strong passions and a serial adulterer. When Henry introduced his illegitimate son, Geoffrey, to the royal nursery, Eleanor was furious, Geoffrey had been born in the early days of their marriage, the result of a dalliance with Hikenai, a prostitute. Eleanor was deeply insulted and the rift between the couple grew steadily over time into a gaping gulf. On inheriting England's crown, the young Henry Plantagenet eagerly and with characteristic energy set about restoring law and order in his new kingdom. All illegal castles erected in King Stephen's anarchic reign were demolished. He was a tireless administrator and clarified and overhauled the entire English judicial system.

Thomas Becket

Thomas Becket was born around 1118, in Cheapside, London, on 21 December, the medieval feast day of St Thomas the Apostle. He was the son of Gilbert Becket, a prosperous London merchant and his wife Matilda. Gilbert's father came from Thierville in Brionne, Normandy, and was either a small landowner or a knight. Matilda was also of Norman ancestry. The young Thomas was educated at Merton Priory in England and later attended a grammar school in London. He spent a year in Paris and on returning to England he joined the household of Theobold, Archbishop of Canterbury. Thomas was entrusted with several important missions to Rome by Theobald, who also sent him to Bologna and Auxerre to study canon law and upon his return made him Archdeacon of Canterbury. In 1154, Theobold introduced him to the new king, Henry II. The two were to become became firm friends and a strong bond was formed between them. Henry appointed Becket as Chancellor. The king sent his eldest son and heir Henry to live in Becket's household, with

whom he formed a strong attachment. The young Henry was reported to have said Becket showed him more fatherly love in a day than his father did for his entire life. Unlike the King, Thomas dressed extravagantly. A story is related that riding through London together on a cold winters day, Henry saw a pauper shivering in his rags. He asked Thomas would it not be charitable for someone to give the man a cloak, Beckett agreed that it would, whereupon Henry laughingly grasped Thomas' expensive fur cloak. There followed an unseemly struggle in which the King attempted to wrest the unwilling Beckett's cloak from him. Finally succeeding and most amused at Thomas's reaction, he threw it to the beggar. Becket was sent on a mission to the court of France to negotiate a marriage between Henry and Eleanor's eldest surviving son, known as Young Henry and Margaret, the daughter of the King of France by his second marriage. This he carried out with aplomb, travelling with a great retinue, his lavish style made a vivid impression on the French. On the death of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1162, Henry II decided to appoint Thomas Becket to the position. He assumed that Thomas would make an amenable Archbishop through whom he could gain control of the churches legal system. Becket, however, was unwilling to oblige and on his appointment resigned the Chancellorship. Henry flew into a furious rage. Becket changed on becoming an Archbishop, taking his appointment very seriously, he abandoned his former luxurious lifestyle, he existed on a diet of bread and water and slept on the cold stone floor. Although he was attired in the rich vestments of an archbishop, underneath he wore a hair shirt as a sign of penance. He exhibited concern for the poor. Every morning thirteen poor people were brought to his home. After washing their feet Becket served them a meal. He also gave each one of them four silver pennies. In medieval times, the Church reserved the right to try felonious clerics in their own religious courts of justice and not those of the crown, Henry was determined to increase control of his realm by eliminating this custom. In 1163, Thomas entered into disagreement with the king regarding the rights of church and state when he prevented a cleric found guilty of rape and murder from recieving punishment in the lay court. A council was held at Westminster in October 1163, Becket was not a man to compromise, neither, however, was Henry. Eventually Becket agreed to adhere to the 'ancient customs of the realm'. Adamant to win in the matter, Henry proceeded to clearly define those ancient customs in a document referred to as the Constitutions of Clarendon. Becket did eventually back down, but their quarrel continued and became more embittered, culminating in Beckett fleeing the country. Four years later, Henry was anxious to have his eldest son, the young Henry, crowned in his own lifetime to avoid a disputed succession, such as occurred after the death of his grandfather, Henry I. In January 1169, Henry and Becket met again at a conference at Momtmirail in Normandy, which broke up in

quarrels between the pair, with the immovable Becket angrily excommunicating some of Henry's followers. Irritated at such behaviour and refusing to be thwarted, Henry had the coronation of his son carried out by the Archbishop of York to insult Thomas further. In a resultant meeting, a compromise was finally reached and Thomas returned to England. While in France,Thomas had excomunicated the Bishops of London and Salisbury for their support of the king and remained remained steadfast in his refusal to absolve the bishops. Disputes again arose between them over similar issues and Henry, exasperated and enraged at Becket's intransigence, (which matched his own) uttered those final, fatal words "Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?". Four knights, taking him at his word, proceeded to England. They rode to Canterbury where they confronted the Archbishop in the Cathedral calling him a traitor. According to accounts of the monk Gervase of Canterbury and eyewitness Edward Grim, they left their weapons under a tree outside the cathedral and hid their mail armour under cloaks before entering the cathedral to challenge Becket. The knights informed Becket he was to go to Winchester to give an account of his actions, but Becket refused. It was not until Becket refused their demands to submit to the king's will that they retrieved their weapons and rushed back inside for the killing. They attempted to drag him out of the building. Thomas refused to leave and inviting martyrdom, declared himself as "No traitor but a priest of God." When one of the knights struck him on the head with his sword the others joined in and Thomas fell to the Cathedral floor having suffered fatal head injuries.

Richard I "the lionheart"

Richard was born at Beaumont Palace, Oxford, on 8th September, 1157, the third son of Henry II and his French wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, the daughter of William X, Duke of Aquitaine and ex wife of King Louis VII of France. Henry was Eleanor's second husband, she was eleven years his senior and their marriage proved to be a stormy one. From the first, Richard was his mother's favourite son. His wet nurse, Hodierna, was the mother of Alexander Neckham, who was to become Abbot of Cirencester and a famous writer. After the birth of their youngest child, John, Richard's parents drifted into open enmity. King Henry made the beautiful Rosamund Clifford his mistress, it was said that he truly loved her, deeply wounding Richard's mother, Queen Eleanor. The neglected Queen returned to her native Aquitaine, there establishing her own court and taking Richard along with her, who was designated her heir. Richard was known to be fond of music and was nurtured in the troubadour culture of his mother's southern homeland. From the outset, he exhibited the volatile disposition and

energy inherent in the Plantagenet family. He was said to be fond of quoting the Angevin family legend “From the Devil we sprang and to the Devil we shall go”. In 1172, when he was fourteen years old, Richard was invested with his mother's inheritance of Aquitaine and Poitou at Limoges. He joined his discontented elder brother Henry in rebellion against their father, when Eleanor of Aquitaine attempted to join them in Paris, travelling dressed as a man, she was captured by one of her husband's patrols and was imprisoned for the remainder of Henry II's reign. The untimely death of Henry, the Young King later made Richard heir to the entire Angevin Empire. In 1187, caught up in the crusading spirit which spread through Christendom, Richard made a solemn vow to free the Holy City, Jerusalem, from the clutches of the Moslem leader Saladin, by whom it had been captured. Richard Plantagenet grew to be a tall man of around six feet four inches, a graceful figure with long legs and an athletic build, in later years he had a tendency to grow stouter. He had an abiding appreciation of poetry and music and a love of fine clothing, probably inherited from his mother, Queen Eleanor. His hair was red, like his father's, his eyes grey and furious, he had also inherited his full quota of the infamous Plantagenet temper, causing him to be ever at odds with his equally fiery tempered father. Richard was in open rebellion against Henry II when the latter died in 1189 but on succeeding to the throne he acted generously to William Marshall and to all who had remained loyal to his father and honoured his last wishes. One of his first actions as king was to order the release of his much loved mother, Queen Eleanor, from the captivity she had endured for the last ten years. His coronation took place in Westminster Abbey on the 3rd of September 1189. During the ceremony, a bat was seen to zig-zag around the King's head in its erratic flight. Many in those suspicious days saw this as an evil omen. Richard honoured another of his father's dying wishes in having his illegitimate half-brother Geoffrey Plantagenet, nominated as Archbishop of York. Geoffrey was a man of talent and ambition, but was possessed of a genius for tactlessness, he had a fiery temper and was incapable of compromise. He became embroiled in disputes with the canons of York and others of the clergy. The only spiritual function of his office that the new Archbishop seemed to apply himself to with vigour was that of excommunicating those whom he quarreled with, and they were many. When the Pope summoned Geoffrey to Rome, he characteristically refused to comply and was accordingly suspended from his office. Geoffrey turned to Richard for help, asking him to intercede with the Pope, the new King listened sympathetically to his half-brothers complaints until Geoffrey went on to rebuke the King for the immoral life he had led, warning him he ought to mend his ways. Richard, exasperated, could stand no more, he flew into a violent rage, confiscated his estates and ordered him from his presence. Richard's attention was captivated by the

Crusade he had promised to lead. England seems to have been regarded as little more than a source of revenue. He is reported to have said "I would sell London itself if only I could find a rich enough buyer." Richard made out a will leaving his nephew, Arthur of Brittany as heir to the entire Angevin Empire. All preparations being carried out by July 1190, the English and their French allies led by Phillip Augustus set out on their momentous enterprise. The Crusaders stopped en-route at Sicily, where Richard's sister, Joanna, Queen of Sicily, was being held captive by her nephew, Tancred, the new King, who was also refusing to return her dowry. Tancred became more amenable when Richard arrived on the scene and when he captured the city of Messina, Tancred was forced to release her. Phillip, outshone by Richard, sulked. He raised the issue of his sister, Alys, who had been betrothed to Richard since childhood. Gossip claimed that Richard refused to marry Alys as she had been seduced by his father and was even rumoured to have borne the late King's child. The English contingent of the Third Crusade arrived at Acre, in the Holy Land, at Whitsun, 1191. Richard's reputation seems to have arrived before him and on 11th of July, the Moslem defenders surrendered the city to the Christian army. Richard, Philip, and Leopold V of Austria, leader of the German contingent to the Crusade, disagreed over the distribution of the spoils of their victory. Richard deeply insulted Leopold when he threw down his standard from the walls of Acre, an action which was to have dire consequences for him in the future. A further cause of dissension among the leaders of the crusade was Richard's support of Guy de Lusignan, King of Jerusalem, while Philip Augustus and Leopold supported his rival for the title, Conrad of Montferrat. King Phillip Augustus of France was anxious to return home, he did not enjoy being eclipsed by Richard and was piqued at the repudiation of his sister. He set sail for France on 3rd of August, abandoning the Crusade. An exchange of prisoners from Acre was arranged with Saladin, but problems arose in the arrangements. Richard believed Saladin to be creating delays. He consequently ordered the massacre of all the Moslem prisoners. This act of cruelty remains a bloody stain on his reputation. On 7th September, at Arsuf, the armies of Richard and Saladin clashed in battle. Saladin was forced to retreat. Richard then marched on Jaffa, and began to strengthen it as a garrison for Jerusalem. The army arrived at the foothills of the Holy City on 3rd January, 1192. They were, however, exhausted , short of supplies and sickness was rife in their ranks, and were consequently obliged to return to the safety of the coast. A truce was negotiated with the Moslems. A superlative general but a poor politician, Richard proposed that Saladin should give the Holy Land to his nephew Saphadin, whom he suggested should marry his sister Joanna, forming a peaceful alliance between Christian and Moslem. The bemused Saladin, unable to believe his luck, accepted. Joanna, however, who possessed the famed family temper in full measure,

refused outright to contemplate marriage with a Moslem, resulting in a heated family dispute. Richard made attempts to negotiate with Conrad of Montferrat, but Conrad, who distrusted him due to his support of Guy de Lusignan, refused. Following an election of the nobles of the kingdom in April, Conrad was unanimously voted as King of Jerusalem, however, before his coronation could take place, he was murdered at Tyre by two Hashshashin. Conrad held his claim to the throne through his marriage to the heiress Isabella of Jerusalem, who just over a week later was married to Henry II of Champagne, the nephew of both Richard and Phillip, (through Eleanor of Aquitaine's first marriage to Louis of France). Rumours circulated that Richard had had some involvement in Conrad's murder. Richard recieved disquieting news from England, his younger brother John was plotting against him. He made a further approach to Jerusalem but again realised he could not take the city and that he must now urgently return home. Heartened, Saladin then re-took Jaffa. Richard staged a daring counter attack and although heavily outnumbered, put the Moslems to flight. Having negotiated a three year truce, which retained his conquests and gave Christians access to Jerusalem, the King sailed for England. On the return journey he was shipwrecked and taken prisoner by Duke Leopold of Austria, whom Richard had insulted gravely in the early stages of the crusade. He incarcerated Richard in his castle of Durrenstein and England was forced to pay a hefty ransom of a hundred and fifty thousand marks to free him. Phillip and John in the meantime, had attacked Normandy. On the release of his brother, John quickly deserted Phillip. The King of France, no match for Richard, was soon in retreat. The last phase in Richard's life was spent in strengthening the Angevin Empire from the machinations of Phillip Augustus. He built the famed Chateau Gaillard, his "saucy castle " to guard his dominions, on a strategic position, high on a rock at Les Andelys. Richard gained several victories over the French. At Freteval in 1194 and at the Battle of Gisors in 1198, when he adopted the motto "Dieu et mon Droit" "God and my Right" which is still used by British monarchs today. The King spent very little time with his neglected wife, Berengaria of Navarre and there was no issue of the marriage. In fact there is reason to believe that Richard was bi-sexual. Rumours abounded regarding his homo-sexuality in his own lifetime and he once did penance for the sin of sodomy. Richard did have at least one illegitimate son, known as Phillip of Cognac, who steps into the pages of history in Shakespeare's King John.

King John

When John, the last child of the great Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine was born on Christmas Eve, 1167 at Beaumont Palace in Oxfordshire, his father jokingly nick-named him Sans Terre or Lackland, as there was no land left to give him. It seems ironic then,

that John Lackland was eventually to inherit the entire Angevin Empire. A born cynic, with a puckish sense of humour, feckless, treacherous and entirely without scruple, he was possessed of some of the restless energy of his father and was prone to the same violent rages but unlike his father, John was unstable and cruel and a thoroughly flawed character. His deep distrust of others sometimes verged on paranoia. After eight hundred years, John remains the maverick of the House of Plantagenet. Originally brought up for a career in the church, he had been placed at the Abbey of Fontevrault in Anjou, as an oblate, while still in early childhood, to which the young John reacted rebeliously. He was educated by Ranulf de Glanvill, his father's Chief Justiciar. Henry II hoped to improve his youngest son's prospects, by betrothing him, at the age of nine, to a wealthy heiress, his second cousin, Isabella of Gloucester. Isabella was the granddaughter of Robert, Earl of Gloucester, the illegitimate son of Henry I. The couple were duly married when John was 21 but the marriage failed to produce children. Henry II attempted to make his favourite son King of Ireland. The adolescent John and his companions alienated the Irish chieftains who came to pay him homage, mocking their clothes and pulling their beards, resulting in rebellion against his rule and he was forced to leave Ireland. A fickle character, in his youth John conspired against both his father and his brother Richard for his own gain. During Richard's absence on the Third Crusade, John had attempted to overthrow his justicar, William Longchamp. In the course of returning from his crusade, Richard was captured by Leopold V, Duke of Austria, and imprisoned by the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry VI. England had to raise a huge ransom for the return of its king. On his release in 1194, Richard readily forgave his younger brother for plotting his overthrow. John succeeded to the throne at the age of thirty-two, on the death of Richard the Lionheart in 1199. Arthur of Brittany, the son of his deceased elder brother, Geoffrey, Duke of Brittany had an arguably better claim, but Richard was reported to have announced John his heir on his deathbed. John acted promptly, siezing the royal treasury at Chinon. His coronation took place on Ascension Day, 1199. The shrewd Phillip Augustus, in accordance with his policy of weakening the Angevin Empire by creating division amongst the Plantagenets, supported Arthur's claim and attacked Normandy. John incurred further opposition through his infatuation with Isabella of Angouleme, the twelve year old daughter of Count Aymer of Angouleme and Alix de Courtenay. She had been betrothed to Hugh de Lusignan, although the marriage had been delayed because of her extreme youth. The unprincipled John stole the enchanting Isabella from under Hugh's very nose. His first marriage to Isabella of Gloucester had been declared invalid, since they were related within the prohibited degrees. Hugh de Lusignan, incensed, joined forces with Phillip and Arthur, forming a coalition against the King of England. It was said that John was

so besotted with his young bride that he refused to rise from bed until well after noon. Hugh de Lusignan, the slighted fiancee of Isabella of Angouleme had sought redress from his overlord Phillip Augustus, who promptly summoned John to the French court to answer for his actions. John refused to comply and accordingly, Phillip, acting under feudal law, claimed those territories ruled by John as Count of Poitou and declaring all John's French territories except Gascony forfeit, he invaded Normandy. Chateau Gaillard, Richard's impregnable castle, fell to the French after a long siege in 1203, it was followed by the rest of Normandy. John, his resources exhausted, was forced to flee the smoking rubble of his father's once great French Empire. Eleanor of Aquitaine entered the Abbey of Fontevrault, where she took the veil. She died there on 1st April, 1204, aged eighty-two, a remarkable age for the time. Eleanor had slipped into a coma, according to the annals of Fontevrault she 'existed as one already dead to the world'. She was buried at Fontevrault beside the tombs of the husband who had imprisoned her and whom she had hated and her beloved and favourite son, Richard. In 1205 whilst he was fighting to recover his French territories, the King married his illegitimate daughter, Joan , then aged around fifteen, to Llywelyn the Great, or Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, Prince of Gwynedd (circa 1173-1240). An astute political manipulator, Llywelyn then did homage to John for all his Welsh possesions. Joan was John's daughter by a mistress known only as Clemence. In 1209 Prince Llywelyn accompanied John on his campaign into Scotland. Llywelyn went on to steadily increase his influence in Wales and conquered southern Powys in 1208. John became concerned at the growth of his son-in-law's power and viewed it as a theat to his own authority in the province. When Llywelyn attacked the lands of the Earl of Chester in 1210, John threw his support behind the latter.The king marched into Wales with an army, receiving the support of many of the other Welsh princes, he marched toward Deganwy. Llywelyn's army employed the classic guerilla tactic of retreating to the hills, and taking the supplies with them. John had made no provision for supplying Deganwy Castle by sea, and was therefore forced to return to England or face starvation. John returned to Wales within three months, with a well provisioned army, crossing the River Conway, he encamped on the Menai Strait, penetrating deep into the heart of Gwynedd. Llywellyn sent his wife, Joan, John's daughter, to sue for peace. The king imposed humiliating terms on his son-in-law, and annexed the area of North Wales known as the Four Cantrefs, installing Gerard d'Athée and two other mercenary captains into the southern marches. Llywelyn capitalized on growing Welsh resentment against John, and led a revolt against him, which received the blessing of Pope Innocent III. By 1212 Llywelyn had regained the Perfeddwlad and burned a castle erected by John at Ystwyth. Llywelyn's revolt delayed John's planned invasion of

France, Llywelyn formed an alliance with John's enemy, King Phillip Augustus of France, later allying himself himself with the discontented English barons who were in rebellion against him. In 1215 he marched on Shrewsbury and captured the town with little resistance. Over the following three years Llywelyn extended his power base into South Wales, becoming without doubt the single most powerful figure in Wales. John's daughter, Joan died in 1237 at Garth Celyn and Llywelyn suffered a paralytic stroke later in the same year. He died at the Cistercian Abbey of Aberconwy, his own foundation, on 11th April, 1240 and was buried there. His stone coffin was later removed to the parish church of Llanwrst, where it can still be seen. The King turned his attention to administration and justice in England, having inherited some of his famous father's administrative ability and restless energy. Pope Innocent III was annoyed at John's interference in the election of an Archbishop of Canterbury in 1205, a quarrel ensued, resulting in England being placed under an interdict, no church services could be held for six years. In 1209, the difficult John himself was excommunicated. The English barons were entering into plots against him, and John wisely made peace with the Pope. In May, 1213 he agreed to hold England as a fief of the papacy. Eventually, John was met with the full force of his baron's grievances, they demanded their "ancient liberties" and the renewal of Henry I's Coronation Charter. Faced with an armed revolt which may have cost him his kingdom, the king was forced into compliance. At Runnymede, near Windsor, on 15th June 1215, he signed the historic Magna Carta or Great Charter. The Charter curtailed royal power in matters of taxation, justice, religion and foreign policy. Aggrieved and depressed at the loss, mourning his ill fortune and suffering severely from dysentery, he was carried to Newark Castle in a litter and a physician was sent for. He consoled himself with a "surfeit of peaches". John's condition worsened rapidly and he died at Newark on the wild stormy night of 18th October, 1216, leaving England in a state of anarchy and civil war. Rumours abounded at the time that the king had been poisoned. Matthew Paris was later to comment that "Foul as it is, Hell itself is defiled by the presence of John". Despite his obvious failings, evidence exists that John was not as bad as his posthumous reputation would seem to suggest. King John was buried at Worcester Cathedral by the shrine of his favourite saint, the Saxon, St. Wulfstan, becoming the first of the Angevin kings to be buried in England.

Runnymede

borough (district) in the northwestern part of the administrative and historic county of Surrey, southeastern England. It lies to the west of London on the River Thames. The town of Addlestone is the administrative centre. Runnymede is largely rural in character and includes a considerable portion of Windsor Great Park as well as

the riverside Runnymede meadows, 1 mile (1.6 km) northwest of Egham. Those meadows are celebrated as the place where King John granted the Magna Carta on June 15, 1215.

Magna Carta

written in Latin, the Magna Carta (or Great Charter) was effectively the first written constitution in European history. Of its 63 clauses, many concerned the various property rights of barons and other powerful citizens, suggesting the limited intentions of the framers. The benefits of the charter were for centuries reserved for only the elite classes, while the majority of English citizens still lacked a voice in government. In the 17th century, however, two defining acts of English legislation–the Petition of Right (1628) and the Habeas Corpus Act (1679)–referred to Clause 39, which states that "no free man shall be…imprisoned or disseised [dispossessed]… except by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land." Clause 40 ("To no one will we sell, to no one will we deny or delay right or justice") also had dramatic implications for future legal systems in Britain and America. On June 15, 1215, the document known as the Articles of the Barons was at last agreed upon, and to it the king's great seal was set. It became the text from which the draft of the charter was hammered out in the discussions at Runnymede (beside the River Thames, between Windsor and Staines, now in the county of Surrey), and the final version of the Magna Carta was accepted by the king and the barons on June 19. The charter was a compromise, but it also contained important clauses designed to bring about reforms in judicial and local administration. Much explosive material is set out in the Magna Carta, which was sealed by King John "in the meadow called Ronimed between Windsor and Staines on the fifteenth day of June in the seventeenth year of our reign." The remarkable fact is not that war broke out between John and his barons in the following months but that the king had ever been brought to agree to the sealing of such a document at all. That the king genuinely wished to avoid civil war, that he was prepared to accede to reasonable demands for a statement of feudal law, and that he had a basic desire to give good government to his subjects are all strikingly shown by his submission to clauses that, in effect, authorized his subjects to declare war on their king. Clause 61 of the 1215 charter called upon the barons to choose 25 representatives from their number to serve as a "form of security" to ensure the preservation of the rights and liberties that had been enumerated. John's dissatisfaction with that clause and its implementation was recorded by chronicler Matthew Paris, and historians since that time have questioned its genesis. Was clause 61 proposed by Langton as a method of progressing toward a limited monarchy, or did it come from the barons as a way of expressing their feudal right of formal defiance in the face of a lord who had broken a contract? Whatever its origin, that clause is

of interest because it illustrates the way that the western European elite were talking and thinking about kingship in 1215. Although clause 61 was omitted from reissued versions of the charter, after the deposing of King Henry III during the Barons' War (1264), it served as the model for an even harsher attempt to control the king. King John died on October 18/19, 1216, while Louis of France (afterward Louis VIII), supported by rebellious English barons, was trying to gain control of England. One of the first acts of the council of John's young successor, Henry III, was to reissue the Magna Carta on November 12 in the hope of recalling men to their allegiance to the rightful king. The charter of 1216 was considerably shorter than its predecessor—42 clauses versus 63 in the 1215 document—as the council had omitted clauses dealing with purely temporary and political matters as well as those that might limit its own power to raise money or forces to carry on the war. The church, while keeping a general promise of freedom, lost its specific guarantee of free election to office. Even in that moment of danger, the council did not forget one main purpose of the charter: to provide a definitive statement of feudal law. It tried to address points in doubt, such as specific matters of inheritance law and the precise year at which an heir should attain his majority (age 21). Instead of the "form of security," the council stated that all omissions were postponed for future consideration.

solidarius

one who serves in the army for pay, from Medieval Latin, later "a soldier" in English.

Henry III

Henry III, the eldest son of King John and Isabella of Angouleme, was born on 1st October, 1207 at Winchester. A grandson of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, he was also the great-great-grandson of Louis VI of France. He succeeded his unpopular father at the age of nine, to a kingdom in a state of anarchy. Henry was described as being a "pretty little knight" when crowned at the Abbey Church of Gloucester with a circlet belonging to his mother since hs father had previously lost the royal treasure in the Wash. The highly capable William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, was appointed Regent along with Hubert de Burgh. At the time of King John's death, London and most of the channel ports were held by the French. In a popular move, Marshal announced his intention to rule by the terms of Magna Carta, the French invaders were driven out and peace restored in England. The great William Marshal, having served four generations of the Plantagenets with great ability, died in May, 1219, leaving de Burgh as sole Regent. King Henry III could not have been less like his father in character, nor was he built in the usual Plantagenet mould. Cultivated, aesthetic, petulant and kind natured but weak and ineffectual, Henry reached his majority at the

age of nineteen in 1227 and took over the reins of government of his kingdom but retained de Burgh as his chief adviser. A contemporary has stated of Henry III that "His mind seemed not to stand on a firm basis, for every sudden accident put him into passion". He was of middle stature, measuring around 5' 6" and like his father, inclined to be plump. He had a drooping left eyelid, which was inherited by his oldest son Edward I, the eyelid covered half of the eye which rendered him a rather sinister appearance. In 1236, Henry married Eleanor of Provence, whose sister Margaret had already married Louis IX of France. Henry launched an unsuccessful expedition into Gascony in 1230, a belated attempt to regain the Plantagenet ancestral lands in France. Eleanor was the second daughter of Raymond Berenger, Count of Provence (1198-1245) and Beatrice of Savoy (1206-66). Beatrice herself was the daughter of Tomasso, Count of Savoy and Margaret of Geneva. Eleanor's elder sister, Margaret, was married to the King of France. No physical description of Eleanor survives, but since her son Edward I was over six feet tall and her husband was not, it can safely be assumed that she was quite tall for a woman. Unlike her husband, Eleanor was a strong willed character. Legend records that his attention had been drawn to her by a poem she addressed to his brother, Richard Earl of Cornwall. A further disastrous military campaign to expel Louis IX from Poitou was embarked upon in 1254. Disaffection at Henry's rule was by this time rife amongst the nobles. Henry foolishly showered honours on his Queen's foreign family, which increased their grievances. Eleanor's maternal uncle, Peter of Savoy, was granted the honour of Richmond and his brother, Boniface, was made Archbishop of Canterbury. The situation was further inflamed by Henry's patronage of his French relatives, the Lusignans. They were his half-brothers by his mother's second marriage to Hugh de Lusignan. They too were given Earldoms and church posts in England. Henry made his half bother, William de Valence, Earl of Pembroke in 1247, while another half brother, Aymer, became bishop-elect of Winchester. These foolish policies coupled with Henry's pathological irresolution in government produced political revolution. By the Provisions of Oxford (1258), a council of fifteen nobles to help govern the country was imposed on the King. Chief among these was Henry's brother-in-law, the French born Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, the husband of his sister, Eleanor. The resentful Henry asserted himself and recovered power in 1261. Queen Eleanor herself was highly unpopular and was paricularly loathed by the Londoners. In July 1263, she was pelted her with rotten eggs and vegetables whilst sailing down the Thames in her barge. The Queen was rescued by Thomas FitzThomas, the mayor of London, and was given refuge at the home of the Bishop of London. Her son Edward was never to forget this insult to his mother and thereafter reciprocated by detesting the Londoners. The King suffered defeat

at the hands of de Montfort at the Battle of Lewes on 14th May, 1264, de Montfort appropriated control of the government and a subsequent first representitive parliament was called in 1265. He selected a council of nine and ruled in the name of the king. De Montfort realised the need to obtain the support of the middle classes, in 1264, he summoned knights from each shire in addition to the normal high churchmen and nobility to an early pre-Parliament and in 1265 invited burgesses from selected towns. Henry and his eldest son, Edward, along with his brother, Richard, Earl of Cornwall, were placed under house arrest. Edward, of a much more able character than his father, escaped from his forced confinement and took up arms in Henry's cause. Edward defeated de Montfort at the Battle of Evesham in 1265. Henry was thrown to the ground and would have been killed had he not lifted his visor and exclaimed to his assailant "Save me, save me, I am Henry of Winchester!" De Montfort, the founder of Parliament, was killed in battle. His body was cut into pieces and his head sent to Wigmore Castle. Such of his remains which could be found were buried beneath the altar of Evesham Abbey. Edward, although disliking de Montfort, adopted some of his ideas. In the words of architectural historian John Goodall, Henry was "the most obsessive patron of art and architecture ever to have occupied the throne of England". He rebuilt the royal palace at Westminster, his favourite home, rebuilding both the palace and Westminster Abbey at a cost of almost £55,000. Henry spent in the region of £58,000 on his royal castles, carrying out major works at the Tower of London, Lincoln and Dover and added the Great Hall at Winchester Castle. At Windsor, a huge overhaul of the castle produced a lavish palace complex, whose style and detail inspired many subsequent designs in England and Wales. Henry revered and venerated the Saxon King St. Edward the Confessor, who had been canonised in 1161, even having a mural painted of him in his bedchamber. He possessed a mania for building and his life's work was the re-building of Westminster Abbey, first built by King Edward. In 1269, the new Abbey was consecrated, and Edward the Confessor's body reburied there in a rich and imposing shrine. Henry III himself helped carry the Confessor's coffin to its new resting place. Three years later Henry III himself died at his Palace of Westminster on 16 November, 1272, aged sixty- five and became the first of the Plantagenets to be buried within the Abbey, which was later to become the mausoleum of England's monarchs. His tomb, made by Cosmati marblers, lies by Edward the Confessor's shine. His body was temporarily laid to rest in the tomb of Edward the Confessor while his own sarcophagus was constructed. Henry was succeeded by his oldest son, Edward I.

Simon de Monfort

Simon was born in 1208, a younger son of the French nobleman Simon de Montfort and his wife Alix de Montmorency. His paternal grandmother, Amicia de Beaumont, was the senior co-heiress of her brother Robert de Beaumont, 3rd Earl of Leicester. The elder de Montfort had led a crusade against the heretics in Toulouse. On the loss of the Duchy of Normandy, King John granted the Leicester estates and title to Simon's father's cousin Ranulf, Earl of Chester. De Montfort's eldest son Amaury attempted to regain the earldom but finally agreed to allow his younger brother Simon to claim it in return for all family possessions in France. Simon arrived in England in 1229, the new king, Henry III, although sympathetic, was not in a position to confront the powerful earl of Chester, Simon approached the the Earl himself, since he was childless, Ranulf agreed him to cede the earldom to his kinsman. Simon married Eleanor, the widowed sister of Henry III, on 7 January 1238 at the King's chapel in Westminster Palace, without gaining the consent of the king's council. Eleanor had been previously married, at the age of nine, to William Marshal son of William Marshal Earl of Pembroke. The incompetence, tyranny and pathological irresolution in government of Henry III determined the barons not to loose the benefits of Magna Carta which had been secured by their ancestors. Simon became the leader of baronial opposition to Henry which resulted in civil war. De Montfort was preparing to join the crusade of Louis IX of France, when in 1248, King Henry asked him to pacify Gascony, there Simon made enemies which resulted in him being put on trial in 1252. His relationship with his irresolute brother-in-law the king now strained, Simon owed large sums of money to Thomas II of Savoy, and named the King as his security, an action which succeeded in enfuriating Henry. Simon fled to France, and later participated in a crusade to the Holy Land. On his return to England, Simon emerged as the leader of the barons opposing Henry's foreign favourites at court. In 1258 the barons party drew up Provisions at Oxford to subject the king to a council and a 'Parliament' (from the Old French “parlement” meaning, speaking, a conference) consisting of fifteen and twelve barons each. In 1260 Simon held a parliament, at which he transacted business contrary to the orders of Henry, the king regained power and Simon was obliged to return temporarily to France. He returned in 1263 and declared war on his enemies, arresting the Savoyard Bishop of Hereford inside his cathedral, Henry and his family were forced to seek refuge from rioting Londoners in the Tower of London. With the aid of his eldest son, known as the Lord Edward (later Edward I) Henry re-asserted himself and Simon was obliged to accept the arbitration of Louis IX of France, by the Mise of Amiens of 1264 Louis cancelled the Provisions of Oxford. Simon refused to accept the decision stating 'I have been in many lands and nowhere have I found men so faithless as in England, but, though all forsake me I and my four sons will stand for the just cause.' In

this he had the support of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, the Franciscans and Oxford students. The civil war reached a climax at the Battle of Lewes fought on 14 May 1264, where Simon's forces wore White Crosses like crusaders. The King, Lord Edward, and Richard Earl of Cornwall, Henry's brother were all captured and Henry was forced to accept Simon's terms in the Mise of Lewes. In 1265 Simon called a parliament which included two citizens from every borough in addition to the usual clegy, barons and knights. His rule however was imperilled by a quarrel with the young Gilbert de Clare which led to a renewal of the war in May, 1265. Lord Edward managed to escape from his captivity, when on the pretext of going hunting, he outdistanced his captors and reached Wigmore Castle, where he was joined by Simon's 's chief ally Thomas de Clare, Gilbert de Clare and others. Simon summoned the help of his son Simon from Sussex, the young Simon and his forces stopped to rest on 2 August at the priory of Kenilworth, when a spy ushered in the Lord Edward and de Clare to surprise them, Edward took many prisoners. On 3 August Simon reached Evesham to be told the bad news, aware he would be surrounded, he held the captive Henry III amongst his ranks and on the morning of 4 August the two hostile brothers-in-law heard mass together. At dawn, lookouts placed in the tower of Evesham Abbey, reported sighting Lord Edward's army at Green Hill, just outside the town. At about eight o'clock in the morning, Simon rode out of the town of Evesham as a great thunderstorm began to rage. An ominous black cloud hung over the field of Evesham, as Montfort led his army into battle formation. The royalist army charged with the cry 'Death to the Traitor'. Edward's forces wore a red cross as a distinguishing mark. De Montfort's army as positioned in a loop of the River Avon, with Edward's forces holding the high ground, and blocking the only available bridge across the river. Simon, badly outnumbered, charged at the head of his cavalry and concentrated his forces on the centre of the enemy's front, hoping to drive a wedge through the line. Though these tactics initially met with some success, the baronial forces soon lost the initiative, especially as the Welsh infantry provided by Llywelyn the Last deserted at an early point in the battle. The flanks of the royal army closed in on Montfort's, surrounding them. With Montfort confronted by a force which doubled the size of his own, the battle rapidly turned into a massacre. Despite attempts to surrender, most of the baronial rebels were slain on the field rather than taken prisoner and ransomed. In what has been referred to as "an episode of noble bloodletting unprecedented since the Conquest", Montfort's son Henry was killed first, King Henry himself, who had been in the custody of Montfort and dressed in his colours, was rescued from the mêlée by Roger de Leybourne. Henry was reported to have been thrown to the ground and would have been killed had he not lifted his visor and exclaimed to his assailant "Save me, save me, I am Henry of

Winchester!". The carnage was terrible, fleeing rebels were pursed back into the town by the royalists, the slaughter continuing through the streets and even within Evesham Abbey itself. Simon himself was unhorsed and slain in the fighting. His body was mutilated in an unparalleled frenzy by the royalists, his head, hands, feet and testicles cut off. His head was sent to Wigmore Castle by Roger Mortimer, Earl of March as a trophy to his wife. Such remains of de Montfort that could be located were collected on a ladder by monks and covered by a torn coat, they were carried to Evesham Abbey and buried, along with the body of his son Henry, under the altar there.Simon de MontfortSimon's son, the younger Simon de Montfort, arrived at Evesham with reinforcements just in time to see his father's head atop a pike. In 1268 Henry of Almain, Henry III's nephew, accompanied his cousin Edward on Crusade, Edward sent him back from Sicily to pacify the unruly province of Gascony. Henry took the land route along with Philip III King of France and Charles I of Sicily. While attending mass at Chiesa di San Silvestro in Viterbo on 13 March 1271, he was murdered by his cousins Guy and Simon the younger de Montfort, sons of Simon de Montfort, 6th Earl of Leicester, in revenge for the beheading of their father and older brother at the Battle of Evesham. Henry was murdered while he clutched the altar, begging for mercy. Guy is said to have replied "You had no mercy for my father and brothers". The de Montfort brothers were excommunicated for the crime. Simon's grave was revered as holy ground by many of the commoners until King Henry was informed, who had his remains reburied under a tree. Matthew Paris reported that Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, once said to Simon's eldest son Henry: "My beloved child, both you and your father will meet your deaths on one day, and by one kind of death, but it will be in the name of justice and truth".

Parliament

Simon De Montfort's Parliament was the first instance of a parliament in which representatives from towns and the shires were summoned together to discuss matters of national concern. This Parliament is seen as the earliest forerunner of the modern Parliament because of its inclusion of both knights and burgesses, for a reason other than the granting of taxation. This broadened the types of people represented at a high level who were participating in affairs of the nation. In 2015 the Houses of Parliament, along with the people of the UK, commemorated 750 years since the Simon de Montfort Parliament (1265).

Medieval House of lords

The Lords sitting in the medieval House of Lords were of two types, the lords spiritual and the lords temporal. The lords spiritual were the bishops and abbots. Not many abbots, the heads of religious houses, were ever summoned to Parliament and most who were

never attended. After Henry VIII abolished all the monasteries between 1536 and 1539 these posts no longer even existed. But the two archbishops and 19 bishops, later increased to 24 bishops, were all summoned to every Parliament from 1305 until they were excluded from Parliament in 1642, only to be restored there in 1661. They still sit in the House today. In the early Middle Ages the lords temporal consisted of only a small number of earls and a much larger number of barons, of whom only about a third were summoned to any individual Parliament. The first reference to the nobility as peers comes from 1321 and suggests that already by that time they saw themselves as a coherent group, accountable only to each other. By the middle of the 15th century the lords had been further divided into five ranks, in descending order: dukes, marquesses, earls, viscounts, and barons. From 1422, when the infant Henry VI came to the throne, the realm descended into civil war, the Wars of the Roses, as rival groups of great nobles and their followers fought for power. These peers, at the height of their influence, were able to exclude the many non-noble officials - judges and royal administrators - who previously had often been part of the King's Great Council from voting in the House of Lords. The peers also insisted that a summons to the Lords was an honour due to their noble status, not just an expression of the King's will, which should be transferable to their heirs in perpetuity. By the time Henry VII claimed the crown in 1485 at the Battle of Bosworth Field, a House of Lords consisting exclusively of the lords spiritual and every member of all five ranks of the hereditary peerage, was well in existence.

Edward I

Often considered the greatest of the Plantagenets, Edward I was born on the evening of 17th June, 1239, at Westminster Palace, the first born child of Henry III and Eleanor of Provence. He was named Edward in honour of his father's favourite saint, the Saxon King Edward the Confessor. Edward was a delicate child and suffered from a life threatening illness in 1246, which his devoted mother, Eleanor of Provence, nursed him through at Beaulieu Abbey. Among Edward's childhood friends was his cousin Henry of Almain, who was the son of Henry III's brother, Richard, Earl of Cornwall. Henry of Almain would remain a close companion of Edward throughout both the civil war that followed, and later during the crusade. Edward I was a tall man of six feet two inches (1.88 metres), with long arms and legs from which his nick-name, Longshanks, was derived. His hair was black like his Provencal mother's, his complexion swarthy and his eyes fiery in anger. He inherited a drooping eyelid from his father Henry III, Edward spoke with a pronounced lisp, but possessed the fierce Plantagenet temper

in full measure. The Song of Lewes in 1264 described him as a leopard, an animal regarded as particularly powerful and unpredictable. At the age of fifteen, the Lord Edward as he was then known, was married to his second cousin, the thirteen year old Leonora or Eleanor of Castile (1241-1290) on 1st November, 1254, to settle disputes over rights to Gascony. The couple were married at the monastery of Las Huelgas, Burgos, Edward was knighted by Eleanor's half-brother, Alphonso X, to mark the occasion. Eleanor was the beautiful dark-haired daughter of Ferdinand III, King of Castile and his second wife, Jeanne, Countess of Ponthieu. Eleanor was also descended from Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, through their second daughter, Eleanor, who had married Alphonso VIII of Castile. Although their marriage was a political alliance the pair became deeply attached. She bore him sixteen children. The couple's first two sons, Henry and John died in infancy, their third son, Alphonso, the heir to the throne and Eleanor's favourite died at twelve years old, leaving their fourth son, Edward as his father's heir. The civil war known as the Second Barons' War broke out in England in 1264 , rebel barons led by Henry's French born brother-in-law, Simon de Montfort, 6th Earl of Leicester, fought against forces loyal to King Henry III. Montfort wanted to reassert the terms of Magna Carta and force the king to surrender more power to the baronial council. The first of battle of the war took place at Gloucester, which Edward captured from the rebels. Robert de Ferrers, Earl of Derby, came to the assistance of the rebels, Edward negotiated a truce with the earl, the terms of which he later broke. Edward then took Northampton from de Montfort's son Simon, before embarking on a retaliatory campaign against Derby's lands. The two opposing sides finally met at the Battle of Lewes, which took place on 14 May 1264. Lord Edward commanded the right wing and defeated the London contingent of Montfort's forces. However, he made the mistake of following in pursuit of the fleeing enemy forces, to discover on his return to the battle that the rest of the royal army had been defeated. By an agreement known as the Mise of Lewes, Edward and his cousin Henry of Almain were given up as prisoners to the rebel barons. Montfort appropriated control of the government and a subsequent first representitive parliament was called in 1265. Edward managed to escape from his captors on 28 May, 1265 and joined the Earl of Gloucester, who had recently defected to Henry III's side. He retook Worcester and Gloucester, in the meantime, Montfort, supported by Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, Prince of Wales, moved east to join forces with his son Simon. Edward mounted a surprise attack at Kenilworth Castle, before moving on to cut off Montfort. The opposing forces met at the Battle of Evesham, which was fought on 4 August 1265. Henry III himself was thrown to the ground during the battle and would have been killed had he not lifted his visor and exclaimed to his assailant “Save me, save me, I am Henry of Winchester!” Montfort was defeated

and killed, his body was frenziedly mutilated on the battlefield and his remains were buried secretly at the nearby Evesham Abbey while his head was sent to Wigmore Castle on the Welsh Marches. In December 1265, Edward came to terms with his cousin the younger Simon de Montfort at the Isle of Axholme in Lincolnshire, and in March 1266, led a successful assault on the Cinque Ports. The remaining rebels held out in the virtually impregnable Kenilworth Castle and did not surrender until the drafting of the conciliatory Dictum of Kenilworth. King Edward embarked on a highly ambitious plan to conquer the whole of Britain. He led an army into Wales in 1277. The first invasion proceeded along the North Wales coast. Llywellyn ap Gruffyd, Prince of Wales, was the husband of Eleanor, Edward's niece and the daughter of Simon de Montfort. The campaign was successful and the Welsh Prince surrendered to the English king, by the Treaty of Aberconwy in 1287 he was compelled to accept humiliating peace terms. In 1282 the Welsh, led by Llewelyn's brother Dafydd ap Gruffyd, rose against English rule. Edward again marched an army into Wales. Llywelyn joined the revolt which experienced some initial success, the castles of Builth, Aberystwyth and Ruthin were wrested from English hands and an English army defeated at the Menai Straights in Gwynedd. Llywelyn was killed at the Battle of Irfon Bridge on the 11th December 1282, crushing Welsh hopes. In accordance with the barbaric custom of the time, his severed head was sent to London to be displayed at the Tower. Dafydd continued to lead the Welsh resistance, but was handed over to Edward in June 1283, when he too, was tried and executed. Llywelyn's infant daughter Gwenllian of Wales, was imprisoned at Sempringham Abbey, where she remained for the rest of her life, she became a nun and died there, 55 years later in June 1337. A fragment of the True Cross, the Cross of Gneth, said to have been back from the Holy Land to Wales by a Priest called Neotus, was carried by Edward to England. His son, King Edward II kept the relic at the Tower of London but King Edward III presented it to St. Georges Chapel, Windsor soon after he had founded the Order of the Garter. The relic disappeared in the sixteenth century. Following his conquest of Wales, Edward I built a formidable Iron Ring of Castles, a days march from apart, to defend his aquisitions from Welsh rebellion. Subsequent to Edward's first Welsh campaign when he succeeded in isolating his adversary, Llywelyn the Last in Snowdonia and Anglesey, the English king erected the castles of Flint, Rhuddlan, Builth Wells and Aberystwth. After the failure of Llywelyn's second uprising in 1282, the Iron Ring was extended to include castles at Conway, Caernarfon and Beaumaris. Eleanor of Castile died in 1290 at the age of 49. Eleanor had been accompanying Edward on a journey to Lincoln, when she began to exhibit sympoms of a feverish illness she had previously suffered from in 1287. The Queen's condition worsened as their entourage the village of Harby,

in Nottinghamshire, they were forced to abandon the journey, the now grievously sick queen was lodged in the house of Richard de Weston. After receiving the last rites, Eleanor died there on the evening of the 28th of November 1290. Her husband was at her bedside at the end. The normally thick skinned Edward was deeply affected by her loss. Edward had a memorial cross erected at every spot where her body was halted during it's journey to London. Charring Cross derives its name, which is a corruption of Chere Reine Cross, from one of these crosses. The King remarried at the age of 60, he chose as his second wife the seventeen year old Margaret of France, the daughter of Phillip III, King of France and Maria of Brabant, their wedding was celebrated at Canterbury on 8th September 1299. Their first child, a son, Thomas of Brotherton, Earl of Norfolk, was born within a year of the marriage and was followed by a further son, Edmund of Woodstock, Earl of Kent in August, 1301. A daughter, named Eleanor for the king's first wife, followed in May, 1306. Despite their disparate ages the pair grew extremely close and Margaret built up a close relationship with Edward's heir, his eldest surviving son by his first marriage, Edward, Prince of Wales (later Edward II) who was but two years younger than herself. Edward's attention was turned north to Scotland. Alexander III, King of Scots, Edward's brother-in-law, had recently died, leaving his young granddaughter, Margaret, known as the Maid of Norway, as his sole heir. Edward proposed a marriage alliance between Margaret and his eldest surviving son and heir, Edward of Carnarvon, Prince of Wales, by which he hoped to gain control of Scotland. Margaret died on the journey to her new kingdom, leaving the Scottish succession disputed between a number of candidates, among whom the English King was asked to arbitrate by the Scottish lords. His choice fell upon John de Balliol, who did possess a strictly superior hereditary right. Balliol was effectively a puppet of the English, the discontented Scots promptly rose in rebellion against this arrangement and an English army was marched north into Scotland in 1296 to deal with them. Edward stormed the inadequately defended border town of Berwick upon Tweed, slaughtering its inhabitants and overun Scotland. King John Balliol was humiliated and sent as a prisoner to the Tower of London. The Stone of Destiny, a venerated relic, which Scottish Kings had been crowned on since the Dark Ages, was taken in 1296 and removed to Westminster. It was incorporated in a coronation chair specially built for this purpose at Westminster Abbey and has only recently been returned to Scotland. The banner of Scottish resistance was taken up by the patriot William Wallace, he was both a brave and resourceful opponent and together with Andrew Moray defeated Edward's forces under John de Warrene, Earl of Surrey and Hugh Cressingham at the Battle of Stirling Bridge in 1297. Wallace then continued a guerilla war in the name of King John, gaining the support of the Scottish clans, although he never gained the loyalty

of the nobles. William Wallace was defeated by Edward I at the Battle of Falkirk in 1298 and three regents appointed to rule Scotland, the Bishop of St. Andrews, Robert the Bruce and John the Black Comyn. The spirited William Wallace, unbowed, stormed Stirling Castle in 1304, but was later treacherously handed over to the English by one of his own countrymen, he suffered the horrendous death of being hanged, drawn and quartered. Robert the Bruce, after murdering his rival, Comyn, in the church at Greyfriars, was crowned King of Scots. Abandoning conventional methods, Bruce tried to starve the enemy out and made efforts to capture the English strongholds. Making his way north to deal with the Scots yet again, the great Edward I, suffering from dysentry, died at Burgh on Sands, just south of the Scottish border, at the age of sixty-eight on 7 July, 1307. Apprehensive of his son Edward's ability to continue his work, he was purported to have asked his flesh to be boiled from his bones, so that they could be carried with the army on every campaign into Scotland and that his heart be buried in the Holy Land. One account of the King's deathbed relates that Edward gathered around him the earls of Lincoln and Warwick, Aymer de Valence, and Robert Clifford, and charged them with looking after his son Edward. In particular he stated they should make sure that Piers Gaveston was not allowed to return to the country. His son buried Edward I's body in Westminster Abbey, the mausoleum of English Kings, in a dalmatic (long tunic) of red silk damask with a mantle of rich crimson satin fastened with a fibula gilt in gold. The place where he lies is marked by a simple stone slab which bears the epitaph 'Edwardus Primus Scottorum Malleus hic est 1308. Pactum Serva' (Here lies Edward, the Hammer of the Scots. Keep this vow). Edward's 26 year old widow, Margaret of France retired to Marlborough Castle after his death and never remarried, she is recorded as saying "when Edward died, all men died for me". She lived on for ten years after her husband's death, dying at the age of 36 and was buried at Greyfriars Church, Greenwich.

John de Balliol

John Balliol was born in 1248, most probably at Barnard Castle, he was the son of John, Baron Balliol, (the founder of Balliol College, Oxford) and his wife Devorguilla of Galloway, and through his mother derived his claim to the throne of Scotland, Devorguilla was the granddaughter of David, Earl of Huntingdon, himself the grandson of David I. Robert the Bruce's grandfather, known as 'Robert the Competitor' was a further claimant. In the male line the House of Balliol was an Anglo-Norman family who began to rule some estates in England in the reign of William II “Rufus”. Robert the Bruce based his claim on his descent from Isabella, David's second daughter. Edward I, one of the most formidable of English Kings, was asked by the Scots to arbitrate between the Competitors for the honour. He decided in favour of John Balliol. Balliol was

duly crowned King of Scots on St. Andrew's Day, 30th November, 1292 at Scone. The new King of Scots was married to Isabella, daughter of John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey and Alice de Lusignan. Isabella's maternal grandparents were Hugh X de Lusignan and Isabella of Angouleme, the widow of King John of England. The slighted Bruces defiantly refused to pay homage to King John. The opportune Edward I had hoped to personally gain by his involvement in Scottish affairs and in 1293 he declared the treaty of Birgham void, rendering his puppet, King John, known as Tom Tabard (i.e. empty garment) with little actual power. A Scottish council was elected by the nobility to govern the country. They negotiated an alliance with France and declared war on the English in the name of the humiliated King John. The Scots then attacked the border town of Carlisle, which the Bruce family defended against them. Edward gathered an army and in retaliation sacked Berwick, the English army then marched on into Scotland. Balliol surrendered to Edward, now in effective control of the country. On 10th July, 1296, the puppet King John was forced to abdicate his throne, the English King had him taken south and imprisoned him in the Tower of London. John Balliol died before 1315 on his family estates at Bailleul, France. He was succeeded on Scotland's throne by Robert the Bruce.

Robert the Bruce

Scotland's hero King, the renowned Robert the Bruce, was born into the Scottish nobility on 11th July, 1274, at Turnberry Castle in Carrick, Ayrshire. Robert was the son of Robert the Bruce, Lord of Annandale and Marjorie, daughter of Niall of Carrick and Margaret Stewart, herself the daughter of Walter, High Steward of Scotland. The Bruce family was not of native Scots origin, but had its roots in Normandy, a Robert de Brus had come over to England with the army of William the Conqueror. William had rewarded De Brus by granting him lands in Yorkshire but the family had added to this inheritance by acquiring considerable lands in Huntingdonshire and in Annandale, Scotland. Robert's mother's family was of Scots Gaelic descent. Following the extinction of the royal line of the House of Dunkeld, no clear successor existed to the throne of Scotland, a period known to history as the First Interregnum. The English King Edward I was asked to decide between the many candidates who claimed the Scottish crown, which included Robert's grandfather Robert de Brus, 5th Lord of Annandale , he selected John Balliol, who strictly speaking, had the slightly better hereditary right. Balliol was effectively a puppet King, set up to be manipulated by the formidable Edward and to rule Scotland according to his wishes. Robert the Bruce's claim to the throne of Scotland derived through his great-grandmother, Isabella, the daughter of David, Earl of Huntingdon, grandson of David I. In 1296 King John Balliol was humiliated and forced to abdicate by

Edward and there followed a period when there was no King in Scotland for ten years, the country was instead ruled by a series of Governors, this period is known as the Second Interregnum. When Robert's father died in 1304, he made a pact with John Comyn the Red, the nephew of John Balliol, about the succession to Scotland's throne. Comyn proceeded to treacherously betray Bruce, by informing the English King of their secret plans, as a result of which, Bruce narrowly escaped capture by the English. In retribution, Robert furiously attacked Comyn at an arranged meeting at the Greyfriars church in Dumfries. Possessing a savage temper when roused, he stabbed Comyn to death in a frenzied rage within the church itself , for which he was excommunicated by the outraged Pope. He was crowned King of Scotland by Isabella, Countess of Buchan, at a ceremony at Scone Abbey on 25th March, 1306. The ancient and sacred Stone of Destiny, used at the anointing of Scottish Kings since the Dark Ages, was not used in the service since it had already been carried off to London by the English and placed in Westminster Abbey as a trophy by Edward I. Edward I, incensed at what he saw as the Bruce's treachery, sent an English army north to deal with the renegade. The Scots army met them at Methven near Perth, but victory went to the English forces. Bruce was forced to seek refuge in the remote Scottish Highlands, there, like an injured fox run to ground, he retreated into his lair, a cave where he was famously heartened by watching a persistent spider make six attempts to spin a web along the roof before finally succeeding, which inspired Robert to continue his heroic struggle against English domination. King Robert decided to dispatch his family to the Orkney Islands for their greater safety. Elizabeth de Burgh and other members of his family were captured by the English en-route, and taken prisoner. His twelve year old daughter was imprisoned in the Tower and some of the female members of his family, including his sister, Christina, suffered the humiliation of being held suspended in cages in full public view by Edward. His three younger brothers, Thomas, Alexander and Niall were all executed. This brutal treatment succeeded in making the Bruce more determined and resolute to eventually prevail. In 1307 he mounted a surprise attack on the English forces at Carrick. Edward sent another army north to deal with the rebel Scots. Robert again resorted to hiding in the hills and mounted a guerilla war. He was defeated by the Earl of Pembroke at Glen Trool in Galloway, but, refusing to be deterred, met him again at Loudon Hill where Bruce's military tactics won a much needed victory for Scotland. The indomitable Edward I decided to march up to Scotland yet again, to deal with the irksome miscreant Robert the Bruce himself. Edward I, now aged and ailing, died at Burgh-on-Sands, Cumberland and was buried at Westminster Abbey, the mausoleum of the English Kings, with the epitaph “The Hammer of the Scots”. So determined was he to utterly crush the Scots it was reported that he asked for

the flesh to be boiled from his bones and the bones carried with the English armies into Scotland thereafter, a request which was not honoured by his son and heir Edward II. Bruce called a Parliament at St. Andrews on 17th March, 1309, clearly exhibiting to the English by that action that he was now effective King of Scotland. Enboldened, Robert then went on the offensive and marching an army into northern England, regained those Scottish castles which were still in control of the English.

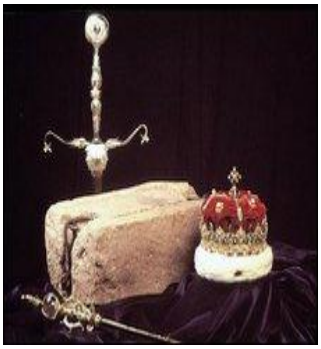
William Wallace

the great Scots patriot, was the second of three sons of Malcolm Wallace, a landholder of Elderslie near Paisley and Margaret Crauford. William's birthdate is a matter of dispute all that can that can be said with certainty is that it occured around 1270 - 1276. He was educated by his uncle, who may have been a parson, at Dunipace, in Stirlingshire. His father had refused to pay homage to the English king, Edward I. Malcolm descended from Richard Wallace, of Welsh extraction, who had followed the Stewart family to Scotland in the twelfth century. The surname Wallace is purported to mean Welsh, or possibly 'foreigner'. Malcolm Wallace was killed at Loudon Hill in the latter months of 1291 by an English knight named Fenwick. William himself was declared an outlaw when he killed an Englishman named Selby, who had insulted him. He later killed two English soldiers in a fracas over poaching fish. Following the extinction in the male line of the ruling House of Dunkeld, when Alexander III inadvertantly tumbled over a cliff on a stormy night in 1286 , and the death of his only grand-daughter, the six year old Margaret, the 'Maid of Norway', Scotland was left without a monarch with no clear successor and a number of contenders vied for the honour. The formidable King Edward I of England was asked to arbitrate and his choice fell upon John Balliol (1248-c.1315), who was set up as a puppet king, with himself pulling the strings. The slighted Bruces, who had been amongst the contenders, defiantly refused to pay homage to King John. The opportune Edward I had hoped to personally gain by his involvement in Scottish affairs and in 1293 he declared the treaty of Birgham void, rendering his puppet, King John, known as Tom Tabard (i.e. empty garment) with little actual power. Edward, incensed, marched into Scotland at the head of an army. Balliol was taken prisoner to England, English overlords were appointed to govern Scotland. The Stone of Destiny, on which Scottish kings were traditionally crowned, was carried off and placed in Westminster Abbey, where Edward humiliatingly had it incorporated beneath the English throne. Wallace emerged from the shadows of obscurity to carry the torch of Scottish independence in May, 1297, when he rose against William Hazelrigg, the English sheriff of Clydesdale and slew him. He was a powerful man of sturdy physique , whose height was reported to be 6'7". No

contemporary portraits exist although he was described in the Scotichronicon, dating from from the fourteenth century as " a tall man with the body of a giant, cheerful in appearance with agreeable features, broad-shouldered and big-boned, with belly in proportion and lengthy flanks, pleasing in appearance but with a wild look, broad in the hips, with strong arms and legs, a most spirited fighting-man, with all his limbs very strong and firm". The effect upon the subjugated Scots was electric and supporters flocked to Wallace's cause. Heading a rebellion in the name of King John Balliol, he succeeded in driving the English out of Perth, Stirling and Lanarkshire and laid seige to the castles of Stirling and Dundee. Andrew Moray rose simultaneously in the north, from Avoch in the Black Isle, he took Inverness and Urquhart Castle by Loch Ness. Although Wallace gained the support of the Scottish clans, he never succeeded in gaining the loyalty of the nobles. Bringing new hope to a nation staring into the abyss, with infectious courage, he defeated the English under John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey at the Battle of Stirling Bridge. Warenne offered to negotiate, urging Wallace to accept the king's peace, this was proudly rebuffed 'Tell your people that we have not come here to gain peace, but are prepared for battle, to avenge and deliver our country. Let them come up when they like, and they will find us ready to meet them even to their beards.' Wallace gained victory over the English despite being less well equipped and far outnumbered, forces lead by Wallace and Andrew Moray used clever military tactics to rout the English, and clearly exhibited to the Scots nation that the English were not invincible. Murray, however paid a heavy price, he was badly wounded and died as a result of his injuries two months later. After Stirling Bridge, Wallace was knighted, possibly by Robert the Bruce. Wallace was appointed Guardian of Scotland, to rule in the name of the captive King John. He evoked much love and reverence from the common people who saw him as their champion and protector against English oppression. He proceeded to ravage and pillage the Northern counties of England. On 22nd July, 1298, Wallace experienced the bitter taste of defeat at Battle of Falkirk by an English army led by Edward I in person, who was eager for revenge. The English longbow wreaked havoc among the Scottish ranks, Scots casualties were great and Wallace himself was forced to flee to the mountains. With unbending commitment to the cause of Scotland's independence, he continued a guerilla war until 1299, taking refuge in the Scottish mountains and forests, after which when he went to France in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain foreign aid. The guardianship of Scotland passed jointly to Robert the Bruce , the Bishop of St. Andrews and John Comyn, Lord of Badenoch, known as the 'Red Comyn', the nephew of John Balliol and already an enemy of the Bruces. Bruce and Comyn quarreled frequently, Bruce was reluctant to fight to support Balliol's claim and eventually resigned his commision. The spirited William

Wallace, unbowed, returned to Scotland in 1303 and resumed guerilla attacks in his struggle against the English. On 5th August, 1305, in an attempt to meet up with Robert the Bruce, he was treacherously betrayed by Sir John de Menteith, a fellow Scot and captured by the English in a barn at Robroyston near Glasgow. Menteith had fought on the Scottish side in the Wars of Independence but had later sworn allegiance to and made his peace with Edward I. Edward rewarded him by appointing him sheriff and keeper of Dumbarton Castle. Wallace was taken captive to London and put on trial at Westminster Hall for treason against Edward I, although he had never sworn fealty to him. Wallace was subjected to an appalling and barbaric death, he was dragged on a hurdle from Westminster to the Tower of London and on to the Elms at Smithfield, where he was hanged, drawn and emasculated, his entrails being burned before his eyes. His decapitated head was set upon a pike at London Bridge, while his quartered body was exposed at Newcastle, Berwick, Perth and Aberdeen. William Wallace remains a national hero amongst the Scottish people. The towering mock gothic Wallace Monument at Abbey Craig, a mile to the north east of Stirling was erected in his memory in 1869 by public subscription and overlooks the site of his famous victory at Stirling Bridge. It contains what is reputed to be his 5' 4" (162cm) long sword.

Stone of Destiny

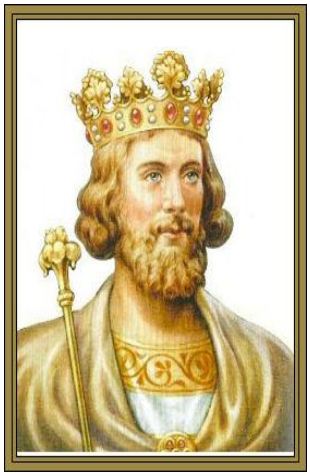


The Stone of Destiny, otherwise known as An Lia Fàil, or the Stone of Scone, revered for centuries as a holy relic, played a central role in the coronation of early Scottish kings, the plain block of sandstone has had a turbulent history, having been fought over, hidden and captured for over 700 years. The stone measures about 26 inches (660 mm) by 16.75 inches (425 mm) by 10.5 inches (270 mm) and weighs approximately 336 pounds (152 kg). On one surface is a roughly incised cross and at each end is an iron ring, intended to make transport easier. The origin of the stone are shrouded in myth. According to mythology the Stone of Destiny, also known as the Lia Fail, used by Jacob as a pillow in biblical times, originated in Palestine and was transported through Egypt, Sicily, Spain and Ireland. Legend goes on to relate that the stone was brought from Ireland to Argyll by Fergus, son of Erc, and was deposited at Dunadd, when the Viking raids started, Kenneth MacAlpin moved it to the Abbey at Scone in Perthshire in 846. Although it has been proven by geologists to be a “lower Old Red Sandstone” quarried in the vicinity of Scone. The late writer and historian Nigel Tranter believed the object Edward took to London was "a lump of Scone sandstone". The practice of seating the ruler upon a stone was practised in Ireland since ancient times. This

tradition is understood to be a surviving part of ancient fertility rites. Generations of Scotland's sovereigns, from the ninth century, had been crowned upon the stone. The Stone was used at Iona, Dunadd, Dunstaffnage and Scone for enthroning a succession of Dalriadic and subsequent monarchs. There are various descriptions of the Stone of Destiny. If St Columba's, it was white marble. If Jacob's Pillow, it would have been black basalt. John Balliol became the last king to use the Stone of Destiny in Scotland in 1292. During the Scottish Wars of Independence, the Stone was captured by Edward I of England 'the Hammer of the Scots' in 1296 and removed to Westminster Abbey. The stone captured by Edward I and taken to Westminster Abbey was fitted into a wooden, high backed gothic style chair, known as King Edward's Chair. In 1297, Edward I commissioned Master Walter, a court painter, to decorate the chair with patterns of birds, foliage and animals on a gilt background. The figure of a king, either Edward the Confessor or Edward I, his feet resting on a lion, was painted on the back. Beneath the seat is a platform and cavity to contain the Stone of Scone. Four gilded lions act as legs to the chair, added in the sixteenth century and replaced in 1727. Only traces of this original paintwork survive and the chair has been much damaged by graffiti. Since the coronation of Edward II in 1308 almost every monarch has been crowned in the chair. Exceptions are Edward V and Edward VIII, who were not crowned, Queen Mary I, who was crowned in a chair given to her by the Pope and Mary II who was crowned as joint monarch alongside her husband William III in a replica chair.At the Treaty of Northampton in 1328, King Edward III of England agreed to return the Stone of Destiny to the Scots, but riotous crowds prevented it from being removed from the abbey. James VI of Scotland ascended the English throne as James I of England on the death of his cousin Elizabeth I in 1603, but still the stone remained at Westminster. A group of four Scottish students, namely, Ian Hamilton, Gavin Vernon, Kay Matheson, and Alan Stuart took the Stone from Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1950. In the course of its removal the stone was broken into two pieces. A major search for the stone was ordered by the British Government, the students risked road blocks at the border to return the larger part of the stone to Scotland, hidden in the back of a borrowed car, they were aided by a new accomplice John Josselyn. Although English, John Josselyn, then studying at the University of Glasgow, was a Scottish Nationalist. Ironically Edward I was Josselyn's 21 times great grandfather, although he was probably unaware of the fact at the time. The smaller piece of the stone was returned to Scotland later. The Stone was given to a senior politician who arranged for it to be professionally repaired, four months after its theft, the stone was then left, draped in a Saltire flag, on the altar of Arbroath Abbey, on 11 April 1951, in the safekeeping of the Church of Scotland. The London police were informed of its location and after a brief sojourn

north of the border, the Stone was taken south again to be returned to Westminster Abbey. None of the students were ever prosecuted. In 1996, the then British Conservative Government of John Major, with the approval of the Queen, decided that the Stone should be returned to Scotland when not in use at coronations. On St. Andrew's Day, 15th November 1996, it returned to Scotland after 700 years, the stone was handed over at the border and transported to Edinburgh Castle, where it remains along with the Crown Jewels of Scotland. A replica of the stone is kept in the grounds of Scone Palace in Perthshire.

Edward II



Edward was born at Caernarfon Castle on St. Mark's day, 25th April, 1284, the fourth son of Edward I and his first wife Eleanor of Castile. The death of his older brother, Alphonso, a short time later, made the four month old Edward heir to the throne. His mother died when he was five. At the age of sixty, his father remarried in 1299, to Margaret of France, the seventeen year old sister of Phillip IV. His father's new wife was only two years older than himself. Edward became fond of his new stepmother, whom he is recorded as presenting with a gold and ruby ring and she often interceded for him to avert the wrath of his stern father. On 7th February, 1301, at a Parliament held at Lincoln, Edward was created the first English Prince of Wales by his father. Edward was a tall, strong and handsome youth who loved music and acting. He was homo-sexual and became excessively devoted to a succession of favorites. King Edward I had banished Edward's lover, Piers Gaveston, in an outburst of Plantagenet rage. King Edward II's inglorious reign began in 1307. One of his first acts as King was to re-call Piers Gaveston. The following year, Edward married the twelve year old Isabella of France, the daughter of Phillip IV by Jean of Navarre. He gave all the best jewels, received as wedding presents, to Gaveston, thereby grossly offending his bride. Although the marriage produced four children, two sons, the future Edward III and John and two daughters, Eleanor and Joan, later Queen of Scotland, Edward continued in his addiction to homo sexual favourites. To the chagrin of his neglected Queen, Gaveston was showered with favours and made Earl of Cornwall. He added to his growing unpopularity by insulting and ridiculing some of the most powerful barons, he called the Earl of Warwick the 'black hound of Arden', ‘Let him call me“hound”,’ the earl is said to have commented, ‘One day the hound will bite him.’ The king liked to dress like his friend Piers, Edward's relationship with Gaveston referred to as 'the sin against nature' was usually mentioned indirectly, with comparisons to the Old Testament love of King David for Jonathan, “a love beyond the love of women”. A coalition of barons, known as the 'Ordainers' rose in rebellion against Edward. He was forced to sign 'Ordinances' to govern England

better and Gaveston was held captive at Warwick Castle. Guy de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick and the King's cousin, Thomas, Earl of Lancaster finally brought about Gaveston's death on 19 June, 1312. Edward, distraught, had little choice but to accept the situation, but smoulderingly resentful, he vowed he would be avenged upon them. Edward, having learnt nothing from past events, acquired a new favourite, Hugh Despencer. Despencer and his father, also Hugh, two great Marcher lords, were anathema to the barons who brought about their banishment in 1321. The king struck back the following year, when he captured and executed his arch-enemy and cousin, Henry of Lancaster and recalled the Despencers. His deeply insulted Queen, Isabella, was sent on a mission abroad to do homage to her brother the French King for England's French possessions. There she plotted against her despised husband with her lover, Roger Mortimer, Earl of March. Her actions deeply shocked her brother the French king and the pair were obliged to move on to Hainault. In negotiations with William, Count of Hainault it was agreed that Isabella's son, the young Edward, should marry the count's daughter Phillipa in return for armed support of Isabella's rebellion. On 24th September 1326, Mortimer and Isabella, the She-Wolf of France as she was known to contemporaries, invaded England. They were joined by many of the country's dissatisfied nobles. Edward failed in an attempt to rally London and fled but was captured and forced to abdicate in favour of his fourteen year old son, Edward. The hated Despencers were promptly executed. Landing at Orwell on the east coast, Isabella was joined by many disaffected nobles, including Thomas, Earl of Norfolk and Henry of Lancaster. Edward fled from London, Isabella and Mortimer besieged Bristol, which was being held for the king by Hugh de Despenser the Elder. When the city fell, Isabella recovered her daughters Eleanor and Joan, Despenser the Elder was executed by his Lancastrian enemies, his body was hacked to pieces and fed to the local dogs. A huge crowd gathered to see Hugh Despenser the Younger die. They dragged him from his horse, stripped him, and scrawled Biblical verses against corruption and arrogance on his skin. He was then dragged into the city, and condemned to be hung, drawn and quartered. Decapitated remains, uncovered at Hulton Abbey, in Staffordshire during the 1970's are said to those of Despencer. The skeleton had been beheaded and chopped into several pieces with a sharp blade, there was also evidence of a stab wound to the stomach. Carbon dating of the Hulton Abbey skeleton indicated that death occured no later that 1385. King Edward II was imprisoned firstly at Kenilworth Catle and later removed to Berkeley Castle in Gloucestershire in January 1327. Thomas de Berkeley and Sir John Maltravers were appointed the ex-king's custodians. In the summer of that year, following a failed attempt to release him, in the interests of the safety of the new regime, it was considered more convenient if he were dead. He was

placed in a dungeon, into which was thrown filth and rotting animals, in the hope that he would contract some form of disease and die, thus removing from his captors the responsibility for his murder. Edward, an extremely fit man, continued to doggedly survive this treatment. According to the rather gory traditional belief, Edward was murdered in a bestial manner on the orders of Mortimer and Isabella on around 11th October, 1327. A red hot poker was inserted into his entrails by means of a horn, to leave no outward marks on his body. The people of Berkeley were said to have heard the agonized screams of the dying king outside the castle. This account of how Edward met his death is not however, corroborated by any contemporary source and none of the directly contemporary chroniclers recorded with certainty how Edward II met his untimely end, which remains shrouded in mystery. On 24 September 1327, the then fourteen year old king Edward III wrote to the earl of Hereford informing him that his father had been 'commanded to God'. At the Westminster parliament of November 1330, the first one held after the fall of Mortimer from power, the cause of the ex king's death was finally declared as murder. The regicides were named as Sir Thomas Gurney and William Ockley, a man-at-arms. How Edward died was never officially stated and there are conflicting theories on the issue. Some chroniclers merely state that Edward died at Berkeley, others relate that his death was due to natural causes, other reasons for his death include that died of illness, of sorrow, suffocation, strangulation and “either”" death or by the violence of others.

the battle of Bannockburn

While Edward dallied with Gaveston Robert the Bruce set about regaining the kingdom of Scotland. Edward lead an army north in 1314 in attempt to halt his advance. They met on Midsummer Day, 22 June, at the Battle of Bannockburn, near Stirling. The encounter was to go down as one of the most resounding defeats in English history. The encounter begun when Henry de Bohun famously charged alone against Robert the Bruce and was killed by an axe blow on the head by the Scottish king. The English army were hemmed in to a tight space between the River Forth and the Bannockburn. The Scots bore down on them and routed Edward's army, inflicting a devastating defeat, many were killed whilst fleeing. The King of England himself was forced into an humiliating flight back to England with the Scots hard at his heels. Edward was turned away from Stirling Castle and fled in haste to Dunbar from where he managed to obtain a boat back to England.

common law

The English common law originated in the early Middle Ages in the King’s Court (Curia Regis), a single royal court set up for most of the country at Westminster, near London. Like many other early

legal systems, it did not originally consist of substantive rights but rather of procedural remedies. The working out of these remedies has, over time, produced the modern system in which rights are seen as primary over procedure. Until the late 19th century, English common law continued to be developed primarily by judges rather than legislators. The common law of England was largely created in the period after the Norman Conquest of 1066. The Anglo-Saxons, especially after the accession of Alfred the Great (871), had developed a body of rules resembling those being used by the Germanic peoples of northern Europe. Local customs governed most matters, while the church played a large part in government. Crimes were treated as wrongs for which compensation was made to the victim. The Norman Conquest did not bring an immediate end to Anglo-Saxon law, but a period of colonial rule by the mainly Norman conquerors produced change. Land was allocated to feudal vassals of the king, many of whom had joined the conquest with this reward in mind. Serious wrongs were regarded mainly as public crimes rather than as personal matters, and the perpetrators were punished by death and forfeiture of property. The requirement that, in cases of sudden death, the local community should identify the body as English ("presentment of Englishry")—and, therefore, of little account—or face heavy fines reveals a state of unrest between the Norman conquerors and their English subjects. Government was centralized, a bureaucracy built up, and written records maintained. Controversy exists regarding the extent to which the efficient government of the Anglo-Norman realm was due to the legacy of Anglo-Saxon institutions or to the ruthlessness of the Norman invaders. Elements of the Anglo-Saxon system that survived were the jury, ordeals (trials by physical test or combat), the practice of outlawry (putting a person beyond the protection of the law), and writs (orders requiring a person to appear before a court; see below The development of a centralized judiciary). Important consolidation occurred during the reign of Henry II (1154–89). Royal officials roamed the country, inquiring about the administration of justice. Church and state were separate and had their own law and court systems. This led to centuries of rivalry over jurisdiction, especially since appeals from church courts, before the Reformation, could be taken to Rome. The Normans spoke French and had developed a customary law in Normandy. They had no professional lawyers or judges; instead, literate clergymen acted as administrators. Some of the clergy were familiar with Roman law and the canon law of the Christian church, which was developed in the universities of the 12th century. Canon law was applied in the English church courts, but the revived Roman law was less influential in England than elsewhere, despite Norman dominance in government. This was due largely to the early sophistication of the Anglo-Norman system. Norman custom was

not simply transplanted to England; upon its arrival, a new body of rules, based on local conditions, emerged.

trial by "ordeal"

a trial or judgment of the truth of some claim or accusation by various means based on the belief that the outcome will reflect the judgment of supernatural powers and that these powers will ensure the triumph of right. Although fatal consequences often attend an ordeal, its purpose is not punitive. The main types of ordeal are ordeals by divination, physical test, and battle. A Burmese ordeal by divination involves two parties being furnished with candles of equal size and lighted simultaneously; the owner of the candle that outlasts the other is adjudged to have won his cause. Another form of ordeal by divination is the appeal to the corpse for the discovery of its murderer. The ordeal of the bier in medieval Europe was founded on the belief that a sympathetic action of the blood causes it to flow at the touch or nearness of the murderer. The ordeal by physical test, particularly by fire or water, is the most common. In Hindu codes a wife may be required to pass through fire to prove her fidelity to a jealous husband; traces of burning would be regarded as proof of guilt. The practice of dunking suspected witches was based on the notion that water, as the medium of baptism, would "accept," or receive, the innocent and "reject," or buoy, the guilty. In ordeal by combat, or ritual combat, the victor is said to win not by his own strength but because supernatural powers have intervened on the side of the right, as in the duel in the European Middle Ages in which the "judgment of God" was thought to determine the winner. If still alive after the combat, the loser might be hanged or burned for a criminal offense or have a hand cut off and property confiscated in civil actions.

trial by jury

In the 12th century, Henry II took a major step in developing the jury system. Henry set up a system to resolve land disputes using juries. A jury of twelve free men were assigned to arbitrate in these disputes. Unlike the modern jury, these men were charged with uncovering the facts of the case on their own rather than listening to arguments in court. Henry also introduced what is now known as the "grand jury", through his Grand Assize. Under the assize, a jury of free men was charged with reporting any crimes that they knew of in their hundred to a "justice in eyre", a judge who moved between hundreds on a circuit. A criminal accused by this jury was given a trial by ordeal. Under the jury, the chances of being found guilty were much lower, as the king did not choose punishment nor verdict. The Church banned participation of clergy in trial by ordeal in 1215. Without the legitimacy of religion, trial by ordeal

collapsed. The juries under the assizes began deciding guilt as well as providing accusations. The same year, trial by jury became a fairly explicit right in one of the most influential clauses of Magna Carta, signed by King John. Article 39 of the Magna Carta reads (translated by Lysander Spooner in his Essay on the Trial by Jury (1852)). Although the charter says or by the law of the land, this in no manner can be interpreted as if it were enough to have a positive law, made by the king, to be able to proceed legally against a subject. The law of the land was the consuetudinary law, based on the customs and consent of King John's subjects, and since they did not have Parliament in those times, this meant that neither the king nor the barons could make a law without the consent of the people. According to some sources, in the time of Edward III, by the law of the land had been substituted by due process of law, which in those times was a trial by twelve peers. During the mid-14th Century, it was forbidden that persons who had sat on the Presenting Jury (i.e., in modern parlance, the Grand Jury) should also sit on the trial jury for that crime. Medieval juries were self-informing, in that individuals were chosen as jurors because they either knew the parties and the facts, or they had the duty to discover them. This spared the government the cost of fact-finding. Over time, English juries became less self-informing and relied more on the trial itself for information on the case. Jurors remained free to investigate cases on their own until the 17th century. The Magna Carta being forgotten after a succession of benevolent reigns (or, more probably, reigns limited by the jury and the barons, and only under the rule of laws that the juries and barons found acceptable), the kings, through the royal judges, began to extend their control over the jury and the kingdom.

friar

is a member of one of the mendicant orders founded since the twelfth or thirteenth century; the term distinguishes the mendicants' itinerant apostolic character, exercised broadly under the jurisdiction of a superior general, from the older monastic orders' allegiance to a single monastery formalized by their vow of stability.

manorial system

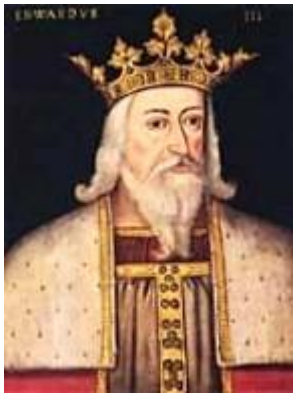
was a way that feudal lords organized their lands in order to produce agricultural goods. The manor had four main areas: the manor house and accompanying village, farmland, meadowland, and wasteland. The lord of the manor lived in the manor house and the serfs lived in mud brick cottages that were all in the same area. The serfs' cottages were very small and only consisted of one room. Serfs used fire to heat their homes when they weren't working in the fields. Serfs farmed and completed other jobs around the manor. Serfs also worshiped in the village church in attempt to go to heaven

in their after life. It also used a special system to farm their fields. This system was called the three-field rotation. This system allowed each serf a strip of land. In the autumn one third was planted to wheat, barley, or rye, and in the spring another third of the land was planted to oats, barley, and legumes to be harvested in late summer. One strip was always left barren so that when the fields were rotated a strip of soil could be rested. Each of the strips were one acre of land and the best soil was given to the lord of the land while the serfs took to the rest of the farmland regardless of its quality. This system provided for the manor quite well, sometimes there was even a surplus. In times of surplus the serfs could sell their crops which allowed for towns and villages to grow.

guild

is an association of artisans or merchants who oversee the practice of their craft in a particular town. The earliest types of guild were formed as confraternities of tradesmen. They were organized in a manner something between a professional association, trade union, a cartel, and a secret society. They often depended on grants of letters patent by a monarch or other authority to enforce the flow of trade to their self-employed members, and to retain ownership of tools and the supply of materials.

Edward III



The charismatic Edward III, one of the most dominant personalities of his age, was the son of Edward II and Isabella of France. He was born at Windsor Castle on 13th of November, 1312 and created Earl of Chester at four days old. Edward was aged fourteen at his ill fated father's abdication, he had accompanied his mother to France where she and her lover, Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, planned his father's overthrow. Edward II was later probably murdered at Berkeley Castle, however there are conflicting theories, all of which lack concrete proof as to how the ex-king met with his untimely end.. Although nominally King, the young Edward III was in reality the puppet of Mortimer and his mother, who ruled England through him. A handsome and approachable youth, whom Thomas Walsingham described as "a shapely man, of stature neither tall nor short, his countenance was kindly." Edward drew inspiration from the popular contemporary tales of chivalry. He was married to his cousin, Phillipa of Hainault, the daughter of William the Good, Count of Hainault and Holland and Jeanne of Valois, granddaughter of Phillip III of France. The marriage had been negotiated by Edward's mother, Isabella, in the summer of 1326. Isabella, who was estranged from her husband, Edward II, visited the Hainaut court, along with Prince Edward, to obtain aid from Count William to depose King Edward in return for the couple's betrothal. After a dispensation had been obtained for the marriage of the cousins (they were both descendants of Philip III), Philippa arrived in England in December 1327 escorted by her uncle, John of Hainaut. The marriage, celebrated at York Minster on 24th January, 1328, was a happy one, the two became very close and produced a large family. Phillipa was kind and inclined to be generous and exercised a steadying influence on her husband. Their eldest son Edward, later known as the Black Prince, was born on 15th June 1330, when his father was eighteen. Phillipa of Hainault was a popular Queen Consort, who was widely loved and respected, and theirs was a very close marriage, despite Edward's frequent infidelities. She often acted as Regent in England during Edward's absences in France. Froissart describes her as being "tall and upright, wise, gay, humble, pious, liberal and courteous." Edward and Phillipa produced fourteen

children in all. Their second child, a daughter, was born at Woodstock on June 16, 1332 and named Isabella after her paternal grandmother. Isabella was her father's favourite daughter he was said to have doted on her. A second daughter, Joan, named after Phillipa's mother, was born in the Tower of London in late 1333 or early 1334. A son William was born at Hatfield on 16 February, 1337, but survived only a few months. In 1338, Philippa and Edward traveled to Euope to arrange alliances in support of Edward's claim to the French throne. Philippa stayed in Antwerp, where her son, Lionel, later Duke of Clarence, was born on November 29, 1338. He was to grow to be nearly seven feet tall. Philippa gave birth to another son John of Gaunt, later Duke of Lancaster, on March 6, 1340 at Ghent. A further son, Edmund, who would be created Duke of York, was born at Langley in June of 1341. In 1343, Phillipa gave birth to daughter Blanche who died soon after she was born. On October 10, 1344 she gave birth to a daughter named Mary, another daughter, Margaret, was born in 1346. William was born at Windsor in 1347. Their last child, Thomas was born at Woodstock in 1355. It seems Edward had been fond of his father Edward II. By the Autumn of 1330, when he reached eighteen, he strongly resented his political position and Mortimer's interference in government. Aided by his cousin, Henry, Earl of Lancaster and several of his lords, Edward led a coup d'etat to remove Mortimer from power. The Dowager Queen's lover was arrested at Nottingham Castle. Stripped of his land and titles, Mortimer was accused of assuming Royal authority. Isabella's pleas for her son to show mercy were ignored. Without the benefit of a trial, Mortimer was sentenced to death and executed at Tyburn. Isabella herself was shut up at Castle Rising in Norfolk, where she could meddle in affairs of state no more, but she was granted an ample allowance and permitted to live in comfort. Troubled in his conscience about the part he had been made to play in his father's downfall, Edward built an impressive monument over his father's burial place at Gloucester Cathedral. Edward renewed his grandfather, Edward I's war with Scotland and repudiated the Treaty of Northampton, which had been negotiated during the regency of his mother and Roger Mortimer. This resulted in the Second War of Scottish Independence. he regained the border town of Berwick and won a decisive victory over the Scots at Halidon Hill in 1333, placing Edward Balliol on the throne of

Scotland. By 1337, however, most of Scotland had been recovered by David II, the son of Robert the Bruce, leaving only a few castles in English hands. Queen Phillipa died in August, 1369, of an illness similar to dropsy. The last years of Edward III's reign saw him degenerate to become a pale shadow of the ostentatious and debonair young man who had first set foot in France to claim its throne. The King began to lean heavily on his grasping and avaricious mistress, Alice Perrers, who had served as a lady-in-waiting to Queen Philippa. Possibly the daughter of a prominent Hertfordshire landowner, Sir Richard Perrers, she became his mistress in 1363, when she was 15 years of age, six years before the queen's death. After the Queen's death, Edward lavished gifts on her, she was given property and even some of the late Queen Phillipa 's jewels and robes. Alice Perrers gave birth to three illegitimate children by Edward III, a son named Sir John de Southeray (c. 1364-1383), who married Maud Percy, daughter of Henry Percy, 3rd Baron Percy, and two daughters, Jane, who married Richard Northland, and Joan, who married Robert Skerne. The Black Prince and Edward's ambitious third son John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, became the leaders of divided parties in the court and the king's council. With the help of Alice Perrers, John of Gaunt obtained influence over his father, and controlled the government of the kingdom. His heir, Edward, the Black Prince, the flower of English chivalry, was stricken with illness and died before his father in June, 1376. The chronicler Rafael Holinshed, tells us Edward believed the early death of his son was God's punishment for usurping his father's crown:-“But finally the thing that most grieved him, was the loss of that most noble gentleman, his dear son Prince Edward . . . But this and other mishaps that chanced to him now in his old years might seem to come to pass for a revenge of his disobedience showed to his in usurping against him”. In September 1376 the king was unwell and was said to be suffering from an abscess. He made a brief recovery but, in a fragile condition, suffered a stroke at Sheen on 12th June, 1377. It was said that Alice Perrers stripped the rings from his fingers before he was even cold. Edward III was buried in Westminster Abbey, the gilt-bonze effigy of the king lies on top of a tomb chest with six niches along each long side holding miniature effigies of the kings twelve children. The wooden funeral effigy of Edward III,

modelled from a death mask, survives at Westminster Abbey and has a twisted mouth, which suggests the effects of a stroke on the ageing king.

Hundred Years War

The Capetian dynasty of France, from whom King Edward III descended through his mother, Isabella of France, (the daughter of Phillip IV, "the Fair") became extinct in the male line. The French succession was governed by the Salic Law, which prohibited inheritance through a female. Edward's maternal grandfather, Phillip IV died in 1314 and was suceeded by his three sons Louis X, Philip V, and Charles IV in succession. The eldest of these, Louis X, died in 1316, leaving only his posthumous son John, who was born and died that same year, and a daughter Joan, whose paternity was suspect. On the death of the youngest of Phillip's sons, Charles IV, the French throne therefore descended to the Capetian Charles IV's Valois cousin, who then became Phillip VI. As the grandson and nephew of the last Capetian kings, Edward considered himself to be a far nearer relative than a cousin. He quartered the lilies of France with the lions of England in his coat-of-arms and formally claimed the French throne through right of his mother. By doing so Edward began what later came to be known as the Hundred Years War. The conflict was to last for 116 years from 1337 to 1453. The French were utterly defeated in a naval battle at Sluys on 24th June, 1340, which safeguarded England's trade routes to Flanders. This was followed up by an extraordinary land victory over Phillip VI at Crécy-en-Ponthieu, a small town in Picardy about mid-way between Paris and Calais. The Battle of Crecy was fought on 26th August, 1346, where a heavily outnumbered English army of around 15,000, defeated a French force estimated to number around 30,000 to 40,000. French losses were enormous and it was at Crecy that the King's eldest son, Edward, Prince of Wales, otherwise known as the Black Prince, so named for the colour of his armour, famously won his spurs. Edward then laid siege to the port of Calais in September, which, after a long drawn out siege, eventually fell into English hands in the following August. Edward was determined to make an example of the unfortunate burghers of Calais, but the gentle Queen Phillipa, heavily pregnant, interceded with her husband, pleading for their lives. Calais was to remain in English hands for over two hundred years, until it

was lost to the French in 1558, during the reign of the Tudor queen, Mary I. The war with Scotland was resumed. Robert the Bruce was long dead, but his successor, David II, seized the chance to attack England while Edward III's attention was engaged in France. The Scots were defeated at the The Battle of Neville's Cross by a force led by William Zouche, Archbishop of York, Henry Percy and Ralph Neville. The Scot's king, David II, was taken prisoner to England, where he was housed in the Tower of London. After spending eleven years a prisoner in England, he was released and allowed to return to Scotland for the huge ransom of 100,000 marks. The Black Prince covered himself in glory when he vanquished the French yet again at Poiters in 1356, where the French king, John II, was captured. A ransom was demanded for his return which amounted to the equivalent of twice the country's yearly income. King John was accorded royal privileges whilst a prisoner of the English and was allowed to return to France in attempt to collect the huge ransom. Claiming to be unable to raise the amount, he voluntarily re-submitted himself to English custody and died a few months later. Peace was then negotiated and by the Treaty of Bretigny of 1360 England retained the whole of Aquitaine, Ponthieu and Calais, in return Edward relinquished his claim to the French throne.

"Auld Alliance"

the alliance between the kingdoms of Scotland and France. The Scots word auld, meaning old, has become a partly affectionate term for the periodic alliance between the two countries before the Union of Crowns, when the Scottish monarch James VI acceded to the throne of England (as James I). The alliance played a significant role in the relations between Scotland, France and England from its beginning in 1295 to the 1560 Treaty of Edinburgh. The alliance was renewed by all the French and Scottish monarchs of that period except Louis XI. By the late 14th century, the renewal occurred regardless of whether either kingdom was involved in a conflict with England. The alliance dates from the treaty signed by John Balliol and Philip IV of France in 1295 against Edward I of England. The terms of the treaty stipulated that if either country was attacked by England, the other country would invade English territory, as happened at the Battle of Flodden, 1513. The alliance played an important role in conflicts

between both countries and England, such as the Wars of Scottish Independence, the Hundred Years' War, the War of the League of Cambrai and the Rough Wooing.

Welsh longbow

The standard yew longbow was over 6 feet long (6 ft. 6 inches), with a yard long arrow. They are powerful weapons that require enormous strength to draw. In general, the draw weight is 120-150 pounds, with a range between 200 and 300 yards. "In battle, longbow formations fired 10-12 volleys per minute. Each archer was provided 60-72 arrows. A force of 4,000 longbowmen could loose 240,000 arrows within the space of five minutes." Thus, in order to master its use, a man must practice. A lot. Once King Edward of Englandrealized the longbow's full potential, he adopted it from the Welsh, such that "To ensure a steady stream of bowmen for his army, Edward I banned all sports except archery on Sundays. Shooting ranges were set up on or near church property so parishioners would follow worship services with archery practice." Edward III used the long bow to great effect during the Hundred Years War, filling his ranks with Welsh and longbowmen that decimated the French ranks, particularly at the Battles of Crecy and Agincourt.

Treaty of Bretigny

(1360) Treaty between England and France that ended the first phase of the Hundred Years' War. Marking a serious setback for the French, the treaty was signed after Edward the Black Prince defeated and captured John II of France at the Battle of Poitiers (1356). The French ceded extensive territories in northwestern France to England and agreed to ransom John at a cost of three million gold crowns, while King Edward III renounced his claim to the French throne. The treaty failed to establish a lasting peace, and the war began again in 1369.

Black Death

disaster struck England in Edward III's reign, in the form of bubonic plague, or the Black Death, which cut a scythe across Europe in the fourteenth century, killing a third of it's population. It first reached England in 1348 and spread rapidly. In most cases the plague was lethal. Infected persons developed black swellings in the armpit and groin, these were followed by black

blotches on the skin, caused by internal bleeding. These symptoms were accompanied by fever and spitting of blood. Contemporary medicine was useless in the face of bubonic plague, it's remorseless advance struck terror into the hearts of the medieval population of Europe, many in that superstitious age saw it as the vengeance of God. The population of England was decimated. Three of Edward's children, his daughter Joan and young sons, Thomas and William, who had been born in 1347 and 1348, were to die during the outbreak of bubonic plague in 1348. Joan was betrothed to Peter of Castile, son of Alfonso XI of Castile in 1345, and left England to journey to Castile in the summer of 1348. She stayed at the city of Bordeaux, in southern France, en-route, where there was a severe outbreak of the plague. Members of her entourage began to fall sick and die and Joan was moved, probably to the small village of Loremo, where she succumbed to the Black Death, suffering a violent attack she died on September 2, 1348. Edward wrote mournfully to Alphonso XI of Castille:-"We are sure that your Magnificence knows how, after much complicated negotiation about the intended marriage of the renowned Prince Pedro, your eldest son, and our most beloved daughter Joan, which was designed to nurture perpetual peace and create an indissoluble union between our Royal Houses, we sent our said daughter to Bordeaux, en route for your territories in Spain. But see, with what intense bitterness of heart we have to tell you this, destructive Death (who seizes young and old alike, sparing no one and reducing rich and poor to the same level) has lamentably snatched from both of us our dearest daughter, whom we loved best of all, as her virtues demanded. No fellow human being could be surprised if we were inwardly desolated by the sting of this bitter grief, for we are humans too. But we, who have placed our trust in God and our Life between his hands, where he has held it closely through many great dangers, we give thanks to him that one of our own family, free of all stain, whom we have loved with our life, has been sent ahead to Heaven to reign among the choirs of virgins, where she can gladly intercede for our offenses before God Himself" In the aftermath of the Black Death there was inevitable social upheaval. Parliament attempted to legislate on the problem by introducing the Statute of Laborers in 1351, which attempted to fix prices and wages.

Black Prince

Although Edward of Woodstock never reigned as King of England he has gone down in history as a great medieval military leader, achieving notable victories against England's medieval rivals, the French, in the Hundred Years War. Edward, the eldest son of Edward IIII and Phillipa of Hainault, daughter of William, Count of Hainault, was born on 15 June, 1330 at the royal Palace of Woodstock in Oxfordshire. Edward III, on 16 September, alloted five hundred marks a year from the the profits of the county of Chester for his maintenance, and in the following February, the whole of these profits were assigned to Queen Phillipa for him. He was created Prince of Wales on 12 May, 1343, aged twelve, at Westminster and was also created Earl of Chester and Duke of Cornwall, making him the first English Duke. He was one of the original Knights of the Order of the Garter, an order of chivalry founded by his father. During his lifetime he was known as Edward of Woodstock; the title of Black Prince was adopted after his death and is a possible reference to his black armour. Edward exhibited military ability at an early age, covering himself in glory at the Battle of Crecy on 26th August, 1346, during his father's campaign to acquire the throne of France. The prince commanded the right wing of the English forces in the battle and played a major role in the defeat of the French at the age of but sixteen. When Edward III encountered his son after the battle, he embraced him with emotion and declared that he had acquitted himself loyally. Legend relates that the Black Prince acquired his arms of the Prince of Wales feathers from the blind King John I of Bohemia , who perished heroically in the conflict. In the aftermath of the battle, the prince happened upon the body of the dead King John, taking his helmet lined with ostrich feathers. The feathers and the dead king's motto 'Ich dien' (I serve) were adopted by Edward as his own badge, they have been used by every subsequent Princes of Wales since. In 1355, he was appointed his father's lieutenant in Gascony and the following year led another significant victory against the French at Poitiers, taking King John of France prisoner, whom he treated with ostentatious chivalry and magnanimity. He was later created Prince of Aquitaine and Gascony. Edward married his cousin Joan, Fair Maid of Kent in 1362 at Windsor Castle. Joan was the daughter and heiress of Edmund Plantagenet, Earl of Kent and granddaughter of Edward I and his second wife Margaret of France. She

possessed a chequered marital history, being first married to Sir Thomas Holland in 1340, that same year, when Holland was absent on campaign, Joan contracted a further marriage with William Montagu, Earl of Salisbury. In 1349 Holland successfully petitioned the Pope for his wife's return causing a great scandal at the time. Joan's brother died in 1352 and she became Countess of Kent in her own right. The marriage of Edward and Joan produced two children, Edward of Angouleme born in 1365, and Richard of Bordeaux, later Richard II who was born on 6 January 1367. Froissart described their household as especially magnificent. The young Edward died in 1372 at the age of six, leaving the second son, Richard of Bordeaux, as his father's heir. His parents were said to be grief stricken and much affected. In 1367, Edward led an expedition to Castile, in support of the deposed King Pedro of Castile, leading an army into Spain over the pass of Roncesvalles, and on 3rd of April, 1367 won a resounding victory at the Battle of Najera in northern Castile. He then marched to Burgos, where he declared Pedro King of Castile. In gratitude for his military assistance, Pedro presented him with a huge and magnificent ruby, which is still kept in the British Crown Jewels and today adorns the Imperial State Crown. Edward remained in the kingdom of Castile for the next four months, residing mainly at Valladolid. His army suffered badly during the hot Spanish summer and Edward himself began to exhibit the first symptoms of a mortal disease, possibly dysentry. Returning to Aquitaine, and having exhausted his financial resources with the high cost of his Castilian campaign, he made himself highly unpopular with the nobility of the province due to a levy of taxes to pay for his Spanish expedition. Resultantly, the Aquitinian nobles rose in rebellion against his rule and he responded by besieging Limoges. When the city fell to him 3,000 of its inhabitants were mercilessly massacred. A year later, Edward fell ill and returned to England on the advice of his physician. His health fell into rapid decline and realising that he was dying, he spent much time in prayer and charitable works and asked his father to protect his young son Richard after his demise. The Black Prince died at Westminster on 8 June 1376, at he age of 45. He was buried at Canterbury Cathedral, a bronze effigy of the prince now marks the tomb. The Black Prince's son Richard succeeded his grandfather Edward III in the following year. Joan of

Kent, who later grew to be extremely obese, remained popular with the people. She died nine years after her third husband, on the 7th of August 1385, during the reign of their son and was buried, in accordance with the terms of her will, at the Greyfriars, in Stamford, Lincolnshire, beside her first husband. At the time of the death of the Black Prince, some of his arms and armour were hung above his tomb in Canterbury Cathedral, near to shrine of Thomas A'Beckett. The practice of setting up arms and armour as 'achievements', carried in the funeral procession and then hung above the owner's tomb, became common from the Middle Ages. His helmet, gauntlets, quilted surcoat, shield, and scabbard are still displayed the cathedral. Although today, replicas hang directly above the tomb, while the faded originals are kept safely behind glass. The decayed scabbard and belt is without its sword, legend sates that the original sword was taken by Oliver Cromwell, in the seventeenth century. The gauntlets are made of copper gilt and are lined with soft doeskin. The Black Prince's shield, which is made of poplar wood, is still covered with layers of canvas, gesso, parchment, and leather. The front is decorated with the leopards of England and fleurs de lys of France, adopted by his father, King Edward III when he lay claim to the French throne. His surcoat, which is made of velvet, stuffed with wool and lined with satin, bears the same arms as the shield. It laces up at the front with eyelets and originally had long sleeves, although the sleeves currently reach only to the elbow. The huge iron helmet is cylindrical in shape with a flat top, eye holes and breathing holes. It is surmounted by a crest, which consists of a lion standing on a cap of maintenance, both made from leather. The hat is lined with red velvet.

“code of chivalry”

is an informal, varying code of conduct developed between 1170 and 1220, never decided on or summarized in a single document, associated with the medieval institution of knighthood. The ideals of chivalry were popularized in medieval literature, especially the Matter of Britain and Matter of France, the former based on Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae which introduced the legend of King Arthur, written in the 1130s. The code of chivalry that developed in medieval Europe had its roots in earlier centuries. It arose in the Holy Roman Empire from the

idealisation of the cavalryman—involving military bravery, individual training, and service to others—especially in Francia, among horse soldiers in Charlemagne's cavalry. The term chivalry derives from the Old French term chevalerie, which can be translated to "horse soldiery".[Note 1] Gautier states that knighthood emerged from the Moors (Muslims) as well as the Teutonic forests and was nurtured into civilization and chivalry by the Catholic Church. Over time, its meaning in Europe has been refined to emphasise social and moral virtues more generally. The code of chivalry, as it stood by the Late Middle Ages, was a moral system which combined a warrior ethos, knightly piety, and courtly manners, all conspiring to establish a notion of honour and nobility.

King Arthur

King Arthur is a medieval, mythological figure who was the head of the kingdom Camelot and the Knights of the Round Table. It is not known if there was a real Arthur, though it is believed he may have been a Roman-affiliated military leader who successfully staved off a Saxon invasion during the 5th to 6th centuries. His legend has been popularized by many writers, including Geoffrey of Monmouth. Little is known about the possible figure who inspired the story of King Arthur, a heroic monarch who has been a popular mythological and literary character for some time. It has been suggested that the real-life "Arthur" may have been a warrior/officer of Roman affiliation who led a British military force against incoming Saxon forces during the 5th to 6th centuries A.D. Still, Celtic monk Gildas wrote of the Saxon invasion in his work The Ruin and Conquest of Britain, citing the conflict at Badon Hills, and no warrior named Arthur is mentioned. In contrast, the 6th century bard Aneirin crafted the Welsh collection of poems The Gododdin in which a heroic Arthur is spoken of. Yet with the work originally shared orally as opposed to being written down, it is impossible to ascertain if Arthur was part of the original story. Another poet, Teliesin, mentions a valiant Arthur in his work as well.

Round Table

King Arthur's famed table in the Arthurian legend, around which he and his Knights congregate. As its name suggests, it has no head, implying that everyone who sits there has equal status. The table was first

described in 1155 by Wace, who relied on previous depictions of Arthur's fabulous retinue. The symbolism of the Round Table developed over time; by the close of the 12th century it had come to represent the chivalric order associated with Arthur's court, the Knights of the Round Table. The Round Table first appears in Wace's Roman de Brut, a Norman language adaptation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae finished in 1155. Wace says Arthur created the Round Table to prevent quarrels among his barons, none of whom would accept a lower place than the others. Layamon added to the story when he adapted Wace's work into the Middle English Brut in the early 13th century, saying that the quarrel between Arthur's vassals led to violence at a Yuletide feast. In response a Cornish carpenter built an enormous but easily transportable Round Table to prevent further dispute. Wace claims he was not the source of the Round Table; both he and Layamon credited it instead to the Bretons. Some scholars have doubted this claim, while others believe it may be true. There is some similarity between the chroniclers' description of the Round Table and a custom recorded in Celtic stories, in which warriors sit in a circle around the king or lead warrior, in some cases feuding over the order of precedence as in Layamon.] There is a possibility that Wace, contrary to his own claims, derived Arthur's round table not from any Breton source, but rather from medieval biographies of Charlemagne—notably Einhard's Vita Caroli and Notker the Stammerer's De Carolo Magno—in which the king is said to have possessed a round table decorated with a map of Rome. Though the Round Table itself is not mentioned until Wace, the concept of Arthur having a marvelous court made up of many prominent warriors is much older. The code of chivalry so important in later romance figures in as well, as Geoffrey says Arthur established “such a code of courtliness in his household that he inspired peoples living far away to imitate him”. Long before Geoffrey, Arthur's court was well known to Welsh storytellers; in the romance Culhwch and Olwen, written around 1100, the protagonist Culhwch invokes the names of 225 individuals affiliated with Arthur. In fact, the fame of Arthur's entourage became so prominent in Welsh tradition that in the later additions to the Welsh Triads, the formula tying named individuals to "Arthur's Court" in the triad titles began to supersede the older "Island of Britain" formula.] Though the code of

chivalry crucial to later continental romances dealing with the Round Table is mostly absent from the earlier Welsh material, some passages of Culhwch and Olwen seem to prefigure it, for instance when Arthur explains the ethos of his court, saying “we are nobles as long as we are sought out: the greater the bounty we may give, the greater our nobility, fame and honour”. Though no Round Table appears in the early Welsh texts, Arthur is associated with various items of household furniture. The earliest of these is Saint Carannog's mystical floating altar in that saint's 12th century Vita; in the story Arthur has found the altar and attempts unsuccessfully to use it for a table, and returns it to Carannog in exchange for the saint ridding the land of a meddlesome dragon. Arthur's household furniture figures into local topographical folklore throughout Britain as early as the early 12th century, with various landmarks being named “Arthur's Seat”, “Arthur's Oven”, and “Arthur's Bed-chamber”. A henge at Eamont Bridge near Penrith, Cumbria is known as “King Arthur's Round Table” The still-visible Roman amphitheatre at Caerleon has been associated with the Round Table. and has been suggested as a possible source for the legend.

Order of the Garter

is the world's most ancient order of chivalry and was founded by King Edward III. The origins of the Garter as the order's emblem and for its motto, Honi Soit Qui Mal y Pense, will probably never be ascertained with certainty, but legend relates that it began at a ball, when Edward III's dancing partner, perhaps Joan, Countess of Salisbury, dropped her garter to her great embarrassment. The King is said to have chivalrously retrieved it and tied it round his own leg, uttering in French "Evil to him who thinks evil of it". The patron saint of the Order is St. George and its home St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle. The sovereign alone can grant membership. For ceremonial occasions, members wear the full vestments of the Order. A dark blue mantle or cloak, lined with white taffeta, with a red hood. The mantle bears the shield of St. George's Cross. The Garter Star is pinned to the left side of the chest, it is an enamelled heraldic shield of St. George's Cross encircled by a garter, which is encircled by an eight point silver badge. A black velvet hat decorated with white ostrich and black heron feathers is also worn. The gold collar bears knots and enamelled

medallions showing a rose encircled by the garter. The George, an enamelled figure of St. George and the dragon is worn suspended from the collar. The ribbon, a wide blue sash, is worn over the left shoulder to the right hip. On its base is a badge showing St. George and the dragon. The garter itself, a buckled dark blue velvet strap with the motto of the Order is worn on the left calf by knights and the left arm by ladies.

Richard II

The future King Richard II was born at the Archbishop's Palace, Bordeaux, Aquitaine, at epiphany, on 6th January, 1367. The product of a first cousin marriage, he was the son of Edward III's eldest son, Edward, Prince of Wales, the Black Prince and his wife, Joan, Countess of Kent. Joan, known as the 'Fair Maid of Kent', was the daughter of Edmund, Earl of Kent, the youngest of Edward I's sons by his second wife, Margaret of France. This gave Richard a double descent from Edward I, due to previous cousin marriages in his family, his grandparents had also been first cousins, Richard was therefore a highly inbred individual. Richard is the first English monarch for whom a contemporary painting survives. He was built in the typical Plantagenet mould, around six feet tall, auburn haired and good-looking, with finely chiseled features and beautiful, long, tapering hands. The chronicler Adam of Usk described him as being ' as beautiful as Absalom.' Richard was also volatile and unstable, brooding and vengeful, and in him the famed Plantagenet temper boiled into a frenzy. The country was governed by Richard's uncle John of Gaunt and a council during his minority. In 1381, when Richard was fourteen, the Peasants Revolt, probably the first socialist movement in English history, broke out in Kent due to simmering reentment of a highly unpopular poll tax. The rebels marched up to London, their leaders, Watt Tyler, Jack Straw and a priest, John Ball, demanded the abolition of serfdom and a pardon for all participants in the uprising. Discontented recruits to the cause were many and their army swelled to what is estimated at around ten thousand. King Richard II, like Edward II before him, was unfortunately reckless in his generosity to favorites, Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford was raised to a Duke. Anger smouldered and came to a head in 1387 when Richard failed to bring certain of his favourites to trial, he was subjected to force. He was defeated by a rebel army led by his uncle, Thomas,

Duke of Gloucester at Radcot Bridge in Oxfordshire, Gloucester had been joined by John of Gaunt's son, Henry of Bolingbroke. At the 'Merciless Parliament' of 1388, the Lords Appellant demanded radical changes in the royal household, the execution of the king's principal supporters and de Vere's estates confiscated. The House of Commons feared the King's attempts to undermine the authority of parliament and he was placed under the control of a council. Their intransigence fueled a smouldering desire for revenge in the unstable Richard. Richard delighted in lavish dress and extravagant jewels. He is popularly credited with introducing the use of the pocket handkerchief. In common with his ancestor Henry III, he venerated the memory of the Saxon King, Edward the Confessor and adopted his coat of arms, which were quartered with his own. Richard's mental state has long been an issue of historical debate the Victorian historian Bishop Stubbs has stated that towards the end of his reign, Richard's mind "was losing its balance altogether". Historian Anthony Steel, who wrote a full-scale biography of the king in 1941, took a psychiatric approach to the issue, and concluded that the king suffered from schizophrenia. This opinion was challenged by V.H. Galbraith, who argued that there was no historical basis for such a diagnosis, a line that has also been followed by later historians of the period, like Anthony Goodman and Anthony Tuck. Nigel Saul, who wrote the most recent academic biography on Richard II, concedes that - even though there is no basis for assuming the king had a mental illness - he showed clear signs of a narcissistic personality, and towards the end of his reign "Richard's grasp on reality was becoming weaker". Two years after Anne's death, Richard married again, taking Isabella of Valois, the six year old daughter of Charles VI of France, as his second wife. Richard treated her with great kindness and they were to become extremely fond of each other. Richard's brooding on past slights culminated with his taking action with ruthless suddeness in 1397. His old opponents were placed under arrest and his uncle, Thomas Duke of Gloucester, was murdered. He exiled his cousin, Henry Bolingbroke, who was one of the five Lords Appellant, in 1399. On John of Gaunt's death, the following year, Richard disinherited Henry and confiscated the vast Lancastrian estates. Henry reacted by invading England, landing at Ravenspur in Yorkshire, on the pretext of recovering his estates, but

in reality he intended to seize his cousin's throne. Richard, in Ireland at the time, sailed to Wales. The King met Henry's representatives at Conway Castle and was informed that if he restored Henry's estates and surrendered certain councillors for trial, he could remain in power. He agreed but was betrayed and instead of being returned to power found himself the inhabitant of a dungeon in the Tower. A Parliament was called at the end of September, at which Henry claimed the throne. Richard was declared a tyrant and deposed. He was taken up to Pontefract Castle, in Yorkshire and there it is certain, he met his end around the second week in February, 1400. Although Henry of Lancaster may have been prepared to let Richard live, the situation changed when it was discovered that the earls of Huntingdon, Kent and Salisbury and Lord Despenser, and possibly also the Earl of Rutland, were planning to murder the new king and restore Richard in the Epiphany Rising. Although averted, the plot highlighted the danger to Henry of allowing Richard to live. His body was taken south from Pontefract and displayed in the old St Paul's Cathedral on 17 February before burial in Kings Langley Church on 6 March.His skeleton was examined in 1871 by Dean Stanley of Westminster but showed no marks of violence. Starvation was the most likely cause, although this has never been proven. After being displayed at St. Paul's, Richard's body was buried in King's Langley Church, Hertfordshire. His child queen, Isabelle of France, mourned him deeply and sincerely. Henry IV wished to make an alliance between herself and his eldest son, Henry, now Prince of Wales, but loyal to the memory of her husband, she was inflexible in refusing to even contemplate it. Isabelle was eventually returned to her father in France. She was married to Charles of Angouleme and tragically died in childbirth.

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster

John of Gaunt, Shakespeare's "time honoured Lancaster", was the fourth but third surviving son of King Edward III and Phillipa of Hainault. Gaunt is an anglicized version of his birthplace of Ghent. In 1350, at the age of ten, John was present at the naval Battle of Winchelsea, where, it is said, his life was saved by Henry of Grosmont, Duke of Lancaster, who attacked the huge Spanish ship that engaged the ship that John and his elder brother Edward, the Prince of Wales were sailing in. Described as tall and well-built by

contemporaries, John's first child was an illegitimate daughter, Blanche (1359-1388/89). Blanche was the daughter of John's mistress Marie de St. Hilaire of Hainaut who was a lady-in-waiting to his mother, Queen Philippa. Edward III arranged John's marriage to the wealthy heiress Blanche of Lancaster on 19 May 1359, at Reading Abbey in Berkshire. Blanche of Lancaster, the daughter of Henry of Grosmont, 1st Duke of Lancaster and his wife Isabel de Beaumont, was John's third cousin, both were great great grandchildren of King Henry III. Blanche descended from Henry's younger son, Edmund Crouchback, Earl of Lancaster. The whole royal family attended the wedding, Edward III presented the fourteen year old Blanche with expensive gifts of jewellery. On the death of Henry of Grosmont in 1361, John inherited half his lands and the title Earl of Lancaster, he also became the 14th Baron of Halton and 11th Lord of Bowland. John acquired the rest of Henry's great estates when Blanche's sister, Maud, Countess of Leicester, died on 10 April 1362. He received the title Duke of Lancaster from his father the king on 13th November 1362. John campaigned with his elder brother Edward of Woodstock, known as the Black Prince and participated in many of the battles of the Hundred Years War and in aid of his ally Pedro the Cruel of Castile. Following the death of Edward, the Black Prince, John of Gaunt gave protection to the religious reformer John Wycliffe, possibly to counteract the growing power of the Roman Catholic Church. John's ascendancy to political power coincided with widespread resentment of his influence in England. English forces had experienced setbacks in the Hundred Years' War, Edward III's rule was becoming unpopular due to high taxation and his affair with Alice Perrers, political opinion closely associated John with the failing government of the 1370s. Edward III died of a stroke at Sheen, a shadow of his former self, in 1377 and was succeeded by his ten-year-old grandson Richard II. John was the virtual ruler of England during the young king's minority, but made unwise decisions on taxation which culminated in the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, Gaunt was blamed for the introduction of the unpopular poll tax, he was away from London at the time of the revolt and thus avoided the wrath of the rebels, however, his Palace of Savoy, considered the grandest nobleman's townhouse of medieval London, was destroyed during the rebellion. What the peasants

could not smash or burn was thrown into the river. Richard struck back against the Lords Appelant in 1397, John's younger brother, Thomas, Duke of Gloucester was imprisoned in Calais to await trial for treason. Thomas was later murdered on his nephew Richard's orders. In 1398 Richard II exiled John's eldest son Henry of Bolingbroke. John of Gaunt died at Leicester Castle on February 3rd, 1399, at the age of fifty-eight, he was buried beside his first wife, Blanche of Lancaster, in the choir of St Paul's Cathedral. Their two alabaster effigies had joined hands. Two days after Gaunt's funeral, Richard made Bolingbroke's banishment perpetual, disinherited his cousin and seized Gaunt's vast estates for the Crown.

Peasants' Revolt 1381

On the death of King Edward III in 1377, his grandson Richard II, (pictured left) a boy of ten, had succeeded to the English throne. During the period of Richard's minority, the government was led by his uncle John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and a royal council. To pay for the costly continuation of the long drawn out wars with France, in 1377, Gaunt and the royal council imposed a new tax, known as the Poll Tax, each person over the age of 15 had to pay one shilling. The tax was much resented as the peasants could ill afford to pay the amounts demanded by the government and it caused severe hardship. The Poll Tax was applied three times in four years, the Poll Tax of 1380 was particularly hated, as it took no account of individual wealth and demanded the same sum from all, rich or poor. By 1380, the peasants had had enough and many were avoiding paying the tax by hiding from the government's tax collectors. The clergy also, had been badly hit by the Black Death, and many of the new clergy were poorly educated. The Church owned vast amounts of land, and the abbots and bishops sided with the barons against the peasants. Many peasants had to labour without pay on church land, sometimes up to two days a week. A number of priests preached against the accepted heirarchy of medieval society, amongst these was John Ball, a radical preacher of Colchester, and a native of St. Albans in Hertfordshire. Ball's sermons criticising the feudal system angered his bishop and in 1366, he was removed from his post as the priest of St James' Church in Colchester. Undeterred, Ball continued preaching, in response, the Archbishop of Canterbury ordered his arrest and he was

imprisoned in Maidstone Castle. On reciept of the Poll Tax returns for 1380, the Royal Council discovered that the amount collected was less than previous years. Tax collectors were again dispatched, with orders to collect the full amounts. One of these tax collectors, Thomas Bampton, a member of Parliament and a Justice of the Peace arrived at the village of Fobbing in Essex, and summoned the peasants of Fobbing and nearby Stanford and Corningham to appear before him. The village's representative, one Thomas Baker, stated that the tax had already been paid and that no more money would be forthcoming. When Bampton tried to arrest Baker, violence broke out. The result was a riot, Bampton and his men were driven from the Fobbing. Three of Bampton's servants were killed and Bampton himself was forced to flee. Sir Robert Belknap, a Chief Justice, who was sent to calm the situation, experienced a similar fate to Bampton. News of the riot spread, the peasants of Essex rose up, banded together and turned on the landowners. Manor houses were burnt down, and the records of taxes, labour duties and debts destroyed. On 4 June, the rebels gathered at Bocking, the Essex peasants, numbering perhaps a few thousand, marched towards London to present their complaints to the young king, the common people did not blame Richard for their grievances, their anger instead focused on John of Gaunt, Simon Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury and others of Richard's advisors. One section of the movement led by John Wrawe, a former chaplain, proceeded into Suffolk, to raise a revolt there. The peasants of Kent followed their example, they besieged Maidstone Castle, demanding the release of the priest John Ball. The castle finally surrendered and John Ball was set free, The revolts quickly spread to other parts of England. Wat Tyler was elected as the peasant's leader at Maidstone on 7 June. Tyler probably came from Colchester, the home of John Ball, little is known about Tyler, as his name suggests, he may have been a roof tiler by trade. The efficiency with which he led his forces suggests he may have had experience as a soldier in France. He led the peasants to Canterbury, which they entering on 10 June. Finding the hated Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor, Simon Sudbury was absent, they forced the monks of the cathedral to swear loyalty to their cause. Their anger was vented on properties in Canterbury owned by the royal council, several men who they suspected as enemies to their cause were executed and prisoners in

the goal were released to join their ranks. The rag-tag army marched to London, their leaders, Watt Tyler, Jack Straw and John Ball, demanded the abolition of serfdom and a pardon for all participants in the uprising. Discontented recruits to the cause were many and their army swelled to what is estimated at around ten thousand. On their journey, they happened upon the King's mother, Joan of Kent, the dowager Princess of Wales, who on hearing news of the revolt was travelling to the safety of the capital, although she was insulted she was not harmed. They reached the south-east of London, on 12 June and camped at Blackheath, in all an estimated 100,000 peasants entered London. King Richard returned to London the following day, he was joined at what was considered the safe fortress of the Tower of London by his mother, Archbishop Sudbury, the Lord High Treasurer Sir Robert Hales, and several of his nobles. he rebels crossed from Southwark onto London Bridge on the afternoon of 13 June and entered the city. The rebel force from Essex simultaneously made its way towards Aldgate on the north side of the city, their forces were swelled by many Londoners. The Kentish rebels produced a list of those whom they wanted handed over for execution. It included the King's uncle, John of Gaunt, Archbishop Sudbury and Hales; other members of the royal council; and officials, such as Bampton. Clerkenwell Priory, the headquarters of the Knights Hospitaller, was destroyed, as were a legal buildings and offices owned by the Hospitallers in Fleet Street, books and paperwork were burned in the street. The Savoy Palace on the Strand, owned by the deeply unpopular John of Gaunt was also ransacked and burnt with many of the palace's costly contents being dthrown into in the River Thames. On 15 June, arrangement was reached to meet the rebels at Smithfield, just outside the city walls. Tyler, who was alone apart from an attendant who carried a banner, greeted the King by addressing him as "brother" and shaking his hand. Richard asked why the rebels had not withdrawn from London following the signing of the charters, to which Tyler read out his further demands "Let no law but the law of Winchester prevail, and let no man be declared outlaw by the decree of judges and lawyers. No lord shall exercise lordship over the commons and since we are opposed by a vast horde of bishops and clerks, let there be but one bishop in England. The property and goods of the holy church should be taken and divided according to

the needs of the people in each parish, after making provision for the existing clergy and monks and finally, let there be no more villeins in England and all free and of one condition." Richard agreed to all his requests and again asked that the commons now return to their homes. It being a hot day, Tyler asked for a flagon of water to rinse his mouth and on receiving the water 'he rinsed his mouth in a very rude and disgusting fashion before the King" and spat on the ground. One of the king's servants insulted Tyler, stating he was one of the greatest thieves in Kent, who retaliated and drew his dagger, William Walworth, Mayor of London, then intervened and tried to arrest him at which Tyler lashed out with his dagger, Walworth then stabbed Tyler in the head and neck at which Tyler fell back on his horse but was attacked by some of Richard's servants. . Richard rode toward the assembled crowd, who had been unable to see what had occured and persuaded them to follow him away from Smithfields to Clerkenwell Fields, defusing the situation, he convinced them to disperse to their homes. Tyler was taken to tthe nearby St. Batholomew's hospital, where his head was cut off and displayed on a pole. With their leader dead and the royal government now backed by the London militia, the rebel movement began to collapse. A force led by the king's uncle, Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester was dispatched into Essex to crush the rebels. A battle between Gloucester and the rebels was fought near the village of Billericay on 28th June, during which the peasants were defeated, over 500 of them were slain in the battle. By the summer of 1381, the revolt was over. The priest John Ball was drawn and quartered on 15th July, 1381, at Coventry, as were the peasant's leaders from Kent and Essex . Richard failed keep any of his promises claiming that they were made under duress. Although the hated poll tax was withdrawn, the peasants were forced back into their old way of life.

Wat Tyler

was a leader of the 1381 Peasants' Revolt in England. He marched a group of rebels from Canterbury to the capital to oppose the institution of a poll tax and demand economic and social reforms. While the brief rebellion enjoyed early success, Tyler was killed by officers loyal to King Richard II during negotiations at Smithfield, London.

Lollardy

was a religious movement that existed from the mid-14th century to the English Reformation. It was initially led by John Wycliffe, a Roman Catholic theologian who was dismissed from the University of Oxford in 1381 for criticism of the Roman Catholic Church. The Lollards' demands were primarily for reform of Western Christianity. Lollard, Lollardi or Loller was the popular derogatory nickname given to those without an academic background, educated (if at all) only in English, who were reputed to follow the teachings of John Wycliffe in particular, and were certainly considerably energized by the translation of the Bible into the English language. By the mid-15th century, "lollard" had come to mean a heretic in general. The alternative, "Wycliffite", is generally accepted to be a more neutral term covering those of similar opinions, but having an academic background. The term is said to have been coined by the Anglo-Irish cleric Henry Crumpe, but its origin is uncertain. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it most likely derives from Middle Dutch lollaerd (“mumbler, mutterer”), from a verb lollen (“to mutter, mumble”). It appears to be a derisive expression applied to various people perceived as heretics—first the Franciscans and later the followers of Wycliffe. Originally the Dutch word was a colloquial name for a group of the harmless buriers of the dead during the Black Death, in the 14th century, known as Alexians, Alexian Brothers or Cellites. These were known colloquially as lollebroeders (Middle Dutch for "mumbling brothers"), or Lollhorden, from Old High German: lollon ("to sing softly"), from their chants for the dead. Middle English loller (akin to the verb loll, lull, the English cognate of Dutch lollen "to mutter, mumble") is recorded as an alternative spelling of Lollard, while its generic meaning "a lazy vagabond, an idler, a fraudulent beggar" is not recorded before 1582.

Henry of Lancaster

Henry of Lancaster, who was born circa 1281, was the younger son of Edmund Crouchback, 1st Earl of Lancaster and Blanche of Artois, the daughter of Count Robert I of Artois and Matilda of Brabant and a granddaughter of King Louis VIII of France. His father Edmund Crouchback was the younger son of King Henry III of England and Eleanor of Provence and brother of King Edward I. On the death of their father at the siege of Bordeaux in 1296, Henry's elder brother

Thomas, succeeded to his titles and estates as 2nd Earl of Lancaster. Henry accompanied his uncle King Edward I both on his French and Scottish campaigns, he fought in the Battle of Falkirk 22 July 1298 and was present at the Siege of Caerlaverock in 1300. During the reign of his cousin Edward II, Henry was among the lords ordainer, a group of nobles who attempted to force King Edward to provide better government for the kingdom. Following the execution of the kings detested favourite, Piers Gaveston in 1312, by the Earl of Warwick and Henry's brother, Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, Henry was among the lords who received a pardon and seems to have remained on relatively good terms with his cousin the king for the remainder of his reign. Thomas Earl of Lancaster rose in rebellion against King Edward II for a second time and was tried and convicted of treason, for which he was executed near his castle of Pontefract and had his lands and titles forfeited to the crown in 1322.

Owain Glyndwr

the last native Welsh person to hold the title Prince of Wales.He was born in 1359 into a powerful family of the Anglo-Welsh nobility, during a time of relative peace between the tribes of Wales and the English aristocracy. His father, Gruffydd Fychan II, was a hereditary prince of Powys Fadog and Lord of Glyndyfrdwy, one of the lines of Welsh lords and princes who traced their royal lineage back to before the Norman conquest. His mother, Elen Ferch Tomas Ap Llywelyn of Deheubarth, was also of noble blood. It is thought that his father died sometime before Owain was 11 years old, and the young prince was fostered to the household of Sir David Hanmer, an Anglo-Welsh judge. Owain followed Hanmer's profession, by going to study Law at the Inns Of Court, but didn't become a 'man of law'. He married Hanmer's daughter, Margaret, in 1383 adding the titles of Squire of Sycharth and Glyndyfrdwy to his portfolio. In 1384, military service called Owain, and he enlisted under Sir Gregory Sais in the Marches area, the border country of England and Wales. In 1385 he enlisted under the Earl Of Arundel, fighting for King Richard II. Until the last decade of the 14th century, Owain Glyndwr was a man of the March, having married into a leading Marcher family and become the epitome of an assimilated Welshman. The year 1399 saw the dethronement of Richard II and the seizure of the throne by Henry IV - the lord of Brecon,

Monmouth, Cydweli and Ogwr - although Edmund Mortimer, the leading lord of the March, had a better claim to be the heir of Richard II. The immediate spark for Owain's revolt seems to have been the King's unwillingness to mediate fairly in a dispute between Owain and his neighbour, Reginald Grey of the Rhuthun marcher lordship. On September 16, 1400, Glyndŵr instigated the Welsh Revolt against the rule of Henry IV of England. A group of Owain's supporters proclaimed him Prince of Wales at Glyndyfrdwy. Although initially successful, the uprising was eventually put down. After the final battles of the revolt in 1412, little is known of Owain Glyndwr. Flashes of sporadic violence against the English continued, but by bandits and outlets rather than any semblance of an organised military force. Henry IV died in 1413, and was succeeded by the less Plantagenet, more astute Henry of Monmouth, Henry V. He began to offer the Welsh rebels pardons. Owain's son Marededdd refused a pardon until 1421, leading some historians to suspect that this was the year in which he died. One theory is that he ended his life as a the family chaplain on his daughter Alys' estate she shared with her husband, Sir Henry Scudamore, the sheriff of Herefordshire. The rebellion had to a large extent ruined the fragile but comfortable coexistence the English and Welsh had arrived at. There was extensive destruction of towns and villages, and agricultural land went to waste. It was at least a generation before most of the areas caught up in the revolt got back to working life. There had been great loss of life, an economic blockade and a weakening of commerce. Politically, too, the Welsh were knocked back where they had been making progress. It would be 150 years until the Welsh were allowed to become more prominent in society. But Glyndwr was not being forgotten in the misery. In his play, Henry IV, Shakespeare portrays Owain Glyndwr as a wild, exotic, magical and spiritual man, playing up the romantic 'Celtic' traits. In the 19th century his life and legacy was beginning to be re-evaluated as the Welsh 'nation' began to find its voice once more. The discovery of his seal and letters were proof that he was a national leader of some importance - a learned head of a country with diplomatic ties as any other head of state might. The nationalist movement has always held Owain Glyndwr in high regard, but he is now a figure of mass culture in Wales, with statues and monuments alongside pub and street names commemorating him.

Henry V

Henry was born on either 9th August, or 16th September, 1387 at Monmouth Castle, the son of Henry of Bolingbroke (later Henry IV) and Mary de Bohun. Since he was not expected to inherit the throne at the time, his date of birth has not been recorded with accuracy. Henry received his education at the hands of his great-uncle, Cardinal Beaufort. He had the midnight colouring of his mother's family, the de Bohuns and was of middling stature. The young Henry was knighted by his cousin, Richard II, during the latter's Irish campaign and was part of Richard's retinue, a hostage for his father's good behaviour, when Bolingbroke landed at Ravenspur to lead the rebellion which culminated in his usurpation of the English throne. However, Richard treated the boy well and made no threats against him. The young Henry was created Prince of Wales on the same day as his father's coronation. He was further given his grandfather, John of Gaunt's title of Duke of Lancaster in November 1399. Henry had early experience of warfare, when he put down rebellion and fought at the Battle of Shrewsbury in his father's reign, during the course of the conflict he was wounded in the face by an arrow which entered below his eye, luckily missing both brain and spinal cord and stuck in the bone at the back of the skull. To remove the embedded arrowhead, special tongs had to be constructed and carefully inserted nearly six inches into the wound to grip and extract the metal. He proved himself a distinguished soldier and leader of men, but was said to have been wild and dissident in his youth. Towards the end of Henry IV's reign, relations between Henry and his father had deteriorated, Henry IV thought his ambitious son far too eager to step into his shoes. In a scene from Shakespeare he is portrayed as trying on the crown whilst his dying father slept. The new king revived his great- grandfather King Edward III's claim to the French throne and after negotiations with his French counterpart had broken down, led an English army into France in 1415, renewing what later came to be known as the Hundred Years War. While preparations were being made for the invasion of France, the kings cousin, Richard Plantagenet, Earl of Cambridge entered into a conspiracy with Henry Scrope, 3rd Baron Scrope of Masham, and Sir Thomas Grey to depose the king, and place his late wife Anne's brother, Edmund Mortimer, 5th Earl of March, on the throne. On 31st July Edmund Mortimer revealed the plot to the King,

and further served on the commission which condemned Cambridge to death. Although Cambridge pleaded with the King for clemency, he was beheaded on 5 August 1415. Henry V 'let loose the dogs of war' and landing in France unopposed, with the aid of his brother Thomas Duke of Clarence, he took the town of Harfleur. He then sent the Dauphin a message offering to settle their quarrel for the French throne by single combat, which was declined. Henry marched his army up to English Calais, a remnant of Edward III's conquests. Food was in short supply and a French prisoner informed the English that the ford over the Somme had been staked and guarded by a large French blockade. To add to the king's considerable troubles, dysentery, that scourge of medieval soldiers, was rife in his army. Henry's small army was now in a very precarious position, all bridges across the river had been smashed or heavily defended, but a way across was eventually discovered. Between the English army and their destination of Calais a massive French army lay in waiting. Henry laid siege to Meaux and the city was surrendered to him in May, 1422. He had become seriously ill with dysentery, the bloody flux, and was weakened to such a degree that he found it impossible to ride at the head of his armies and humiliatingly had to be carried in a litter. Rest brought on some improvement in his condition which was followed by a total relapse. Lying mortally ill for three weeks, he made arrangements for the government of his two kingdoms during his young son's minority. Henry died at Vincennes on 31st August, 1422 aged 35. His body was carried in procession across France and returned to England where it was buried behind the altar at Westminster Abbey, within a magnificent tomb. The inscription around the ledge translates as "Henry V, hammer of the Gauls, lies here".rest behind the altar in Westminster Abbey, close to the tomb of Edward the Confessor, and near the tomb of Richard II. A magnificent chapel was erected around his tomb, and a life-sized effigy with a head of solid silver was placed on the tomb. The silver was stolen during the sixteenth century. Henry left a will which appointed his brother John Duke of Bedford, as governor of France and his youngest brother Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester was trusted with the guardianship of his infant son, the ill-fated Henry of Windsor, to whom he bequeathed two kingdoms and an inheritance that was to prove impossible to maintain

Treaty of Troyes

was an agreement that King Henry V of England and his heirs would inherit the throne of France upon the death of King Charles VI of France. It was signed in the French city of Troyes on 21 May 1420 in the aftermath of Henry's successful military campaign in France. It forms a part of the backdrop of the latter phase of the Hundred Years' War finally won by the French at the Battle of Castillon in 1453, and in which various English kings tried to establish their claims to the French throne.

Henry VI

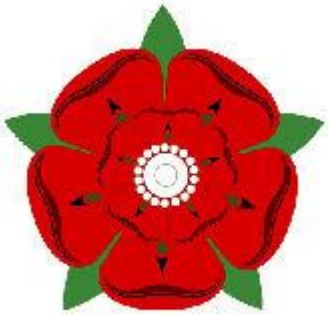
The last king of the Lancastrian dynasty, Henry VI was born at Windsor Castle on 6th December, 1421 the son of Henry V and Catherine of Valois, daughter of Charles VI of France. Henry became King of England in his cradle, he was barely nine months old when his famous father, Henry V, died of dysentry on campaign in France. Two months later he became King of France also, on the death of his maternal grandfather, the mentally unstable Charles VI. During Henry's minority, the war in France had been executed loyally and ably by his paternal uncle, John Duke of Bedford. He struggled with the almost impossible task of retaining his brother's conquests in France. England was ruled by a council led by Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, the youngest of Henry V's brothers. In November 1429, the young king was considered old enough to undergo the arduous coronation ceremony and was crowned at Westminster Abbey at eight years old. The following year, at the age of nine, he crossed to his French kingdom and was crowned King of France at Notre Dame. In the streets of Paris he was observed from an upper storey window by his notorious grandmother, Isabeau of Bavaria, the wanton widow of Charles VI, to whom the young king courteously doffed his hat. Henry's mother, Catherine of Valois, died in 1437 amidst scandal, when it was discovered that the Dowager Queen had contracted a secret marriage with her Welsh clerk of the wardrobe, Owen Tudor and had borne him several children, three sons and a daughter. Henry later created the eldest of these half-brothers, Edmund, Earl of Richmond while Jasper Tudor was raised to the title Earl of Pembroke. Both were later to play leading parts in the Wars of the Roses, the elder, Edmund was to become the father of King Henry VII, the founder of England's Tudor dynasty . Owen Tudor was summoned before the king's

council to explain his conduct, but was released without punishment, he ended his days in 1461, when after fighting on the Lancastrian side at the Battle of Mortimer's Cross, he was beheaded on the orders of Henry's supplanter, Edward IV. The wheel of fortune had begun to turn against the English in France. Joan of Arc led the French to victory, and by 1453, after the death of the great John Talbot, 1st Earl of Shrewsbury at the Battle of Castillon all of the great Henry V's conquests, apart from Calais, were lost. According to the terms of a peace agreement with France, Henry married Margaret of Anjou, daughter of Rene, Duke of Anjou and titular King of Jerusalem and Isabella, Duchess of Lorraine. Margaret was also the niece of the French King, Charles VII. The match was unpopular amongst disaffected elements in England. Margaret, unlike her husband, was a strong willed character, who was unyielding and belligerent, none of which augured well for her future in England. Henry himself was a gentle, devout and kindly man, but early in his reign is said to have been “unsteadfast of wit”. He did not appear to enjoy wearing the magnificent clothing expected of a sovereign and often dressed simply “like a farmer”. Unlike his warlike father, Henry possessed a strong aversion to violence and was deeply, even obsessively, devoted to religion. In 1453, at the age of 32, Henry VI began to exhibit signs of serious mental illness. By means of a “sudden fright” he entered into a trance-like state reacting to and recognising no one. Catatonic schizophrenia or depressive stupor have been suggested as a likely diagnosis. This was probably an inheritance from his maternal grandfather, Charles VI of France, who himself suffered from bouts of schizophrenia, which is reported to have come on suddenly in 1392 when he was then aged 24, and into which he then suffered relapses for the next thirty years. Charles VI's mother, Joanna de Bourbon, also exhibited signs of mental illness, as did various ancestors of hers, including Louis I, Duke of Bourbon, Peter I, Duke of Bourbon and Louis II, Duke of Bourbon. The king's cousin, Richard, Duke of York was appointed Lord Protector, to the annoyance of the Queen, who strongly felt that she and her party should govern England. An intense personal rivalry developed between Richard of York and Margaret's favourite, Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset. Somerset was descended from John of Gaunt's liaison with Catherine Swynford. Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, stood

very near to the throne, his mother, Anne Mortimer, was by the strict rules of primogeniture the true heir of Richard II and York was her only son. Anne's claim derived from her descent from Edward III's second surviving son, Lionel of Antwerp, Duke of Clarence. Henry VI's claim, although in the direct male line, was only through Edward's fourth son, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. Edward IV shocked the nobility when he announced he had been secretly married to Elizabeth Woodville, the beautiful but penniless widow of a Lancastrian knight. The new King had hoped to make the highly attractive Elizabeth his mistress, but she held out for marriage and Edward eventually succumbed to her charms. The old established nobility, and in particular, Warwick, were alienated by the meteoric advancement of the new Queen's large and needy family. In 1470, Warwick, later referred to as the Kingmaker, seething with hatred of the "upstart" Woodvilles, changed his allegiance to the House of Lancaster and was reunited with Margaret of Anjou under the auspices of Louis XI. Edward IV was forced to flee the country before Warwick and King Henry VI was briefly restored. A sad and pitiful figure, he was paraded through the streets of London in a shabby blue gown by George Neville, Archbishop of York and set up as a puppet King, whom the ambitious Warwick ruled through. Edward IV returned to England and defeated and killed his cousin Warwick at the Battle of Barnet. On Edward's return to London, Henry greeted him, stating, "Cousin of York, you are very welcome. I hold my life to be in no danger in your hands." The Yorkist King returned Henry to his former lodgings in the Tower and rode out to meet Margaret and her son who had landed in England on the day that Barnet was fought. Queen Margaret was defeated at last by the death of the son she had fought so long and hard for. She was imprisoned in the Tower of London. Her beloved son's widow, Anne Neville, later married one of his suspected killers, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, through this marriage, Gloucester eventually obtained much of Warwick's vast estates. Margaret's aging but ebullient father, Rene of Anjou, remained unconcerned about his daughter's fate, having recently remarried, he was preoccupied with his new young wife. Margaret was later removed to Windsor Castle, then on to Wallingford. She remained a prisoner until she was ransomed by her kinsman, Louis XI, at the Treaty of Picquigny in 1475. The embittered ex-Queen retired to

her native Anjou, where she took up residence at the Chateau of Dampierre, she died there in August, 1482, aged fifty-three. Henry VI met his death in the Tower of London, on the night of the Vigil of the Ascension, 21st -22nd May, 1471. The demise of his son at Tewkesbury had sealed his fate. While Edward of Lancaster still lived, he rendered the removal of Henry pointless. The Yorkist version of his end, that he died of "pure melancholy and displeasure" on hearing on of his son's death was not much accepted, even at the time. His death so soon after that of his son seems unlikely to have been a coincidence.

Lancastrians



Lancastrians are descendants or supporters of John (of Gaunt) Duke of Lancaster, second son of Edward III, younger brother of Edward the Black Prince. The reason why Gaunt did not become King when the Black Prince died young is that the throne had by then been usurped by Hereford, becoming Henry IV. The usurper did away with Richard II, grandson of Edward III, but Gaunt was crafty enough to survive, and important enough to get himself into Shakespeare's plays in a big way. The 'This sceptr'd isle!' soliloquoy is spoken by a dying John of Gaunt. Lancastrians held the throne of England as Henry IV, Henry V (Agincourt) and Henry VI. Their badge was a red rose. During the Wars of the Roses, a series of cruel battles fought by private armies for the throne, which lasted from 1455 to 1485, the Lancastrians suffered defeat by the replacement (and subsequent murder) of the pious but feeble Henry VI by the dashing, glamorous Edward IV of the House of York (white rose, 1461). The Lancastrian survivors managed to get to France where they took refuge, tended their wounds, and plotted. Margaret of Anjou helped them by invading England and winning battles. Her weak husband Henry was put back on the throne, pausing for a moment to found Eton College in October 1470, but he did not last long. His armies were thrashed at Barnet and Tewkesbury. The latter conflict put paid to most of the remaining Lancastrians, many of whom were butchered by the Yorkists while seeking sanctuary in the cathedral.

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster

John of Gaunt, Shakespeare's "time honoured Lancaster", was the fourth but third surviving son of King Edward III and Phillipa of Hainault. Gaunt is an

anglicized version of his birthplace of Ghent. Edward III arranged John's marriage to the wealthy heiress Blanche of Lancaster on 19 May 1359, at Reading Abbey in Berkshire. Blanche of Lancaster, the daughter of Henry of Grosmont, 1st Duke of Lancaster and his wife Isabel de Beaumont, was John's third cousin, both were great great grandchildren of King Henry III. Blanche descended from Henry's younger son, Edmund Crouchback, Earl of Lancaster. The whole royal family attended the wedding, Edward III presented the fourteen year old Blanche with expensive gifts of jewellery. The marriage is widely believed to have been a happy one, Blanche, a fair haired, beautiful and gracious woman, was described by the chronicler Jean Froissart as "young and pretty". Geoffrey Chaucer described "White", the central figure in his Book of the Duchess, which is believed to have been inspired by Blanche, in such terms as "rody, fresh, and lyvely hewed", her neck as "whyt, smothe, streght, and flat", and her throat as "a round tour of yvoire": she was "bothe fair and bright", and Nature's "cheef patron (pattern) of beautee". John campaigned with his elder brother Edward of Woodstock, known as the Black Prince and participated in many of the battles of the Hundred Years War and in aid of his ally Pedro the Cruel of Castile. Following the death of Edward, the Black Prince, John of Gaunt gave protection to the religious reformer John Wycliffe, possibly to counteract the growing power of the Roman Catholic Church. John's ascendancy to political power coincided with widespread resentment of his influence in England. English forces had experienced setbacks in the Hundred Years' War, Edward III's rule was becoming unpopular due to high taxation and his affair with Alice Perrers, political opinion closely associated John with the failing government of the 1370s. Edward III died of a stroke at Sheen, a shadow of his former self, in 1377 and was succeeded by his ten-year-old grandson Richard II. John was the virtual ruler of England during the young king's minority, but made unwise decisions on taxation which culminated in the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, Gaunt was blamed for the introduction of the unpopular poll tax, he was away from London at the time of the revolt and thus avoided the wrath of the rebels, however, his Palace of Savoy, considered the grandest nobleman's townhouse of medieval London, was destroyed during the rebellion. What the peasants could not smash or burn was thrown

into the river. On 21 September 1371, John took Constanza of Castille, the daughter of Pedro the Cruel of Castille and Leon, as his second wife. They married at Roquefort, near Bordeaux, in Guienne, on 21 September 1371. It was a loveless marriage, but nevertheless produced two children, a daughter, Catherine (1372-1418) and a son John (1374-1375), who died in infancy.Constance's father, King Pedro of Castile, was murdered by his half-brother, Henry of Castile, who usurped his throne, Constanza, Pedro's eldest daughter, was his rightful heiress. Following his marriage to Constanza, John's fate was inextricably interwoven with that of the Iberian peninsula. Under Spanish law, the husband of a female heir to the throne was the rightful king, John impaled his arms with those of Castille and in 1386, he left England in an unsuccessful attempt to claim the Castillian throne in right of his wife. He and Constanza's daughter, Catherine of Lancaster was later married to the future Henry III of Castille, son of King John I of Castile, thereby uniting these two rival claims. In return Constanza, Duchess of Lancaster agreed to renounce all claims to the Castilian throne. In John's absence, Richard II's mishandling of affairs brought England to the brink of civil war. On his return in 1389, John persuaded Richard and the Lords Appellant led by John's younger brother, Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, to compromise, which ushered in a period of relative stability. Four months after his return to England, in March 1390, Richard II invested John with the Duchy of Aquitaine. Richard struck back against the Lords Appelant in 1397, John's younger brother, Thomas, Duke of Gloucester was imprisoned in Calais to await trial for treason. Thomas was later murdered on his nephew Richard's orders. In 1398 Richard II exiled John's eldest son Henry of Bolingbroke. John of Gaunt died at Leicester Castle on February 3rd, 1399, at the age of fifty-eight, he was buried beside his first wife, Blanche of Lancaster, in the choir of St Paul's Cathedral. Their two alabaster effigies had joined hands. Two days after Gaunt's funeral, Richard made Bolingbroke's banishment perpetual, disinherited his cousin and seized Gaunt's vast estates for the Crown. The direct line of the House of Lancaster became extinct with the deaths of Henry VI and his son, Edward Prince of Wales in 1471. John Beaufort's , granddaughter, Margaret Beaufort, had a son, Henry Tudor, who later claimed the throne from

the House of York and was crowned as Henry VII, the first monarch of the Tudor dynasty.

Yorkists

The House of York, a branch of the Plantagenet family produced 3 Kings of England- Edward IV, the boy king Edward V and Richard III. They descended in the male line from Edmund of Langley, 1st Duke of York, who was the fourth surviving son of Edward III, but were also descended in the senior line from Edward being cognatic descendants (through the female line) of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, Edward's second surviving son. The Yorkist claimants therefore held a senior claim to their Lancastrian rivals according to cognatic primogeniture but a junior claim according to agnatic primogeniture. Edmund of Langley, 1st Duke of York (1341 - 1402), the founder of the House of York, was the fourth surviving son of Edward III. He had two sons Edward, Duke of York, who died at Agincourt and Richard, Earl of Cambridge. The Yorkist dynasty based their claim to throne through the marriage of his younger son, Richard, to Anne Mortimer, great-granddaughter of Lionel of Antwerp, the second son of Edward III. Richard, Earl of Cambridge was executed by the Lancastrian king Henry V for his involvement in a plot to depose the Lancastrian King Henry V in favour of his brother-in-law, Edmund, Earl of March, the appointed heir of Richard II. When Edmund later died his claim to the throne devolved on his sister Anne Mortimer. The dukedom of York and the Mortimer claim to the throne passed to her son, Richard Plantagenet. Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York produced four surviving sons, Edward, Earl of March (1442-1483), who succeeded to the throne as King Edward IV in 1461. Edmund of Langley, Earl of Rutland (b.1443), who was killed at the Battle of Wakefield along with his father in 1460. George Duke of Clarence, Shakespeare's, 'false, fleeting, perjured Clarence', who was famously drowned in a butt of malmsey in the Tower of London in 1478 and Richard, Duke of Gloucester (1452-1485). Edward IV left the crown to his young son, Edward V, the elder of the so called 'Princes in the Tower', but the throne was usurped by his uncle, Richard Duke of Gloucester, who ascended the throne as Richard III (1452-1485). The young Edward V and his brother, Richard, Duke of York, disappeared into the depths of the Tower of London and were never seen alive again. Richard III

was killed in battle at Bosworth Field in 1485. The new king, Henry VII, who represented the Lancastrian line, married Edward IV's eldest daughter Elizabeth of York, thereby uniting the claims of both houses in the person of their son, King Henry VIII.

Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick (Warwick the "Kingmaker")

Richard Neville, 16th Earl of Warwick was born on 22nd November, 1428, probably at Bisham, Berkshire, and was the first born son of Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, himself the son of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland and Joan Beaufort, illegitimate daughter of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the third surviving son of King Edward III. Gaunt later married Joan's mother, his long term mistress, Katherine Swynford and the issue of the marriage were legitimized by Richard II. Richard's mother was Alice Montacute, daughter and heiress of the Earl of Salisbury. The Neville family had been powerful in the north of England for centuries, and gradually increased their wealth and prestige through advantageous marriages. At the age of five, Richard was married to Anne Beauchamp, the sister of the the Duke of Warwick, in 1434. On the death of the Duke of Warwick in 1446, the Earldom of Warwick and its vast estates were inherited by his young daughter, also Lady Anne Beauchamp. When she died in 1449 at the age of five, the Earldom devolved to Richard Neville, who held it in right of his wife. Warwick's aunt, Cecily Neville was married to Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, who rose in rebellion against his cousin Henry VI, Warwick followed his father, the Earl of Salisbury in support of the Yorkist claim to the throne and after the victory at the First Battle of St. Albans in 1455, was appointed Captain of Calais. When forces loyal to the king sacked Ludlow after the Battle of Ludford Bridge in 1459, Warwick fled to Calais, returning to England in 1460 where he achieved victory over the Lancastrian forces at Battle of Northampton but tasted defeat at the Second Battle of St. Albans. The Lancastrian queen, Margaret of Anjou, sent a large force of around 6,000, led by the Duke of Somerset and Lord Clifford, to attack York and Warwick's father, Salisbury at Sandal Castle where they were celebrating the Christmas season. In the resulting Battle of Wakefield, York impulsively lead his army down from the castle and

into a trap. Two large forces of the Lancastrian army, commanded by the Earl of Wiltshire and Lord Roos, emerged from nearby woods and the jaws of the trap snapped shut on the Yorkist leader. The Duke of York was killed in the ensuing slaughter. His son Edmund, Earl of Rutland was killed whilst in the course of fleeing the battle, Salisbury was captured and executed. Their severed heads were displayed at York, that of York himself decorated in derision with a paper crown. The new leader of the Yorkist cause was now Richard of York's nineteen year old son, Edward, Earl of March whom Warwick joined forces with in London. A large Lancastrian army proceeded towards London, who were met by Warwick at the Second Battle of St. Albans. Elaborate defences of caltraps, spiked nets and various traps were set up in anticipation of the arrival of the Lancastrian army. However, the attack did not materialise as Warwick had envisaged. The Lancastrian vanguard entered St Albans from the direction of Dunstable and pursued the Yorkist rearguard in retreat from the town. The main body of the Yorkist army was then attacked from the flank and the rear. Warwick marched west to join forces with the approaching Yorkist army under Edward, leaving London undefended. The citizens of London refused to open the gates to the Lancastrians forcing them to withdraw north to Yorkshire. The Battle of Towton, a bitter blood bath fought in a fierce snowstorm, proved to be a decisive Yorkist victory. The victorious Edward made a state entry into London in June and was crowned King Edward IV of England at Westminster Abbey. For the first three years of Edward IV's reign, Warwick was virtual ruler of England. A popular figure with the people due to his naval victories off Calais and the captured Spanish and Genoese ships he brought into the city, any Londoner who was acquainted with his servants was allowed to take as much meat from his kitchens as he could carry on a dagger. The seeds of discord were sown when Warwick attempted to negotiate a marriage alliance with France for Edward for the hand of Bona of Savoy, only to discover on his return that the king had secretly married Elizabeth Woodville, the widow of Sir John Grey, a Lancastrian knight. Elizabeth, who proved to be avaricious and grasping, quickly persuaded her besotted spouse to arrange advantageous marriages amongst the nobility for her large and needy family. Deeply offended, the proud and haughty Warwick came to detest the new

queen. Edward's brother, George, Duke of Clarence also heartily disliked the new Queen. Warwick, who possessed influence over George and under whom he had been brought up, wished to arrange a marriage between him and his eldest daughter and co-heiress, Isabel. The King refused to sanction the match, in defiance of his brother, Clarence married Isabel at Calais. Further ill-feeling and suspicion being engendered on both sides culminated in Warwick and Clarence's open revolt, Edward's forces were defeated by them at the Battle of Edgecote Moor in 1469, and the king himself captured, and imprisoned at Warwick Castle. Warwick attempted to rule England in Edward's name, but a counter rebellion forced the king's release. Although pardoned, Warwick and Clarence incited a further rebellion in Lincolnshire under the leadership of Robert Welles, Viscount Welles,which was crushed by Edward at the Battle of Losecote Field. Warwick and Clarence promptly took ship for Calais with the countess of Warwick, Anne Neville, and the heavily pregnant Isabel, Duchess of Clarence, promptly fled the country. Isabel's child was stillborn and buried at sea. In a subtle stroke of diplomacy, Louis XI of France, known as the Spider, reconciled the discontented Warwick with the Lancastrian queen, Margaret of Anjou, then in exile in France, no mean feat, since they were bitter enemies and Margaret had executed Warwick's father, Salisbury. Warwick is reported to have spent hours on his knees before Margaret before she would consent to the alliance. His younger daughter, Anne Neville, was betrothed to Margaret's son, Edward, the Lancastrian Prince of Wales. He invaded England on Margaret's behalf in 1470, resulting in the flight of Edward IV to Burgundy and the release of Henry VI from the Tower of London and his brief re-instatement as king. A sad and pitiful figure, he was paraded through the streets of London in a shabby blue gown by George Neville, Archbishop of York and set up as a puppet King, whom the ambitious Warwick ruled through. Edward IV, backed by the Duke of Burgundy, returned in 1471, meeting Warwick's forces at Barnet. Having no longer anything to gain from the outcome of the battle, George, Duke of Clarence, Shakespeare's 'quicksand of deciet' was reconciled with his brother Edward, deserted his father-in-law and took his considerable forces into the ranks of the the Yorkists. A thick mist descended prior to the Battle of Barnet, obscuring sight of the enemy,

resulting in both army's being incorrectly aligned, with their right wings overlapping. The royal army duly advanced, the right wing outflanking Warwick's left. The same situation arose with the royal left wing, which was similarly outflanked and routed by Warwick's right, commanded by the Earl of Oxford, an excellent general. The King managed to deploy his reserve and attacked Warwick in the centre. Oxford, who had been engaged in the pursuit of the fleeing Yorkists, returned to the battle, due to the thick mist, Montague's men mistook Oxford's banner for the Yorkist sun in splendour and opened fire on them. Oxford's contingent fled and the rebels were routed. Warwick's brother, John, Marquess Montagu, was killed in the course of the battle and according to the official version of the battle, the mighty Warwick himself was killed fleeing the field in attempt to reach his horse. Probably the most likely method of his despatch was a sword thrust into his throat, after forcing open his visor. A wound on the left side of his neck is clearly depicted in an illustration in the Yorkist chronicle the Arrival. Edward IV's sister Margaret Duchess of Burgundy, who must have been well informed, in the course of writing to her mother-in-law a few days after the battle, states that the Earl of Warwick was captured at the end of the battle, and whilst in the course of being taken alive to Edward "some men recognised him and killed him". Warwick's body together with that of his brother, Montague, were later displayed at St. Paul's covered only with a loin cloth, before being buried at Bisham Priory in Berkshire. During the Refomation, much of Bisham Abbey was destroyed on the orders of King Henry VIII and the tomb of Warwick destroyed. Warwick's younger daughter, Anne Neville, following the death of her first husband, Edward Prince of Wales, was married to Edward IV's youngest brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester. When her husband later ascended the throne as Richard III, Anne Neville became Queen of England. Warwick's grandson, Edward, Earl of Warwick, the son of his elder daughter Isabel and George, Duke of Clarence was to be the last male line Plantagenet, after being held prisoner in the Tower of London for most of his life, was executed by Henry VII due to his closeness to the throne in 1499.

Edward IV

The first Yorkist King, Edward IV, was the eldest surviving son of Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York and Cecily Neville and was born on 22nd April, 1442 at Rouen, whilst the Duke was stationed in France. His father, Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, held a strong claim to the English throne. He was the son of Richard, Earl of Cambridge, who himself was the son of Edward III's fourth surviving son, Edmund of Langley, Duke of York. Richard of York's mother Anne Mortimer, was the great grandaughter and heiress of Phillipa Plantagenet, the only child of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, second surviving son of Edward III. Richard II had declared Anne's father, Roger Mortimer, 4th Earl of March, as heir presumptive to the crown. Edward's mother, Cecily Neville, was the daughter of Ralph Neville, 1st Earl of Westmorland, and Joan Beaufort, daughter of John of Gaunt, 1st Duke of Lancaster and his mistress, later wife, Katherine Swynford. The Lancastrian king, Henry VI, was descended from Edward's third son John of Gaunt by a legitimate line from Henry IV. On the death of his father and brother, Edmund, Earl of Rutland, in contest for the throne, at Sandal Castle, Wakefield at Christmas, 1460, Edward inherited from his father the Yorkist claim to England's throne. He acquired the support of his powerful cousin, Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, later to be known to history as 'Warwick the Kingmaker'. Edward proved to be an able general, defeating the Lancastrians at Mortimers Cross in February 1461 after which he was proclaimed king in London. He gained a further decisive victory over the Lancastrians at Towton in Yorkshire, on 29th March, Palm Sunday. Fought in a snowstorm, it was to be the bloodiest battle of the Wars of the Roses, with casualties reported to be in the region of 28,000. The victorious Edward made a state entry into London in June and was crowned King of England at Westminster. Edward was well renowned for his fair complexion and good looks. The Croyland Chronicler described Edward as “a person of most elegant appearance and remarkable beyond all others for the attractions of his person”. On becoming king at nineteen years old, Edward met and secretly married Elizabeth Woodville, the widow of Sir John Grey of Groby, a Lancastrian knight had been killed in the Second Battle of St Albans in 1461. Elizabeth was the daughter of Sir Richard Woodville (later Earl Rivers) and Jacquetta of Luxembourg, whose first husband was

John of Lancaster, Duke of Bedford, the brother of Henry V. Elizabeth first met Edward when she came to petition him for the restoration of her son's estates, the King had wanted her to become his mistress, but she refused. Bewitched by her beauty, he finally proposed, they were married at the Manor of Grafton in Northamptonshire on 1 May 1464. Elizabeth had two sons from her first marriage, Thomas, later created Marquess of Dorset, and Richard Grey. Elizabeth, who proved to be avaricious and grasping, quickly persuaded her besotted spouse to arrange advantageous marriages amongst the nobility for her large and needy family. This succeeded in alienating 'the over mighty subject' Warwick, turning him from Edward's supporter to his implacable enemy. Edward's brother, George, Duke of Clarence also heartily disliked the new Queen. Warwick, who possessed influence over George and under whom he had been brought up, wished to arrange a marriage between him and his eldest daughter and co-heiress, Isabel. The King refused to sanction the match, in defiance of his brother, Clarence married Isabel at Calais. An able ruler, Edward IV made an admirable start on reforming royal administration and on improving the machinery of royal finance. Edward embarked on an extensive building scheme, St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, intended to be the mausoleum of the House of York. He patronised his rival King Henry VI's foundation of Eton College. William Caxton set up England's first printing press during the reign, and also received Edward's patronage. Edward revived the ancient claim of English Kings to the throne of France and set sail for France in the summer of 1475 with an army of around 10, 000. He possessed a powerful ally in Charles, Duke of Burgundy, the husband of his sister Margaret. The Treaty of Picquigny in 1475 brought the King a pension from Louis XI along with diplomatic benefits. Several of the king's followers, which included his brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, considered the deal inglorious but Edward emerged with credit and had acquired a lucrative pension. The King's untrustworthy brother George, Duke of Clarence (pictured left) remained sullenly disatisfied, his wife Isabel Neville died shortly after giving birth to a second son, Richard, in December, 1476, she was followed to the grave by her baby the following January. The death of women in or after childbirth was a common occurrence of the age, but Clarence, always inclined to be of a suspicious

frame of mind and driven by a burning resentment of the Queen and her family, accused Ankarette Twynho, a woman who had waited on his wife, of poisoning her. A jury was bullied into deciding Ankarette guilty and the unfortunate woman was hung. In retribution and as a warning, two of Clarence's men were executed on a charge of using magical arts against the King and his family. Frustrated but unable to strike directly at the Queen, he burst into the council chamber at Westminster and read aloud a declaration of their innocence. The Duke of Clarence had clearly gone too far. A rising in Cambridgeshire was believed to have been incited by Clarence and Edward, whose patience had been tried to the limit, accused him of placing himself above the law when he tried and hung Ankarette Twynho. He was found guilty of high treason, attainted and the death sentence passed. At the request of their mother, Cecily Neville, Dowager Duchess of York, the execution was carried out privately in the Tower of London on 18th February, 1478. Rumour reported that he had been drowned in a butt of malmsey wine. In his later years, due to over indulgence, Edward IV had put on much weight In his latter years Edward's once athletic phyique had gone downhill and turned to fat, as did that of his formidable grandson, Henry VIII. The French writer Philippe de Commynes recorded that Edward was 'beginning to get fat and I had seen him on previous occasions looking more handsome.' After his return from France, Edward took Jane Shore as his mistress, he called her the merriest of his concubines and described her as “Merry in company, ready and quick of answer”. She possessed a large amount of influence over the king, which she did not use for her own personal gain, but often used it to bring those out of favour before the king to help them gain pardon. Thomas More later recorded many years later, that she “never abused (her influence) to any man's hurt, but to many a man's comfort and relief” and “where the king took displeasure, she would mitigate and appease his mind; where men were out of favor, she would bring them in his grace; for many that highly offended, she obtained pardon”. Edward, a notorious womaniser, did not discard her as he had done with many of his previous mistresses. Their relationship was to last until his death. In 1483 after catching a cold on a fishing trip on the Thames at Windsor, which is believed to have developed into pneumonia. Edward was aged just 41 at his death which was both sudden

and unexpected. The Croyland Chronicler cryptically recorded that "The king took to his bed neither worn out with old age nor yet seized with any known kind of malady, the cure of which would not have appeared easy in the case of a person of more humble rank." The symptoms of Edward's final illness are largely unrecorded by the chroniclers of the time making it difficult to diagnose his cause of death. On 9th April he died at Westminster and was buried in his foundation of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, his tomb lies close to that of his victim, the Lancastrian King Henry VI. The tomb of King Edward IV was later destroyed by the Roundheads. He was suceeded by his twelve year old son, Edward V.

The fate of Elizabeth Woodville. Elizabeth Woodville lived on to see further reversals of fortune. The throne of her son Edward V was usurped by her brother-in-law, the Duke of Gloucester, who became Richard III and her marriage to Edward IV declared invalid and her children bastards. Her two young sons, Edward V and Richard, Duke of York, disappeared inside the grim walls of the Tower of London and were never again seen alive. In attempt to regain her lost influence, she supported the Lancastrian Henry Tudor, promising him the hand of her eldest daughter, Elizabeth. After Henry's defeat of Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, he married Elizabeth of York , Elizabeth was restored to her position as Dowager Queen and stood as godparent to the new Tudor heir to the throne, her grandson, Prince Arthur. For reasons which remain unclear, Elizabeth quarreled with her new son-in-law and was confined to a nunnery at Bermondsey in 1487. She died there, penniless on 8th June, 1492 and was buried beside her husband, Edward IV, at Windsor.

Wars of the Roses

The Wars of the Roses were a series of dynastic wars fought between supporters of two rival branches of the House of Plantagenet, the houses of Lancaster, whose emblem was the red rose and the House of York whose badge was the white rose.

First Battle of St. Albans. 22 May, 1459. As the result of a long standing power struggle involving Richard, Duke of York and Margaret of Anjou, wife of the Lancastrian King Henry VI, banners were unfurled at St. Albans in the first battle in the civil war which was later to be termed the Wars of the Roses. The opposing

armies clashed at the town of St Albans. The Yorkists made two frontal assaults down the town's narrow streets against Lancastrian barricades, to no effect. The Earl of Warwick lead his troops through back lanes and gardens, to launch a surprise attack on Lancastrian troops in the Market Square. The Lancastrians were routed. Warwick then issued orders to shoot those guarding the king, Henry seems at this point in the battle to have been wounded by an arrow. The Lancastrians troops stationed at the barricades realised they were ouflanked and fled. Henry VI was captured and escorted back to London by the victorious Yorkists. The leading Lancastrian Dukes of Somerset and Northumberland along with Lord Clifford were killed.

Northhampton. 10 July, 1460. Margaret of Anjou, fiercely defensive of the rights of her son, Edward of Lancaster, the Prince of Wales, remained utterly determined to crush the Yorkist claim to the throne. She gathered an army to advance her son's cause and York, Salisbury and Warwick were forced into flight before her. In response the Duke of York marched his forces from his base at Ludlow, but was intercepted by a Lancastrian army lead by Lord Audley. Attempts at negotiation between Warwick and the Lancastrians proved fruitless as Henry refused to admit Warwick to his presence. The ensuing battle outside the walls of Northampton proved a significant Yorkist victory, the Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Shrewsbury and Lords Egremont and Beaumont were all killed whilst attempting to protect the king from the Yorkists closing on his tent. Henry was again captured and Margaret and her son were forced to flee.

Wakefield. 30 December, 1460. The resolute Margaret of Anjou responded to this victory by raising a further army. York and his brother-in-law and ally Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury advanced to meet the Queen. They defeated a Lancastrian advance guard lead by Andrew Trollope and arrived at Sandal castle in Yorkshire were they planned to spend Christmas. A large force of around 6,000, lead by the Duke of Somerset and Lord Clifford surrounded the castle. York impulsively lead his army down from the castle and into a trap. Two large forces of the Lancastrian army, commanded by the Earl of Wiltshire and Lord Roos, emerged from nearby woods and the jaws of the trap snapped shut on the Yorkist leader. The Duke of

York was killed in the ensueing slaughter. His son the Earl of Rutland was killed whilst in the course of escape, Salisbury was captured and executed. Their severed heads were displayed at York, that of York himself decorated in derision with a paper crown.

The Battle of Mortimer's Cross. 2 February, 1461. York's eldest son, Edward, Earl of March, took up the position of leader of the Yorkist cause. An efficient general, he presented as a formidable opponent to Margaret. Edward IV joined forces with the dead Salisbury's son, Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, in London, determined to avenge his father's death. Edward marched into Hereford to engage the Lancastrian lords, Jasper Tudor and the Earl of Wiltshire, who were routed at Mortimer's Cross. Prior to the battle a complete parhelion appeared in the sky, from which phenomena it is believed, Edward adopted his badge of the Sun in Splendour. Jasper's father, Owen Tudor, was captured and beheaded after the battle.

Second Battle of St. Albans. 17 February, 1461. A large Lancastrian army proceeded towards London, who were met by the Earl of Warwick, with the king in his train at the town of St. Albans on Barnard's Heath. Elaborate defences of caltraps, spiked nets and various traps were set up in anticipation of the arrival of the Lancastrian army. However, the attack did not materialise as Warwick had envisaged. The Lancastrian vanguard entered St Albans from the direction of Dunstable and pursued the Yorkist rearguard in retreat from the town. The main body of the Yorkist army was then attacked from the flank and the rear. Warwick marched west to join forces with the approaching Yorkist army under Edward, leaving London undefended. Terrrified by tales of Lancastrian pillaging and looting, the citizens of London refused to open the gates, forcing the Lancastrians to withdraw north to Yorkshire.

Battle of Towton. Palm Sunday, 29 March, 1461. The Battle of Towton, a bitter blood bath was fought in a fierce snowstorm on a plateau between the villages of Towton and Saxton in Yorkshire. Both sides had amassed sizeable armies of around 50,000 each. Edward led the Yorkist centre, Warwick the right and Fauconberg the left. The Lancastrian army was led by the Duke of Somerset, who controlled the centre, the

Earl of Northumberland commanding the right and the Duke of Exeter the left. The Lancastrian army occupied a good strategic position at the summit of the plateau. The Yorkist archers, greatly aided by the wind direction, were able to shoot much further than their Lancastrian counterparts. Finally the Lancastrians charged their opponents and ferocious hand to hand fighting ensued. Edward himself fought on foot. The Duke of Norfolk arrived on the scene with reinforcements ensuring a Yorkist victory. The routed Lancastrians fled, Some of the worst slaughter took place at the aptly named Bloody Meadow, where it was reported men crossed the River Cock over the bodies of their fallen comrades. The dead littered the fields all the way from Towton to Tadcaster. At Tadcaster some Lancastrian troops made a stand but were slaughtered. The rout lasted throughout the night and into the morning. Towton proved to be the largest and bloodiest battle ever fought on English soil, with casualties reported to have been in excess of 28,000.Henry VI, Margaret of Anjou, and the Lancastrian Prince of Wales fled north to seek refuge in Scotland. The triumphant Earl of March was accepted as king and crowned as Edward IV at Westminster Abbey on 28 June, 1461.

Battle of Hexham. 14 May, 1464. On his return from the Scottish border, Montague again met the Lancastrians forces at Hexham, which resulted in a further Yorkist victory. Many Lancastrian leaders were executed after the battle, severely limiting their effectiveness as a rival party for the crown.

Battle of Edgecote Moor. 26 July, 1469. King Edward IV's unpopular marriage to the greedy and grasping Elizabeth Woodville eventually suceeded in alienating Warwick and his brother George Plantagenet, Duke of Clarence. In 1469 in response to an uprising in Yorkshire Edward gathered an army and marched north, he was intercepted and defeated on the journey by a Lancastrian force. Warwick and Clarence had already landed in England from Calais to join the rebels under 'Robin of Redesdale'. Edward was captured and 'the Kingmaker 'Warwick assumed control of the country, albeit in his name.

Battle of Losecote Field. 12 March, 1470. Under the ruse of putting down an uprising, Edward IV raised an army in 1470 and attacked Warwick's forces at

Empingham. Victory went to the royal forces. The battle acquired its name of 'Losecoat Field' due to the haste in which the rebels shed their coats in flight. Warwick and Clarence fled to France, where they were encouraged by Louis XI to form an alliance with the exiled Margaret of Anjou, Warwick married his younger daughter, Anne Neville, to Margaret's son, the Lancastrian Prince of Wales.

The Battle of Barnet. 14 April, 1471. Warwick, returning from France, joined forces with his allies Montague, the Duke of Exeter and the Earl of Oxford at Coventry and marched toward London. Edward awaited them just north of the town of Barnet. A thick mist descended prior to the battle, obscuring sight of the enemy, resulting in both army's being incorrectly aligned, with their right wings were overlapping. The royal army duly advanced, the right wing outflanking Warwick's left. The same situation arose with the royal left wing, which was similarly outflanked and routed by Warwick's right, commanded by the Earl of Oxford, an excellent general. The King managed to deploy his reserve and attacked Warwick in the centre. Oxford, who had been engaged in the pursuit of the fleeing Yorkists, returned to the battle, due to the thick mist, Montague's men mistook Oxford's banner for the Yorkist sun in splendour and opened fire on them. Oxford's contingent fled and the rebels were routed. The mighty Warwick was killed fleeing the battlefield in an attempt to reach his horse.

Tewkesbury. 4 May, 1471. Margaret of Anjou and her son, Edward, Prince of Wales, landed from France on the eve of the Battle of Barnet to hear the disquieting news of the Yorkist victory at Barnet and her ally, Warwick's death. Edward pursued them as they marched to Wales to join forces with the staunch Lancastrian, Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke and caught up with them at Tewkesbury, in Gloucestershire. The Prince of Wales and Lord Wenlock led the Lancastrian centre and the Earl of Devon, the left. Margaret retired to a nearby convent, to await the outcome of the battle. Edward IV himself commanded the centre of the Yorkist army, his youngest brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the left and William, Lord Hastings the right. Edward attacked at dawn, following an exchange of artillery fire, the Yorkists advanced at which Somerset attacked the flank of the Yorkist left. The Yorkist's responded by

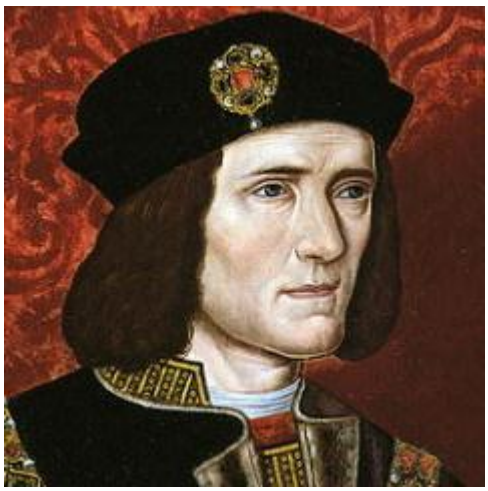
attacking Somerset's flank. Somerset himself attacked and slew the aged Wenlock, whom he frenziedly accused of not supporting him. The remainder of the Lancastrians panicked and fled, pursued into Tewkesbury by the exultant Yorkists. The Prince of Wales was either killed fleeing the battle or shortly thereafter. Lancastrians who sought sanctuary in Tewkesbury Abbey were dragged out and executed. The Lancastrian cause was now utterly decimated, Margaret, crushed at last by the death of her son, was taken prisoner and imprisoned in the Tower of London.

Bosworth. 22 August, 1485. On the death of Edward IV, his young sons, Edward V and Richard, Duke of York. were imprisoned in the Tower of London, after which they were never again seen alive, and the throne was taken by his brother, who became Richard III. His right was challenged by Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, who claimed to be the heir of Lancaster. Henry landed at Milford Haven in Wales on August 7, 1485 and Richard III advanced to meet him. The two armies eventually faced each other south of the village of Market Bosworth in Leicestershire. The ranks of the Yorkist army were infiltrated with treason. Lord Thomas Stanley and his brother Sir William who positioned their armies to the sides of the battle and their timely intervention ensured a victory for Henry Tudor, who suceeded to the throne as Henry VII. Richard III was killed in battle, having refused to flee. Henry later married Edward IV's eldest daughter, Elizabeth of York. Click for a fuller account of the battle.

The Battle of Stoke. 16 June, 1487. An imposter arose to challenge the newly established Tudor regime in 1487. Lambert Simnel, who posed as Edward, Earl of Warwick along with his die-hard Yorkist supporters, including John de la Pole Earl of Lincoln, Richard III's appointed heir, he planned an invasion of England. They were met by Henry VII's forces under the Earl of Oxford at East Stoke. Initially the rebel army seemed to be gaining the upper hand, but after the arrival on the battlefield of Lancastrian reinforcements, they were eventually routed and Henry VII triumphant.

Richard III (of Gloucester)

The last of England's line of Plantagenet kings, Richard III, was born at Fotheringhay Castle in Northamptonshire on 2nd October, 1452. Richard was



the eleventh child in a large family and the fourth surviving son of Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, (premier descendant of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, the third son of Edward III) and Cecily Neville. Cecily was the daughter of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland and Joan Beaufort, Joan herself was the illegitimate daughter of John of Gaunt. His was a difficult birth, his mother was at a precarious age for childbearing in the middle ages and the child was a breech. As an infant Richard was weak and sickly and not expected to survive the perils of childhood in the late middle ages. The young Richard grew up amidst the violent civil strife of the Wars of the Roses, it formed and moulded him and he was very much the product of that turbulent age. His father, Richard , Duke of York, challenged the Lancastrian King Henry VI's right to the throne. After a prolonged struggle for possession of England's crown, both his father and his brother, Edmund, Earl of Rutland, were killed by Lancastrian forces under Margaret of Anjou at Sandal Castle, at Christmas, 1460. Their heads, York's crowned with a paper coronet in derision, were struck on the walls of York. The Yorkist claim to the throne passed to the young Richard's eldest brother, Edward, a competent general, he defeated the Lancastrians, deposed Henry VI and was crowned at Westminster Abbey as King Edward IV in 1461. Richard received his education at Middleham Castle in Yorkshire in the household of his influential maternal cousin, Richard Neville, later to be known to history as Warwick the Kingmaker. He was created Duke of Gloucester on 1st November 1461, after the accession of his brother, Edward IV, to the throne. The title was traditionally a royal one, but considered to be an unlucky one. Shakespeare states in his Henry VI, part three that "Gloucester's Dukedom is too ominous" a reference to its previous holders, Thomas Duke of Gloucester, youngest son of Edward III, who was murdered by supporters of his nephew Richard II, while Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, brother of Henry V, suffered a similar fate during the reign of his nephew, Henry VI. Richard adopted the white boar (see right) as his personal badge, along with the motto “Loyaulte me lie” (Loyalty binds me.) On the death of the mighty Earl of Warwick at the Battle of Barnet, Richard married his recently widowed younger daughter, Anne Neville. Anne had previously been the wife of Edward, the Lancastrian Prince of Wales, who had been killed during or after the decisive Yorkist

victory at Tewkesbury. Anne and Richard were first cousins once removed, both descended from Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland and Joan Beaufort, the daughter of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, third surviving son of Edward III. Richard had first met his future wife when he was taken into her father's household at Middleham Castle on the death his father, in 1460. Contemporary accounts vary as to how Anne's first husband actually met his death, some state he was killed in battle, others that he was murdered during its aftermath by Edward IV, Richard and Lord Hastings. Anne was taken to Coventry after the Battle of Tewkesbury then moved to her sister Isabel and her husband George, Duke of Clarence's home in London. Richard of Gloucester, then in his late teens, requested, and was granted, permission from Edward IV, to marry Anne, who was co-heiress to her father's vast estates. Clarence, who was eager to secure the whole Neville inheritance for himself, opposed the marriage. There are varying accounts of what happened subsequently, one states that she escaped from Clarence's household and sought refuge in a London cookshop disguised as a servant. Richard is said to have traced her and escorted her to sanctuary at the Church of St Martin le Grand. The couple were married on 12th July 1472, at Westminster Abbey, Richard and Clarence then engaged in a lengthy dispute over who should inherit a bulk of the Neville and Beauchamp estates, although Anne's mother, Anne Beauchamp was still living, her property was divided between her two sons-in-law. A disgraceful Act of Parliament stated she should be deemed as legally dead. The marriage produced one child, Edward of Middleham, later Prince of Wales, born in December 1473, although Richard is known to have at least two illegitimate children, a son, John of Gloucester (who was later claimed to be executed by Henry VII) and a daughter, Katherine Plantagenet, who was married to the Earl of Huntingdon. Richard made his power base in the north, where he now owned vast estates and acted as his brother's lieutenant in the region. Disliking the Queen, Elizabeth Woodville and her upstart and grasping relations, he stayed away from court as much as was practically possible, living mainly at Middleham in Yorkshire. Richard was said to ressemble his father. Unlike his brothers Edward IV and George, Duke of Clarence, both tall and well built, Richard was short, slightly built and dark haired. His skeleton revealed that he suffered from scoliosis, or

curvature of the spine, which meant that one shoulder would have been higher than the other, the condition is different from kyphosis, which is a condition of a curving of the spine that causes a bowing or rounding of the back, which leads to a hunchback. No evidence was found on his remains of a withered arm, Shakespeares 'blasted sapling'. Richard was sickly as a child, the fifteenth century Silesian nobleman Nicolas von Poppelau, who met Richard and clearly liked him, stated Richard was taller and slimmer than himself, not so solid and far leaner with delicate arms and legs. John Rous recorded Richard was "slight in body and weak in strength". Katherine FitzGerald, who is said to have once danced with him at the court of Edward IV, described him as handsome. On the death of his brother Edward in April, 1483, Richard interrupted the progress of the new king, his nephew, Edward V, at Stony Stratford. Woodville, Grey and others of the boy's escort were sent to Richard's power base in the north. Anthony Woodville and Richard Grey, despite reassurals to the contrary, were later executed on Richard of Gloucester's orders. The young King, now in the custody of his uncle Richard and Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, continued on his progress to London. News of the dramatic occurrences at Stony Stratford raced ahead of them, Queen Elizabeth Woodville, in a state of agitation, fled to Westminster Abbey with her daughters and her younger son, Richard, Duke of York. Avaricious as ever, she did not fail to take all her possessions into sanctuary with her. Gloucester and Buckingham entered London with the young king and a large body of armed men from the north. Panic spread, most people had been taken by surprise and astonishment was rife at the speed of events. An unmistakable atmosphere of coup d'etat gripped the city. While the grasping Woodvilles had been unpopular, King Edward IV had been much loved by the people, and therefore most were loyal to his son. Richard of Gloucester eased apprehension by explaining he was only countering a Woodville conspiracy aimed at himself and "the old nobility of the realm". This explaination was generally accepted and the fears which had gripped London were calmed. The young King Edward V was lodged in the Tower of London ostensibly awaiting his coronation. There was nothing sinister detected in this at the time when the Tower was a royal residence as well as a prison. On the pretext that his brother required his company and the

Queen was being foolish, the ten year old Richard, Duke of York, was removed from the safety of sanctuary at Westminster and taken to join him in the Tower. At a meeting of the council at the Tower on the thirteenth of June, ostensibly to discuss Edward V's coronation, Gloucester, the Lord Protector, had William, Lord Hastings suddenly and unexpectedly arrested on a charge of treason. Hastings, while he detested the Woodvilles, had been a close friend of Edward IV and would never have countenanced the disinheriting of his children. He was executed, without trial, the same day on a block of wood. Edward IV's mistress Jane Shore, who had been taken up by Hastings, was humiliatingly forced to walk barefoot in her petticoat through the streets of London with a taper in her hand. This punishment did not have the effect Richard planned, instead the crowds who gathered to watch the spectacle were moved to pity and impressed with the dignity she displayed during her ordeal. The legitimacy of the young Edward V then began to be actively questioned, and the old claim of Edward IV not being the true son of Richard, Duke of York was resurrected by Buckingham, who stated that the late King's true father had been an archer named Blaybourne, who was supposed to have had an adulterous affair with Cecily, Duchess of York. The two young princes had been seen playing in the Tower gardens at various times until then. Gradually, they began to appear less frequently. The last person to see them alive was Edward V's physician, Dr. Argentine, who had attended him at the Tower and found him in a state of abject melancholy. Questions were raised in his reign with regard to Edward's legitimacy, it was noted that he looked nothing like his father, the short and dark Richard Plantagenet. Rumours were promoted by the Earl of Warwick in 1469, and repeated by George, Duke of Clarence shortly before his death in 1478, but with no evidence. It was suggested that the real father may have been an archer called Blaybourne.until recently, the generally accepted view was that issue was a fallacy raised to support both the claims of his brothers George and later Richard III. Prior to his succession to the throne, on June 22, 1483, Richard III is said to have declared that his older brother was illegitimate. The Act of Titulus Regius describes Richard III as “the undoubted son and heir” of Richard, Duke of York, Mancini states that Edward's mother, Cecily Neville, known as “Proud Cis” began this story,

when she was informed of Edward's secret marriage to Elizabeth Woodville, the outraged Cecily is reported to have declared that she was tempted to swear he was illegitimate and thereby have him removed from the throne for his foolishness. In 2003, Dr Michael Jones disclosed in a Channel 4 documentary by Tony Robinson evidence from Rouen Cathedral. In the cathedral register, an entry in 1441 records that the clergy were paid for a sermon for the safety of the Duke of York, going to Pontoise on campaign. He would have been on campaign from July 14 to August 21, 1441, which was several days' march from Rouen. Unless he was born prematurely, which is not recorded, By counting back from Edward's birth on April 28, it would seem that Richard of York was not present at the time of Edward's conception around the first week of August 1441. Furthermore , the cathedral records reveal that Edward's christening was carried out in private in a side chapel of the Rouen Cathedral, while at the christening of Richard and Cecily's second son, Edmund, Earl of Rutland, the whole cathedral was used for a huge celebration, again suggesting to supporters of the theory that Edward was indeed illegitimate, although the Duke of York never disclaimed his paternity of his eldest son. Some historians have offered criticism of this theory in that it is logistically possible for Richard Duke of York to have returned briefly from battle to Rouen. It remains debatable as to whether Richard had Edward and his younger brother, Richard, Duke of York, murdered in the Tower. Revisionists claim that his ally the Duke of Buckingham, or his successor, Henry Tudor had just as much cause to remove them from his path to the throne as did Richard. Opinion about his role in his nephew's disappearance has oscillated between two extremes, one is the picture painted by Shakespeare of a murderous monster who ruthlessly liquidated all who stood in his path to power, the other is of a much maligned and conscientious ruler. Much evidence to support both claims has been raised. At a distance of more than five hundred years it is impossible to state with certainty who was responsible for ordering the murder of Edward V and his young brother, all that can be said with certainty is that rumour was rife at this time that they had been done away with and that they were never seen alive again. (For an account of the mysterious disappearance of the two Princes in the Tower, see our section on Edward V). Richard's

	coronation took place on 6th July 1483, Buckingham was created Constable and great Chamberlain of England and magnificently clad, held the King's train at the ceremony. King Richard III then set out on a royal progress. When he reached the city of York, where he was popular, England's only north country King was well received. His son, Edward of Middleham, was created Prince of Wales in a magnificent ceremony at York Minster.
esquire	a man belonging to the order of English gentry ranking next below a knight.
Richard Whittington	was an English merchant and a politician of the late medieval period. He is also the real-life inspiration for the English folk tale Dick Whittington and His Cat. He was four times Lord Mayor of London, a member of parliament and a sheriff of London. In his lifetime he financed a number of public projects, such as drainage systems in poor areas of medieval London, and a hospital ward for unmarried mothers. He bequeathed his fortune to form the Charity of Sir Richard Whittington which, nearly 600 years later, continues to assist people in need.
Company of the Staple	is one of the oldest mercantile corporations in England. It is rare, possibly unique, in being ‘of England‘ and not bounded by any city or municipality. It may trace its ancestry back as far as 1282 or even further. A group of 26 wool merchants apparently first started the Company. The Dukes of Burgundy and Counts of Flanders granted it charters. The Merchants were in Bruges in 1282, Dordrecht in 1285, Antwerp in 1296 and St Omer in 1313. The Company controlled the export of wool to the continent from 1314. The Duke of Flanders awarded a grant to the English Merchants in 1341. Its first charter from an English monarch was in 1347 giving it control of the export trade in staple commodities.
Merchant Adventurers	company of English merchants who engaged in trade with the Netherlands (and later with northwest Germany) from the early 15th century to 1806. The company, chartered in 1407, principally engaged in the

export of finished cloth from the burgeoning English woolen industry. Its heyday extended from the late 15th century to 1564, during which period it sent its fleets to its market at Antwerp in the Spanish Netherlands with cloth to be sold at the annual fairs. By the middle of the 16th century, as much as three-fourths of English foreign trade was controlled by the London officers of the company, many of whom served as financiers and advisers to the Tudor monarchs. After 1564 the Merchant Adventurers lost its market in the Spanish Netherlands and a long search for a new one followed. After 1611 its foreign trading activities were centred at Hamburg and one or another town in the republican United Provinces. The company was criticized in Parliament as a monopoly, and it lost many of its privileges in the 17th century.

William Langland

(born c. 1330—died c. 1400), presumed author of one of the greatest examples of Middle English alliterative poetry, generally known as Piers Plowman, an allegorical work with a complex variety of religious themes. One of the major achievements of Piers Plowman is that it translates the language and conceptions of the cloister into symbols and images that could be understood by the layman. In general, the language of the poem is simple and colloquial, but some of the author’s imagery is powerful and direct. There were originally thought to be three versions of Piers Plowman: the A version of the text, which was the earliest, followed by the B and C versions that consisted of revisions and further amplifications of the major themes of A. However, a fourth version, called Z, has been suggested and the order of issue questioned. The version described here is from the B text, which consists of (1) a prologue and seven passus (divisions) concerned primarily with the life of man in society, the dangers of Meed (love of gain), and manifestations of the seven capital sins; and (2) 13 passus ostensibly dealing with the lives of Do-wel, Do-bet, and Do-best; in effect, with the growth of the individual Christian in self-knowledge, grace, and charity.

(born c. 1342/43, London?, England—died October 25, 1400, London), the outstanding English poet before

Geoffrey Chaucer

Shakespeare and "the first finder of our language." His The Canterbury Tales ranks as one of the greatest poetic works in English. He also contributed importantly in the second half of the 14th century to the management of public affairs as courtier, diplomat, and civil servant. In that career he was trusted and aided by three successive kings—Edward III, Richard II, and Henry IV. But it is his avocation—the writing of poetry—for which he is remembered. Perhaps the chief characteristics of Chaucer's works are their variety in subject matter, genre, tone, and style and in the complexities presented concerning the human pursuit of a sensible existence. Yet his writings also consistently reflect an all-pervasive humour combined with serious and tolerant consideration of important philosophical questions. From his writings Chaucer emerges as poet of love, both earthly and divine, whose presentations range from lustful cuckoldry to spiritual union with God. Thereby, they regularly lead the reader to speculation about man's relation both to his fellows and to his Maker, while simultaneously providing delightfully entertaining views of the frailties and follies, as well as the nobility, of mankind. Chaucer's great literary accomplishment of the 1390s was The Canterbury Tales. In it a group of about 30 pilgrims gather at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, across the Thames from London, and agree to engage in a storytelling contest as they travel on horseback to the shrine of Thomas à Becket in Canterbury, Kent, and back. Harry Bailly, host of the Tabard, serves as master of ceremonies for the contest. The pilgrims are introduced by vivid brief sketches in the General Prologue. Interspersed between the 24 tales told by the pilgrims are short dramatic scenes presenting lively exchanges, called links and usually involving the host and one or more of the pilgrims. Chaucer did not complete the full plan for his book: the return journey from Canterbury is not included, and some of the pilgrims do not tell stories. Further, the surviving manuscripts leave room for doubt at some points as to Chaucer's intent for arranging the material. The work is nevertheless sufficiently complete to be considered a unified book rather than a collection of unfinished fragments. Use of a pilgrimage as a framing device for the collection of stories enabled Chaucer to bring together people from many walks of life: knight, prioress, monk; merchant, man of law, franklin, scholarly clerk; miller, reeve, pardoner; wife of Bath

and many others. Also, the pilgrimage and the storytelling contest allowed presentation of a highly varied collection of literary genres: courtly romance, racy fabliau, saint's life, allegorical tale, beast fable, medieval sermon, alchemical account, and, at times, mixtures of these genres. Because of this structure, the sketches, the links, and the tales all fuse as complex presentations of the pilgrims, while at the same time the tales present remarkable examples of short stories in verse, plus two expositions in prose. In addition, the pilgrimage, combining a fundamentally religious purpose with its secular aspect of vacation in the spring, made possible extended consideration of the relationship between the pleasures and vices of this world and the spiritual aspirations for the next, that seeming dichotomy with which Chaucer, like Boethius and many other medieval writers, was so steadily concerned.

William of Wykeham

(born 1324, Wickham, Hampshire, Eng.—died Sept. 27, 1404, Bishops Waltham, Hampshire), English prelate and statesman, the founder of Winchester College and of New College, Oxford. Wykeham evidently came from a very poor family. Wealthy patrons helped him obtain an education, and about 1356 he entered the service of King Edward III. By the mid-1360s he was the king's most trusted assistant. In 1367 he was made chancellor of England and bishop of Winchester, but he lost the former post (1371) in an anticlerical reaction led by the powerful John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. He then became a bitter opponent of Gaunt, who had assumed control of the government of the senile king Edward. Gaunt retaliated by hounding Wykeham with charges of corruption. The bishop received a royal pardon on the accession of King Richard II, whom he served as chancellor from 1389 to 1391. Meanwhile, Wykeham was working to found his educational institutions. He built New College, beginning in 1380, and in 1382 he founded at Winchester a school (see Winchester College) to prepare boys for study at New College.

William Caxton

(born c. 1422, Kent, England—died 1491, London), the first English printer, who, as a translator and publisher, exerted an important influence on English literature. In 1438 he was apprenticed to Robert Large, a rich

mercer, who in the following year became lord mayor of London. Large died in 1441, and Caxton moved to Brugge, the centre of the European wool trade; during the next 30 years he became an increasingly prosperous and influential member of the English trading community in Flanders and Holland. In 1463 he took up duties as "Governor of the English Nation of Merchant Adventurers" in the Low Countries—a post of real authority over his fellow merchants. Sometime in 1470 he ceased to be governor and entered the service of Margaret, duchess of Burgundy, possibly as her financial adviser. In that period Caxton's interests were turning to literature. In March 1469 he had begun to translate Raoul Le Fèvre's Recueil des histoires de Troye, which he laid aside and did not finish until September 19, 1471. In Cologne, where he lived from 1470 to the end of 1472, he learned printing. In the epilogue of Book III of the completed translation, entitled The Recuyell of the Histories of Troye, he tells how his "pen became worn, his hand weary, his eye dimmed" with copying the book; so he "practised and learnt" at great personal cost how to print it. He set up a press in Brugge about 1474, and the Recuyell, the first book printed in English, was published there in 1475. Caxton's translation from the French of The Game and Playe of the Chesse (in which chess is treated as an allegory of life) was published in 1476. Caxton printed two or three other works in Brugge in French, but toward the end of 1476 he returned to England and established his press at Westminster. From then on he devoted himself to writing and printing. The first dated book printed in English, Dictes and Sayenges of the Phylosophers, appeared on November 18, 1477. Although a pioneer of printing in England, Caxton showed no great typographical originality and produced no books of remarkable beauty. Kings, nobles, and rich merchants were Caxton's patrons and sometimes commissioned special books. His varied output—including books of chivalric romance, conduct, morality, history, and philosophy and an encyclopaedia, The Myrrour of the Worlde (1481), the first illustrated English book—shows that he catered also to the general public. The large number of service books and devotional works published by Caxton were the staple reading of most literate persons. He also printed nearly all the English literature available to him in his time: Canterbury Tales (1478 and 1484) and other poems by Chaucer, John Gower's Confessio

amantis (1483), Sir Thomas Malory's Morte Darthur (1485), and much of John Lydgate.

THE TUDORS

Henry VII

he first of the Tudor dynasty, Henry VII won the prize of England's throne in battle at Bosworth from his Yorkist adversary, Richard III, last of the Plantagenet line of kings. Henry was considered "the nearest thing to royalty the Lancastrian party possessed" by the country's Yorkist element, he was the son of Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond and Lady Margaret Beaufort and was born on 28th January, 1457 at Pembroke Castle, Wales. Henry's father, Edmund Tudor, was the half-brother of Henry VI, born of an illicit union between Queen Catherine of Valois, widow of Henry V and Owen Tudor, her Welsh Clerk of the Wardrobe. The discovery of at least three of the queen's illegitimate children had caused scandal at the time, it was seen as an insult to the memory of the great Henry V. Despite this, Henry VI bestowed the Earldom of Richmond on Edmund and that of Pembroke on his brother Jasper and they in return became staunch supporters of the House of Lancaster. Henry's mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort, (pictured below left) from whom he derived his debatable claim to the throne, was an intelligent and learned woman, she was said to be the heir of John of Gaunt after the extinction of Henry V's line. This was arguable, since her descent was through Gaunt's illegitimate son John Beaufort, born of the Duke's affair with his long term mistress Katherine Swynford, whom he later married. It was accepted that the Beauforts were later legitimized by King Richard II, but a clause had been inserted into the document debarring the Beauforts from the throne. This Henry's adherents conveniently chose to forget.Click for Tudor genealogy. The future King Henry VII had been born into the civil strife of the Wars of the Roses, Edmund Tudor's posthumous son, his mother had been only thirteen at the time of his birth. It was reported to have been a difficult confinement. After the death of her husband, Margaret Beaufort had taken refuge in Pembrokeshire, Wales, with her brother-in-law, Jasper Tudor. Henry's grandfather, Owen Tudor, an ardent Lancastrian supporter, had been executed by the Yorkists after the battle of Mortimers Cross. Many of his Beaufort relations had met their death in the long and bloody drawn out struggle against the House of York. After the Battle of Bosworth, Henry announced that he had come to the throne by inheritance, leaving the details studiously vague. Henry secured the person of chief male

surviving Yorkist claimant to the throne, the young Edward Plantagenet, Earl of Warwick, whom he imprisoned in the Tower. Warwick was the son of George, Duke of Clarence, Edward IV's brother. Elizabeth of York, the eldest daughter of Edward IV, whom he had vowed to marry, was escorted to London. He did not marry her until after his coronation, thereby underlining to all that he ruled in his own right but hoped that the marriage would satisfy some of the less extreme Yorkists and lead to their acceptance of the newly established Tudor dynasty. Elizabeth was tall, fair haired, attractive and gentle natured. The marriage took place on 18th January 1486 at Westminster Abbey. Nine months later, the new Queen was delivered of a son. He was given the symbolic name of Arthur, in honour of the legendary Dark Age Celtic King Arthur. The Tudor rose, the product of art not horticulture, was born, the emblem of a rose both red and white was adopted as one of the king's badges, meant to symbolize the union of the Houses of Lancaster and York. The Queen's household was ruled by Lady Margaret Beaufort. The Queen's own mother, the meddlesome and grasping Elizabeth Woodville, suspected of involvement in Yorkist plots, was shut up in a nunnery and stripped of all her belongings. Henry and Elizabeth went on to have a large family, four of whom were to survive to adulthood. The birth of Arthur was followed by that of a daughter, Margaret, destined to be Queen of Scots, in 1489, then came Henry, a second son, (the future Henry VIII) on whom his father bestowed the title Duke of York, which had been previously held by the Queen's brother Richard, one of the 'Princes in the Tower'. Another daughter followed named Elizabeth for her mother, who did not survive the trials of infancy in Tudor times. A further daughter, Mary was born in 1498, she was briefly to become Queen of France. Then came Edmund and Katherine who both died in infancy. In the spring of 1486 the new king went on progress through his realm, among other places, he visited York, where Richard III had, through his connections with the city, been very popular. Outwardly at least, he seems to have been well received. Rebellion broke out in support of a pretender, Lambert Simnel, who posed as the young Earl of Warwick. He was supported by Richard's appointed heir, John de la Pole, the Earl of Lincoln and Francis Lovell, along with Richard's sister Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy. Henry paraded the real Warwick through the streets of London to no avail. The rebels landed from Ireland and the king's

army, under the Earl of Oxford, a superb general, met them at the Battle of Stoke Field on 16th June,1487. Lincoln himself was killed. Henry dealt leniently with Simnel who was taken and put to work in the palace kitchens. Henry's foreign policy was dictated by the need to secure the dynasty he had founded. In 1488 he aided Francis of Brittany. His motives seem to have been to check the power of France, whom he did not want in control of the Channel, as this conjured up the haunting spectre of France, in alliance with the Scots at her northern border, surrounding England, representing a very real threat to her security. Francis eventually accepted French domination. Henry later aided Francis successor, Anne of Brittany. The King formed alliances with the Emperor Maximilian of Habsburg and Ferdinand and Isabella, the joint sovereigns of Spain, who were eager to gain French territories. To strengthen his dynasty and obtain international recognition of it, Henry signed the Treaty of Medina del Campo with the Spanish monarchs whereby Henry's eldest son, Arthur, the heir to the throne, was to marry Katherine of Aragon, their youngest daughter. Maximillian, with his characteristic aptitude for self preservation, deserted his allies once his own ends had been achieved. Anne of Brittany in the meantime, had been forced to accept a proposal of marriage by Charles VIII of France, thereby Brittany had been annexed to France. An English army landed at Calais in 1492. Henry was bought off by Charles with the offer of reimbursement of the cost of his Breton campaigns and the arrears of pension owed to Edward IV (from the Treaty in Piquiny of 1475). New disputes arose between Henry VII and Ferdinand of Aragon, who still could not bring themselves to trust each other. Since his daughter was now widowed, Ferdinand wished to be reimbursed of the first installment of her dowry. Henry, on the other hand, having got the money, was singularly inclined not to part with it and inflamed the situation further by promptly demanding the rest of it. Henry suggested that he should marry Catherine himself. This proposal met with an icy response from Isabella, 'It would be an evil thing,' she wrote 'the mere mention of which offends the ears'. Agreement was finally reached that Catherine should marry the young Henry, the new heir to the throne. Even this arrangement did not run smoothly, Henry and Ferdinand continued to haggle endlessly about money. Catherine was forced to live in near penury with a frugal allowance from her father-in-law. Henry at one point

instructed his son to repudiate his betrothed and embarked on a series of alternative negotiations with the Habsburgs. This resulted in his younger daughter Mary being betrothed to the Habsburg heir, the ugly and highly inbred, Charles V. After the death of Elizabeth of York, Henry became somewhat reclusive and even more avaricious. He entertained the idea of marrying Catherine's mentally deranged sister, Joanna, who since the death of their elder sister, was heiress to her mother's kingdom of Castille. Henry VII died on 21st April, 1509 of tuberculosis at the age of 52 and was buried at Westminster beside Elizabeth of York. Their magnificent effigies, provided by his son, Henry VIII and that of Henry's mother, Margaret Beaufort, (who followed him to the grave but a few months later) by the Renaissance sculptor Pietro Torrigiano can still be seen in the Henry VII chapel at Westminster Abbey.

Court of Star Chamber

in English law, the court made up of judges and privy councillors that grew out of the medieval king’s council as a supplement to the regular justice of the common-law courts. It achieved great popularity under Henry VIII for its ability to enforce the law when other courts were unable to do so because of corruption and influence, and to provide remedies when others were inadequate. When, however, it was used by Charles I to enforce unpopular political and ecclesiastical policies, it became a symbol of oppression to the parliamentary and Puritan opponents of Charles and Archbishop William Laud. It was, therefore, abolished by the Long Parliament in 1641. Finding its support from the king’s prerogative (sovereign power and privileges) and not bound by the common law, Star Chamber’s procedures gave it considerable advantages over the ordinary courts. It was less bound by rigid form; it did not depend upon juries either for indictment or for verdict; it could act upon the petition of an individual complainant or upon information received; it could put an accused person on oath to answer the petitioner’s bill and reply to detailed questions. On the other hand, its methods lacked the safeguards that common-law procedures provided for the liberty of the subject. Parliaments in the 14th and 15th centuries, while recognizing the occasional need for and usefulness of those methods, attempted to limit their use to causes beyond the scope or power of the ordinary court. It was during the chancellorship of Thomas Wolsey (1515–29) that the judicial activity of Star

Chamber grew with greatest rapidity. In addition to prosecuting riot and such crimes, Wolsey used the court with increased vigour against perjury, slander, forgery, fraud, offenses against legislation and the king's proclamations, and any action that could be considered a breach of the peace. Wolsey also encouraged suitors to appeal to it in the first instance, not after they had failed to find an efficient remedy in the ordinary courts. The court used the procedures of the king's council. Cases began upon petition or information. Depositions were taken from witnesses, but no jury was used. The punishments, which were arbitrary, included imprisonment, fine, the pillory, whipping, branding, and mutilation, but never death. The Court of Star Chamber retained its popularity throughout the reign of James I but during the 1630s began to attract opposition from the common-law courts, which saw Star Chamber as a rival; from the parliamentary faction that opposed Charles I's attempt to govern without Parliament; and from the Puritans, who were the most severely punished by the court. The Court of Star Chamber was used to enforce the increased number of Charles's royal proclamations, such as those against enclosures and sheriffs who refused to collect ship money. Considerable opposition against Star Chamber came from the gentry, who protested against the centralization of government and who were revolted by the use of the pillory and corporal punishment on religious dissenters, many of whom were gentlemen and who, therefore, would not have been subjected to such treatment in the common-law courts. Consequently, when the Long Parliament began sitting in 1641, one of its earliest acts was to abolish Star Chamber along with some of the other prerogative courts.

Henry VIII

The larger than life King Henry VIII, England's bluebeard, was born on 28th June, 1491 at Greenwich Palace and was christened at the church of the Observant Friars. As only the second son of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York he had originally been intended for a career in the church. On 14th November 1501, at ten years old, the young Henry played a major role at the wedding of his elder brother, Arthur Tudor, when he escorted the bride, Catherine of Aragon, down the aisle at St. Paul's Cathedral. Arthur's sudden death during an epidemic of the sweating sickness a few months later resulted in his unexpectedly becoming heir to the throne.

Henry was betrothed, in turn, to his brother's widow. The death of his mother shortly after was said to have greatly affected the young Henry. His father grew more avaricious and suspicious in his later years and Henry's wedding was increasingly delayed as the two fathers haggled over money. Catherine herself was reduced to penury and at the instigation of his father, Henry was made to repudiate the marriage agreement. Concerns were raised at his father's treatment of his only remaining son. “This great boy” as Henry VII referred to him, was kept in seclusion in his apartments, which could be reached only through the king's. He was allowed only the company of his tutors and guards. Henry was intelligent, extrovert and confident, like most of the Tudors, he was well seen in theology. In common with the ruthless Yorkist strain, he could also be cruel and extremely self-willed. He did not take after his Lancastrian ancestors, his Tudor father or his Beaufort grandmother, who had a tendency to be austere, introvert and chaste. Henry was recognisably like his paternal grandfather, Edward IV, a gourmandiser, with an appetite also for women, capricious and cruel, yet always able to command popularity. In the early years, the marriage of Henry and Catherine was a happy and stable one. Queen Catherine gave birth to a son, named Henry, on 1st January 1511. In tournaments celebrating the event the extrovert king competed as 'Sir Loyal Heart', tragically, the child died just a few weeks later. An alliance was formed with his father-in-law Ferdinand of Aragon to launch a joint attack on France, but Ferdinand, true to character, deserted his ally as soon as his own ends had been reached. Humiliated but undeterred, Henry invaded France again in 1513, he besieged Therouanne and Tournai, both of which fell to him. At a skirmish with the French known as the Battle of the Spurs, so named for the speed of the French retreat and fought at Guinegate on 16 August, 1513, Henry finally won the glory that he had spent so much money to attain. In the King's absence, his brother-in-law, James IV, King of Scots, allied to the French, invaded England, where Catherine of Aragon remained as regent but was defeated and killed at the Battle of Flodden by a force lead by the Earl of Surrey. Henry's elder sister Margaret, the widowed Scots Queen, became regent for her young son, now King James V. In poor taste, Catherine sent James bloodied coat to her husband in France as a victory token. In 1521, Henry defended the Catholic religion from Martin Luther's protests in a book entitled 'The Defence of the Seven

Sacraments', a grateful pope awarded him with the title Defender of the Faith, which has been borne by subsequent English monarchs since then. Catherine was to experience many still-births and miscarriages before producing the only surviving child of the marriage, a daughter, Mary, born in 1516. Henry doted on the child and loved to show her off to courtiers but desperately wanted a male heir, without which, he felt, England would fall back into the anarchy of the Wars of the Roses. Although Henry's marriage to Catherine was, in its early years, a happy one, Henry still took mistresses. He conducting an affair with one of the sisters of Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham, either Elizabeth or Anne Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon. The most significant mistress was Elizabeth 'Bessie' Blount, the daughter of Sir John Blount and Catherine Pershall, of Kinlet, Bridgnorth, Shropshire. Elizabeth became his mistress during 1514 or 1515, a relationship which continued for about eight years, she gave birth in June 1519 to Henry's illegitimate son, Henry FitzRoy. The boy was made Duke of Richmond in June 1525, Henry's father Henry VII had been Earl of Richmond before taking the throne. Soon after the birth of his son, the King began an affair with Mary Boleyn. There has been speculation that Mary's two children, Henry and Catherine Carey, were fathered by Henry, but this has never been proved, and the King never acknowledged them as he did Henry FitzRoy. In 1522, a marriage was arranged for Bessie Blount with Gilbert Tailboys, 1st Baron Tailboys of Kyme. In 1527 Henry became hopelessly infatuated with Anne Boleyn, a young woman of the court. Anne had large, lustrous brown eyes and raven hair, combined with a stylish way of dressing and enchanting French ways acquired during her stay at the court of Francis I. He had now grown tired of her sister, Mary Boleyn, and cast her off. The ambitious Anne refused to go the way of her sister and become his mistress and instead held out for marriage. Henry's conscience, always a very pliable instrument, conveniently came into play. He claimed to be troubled by a verse in Leviticus stating it was sinful for a man to take his brother's wife and as punishment, any such transgressor would be childless. He persuaded himself that this was why God had denied him a male heir by his marriage to Catherine. Led on by the resolute Anne, now determined to become Queen, Henry resolved that he would divorce Catherine. Catherine, however, refused to comply and acquired the considerable support of her

powerful nephew, Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain. The Pope, caught in Charles' power, could not gratify Henry's desire for an annulment. Despite the strenuous efforts of Wolsey, the Kings Great Matter, as it came to be referred to, dragged on for many years. Henry, characteristically furious and frustrated at not obtaining his own way, defied the Pope, setting himself up as head of the Church of England, a church that was Catholic in doctrine but divorced from the 'Bishop of Rome'. Wolsey, the great Cardinal, having failed to satisfy the King's requirements, was cast down from power despite many years of faithful service. The king's matrimonial matters had now to proceed swiftly, as Anne had announced herself pregnant and Henry was determined that the child, whom he ardently convinced himself would be the longed for son, should be born in lawful matrimony. Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, a man of decidedly Protestant leanings, performed the marriage service. Henry's marriage to Catherine was declared null and void. The Act of Succession 1533, declared Catherine's daughter, Mary, illegitimate, while Henry's marriage to Anne was declared legitimate; and Anne's issue was decided to be next in the line of succession.Catherine's daughter, the Lady Mary, suffered deprivations and the humiliation of being publicly declared a bastard, she was denied access to her mother, although they continued to correspond in secret. Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More were among many who suffered execution because they could not, in good conscience, subscribe to the Act of Supremacy. More commented that Anne Boleyn might "spurn off our heads like footballs" but it would not be long before her head "would dance the like dance," and so it proved to be. Anne's baby, born in September 1533, to Henry's fury, was not the promised son and heir, but a daughter, named Elizabeth, after the king's mother. The king ungallantly made no efforts to conceal his displeasure. When Anne later miscarried of a son in 1536 her fate was sealed. Henry's affections, always volatile and unsteadfast, had strayed to one of Anne's ladies in waiting, Jane Seymour at Wulfhall, Wiltshire. Mistress Seymour, the daughter of a Wiltshire knight, prim, quiet and subservient, was the very antithesis of Henry's argumentative, loud and strong-willed wife, and in this probably lay her attraction to the king. Anne had promised him a son, but annoyingly had failed to deliver what he wanted and he was weary of heated arguments with her. The queen was pregnant again, and Henry

fervently hoped that this time it would be a son to succeed him. On January 24th, 1536, the 44 year old King was unhorsed in a tournament at Greenwich Palace, the armour covered horse fell on top of him and he was badly injured and took quite a blow to the head. Knocked unconcious for around two hours, it seemed for a while that his life was in danger. When news of this accident reached the queen, she miscarried a male child that was about 15 weeks old, on the day of Catherine's funeral, 29 January 1536. Henry did not hide his displeasure with her failure, for most observers, this personal loss was the beginning of the end of the royal marriage. The recent death of Catherine of Aragon had rendered it possible for Henry to be rid of Anne without anticipating the prospect of again being married to Catherine. Ironically, while Catherine had lived, Anne remained safe in her position, Anne herself had long recognised the fact, declaring "she is my death and I am hers". Anne was arrested and tried on a trumped-up charge of treason, for adultery with five men including her own brother. It is unlikely that the charges against her had any basis in fact. She defended herself at her trial with dignity and courage. A court controlled by Henry and presided over by Anne's uncle, Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, pronounced her guilty. Anne was sentenced to be burned or beheaded at the king's pleasure. Disliked for her arrogant manner, there was no one to defend Anne. She stoutly maintained her innocence of the charges throughout. Deserted by everyone, she went to the block with courage. Rather than the execution be carried out by a clumsy axe, Henry had considerately brought over an expert swordsman from France to execute his wife. She was beheaded in the Tower on 19th May, 1536, to enable the King to marry his new love, Jane Seymour. Her headless body, bundled into an arrow chest, was buried unceremoniously at the Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula, within the Tower. Only days later, with unseemly haste, Henry married Jane. Jane Seymour was highly praised for her gentle, peaceful nature, being referred to as "gentle a lady as ever I knew" by John Russell and being named as "the Pacific" by the Imperial Ambassador Eustace Chapuys for her peacemaking efforts at court. According to Chapuys, Jane was of middling stature and very pale; he also commented that she was not of much beauty. Jane made efforts to restore Henry's first child, Princess Mary, to court and to the royal succession, behind any children that Jane might have with Henry. In October 1537, Queen Jane was delivered of a son, as he had been born

on the Feast of St. Edward, the child was christened Edward, in honour of the Confessor. The birth had been a protracted and difficult one, lasting two nights and three days. Prince Edward was christened on 15 October, with his half-sisters, the 21 yearold Lady Mary as godmother and the 4 year old Lady Elizabeth carrying the chrisom. Jane Seymour died of puerperal fever a few days later, she was buried at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, with much pomp. Henry was said to have genuinely mourned her passing and wore black for the next three months. Anne of Cleves. Cromwell arranged a fourth marriage for the King, countering the threat of the Catholic powers, it allied him to the German Protestant princes. Henry had received glowing reports of the lady in question, Anne of Cleves and had received a flattering miniature painted by Holbein. When Anne arrived in England, Henry could not contain his haste to meet her and rushed excitedly down to Rochester to present her with New Years gifts "to nourish love". Alarmed at what he saw, he returned most reluctant to go through with the marriage and enraged at the unfortunate Cromwell. Cromwell persuaded his obstinate, willful and deeply shocked sovereign that there was now “no remedy” but to go through with it. In a bid for power, the Duke of Norfolk, head of the Catholic faction at court, flaunted his nubile and attractive niece, Catherine Howard, before the King. Henry was smitten by the exquisite Catherine and had his marriage to "that great Flanders Mare" Anne annulled on the grounds that she had a pre-contract with the Duke of Lorraine. Anne complied with all her formidable spouse's requests, she wisely agreed to be Henry's "good sister". Despite his past service, Cromwell was brought to the block through the machinations of his enemies. The Fall of Catherine Howard. The King married Catherine Howard and well pleased with his new wife, the doting Henry regained some of his lost youth with his lively and vivacious fifth spouse and thanked God for his new found happiness "after sundry troubles of mind which had happened to us by marriages". His "rose without a thorn", unknown to Henry, had already acquired a reputation, promiscuous from adolescence and manipulated into a marriage with an obese and decidedly middle aged man to satisfy her uncle's lust for power and influence, she foolishly and dangerously continued to stray after her marriage. The Protestant element at court seized their chance and pounced. The king was informed and Catherine, arrested for her affairs, became hysterical. The cuckolded Henry immersed

himself in self pity at his treatment by the woman he had so loved. He announced that of all the wives he had,"not one of them had put herself out to be a comfort" to him and woefully cursed his ill fortune at "meeting with such ill conditioned wives". An Act of Attainder, making it treason for any woman of unchaste reputation to marry the king was passed against Queen Catherine and her Lady-in-Waiting, Lady Rochford, who had been party to her infidelities. "Few of any ladies now at court would henceforth aspire to such an honour", wrote Chapuys, the Spanish ambassador, in his report of the sorry affair to Spain. The teenage Catherine was tried for high treason and followed her cousin Anne Boleyn to the Tower and the block. She regained her composure prior to her execution and asked for a block to be brought to her, where she indulged in the macabre exercise of practicing laying her neck on it. Her execution took place on 13 February, 1542, she was reported to have "died well". Catherine was buried beside Anne at the chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula within the Tower. In Victorian times, a memorial pavement was laid out to commemorate both these Queens of England and others that were executed on Tower Green and laid to rest in the Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula. Henry's last marriage to Catherine Parr was a more sensible one. Catherine, an attractive and intelligent woman, was the widow of Lord Latimer. Despite two previous marriages, she had no children of her own, nor was it thought likely that she would produce any. Catherine took a lively interest in Henry's children and their education, she brought them to court and tried to create a family life for them, which had been conspicuously absent prior to her arrival. The King was now ageing fast and in failing health. He suffered from a suppurating ulcer on his leg, which was extremely painful and had become vastly overweight. Henry VIII's Henry's obesity hastened his death at the age of 55, he spent his last days bedridden, although death appeared imminent, as it was treason to predict the King's death, not even Henry's doctors could summon the courage to inform the King. Sir Anthony Denny undertook the perilous task of warning Henry VIII that 'in man's judgement, he was not like to live' and should remember his sins, 'as becometh every good Christian man to do'. Henry responded by saying that he believed that Christ in all His mercy would 'pardon me all my sins, yea, though they were greater than can be. Henry, at Whitehall was sinking fast, he asked for Cranmer, but by the time the Archbishop arrived he was speechless.

Cranmer asked for a sign that he put his faith in Christ, at which Henry, struggling for breath, wrung his hand with all the strength he could muster. He died shortly after, in the early hours of 28th January 1547. Those responsible for the smooth handing over of power to Edward VI did not announce his death for three days. A week later King Henry VIII was buried at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, at his own request, with his best loved queen, Jane Seymour.

The Act of Supremecy

The Act of Supremecy, passed in 1534, established King Henry VIII as the Supreme Head of the English Church.The Reformation Parliament of 1529-1536 approved the king's break with the see of Rome, as well as Henry's divorce and remarriage. In 1539 it was ordered that an English translation of the Bible be placed in every parish church in England. The aged Bishop Fisher refused to subscribe to the Act of Supremecy, and hailed as a Catholic martytr, he received the support of the Pope, who promised to make him a Cardinal in reward for his heroic stand for the rights of the Church against the formidable monarch's wishes. Enraged and ruthless when opposed, Henry vowed that if a hat arrived to make him a cardinal, the Pope would find Fisher had no head on which to wear it. The Bishop stood bravely by his principles. On 17th June, 1535, he was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death. Sir Thomas More, Henry's Lord Chancellor and the author of Utopia, also refused to acknowledge the Act of Supremecy. Despite the pleadings of his family, he could not bring himself, in good conscience to subscribe to the Act. After a harsh term of imprisonment in the Tower, he was informed on the morning of 1st July, 1535, that he was to die later that day. More conducted himself with great courage and walked calmly to his execution wearing a coarse garment and holding a red cross. Thomas asked the Lord Lieutenant for help to mount the steps of the scaffold and joked "but as for my coming down again, let me shift for myself." Before laying his head on the block More loudly declared "I die the king's good servant, but God's first." His head joined that of Fisher on a pike on London Bridge, but was removed under cover of darkness by sympathizers.

Cardinal Wolsey

(born c. 1475, Ipswich, Suffolk, Eng.—died Nov. 29, 1530, Leicester, Leicestershire), cardinal and statesman

who dominated the government of England's King Henry VIII from 1515 to 1529. His unpopularity contributed, upon his downfall, to the anticlerical reaction that was a factor in the English Reformation. Appointed royal almoner in November 1509, Wolsey easily persuaded the pleasure-loving young monarch to surrender more and more of the unwelcome cares of state. The ties between the two men became particularly close after Wolsey organized Henry's successful expedition against the French in 1513. On Henry's recommendation Pope Leo X made him bishop of Lincoln (February 1514), archbishop of York (September 1514), and cardinal (1515). In December 1515 Wolsey became lord chancellor of England. Three years later the pope appointed him a special papal representative with the title legate a latere. Wolsey used his vast secular and ecclesiastical power to amass wealth second only to that of the king. The first priority for both Wolsey and Henry was to make England the arbiter of power in Europe. At that time western Europe was split into two rival camps, with France, England's traditional enemy, on the one side and the Holy Roman Empire of the Habsburgs on the other. Wolsey attempted to make peace with France by promoting a European-wide peace treaty in 1518 and by arranging meetings between Henry and the French king Francis I and between Henry and the emperor Charles V in 1520. Nevertheless, war broke out between France and the Empire in 1521, and two years later Wolsey committed English troops against France. In order to finance this campaign Wolsey raised taxes, thereby arousing widespread resentment. In 1528 he sided with the French against Charles, but by August 1529 France and the emperor had made peace, and England was diplomatically isolated. Although Wolsey had obtained his legatine commission with the intent of reforming the English church, his incessant diplomatic activities left him little time for ecclesiastical concerns. Besides, he was worldly, greedy for wealth, and unchaste—he had an illegitimate son and daughter. Nevertheless, he did at least propose some monastic reforms and even suppressed about 29 monasteries, mainly to obtain the revenues that he needed to found Cardinal's College (later Christ Church) at the University of Oxford. Wolsey's influence on England's judicial institutions was far more substantial. Possessed of a great legal mind, he extended the jurisdiction of the Star Chamber—the King's Council sitting as a court—and used it to impose Henry's justice on lawless nobles. The

conciliar committee that he delegated to hear suits involving the poor soon evolved into the Court of Requests (1529). The immediate cause of Wolsey's fall from power was his failure to persuade Pope Clement VII to grant Henry an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. There had long been a party of nobles who hated the lowborn, overbearing cardinal. When his final attempt to obtain the annulment collapsed in July 1529, these enemies easily turned the king against him. In October Wolsey was indicted on a praemunire charge of having overstepped his legatine authority. Stripped of all his offices and preferments except York, he left London for York in April 1530. Nevertheless, Henry was led to believe that he was conspiring to recover his position. Wolsey was arrested on November 4 on charges of treason (for corresponding with the French court), but he died at the end of the month while on his way south to face the king.

Fidei Defensor

one of the subsidiary titles of the English and later British monarchs since it was granted on 11 October 1521 by Pope Leo X to King Henry VIII of England and Ireland. His wife Catherine of Aragon was also a Defender of the Faith in her own right. The title was conferred in recognition of Henry's book Assertio Septem Sacramentorum (Defense of the Seven Sacraments), which defended the sacramental nature of marriage and the supremacy of the Pope. This was also known as the "Henrician Affirmation" and was seen as an important opposition to the early stages of the Protestant Reformation, especially the ideas of Martin Luther. Following Henry's decision to break with Rome in 1530 and establish himself as head of the Church of England, the title was revoked by Pope Paul III (since Henry's act was regarded as an attack on "the Faith") and Henry was excommunicated. However, in 1544, the Parliament of England conferred the title "Defender of the Faith" on King Henry VIII and his successors, now the defenders of the Anglican faith, of which they (except the Catholic Mary I) remain the Supreme Governors (formally above the Archbishop of Canterbury as Primate). King James V of Scotland was granted the title of Defender of the Faith by Pope Paul III on 19 January 1537, symbolizing the hopes of the papacy that the King of Scots would resist the path that his uncle, Henry VIII, had followed.[3][4] James' father, James IV, had been granted the title of "Protector and Defender of the Christian Faith" by Pope

Julius II in 1507.[5] Neither title became part of the full style of the monarch of Scotland. During The Protectorate (1653–59), the republican heads of state Oliver Cromwell and Richard Cromwell, more clearly profiled as Protestant than the Monarchy, although claiming divine sanction, did not adopt the style "Defender of the Faith". The style was reintroduced after the restoration of the monarchy and remains in use to this day.

Thomas Cromwell

(born c. 1485, Putney, near London—died July 28, 1540, probably London), principal adviser (1532–40) to England's Henry VIII, chiefly responsible for establishing the Reformation in England, for the dissolution of the monasteries, and for strengthening the royal administration. At the instigation of his enemies, he was eventually arrested for heresy and treason and executed. Cromwell's part in the English Reformation has been much debated. At one time he was credited with supplying Henry with a complete plan of action as early as 1529; later it became usual to see in him nothing but the king's most competent executive agent. The truth seems to be that he was in no way in charge until early in 1532, taking over when the king's policy of forcing the pope to come to terms had proved to be a failure. It was, to all appearances, Cromwell who then came forward with a clear notion of how to achieve Henry's purpose without the pope. His policy consisted in making a reality of some large and vague claims to supreme power that Henry had uttered at intervals. He proposed to destroy Rome's power in England and to replace it by the royal supremacy in the church. He was behind the first attacks on the papacy (1532) and the act against the payment by bishops of their first year's revenue to Rome. He secured the submission of the clergy to the king in matters of legislation, and in 1533 he secured the passage of the Act in Restraint of Appeals to Rome, preventing appeals to Rome in matrimonial and testamentary cases. Its preamble embodied his political theory of the sovereign national state. Thereafter he was in complete control of the government, though he remained careful to pretend to be acting on the king's authority. In 1534 he completed the erection of the royal supremacy with the passage of the Act of Supremacy. In 1536, as a newly created baron, Cromwell was also appointed the king's deputy as head of the church. Cromwell's own religious views have been in much doubt. They certainly were not very strong, and

his essentially secular temper subordinated religious to political considerations. Nevertheless, he came to be firmly associated with a radical policy of reform and Reformation. In the main, this resulted from difficulties abroad. While hostility between France and Spain had prevented foreign intervention during the critical years of the Reformation, 1533–36, there seemed a danger of an alliance against England after that date. Cromwell, whose forthright and clear-sighted temper was less well suited to the conduct of foreign affairs than was Henry VIII's skillful opportunism, involved himself in projects of a Lutheran alliance distasteful to the king, who wished to stand on Catholic orthodoxy. In 1539 Cromwell made the mistake of trying to force the king to his side by compelling him to marry Anne of Cleves. The king from the start hated his fourth wife, and by February 1540 it was clear that the alliance with the German princes that she represented was unnecessary. Thereafter, Cromwell's fall came quickly. He fought back for a few months, being created earl of Essex and lord great chamberlain in April 1540, but early in June his enemies persuaded Henry that his vicegerent was a heretic and a traitor. He was arrested on June 10, condemned without a hearing, and executed on July 28. His fall did not end the Reformation, but it marked the end of competent government and purposeful policy in Henry's reign.

Mary I (Bloody)

was born on 18th February, 1516 at the Palace of Placentia at Greenwich, the only surviving and fifth child of Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. Mary had very poor eyesight, being extremely short sighted and suffered from poor health as a child, she was often ill with headaches and sinus conditions. Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, the last of the Plantagenets, was appointed as her governess. Catherine of Aragon doted on her only child and Henry VIII was inordinately proud of his daughter and exhibitionist extrovert that he was, loved to show her off at court. Although Henry VIII was occasionally unfaithful to his wife, Catherine had accepted and generally turned a blind eye to her husband's infidelities, theirs was generally considered a good marriage by royal standards. In 1526, when it became clear that her now middle aged mother would not produce a son, Mary was sent to complete her education at Ludlow as Princess of Wales and heiress to the throne. Anne Boleyn was to be Mary's nemesis. Henry VIII, besotted by her dark good looks, was lead to divorce his

wife and marry Anne whom he had convinced himself would provide him with the son he had always desired. Anne was ambitious, scheming and tempestuous, the King seemed blind to everything but his passion for the Lady and became increasingly tyrannical and ruthless to anyone who frustrated his designs or stood in his way, a sentiment which did not exclude his unfortunate wife and daughter. In 1531, during her parents divorce, when she was seventeen, Mary suffered the humiliation of being declared a bastard by her father and forbidden to see her mother, the adolescent Mary suffered a great deal emotionally as a result of her father's edict and was to bear its scars for the rest of her life. She was removed from the succession by Act of Parliament and relegated to a lower position in the household of her new half-sister Elizabeth, Henry's daughter by Anne. In 1536 her beloved mother died of cancer at Kimbolton Castle and Mary, still grieving, was forced by her ruthless father to sign a submission undermining everything she believed in. To gain his acceptance, she had to to deny that her parents marriage had been legal and acknowledge her own bastardy. This forced betrayal of the mother she had adored affected Mary deeply, although it was extracted under pressure she was never to quite forgive herself for this act and remained haunted by it. Mary suffered much for her adherence to her Catholic faith. Her strongly Protestant brother King Edward VI tried to deprive her of her Catholic religion and bully her into submission, during which time she received the support of her maternal cousin, the powerful Charles V of Spain. On Edward's death she was disinherited in favour of her Protestant cousin, Northumberland's daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey. Mary received a letter informing her that her brother was ill, but was warned on her way to visit him that she was walking into a trap and fled to Framlingham Castle. The nation was clearly behind her and triumphing over all past adversity, she entered London as Queen on 3rd of August 1553. Northumberland was arrested and sent to the Tower along with his sons and Lady Jane. Mary was altogether more merciful than was common in her family, although Northumberland was executed she resisted repeated appeals to do the same to Jane, or her young husband, Guildford Dudley. A fanatical Catholic, Mary was intent on restoring the country to the 'old religion'. She made an unpopular choice of husband in her Catholic cousin Philip II of Spain, the son of the Emperor Charles V, who had frequently given her his support and advice when she

had been left alone after her mother's death and on whom she had come to rely for aid at times of need. English national pride was not prepared to countenance a Spanish King, who was also a Catholic and rebellion broke out led by Thomas Wyatt. Mary arrested her half-sister, Elizabeth and her cousin Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon, whom she suspected of compliance in the plot and sent them to the Tower after which the fires of revolt were extinguished. The Spanish were reluctant to allow Philip to depart for England until the threat posed by Jane Grey was removed. The unfortunate Jane and her husband were accordingly beheaded. Philip duly arrived in England and the marriage was celebrated in July 1554. Mary, who had known little affection since her mother's death, was in love for the first time in her life at the age of thirty-eight. Philip, much younger than his bride, unfortunately did not reciprocate her affection. The Queen's cousin, Cardinal Reginald Pole, the son of Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, executed under Henry VIII, returned from exile as Archbishop of Canterbury and papal legate. Mary believed herself pregnant, but was humiliated when the desperately awaited child did not arrive at the due time and she had to accept that she had been mistaken. The Queen had in fact, suffered from a phantom pregnancy. Philip, never particularly enamoured of her, left England shortly after, leaving Mary desolate and deserted and pathetically yearning for his return. Mary re-enacted the statute of de heretico comburendo in 1555, which restored the power to burn heretics. Catholics believed that burning cleansed the soul. The persecution and burnings of Protestants made Mary execrated by most Englishmen. The hated Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, instrumental in bringing about the divorce of her parents, was one of the first of her victims. The courageous words of the Protestant martyr, Hugh Latimer, as he was tied to the stake, were taken as inspiration by many Englishmen, "Be of good faith, Master Ridley and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by Gods grace in England, as I trust shall never be put out." Her sister and heir Elizabeth, bent on survival, feigned an interest in Catholicism which Mary doubted was sincere. Her husband returned briefly to enlist England's support in a war against France, which lead to the loss of Calais, which had been in English hands since the conquests of Edward III, a source of great sadness to the Queen. She believed herself pregnant of a child which would continue her work and ensure a Catholic succession. It

turned out to be a tumour. Her husband, realizing that the succession of Mary, Queen of Scots to the English throne would be disadvantageous to Spain, since she was at that time married to the Dauphin of France, had to be avoided at all costs. He persuaded Mary to name Elizabeth as her successor and marry her to a Spaniard. Elizabeth resisted such a marriage and the Queen could not, in good conscience, force her to do so. Mary died, deserted again by her husband, on 17 November, 1558, of either uterine or ovarian cancer. She had asked in her will to be buried beside her much loved mother at Peterborough Cathedral, but her successor, Elizabeth I instead had her buried in the Henry VII Chapel at Westminster Abbey. Deeply antagonistic to each other in life the two Tudor sisters were to lie together eternally in death. James I later erected a fine effigy over their tomb, the Latin inscription at its base translates "Partners both in throne and grave, here rest we two sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, in the hope of one resurrection".

Thomas Wyatt

(born c. 1521—died April 11, 1554, London), English soldier and conspirator who led an unsuccessful rebellion against Queen Mary I, probably the most formidable uprising ever faced by a Tudor monarch. Wyatt's father was the renowned poet and diplomat Sir Thomas Wyatt. As a young man he acquired a reputation for recklessness, and in 1543 he was briefly imprisoned for taking part in a London street riot. From 1543 to 1549 or 1550, he served in the army abroad—especially in France—achieving recognition as a skillful and daring officer. Wyatt then returned to England and in 1551 served as sheriff in Kent, where he formed his own rudimentary military organization. On King Edward VI's death (July 1553) he supported the accession of Mary, a Roman Catholic, but by the end of the year he turned against the Queen, considering her proposed marriage to the future king Philip II of Spain to be an affront to England's national honour. He accordingly joined several others, including Lady Jane Grey's father, the Duke of Suffolk, in a conspiracy against the crown. The plot was revealed to Mary's lord chancellor, Stephen Gardiner, by the Earl of Devon, one of the conspirators, at the end of January 1554, with the result that of the conspirators only Wyatt succeeded in raising an army. At first the government offered to negotiate with him, but it soon decided to suppress the insurgents. A force under the command of Thomas Howard, the aged duke of

Norfolk, who was sent to put down the rebellion, largely defected to Wyatt. On Feb. 3, 1554, Wyatt entered the outskirts of London with some 3,000 men. He advanced swiftly to Ludgate, but his troops became disheartened when the populace did not join their cause. Confronted by the royal forces, Wyatt surrendered after a brief engagement. He was tried on March 15 and executed less than a month later. To the last, Mary's partisans made strenuous but unsuccessful efforts to persuade him to implicate Princess (afterward Queen) Elizabeth in his conspiracy. After his death he and his followers were widely regarded as patriots and martyrs by a populace that was becoming increasingly repelled by Mary's persecution of Protestants.

Elizabeth I

Undoubtedly one of England's greatest sovereigns and the last of the Tudors, Elizabeth I was born at Greenwich on 7th September 1533, the only surviving child of Henry VIII by his second wife Anne Boleyn. Her parents had hoped for a son, Henry VIII spent the last days of his wife's confinement deliberating whether to call the child Edward or Henry. Nevertheless, the new infant princess was given a magnificent christening on Wednesday 10th September 1533, at the church of the Observant Friars. The child was named Elizabeth after her grandmothers, Elizabeth of York and Elizabeth Howard. On the death of her sister Mary I in November, 1558, the twenty-five year old Elizabeth, having survived many reversals of fortune, and largely through her own aptitude and skill, ascended the throne. From the start, the new Queen exhibited that she had learned much from her sister's mistakes and had no intention of repeating them. The England she inherited was at war with France, the exchequer was bankrupt, the coinage debased and inflation soaring, the country was also rent with religious difficulties. She appointed Sir William Cecil as her Secretary of State, informing him, "This judgement I have of you, that you will not be corrupted by any manner of gift and that despite my own will and pleasure you will give me such advice as shall be best for the state." Cecil was to prove himself a brilliant minister and served his mistress well for the next forty years. The religious settlement Elizabeth I decided on was a characteristically cautious one. The Church of England was restored and a settlement based on the second Prayer Book of Edward VI established. She lacked the fanaticism of her sister and did not wish "to make windows into mens souls", her

wish was that all men regardless of their religious views, should obey her government. On her accession, Elizabeth' brother-in-law, Phillip II of Spain, proposed marriage but his offer was diplomatically declined. In fact, the Queen had already decided not to marry for both personal and political reasons, but while she had determined never to marry, she had also determined never to let that be known. The possibility of her marriage, Elizabeth realised, was a powerful political bargaining counter which could be used to England's advantage on the chess-board of European politics and accordingly should not be discarded. With consummate skill, she manipulated the ambitions of the many foreign suitors for her hand. Mary, Queen of Scots, her cousin and next in line to the throne, was married to the Dauphin of France. In Catholic eyes Queen Elizabeth I was illegitimate and Mary, advised by her father-in-law, Henry II of France, challenged Elizabeth's right to the throne by quartering the arms of England with her own. The Protestant Scottish lords were engaged in a struggle with the Catholic regent, Mary's mother, Marie of Guise. The English Queen, fearing the French having a foothold in Scotland, supported the lords and sent troops to aid them. The Treaty of Edinburgh of 1560 removed the French from Scotland and allied the lords, now in charge of the country, with England. Elizabeth's foreign policy had proved a success. Elizabeth's foreign policy was largely defensive with the exception of the occupation of Le Havre from October 1562 to June 1563, which ended in failure when Elizabeth's Huguenot allies joined with the Catholics to retake the port. The Queen's intention had been to exchange Le Havre for Calais, lost to France in January 1558, during the reign of her sister Mary. Only through the activities of her seamen did Elizabeth pursue an aggressive policy, which paid off in the war against Spain. She knighted Francis Drake after his circumnavigation of the globe from 1577 to 1580, and he won fame for his raids on Spanish ports and fleets. In 1585, following the deaths of the Protestant leader William the Silent, Prince of Orange, and Francis, Duke of Anjou, Elizabeth sent an army to aid the Protestant Dutch rebels against Philip II. The expedition was led by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Elizabeth's strategy was to support the Dutch on the surface with an English army, while beginning secret peace talks with Spain within days of Leicester's arrival in Holland, was contrary to Leicester's, who wished to fight an active campaign. Elizabeth advised him "to avoid at all costs

any decisive action with the enemy". Elizabeth was accordingly enraged when he accepted the post of Governor-General from the Dutch States-General. Elizabeth saw this as a Dutch ploy to force her to accept sovereignty over the Netherlands. Most of Elizabeth's generation had passed away, the Queen adopted Leicester's step-son as her new favourite. Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, was a handsome and high spirited if temperamental young man, he took liberties with the ageing queen but was forgiven. In April 1599 Elizabeth sent Essex to Ireland as Lieutenant and Governor General, with an army of 17,000 men and explicit instructions to crush the Earl of Tyrone's rebellion and bring Ireland under control. Contary to the Queen's orders, Essex had a secret meeting with Tyrone, made a truce in Elizabeth's name then abandoned his post to return to London and explain his decision to the Queen. The enfuriated Elizabeth placed him under house arrest pending an inquiry. Although cleared of treason, Essex was found guilty of disobedience and dereliction of duty. He was consequently stripped of most of his positions and banished from court. She was said to have indicated by a sign to Cecil that she accepted Mary, Queen of Scot's son, James VI, King of Scotland, as her successor, making a gesture with her hands, she drew a circle round her head to indicate a crown and confirm that this was her wish. Finally she lost the power of speech. The greatest of the Tudors fell into a deep sleep and died in the early hours of 24th March 1603, aged 69. It was the end of an era. Since no post mortem took place the cause of Elizabeth's death remains unknown. She is generally believed to have died of blood poisoning, possibly caused by her white make-up, ceruse, a mixture of white lead and vinegar, the lead in the make up being poisonous. It may have been a bronchial infection that turned into pneumonia, it is also possible that the great queen simply died of old age.

sea dogs

a group of sea-raiders authorized by Queen Elizabeth I of England. The Sea Dogs also engaged in slave trade and were also known as Elizabethan Pirates. The Sea Dogs were essentially a military branch that were authorized by the Queen to attack the Spanish fleet and loot their ships in order to bring back riches and treasure. The Sea Dogs were able to do this because they carried “Letters of Marque” which made their plundering of Spanish ships legal (in their home country) despite the countries

not officially being at war with one another. The Sea Dogs were initially started in 1560 as a way to bridge the gap and close the difference between the Spanish Navy and the English Navy. By having a small fleet of ships that would sail around and pick off Spanish ships, risking their lives and own ships in the process, they were able to reduce the funds and size of the Spanish navy significantly. The Sea Dogs continued carrying out raids against the Spanish until 1604 when England and Spain made peace. After that, many of the Sea Dogs continued as pirates employed by the Barbary States, in what would become the Anglo-Turkish piracy in the Caribbean.

Francis Drake

(born c. 1540–43, Devonshire, England—died January 28, 1596, at sea, off Puerto Bello, Panama), English admiral who circumnavigated the globe (1577–80) and was the most renowned seaman of the Elizabethan Age. was involved in piracy and illicit slave trading before being chosen in 1577 as the leader of an expedition intended to pass around South America, through the Strait of Magellan, and explore the coast that lay beyond. Drake successfully completed the journey and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth I upon his triumphant return. In 1588 he saw action in the English defeat of the Spanish Armada, though he died in 1596 from dysentery after undertaking an unsuccessful raiding mission.

Mary “Queen of Scots”

The tragic and tumultuous life of Mary, Queen of Scots began on the stormy night of 7th December, 1542. The first Queen of Scotland to rule in her own right was born at the Palace of Linlithgow in West Lothian, the daughter of James V and his French Queen, Marie of Guise. As a Queen Regnant, she was one of the greatest prizes in the marriage market of Europe. Elizabeth I of England, who wanted influence in the matter of Mary's marriage in return for recognition as heiress to the English throne, offered her own favourite, Robert Dudley, rumoured to be her lover. Mary, who perceived this offer as an insult, indignantly refused it. She considered Don Carlos as a possible husband, the highly inbred and half-witted heir to Elizabeth I's rival, Phillip II of Spain, before deciding on her handsome cousin Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley. Tall, fair-haired and clean-shaven, Darnley, described by a contemporary as 'lady-faced', was the son of Matthew

Stewart, Earl of Lennox and Lady Margaret Douglas, herself the daughter of Margaret Tudor by her second marriage to Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, therefore himself possessing a claim to the English throne. Darnley had been brought up in England and was accordingly regarded as one of Elizabeth's subjects. Mary seems to have been smitten by him and impulsively rushed into a marriage at Holyrood on 29th July,1568. On hearing the news, the furious English Queen, who had expressly forbidden their union, venomously imprisoned Darnley's mother, Lady Margaret, in the Tower of London. Mary's marriage to Henry Stuart proved to be a disastrous one. Arrogant, dissolute, self-seeking and a drunkard who demanded power, Darnley was soon to make Mary repent her impulsive choice. Mary came to regard her foolish husband as an embarrassment and spent much time with her favourite Italian musician, David Rizzio. Rumour swept through the Scottish court that Rizzio was the Queen's lover and driven by jealousy, Darnley burst into the Queen's apartments with Lord Ruthven and others of the Scots lords, clad in armour. Rizzio was stabbed brutally many times, while he tried to cling to the Queen's skirts for protection. Mary was heavily pregnant at the time. She was never to forgive her husband this outrage and grew to regard him with an intense loathing. In June, 1566, at Edinburgh Castle, a son was born of this tempestuous union, named James Charles. The child was born with a fine caul, like a veil over his face, which was part of the amniotic sac. Darnley coldly cast aspersions on his son's legitimacy, heightening the Queen's resentment of her husband. Elizabeth I, although reported to be secretly depressed at the news of his birth, stood as god-mother by proxy to the Scottish Prince at his baptism. On the night of 10th February,1566, Darnley, while recuperating from syphilis at a house at Kirk'o Field near Edinburgh, was murdered. In a explosion which shook Edinburgh, the house was blown up with gunpowder and Darnley and a servant were found dead in the grounds. They had been strangled, presumably having escaped the blast. James Hepburn Earl of Bothwell, was considered by many to be responsible for the act and the Queen's own complicity in her husband's murder suspected. The skull of Darnley, pitted with the tell tale marks of syphillis, is now in the possession of the College of Surgeons at Edinburgh. Darnley's shocked and grieving father, Matthew Stewart, Earl of Lennox, angrily demanded an inquiry into his son's murder. The Queen duly complied, and Bothwell was declared

innocent of any involvement in Darnley's death. There were many, including Lennox himself, who were sceptical of this verdict and saw it as little more than a whitewash. Despite advice urging her to the contrary, the Queen heedlessly and foolishly consented to marry Bothwell. The ill starred marriage took place according Protestant rites on May 15, 1566, at Holyrood Palace. The outraged Scottish lords rose in revolt in the name of the now fatherless Prince James. Mary and Bothwell faced the rebels at Carberry Hill, but the ranks of her troops were decimated by desertions and she was forced to negotiate with the lords rather than risk battle. The Queen agreed to surrender to her enemies on the promise that no further action would be taken against her. Bothwell, who as part of the agreement was allowed to leave unharmed, eventually made good his escape to Norway. On arrival, he was imprisoned in Dragsholm Castle, where he was chained to a pillar half his own height, rendering him incapable of standing upright. He was to remain there, crouching in the dark and in his own filth until his death ten years later. His body had became overgrown with hair. Bothwell's mummified corpse was later put on display in the crypt at Faarevejle Church, near Dragsholm. Mary was lead captive back to the capital by the lords and abused by the people, dirty and dishevelled and with tears flowing down her face, as their shouts of "burn the whore" rang in her ears, her humiliation was complete and her reputation in tatters. She was later sighted half naked, hysterically weeping and desperately calling for aid at the window of the house where she was held prisoner. Removed to the island castle of Lochleven, she was bullied and threatened and cajoled into abdicating in favour of her infant son, James. Her treacherous bastard brother James, Earl of Moray, was duly appointed Regent. Undefeated and using her legendary Stewart charm to solicit aid, the Queen managed a daring escape from her island prison. Swiftly gathering together an army, Mary met the rebels in battle at Langside on 13th May, 1568. On loosing the battle the Queen fled, though advised by friends on the foolishness of such a course, Mary disregarded their pleas and impulsively rode for England to seek protection and support from her 'dear sister and cousin' Elizabeth. The desperate Mary entered into a plot with Elizabeth's maternal cousin, the Catholic Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, one of the most powerful noblemen in England. They plotted to assassinate the Protestant Queen and place Mary on the throne of England with Norfolk as her

consort. The plot was uncovered by Elizabeth's agents and Norfolk was sent to the block. The trial of Mary, Queen of Scots, presided over by 40 lords, took place at Fotheringay Castle in Northamptonshire. Mary represented herself ably, warning her judges "Remember, the theatre of the world is wider than the realm of England." The verdict was a foregone conclusion and she was found guilty. Elizabeth, after much prevacation, due to her fears that her cousin's execution would provide the arch Catholic Phillip of Spain with the excuse he required to launch an invasion of England, was finally prevailed upon to sign Mary's death warrant. Mary, Queen of Scots passed the night before her execution in distributing her few belongings to the faithful servants who had remained with her in captivity and writing letters to her brother-in-law, the King of France and to Phillip II of Spain, requesting that he reward her servants, before lying down on her bed without undressing. Having undressed to her underwear and been blindfolded by her attendants, the Queen crossed herself and laid her neck upon the block. With outstretched hands, she murmured "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit." The first blow of the axe did not sever her neck, the Queen's lips moved and she let out an audible groan before the axe came down again with a sickening thud. The task had to be completed with a sawing action before the head was completely severed, her lips were still seen to move for some time afterwards.

Lord Darnely

Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, was born on 7 December 1545, at Temple Newsam, Leeds, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. He was the second son child, but first surviving son of Matthew Stuart, Earl of Lennox and his wife Lady Margaret Douglas. Darnley entertained the idea of a marriage with his cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots. Consequently in 1561 both he and his mother Lady Margaret, were imprisoned by Elizabeth. In February 1565 Darnley left London for a visit to Scotland, arriving in Edinburgh, he presented himself to Mary Queen of Scots at Wemyss Castle in Fife. Mary was impressed by her handsome young cousin, James Melville of Halhill reported that "Her Majesty took well with him, and said that he was the lustiest and best proportioned long man that she had seen." After a brief visit to his father at Dunkeld, Darnley returned with Mary and the court to Holyrood on 24 February, from then on, he was constantly in Mary's company. Mary seems to have been

smitten by him and after nursing him through a dose of measles, impulsively rushed into a marriage at Holyrood on 29th July,1568. On hearing the news, the furious English Queen Elizabeth I, who had expressly forbidden their union, venomously imprisoned Darnley's mother, Lady Margaret, in the Tower of London. Mary's marriage to Henry Stuart proved to be a disastrous one. Arrogant, dissolute, self-seeking and a drunkard who demanded power, Darnley was soon to make Mary repent her impulsive choice. Mary came to regard her foolish husband as an embarrassment and spent much time with her favourite Italian musician, David Rizzio. Rumour swept through the Scottish court that Rizzio was the Queen's lover and driven by jealousy, Darnley burst into the Queen's apartments with Lord Ruthven and others of the Scots lords, clad in armour. Rizzio was stabbed brutally many times, while he tried to cling to the Queen's skirts for protection. Mary was heavily pregnant at the time. She was never to forgive her husband this outrage and grew to regard him with an intense loathing. On the night of 10th February,1566, Darnley, while recuperating from syphilis at a house at Kirk'o Field near Edinburgh, was murdered. In a explosion which shook Edinburgh, the house was blown up with gunpowder and Darnley and a servant were found dead in the grounds. These explosions were later attributed to two barrels of gunpowder that had been placed in the small room under Darnley's sleeping quarters. Darnley's body and the body of his valet, William Taylor, were found outside, surrounded by a cloak, a dagger, a chair and a coat. Darnley was dressed only in his nightshirt, suggesting he had fled in some haste from his bedchamber. Upon further examination, the bodies had no signs of injuries that could be associated with the explosion, so the blast did not kill Darnley. It was determined that the two men were killed by strangulation, believed to have taken place after the explosion. James Hepburn Earl of Bothwell, was considered by many to be responsible for the act and the Queen's own complicity in her husband's murder suspected. The skull of Darnley, pitted with the tell tale marks of syphillis, is now in the possession of the College of Surgeons at Edinburgh. Suspicion quickly fell on the Earl of Bothwell and his supporters, notably Archibald Douglas, Parson of Douglas, whose shoes were found at the scene, and Mary herself. Bothwell had long been suspected of having designs on the throne and his close relationship with the queen gave rise to rumours that the pair were intimate. This was viewed as a motive

for Bothwell to have Darnley murdered, with help from some of the nobility and seemingly with royal approval. Mary had been looking at options for removing Darnley, though her ideas were for divorce, and none were suitable.

Earl of Bothwell

Earl of Bothwell.

James Hepburn, 4th Earl of Bothwell was the son of Patrick Hepburn, 3rd Earl of Bothwell and and Agnes Sinclair, daughter of Henry Sinclair, 3rd Lord Sinclair. In around 1559 Bothwell visited Copenhagen around 1559, where he met and married the Norwegian Anna Trondsen but later deserted her. Bothwell first met Mary, Queen of Scots during a visit to the French Court in late 1560, when he was received by the Queen and her first husband, King Francis II of France. In March 1566, after the murder of David Rizzio, Bothwell aided in Mary's escape from Holyrood House. He then gathered an army to support the Queen as she rode back to Edinburgh with Darnley to face the plotters. Bothwell and the queen became close, in the summer of 1567, on receiving news he had been badly wounded, she travelled to the Borders to be with him at Hermitage Castle only a few weeks after giving birth to Darnley's son. On the night of 10th February, 1566, Darnley was murdered at a house at Kirk'o Field near Edinburgh. In a explosion which shook Edinburgh, the house was blown up with gunpowder and Darnley and a servant were found dead in the grounds. They had been strangled, presumably having escaped the blast. Bothwell, was considered by many to be responsible for the act and the Queen's own complicity in her husband's murder suspected. On Wednesday 24 April, while Mary was travelling from Linlithgow Palace to Edinburgh, Bothwell interupted her journey with a large force of men. Informing her that danger awaited her in Edinburgh, he suggested taking her to his castle at Dunbar for her safety. The queen agreed and accompanied him to Dunbar. There she was allegedly raped by him to secure marriage to her, whether Mary was his accomplice or his unwilling victim is a matter of controversy. Despite advice urging her to the contrary, the Queen consented to marry Bothwell. He was divorced by Jean Gordon on 7 May 1567, citing his adultery with her servant as cause and married Mary, Queen of Scots, eight days later. Bothwell was created Duke of Orkney and Shetland on the 12th May 1566 and the ill starred marriage took place according Protestant rites on May 15, 1566, at Holyrood Palace. The outraged

Scottish lords rose in revolt in the name of the now fatherless Prince James. Mary and Bothwell faced the rebels at Carberry Hill, but the ranks of her troops were decimated by desertions and she was forced to negotiate with the lords rather than risk battle. The Queen agreed to surrender to her enemies on the promise that no further action would be taken against her. Bothwell, as part of the agreement was allowed to leave Scotland unharmed. Bothwell set sail from Aberdeen to Shetland and from there he planned to to travel to Denmark to raise an army with the support of Frederick II of Denmark to recover Mary's throne, but was forced by stormy seas towards Norway. He was caught off the coast of Norway without proper papers, and was escorted to Bergen, the home of Anna Throndsen. Anna issued a complaint against him and her cousin Erik Rosenkrantz, a high-level official, remanded him to a local prison. Anna sued him for abandonment and the return of her dowry, but was persuaded byBothwell to take his ship as compensation. He would then have been released, but King Frederick of Denmark had heard news that the English were seeking Bothwell for the alleged murder of Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley and decided to take him into custody in Denmark. On arrival, he was imprisoned in Dragsholm Castle, where he was chained to a pillar half his own height, rendering him incapable of standing upright. Mary obtained an annulment of their marriage in 1570, but Bothwell was to remain there, crouching in the dark and in his own filth until his death on 4 April 1578, ten years later. His body had became overgrown with hair. Bothwell's mummified corpse was later put on display in the crypt at Faarevejle Church, near Dragsholm. The pillar to which Bothwell was chained can still be seen, with a circular groove in the floor around it where he purportedly spent for the last ten years of his life.

Tudor Parliaments

Tudor Parliaments were an essential aspect of English government and administration in the sixteenth century. After the King’s Council, Parliament was the nation’s most important institution; like the Council, it reverberated with activity when it was in session. ‘When it was in session’ is, however, the crucial phrase: we should not speak of Tudor Parliament, but strictly only of Parliaments. Each meeting called by the Crown and ended by it, too, had a separate identity. Indeed it is essential to realize that, unlike the Council, which met regularly in each year of a monarch’s reign, Parliament

was very much an occasional institution. In the 24 years of Henry VII, seven Parliaments sat for a total of 25 weeks. In the 37 years of Henry VIII, 9 Parliaments sat, one of which had 7 sessions. This made a total of 183 weeks, of which 136 weeks occurred in the last 18 years of the reign. The reason for this sudden upsurge in Parliamentary activity was, of course, the Henrician Reformation. In the 6 years of Edward VI's time, 2 Parliaments were summoned, which sat for 5 sessions and 46 weeks. Mary in her four years faced 5 Parliaments, totalling 28 weeks. Lastly, in her 45 years, from 1558 to 1603, Elizabeth called 10 Parliaments, which met for rather less than 140 weeks altogether in their 13 sessions. Parliament was thus active under the Tudors, and exceptionally active in the reign of Henry VIII. Activity is perhaps the striking point, when we consider the question in a European context. The 16th century saw the rise of strong European monarchies and the extension of the civil law. But in England, the Roman civil law was not received; common law was sovereign after the Reformation Parliament and the break with Rome. The English common law, taught in the Inns of Court, was secure as the foundation of the Tudor state; and common law being secure, so necessarily was Parliament, since the inevitable amendments and additions to this law, other than judicial interpretation, was available only by statute. Thus the need for legislation made Parliament an indestructible feature of the Tudor state. So, too, did taxation. While the Crown was supposed to live of its own – that is to say, to pay its ordinary expenditure from its own ordinary and permanent revenues – it could call on the nation for additional money, by way of taxes, to meet extraordinary burdens, notably wars. By 1485, it was an established principle of the constitution, honoured even in such breaches as Wolsey Loans of 1522, that taxation had to be granted by the representatives of the community in Parliament.

Pilgrimage of Grace

The Pilgrimage of Grace is the title given to a widespread revolt against the rule of Henry VIII. The Pilgrimage of Grace started in late 1536 and finished in early 1537. A rising in the northern counties of England, the only overt immediate discontent shown against the Reformation legislation of King Henry VIII. Part of the resentment was caused by attempts, especially under Henry's minister Thomas Cromwell, to increase government

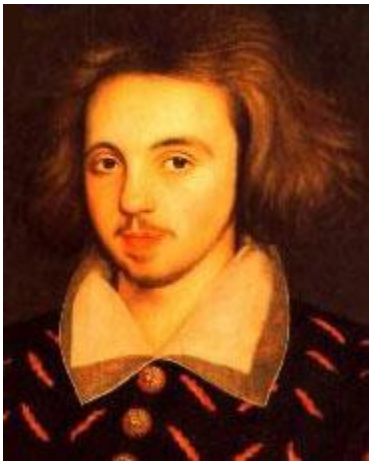
control in the north; there was an element of agrarian opposition to enclosures for pasture; and there was a religious element, aroused especially by the dissolution of the monasteries, then in progress. The arrival of commissioners sent by Cromwell to collect a financial subsidy and to dissolve the smaller monasteries triggered the rising. In Louth in Lincolnshire there were riots on October 1, and commissioners were attacked. The rebels occupied Lincoln, demanding an end to the dissolution, revenge on Cromwell, and the dismissal of heretical bishops. But Henry refused to treat with men in arms against him (although professing their loyalty), and the Lincolnshire movement collapsed on October 19. Meanwhile, a more serious rising had begun in Yorkshire, led by Robert Aske, a country gentleman and lawyer. Aske took York and by October 24 was supported by about 30,000 armed men and by magnates such as Edward Lee, archbishop of York, and Thomas Darcy, Baron Darcy of Templehurst. The government had insufficient troops in the area, but on October 27, at Doncaster Bridge, Thomas Howard, the 3rd duke of Norfolk, temporized with Aske, playing for time until adequate forces could be assembled. At a council at Pontefract on December 2, the rebels drew up their demands, similar to those of the Lincolnshire men but including a return of England to papal obedience and the summoning of a Parliament free from royal influence. To these Norfolk, on December 6, made vague promises and offered a full pardon, whereupon Aske naively assumed he had gained his objectives and persuaded his followers to disperse. Sporadic riots in January and February 1537 enabled the government to deal with the troubles piecemeal; about 220–250 men were executed, including Darcy and Aske. The pilgrimage achieved nothing and received no support from other parts of the country.

Elizabethan Poor Law

The threat to civil disorder led to an Act of the Elizabethan Poor Law to be passed through Parliament in 1563. The different types of Poor people were categorised in order to determine the treatment that they might receive as follows: - the 'Deserving Poor' - the old the young and the sick who should receive help. These poor people were provided with 'Outdoor Relief' in the form of clothes, food or money; - the 'Deserving Unemployed' - those willing and able to work but unable to find employment. These poor people were provided with 'Indoor Relief' in the form of being cared for in almshouses, orphanages

and workhouses; - the sick were cared for in hospitals. Apprenticeships were arranged for the young. The 'Undeserving Poor' - those who turned to a life of crime or became beggars. The dishonest men in these categories were criminals who turned to various forms of theft. The beggars in these categories were referred to as 'Idle Beggars' but many have since been referred to as 'Poor Beggars'. These are still common terms in the modern English language. The punishments for these categories were extremely harsh. The punishment of the 'poor beggars' was that they would be beaten until they reached the stones that marked the town parish boundary. The beatings given as punishment were bloody and merciless and those who were caught continually begging could be sent to prison and even hanged as their punishment.

Christopher Marlowe



Playwright, poet. Christopher Marlowe was a poet and playwright at the forefront of the 16th-century dramatic renaissance. His works influenced William Shakespeare and generations of writers to follow. Born in Canterbury, England, in 1564. While Christopher Marlowe's literary career lasted less than six years, and his life only 29 years, his achievements, most notably the play The Tragicall History of Doctor Faustus, ensured his lasting legacy. The nature of Marlowe's service to England was not specified by the council, but the letter sent to Cambridge has provoked abundant speculation, notably the theory that Marlowe had become a secret agent working for Sir Francis Walsingham's intelligence service. No direct evidence supports this theory, but the council's letter clearly suggests that Marlowe was serving the government in some secret capacity. Surviving Cambridge records from the period show that Marlowe had several lengthy absences from the university, much longer than allowed by the school's regulations. And extant dining room accounts indicate that he spent lavishly on food and drink while there, greater amounts than he could have afforded on his known scholarship income. Both of these could point to a secondary source of income, such as secret government work. But with scant hard evidence and rampant speculation, the mystery surrounding Marlowe's service to the queen is likely to remain active. Spy or not, after attaining his master's degree, Marlowe moved to London and took up writing full-time. After 1587, Christopher Marlowe was in London, writing for the theater and probably also engaging himself occasionally in

government service. What is thought to be his first play, Dido, Queen of Carthage, was not published until 1594, but it is generally thought to have been written while he was still a student at Cambridge. According to records, the play was performed by the Children of the Chapel, a company of boy actors, between 1587 and 1593. Marlowe's second play was the two-part Tamburlaine the Great (c. 1587; published 1590). This was Marlowe's first play to be performed on the regular stage in London and is among the first English plays in blank verse. It is considered the beginning of the mature phase of the Elizabethan theater and was the last of Marlowe's plays to be published before his untimely death. There is disagreement among Marlowe scholars regarding the order in which the plays subsequent to Tamburlaine were written. Some contend that Doctor Faustus quickly followed Tamburlaine, and that Marlowe then turned to writing Edward the Second, The Massacre at Paris, and finally The Jew of Malta. According to the Marlowe Society's chronology, the order was thus: The Jew of Malta, Doctor Faustus, Edward the Second and The Massacre at Paris, with Doctor Faustus being performed first (1604) and The Jew of Malta last (1633). What is not disputed is that he wrote only these four plays after Tamburlaine, from c. 1589 to 1592, and that they cemented his legacy and proved vastly influential. The constant rumors of Christopher Marlowe's atheism finally caught up with him on Sunday May 20, 1593, and he was arrested for just that "crime." Atheism, or heresy, was a serious offense, for which the penalty was burning at the stake. Despite the gravity of the charge, however, he was not jailed or tortured but was released on the condition that he report daily to an officer of the court. On May 30, however, Marlowe was killed by Ingram Frizer. Frizer was with Nicholas Skeres and Robert Poley, and all three men were tied to one or other of the Walsinghams--either Sir Francis Walsingham (the man who evidently recruited Marlowe himself into secret service on behalf of the queen) or a relative also in the spy business. Allegedly, after spending the day together with Marlowe in a lodging house, a fight broke out between Marlowe and Frizer over the bill, and Marlowe was stabbed in the forehead and killed. Conspiracy theories have abounded since, with Marlowe's atheism and alleged spy activities at the heart of the murder plots, but the real reason for Marlowe's death is still debated.

Ben Jonson

Playwright Ben Jonson (1572–1637) was a major force in Elizabethan and Jacobean theater, second only to William Shakespeare himself. Benjamin Jonson was born circa June 11, 1572 in London. After a stint in the army, he established himself as an actor and playwright. His first major success was Every Man In His Humour (1598). From there, Jonson went on to become a favorite of King James I, who may have made him poet laureate. Jonson's other plays include Volpone (1605), The Alchemist (1610) and Bartholomew Fair (1614). The year 1598 marked an abrupt change in Jonson's status, when Every Man in His Humour was successfully presented by the Lord Chamberlain's theatrical company (a legend has it that Shakespeare himself recommended it to them), and his reputation was established. In this play Jonson tried to bring the spirit and manner of Latin comedy to the English popular stage by presenting the story of a young man with an eye for a girl, who has difficulty with a phlegmatic father, is dependent on a clever servant, and is ultimately successful—in fact, the standard plot of the Latin dramatist Plautus. But at the same time Jonson sought to embody in four of the main characters the four "humours" of medieval and Renaissance medicine—choler, melancholy, phlegm, and blood—which were thought to determine human physical and mental makeup. That same year Jonson killed a fellow actor in a duel, and, though he escaped capital punishment by pleading "benefit of clergy" (the ability to read from the Latin Bible), he could not escape branding. During his brief imprisonment over the affair he became a Roman Catholic. Following the success of Every Man in His Humour, the same theatrical company acted Jonson's Every Man Out of His Humour (1599), which was even more ambitious. It was the longest play ever written for the Elizabethan public theatre, and it strove to provide an equivalent of the Greek comedy of Aristophanes; "induction," or "prelude," and regular between-act comment explicated the author's views on what the drama should be. The play, however, proved a disaster, and Jonson had to look elsewhere for a theatre to present his work. The obvious place was the "private" theatres, in which only young boys acted. The high price of admission they charged meant a select audience, and they were willing to try strong satire and formal experiment; for them Jonson wrote Cynthia's Revels (c. 1600) and Poetaster (1601). Even in these, however, there is the paradox of contempt for human behaviour hand in hand with a longing for human order. From 1605

to 1634 he regularly contributed masques for the courts of James I and Charles I, collaborating with the architect and designer Inigo Jones. This marked his favour with the court and led to his post as poet laureate. Jonson embarked on a walking tour in 1618–19, which took him to Scotland. During the visit the city of Edinburgh made him an honorary burgess and guild brother. On his return to England he received an honorary Master of Arts degree from Oxford University, a most signal honour in his time. Jonson's life was a life of talk as well as of writing. He engaged in "wit-combats" with Shakespeare and reigned supreme. It was a young man's ultimate honour to be regarded as a "son of Ben." In 1623 his personal library was destroyed by fire. By this time his services were seldom called on for the entertainment of Charles I's court, and his last plays failed to please. In 1628 he suffered what was apparently a stroke and, as a result, was confined to his room and chair, ultimately to his bed. That same year he was made city chronologer (thus theoretically responsible for the city's pageants), though in 1634 his salary for the post was made into a pension. Jonson died in 1637 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

William Shakespeare

(baptized April 26, 1564, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, England—died April 23, 1616, Stratford-upon-Avon), English poet, dramatist, and actor, often called the English national poet and considered by many to be the greatest dramatist of all time. William Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway on November 28, 1582, in Worcester, in Canterbury Province. Hathaway was from Shottery, a small village a mile west of Stratford. William was 18 and Anne was 26, and, as it turns out, pregnant. Their first child, a daughter they named Susanna, was born on May 26, 1583. Two years later, on February 2, 1585, twins Hamnet and Judith were born. Hamnet later died of unknown causes at age 11. By 1592, there is evidence William Shakespeare earned a living as an actor and a playwright in London and possibly had several plays produced. By the early 1590s, documents show William Shakespeare was a managing partner in the Lord Chamberlain's Men, an acting company in London. After the crowning of King James I, in 1603, the company changed its name to the King's Men. From all accounts, the King's Men company was very popular, and records show that Shakespeare had works published and sold as popular literature. The

theater culture in 16th century England was not highly admired by people of high rank. However, many of the nobility were good patrons of the performing arts and friends of the actors. Early in his career, Shakespeare was able to attract the attention of Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton, to whom he dedicated his first- and second-published poems: "Venus and Adonis" (1593) and "The Rape of Lucrece" (1594). With the exception of Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare's first plays were mostly histories written in the early 1590s. Richard II, Henry VI (parts 1, 2 and 3) and Henry V dramatize the destructive results of weak or corrupt rulers, and have been interpreted by drama historians as Shakespeare's way of justifying the origins of the Tudor Dynasty. Shakespeare also wrote several comedies during his early period: the witty romance A Midsummer Night's Dream, the romantic Merchant of Venice, the wit and wordplay of Much Ado About Nothing, the charming As You Like It and Twelfth Night. Other plays, possibly written before 1600, include Titus Andronicus, The Comedy of Errors, The Taming of the Shrew and The Two Gentlemen of Verona. It was in William Shakespeare's later period, after 1600, that he wrote the tragedies Hamlet, King Lear, Othello and Macbeth. In these, Shakespeare's characters present vivid impressions of human temperament that are timeless and universal. Possibly the best known of these plays is Hamlet, which explores betrayal, retribution, incest and moral failure. These moral failures often drive the twists and turns of Shakespeare's plots, destroying the hero and those he loves. In William Shakespeare's final period, he wrote several tragicomedies. Among these are Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale and The Tempest. Though graver in tone than the comedies, they are not the dark tragedies of King Lear or Macbeth because they end with reconciliation and forgiveness. Tradition has it that William Shakespeare died on his birthday, April 23, 1616, though many scholars believe this is a myth. Church records show he was interred at Trinity Church on April 25, 1616. In his will, he left the bulk of his possessions to his eldest daughter, Susanna. Though entitled to a third of his estate, little seems to have gone to his wife, Anne, whom he bequeathed his "second-best bed." This has drawn speculation that she had fallen out of favor, or that the couple was not close. However, there is very little evidence the two had a difficult marriage. Other scholars note that the term "second-best bed" often refers to the bed belonging to the household's master and mistres—

the marital bed—and the "first-best bed" was reserved for guests.

Edmund Spenser

(born 1552/53, London, England—died January 13, 1599, London), English poet whose long allegorical poem The Faerie Queene is one of the greatest in the English language. It was written in what came to be called the Spenserian stanza. Spenser was considered in his day to be the greatest of English poets, who had glorified England and its language by his long allegorical poem The Faerie Queene, just as Virgil had glorified Rome and the Latin tongue by his epic poem the Aeneid. Spenser had a strong influence upon his immediate successors, and the sensuous features of his poetic style, as well as his nine-line stanza form, were later admired and imitated by such poets as Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley in the Romantic period of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He is widely studied today as one of the chief begetters of the English literary Renaissance and as a master who embodied in poetic myth a view of the virtuous life in a Christian universe. Sixteenth-century Ireland and the Irish were looked on by the English as a colony, although the supposed threat of an invasion by Spain and the conflict between an imposed English church and the Roman Catholicism of the Irish were further complicating factors. Irish chieftains and the Anglo-Irish nobility encouraged native resistance to newly arrived English officials and landowners. As Grey’s secretary, Spenser accompanied the lord deputy on risky military campaigns as well as on more routine journeys. He may have witnessed the Smerwick massacre (1580), and his poetry is haunted by nightmare characters who embody a wild lawlessness. The conflict between Grey’s direct, drastic governmental measures and the queen’s characteristic procrastinating and temporizing style soon led to Grey’s frustration and recall. But Spenser, like many others, admired and defended Grey’s methods. Spenser’s A View of the Present State of Ireland (written 1595–96, published 1633), a later tract, argues lucidly for a typically 16th-century theory of rule: firm measures, ruthlessly applied, with gentleness only for completely submissive subject populations. For four or five years from roughly 1584, Spenser carried out the duties of a second important official position in Ireland, deputizing for his friend Lodowick Bryskett as clerk of the lords president (governors) of Munster, the southernmost Irish province.

The fruits of his service in Ireland are plain. He was given a sinecure post and other favours, including the right to dispose of certain forfeited parcels of land (he no doubt indulged in profitable land speculation). For a time he leased the small property of New Abbey, County Kildare, and on this basis was first designated "gentleman." Finally, he obtained a much larger estate in Munster. His early death may have been precipitated by the penetration into Munster of the Irish uprising of 1598. The undertakers and other loyalists failed to make headway against this. Kilcolman was burned, and Spenser, probably in despair despite the Privy Council's having just recommended his appointment to the important post of sheriff of Cork, carried official letters about the desperate state of affairs from the president to London, where he died. He was buried with ceremony in Westminster Abbey close by the grave of Geoffrey Chaucer.

THE STUARTS

The House of Stuart

The Stuarts, that highly romantic but luckless dynasty, succeeded to the English throne on the death of the childless Tudor Queen Elizabeth I in 1603, in the person of James I and VI (1603-1625), son of Mary Queen of Scots and Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, who became the first joint ruler of the kingdoms of both England and Scotland. The spelling of the ancient Scottish dynasty of Stewart was changed by Mary, Queen of Scots, during her long residence in France. The earliest recorded member of the Scottish House of Stewart was Flaald I, who was of Breton origins and was employed in the serice of the eleventh century Lord of Dol and Combourg. Flaald and his immediate descendants held the hereditary and honorary post of Dapifer, or food bearer in the Lord of Dol's household. The Stuart claim to England's throne derived from Margaret Tudor, eldest daughter of Henry VII, who married James IV. King of Scots. James I's successor Charles I (1625-49) was executed on the orders of Parliament, when England was declared a republic. The monarchy was restored in 1660 when his son, the previously exiled Charles II (1660-85), was invited to return. Charles, or the 'Merry Monarch' as he is otherwise known, is famous for his many mistresses and his long liason with the actress Nell Gwyn. On the death of his niece, Queen Anne in 1714 the Stuart dynasty was displaced by its Hanoverian cousins. This section also contains biographies of the Stuart Pretenders including the courageous but highly impulsive Bonnie Prince Charlie. Monarchs:

James I & VI (b.1566, son of Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley & Mary Queen of Scots; r.1603-1625).

Charles I (b.1600, son of James I & Anne of Denmark; r.1625-49).

Charles II (b.1630, son of Charles I &Henrietta Maria of France; r.1660-1685).

James II & VII (b.1633, son of Charles I &Henrietta Maria of France; r.1685-1701).

William III (b.1650, son of William II of Orange &Mary of Gt Britain; r.1688-1702).

Mary II (b.1662, daughter of James II & Anne Hyde; r.1688-94).

Queen Anne (b.1664, daughter of James II & Anne Hyde; r.1702-1714).

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