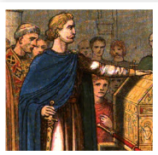
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1066

Britain in 1066

In 1066, Edward the Confessor was the Anglo-Saxon king of England. After his death, his brother-in-law Harold Godwinson was crowned King Harold II, although several others also claimed the right to the throne.

Potential kings



Harold Godwinson

Harold was Edward the Confessor's brother-in-law and the most powerful Saxon earl. Harold's mother was related to the former king, Cnut the Great.



William of Normandy

William was the second cousin of Edward the Confessor and the Duke of Normandy. William claimed Edward had named him as his successor.



Harald Hardrada

Harald was a fierce Viking warrior and King of Norway. He claimed he was a descendant and successor of Cnut the Great.



Edgar Ætheling

Edgar had the strongest claim to the throne. He was the grandson of a previous English king, Edmund I. However, he was in his early teens in 1066.

Battle of Hastings

Build-up to the battle

King Harold II's brother, Tostig, had gone to Norway to help the Viking king, Harald Hardrada, to take the throne of England. King Harold II's army fought against Harald Hardrada in a battle at Stamford Bridge in Yorkshire on 25th September 1066. After a long battle, King Harold II defeated Harald Hardrada. He marched his army to the south of England where William of Normandy and his troops had landed at Pevensey Bay.



During the battle

King Harold II told his men to get ready for battle on Senlac Hill, Hastings on 14th October 1066. Both sides fought a hard battle. By the early evening, the battle was over. King Harold II and his brothers had been killed.



After the battle

William was crowned King of England on Christmas Day 1066 and became known as William the Conqueror. The time of the Anglo-Saxons had ended and the Norman period began. King William took over the Saxon lands, introduced the French language and built many castles.

Bayeux Tapestry

The Bayeux Tapestry tells the story of the Norman invasion and the Battle of Hastings in 50 different scenes. It is an embroidered cloth over 70m long and 50cm wide. The tapestry shows Duke William of Normandy sailing across the English Channel with his army and horses, the Battle of Hastings and the death of King Harold II. The tapestry is on display in the Bayeux Museum in northern France.



Part of the Bayeux Tapestry showing the death of King Harold II

Castles

The Normans built motte and bailey castles all around Britain to protect their new country. These consisted of a mound of earth known as a motte, with a wooden or stone tower on top called a keep. An enclosed area at the bottom of the mound, the bailey, housed the stables, storehouses, bakeries and quarters for the soldiers. These castles were quick and cheap to build, but not very strong and they caught fire easily. The motte and bailey castles were soon replaced with stone castles. These were castles with tall, square keeps and thick walls that could hold off fierce enemy attacks.

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Events of 1066

5th January	The King of England, Edward the Confessor, dies.
6th January	Harold Godwinson is crowned King Harold II.
18th September	The Viking king of Norway, Harald Hardrada, invades the north of England and tries to claim the throne.
20th September	King Harold II sends some men to confront Harald Hardrada's troops outside York. King Harold II's men are defeated at the Battle of Fulford and King Harold II himself marches north with his troops to stop the Viking invasion.
25th September	King Harold II defeats Harald Hardrada at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. Harald Hardrada is killed. King Harold II marches his exhausted army south to stop the imminent invasion by William of Normandy.
28th September	William lands on the south coast of England.
14th October	The Battle of Hastings takes place between King Harold II and William of Normandy. William wins and King Harold II is killed.
Mid-October	After the Battle of Hastings, 15-year-old Edgar Ætheling is proposed as King of England by the Witan but there is no coronation to make it official.
25th December	William of Normandy is crowned King of England. He becomes known as William the Conqueror.

Domesday Book

Between 1085 and 1086, William the Conqueror ordered a 'Great Survey' to find out who owned the land across England and parts of Wales. He also wanted to find out how much money could be raised in taxes. This information was recorded in the *Domesday Book*. Officials had to record how much land there was and the owner. The information was given to scribes and clerks who recorded it in the *Domesday Book*.



After William the Conqueror

William the Conqueror died on 9th September 1087 while fighting in France. He had decided to make his second son, William Rufus, the next King of England instead of his oldest son, Robert. Robert and his friends were not happy about the situation because they thought Robert should be king. Robert's followers led two rebellions against William Rufus over the next eight years and they were defeated both times. William Rufus died in a hunting accident in 1100 and his younger brother, Henry, became King of England.



William Rufus (c1056–1100)

Glossary

Anglo-Saxon	The Germanic people who lived in England from the 5th century up to the Norman conquest.
bailey	The open area within the outer wall of a castle containing buildings necessary for castle life.
Bayeux Tapestry	An embroidered cloth that shows the events leading up to the Norman conquest of England.
brother-in-law	The husband of your sister or the brother of your husband or wife.
castle	A large, strong building built to defend the people inside from attack.
claim to the throne	To demand to be recognised as an individual who has a right to become the next king or queen of a country.
conqueror	Someone who has successfully taken over a country or its people.
Domesday Book	A written record, ordered by William the Conqueror, showing who owned the land in England and parts of Wales.
keep	The strong, central tower of a castle, acting as a final refuge.
motte	A raised mound or area on which a wooden or stone keep is built.
Norman	Belonging or relating to the Normans, who were people from northern France.
rebellion	An action against those in authority.
Witan	The council of important and wise English noblemen summoned to advise the king.

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