

## 140 Fathers and Sons

In his final years, Henry faced a new challenge - from his ambitious son Henry. III and tired, for a while he loses control to the young bucks, the new generation, and the men of his son.

### The coming men

#### Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester (1377-1447)



Chief of Prince Hal's men was Henry Beaufort. the second of four illegitimate children of John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford. He seems to have been marked out for a clerical career from the start, going to Peterhouse, Cambridge and Queen's College, Oxford. Advancements and positions came quickly, and in 1397 he was chancellor of Oxford University, and by 1398 Bishop of Lincoln. A liaison with Alice Fitzalan, Archbishop Arundel's niece. In the autumn of 1402 he was appointed to the king's council, and in 1403, he was appointed chancellor of England for two years. By 1404 he had progressed to the richest see in Europe - Winchester.

When in January 1410, Henry, prince of Wales, displaced Arundel as head of the council, Bishop Beaufort and his brother Thomas headed the administration. Thomas became chancellor while Bishop Henry opened parliament. For the two years of the prince's administration, until November 1411, Beaufort followed a policy of fiscal solvency and friendship with Burgundy.

In March 1410 his elder brother John died, leaving his widow, Margaret, with three young children. Thomas of Lancaster the king's second son then managed to marry the widow, therefore enjoying the lands that formed the greater part of the young Beauforts' inheritance. Bishop Henry tried to impede the marriage, and refused to surrender to Thomas his brother's treasure for a while but in the end was forced to give way.

In November 1411 Henry IVth asserted himself one last time, and Beaufort was out on his ear. But after his death in 1413, Beaufort was back, made Chancellor and he was back in power. Beaufort would remain as the leading political figure until his death in 1447, the most staunch and relentless supporter of the Lancastrian dynasty.

### **Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick (1382-1439)**



The Beauchamp family was almost destroyed by Richard II in 1397–9 and saved only by the accession of Henry IV. His father had died in April 1401, leaving his lands concentrated principally in the west midland counties of Warwickshire and Worcestershire. Over the years, he rebuilt the fortunes of the family, participating in the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403, after which he was made a knight of the Garter. From 1408 to 1410 he travelled abroad, visiting Rome and the Holy Land and returning via Eastern Europe and was a renowned jousting. In May 1410 he was named a royal councillor but in November 1411 he suffered the same fate as Beaufort when Henry IVth re-asserted himself.

## 141 De Heretico Comburendo

With John Wycliffe and the Lollards in the 14th century, heresy finally came to England. Up to this point, rural England had been notable for avoiding the religious turmoils that sprung up from time to time through the continent.



William Sawtry, 1401

William Sawtry was very probably the first person in England executed for heresy by being burned. He was not to be the last.

William Sawtry was a parish chaplain in Norfolk. He was a vigorous preacher, spreading an unusual message; he declared that he would rather venerate a living monarch, or the bodies of the saints, or a confessed and contrite man, than any crucifix; that priests should preach or teach rather than say canonical services; and that money used for pilgrimages would be better spent on the poor. Most significantly, he also held that real bread remained on the altar after the words of consecration - not the body of Christ.

Initially, Sawtry was taken in 1399 to the presence of Bishop Henry Dispencer, the Bishop of Norwich who had dealt so firmly with the Peasants revolt. He started off defiantly, but a few weeks later he was persuaded to abandon these beliefs, and he abjured them publicly at Lynn, swearing never again to preach or hold them.

Sawtry then moved to London, and despite his promises not to preach his heretical views any more, that is exactly what he did. So in 1401, he was hauled before a full convocation of the church at St Pauls in front of no lesser person than Archbishop Arundel. What followed was typical; Arundel questioned him closely and aggressively, trying to trick Sawtry into admitting his heresy. Sawtry responded with clever evasions and replies that could be interpreted several ways. For several hours Sawtry avoided answers that could incriminate him, but Arundel was relentless pushing him harder and harder for hour after hour.

Eventually, Sawtry could avoid him no longer; following their consecration, he said the bread at the altar, quote 'remained true bread, and the same bread as before'.

Arundel had won – he had his man. William Sawtry was convicted as a heretic. He made no plea for mercy. Instead he loudly prophesied imminent ruin for clergy, king, and kingdom. On 26 February he was ceremonially stripped of his priestly orders before a large congregation at St Paul's, to whom the archbishop expounded the condemned man's offences in English. He was then handed over as a layman to the secular powers. His execution was authorized by direct royal command, because there was no formal law, and soon afterwards burned at Smithfield, quote

*'bound, standing upright, to a post set in a barrel with blazing wood all around, and thus reduced to ashes'*

The Lollards had their first martyr. Sawtry was reviled by orthodox chroniclers but honoured by his underground co-religionists: one such, William Emayn of Bristol, in 1429 called Sawtre 'a holy man ... worshipped in heaven', and he later figured prominently in Foxe's protestant book of martyrs.

## 142 Greatest Man - or Monster?

Henry Vth is a man who has a reasonable claim to be the greatest of English kings. But what did contemporaries think of him? Successful he was no doubt - but in his rigid piety and ruthlessness was he also a monster?

We have arrived at one of the most famous rulers of England. Who inspired one of the most famous and talented of historians, K B MacFarlane to describe him, remarkably immoderately, as "the greatest man that ever ruled England". Historians ever since have been picking away at that, because historians do so hate brave and definitive statements. And so the revisionist view goes all the way to Ian Mortimer, who as a historian is also not afraid of brave and definitive statements. So Ian basically describes Henry as a Monster. A monster "undermined by his own pride and over whelmed by his own authority"; a "wanton destroyer of lives" and proof that "a man may be a hero and yet a monster".

Ouch.

But maybe the main thing is that to contemporaries, both English and French, Henry was the model of kingship. Even to the French he looked better than their own lot.





### 143 The Champion of Christ

In 1413, Henry's friend John Oldcastle very probably celebrated the arrival of his prince on the English throne - now at last, surely, the Lollards would have their chance to express themselves, be protected by the crown.



Archbishop Arundel preaching.  
Jean Creton, *La Prinse et mort du roy Richart*, c1401-5.  
British Library MS Harley 1319 f. 12.

## 144 The Agincourt Campaign - Part I

There is little doubt that Henry Vth always intended to fight in France - unless they completely rolled over. Which was unlikely; the French were perfectly ready to fight and on the surface at least united in the face of the English threat, and looking forward to giving them a beating. This week, Henry prepares.

### **Dramatis Personae: The French**

#### **John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, 1371-1419**

John the Fearless was aggressive, cunning, mercurial, deeply untrustworthy, hugely ambitious - and always surprising. Following John's murder of the Loius, Duke of Orleans, and in the context of the madness of King Charles VIth, The Burgundian faction fought with the Orleanists for control of the crown.



#### **Charles, Duke of Orleans, 1394 - 1465**

Charles was the son of the murdered Louis, and was honour-bound to avenge his father's murder - contributing to the constant instability of the French kingdom. He therefore allied himself with the powerful Bernard VII, Count of Armagnac, and together was engaged in an intermittent struggle for control until the Treat of Arras at last brought unity. In fact, Charles was destined to spend 25 years in English captivity. It meant he was to have a greater reputation for writing poetry and as a patron of the arts than as a warrior.



### **Jean, Duke of Bourbon, 1481 - 1434**

### **The Duke of Alencon, 1385-1415**

Jean of Bourbon was 34 at the time of Agincourt, and reputedly keen to get it on with the English, and follow at aggressive strategy to fight and throw them out of France. In fact he was to end his life in English captivity. Jean, The Duke of Alencon was similarly keen to prove superiority of French arms, and was to come closer than any of the French leaders to fulfilling these aims.



### **Jean le Maingre II (Boucicaut) 1366-1421, Marshal of France**

### **Charles d'Albret, Constable of France**

Boucicaut was one of the most celebrated figures in France, the epitome chivalry with it's contradictions and contrasts- writer of poetry and military adventurer. He fought all comers at the famous tournament at Inglevert at the age of 24, and won fame fighting the Ottomans in the East - often with a disastrous lack of success, such as at Nicopolis. But there's not doubt he was a glittering figure with vast military experience, and as Marshal advised the French leaders. Charles d'Albret was part of the influential Gascon family that caused the English so much trouble, and had fought under the famous Bertrand de Guesclin to recover the lands lost at Brittany.





### **Louis of Guyenne, Dauphin of France, 1397-1415**

And finally to the young man who became the official face of the French opposition to Henry, the young heir to the throne, Louis, Dauphin, son of Charles VIth. The man who reputedly mocked Henry by sending a gift of tennis balls. The man to whom Henry wrote as he sat in Southampton, ready to board his ship for France

***"Friend, give us what we are owed and by the will of the almighty avoid a deluge of human blood "***

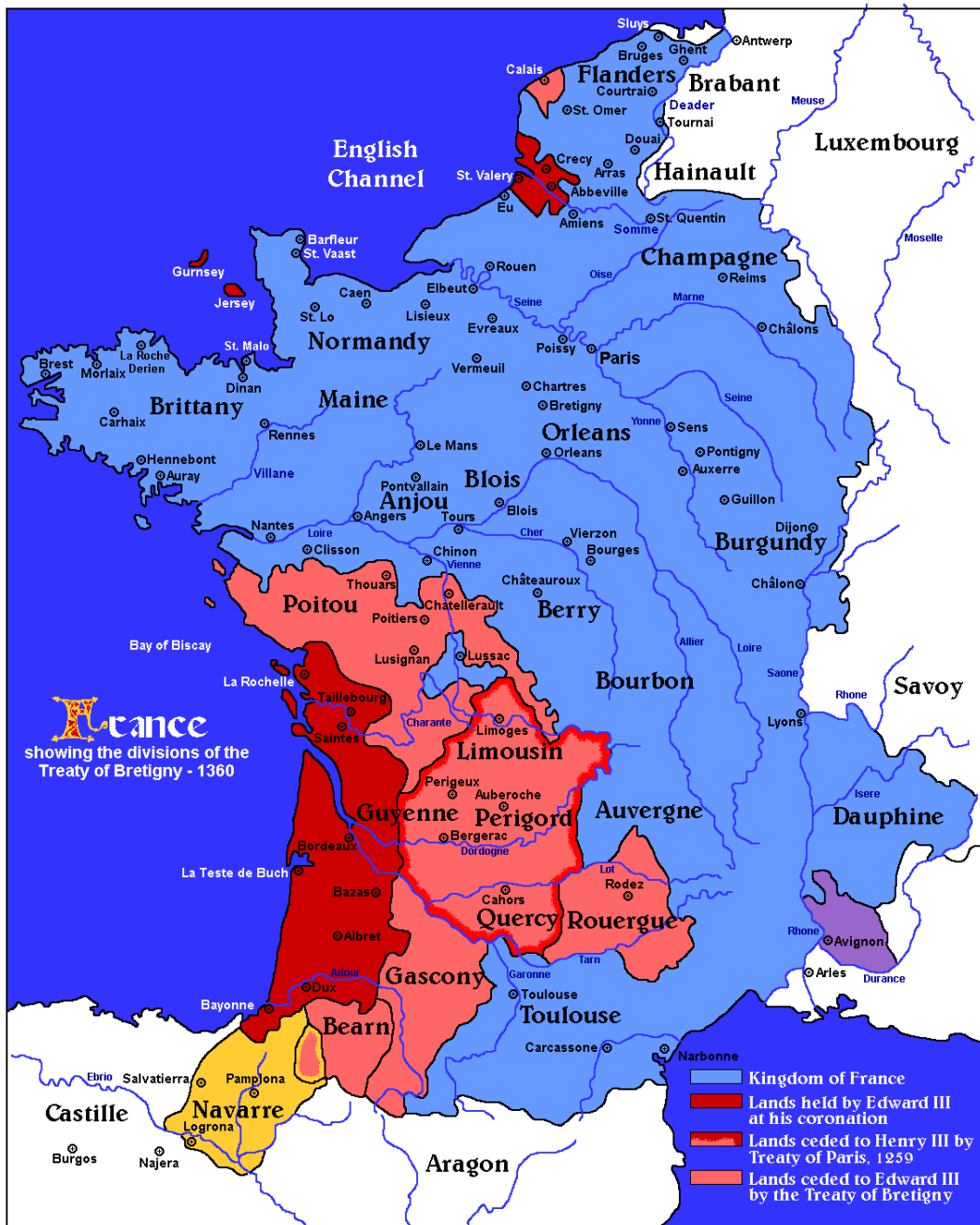
The Treaty of Bretigny, 1360 and English demands

The treaty of Bretigny represented Edward III at the height of his powers. It restored to the English crown the lands of Poitou in particular that had been part of Eleanor's great lands of Aquitaine. Yet it was never ratified, and by Edward's death was essentially a dead letter. It was this treaty that formed the basis of Henry's demands. But he went further; he went back to the Conqueror to claim Normandy; and to Henry II to claim Maine, Tourraine and Anjou. The throne of France was probably always negotiable.

And of course Henry enthusiastically pushed his desire to marry Charles VIth's daughter, Catherine de Valois.



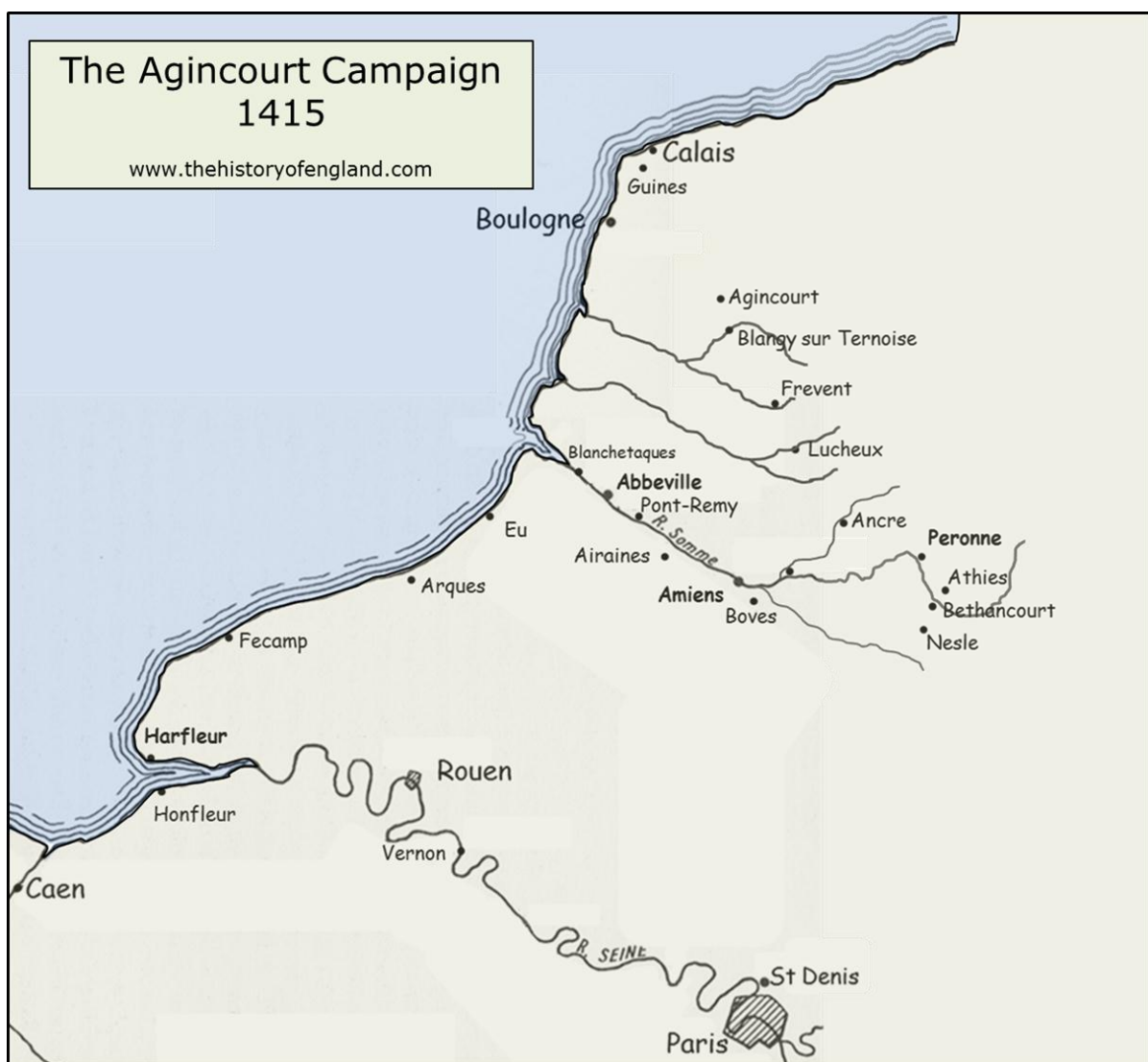


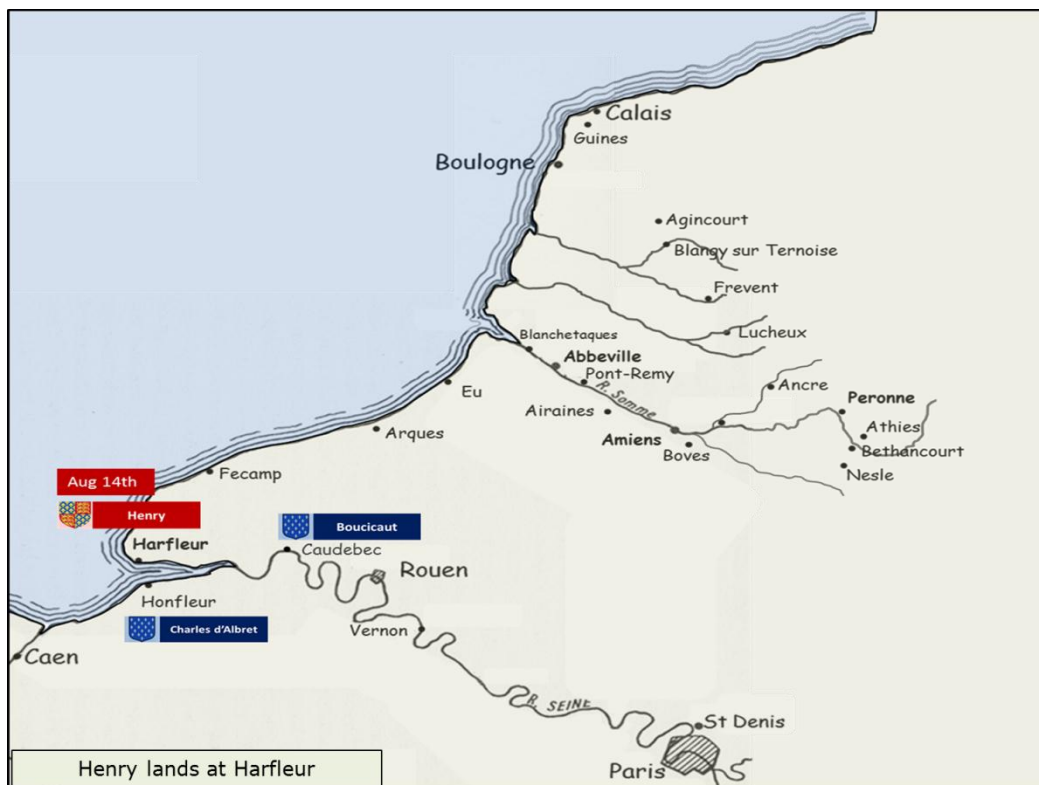


Map of the Treaty of Bretigny

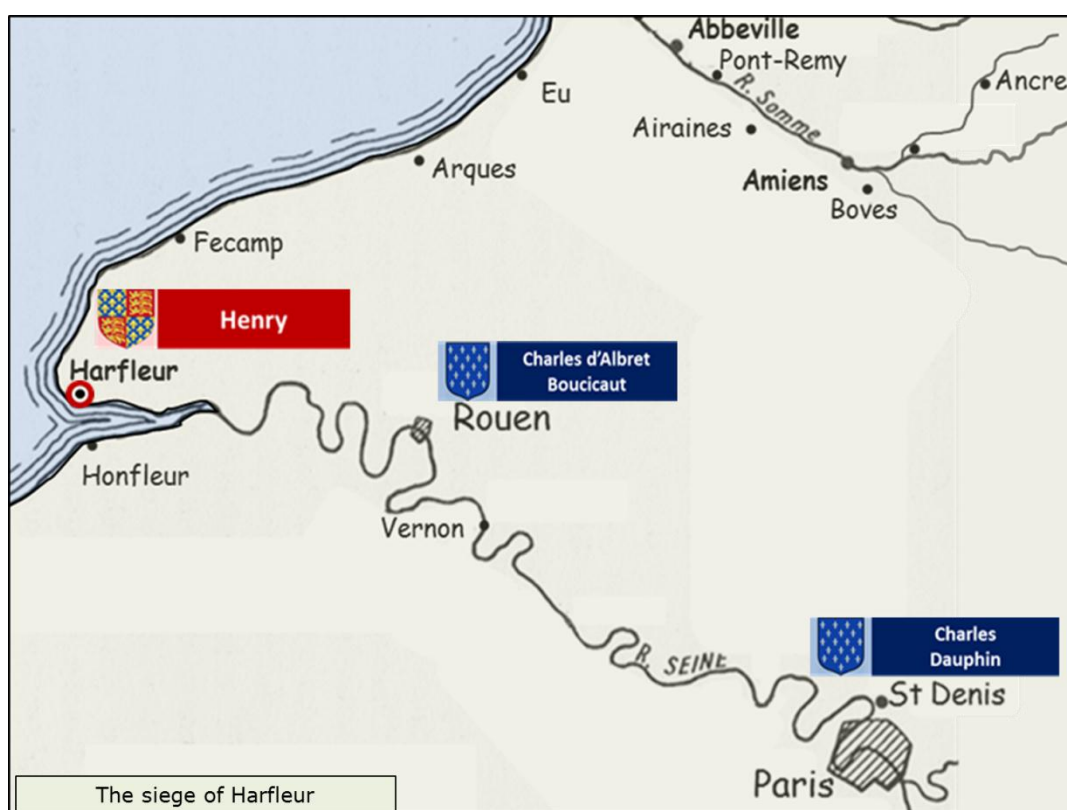
## 145 The Agincourt Campaign Part II

Henry probably now intended to be King of France or Duke of Normandy as a minimum. So what he planned was a war of conquest, not just the traditional chevauchee. It's likely that he planned to start with Harfleur, take it quickly and then advance to the capital of Normandy - Rouen - before winter. But Jean d'Estouteville, captain of Harfleur, had other ideas.

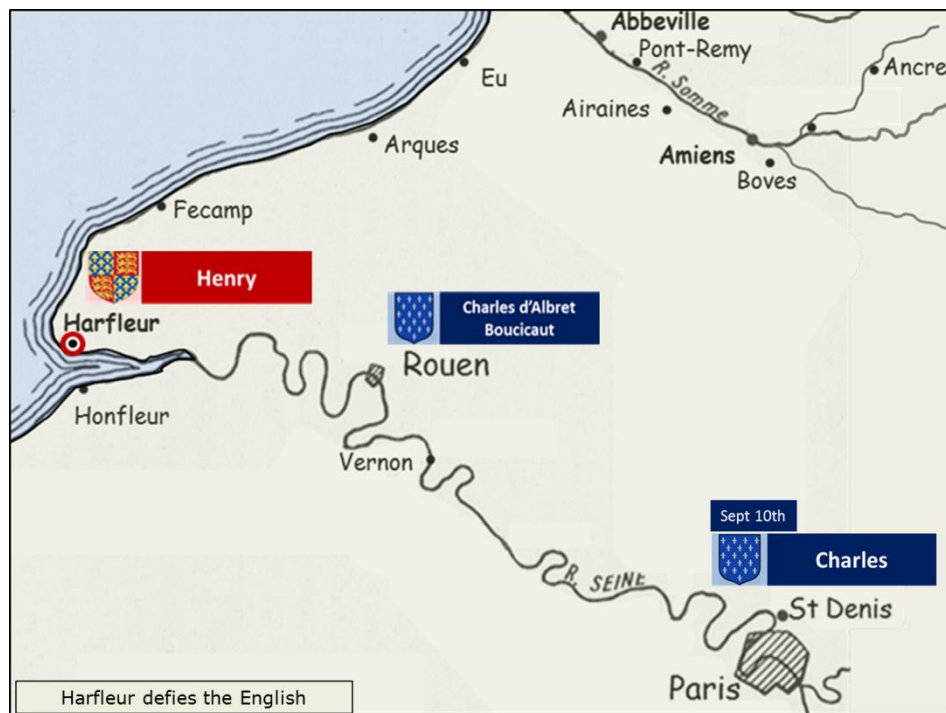




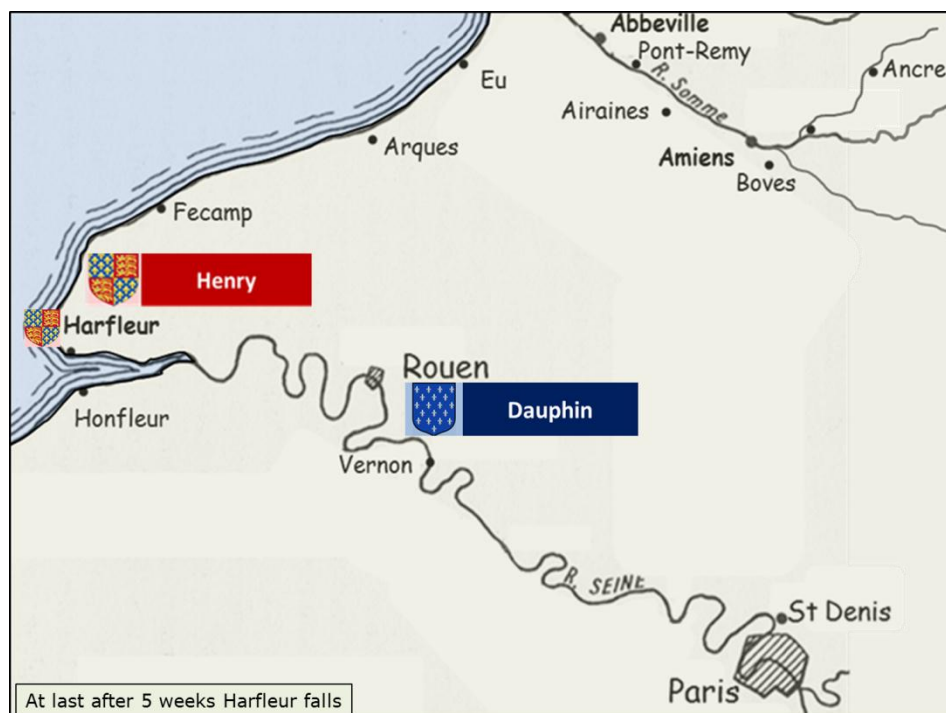
The destination of the fleet of 1,500 ships was a closely guarded secret until on 14th August 1415, Henry landed at the beach near Harfleur. The army of English and Welshmen was one of the largest to leave England; a fighting strength of 12,000 men, 15,000 all told. It contained 8,000 archers and 4,000 Men at Arms. The French forces nearby were not large enough to resist such an army.



By 19th August, the Duke of Clarence had completely surrounded Harfleur – though not before, at the last minute, 600 men under French commander de Gaucourt sneaked into the town to bolster the defence. The English set up huge cannon to bombard the town. By 28th August letters from the French king were reaching his lords, telling them to assemble at Rouen.

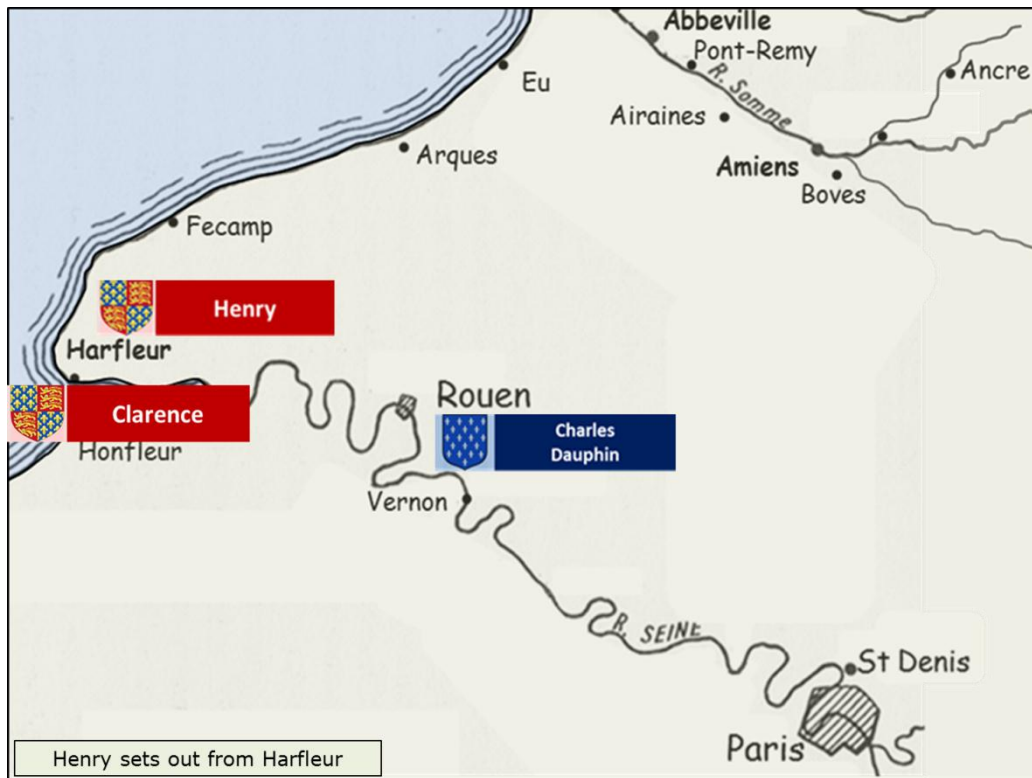


Henry's plan had been to reduce Harfleur quickly, and then probably to advance on Rouen, and force battle. But resistance at Harfleur was fierce; again and again the defenders rebuilt their walls and fought off assault after assault. The French army was growing - on 10th September, King Charles VIth took the famous symbol of war, the Oriflamme at St Denis.

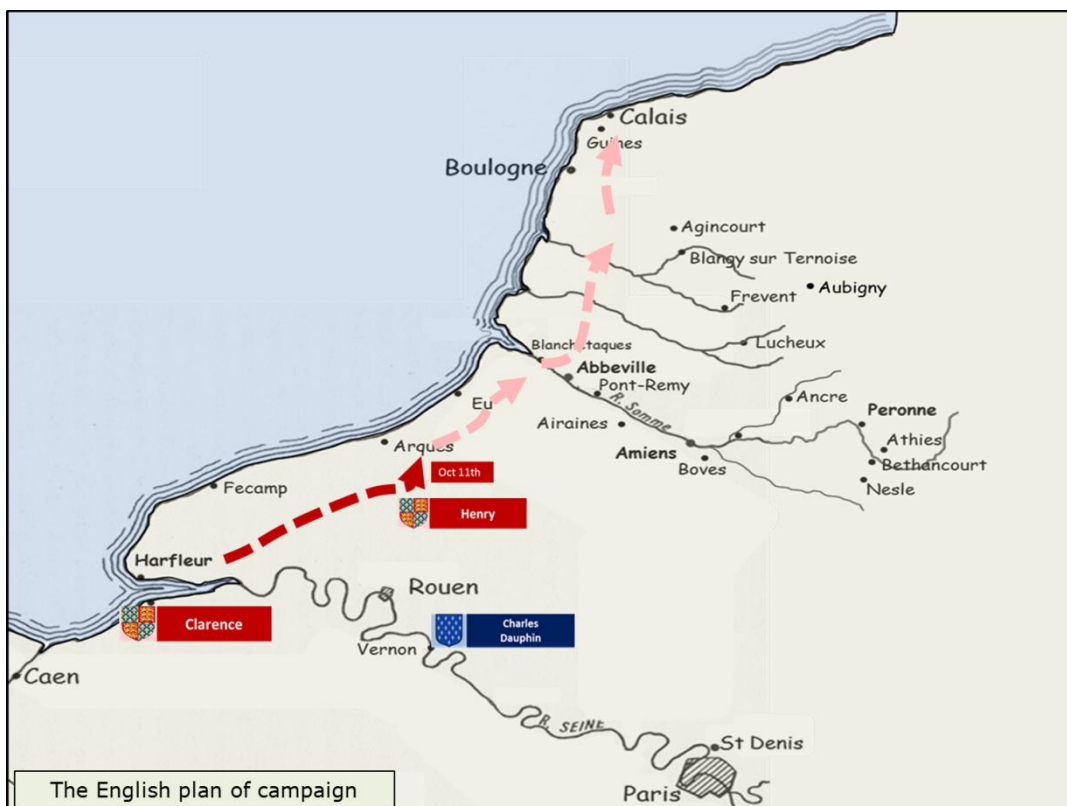


After 5 long weeks, still Harfleur held out against the English; but by 17th September the town was close to despair, and Henry prepared for the final assault. Panic-stricken townspeople begged for truce – and agreed that if no relief arrived from the King Charles and Louise, the Dauphin, by 22nd September they would surrender. Despite their pleas, none came from the Dauphin at Rouen – and Henry entered the ruins of Harfleur.





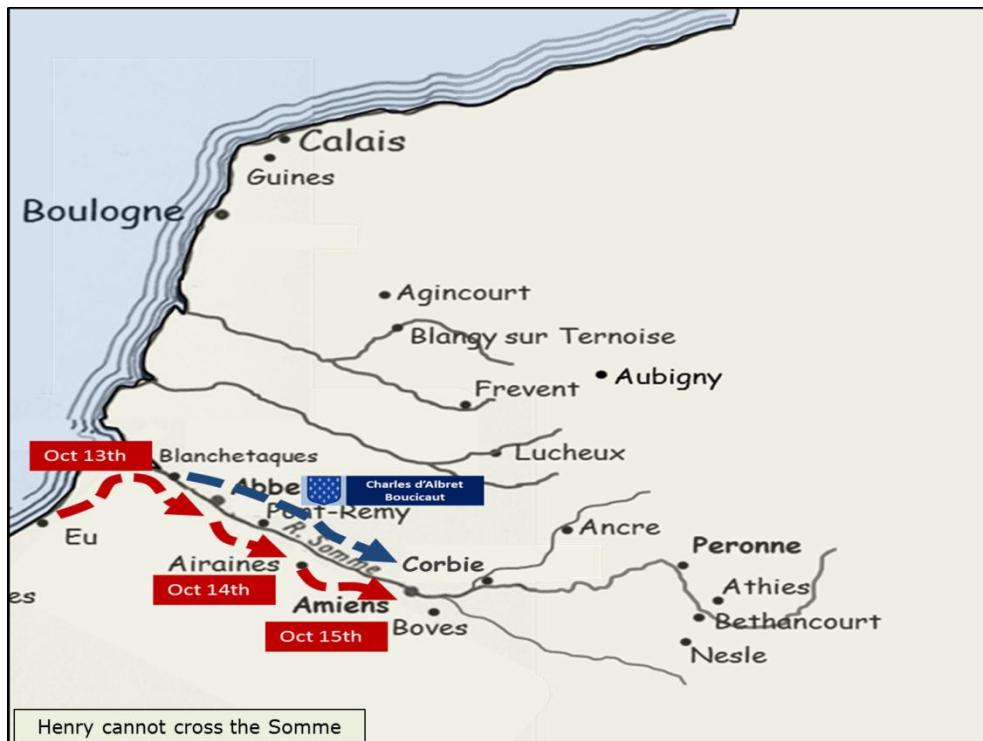
The inhabitants of Harfleur brutally expelled, Henry put Clarence in charge of rebuilding the town – to be a new Calais. Henry boldly announced his intention to the French that he would march through France; since he had told the French hostages to meet him at Calais, the French now knew this was his destination. Henry had two objectives; to draw the French away from defenceless Harfleur; and to entice Charles and the Dauphin to battle.



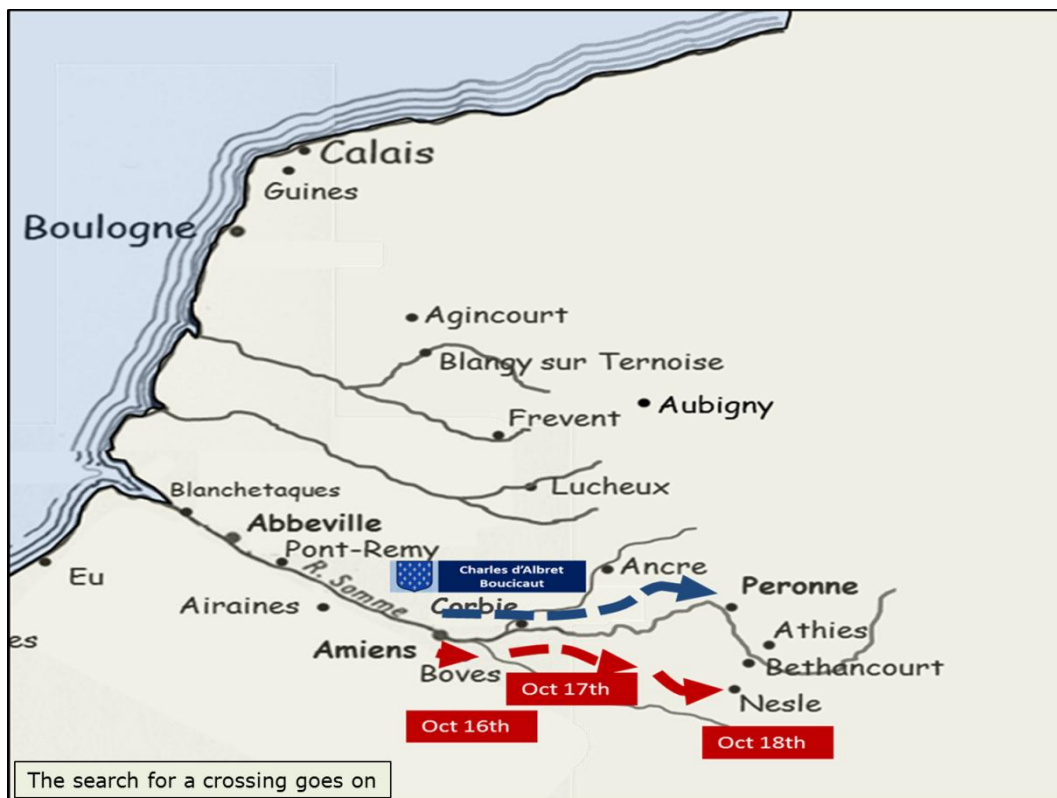
THE FRENCH GATHER THEIR FORCES Henry left with about 8,000 men, leaving 1,200 with Clarence at Harfleur. Henry's plan was to follow Edward III's example to march to Calais by the ford at Blanchetaque. By October 11th, he had reached the small town of Arques, and negotiated provisions from them in return for leaving them in peace.



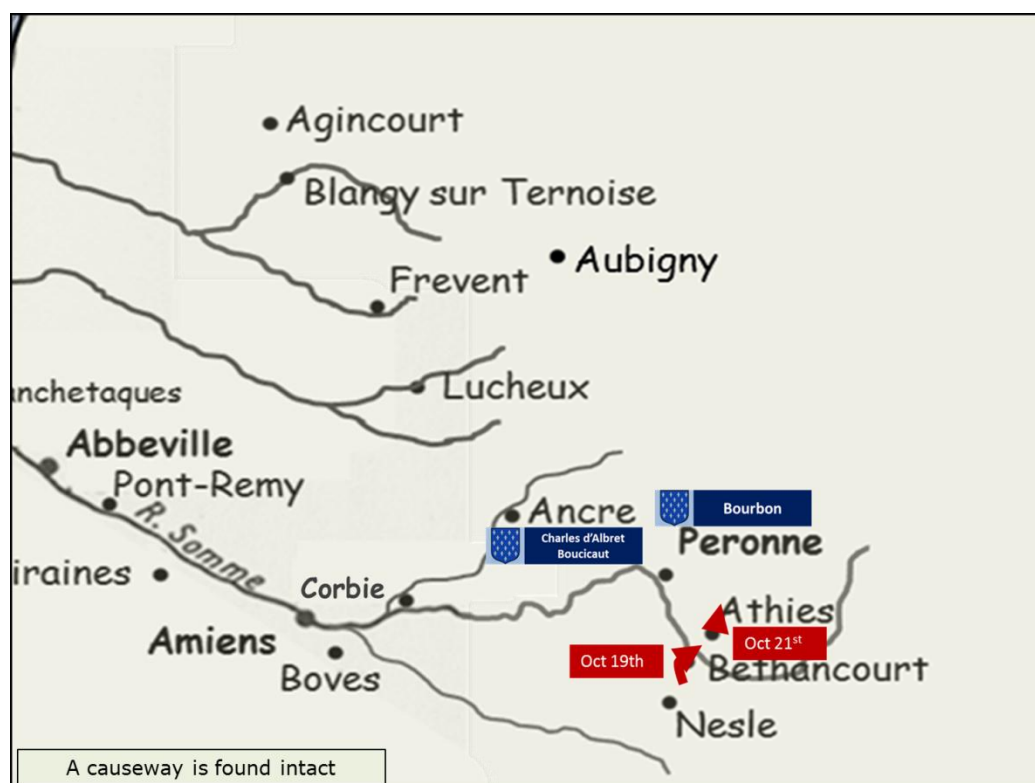
The French now knew where Henry was going. The Peace of Arras had given them a new unity between Armagnac and Burgundy, and Charles's madness was for a while quiet. They were determined to give Henry what he wanted – a fight. Just as in 1346, the River Somme was to be an uncrossable barrier while they gathered an unbeatable army. And this time they knew all about Blanchetaque. By the time Henry reached Eu on 13th the Marshal (Boucicaut) and Constable (Charles d'Albret) already held significant forces north of the Somme.



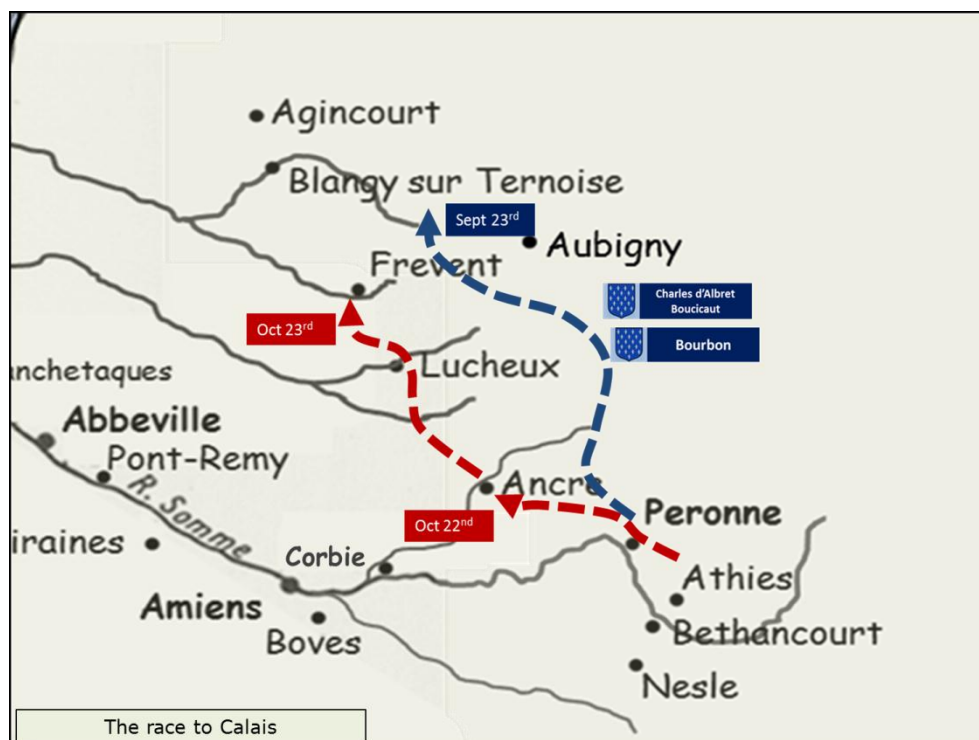
On October 13th the Duke of York find out bad news – Constable d'Albret and Marshal Boucicaut has blocked Edward III's ford at Blanchetaque. The English cannot cross there. For 6 days the English march grimly along the Somme towards the head of the river, wracked by hunger, thirst and dysentery. Every ford is blocked, every bridge destroyed, every town held against them. Meanwhile on the other side of the river the French army track the increasingly desperate English.



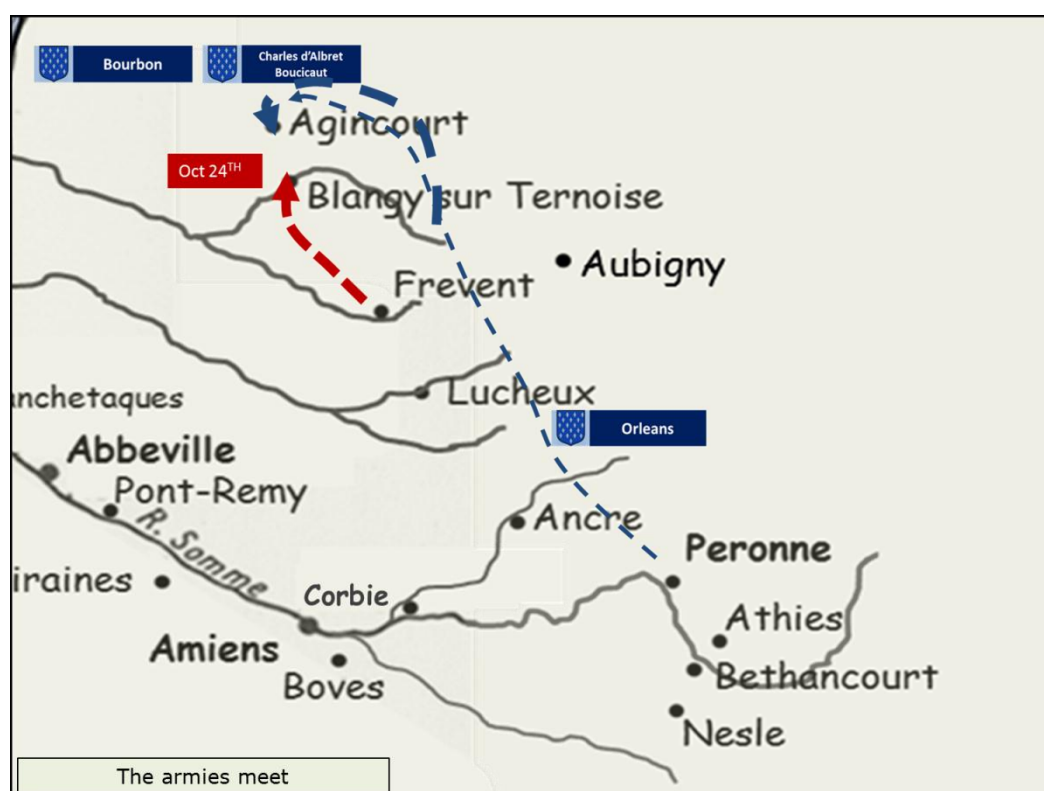
Outside Corbie, Henry is attacked by French skirmishers. He decides to cut across a bend in the river, which will save time and take him out of the reach of the French across the river.



On 19th, Henry's scouts found a causeway only half destroyed just beyond the town of Nesle. The English had cut across a bend in the Somme, and maybe the French had for a while lost touch. By the 20th the English were across, and it was too late for the French to stop them. On 20th the English celebrated and rested. Meanwhile, the warlike Duke of Bourbon had now reached Peronne and issued a challenge to Henry – meet at Aubigny and we will fight there. Henry agreed.



But Henry lied. While the French headed to Aubigny to prepare the best possible battlefield, Henry headed more a more westerly route towards Calais. Maybe Henry had decided not to fight, or maybe he simply wanted to find a battlefield of his own making. But the French soon realised, an by 23rd were ahead of the English at St Pol, and aiming to put themselves between the English and Calais. Constant skirmishes became the norm along the line of march.



On 24th, the Duke of York led the English vanguard over the bridge at Blangy. Ahead at the top of the hill a mounted scout came tearing down the hill – he could see a massive French army ahead. Marching in full armour, the English continued to cross as Henry exhorted his men to the fight ahead. But as evening fell it was clear there would be no fighting that night. It would be tomorrow, St Crispin's Day, that the English would face the test. Behind them from Peronne, the French leader, the Duke of Orleans travelled through the night to be with is army. The scene was set.



## The Agincourt Campaign October 1415

[www.thehistoryofengland.com](http://www.thehistoryofengland.com)

Agincourt

Tramecourt

After a march of over 100 miles and 2 weeks, finally the two armies were going to come face to face.

Who knows if Henry Vth always intended a fight, or if in the last few days had decided to void the French and run for Calais.

But whatever he'd intended, there was no escape now.



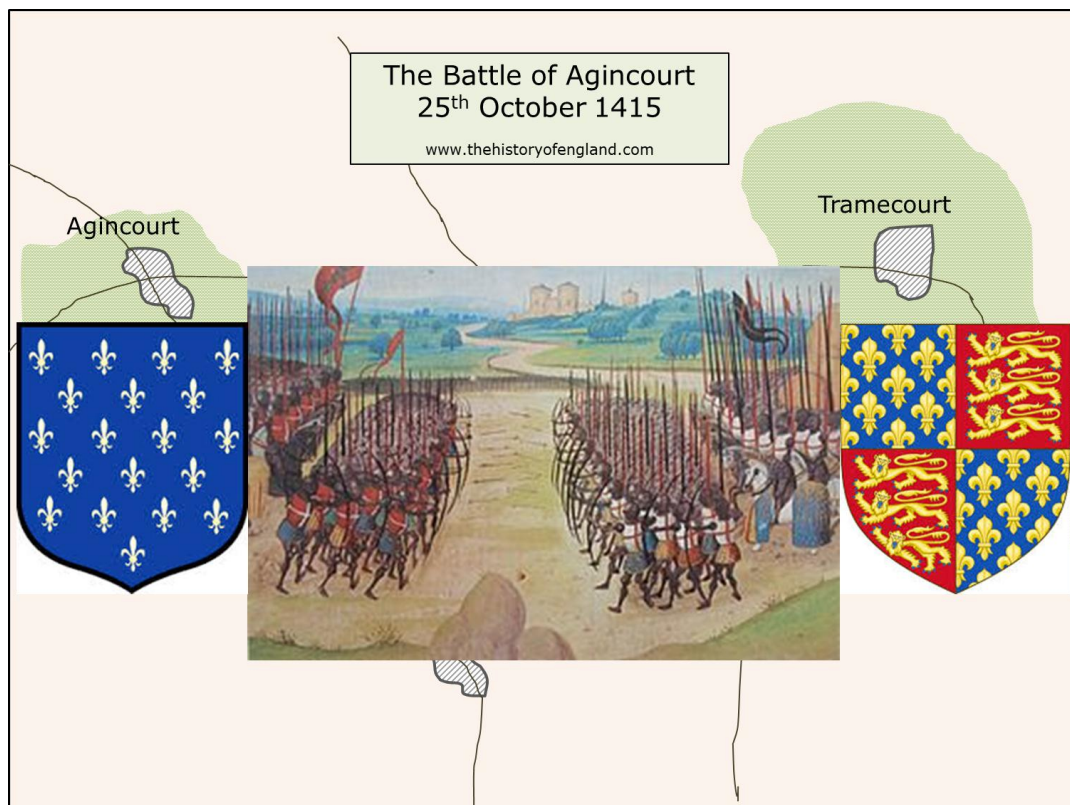
### 146 The Agincourt Campaign - Part III: The Battle

And so at last to one of England's most famous battles. Outnumbered and trapped, Henry and his English and Welsh faced the cream of the French warrior class.

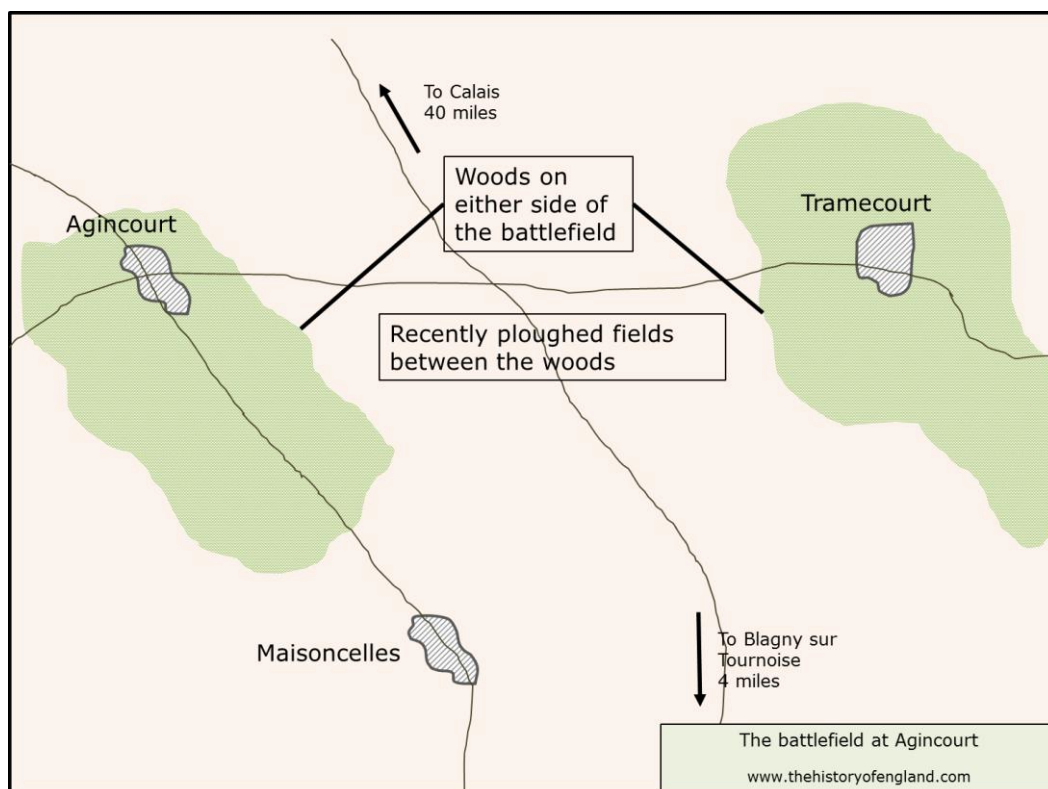
The Duke of Alencon attacks the fallen Gloucester and his brother King Henry!! Note the absence of mud and blood - I think they'd have looked a little messier...



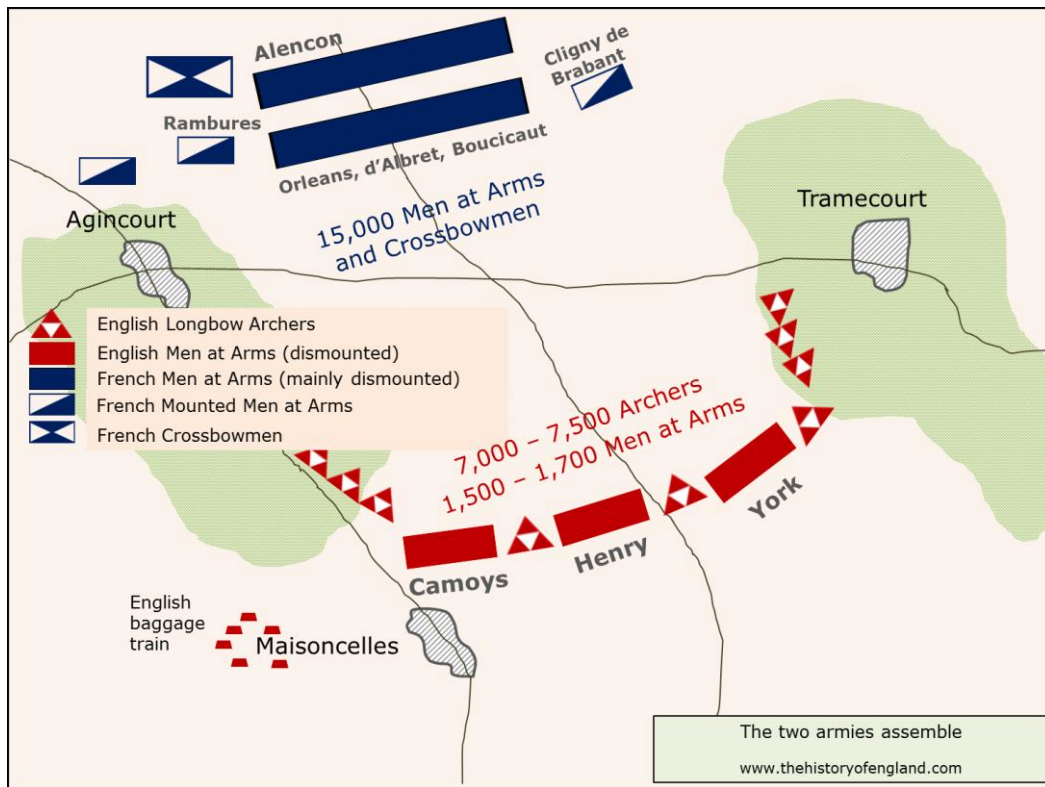




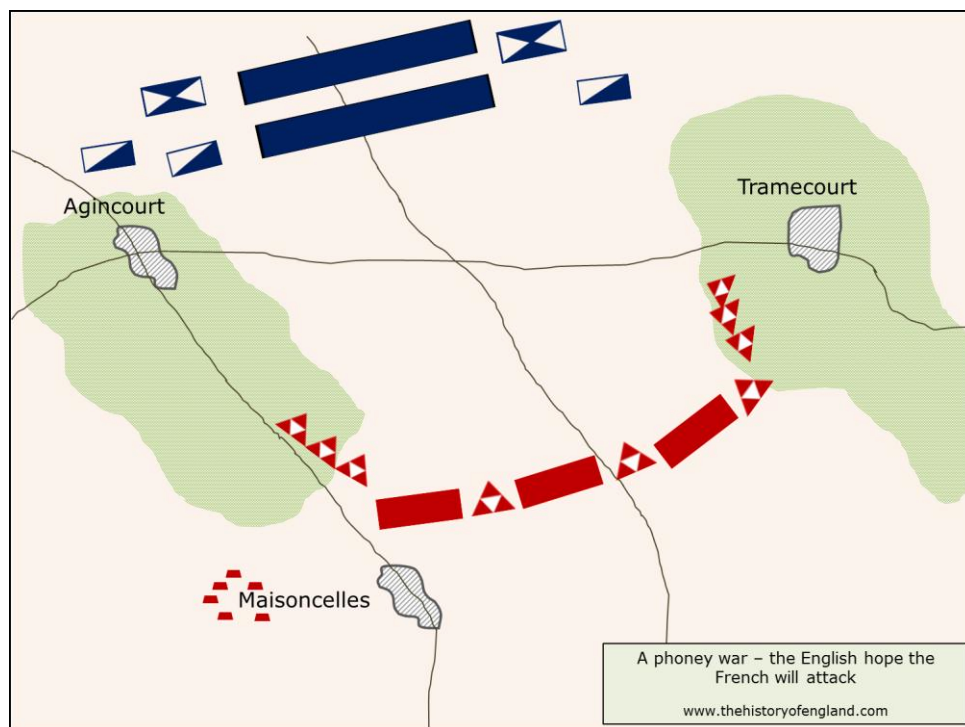
On the 24th of October, Edward Duke of York led the vanguard of the English army over the bridge at Blagny sur Tournoise. The English had been marching since they left Harfleur on 8th October, and were tired, hungry and many of them ill with dysentery. Ahead, one of the Duke's scouts charged down the hill – over the brow of the hill in the distance he could see a massive French army. By the end of the day, the two armies had been staring at each other, and clearly were not going to fight until the following day. This is the story of that day



The battlefield lay between the two villages of Agincourt and Tramecourt, a few miles north of Blagny, where the English had crossed the river Tournoise. The woods effectively squeezed the two armies between the woods. It was wet – throughout the night of 24th October, the rain had fallen leaving the ground wet and heavy.

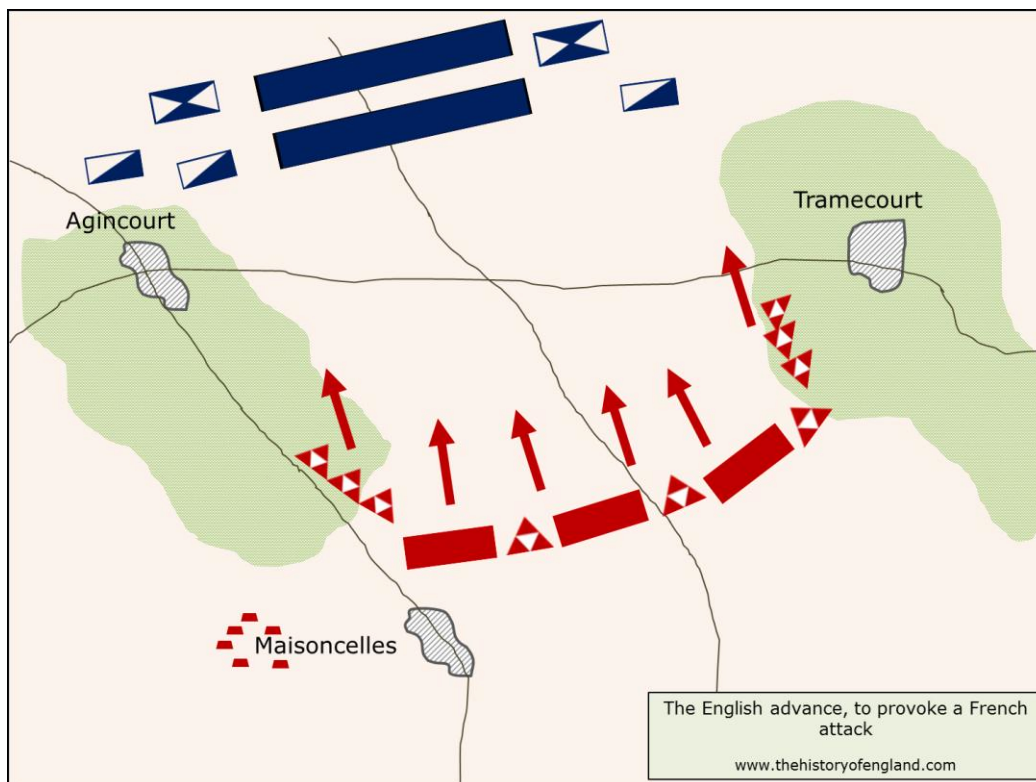


The composition of the two armies was very different. The French army of about 15,000 was dominated by heavily armoured Men at Arms, both mounted and on foot. There were crossbowmen – but they were sent to the back. There were three mounted special detachments; two to sweep away the English archers on the wings, and one to gather the locals and cause a distraction by attacking the baggage train. The English army was about 8,000 men, 2/3rds of them archers, protected by wooden stakes. The baggage train was outside nearby Maisoncelles where Henry spent the night of 24th October.

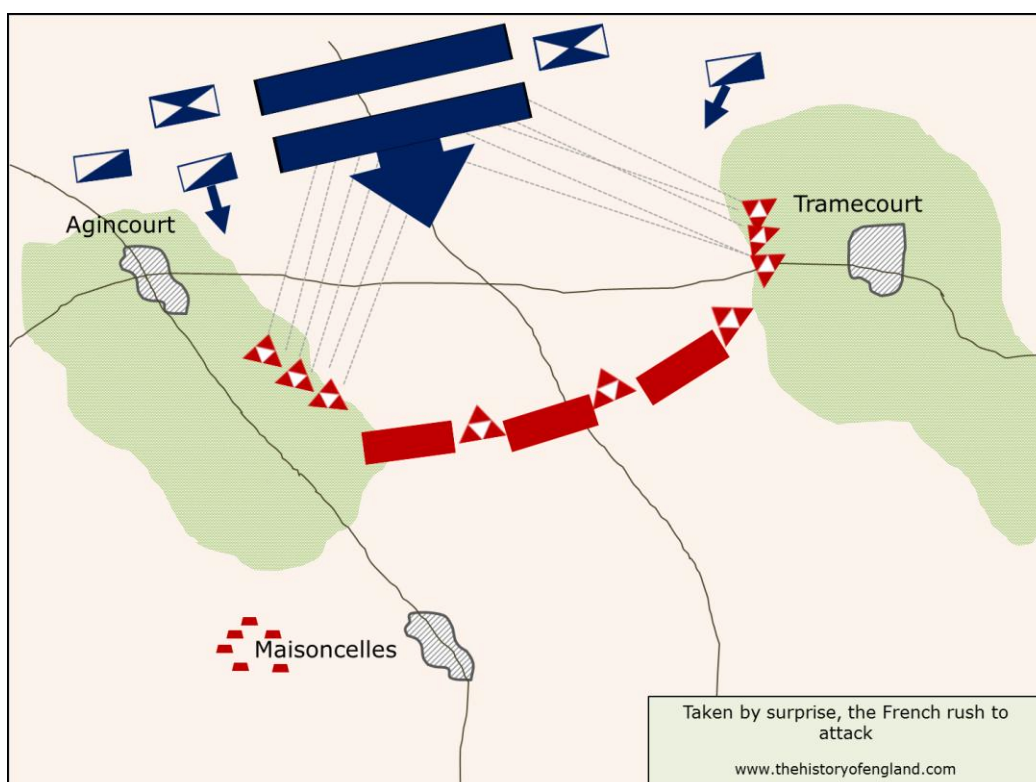


During the night of the 24th The English camp was silent, by orders of the king, while the sounds of the French camp drifted across the field. The English army was up and assembled ready for an early attack on 25th – but it was not until 10 that the French were fully ready for battle. There was a pause while the pre-battle negotiations went on, but then – nothing.

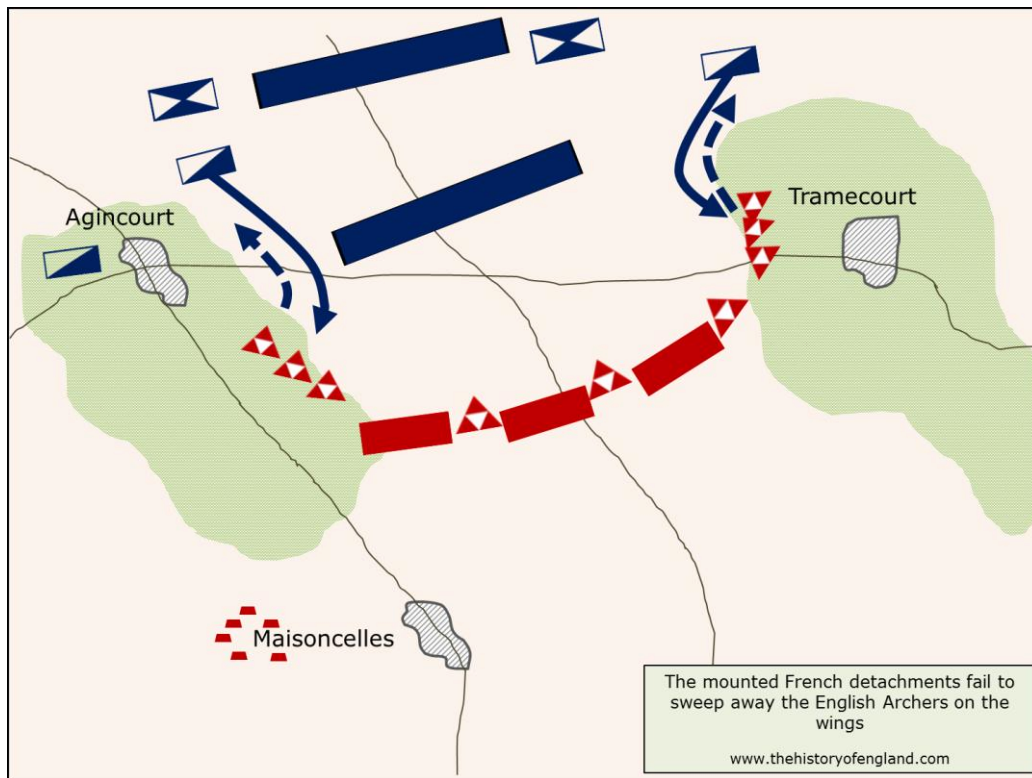




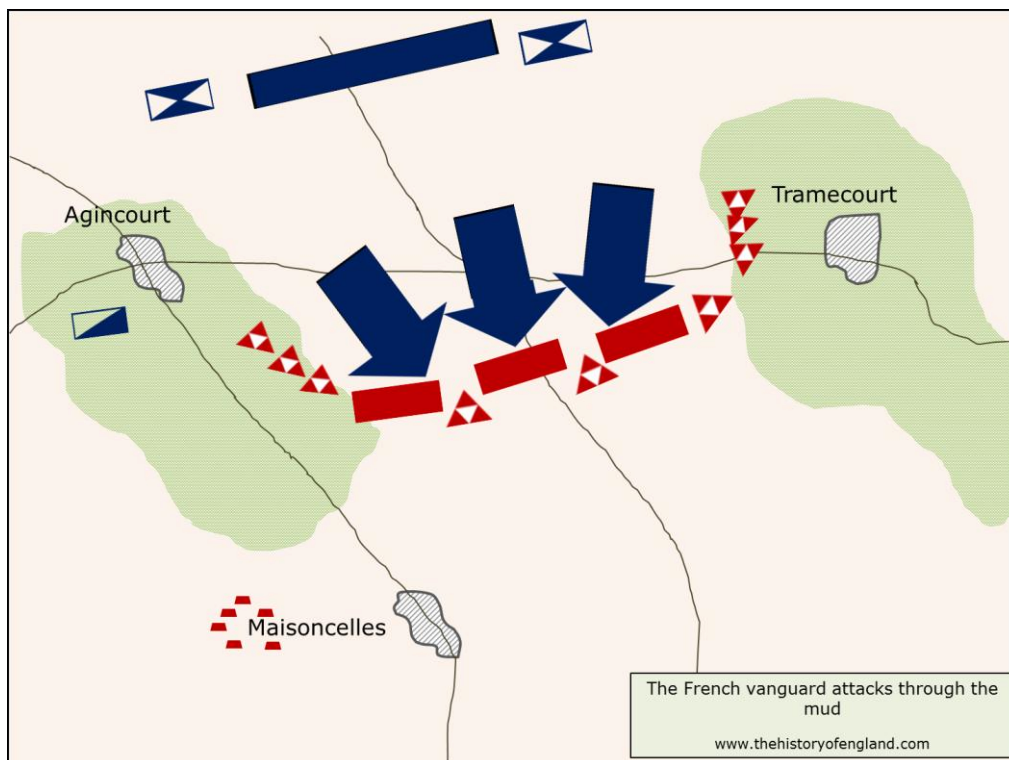
English battle strategy relied on the enemy attacking – to be cut to pieces by archers, then finished off by a defensive wall of dismounted Men at Arms. The French were not playing by the rules. So Henry decided to encourage them. Sir Thomas Erpingham came forward from the ranks, threw his baton in the air and shouted 'Strike Now!'. The archers picked up their stakes and the whole English army began to advance.



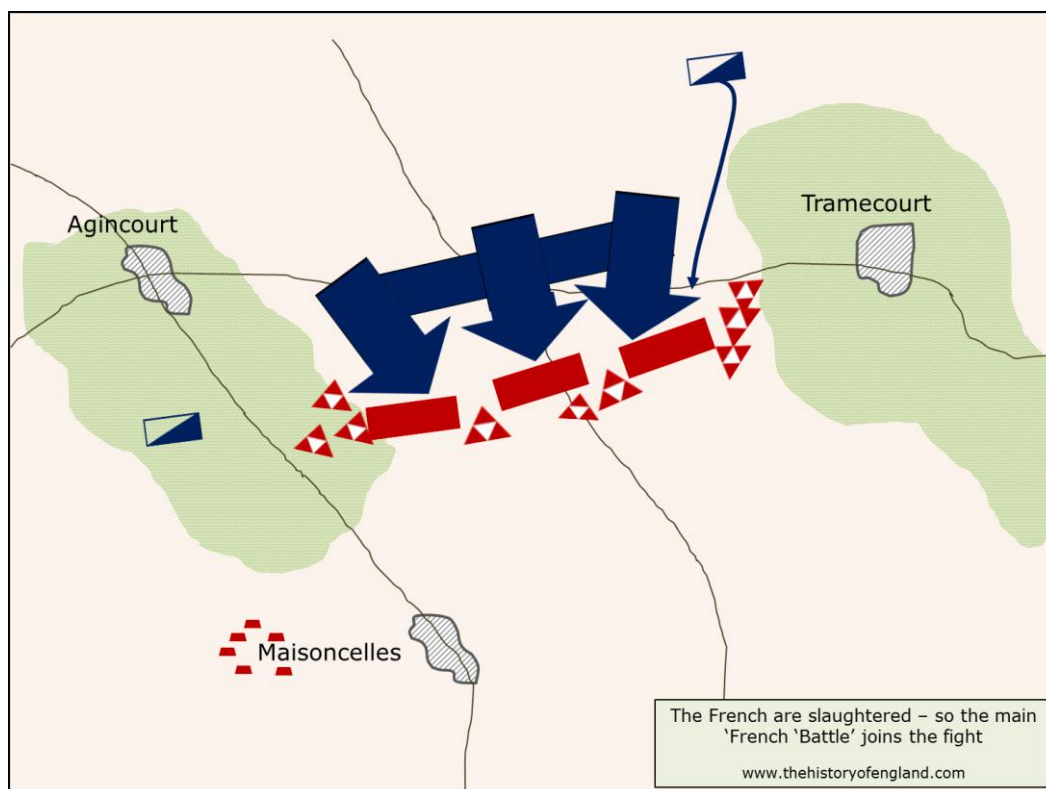
From here the archers could reach the French ranks, and arrows began to rain down on the Men at Arms. The French were taken by surprise – men rushed for their arms, for their horses. The French were convinced they would crush and with a cry the French army lurched forward.



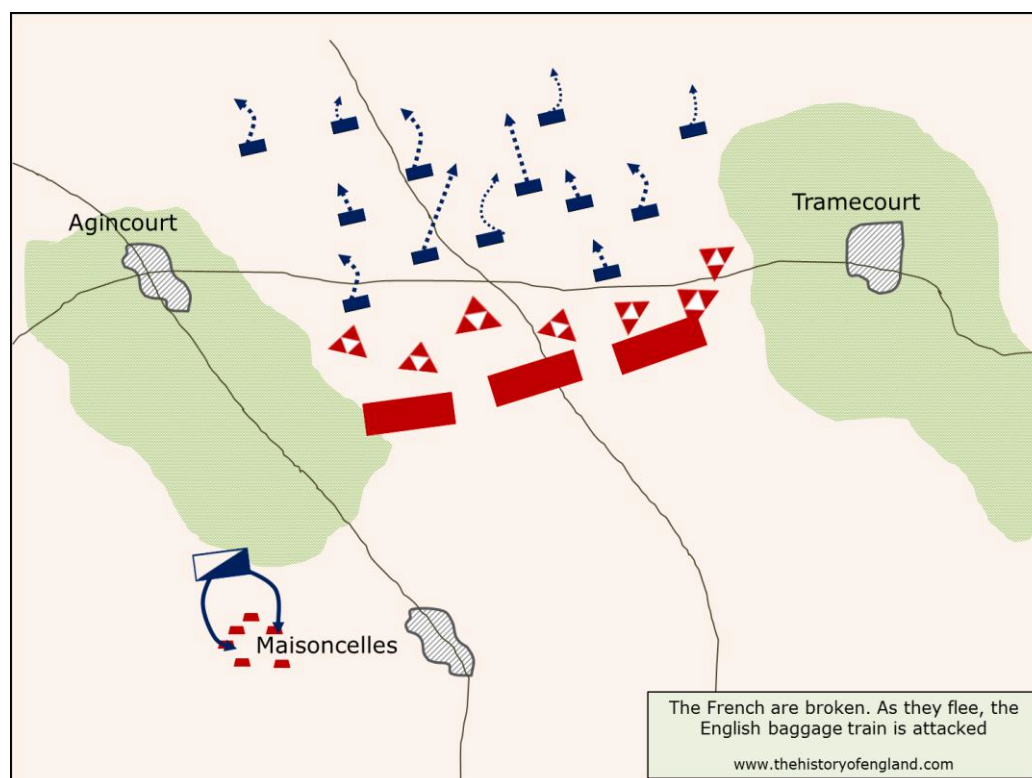
From here the archers could reach the French ranks, and arrows began to rain down on the Men at Arms. The French were taken by surprise – men rushed for their arms, for their horses. The French were convinced they would crush and with a cry the French army lurched forward. On the wings, the French strategy to sweep away the archers with a mounted charge failed as French horses were mown down by arrows, just as at Crecy. As the Men at arms in the vanguard lumbered forward, they were now faced with a hail of English arrows.



The French vanguard was in torment. The ground was heavy with mud, and they slipped, and fell and staggered forward. From the wings came a blizzard of arrows. Under the pressure forward the vanguard split into columns, and squeezed into the centre of the field, increasing the carnage. As men fell, it became yet harder to move forward, and an easier target for the Archers. As the French reached the English line they were exhausted and immobilised. The slaughter began.

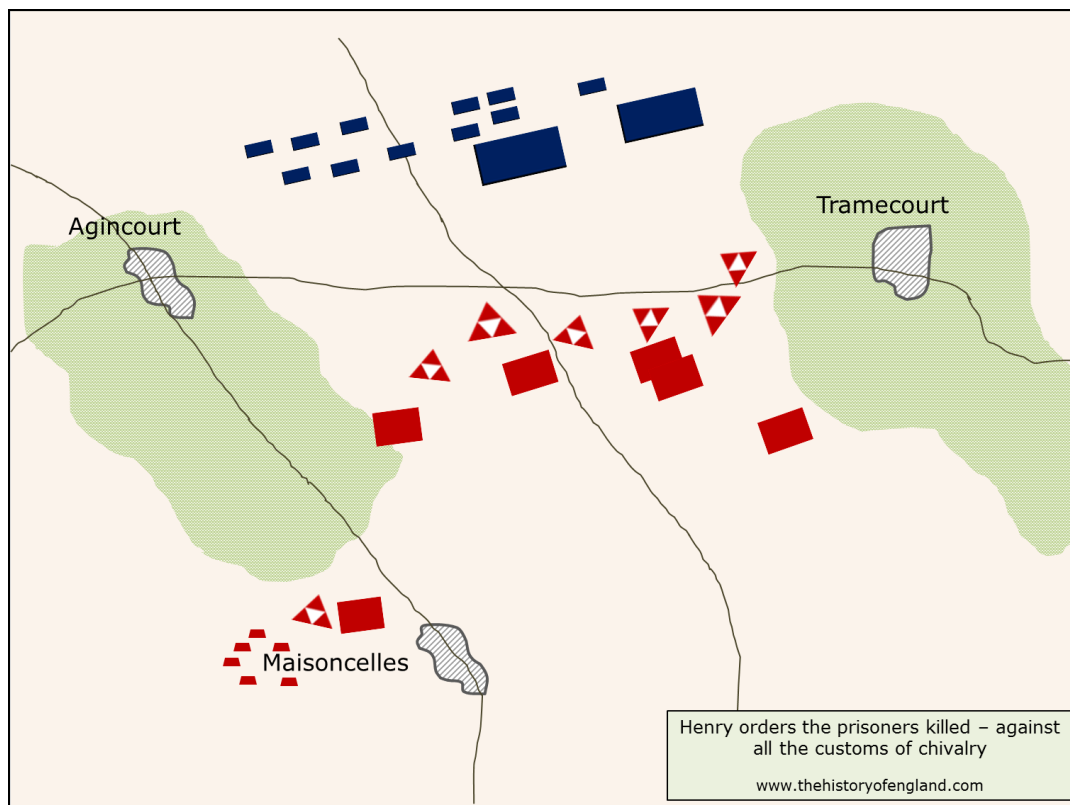


Still the French came forward. As the French 'main battle' joined the fight, and as the English archers ran out of arrows, the pressure on the English line became intense. But although the Duke of York was killed, and The Duke of Gloucester wounded and Henry himself hit, the French were being slaughtered in huge numbers. Somewhere around here the Duke of Brabant, brother to the Duke of Burgundy, arrived with a small group of men – only to be captured

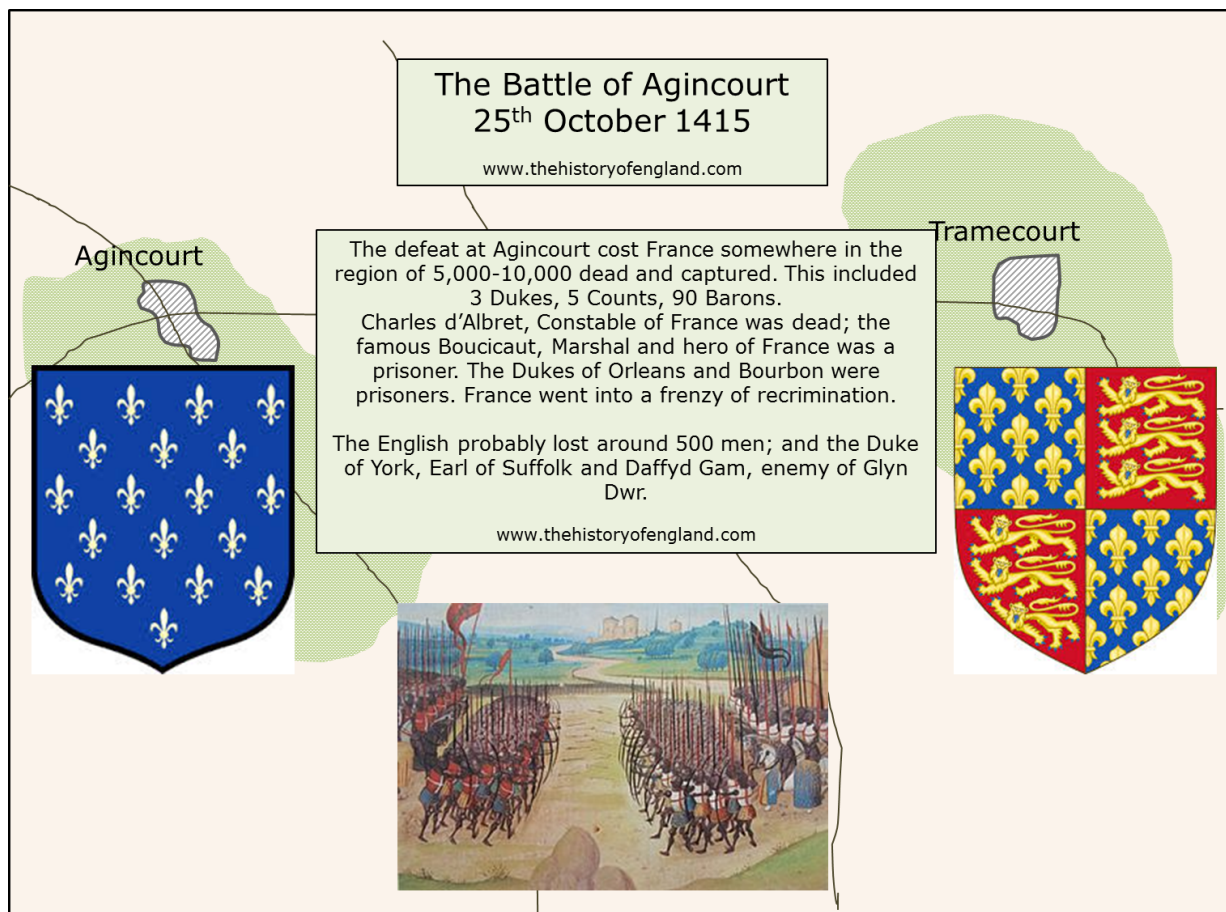


At last the French could take no more slaughter; the Duke of Orleans was captured, the Duke of Alencon was dead. The French Men at Arms fled from the English lines. As it happens at this time the French attacked the baggage train to the rear – but it was too late to distract Henry. Men at Arms relaxed, began to collect prisoners, archers collected arrows, started stripping the dead. The battle was surely over, and a great victory won.





But then something happened. The French line began to reform, under Cligny de Brabant. Henry looked at the battlefield – his men were dispersed, vulnerable, unready to face any new charge. The remaining French army was still significant in numbers. Henry ordered all the non royal prisoners killed an act against all decency and chivalry. Why? An act of savagery? An act of fear? Or of reason – a warning to the French not to attack, and to remove the value of a further French attack to rescue them.





## 147 Women and Anglo Saxon England

Unaccustomed as I am to social and economic history...here is the first of a bit of a thread over the next few weeks and months about some social stuff, and indeed with a bit of a focus on women. Due to popular demand, we start of this thread with a look at the status and role of women in Anglo Saxon England.

### A Great Book!

I have to honour my debt to Henrietta Leyser and her book on Medieval Women. Most of the podcast, and some following over the next few weeks, owe a vast amount to it.

As it happens you can buy them through my wee Amazon bookshop.



St. Hilda

### An Anglo Saxon Riddle

Here's that Riddle. Answer in the next episode.

I'm a wonderful thing, a joy to women,  
to neighbours useful. I injure no one  
who lives in a village save only my slayer.  
I stand up high and steep over the bed;  
underneath I'm shaggy. Sometimes ventures  
a young and handsome peasant's daughter,  
a maiden proud, to lay hold on me.  
She seizes me, red, plunders my head,  
fixes on me fast, feels straightway  
what meeting me means when she thus approaches,  
a curly-haired woman. Wet is that eye.

### 147a The Pitfalls of being a Medieval Queen by Melisende

Being a medieval queen could be a hazardous business - find why, and how, by Melisende of Outremer, and visit Melisende's blog, [www.womenofhistory.blogspot.com](http://www.womenofhistory.blogspot.com).



## 148 Women and 1066, and Marriage

As far as women were concerned, was 1066 generally a Good Thing, a Bad Thing - or just a Thing? That's the main item of debate this week, along with a bit about marriage, and a toe-curling piece about how to get out of an unwanted marriage contract by proving your partner failed to live up to their, um, duties.

### A duty of sex

According to the teaching of the church, the point about marriage was to have children, and therefore both men and women had a legal responsibility to have sex in marriage unless both decided it was a bad idea. So the easiest way out of an unwanted marriage was to claim that your partner was unable to deliver the goods.

Here, from Henrietta Leyser's book 'Medieval Women' is a quote from a case in York in 1433 when John was accused of just such a thing:

'The ...witness exposed her naked breasts and with her hands, warmed at the said fire, she held and rubbed the penis and testicles of the said John. And she embraced and frequently kissed the said John, and stirred him up in so far as she could to show his virility and potency, admonishing him for shame that he should then prove and render himself a man. And ...the said penis was scarcely 3 inches long...remaining without any increase or decrease'



Aethelfaed

### Determined to marry for love - Margery Paston

One of the church's nicer sides was the teaching that actually no church wedding or oath was required for a couple to get married - a simple agreement between a woman and a man was sufficient. So when 20 year old Margery Paston fell in love with her family's 30+ bailiff, Richard Calle, Margery was able to claim that she was already married.



You can read some of the letters directly at the Luminarum site by following this link: [www.luminarium.org/medlit/pastontext.htm](http://www.luminarium.org/medlit/pastontext.htm)



## 149 Sex, Childbirth and Children

Medieval understanding of physiology had an impact on attitudes to sex, just as much as did the teachings of the church, though who knows how much it had an impact on everyday life. And something about how childbirth fitted into community life, and rearing the outcome.



Medieval Birth in Art.

