60 William the Regent

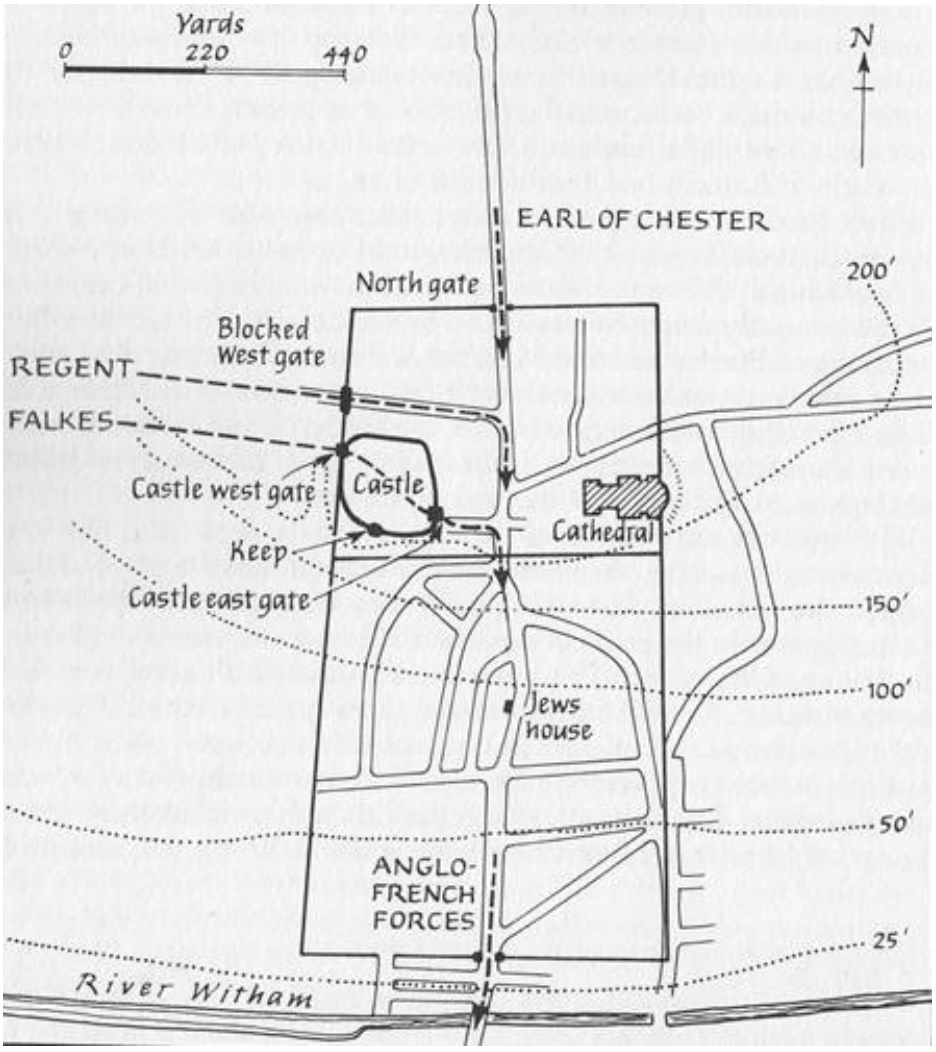
A man was needed to guide England through a civil war and minority. So who do you think they picked? The answer was of course William the Marshal who was now a very old man by the standards of the time. The Earl of Chester was politely asked, given the size of his holdings, but there was no holding William. In the two and a half years left to him, William was able to throw Louis out of the England and establish Henry as the rightful king. But he left an awful lot more for his successors to do.

The Civil War of 1216-1218

The advantages in this civil seemed to lie all on one side - with the French prince, Louis, and his allies the Barons. After all, 97 holders of major baronies supported Louis, while just 38 were on Henry's side. And the Marshal's attempt to lure some away came initially to nothing. But appearances were deceiving; Henry had over 150 royal castles, supported by sheriffs and castellans who used the local area to support themselves. Reducing all these castles would take time and resources - in a way, it was bigger than the challenge William the Conqueror had faced. And John had done his cause a lot of good by dying; Henry was untouched by his reputation, and his advisors played on that.

The Battle of Lincoln, 1217

The battle of Lincoln is the second most decisive battle fought on English soil - but unlike Hastings is almost completely unknown. William the Marshal's victory meant that England would be ruled by Plantagenets not Capetians. There's a good description of the battle in David Carpenter's 'The Minority of Henry IIIrd, a book now remarkably difficult to get hold of!



Marshal won because he concentrated his forces and achieved a local superiority of forces. But he had to work at it - Louis's forces retreated behind the walls of the town, continued to besiege the castle and prepared to wait for re-enforcements. The Marshal wasn't having any of that. He sent Falkes de Breaute to break into the castle. Then while Falkes sallied out, the Earl of Chester attacked the north gate. While everyone was busy and occupied, the Marshal himself burst through a formerly blocked gate and charged into the enemy, so hard that he penetrated 3 ranks deep. By the end of the battle, many leaders of the rebel forces were captured for ransom including Robert fitz Walter, the former leader of the Army of God.

The only man of substance to be killed was the Count of Perche, stabbed through the eyes of his visor - you can see him in Matthew Paris's titchy pic above. Everyone was very sorry about it. No doubt loads of oiks like thee and me also got killed, but no one thought of that as worth mentioning.

The Battle of Sandwich, also 1217

Louis was confined to London by the defeat. He had one more throw of the dice - his wife Blanche of Castile was coming with re-enforcements from France, which is where we come to the naval battle of Sandwich. As the French fleet sailed towards the English coast Hubert de Burgh led the English fleet out. At first it looked as though he was running away - but in fact he was simply getting the weather gauge. The defeat of the French fleet sealed the fate of the rebels and the French. At the Treaty of Lambeth Louis made sure that the rebels would get their land back, and took a bribe of 10,000 marks to leave. In Paris's picture above, you can see Eustace the Monk losing his head.

Regency and death

William had massive problems to deal with - lack of money, a bunch of independent sheriffs and Castellans wandering around, no Justice system. He did not manage to solve these problems before he died and handed his mantle on to the triumvirate of Pandulf, Hubert de Burgh and Peter des Roches. But he did achieve two things; he restarted the Eyres of the Royal Justices. This was important becuase royal justice was a visible manifestation of royal authority, and also because it generated revenue. And secondly, his constant involvement of the Magnum Consilium, for Great Council, legitimised his regime and firmly embedded the principle of consultation.

William himself died at Caversham on May 14th 1219.

61 The Minority of Henry III

The years between 1219 and 1227 saw the gradual resumption of royal power. It also saw a power struggle between Peter des Roches, the Bishop of Winchester, and Hubert de Burgh the Justiciar. By January 1227 when Henry took control of the royal seal, that struggle at least seemed to be fully resolved in favour of Hubert.

The Problems facing the Regency

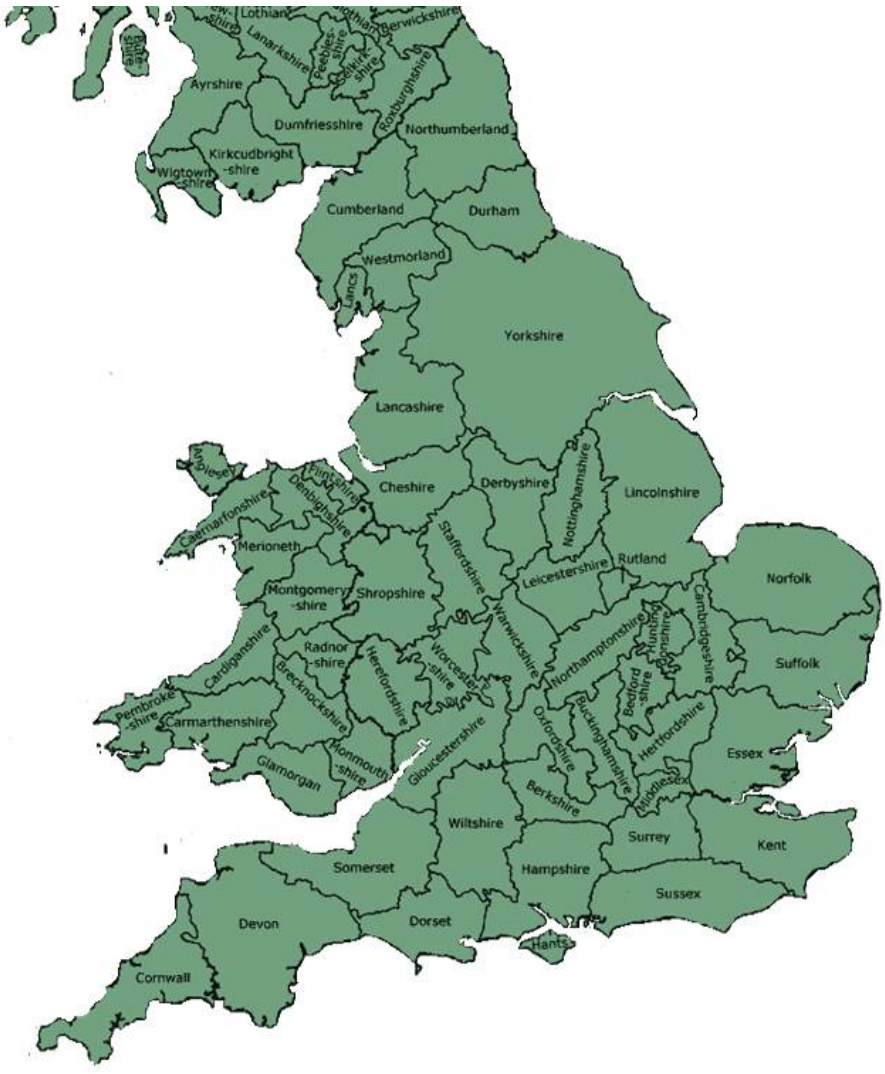
The triumvirate of Hubert de Burgh, Peter des Roches and Pandulf (the Papal Legate) were faced with:

- **Not enough money**: Too many of the king's sheriffs kept royal revenue for themselves to use for local government, rather than sending revenues to the central exchequer
- **No control:** too many of the royal sheriff did not always answer to the king
- **Loss of control** over royal castles and demesnes lands

Falkes de Breaute

He is a good example of the problem. He was a loyal supporter of Hubert de Burgh and the king. But he thought the king was best served by strong local servants such as himself. Also, until the king gained his majority, Falkes considered it would actually be wrong of him to hand royal castles over to other people - like Hubert.

By 1224, Falkes was as powerful as the king in his heartlands, as shown on the map. But at the siege of Bedford in 1224 he was finally brought to heel. He was exiled, his brother hanged.



Assumption of the royal seal

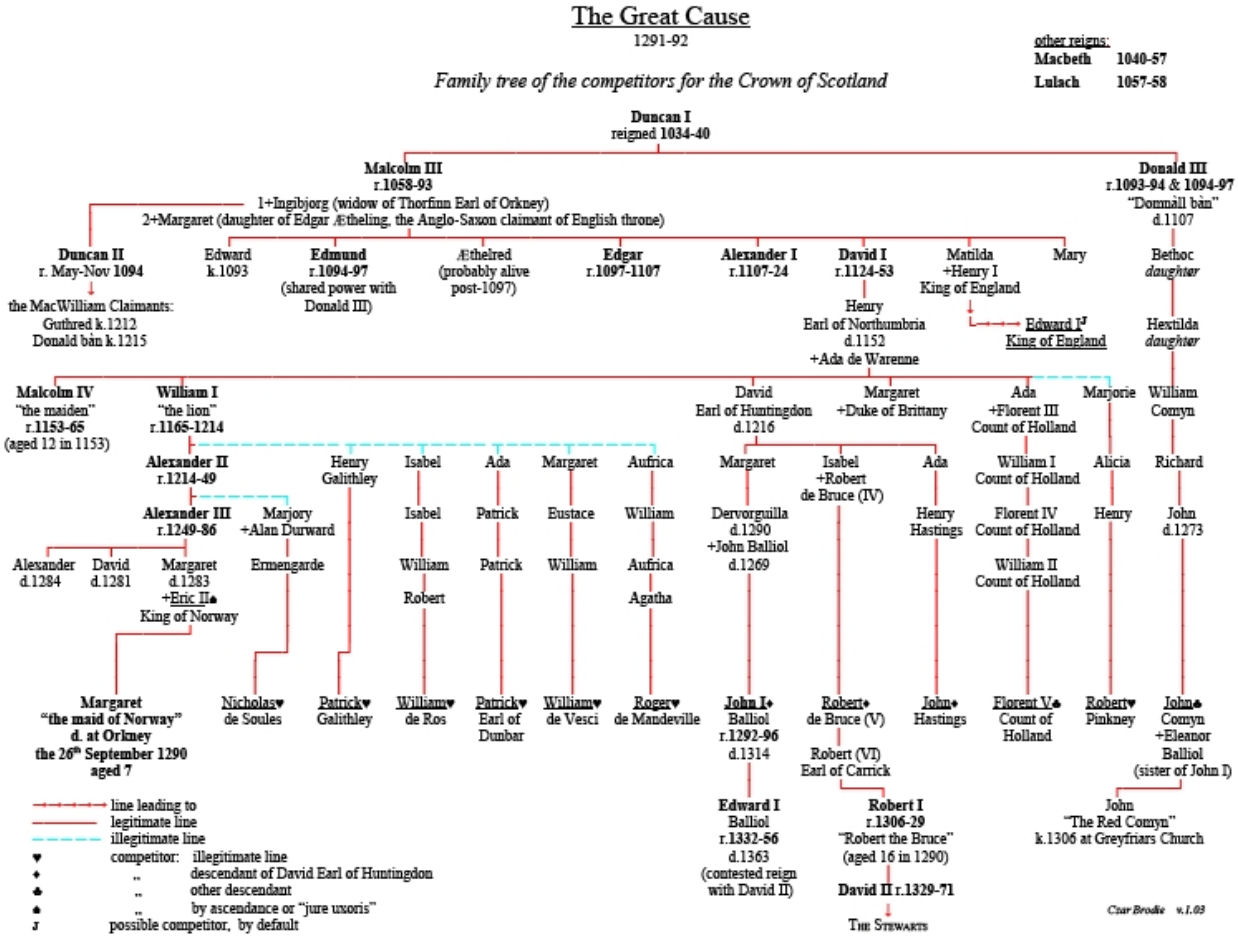
By 1227 the crown had re-established control, and revenues had recovered to a degree - though still nowhere near those of King John's or the Capetian kings of France. Hubert had gained political ascendancy, and Peter des Roches had gone on pilgrimage. So in January 1227, Henry took control of the royal seal - effectively signalling that he had gained his majority.

The Great Seal of Henry III

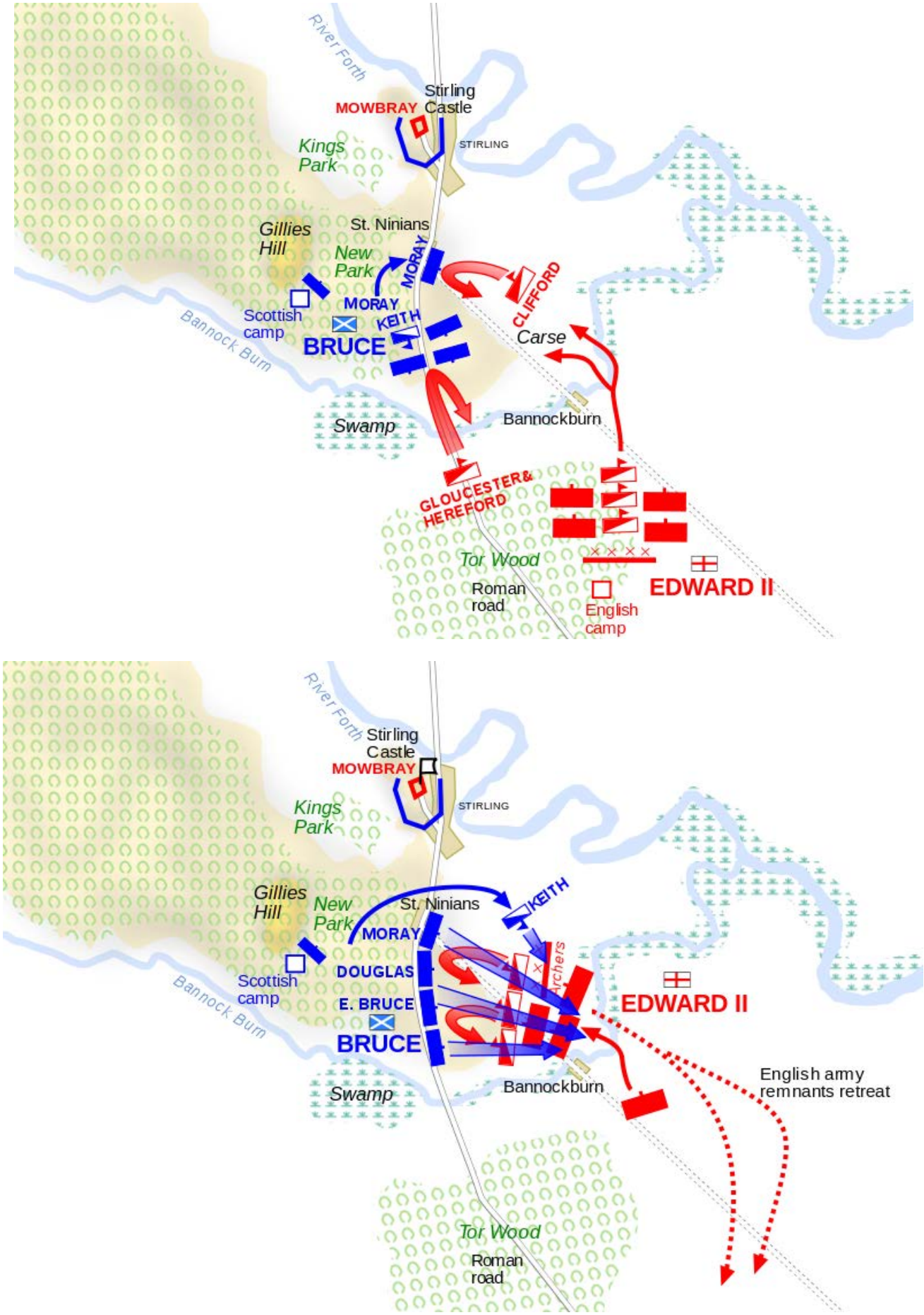
Magna Carta reissued by Henry III 1225

61a Bannockburn by Zack Twamley

Bannockburn was a landmark defeat for the English, which signalled a long term change to the strategy Edward I had started. Zack talks about the events that led up to the battle, how the battle itself unfolded, and how England reacted to defeat.



Robert The Bruce



The Battle of Bannockburn June 1314

62 The Minority Abroad

Harmony with Scotland, the career of Llewellyn the Great, the loss of Poitou! During the minority of Henry, English prestige and power was at something of a low point - with the one exception of Gascony, where a supreme effort brought one success. And meanwhile in Southern France, the Cathars burned.

Llewellyn the Great

Llewellyn was both a warrior and consummate politician. He had a vision for a Wales united under one ruler (himself, in case you were wondering). And although Henry managed to hang on to the principle that other rulers of Wales should pay him homage, Llewellyn pretty much achieved the fact of a united Wales. After his death in 1240, historians point to the lack of lasting legacy, but for 40 years Llewellyn dominated Welsh politics and more than held the English at bay.

Offa's Dyke near Clun.

Llewellyn and sons.

The loss of Poitou

Hubert de Burgh knew that the English were in a perilously weak position in Poitou - no cash, no power. But for a while they managed to get Phillip Augustus to renew the truces. Meanwhile they had to keep the powerful Lusignan clan happy in La Marche, going to the extent of betrothing little 10 year old Joan, daughter of John, to Hugh de Lusignan.

Isabella of Angouleme left England and her son for her homeland; and then in 1220 dropped a bombshell. She stuck her palm in her daughter's face, pushed hard, and married Hugh de Lusignan herself, son of the man she had been betrothed to before John had come along.

Then in 1224, Louis the new king of France did not renew the truce, and made alliance with Hugh and Isabella. By 1225 it was all over, Poitou was gone, and it looked like Gascony would go the same way - only Dax, Bayonne and Bordeaux held out.

Stitched Kippers!

Gascony Saved

Louis left Hugh to mop up - after all there were only 3 major towns holding out. But in fact the Gascons were determined to stay with England - after all, that's where all their trade went. So they maintained and army in the field, and Henry managed to raise a tax.

So in 1225 William of Salisbury and Richard of Cornwall came over, and soon Hugh found himself pushed back to a few areas, including the town of La Reole. Louis tried to come back and help, but was ambushed trying to cross the Dordogne, and therefore unable to link up with Hugh.

By the end of 1225, therefore, Gascony had been saved for the English crown for 200 years more.

Montsegur Castle

63 The Last Great Justiciar

From 1227 to 1234 we are sort of in betweeners - the minority has ended, but Henry's government in still dominated by the old guard, people like Hubert de Burgh. But it doesn't go well - money is still tight, Henry's campaigns in France aren't great, and in 1232 Peter des Roches, the old enemy, is back in the country.

Henry's personal rule

The period between 1227 and 1258 is tagged as Henry's personal rule. The first period within this might be considered to be 1227 to 1234, from when he announced at a *magnum consilium* at Oxford that he would take control of the royal seal; until 1234, when the fall of Peter des Roches signals the end of the system of Justiciars or high profile leading men.

The fall of Hubert de Burgh

When Henry ends his minority, Hubert at last cashes in - he is made Earl of Kent, is assigned 2 honours and the welsh border castles of Grosmont, Skenfrith, the White Castle and others.

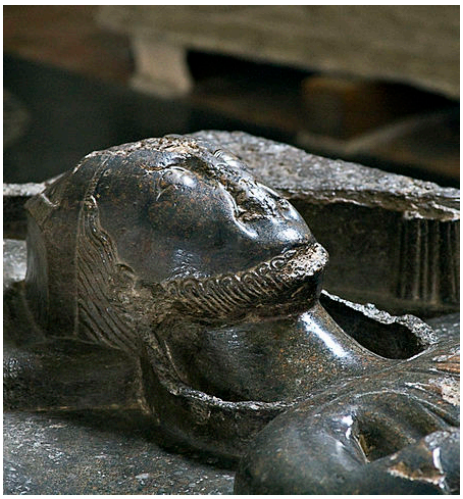
But by 1232 his government and reputation is in trouble; the barons didn't like such a low born bloke having such riches. Hubert's power had begun to rub the church up the wrong way, and Henry managed to blame him for the failure of the French campaigns and the lack of available cash. So on the return of Peter des Roches, Hubert is in trouble - and in 1232 he is imprisoned in Devizes castle, and des Roches' man, Peter De Rivaux takes over.

The Fall of Peter des Roches

Peter des Roches was an even worse choice. At least Hubert basically believed in Magna Carta and consensual government between king and barons - Peter rode roughshod over all of that. Plus he completed failed to improve the royal finances in anyway, and by 1234 the Earl of Pembroke was in revolt.

It took Edmund of Abingdon, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, to bring peace. He made Henry accept that he made the wrong choice - and Peter de Rivaux and Peter des Roches were removed. From here on in Henry aimed to rule without he great officers of state, though strictly speaking Stephen Seagrave was Justiciar for a short period.

Hubert De Burgh



Peter Des Roche

64 The Personal Reign of Henry III - Part 1

Henry III brushed off his great officers of state and the period of 1234 to 1258 is a period of personal rule. Henry finds himself a wife, a new personal favourite in the form of Simon de Montfort, and makes one last attempt to regain Poitou.

The character of Henry III

The word that seems to have stuck with Henry is 'simplex' - a word that could mean honest and straightforward, or stupid. Let's say it means naive in Henry's case. Henry lacks the nastiness of his father, but also his energy and strength of will. Despite the fact that he tries hard to maintain peace and happiness at court, he ends up suffering rebellion

Henry was a very pious man - who also had something of an obsession over Edward the Confessor. As a result, his first born son was landed with the outlandish, Anglo Saxon name of Edward, and Henry devoted massive time and resources to rebuilding Westminster Abbey.

Eleanor of Provence

In 1235, the 12 year old Eleanor and Henry were married. Eleanor was one of 4 daughters who married into the English and French monarchies. She was to prove a force in English politics despite all the disadvantages of the Queen's position.

Simon de Montfort arrives

Simon de Montfort was born in 1208, the third son of Simon de Montfort and Alice de Monmorency, a remarkable couple. De Montfort the elder had been a chief prosecutor of the Albigensian crusade in the south of France and had died outside the walls of Toulouse in 1218. By 1221 his mother was also dead, and so Simon was left an orphan at the age of 13. De Montfort had a vague claim to the Earldon of Leicester. He bought out his elder brother Amaury's claim for £500, and headed over to England. By 1230 he had persuaded the Earl of Chester (with some financial help) to surrender his claim, and was in place.

In 1236, de Montfort married the king's sister Eleanor. This was political dynamite - Eleanor would have been a valuable counter in the game of international diplomacy, not someone to be chucked away on random barons.

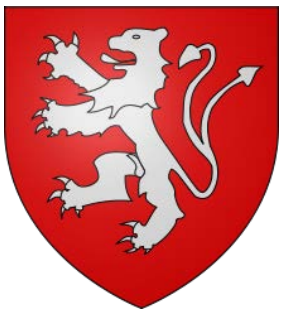
A couple of points about this period then; firstly, Simon's character reflects his early years. Fiercely and militaristically religious; rigid minded with enormous force of character and charisma; a silver tongue, able to talk himself out of most situations; ambitious; but also with a constant sense of financial vulnerability from the early years as a landless third son that made financially grasping and more than a bit greedy.

Secondly, he is closer to the king in the 1230's and 1240's that almost any other baron, at the centre of the king's court. But the relationship becomes ever more uneasy; de Montfort was capable of shouting at the king in a way that no one else would dare to, and was constantly claiming that Henry owed him money. Henry was a weak man and I imagine (a guess) that after being initially dazzled by de Montfort, deep down he came to heartily hate the man as he was bullied and hectored.

Henry III carrying the relic of The Holy Blood to Westminster (M Paris)

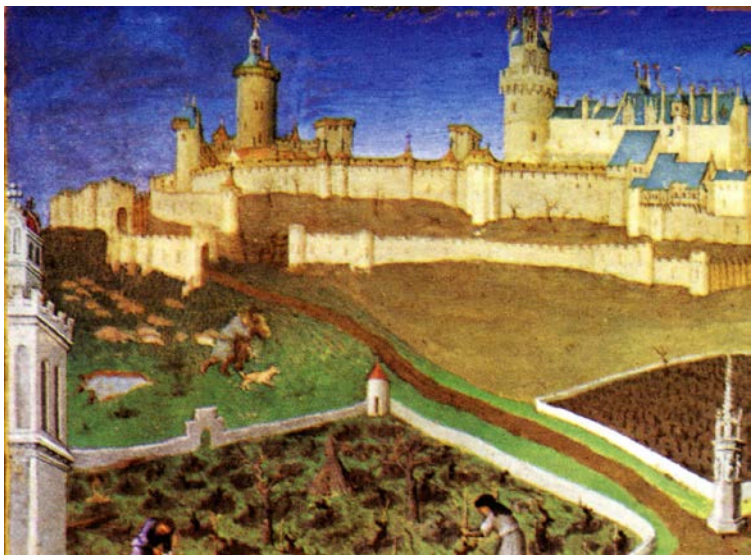
Eleanor of Provence.

Simon de Montfort.



The Arms of de Montfort

A Page from the Fine Rolls of Henry III



Chateau de Lusignan

65 Why was Henry III so unpopular?

It seems strange. Henry III was a likeable enough chap, who did his best to keep a harmonious court, and gave England an extended period of peace. And yet it's all going to go up in flames around him. So the question is why was he so unpopular?

St. Francis

St. Dominic

Robert Grosseteste

Henry III Silver Penny

Henry's Gold Coin

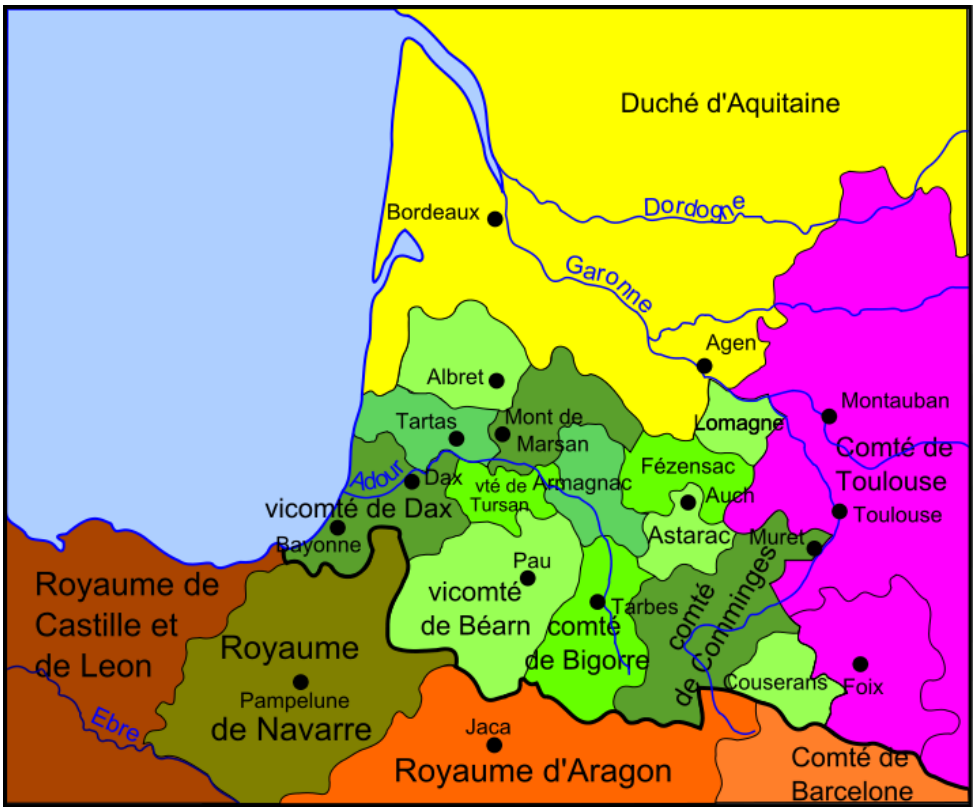
66 The Road to Revolution

In 1258, the resentments all came together and the pot boiled over. The pope Alexander did his vassal no favours what so ever by pushing so hard that Henry had to ask his great men for more money. Together with some blazing rows between the Lusignans and the English barons, the spark had been applied to the powder keg. The result was the hobbling of the king by the Provisions of Oxford.

In 1248, the truce with France ended. So Henry had to get Gascony sorted out. There was little Ducal control, and one man in particular, Gaston de Bearn had a history of independence. You can see Bearn on the map to the south and centre. Meanwhile the Spanish kingdoms to the south - Aragorn, Castile, Navarre - all had claims and presented a threat.

Henry's solution was to turn to Simon De Montfort. It's difficult to decide whether de Montfort did a good or bad job - he was brutal and high handed, but he probably *was* bringing the locals to heel. Trouble was that it was all too much fuss and bother for Henry to deal with, lots of complaints from the locals, lots of expense.

So in 1252 de Montfort was basically put on trial in front of parliament. Things got nasty, and personal, between de Montfort and Henry. But the English Barons were on de Montfort's side. In the end, however, de Montfort was sacked, and Henry took over - with a remarkably successful campaign. It left a further fund of resentment.



The Sicilian Affair

Frederick Hohenstaufen (the Holy Roman Emperor) and the Papacy didn't get on. So when Frederick died leaving a young son, the Papacy wanted to make sure no Hohenstaufen inherited the Kingdom of Sicily, part of the Emperor's dominions or a Papal fief, depending whose side you were on.

So the Pope offered Sicily to Henry's younger son Edmund. Oh, along with the price tag of 135,000 marks, since the Pope needed to go and capture it from Frederick's illegitimate son, Manfred.

Whether or not it was possible - and some historians argue it wasn't as daft as it seems, and actually something similar did happen in the end - Henry did not involve his barons, did not have the money; the Pope's aggressive and

hectoring attitude to Henry put him in a politically very difficult decision. It forced him in 1258 to ask his great council for money when he'd really rather not have had to.

Revolution and the Provisions of Oxford

In April 1258, 7 magnates cornered Henry at Westminster and told him he wasn't up to it. He needed to appoint a council of 24 to manage and reform the kingdom, and he needed to get rid of the Poitevins. Henry bravely caved in and thus the monarchy suffered its greatest loss of power in a simple stroke.

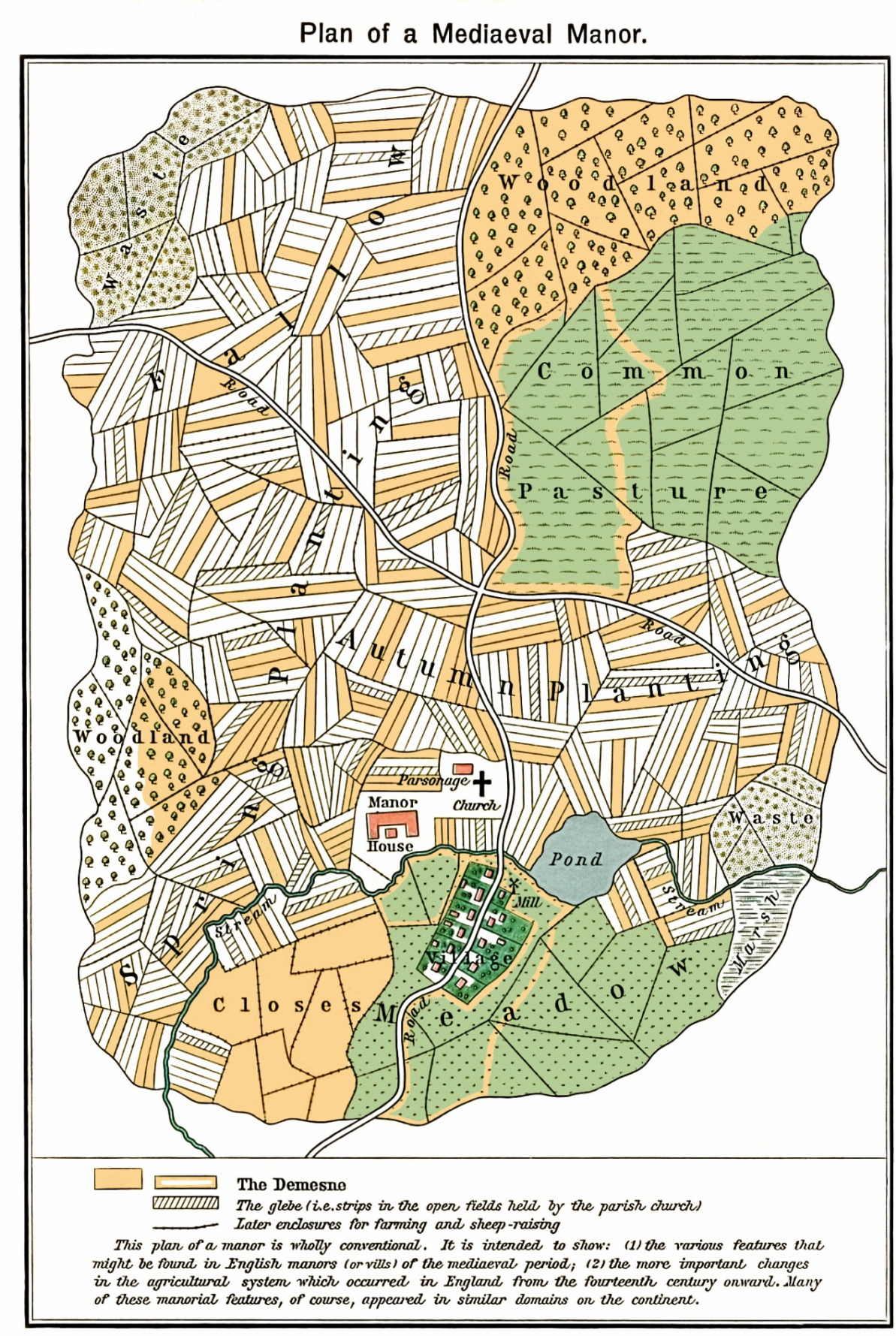
In June 1258, the Great Council, or Parliament as it was being called since 1236, met at Oxford. A muster for a Welsh campaign was happening the following week at Chester, so a large number of lesser Barons and knights came along too. So the meeting was a much more socially diverse group, and much more radical than might be expected.

A series of thoughts and agreements came from the parliament, which we call the Provisions of Oxford, which would be developed later into the Provisions of Westminster. They are a dramatic and radical remodelling of the nature of kingship in England. The main points were:

- A new council of 15 was set up, to bypass the problem of the hung council of 24; and the royal representatives were reduced to just 3. So Royal authority was now at the mercy of the barons.
- There now had to 3 parliaments every year, whether the king liked it or not. So no avoiding the issue of the day.
- The major ministers of state were to be re-instituted – Justiciar, Treasurer, Chancellor, so that the kings couldn't make those arbitrary decisions any more. And most radically, it was the council that had the final say on who they were. So, the king didn't appoint his own ministers? Now that is radical.
- 4 knights were delegated in each shire to collect complaints against officials and take them to the Justiciar. So much more power and authority was delegated to the localities
- The approach of tax farming was abolished; Sheriffs now had to account for everything they submitted, and they were paid a salary, were recruited for a year, and were to come from the local community.

67 13th Century Life - the Peasantry

Over the 13th century, economic growth continued. For the Peasantry, this gave some opportunities; more chance to sell their produce and get involved in a wider range of money making ventures. It meant that population growth continued, since cottagers and wage earners were able to make enough to get by on small plots of land; and so the density of landholding grew. During the 13th century all of this is fine - but there could be trouble ahead.



Open Field System

14th Century Reeve Directing Serfs (from the Queen Mary Psalter)

Restored 13th Century Hall

Basket weaving

Glazed Pottery

Wool Dyers

Medieval Market

Seedman

68 13 C Life - Peasants fighting back...and Towns

Being a Peasant was no doubt a pretty hard existence. But they were not without their methods of fighting back, and protecting their rights. This week also we look at the history of towns in the 13th century, as the economy continues to grow.

Relative size of towns - evidence from taxation

The chart below gives a perspective on the relative volume of trade through each town. Although by this stage London would have been by far the largest town by population, it's clear from this that other towns were much closer in terms of the column of their trade. Obviously there are a lot of missing west coast ports and inland towns, but the total volume of trade in these ports suggested by these returns was £75,000. It's also quite fun, of course to see how times have changed over the centuries - towns like Boston and Fowey had an importance in trade that these days it would be difficult to see.

Returns from the pipe roll of 1204 tax of 1/15th			
Port	Tax		
	£	s	d
London	836	12	10
Boston	780	15	3
Southampton	713	3	7.5
Lincoln	656	12	2
King's Lynn	651	11	11
Hull	344	14	4.5
York	175	8	10
Newcastle	158	5	11
Grimsby	91	15	0.5
Winchelsea	62	2	4.5
Hedon	60	8	4
Yarmouth	54	15	6
Fowey	48	15	11
Yarm	42	17	10
Shoreham	40	4	9
Barton on Humber	33	11	9
Dover	32	6	1
Chichester	23	6	7
Scarborough	22	0	4
Immingham	18	15	10.5
Selby	17	11	8
Colchester	16	0	0
Sandwich	16	0	0
Exmouth	14	6	3
Seaford	12	12	2
Orford	11	7	0
Rye	10	13	5.5
Ipswich	7	11	7.5
Saltash	7	4	18
Norwich	6	19	10
Dunwich	5	4	9
Dartmouth	3	0	0
Pevensey	1	1	11.5
Coatham		11	11
Whitby		4	0
Clearly there are major west coast ports missing from this list; the most signficicant would be Bristol and Chester			

Chester

Pannage (Queen Mary Psalter) 14C

Modern Pannage in The New Forest

69 Merchants and trivial stuff about Magnates

Wool was the wealth of England, the great trade that brought wealth and prosperity to England. The people who really made the money were the big ticket Italian Merchants. This week we also look at the life of Magnates, the super-rich during the period, and their households.

External Trade

Just as the 13th C saw a continued growth of towns, so trade grew - to a value of about £500,000 by the end of the century. By and large, England was an exporter of raw materials, and an importer of finished products, or Agricultural products we could grow ourselves. Here are a few of the things we exported:

- Wine: counting Gascony as part of the piece, Gascony exported wine especially to the Continent. England of course was a very valuable customer - sometimes taking 20% of its output.
- A million tons of tin from Cornwall
- Lead from the Pennines and North Wales
- The Wool Trade and Merchants

The Wool trade **(Download "The Wool Trade" by Eileen Powers from the Website)**

But the big one was Wool; it generated something like half of England's external trade at this time.
The size of our exports varied - reaching a height of 46,000 sacks. You might wonder what a sack of wool looks like - and if so, look no further than the Woolsack, which, slightly oddly, the Lord Chancellor chooses to sit on in the House of Lords. Those 46,000 sacks of wool were produced by something like 10 million sheep.

The trade was driven by the relationship with one of the two economic powerhouses of Europe - Flanders. Just across the channel, Flanders had the largest concentration of towns and cloth producing industry outside of North Italy, and our closeness to this key market gave us the edge. Although the wool we produced was not as fine as Spain's Merino, it was softer, and easier to felt - and so therefore cheaper to manufacture.

Merchants

The merchants who dominated this trade were initially not English. The biggest firms were Italian - names like the Riccardi, the Frescobaldi, Peruzzi and the Bardi dominated the English scene. They dominated because of their access to markets, but also their unique way of joining together, giving them access to capital that the English Merchant couldn't compete with. Often, they would work with English merchants, who would gather wool from their hinterland, and sell to the large exporters at local fairs. But increasingly, Italian merchants went straight to the biggest producers - the Cistercian monasteries like Fountains or Rievaulx. They would buy up several years of crop in advance - the merchant got a great price (maybe as low as £4 a sack, which they could sell for £8), but took the risk that prices would fall; the Abbey got les for their crop, but got their money in advance, and the security that brought. By the time of Edward I, the Italian houses were also lending serious amounts of money to the English crown - to their eventual downfall.

The Great Hall-Stokesay

Nicholas of Ludlow and Stokesay Castle

Not all successful merchants were foreign. Over time, and certainly by the early 14th Century, the picture had reversed, and English Merchants controlled the majority of the English trade.

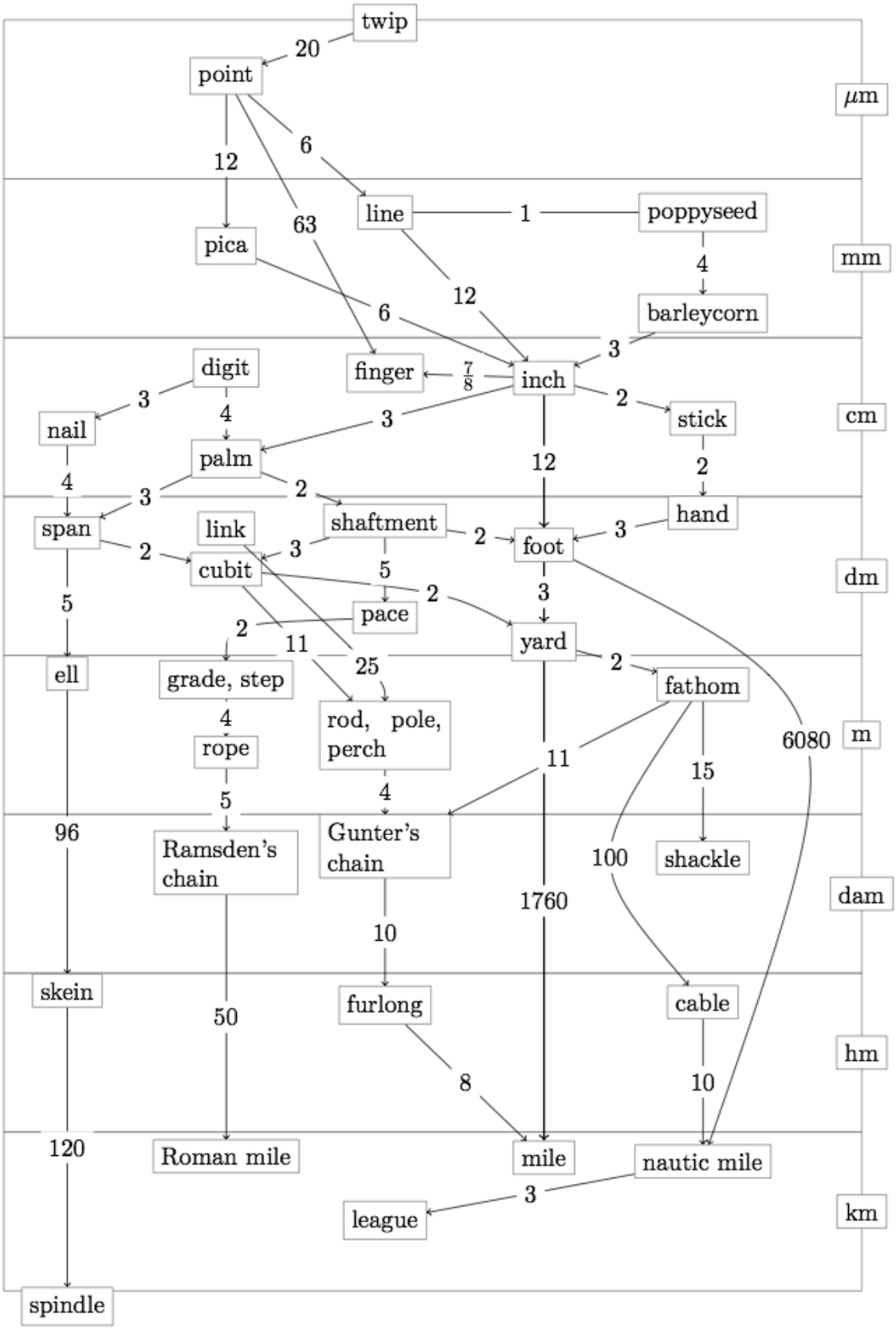
An example is Nicholas of Ludlow, and his son Laurence, who became the richest merchants of their time. Laurence was enormously rich - lending for example, £4,000 to one baron in a single transaction. He became an adviser to Edward I on commerce, which to the fury of other merchants resulted in Edward tripling the customs duty on wool to £2 per sack. Laurence had the typical life of a Merchant - we know that he travelled the English fairs such as Boston, but also the great French fairs of Champagne. He sold to the cloth merchants of the Low Countries such as Ghent, Bruges and Types. In 1291, he set off on a normal voyage, carrying in his ship 189 sacks of wool, each worth about £7 and containing 250 fleeces. Unfortunately, but much to the glee of his competitors, he was shipwrecked and drowned.

In 1280s, Laurence had bought into the landowning classes, in a model that will be recognisable for many hundreds of years of English history.

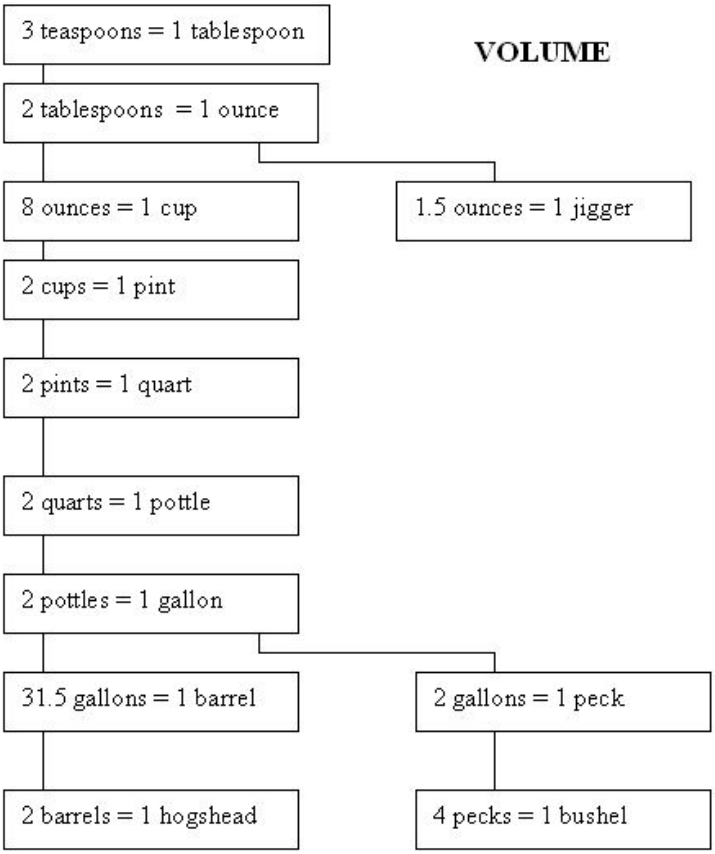
They built the rather exquisite Stokesay Castle in Shropshire in the Welsh Marches, which would more formally be called a fortified manor house. It was strong enough to resist a casual attempt at banditry from robbers or the Welsh, but not strong enough to resist a proper siege - there are lovely big windows that give direct access to the main hall, for example, that you could drive a wagon through.

The Gate House

The Great Hall

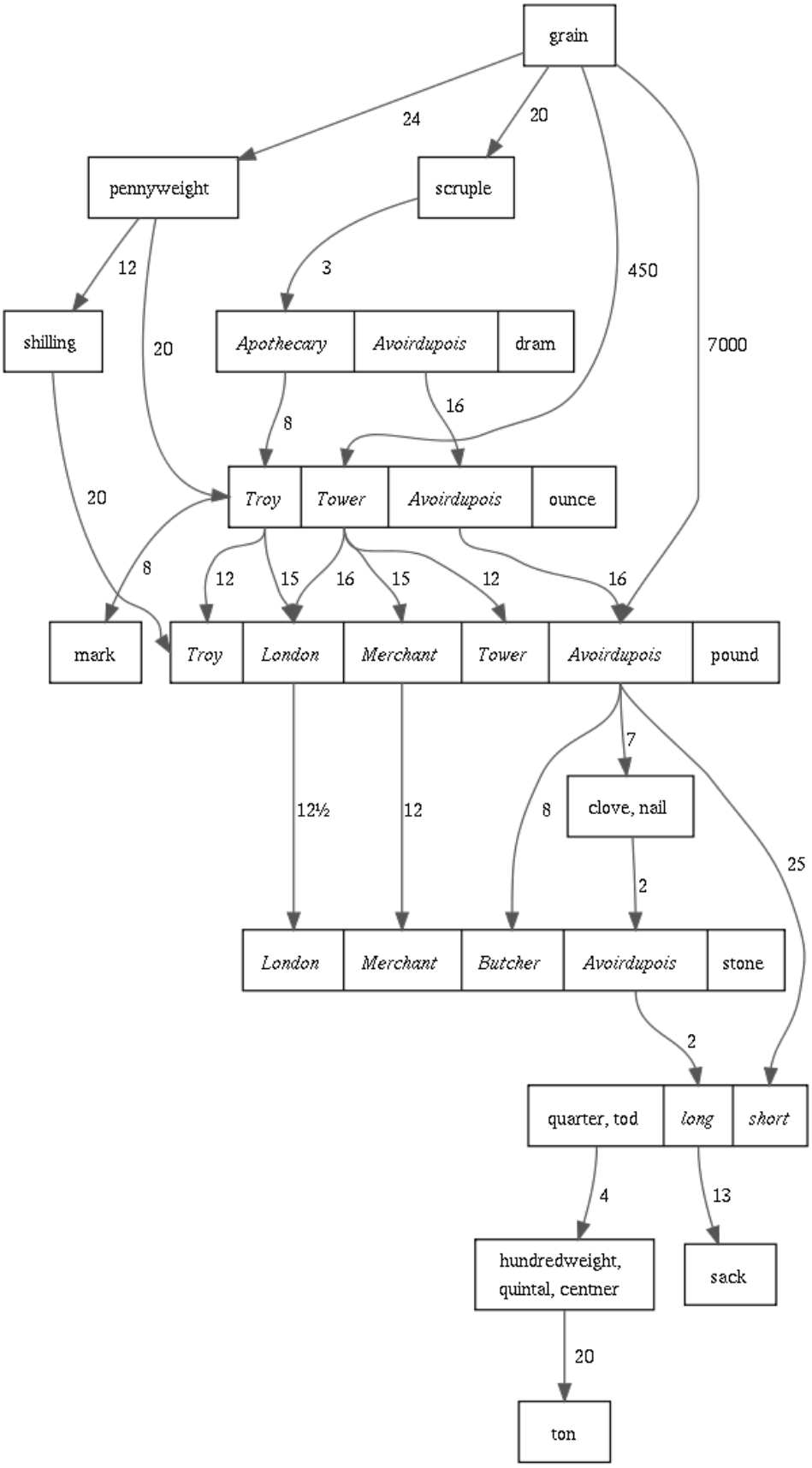


English Units of Length



A One POOD - It is approximately 16.38 kilograms (36.11 pounds)

Check out the "English Units" page on Wikipaedia



Units of Mass

.....No Pood!