

The Norman Conquest

Timeline of events

Harold sends his army home Harold had expected invade during the summer months when the weather was good. When the invasion didn't arrive. Harold's men went home to harvest the crops from the fields.

Viking Invasion 20 September 1066 Harald Hardraada and Tostig invaded, with more than 10,000 men in 300 longships. Anglo-Saxon Earls Edwin and Morcar were defeated at Battle of Fulford.

Battle of Stamford Bridge 25 September 1066 Harold Godwinson travelled north to fight Harald Hadraada. In four days he marched 180 miles to surprise Hardraada and Tostig, east of York. Godwineson defeated Hardraada but his army was tired and badly reduced in size.

Normans arrive 27th September William Duke of Normandy set sail with almost 700 ships. His soldiers landed at Pevensey and made a small castle. Then the Normans pillaged and burned the surrounding area, in order to force Harold to come south and defend his people.

Harold did not hesitate. Having heard of William's landing while at York, he raced his army down the old Roman road of Ermine Street, stopping on the way at his foundation of Waltham Abbey, to pray for victory. By 12 October, he was back in London and gathering what forces he could to face William. By the 14th, he was on the way to Hastings.

Positioning for the Battle 14 October 1066 Harold drew up his army in three wedges on Senlac Ridge, a hill overlooking the battlefield. He had little more than 5,000 Saxon Houscarls, against a Norman force of up to 15,000 infantry, archers and horsemen.

The First attack The Normans attacked first charging at Harold's shield wall. The battle raged for hours. A rumour spread throughout the battlefield that William of Normandy had been killed. Suddenly, a Norman knight tore off his helmet and cried "it is me, William" to prove he was not dead. The Normans rallied around the Duke and using their cavalry, tore apart the Saxons.

The King is dead The Normans were winning the battle and many Saxons were killed. According to legend, a stray arrow struck Harold Godwinson in the eye and the Saxon king fell down dead. William was crowned king of England on Christmas day at Westminster Abbey, 1066.

Key Individuals

Harold Godwineson: The Anglo Saxon Earl of Wessex and one of the most powerful men in England. Harold's sister was married to Edward. He was a brave and respected soldier. The Witan wanted him to be king.

Tostig Godwineson: Harold Godwineson's brother. He joined forces with Harald Hardraada, seeking revenge after being exiled from England. He was killed at the Battle of Stamford Bridge.

William, Duke of Normandy: He came from a fighting family and was a feared and respected soldier. Sent soldiers to help Edward when he faced rebellion. Norman's claimed that he was promised the throne by Edward.

Harald Hardraada (Fairhair): The Viking king of Norway. His ancestors had ruled England before. His name means 'hard ruler' and he was feared across Europe and one nickname of his was 'the ruthless'.

Key Terms

Bayeux Tapestry – a 60m banner celebrating the Battle of Hastings

heir - a person who has the right to take the rank and property of someone who has died

claimant - a person who demands something

conquest -to take over another country by force

consolidate – to make something stronger or more certain

monarchy – a country which has a king or queen

Anglo Saxon - people who lived in Britain from the 5th century. They included people from Germanic tribes who migrated to England

Witan - the Anglo Saxon council, made up of Earls and Bishops that helped the king run the country

Houscarl - full time, professional soldiers, fighting for Harold Godwineson

Fyrd - part time soldiers with little or no training

Norman - a person who comes from Normandy

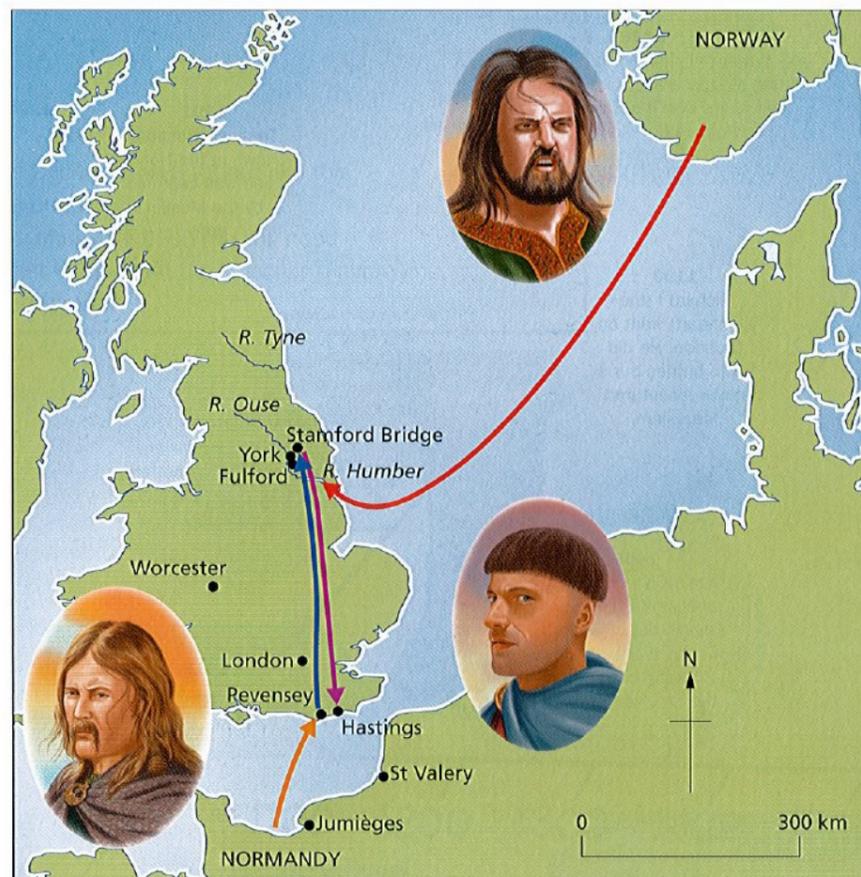
Normandy - an area in Northern France ruled in 1066 by Duke William

Viking - Norsemen (people from the North) they first invaded Britain in 793AD and ruled England to 950AD

reign – the time a monarch is in power for

feudal – controlling or renting land

Domesday Book – a huge book listing who owned what in England



1000 - 1483

Medieval England

Norman - Angevin - Plantagenet

1500 - 1750

Early Modern England

Renaissance - Tudor - Stuart

1750 - 1900 Modern Britain

Industrial Revolution
Hannoverian

1900 - 2000

20th Century Britain

Great War - WWII - Cold War