***Rulers of England – Middle Ages/ Medieval Realms***

**The bigger picture – context – the wider world – interconnections – Global History**

* 320-550 AD/ CE – **Gupta Dynasty** ruled most of **Bharat** (India) – great **Hindu** civilisation – to many, this was India’s “Golden Age” which saw many achievements in science, technology, medicine, literature, art, trade, manufacturing, government etc.
* C4th AD/ CE – **Christianity** became official religion of Roman Empire: huge implications because Rome eventually became the hub of a new **monotheism** in the West.
* Altho’ the Roman Empire in the West was collapsing, the Bishop of Rome eventually became the spiritual leader of European Christians – “Poppa” (Holy Father), **The Pope**.
* C6th-7th AD/ CE emergence of **The Prophet Muhammad** in **Arabia**…
* Muhammad was a merchant: 610 final revelation from God (Allah)-> M’s rejection of **polytheism** led to conflict with others in city of **Mecca** (Makkah) -> M fled to **Medina**, 622 (“Hegira”)-> 622 AD/ CE= start of Muslim calendar.
* 630 AD/ CE –> M & followers captured Mecca; **idolatry** banned; tenets of the new faith (**Islam** – submission to God’s will) started to be written down –> **“Qu’ran”** (Koran), altho’ the task was not fully completed until after The Prophet’s death in 632 AD/ CE.
* The new religion was a powerful unifying force for the previously disunited peoples of Arabia, who were now determined to spread the final revelation of God (Allah) to the wider world:
* C7th – 10th AD/ CE – **“Arab Conquests”** – remarkable period of Arab/ Muslim expansion & conquest out of Arabia across Middle East (**“al Quds”** – **Jerusalem**, The Holy City, taken, 638 AD), N Africa, S Europe, & Asia –> roughly to modern Pakistan, but also into areas of China.
* This period also saw a “civil war” in Islam between the **Shia** (‘Party of Ali’ – believe only direct descendants of The Prophet’s successor, Ali, should be **Caliph ,** or leader of the Faithful – the **“Ummah”)** and **Sunni** (majority – believe any suitable Muslim can be Caliph; The Prophet did not designate a successor).
* Estab of many remarkable Muslim civilisations, notably in **Spain (eg Cordoba)**, but also in Africa & Asia.
* At this time, the Muslim world was dominant in science, medicine, technology, trade, often preserving much of the learning of the Ancient World, but also innovating & spreading new ideas - eg **universities**.
* Eg by 814 AD/ CE the Arabs had adopted & adapted the ancient **Indian number system** (0-9) which was then spread via trade. Huge implications for development of maths, science etc.
* Meanwhile, C4th-6th AD/ CE – much of W Europe was colonised by pagan **Germanic tribes** (eg Angles, Saxons, Franks, Jutes); Roman Empire in West collapsed -> chaos of European **“Dark Ages”**, from which eventually emerged the **Christian kingdoms of Medieval Europe**.
* 590-604 AD/ CE **Pope Gregory** established the power of the **Papacy** in Rome. Christian missionaries sent out to many places, notably **St Augustine** to Angleland (England) who estab’d the first ‘archbishop’ of Canterbury, & laid foundations of “Roman” Christianity in England.
* There had been Christians in Britain since Roman times (**St Alban**). King Offa of Mercia was a Christian, endorsed by Pope Adrian I as “King of the English”, & authorised to establish an Archbishopric at Lichfield. However, they tended to follow the “Celtic” model of Christianity – different from the style which the reforming Pope Gregory now wanted.
* 597 AD/ CE - **King Ethelbert of Kent** became Christian. Key development -> **Canterbury** became the “hub” of the English Church, and pretty rapidly thereafter most Anglo-Saxon rulers became Christian, largely following the “Roman” model.
* **Synod of Whitby** (council of Church leaders), 664 AD/ CE, largely resolved the key differences between “Celtic” & “Roman” Christians in the British Isles, altho’ the Celtic influence remained strong in Wales, Ireland, & parts of N England & Scotland.

**Anglo-Saxon/ Danish rulers of England (C6th-1066)**

Eg **Offa of Mercia** (757-96) – law codes, & probably built **“Offa’s Dyke”** - fortified frontier b/ween Mercia & **“Wales”** (Celtic area to West of “Angleland”). Promoted peace & trade (esp along the previously lawless frontier with Wales), law & order, good govt.

**(NB** “Wales”/ “Welsh” = Anglo-Saxon (Old English) word for non-English peoples in the British Isles; the Welsh called/ call themselves *Cymry* (”The People”) and their country *Cymru*.**)**

**Egbert, King of Wessex** (802-39)–> by 828 generally acknowledged as “overlord” of the 7 ‘kingdoms’ of Anglo-Saxon England.

**Ethelwulf, King of Wessex** (839-58)

**Scotland:** **Kenneth McAlpine** – Gaelic/ Pictish ruler declared first “King of All Scotland”, 844 AD/ CE.

**Age of the “Vikings”(C 9th -11th):** by C9th AD/ CE pagan **Scandinavians** (Danes, Norwegians, Swedes) were sallying forth from their overcrowded homelands (severe shortages of farmland, food) in their amazing **long-ships** (technologically way ahead of other ships of the time), roving (“going viking”) across the seas seeking out new lands to settle. Initially, the Vikings (or “Northmen”) tended to raid coastal areas (often attacking churches & monasteries – easy targets/ lots to plunder), and gained a fearsome reputation. In the longer term, however, most “Vikings” wanted land to settle and farm. In truth, “Vikings” were no more savage than earlier groups of pagan raiders and settlers (such as the Angles, Saxons, Jutes & Franks) who’d moved into W Europe centuries earlier. They were extraordinarily brave and skilful seafarers who had little to lose and everything to gain.

* 861 Vikings discovered **Iceland**, which they subsequently colonised.
* C8th-11th Danish Viking port/ trade centre of **Hedeby** flourished in South Jutland (now in Germany).
* By 862 Vikings (mainly Swedes) were navigating the great rivers of what is now **Russia** and settling there as the “Rus” (because of their fair hair)-> eventually the country was named after them. **Oleg** the Viking, Prince of Novgorod (879-912 CE/AD) eventually became Prince of Kiev, Ukraine. Later **Vladimir the Great**, Prince of Novgorod & Kiev (980-1015 CE/AD), formally adopted Orthodox Christianity (988 CE/AD) as the religion of the “Rus” of Kiev.
* 865 Vikings even attacked the great city of Constantinople (modern Istanbul – “Miklagard” to the Vikings), capital of the surviving Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium)- they were driven off, but this did not stop them…
* “The Northmen” contd raiding/ settling all over NW Europe and elsewhere, eventually “cutting deals” with Christian kings in England and France: in return for becoming Christian they were allowed to settle and hold lands in less populated areas of countries they’d invaded…
* Eg **“Crisis of 878”** in England – “The Great Danish Army” of **Guthrum** nrly took all of Saxon England –> defeated eventually by forces of Alfred of Wessex (**Battle of Edington**) -> **Treaty of Wedmore** -> the newly “Christianised” Danes allowed to settle/ rule much of the North as **“Danelaw”**.
* Similarly, in 911 the Frankish king allowed **Rollo** the Viking (aka “”Hrolf the Ganger”) to settle in NW France and rule as the now Christian “Duke Robert of Normandy”, whose descendants (the by then French speaking “Normans” under Duke William, “The Bastard”) would eventually conquer Saxon England - 1066 and all that.
* The Vikings contd, however, to press their advantage whenever/ wherever they could – eg Alfred of Wessex only drove them from London in 886, and Edward “The Elder” had to drive the Danes from Essex in 913.
* 924 – **Athelstan** of Wessex effectively had control of most of England ->926 Athelstan took control of **Northumbria** (N England), and forced the Welsh princes, the King of **Strathclyde** (S Scotland), and most **Picts** and **Scots** to accept him as their “overlord”. But many did not accept this situation…
* 937 – **Battle of Brunanburgh** –> Athelstan defeated a great **Scottish, Pictish, & Danish Viking Alliance**, and was declared “King of All Britain”!
* This was not, however, sustainable -> Athelstan’s brother, **Edmund**, succeeded him as King of England, 939 (reigned until 946), whilst **Malcolm I** became King of Scotland, 942.
* The Vikings carried on with their “business” – eg **York** (Jorvik) developed (from 866) into the capital of N England. In Ireland, they were key developers (C9th/10th) of the city now known as **Dublin** as a great trading hub.
* 981-5 – **Eric “The Red”** settled **Greenland** - lost 14 of his 25 long-ships getting there!
* 1002 – **Leif Erikkson** reached/ explored the coast of **N America – “Vinland”**.
* 1016-42 – the Danes/ Norwegians (**King Cnut**) actually ruled all of England as part of their Scandinavian Empire.

The “Vikings” were remarkable people – great seafarers, explorers, colonisers, but also farmers, traders, merchants, and artists. Their culture was very sophisticated; their shipbuilding, metal working and other crafts were extraordinary. They were certainly formidable warriors, but they were not just the bloodthirsty savages (“The Scourge of God”) portrayed by the monks and other Christian writers who had been the main victims of their earliest raids. Once settled, and especially when “Christianised”, they usually integrated well, and whenever they got the chance to rule, they often turned out to be quite good at it – eg Oleg of Kiev, & Vladimir the Great… founding of “Russia”; King Cnut of England; Dukes of Normandy.

***The Wider World:***

**Africa**

* **Great Acropolis** of Kingdom of **Zimbabwe** built, circa 850 AD/ CE.
* **“Golden Age of Ghana”** began about 920 AD/ CE – great African civilisation.
* **Mali Empire** – at its height (C14th), a major producer of salt, copper, & gold (indeed, most of late Medieval Europe’s gold came from Mali), and fielded an army of 100,000 troops, incl 10,000 cavalry!
* There were many remarkable kingdoms in Africa during this period and later…
* Eg **Bornu Empire** (roughly modern Chad & Nigeria) – capital city Gazargamo: popul 20,000+; enclosed by 3-4 miles of 20’ high walls. Great centre of trade, religion, & scholarship.
* Eg **Kand** – capital was the great trading city of **Njimi**.
* Mostly Muslim (Sunni)-> Arabic usually used for written records, chronicles etc
* Many impressive buildings – palaces, fortresses, mosques etc
* Very sophisticated societies – scholars, legal systems/ law codes, banking & trading centres, organised farming, and amazing artwork and metal working - eg **“Benin Bronzes”** – made in **Kingdom of Benin** (roughly modern Nigeria) circa C13th.
* The great trading (and religious) city of **Timbuktu (in Mali)** was famous thro’out Africa, Europe, & Asia – described in detail by the famous N African Arab merchant explorer **Ibn Batatu**.

**Asia**

* 2 Ancient Chinese philosophers worth noting (because their teachings remain influential today) are: 1. **Sun Tzu (“Master Sun”)**, C6th-5th BCE, *The Art of War.* 2. **Confucius (“Kong Fuzi” – “Master Kong”)**, 551-479 BCE, *Analects*.
* **Chinese** invented **paper** around C1st-2nd AD/ CE…possibly even earlier.
* 907-960 AD/ CE – terrible civil wars in **China** – T’ang Dynasty lost control, 906/7 -> ferocious rivalry between competing factions supporting rival emperors -> ‘Five Dynasties’ 907-960…’Song Dynasty’ 960-1279…’Great Ming Empire’ 1368-1644.
* **“Great Wall of China”** (in fact a complex system of defences, eventually over 13,000 miles long, built to ward off invaders, regulate frontiers, & protect key agricultural areas and cities, esp **Beijing**): initial sectors prob built under **T’angs**, & earlier rulers, but added to gradually by later dynasties, esp **Mings** (the last wholly **Han Chinese** Emperors) who were guarding against Mongol threats.
* During C10th (probably around 930s) the Chinese invented **printing** (wood blocks) ->huge long-term significance for humankind: another of China’s **‘Four Great Inventions’** (paper, printing, gunpowder, magnetic compass).
* **Mongols** moving into area now known as Mongolia, and then N China –> conquered by 1123.
* 1161 – first documented use of **explosives** (gunpowder) in warfare – by Chinese against Mongols.
* **Genghis Khan (Temujin)**, 1162-1227 CE/ AD, was the first “Great Khan”. Remarkable ldr who unified the Mongol peoples, and then led them to conquer/ build the vast **Mongol Empire**.
* Genghis was an extremely ruthless military leader/ empire builder, but once in control, he was also surprisingly “modern” in many ways – eg religious toleration, legal rights for women, concern for justice etc.
* NB – 16 million men in Asia & Europe today carry a “genetic marker” indicating that they’re descended directly from Temujin’s (“Genghis Khan”) immediate family group.
* By the 1190s the Mongols were expanding their conquests in E Asia…
* 1280 – **“Kublai Khan”** Emperor of China – the Mongols, in effect, blended with the “Chinese”…became part of them.
* By C15th Chinese were sending great fleets (hundreds of **‘super junks’**; some 300’ long; watertight compartments; carried live animals for food; astral & magnetic compass navigation) out across the vast Pacific -> probably reached **‘Australia’** (1450s).
* 998AD/ CE **Mahmud** founded 1st Islamic realm in **India** -> by C13th became the **Delhi Sultanate** (1206-1526)-> later succeeded by **Mughal Empire**, founded by Babur,1526-> lasted until C18th.
* **Japan** – ravaged by very bloody civil wars 1150s, until eventually stability & order were imposed by the **‘Shogunate’** – military government by warlords serving the Emperor, which lasted well into the C18th. (“Shinto” –> ‘Way of the Gods’/ reverence for “essences”, spirits etc.; later – “Bushido” –> ‘Way of the Warrior’. Medieval Japan was highly refined & sophisticated, but also very “feudal” & militaristic.)
* **NB** throughout the European ‘Middle Ages’, the most populous, wealthy, and sophisticated parts of the world were in “the East”, esp India & China. By comparison, Europe was a relatively primitive backwater, which was why European merchants went to such great lengths to trade with the East – **“The Silk Roads” – Marco Polo** in “Cathay” (China) etc.

**Asia-Minor** (roughly modern Turkey) & **The Middle East**

* Mid C11th the **Seljuk Turks** (fierce warrior “horse people”, orig from Central Asia, who’d converted to Islam) swept through the Arab Empires of the Middle/ Near East (seizing Jerusalem from its Arab rulers) and into Asia Minor 1070s…
* 1071 Seljuks defeated the **Byzantines** (heirs to the Ancient Roman Empire; capital the great city of **Constantinople**) at the **Battle of Manzikert**.
* Shocking event -> Seljuks estab’d **“Sultanate of Rum”** in Asia Minor, and were now a direct threat to the Christian Byzantine Empire.
* 1095 - the **Byzantine Emperor, Alexios I, “Comnenus”**, made a desperate appeal to Christian Western Europe for military help V the Seljuk threat, which led to the movement now called **‘The Crusades’**...(the term ‘Crusades’ was not generally used until the C13th):
* 1096-1291 many expeditions (‘armed pilgrimages’) left Europe to fight to recover the Holy City (Jerusalem) for **“Christendom”**.
* **Crusader States** or **“Latin Kingdoms” (eg “The Kingdom of Jerusalem”; “The County of Edessa”)** were established in “The Holy Land”, or **“Outremer”** (The Land Over the Sea).
* Ultimately, however, The Crusades came to nothing – it was impossible to retain control of Jerusalem/ The Holy Land in the face of increasingly well organised Muslim resistance.
* Although not originally a religious war as such (the Byzantine Emperor had just wanted Western troops to help fight off the Seljuk threat to Constantinople), the atrocities, betrayals, and political games of *all* participants left a legacy of bitterness and mistrust not only between some Christians & Muslims, but also between the Byzantine Greek and Western Christians.
* NB “Crusading” also happened elsewhere, notably against pagans in **The Baltic** region of Europe; against Christian “heretics” in S France, and against the Muslim **Moors** in Spain – eg **Alfonso III of Castile** started this **“Reconquista”** (reconquest) in 900 AD/ CE, & it contd thro’out the Middle Ages until eventually (1492) the last Muslim stronghold in Spain (**Granada**) fell.
* Eventually, another Turkish clan, **The Ottomans**, defeated The Byzantine Empire (**Constantinople fell to the Ottomans, 1453)**, took over most of the Middle Eastern Arab lands, much of N Africa, & parts of S Europe (eg The Balkans), and the **Sultans (eg Suleiman the Magnificent, “Shadow of God on Earth”)** based in **Constantinople/ “Istanbul”** ruledthe **Ottoman Empire -** in the C16th probably the greatest power in the world.
* The Ottoman Empire only collapsed at the end of The First World War (1914-18). [NB Boris Johnson is a descendant of one of the ministers of the last Sultan.]

**Americas** & **Pacific Region**

* The **“Americas”** were relatively isolated from the wider world, & therefore developed in distinct ways, as did the **Polynesian** peoples of the **Pacific Ocean** region (remarkable seafarers who colonised many islands, incl ‘**New Zealand’**).
* By the time of “first contacts” with Europeans @ end of ‘Middle Ages’ – **Christofio Colombo’s** first “Voyage of Discovery”, 1492…
* … which reached the **Caribbean** (he thought it was India, which he was trying to find via a “Western sea route” -> hence he named the islands the **“West Indies”**, & called the inhabitants “Indians”); followed by many others, mainly from Portugal & Spain…
* … who eventually conquered, colonised territory thro’out Central & South America – very ruthlessly (“**Conquistadors”**)…
* …there were a number of sophisticated societies in the **Americas**:
* Eg C12th-15th height of **Pueblo “Mound Culture”** (huge earthworks & ceremonial structures built by indigenous peoples in parts of N America).
* Eg Peru – **Inca Empire**
* Eg Mexico – **Aztec Empire**
* Amazing cities (often far bigger than European ones), paved road networks, temples, palaces, canals, complex farming systems etc
* However, mainly because these civilisations had not developed certain technologies (eg iron & steel armour & weapons, gunpowder/ firearms), & did not have horses (not indigenous to America), the ruthless “Conquistadors” overwhelmed and enslaved them – eg **Cortes** (Aztecs), **Pizarro** (Incas).
* “European” diseases (eg smallpox, typhus, flu) also devastated their populations, although the Americas probably “gave” Europe syphilis (a nasty STD) in return!
* By the C16th the Portuguese (Brazil) and Spanish (most of the rest of S America) controlled much of what is now called **“Latin America”** (because today the prevalent languages – Spanish & Portuguese – are derived from Latin), & the original civilisations had been destroyed.
* NB “The Conquistadors” also fought, conquered & colonised, or interfered elsewhere – eg parts of N America (most of what are now the SW States of the USA), Caribbean (“The Spanish Main”), Africa (eg Angola, Mozambique – Portuguese colonies until 1970s), Asia (notably, Japan, where they were very involved in politics, trade etc).
* NB Later (C17th onwards) European colonists of northern N America (mainly French, Dutch, British, and later Germans & Scandinavians) did great harm to the indigenous peoples there, eg the **Hurons**, **Mohawks (Mohicans), & Iroquois** of the NE & Mid-West; the **Sioux** of the Mid-West; **Blackfoot & Cheyenne** of Great Plains; **Navajo & Apache** of SW; **Seminole** of SE; **Pacific tribes** of the NW.
* Fundamental problem – Europeans wanted to settle land/ farm & ranch/ mine valuable resources etc. In contrast, “The First Nations” of N America had no concept of “owning” land – all humans, animals etc lived under “The Great Spirit”: everyone & everything were part of Nature – no-one could “own” any part of it.

**Back to Europe**

* 800 AD/ CE **Charlemagne (“Charles the Great”)** of the Franks proclaimed **“Holy Roman Emperor”** – Christian ruler of most of what are now France & Germany.
* This “Frankish Empire” was always a bit shaky – too many rival princes etc, and it often fragmented, esp after the death of the Emperor **Charles “The Bald”** in 877 AD/ CE, but…
* 881 **Charles III, “The Fat”,** reunified it – for a while.
* 910 – **Abbey of Cluny** founded in France –> developed into an important centre of Christian learning.
* 920s – **Wenceslas (“Good King Wenceslas”)** ruled **Bohemia** (roughly the modern “Czech Republic”) as a just Christian monarch…until murdered by rivals in 929.
* 936 – **Otto “The Great”** declared “King of the Germans”.
* 962 – **Holy Roman Empire** (in the West) revived – lasted in one form or another for most of the rest of the Middle Ages, and struggled on (under mainly Spanish ldrshp) into the Early Modern period (C16th/ 17th onwards)…
* However, as the C18th French writer & philosopher, **Voltaire**, famously observed, The “Holy Roman Empire” “…was never ‘Holy’, nor ‘Roman’, and not really an ‘Empire!’”
* 1016/7-42 – Danes ruled England.
* 1054 – **Great Schism** – Eastern Byzantine(Greek) Christian Church broke away from the Western “Roman” Church: issues of language (Greek or Latin), form & styles of worship, how Church should be led/ run; the calendar, incl dates of Easter & Christmas.
* 1066 – Battle of Hastings -> Norman Conquest of Saxon England.
* 1075-1122 – great disputes between Popes in Rome & German Emperors over the issue of who had ultimate authority to appoint bishops: often flared into war between supporters of the 2 sides, esp in Italy.
* 1095 – **Council of Clermont**, N Italy – **Pope Urban II** called on Western Christians to “take the Cross” and recapture Jerusalem from the Turks – start of “The Crusades”.

**MEDIEVAL ENGLAND**

**Alfred** “the Great”, King of Wessex (871-99) –> unified most of Anglo-Saxon England under **Wessex** (**Winchester** became Capital of England); neutralised the Viking threat (“burhs”; R Navy; Battle of Edington, 878; Tr of Wedmore; “Danelaw” etc); promoted good govt, Christianity, learning – *The Anglo Saxon Chronicle*. (“**Alfredian Renaissance”** –> great flowering of Christian learning and culture.)

**Cnut** (Canute) – Viking King of Denmark (from 1014) & England (from about 1017): good king –> promoted law & order & stable govt. England was part of a wealthy Viking Empire. Cnut died 1035; England eventually reverted to Anglo-Saxon control.

**Edward** “the Confessor” (1042-66) – close ties with Normandy/ no clear heir -> succession crisis, 1066, the “Year of Three Kings”.

**Norman** (descendants of William of Normandy) & **Angevin kings** (descendants of Counts of Anjou, esp Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou, who married, 1128, Matilda, daughter of Henry I of England)

**William I** “the Conqueror” (1066-1087) – ruthless conqueror of Anglo-Saxon England; Battle of Hastings, 1066; Harrying of the North, 1069; castles (control); heavy tax; Forest Laws; Feudalism; *Domesday Book*.

**William II** “Rufus” (1087-1100)-2nd son & favourite of William I. Flamboyant character – excellent soldier, but he upset many, esp older bro, **Robert II “Curthose”,** Duke of Normandy**,** who disputed his succession to English throne -> Robert stirred up rebellions in England V Rufus 1088 & 1095, & fought directly against Rufus until 1096 when he joined 1st Crusade – his brother, William II “Rufus”, paid him to go! William II also fell out with **Anselm**, Archbishop of Canterbury - because Rufus was “ungodly” (and possibly gay) and tried to take land from the Church -> Anselm exiled.

Possibly William II “Rufus” was assassinated (“hunting accident”, New Forest) by supporters of his brother, Henry - who certainly moved remarkably quickly to secure the throne. Need to be careful though – monks (Churchmen) who wrote the chronicles were biased against William II – eg he was buried in Winchester Cathedral. Not long after, its tower collapsed, which Church people took as a sign from God that William was damned! On balance, William II was quite a capable king who strengthened Norman rule of England, and he also built the magnificent **Westminster Hall** in London. Many English people did not, however, really accept that Normans could truly be their kings.

**Henry I, “Beauclerk”** (because he was very well educated) – lived 1068-1135. King of England, 1100-35. 3rd surviving son of William I, “the Bastard”, Duke of Normandy, “the Conqueror” of England. Determined to become a credible “English” King:

-> Nov 1100 married **Matilda of Scotland**: sister of **Edgar, King of Scotland,** daughter of **Malcolm III of Scotland**,and granddaughter of **Edmund “Ironside”, King of England 1016**, which massively enhanced Henry’s status as an “English” king because their children would have “English blood”. Known as “Good Queen Maud”, Matilda was a strong supporter of Archbishop Anselm and the Church (see above – Anselm’s troubles with William II).

Matilda died in 1117 – she & Henry had 2 legitimate children –> **William Adelin**, the heir, and **Matilda (aka The Empress Matilda or Maud)**, who would one day (1127) be declared “future Queen” by the English barons… (see below\*)

Henry I & his “Queen Consort” Matilda established themselves as legitimate and credible rulers of England. They promoted strong and just govt, which was stable, and “Godly”. Their reign was, however, troubled because Robert II, Duke of Normandy, “Curthose” (Henry’s older bro, by then returned from the First Crusade), contd to claim the English throne-> war until 1106 when Henry I of England defeated/ captured Robert at **Battle of Tinchebrai** and retook Normandy, re-establishing the Anglo-Norman Realm. Robert spent the rest of his life (28 more years!) as Henry’s prisoner, but Robert’s son, **William Clito** (only 4 when his father was captured) grew up to be a constant thorn in Henry’s flesh. Clito got the support of the French King and the Count of Anjou (who both feared Henry I’s power), and Henry I had to fight constantly to protect his Norman domains from them.

**NB Local interest:** Throughout this tricky time Henry I was very ably supported by his Chancellor, **Roger, Bishop of Salisbury**: d.o.b. uncertain – died 1139. Roger of Salisbury was a brilliant lawyer, financier, strategist and organiser who ran The Royal Council when the king was fighting in Normandy. He created “The Exchequer” to professionalise tax gathering, and was very much Henry I’s right hand man. Despite supporting the succession of the next king, **Stephen of Blois\*** (after Henry’s death, 1135), Roger fell from favour, and died in relative obscurity. A pity – he deserves to be better remembered.

**\*Matilda (or Maud) – “The Empress”** (lived 1102-1167)

* Only daughter of Henry I & Matilda.
* 1114 – married Emperor Henry V, Holy Roman Emperor & King of the Germans (1099-1125)
* 1125 – Henry died -> Matilda then married **Geoffrey, Count of Anjou** in 1128.
* 1120 – her brother, & heir to Henry I of England, **William Adelin**, died in **The White Ship** sinking.
* Consequently, in 1127, the English barons did homage to “Empress Matilda” as their future Queen.
* However, when Henry I died in 1135, his nephew, **Stephen Count of Blois\***, seized the throne -> **King Stephen** (1135-54)
* Stephen was supported by the English Church & many of the barons, who feared handing England over to an “Empress” who was married to the very powerful Geoffrey of Anjou.
* However, Stephen was an inept king who rapidly alienated many of his supporters.
* 1138 – **Robert, Earl of Gloucester**, Matilda’s half-brother (one of Henry I’s illegitimate children – most Medieval kings fathered ‘bastards’ – it was “normal”) rebelled…
* … and the **Scots** under **King David I**, taking advantage of the chaos down south, invaded the North of England.
* Altho’ defeated at **“The Battle of the Standard”**, 22nd Aug 1138, in N Yorkshire [so called because the English commander, William d’Aumale (an Anglo-Norman Count), rallied his army under a huge mast carrying the banners of St Peter of York, St John of Beverley, & St Wilfred of Ripon], the Scots kept control of Northumbria, Carlisle, & Durham – for a time.
* 1139 - Matilda invaded England from Normandy and established a base in the West Country.
* For the next 14 years England was ravaged by lawlessness and warfare – **“The Anarchy”**, a civil war.
* At one point Matilda seemed to have won – 1141 **Battle of Lincoln** – Stephen defeated & captured -> Matilda’s prisoner.
* But…14th Sept, 1141 – Matilda’s forces besieging **Wolvesley Castle**, **Winchester**, were routed by a Royalist relief force(“The Winchester Rout”) -> Robert of Gloucester was captured, forcing Matilda to release Stephen in a “hostage trade” for her brother.
* War dragged on – the chaos & bloodshed had a bad impact on ordinary people, & Matilda was becoming increasingly unpopular.
* Stephen achieved a notable victory at **Faringdon**, 1145 – a turning point.
* Matilda kept fighting, but her forces were weak, and she was losing key supporters.
* Robert of Gloucester died, 1147, depriving Matilda of her brother and main supporter, and she retreated to Normandy.
* An uneasy “peace” followed, but Stephen could not convince the Church (nor many of his barons) to acknowledge his eldest son, **Eustace**, as his successor because Eustace was an excessively ruthless & brutal soldier whom people feared.
* Eustace died, 1153, which forced Stephen to compromise and bring the civil war to an end:
* **Treaty of Winchester** (sometimes incorrectly called “Tr of Wallingford” because initial parleying had taken place there), Nov 1153 (ratified at Westminster, Dec 1153), ended the civil war:
* Stephen to keep the throne for the rest of his life, but would be succeeded by Matilda’s son, **Henry of Anjou**.
* Stephen’s surviving son, William Earl of Surrey, was excluded from the succession, but was well “compensated”.
* Thus, when Stephen died in 1154, the English Crown passed to Henry of Anjou, who became **Henry II** of England.

**The Angevins**

Henry II & his 2 sons who ruled after him (**Richard I** & **John**) are called “The Angevins” (descended from Geoffrey, Count of Anjou): Henry II married **Eleanor of Aquitaine** (Western France), and, therefore, his domain included not just England, but also the Norman lands in France, plus Anjou & Aquitaine. This **Angevin Empire** extended from England’s frontier with Scotland to the Pyrenees in the South of France. Henry II was one of the greatest rulers of his time, controlling nearly as much “French” territory as the Kings of France.

All subsequent Medieval English kings (including the “cadet” branches\* of the **Houses of York & Lancaster**) were descended from this “Angevin” line, but are known as “**The Plantagenets”** -probably after the *Planta Genista* (“common broom plant”) badge of The House of Anjou. The “Angevins”/ “Plantagenets” ruled England 1154-1485. **Richard III** was the last Plantagenet King of England.

(\* “cadet” branches or lines of Royal Houses = male descendants of younger sons of kings.)

**Henry II** (1154-1189) – “The Lion in Winter” – **Thomas Becket** was his close friend & Chancellor – later (from 1162) Archbishop of Canterbury -> Henry’s radical legal reforms (**Clarendon “Constitutions”, 1164, & “Clarendon Assize”, 1166**) grtly strengthened the power of Royal courts at expense of Church courts, & intro’d juries -> disputes with Church re relative authority of King’s Law and Church Law -> ***MURDER OF THOMAS BECKET, 1170.*** (Becket subsequently made a “saint” by Pope – “St Thomas”). [“Avranches Compromise”, 1172, absolved Henry of any intentional involvement in Becket’s murder.]

Henry II was formidable – respected & feared. He destroyed illegal baronial castles built during “The Anarchy”, and forced the barons to yield to him. **Malcolm III of Scotland** did homage, & returned Northumberland, Westmorland & Cumberland to England. The **Welsh Princes** were subdued, & the **Irish kings** accepted (reluctantly!) Henry’s “over-lordship”. However, the sheer size of his “Angevin Empire” made it hard to govern. Henry could not be everywhere at once, and many people (his barons, French, Scottish, Irish kings) feared his overwhelming power. Consequently, Henry II devised a scheme to divide his empire b/ween his 4 sons: Henry to get England, Normandy, Anjou & Maine; Geoffrey – Brittany; Richard - Aquitaine; John – Ireland, once it was fully subdued. This division made political & strategic sense – it kept the Angevin domain “in the family”, but would reassure French kings especially that their “English” Angevin “cousins” were no threat to them. Tensions/ rivalries & mistrust were, however, rampant, & as Henry’s older sons reached adulthood (1170s onwards) these bubbled-over into rebellion & warfare.

Later part of H II’s reign v troubled by his 3 “difficult” older sons: “The Young King” Henry (lived 1155-83) [who’d actually been crowned ‘King of England’ “in waiting” in his father’s lifetime, 1170 - only time in English history this happened], Geoffrey, Count of Brittany, (lived 1158-86), & Richard, Duke of Aquitaine, (lived 1157-99), who allied, at various times, with each other, & with the Scots & French, against their father. Henry II died at Tours in France, 1189, having suffered a humiliating military defeat by his son, Richard, allied with the French King, Philip II “Augustus”. Because Henry & Geoffrey were by this time dead, Richard inherited England and all the other Angevin lands. His younger brother, John, who’d always been Henry II’s favourite, was resentful and frustrated.

**Richard I** (”The Lion Heart”)(1189-1199) – great ***Crusading General (3rd Crusade)***, but a negligent King of England – spent only 7 months of his reign in England –> bankrupted the country paying for his wars and other military adventures. Died campaigning in his French territories: succeeded by yngr bro, John.

**King John** (1199-1216) – much demonised (“Lackland”, “Soft Sword”, murderer of priests, in league with the Devil etc), but much of what is believed about John is untrue. By no means a totally bad king (eg improved law courts, & govt admin, and had successes in Scotland & Wales); certainly no worse than many others. John lost control of much of England’s French territory, which alienated many barons. Hard reality – John had to deal with the bankruptcy & political mess left behind by Richard I, not least problems with some barons, who during Richard’s long absences had got used to doing whatever they pleased. Constant conflict with many of the barons (->**1st** **Barons’ War,** 1215-17), & also with The Church (The Pope even excommunicated John at one point!) were features of John’s unhappy reign.

John married **Isabella of Angouleme:** their young son, Henry, succeeded John, aged 9.

John signed ***MAGNA CARTA, 1215***. At the time, a politically necessary agreement with the Church & his most troublesome barons –> did not last long…John died 1216, at war with many of his barons. Since then, however, many of the ‘rights’ laid down in Magna Carta have become basic rights for everyone, but that was never the intention of *any* of the original signatories: it was all about the “rights” of the rich & powerful. John only signed because he had no choice at the time. John was not a great king – he could be extremely self-centred and devious, and made some bad mistakes, but nor was he the evil monster of popular belief.

**The Plantagenets**

**Henry III** (1216-1272) – difficult reign – became king aged 9 – Govt initially therefore led by leading barons, esp **William Marshal, 1st Earl of Pembroke** (died 1219), and **Hugh de Burgh**. Henry came of age 1227 -> upset many barons because he was wasteful & inefficient, relying heavily on foreign favourites, esp after marrying **Eleanor of Provence**, 1236. Henry III was also too keen on helping the Pope conquer Sicily, in exchange for a Papal promise that his son would be made “King of Sicily”. OTOH, in fairness, it could be argued that many barons simply did not like the young king asserting himself at their expense.

Barons issued ***The Provisions of Oxford, 1258***, which aimed to limit the King’s powers & force him to rule with a council of barons. Henry rejected these demands ->**2nd Barons’ War, 1264-67.** Barons’ ldr, **Simon de Montfort**, defeated & captured Henry III & Prince Edward @ **Battle of Lewes, May 1264**, and ruled England (some think he helped develop Parliament as an important part of govt) until killed @ **Battle of Evesham, Aug 1265**. For the rest of Henry III’s reign, his son Edward (“Lord Edward”), the victor of Evesham, ran everything.

**Edward I** (1272-1307) – aka “Longshanks” (v tall), “Hammer of the Scots” – great warrior king – ldr of 9th Crusade, 1271-2.

* Married 1. Eleanor of Castile, 1254 – died 1290 (The ‘Eleanor Crosses’ in many English towns commemorate her); 2. Margaret of France, 1299 – a political marriage.
* **Wales** – “rebellion” led by **Llewelyn ap Gruffud**, 1277-82 -> Llewelyn killed -> **Statute of Rhuddlan, 1284:** English govt & law extended to incl’d Wales. Another Welsh “rebellion”, 1294-5, crushed ruthlessly, & Welsh subdued (**ring of castles** etc). (Creation of ‘Prince of Wales’- sneaky move by Edward!)
* **Scotland** – “rebellion” of **John Balliol** crushed @ **Battle of Dunbar, 1296**. Second “rebellion” led by **William Wallace** (great victory over English @ **Stirling Bridge, 1297**) contd despite Edward’s decisive victory at **Falkirk, 1298**…ended in uneasy “peace” -> Wallace eventually captured (possibly betrayed by Scottish lords who resented him due to his relatively low social status) & executed in London, 1305 (“hanged, drawn, quartered” – grim!).
* **Wallace** – great national hero of Scots; inspired resistance to English rule. Edward could subdue the Scots short-term, but Scotland was too far from London/ S England, & too large, to dominate as he’d done in Wales.
* **Robert the Bruce** contd resistance ->Edward died, 1307, en route to dealing with this new Scottish “rebellion”.
* Edward also had to fight to defend his domains in France against the French King, Philip “the Fair” (ie handsome), 1294-99. Edward married Philip’s sister, Margaret, as part of the eventual peace treaty.
* Edward’s continual wars, and his massive castle building programme in Wales, placed huge strains on England’s finances. This caused tensions: Archbishop Peckham reasserted the rights of Church Courts; Archbishop Winchelsea resisted increased taxes on Church; the barons objected strongly to any new taxes on them.
* Because of these issues, Edward had to cajole & persuade rather than force his leading subjects into supporting him, which meant that ‘Parliament’ grew in importance as a forum of discussion, altho’ it only met when the king summoned it.
* Edward made some important reforms to Govt & Law: eg **Statute of Gloucester, 1278** (centralised Royal Govt); **Statute of Winchester, 1285** (improved law enforcement); **Statute of Quo Warranto, 1290** (combat abuse/ misuse of privileges granted by Crown); **Statute of Quia Emptores, 1290** (against misuse of feudal rights).
* Big stain on Edward I = anti-Semitism. Jewish bankers had loaned a lot of money to King. Edward stoked anti-Jewish fears & superstitions, and then in **1290 Expelled Jews from England** -> all their money & property was forfeited to The Crown – ie to him!

**Edward II** (1307-1327): son of Edw I & Eleanor of Castile; born in Caernarfon Castle –> first English “Prince of Wales” (1301-7). Handsome, but extravagant, reckless & incompetent. His reign was a disaster: favourites (Piers Gaveston, & later Hugh le Despenser) alienated the barons, who tried to control the king (”Ordinances”, 1311), and then ended up fighting him. He also humiliated & infuriated his wife, **Isabel of France**. Worst of all – Edw II suffered a massive military defeat in Scotland – **Battle of Bannockburn**, 1314. Edw forced to hand control to his cousin, **Thomas, Earl of Lancaster.** Edward eventually fought back -> 1316-22, resulting in Thomas’ execution. However, Isabel, & her lover, **Roger Mortimer,** invaded England, 1326, overthrew Edward in 1327, and Mortimer ran England, 1327-30, probably having had Edward II murdered, Berkeley Castle, Gloucestershire, 1327.

**Edward III** (1327-1377): Married Philippa of Hainault, 1328. Took full control of England aged 18, 1330 -> executed Mortimer. Edward re-established good relations with the barons; promoted trade, & improved the R Navy. A very able King, and an outstanding general. Supported **Edward Balliol** (an Anglo-Norman “Scots” baron, & therefore “pro English”) as King of Scotland. Edw III helped Balliol defeat his rival, **David II** –> won battles of **Halidon Hill, 1333** and **Neville’s Cross, 1346,** where David was captured. Restored English military pride, and “stabilised” relations with Scotland, which Edward did not try to conquer, although many Scots did not care for their “English king”, Balliol.

Edward III was more focused on conquering France, to which his Norman/ Angevin inheritance did give him some claim: the start of the so-called ***Hundred Years War*** **(1338-1453)** b/ween England & France. Initially, Edward III achieved notable victories over the French - at sea, **Sluys, 1340**; on land, **Crecy, 1346**, and capture of **Calais, 1347**. After a lull in the war, he scored a massive victory at **Poitiers, 1356**, capturing King John II of France. His campaign of 1359-60 was not so successful, and he could not build on his earlier victories -> **Treaty of Bretignay, 1360:** Edward III renounced his claim to the French throne in return for French recognition of his full sovereignty over all of his French domains.

***The Black Death*** (Bubonic Plague – *Yersinia Pestis* – black rats – fleas…+ prob other diseases such as anthrax, typhus, smallpox) swept across Asia & Europe during Edward III’s reign: European peak 1346-51…Brit Isles, 1347-49…probably killed at least 75 million in Eurasia. In England, approx. 30-50% of population died. Short-term impact devastating, altho’ in longer-term it reduced overpopulation and did much to weaken feudalism -> “Golden Age of Peasant Labour”. **Statute of Labourers, 1351** – attempt to limit the wage increases resulting from the labour shortages following the Black Death. V unpopular with many peasants -> a long-term cause of the ***Peasants’ Revolt, 1381.***

Edward III suffered from *dementia* in his final years: his mistress Alice Perrers looked after him (some said she manipulated him), whilst his fourth son, **John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster,** virtually ran the country from about 1371…and then on into the reign of the young Richard II (1377-99). (NB Danny Dyer, “Cockney” actor/ star of *Eastenders* is a descendant of Edward III’s.)

**Richard II** (1377-1399); grandson of Edw III/ son of **Edward, “The Black Prince”** (hero of wars in France – eg led English Army at Poitiers. Edward died 1376) & Joan of Kent. Richard II married – 1. Anne of Bohemia (died 1394); 2. Isabel of France. His reign was dominated by his uncle, **John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster**, 4th son of Edward III.

Richard II faced down ***The Peasants’ Revolt, 1381*** (John Ball – “Lollards”/ “hedge priests” – Wat Tyler – multiple/ complex causes, incl “Poll Tax”): the rebellion was mainly by wealthier free peasants in the South East & Essex –> Archbish Canterbury murdered. There were, nevertheless, outbreaks of violence all over England. Some historians believe this was the closest Medieval England ever came to “class war”/ revolution.

Richard II was not, however, able to control the great lords (“magnates”), who were jockeying for power and influence…herein lay the long-term origins of the so-called ***Wars of the Roses, 1455-87*:** a struggle for control of the throne between the supporters of 2 factions centred on 2 rival ‘cadet’ branches of the Plantagenet Dynasty – York & Lancaster. It was NOT a war b/ween Yorkshire & Lancashire, but a power struggle b/ween rival factions.

Struggling to assert himself over his magnates, Richard II made a fatal mistake, 1399, when his “overmighty” uncle, **John of Gaunt**, **Duke of Lancaster**, died: Richard confiscated Gaunt’s family lands. John of Gaunt’s son & heir **Henry Bolingbroke** (who’d been exiled) was now “dispossessed” & had nothing to lose -> invaded England while Richard was dealing with problems in Ireland. On his return, Richard found he had nowhere to go -> yielded to Bolingbroke & his supporters (most of the magnates, who’d concluded that if R II was willing to dispossess & humiliate his cousin, Bolingbroke, then he might do likewise to them!) @ Conway, August 1399. Richard abdicated Sept 1399 -> imprisoned in Pontefract Castle, Yorks. Starved to death – possibly, on Henry’s orders…certainly, many believed so. Altho’ it’s just as likely he was severely depressed & anxious -> became *anorexic*, with fatal consequences. Whatever the truth, Richard died in Henry’s custody –> v damaging to Henry’s reputation.

Richard II had no heir - Bolingbroke of Lancaster had taken the throne in a ***coup d’etat*** -> “Lancastrians” dominant -> Henry Bolingbroke now King Henry IV.

**Henry IV** (1399-1413): because Henry had *usurped* the throne (and possibly killed Richard II), his reign was unstable – many did not really accept him as legitimate king, and he faced many revolts – eg **Owain Glyndwr** in **Wales** (1400-09), who was supported by **Henry Percy, 1st Earl of Northumberland,** & his son **Henry or ‘Harry’, aka “Hotspur”**.

“Hotspur” killed 1403, but in 1405 Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, **Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk**, and **Richard Scrope, Archbishop of York**, raised another rebellion. Henry eventually dealt with these rebels, but it took until 1408 (**Bramham Moor, nr Tadcaster, Yorks, 19th Feb 1408 –>** ended Percy rebellion/ Henry Percy killed) before all of these “northern rebels” were crushed. Meanwhile, there was constant threat of a French invasion, and Henry IV’s son & heir, Henry (”Prince Hal”) was a continual source of trouble: 1410 Prince Henry, backed by the **Beauforts** (another branch of the “Lancastrians” who had ambitions of their own!), ousted **Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury,** the King’s unpopular Chancellor. All of this placed a huge strain on Henry IV. Eventually, Arundel was restored (1412), & the King & “Prince Hal” seemed reconciled. But Henry IV was exhausted/ health failing -> died 1413. “Prince Hal” succeeded as King Henry V:

**Henry V** (1413-22): son of Henry IV & wife Mary de Bohun. “Prince of Wales”, 1399 -> fought Welsh rebels, esp Owain Glyndwr. Once king, Henry V “restarted” ‘The 100 Years War’, claiming the French throne. Captured Harfleur in Normandy, & won a great (and surprising!) victory @ **Battle of Agincourt, 1415** (English & Welsh long-bowmen, + luck, & Henry’s generalship and inspiring ldrshp were decisive). Henry was allied with the **Burgundians** -trad allies of the English against the French kings who wanted control of Burgundy. The ‘Holy Roman Emperor’, **Sigismund**, also supported Henry V’s claim to France because this undermined his great rival, the King of France.

Henry V was a formidable soldier determined to restore all English territory in France, as well as pressing his claim to the French throne. By 1420 he controlled most of N & W France, and was in a dominant position. As long as the King was leading England to “glorious” victories in France, the “magnates” (who benefited grtly from such “winning wars”!) were happy. It would, however, be a different situation when the next king proved less effective as a war leader!

**Treaty of Troyes, 1420**: Fr King Charles VI (a deeply troubled man plagued by mental illness) made Henry V his heir & “Regent” in France, and Henry V married Charles’ daughter, **Catherine of Valois.** Henry V & Catherine had a son, but King Henry died (dysentery), 1422. Their 10 month old son, Henry, born 1421, was now heir to the thrones of France & England.

**Henry VI** (1422-61, and 1470-1): the only person crowned king of both England (1429) & France (1430). Unfortunately, he wasn’t at all suited to such a demanding role: he was quiet, gentle & scholarly. His great personal project was the founding of **Eton College (1440)** – ironically, for “the education of sons of the poor”. To complicate matters further, tragically, Henry VI seems to have inherited his grandfather’s mental health problems [probably *schizophrenia*], altho’ this was not immediately apparent because such mental illnesses tend to emerge in late adolescence/ early adulthood, esp if the sufferer is unduly stressed.

* H VI succeeded to the throne as an infant -> England was, therefore, governed (1422-37) by a “Regency Council” headed by his uncles, John of Lancaster & Humphrey of Gloucester.
* This long regency, plus Henry’s increasingly obvious unsuitability as king, meant that baronial factions developed – opposing groups competing for power, influence, and control of govt.
* Bitterness/ resentment/ suspicions about the “Lancastrian” seizure of the throne (Henry IV), death of Richard II (1399), had never really gone away, so when the “Lancastrian” King H VI proved to be weak & incapable, things came to a head.
* The stresses of kingship triggered Henry’s serious mental health problems, and the loss of the “100 Yrs War” with France (by 1453) created a crisis of confidence.
* **Cade’s Rebellion (1450), Kent** – highlighted how unpopular H VI’s “Lancastrian” govt had become, not least because of the losses in France. William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk , was murdered/ London threatened/ King H VI forced to flee rebel forces!
* Order eventually restored…Jack Cade killed 12th July, 1450. Most rebels pardoned/ went home. However, credibility of H VI & his govt severely damaged…
* The rebel manifesto *Complaint of the Commons of Kent* certainly encouraged Richard, Duke of York, to attack the King’s govt., which seemed helpless & hopeless.
* The Beauforts (eg Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester; Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset – “Lancastrians”) were increasingly at loggerheads with Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, and Richard Duke of York – “Yorkists”.
* Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick (aka “The Kingmaker”), played one side against the other, but had “Yorkist” sympathies…until he switched sides, 1469!
* “Yorkists” believed William de la Pole, 1st Duke of Suffolk, a supporter of the Beauforts, had made a mess of things in France – largely due to the influence of **Margaret of Anjou**, The Queen, who’d married Henry VI, 1445.
* Throughout the realm magnates/ barons began taking sides, which disrupted good government and law and order, and often resulted in local feuds becoming part of a growing nationwide conflict between 2 court factions.
* Had the king been strong, forceful, & decisive, and a “war winner”, none of this would have mattered.
* But by 1453-4 Henry VI was a psychological wreck, barely able to speak, who often spent days staring blankly into space->
* Richard, Duke of York, acted decisively, and took control as “Protector” of the Realm, 1454.
* Once Henry VI recovered his senses (1455), and his wife, Margaret of Anjou, reasserted herself, the Beauforts were “back in the driving seat”.
* However, a weak king, & his ambitious “French” wife, were only “in control” because of the backing of their “Lancastrian” relatives and cronies.
* Richard of York, a descendant of Edward III’s second son, thought he had “the right” over Henry VI, great grandson of Edward III’s third son, Henry IV – the man who’d *usurped* the throne & probably murdered Richard II!
* These Royal cousins (“cadet” branches of the Plantagenet) DID each have a claim, but the “Yorkists” felt theirs was the more legitimate.
* 1455 – open warfare broke out b/ween the 2 rival factions & their supporters.

**“The Wars of the Roses” (1455-87)**

* term originated in C17th/ later made popular by C19th writer Walter Scott.
* Not constant warfare 1455-87: prob only a total of 15 months of actual warfare, interspersed by long periods of relative peace.
* Wars in fact had 3 distinct, but connected, periods of strife:

1. Outbreak of war & Yorkist triumph - caused by Henry VI’s inadequacy/ humiliations of England in France (esp loss of Normandy, 1449-50) -> tensions escalated into open warfare:

* Cade’s Rebellion, 1450, had highlighted weakness/ demoralisation of Henry VI’s govt, but it was some time before actual fighting erupted.
* 1st Battle of St Albans, 1455 (Yorkist win); Battles of Blore Heath (Yorkist win) & Ludford Bridge (Lancastrian win), 1459.
* Crisis period, 1459-61…Battle of Northampton, 1460 (Yorkist win)-> Richard of York openly claimed throne, but Battle of Wakefield, 1460 (Lancastrian win/ Richard of York killed)…
* Continual struggle for control of North -> campaign against Northumbrian castles, which Yorkists eventually won, 1461-4, mainly due to the energetic ldrshp, & military competence, of Richard of York’s 3rd son, Richard Duke of Gloucester – the future King Richard III.
* 1461 – decisive year - > Battle of Mortimer’s Cross (Yorkist win); 2nd Battle St Albans (Lancastrian win), but at **Battle of Towton, 1461** (prob the bloodiest battle ever fought on English soil – at least 10,000 died on the day/ at least as many again died of wounds over next few weeks) Edward of York, eldest son of Richard of York, (**Edward IV, 1461-83),** won a massive victory (battle fought in a storm – wind against Lancastrian archers whose arrows dropped short/ Yorkist arrows carried further by wind to decimate Lancastrians!) which seemed to settle things…
* **Edward IV** crowned king, and for a time peace & order were restored. Henry VI “retired”/ Margaret of Anjou exiled. Richard of Gloucester, Edward IV’s youngest bro, “tidied up” in the North, destroying pockets of Lancastrian resistance –> job done by 1464.
* However, **Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick & Salisbury (aka “The Kingmaker”),** having been a key supporter of Edward of York & his most powerful friend, was increasingly side-lined after Edward IV’s marriage, 1464, to **Elizabeth Woodville**, whose family now had the king’s favour, and were suspicious of Warwick’s influence at court.
* Warwick’s resentment of this “Woodville faction” resulted in him switching sides ->

1. Warwick’s power play/ Lancastrian fight back, 1469-71 - Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, joined Margaret of Anjou (former enemy), and the Lancastrian cause revived:

* 1469 – Warwick in France plotting with his son-in-law, King Edward IV’s treacherous younger bro, **George, Duke of Clarence**…
* Lancastrian forces, stirred up by Warwick & Margaret of Anjou, defeated Edward’s forces at **Edgcote Moor, Nr Banbury,** July 1469: Edward captured briefly, but escaped…chaos reigned…
* Lancastrian **Lincolnshire Uprising**, 1470, defeated by Edward, but…
* Warwick, Clarence, & Margaret of Anjou then invaded England & forced Edward to take refuge in Flanders (Low Countries).
* 1470 – Henry VI restored (“readeption”) to throne, but the real power was with Queen Margaret & Warwick “The Kingmaker”- not popular… Clarence switched back to his bro, Edward IV, just in time to save himself from charges of treason, and helped Edward regain the throne, 1471.
* …but tensions/ mistrust persisted b/ween the brothers -> Clarence subsequently (1478) charged with using “necromancy” (black magic) against his brother, & was executed – some say he was drowned in a vat of wine!
* 1471 – Edward, invaded England -> smashed Lancastrians at **Battles of Tewkesbury** (Margaret captured) and **Barnet** (Warwick killed). H VI murdered quietly. Edward IV fully restored…
* 1475 - Edward IV invaded France with his ally, Duke of Burgundy, and secured a tidy sum of money & a pension from the French king in exchange for going home (Tr of Picquiny), which made him financially secure.
* Edward made govt more efficient/ enforced law & order, & clamped-down on troublesome lords in the “Marches” (borderlands), esp of Wales.
* He collected books, and promoted printing as a patron of **William Caxton**.
* Edward IV ruled peacefully until his death 1483.

1. Richard of Gloucester (Yorkist) – betrayal/ seizure of power:

* Edward IV & Elizabeth Woodville had 2 sons – Princes Edward & Richard.
* Prince Edward was, however, too young (12) to rule independently -> crowned king **Edward V**, April 1483.
* His trusted uncle **Richard of Gloucester** would serve as “Protector of the Realm” until the young King Edward V (and his yngr bro, Richard, Duke of York) came of age…
* The Royal Princes were “secured” in the Tower of London, & “disappeared” in the Summer/ Autumn of 1483.
* Richard of Gloucester asserted that the boys were illegitimate, making him the rightful heir…
* 25th June, 1483 – Parliament agreed -> Edward V’s Woodville relatives & supporters were arrested, and subsequently slaughtered!
* 26th June, 1483 – Richard of Gloucester became **Richard III**, king of England!
* **Richard III (1483-**5) was undoubtedly able – he was an excellent soldier who’d loyally served his bro Edward IV, & was married to Anne Neville, daughter of Warwick “The Kingmaker”. He’d done the hard fighting needed to secure the North for the Yorkists.
* In his brief reign, R III did much to improve national finances and promote trade.
* His ruthless seizure of power, however, alienated many – it was brutal, and a gross breach of trust, “honour” etc… unsurprisingly, he faced rebellions, esp in Wales & W Country:
* W Country rebellion of Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, Autumn 1483, was defeated -> Buckingham executed – in Salisbury Market place, roughly where “Blue Boar Row” is today.
* A much bigger threat arose, however, from **Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond**, a relatively obscure Lancastrian of S Welsh origins (“Twdr”): son of Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond, & Margaret Beaufort, who’d been in exile in Brittany & France since the collapse of the Lancastrian cause in 1471.
* Henry Tudor landed with a small force @ Milford Haven, S Wales, and rallied supporters to his cause ->
* **Battle of Bosworth, 22nd Aug 1485:** v close run fight. Some magnates wavered, only deciding to support Henry Tudor at “The Eleventh Hour” when actually on the battlefield. Richard III died bravely leading his vanguard in a desperate attack on Henry Tudor personally.
* Henry Tudor took the Crown on the battlefield. Richard III’s body was treated with contempt (stripped naked/ flung over a horse/ dumped in a common grave), rather than accorded the dignity usual for a king killed in battle – clear message being sent! (R III’s body was eventually recovered by monks, & given a Christian burial.)

**Start of the Tudors – Henry VII**

* **Henry VII** **(1485-1509)**, as he now was, backdated the start of his reign to 21st Aug, 1485 – meaning all those who’d fought for R III @ Bosworth were, technically, traitors – another clear “message”!
* Henry VII was formally crowned King of England, Oct 1485. Jan 1486 – married Eliz of York.
* H VII was a remarkable king –> “against the odds”, he estab’d a new dynasty, unified England, & secured its long-term security & prosperity.
* Technically, “The Wars of the Roses” did not end until about 1487: 2 “Yorkist Pretenders” (Lambert Simnel & Perkin Warbeck), whose supporters claimed they were Edward Plantagenet, son of George Duke of Clarence (Simnel), & Richard, Duke of York, younger of the “Princes in the Tower” (Warbeck), became a focus for rebellion:
* H VII defeated a “Yorkist” uprising centred on Simnel – **Battle of Stoke, 1487**.
* Apart from a few failed “Yorkist” plots revolving around Perkin Warbeck, this was the real end of the “Wars of the Roses”.
* Henry VII promoted English unity under his new “Tudor Regime” by marrying the leading Yorkist woman, **Elizabeth Woodville of York**, daughter of Edward IV, & niece of Richard III.
* Leading “Yorkists” who pledged loyalty to Henry were given prominent positions in his government, and Henry adopted many of Edward IV’s & Richard III’s methods, esp in financial matters.
* Marriage alliances (daughter Margaret to James IV of Scotland; son Arthur to Catherine of Aragon, daughter of King & Queen of Spain) and trade treaties promoted national security & prosperity.
* Magnates were banned from raising private armies.
* The “Star Chamber” Court was developed to deal with “overmighty subjects” – ie magnates whose power meant they could intimidate & “fix” judges & juries in ordinary law courts.
* Even Henry’s close personal friend & supporter, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, was fined heavily when he disobeyed the laws banning pvt military forces.
* Henry VII estab’d a Royal Monopoly (ie sole right to make & own) on gunpowder and cannons, meaning great lords no longer dared defy the king from their castles.
* Henry was a workaholic, who withdrew from public view (“remote & Italianate”- Dr David Starkey) for much of the time – people only got to see the king by request & on Henry’s terms.
* He personally inspected and approved all Royal accounts, and his networks of spies & informers kept him abreast of what was happening throughout England and abroad.
* He taxed heavily, esp the magnates, who were forced to “pay their dues”. This strengthened The Crown, & weakened the great lords.
* Henry VII’s chief tax gatherers, Empson & Dudley, were hated and feared, but very efficient!
* Symbols – esp “The Tudor Rose” (combining the roses of York & Lancaster) – used everywhere to spread the message of unity under the Tudors (propaganda).
* Henry VII was feared & respected…with good reason.
* He restored peace, stability, law & order, and prosperity to England.
* No-one was above the Law – it was widely believed that he hanged a disobedient pack of hunting hounds! Almost certainly untrue, but the fact so many believed such stories speaks volumes about Henry VII’s reputation.
* Henry VII was not “good”, but he was effective, and scrupulously fair…to those loyal to him.
* When he died unexpectedly (stroke) in 1509, his young son & heir, the 17 year old **Henry VIII** inherited a well governed, stable, and wealthy kingdom.
* Because Henry VII’s reign established a totally new ruling dynasty, ending the Plantagenet hold on the English throne, and coincided with many wider changes (eg weakening of feudalism/ growth of trade, towns, cities/ The Renaissance/ Voyages of Discovery etc), some see him as a “New Monarch” whose whole approach ushered in The Modern Era.
* This is a tad simplistic, but it is broadly true that Henry VII’s reign/ start of the Tudor Dynasty did represent a transitional period between “Medieval” and “Modern” periods in British history.
* As one historian wrote, Henry VII was ‘…a late Medieval monarch in an Early Modern setting.’ (R Lockyer, *Tudor & Stuart Britain*, 1964/2004, 3rd edition).
* Because the Tudor Dynasty was new, it was vital that there was a smooth transition between generations – a clear line of succession.
* This explains why Henry VII’s son and successor, Henry VIII, was *so* obsessed with having sons to succeed him. (CRH, 2019)