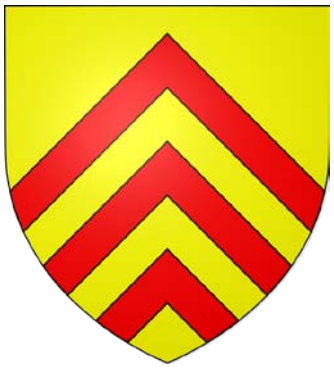
**80 In which we Dawdle**

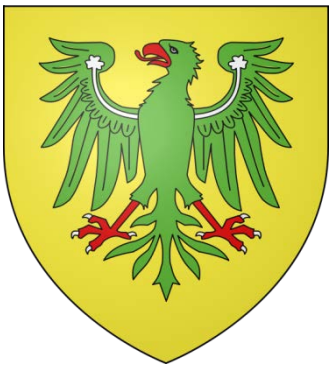
When Edward I arrived back in 1289 from Gascony, he was in many ways at the height of his awesomeness. A chivalric monarch, a leading statesman in Christendom, and at least partly responsible for legal reforms, that will cause a historian to call him 'the English Justinian'. But he also had problems. He was strapped for cash. There was a background of discontent against the firmness of Edward's rule. But Edward was a clever politician as well as a chivalric monarch, and knew how to negotiate his way back to popularity - and it would not be good news for England's Jewish community.

16th-century illustration of Edward I presiding over Parliament. The scene shows Alexander III of Scotland and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd of Wales on either side of Edward; an episode that never actually occurred. (From Wiki).

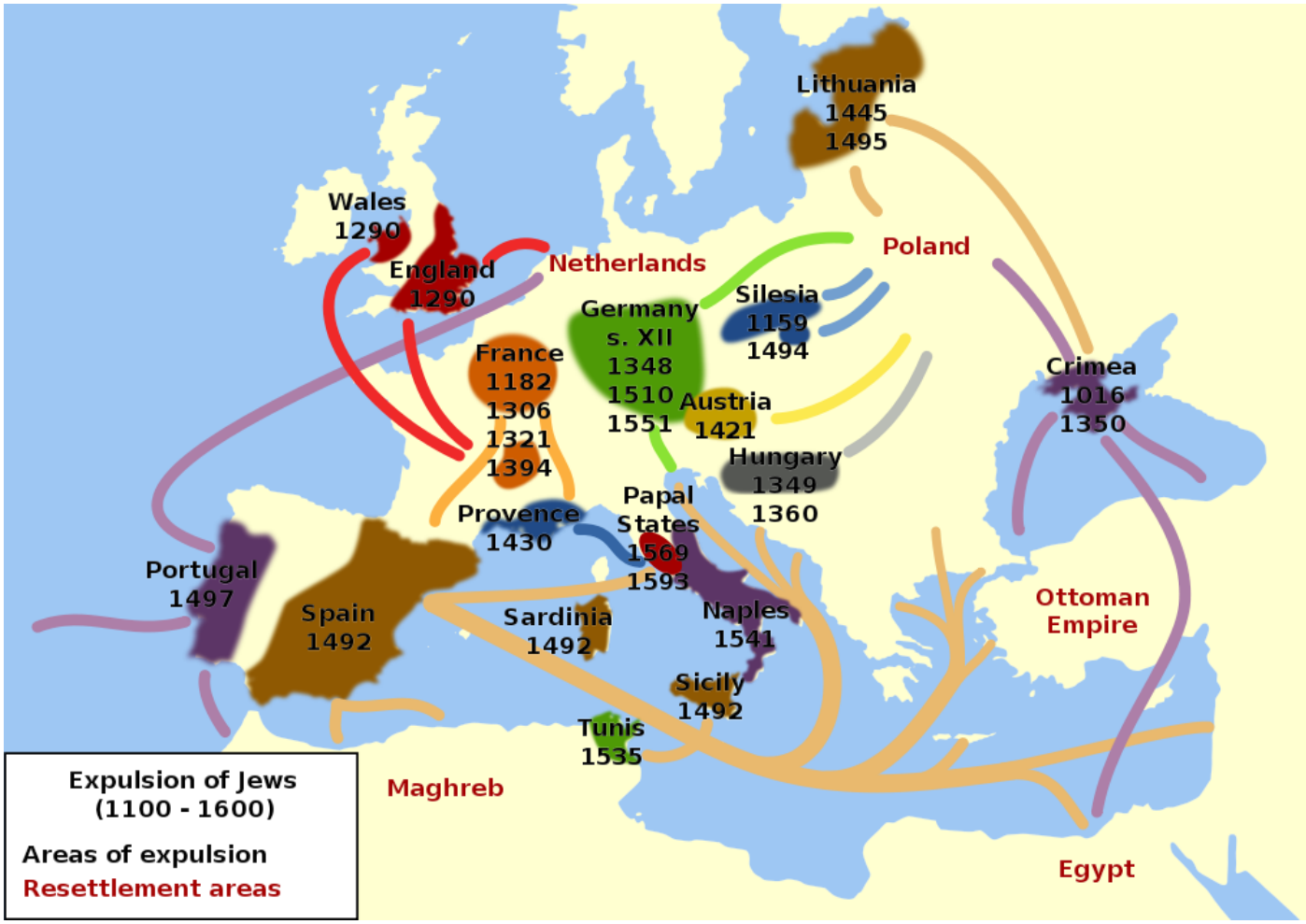
Joan of Acre



Arms of de Clare



Arms of Monthermer



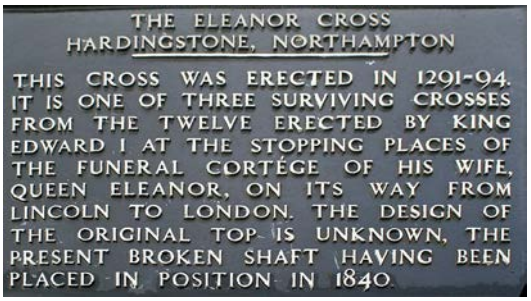


Sites of the Eleanor crosses

Northampton

Charing Cross

Geddington

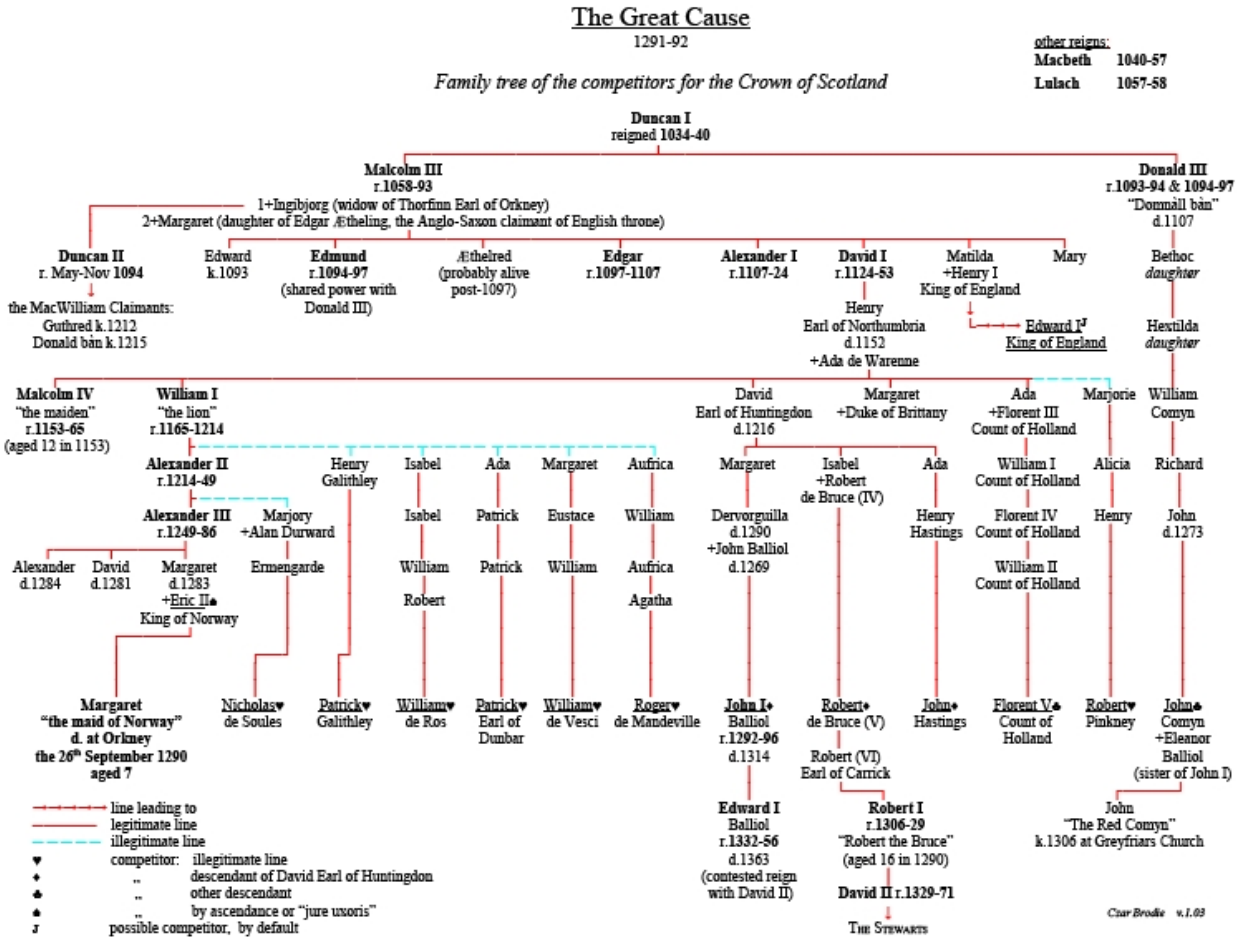


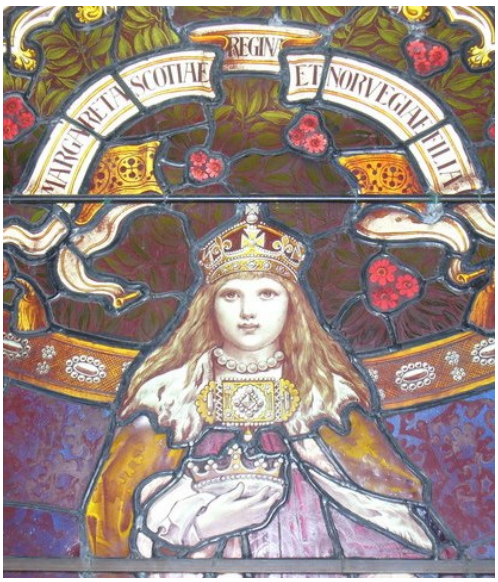

Plaque at Northampton

Eleanor of Castile

**81 The Great Cause**

Through a stunning piece of bad luck, Alexander III left no heirs. And now there was no clear successor to his throne of Scotland. For the search for the right successor, the Scottish Guardians of the Realm turned to Scotland's friend - England. But Edward had other plans - for him this was a great opportunity to revive the claims of the kings of England to be overlords of all Britain.




The Maid of Norway

Stain Glass window Lerwick Town Hall


Coronation Chair and Stone of Scone

King Edward's Chair today sans the Stone of Destiny.

John Balliol & the Misses


Floris Count of Holland

Scottish Oatcakes!

**82 The Sucker Punch**

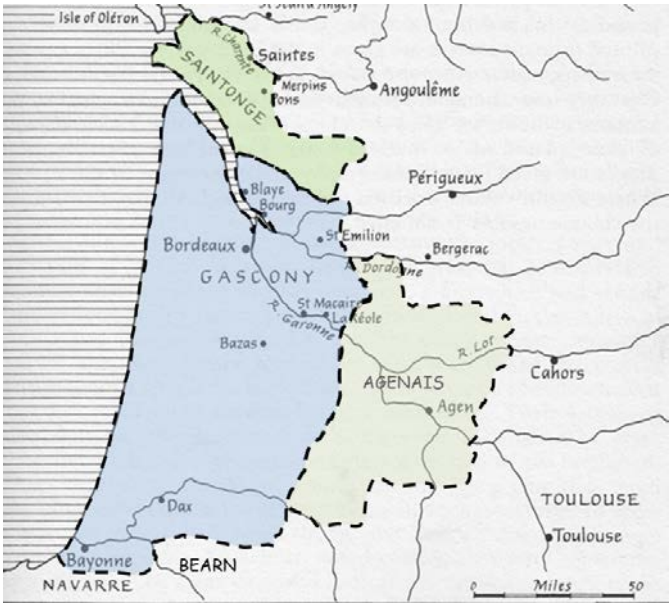
Since the Treaty of Paris in 1259, England and France had been friends, united by a monarchy with close ties and relationships. So when in 1293 a dispute blew up over a sea fight in the Channel, Edward clearly didn't expect it to become a problem.  But in fact Phillip IV (the Fair) of France was keen to strengthen the power of the French monarchy - and that didn't include having Gascony controlled by a foreign king.

**The Sucker Punch**

Edward sent his brother Edmund of Lancaster to negotiate with Phillip. Together it sounded as though they'd stitched up a nice face-saving deal. Publicly, Phillip would confiscate Gascony from his vassal, Edward Duke of Gascony, to keep his nobles happy and his brother Charles of Valois. But then he'd invite Edward to Amiens, where he'd hand them back again on favourable terms.

Edward spent no time discussing any of this with his magnates; as far as he was concerned, Phillip was family and Edmund was of course his brother. So what could go wrong? Duly in 1294, Gascony and almost all its towns where handed over in 1294.

To Edward's horror there was no invitation to Amiens - Gascony was confiscated, and stayed confiscated. With only Bourge, Blaye and Bayonne left in English hands; Edward had been suckered out of his French possessions and would have to win them back.




**The Cinque Ports**

The Cinque Ports, and their delightfully medieval character, are a constant companion through English history. There's a great map and article at Wikipedia:

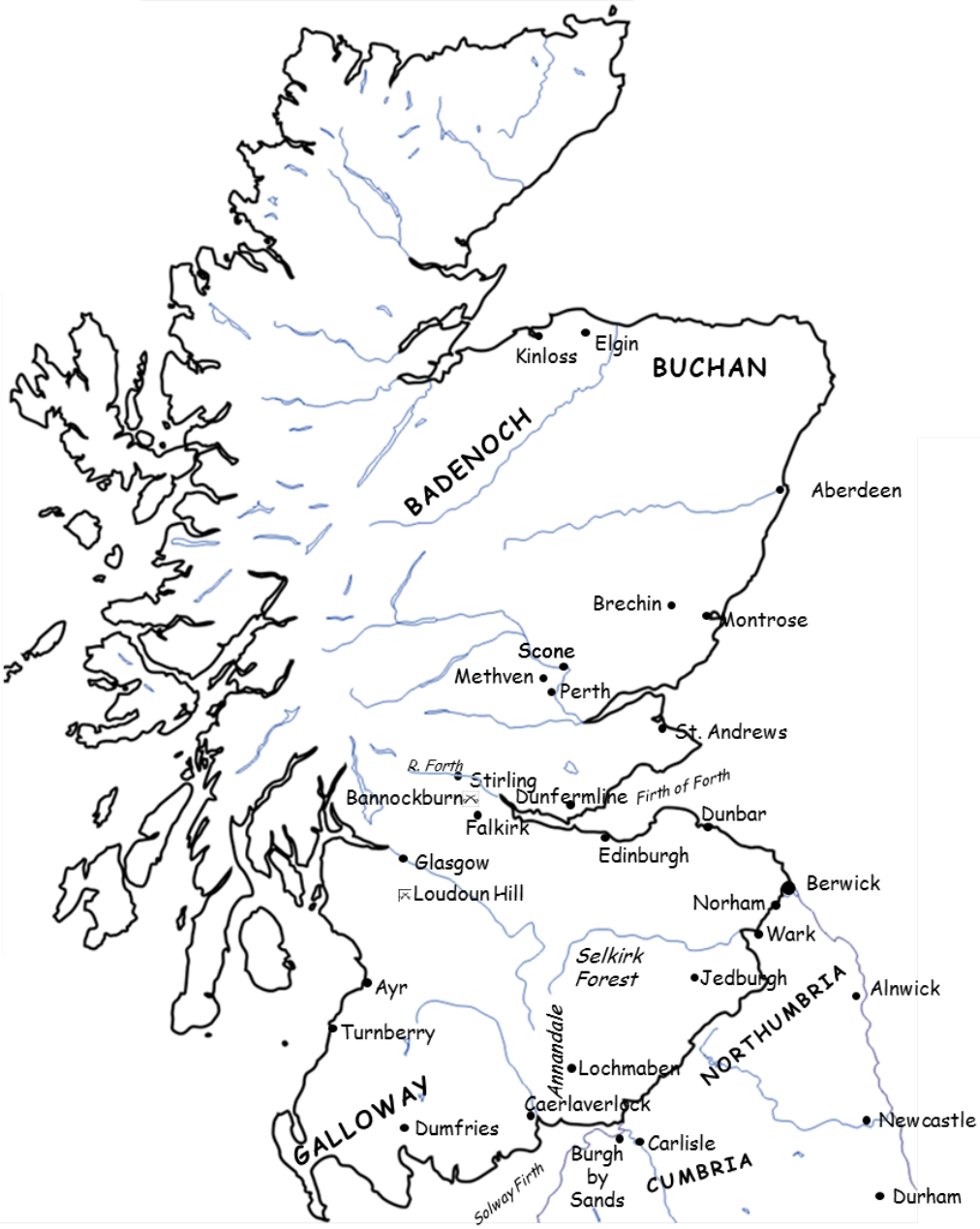
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinque_Ports

**Scotland and 1296**

John Balliol has gone down in history as a weak king, but there's no doubt he was in a hideous position. In 1294 Edward demanded he hand over 3 castles. In 1296, Balliol refused, and made alliance with the French.

In response, Edward invaded with an army of 5,000 cavalry and 30,000 foot. His campaign was almost entirely successful - Berwick fell in March, and in April John of Warenne, Earl of Surrey, defeated the Scots at Dunbar.

By August, Balliol had been stripped of his royal rank by Edward and imprisoned in the Tower of London, and Edward had established direct rule.

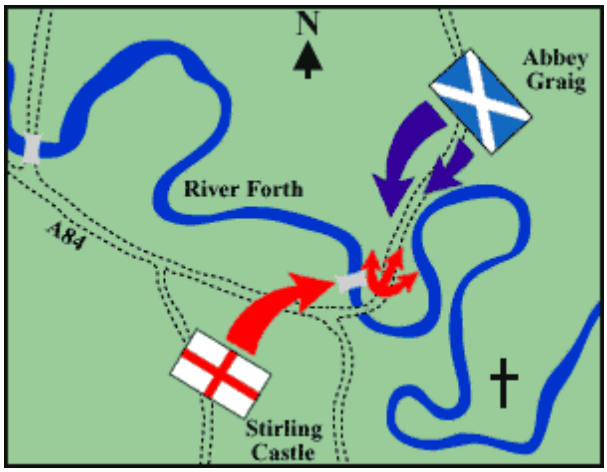

Kinloss
Elgin
BUCHAN
BADENOCH
Aberdeen
Brechin
Montrose
Scone
Methven
Perth
St. Andrews
R. Forth
Stirling
Bannockburn
Dunfermline
Firth of Forth
Falkirk
Dunbar
Edinburgh
Glasgow
Loudoun Hill
Berwick
Norham
Wark
Selkirk Forest
Jedburgh
Alnwick
NORTHUMBRIA
Ayr
Turnberry
Annandale
Lochmaben
Caerlaverlock
GALLOWAY
Dumfries
Newcastle
Carlisle
Burgh by Sands
CUMBRIA
Solway Firth
Durham

**83 Crisis**

From 1297, things became harder for Edward. The relentless pressure of external wars led to increased taxation. This continuous pressure on the magnates, church and people eventually led to a resistance. Edward's personality didn't help; up to now, he had carried everything before him - now, suddenly, he's faced with the concept of compromise. Meanwhile in the north its come-uppance time for Wallace at the battle of Falkirk.

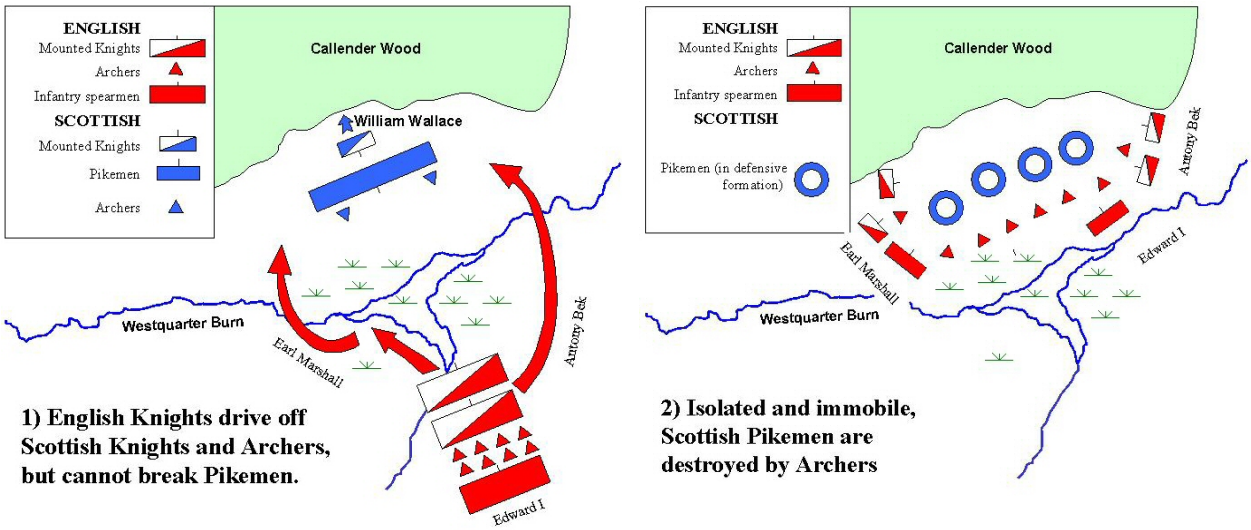
Elizabeth and Edward, children of Edward I

"You shall either go, or hang!"




The Battle of Stirling Bridge

Edward I and the Prince of Wales

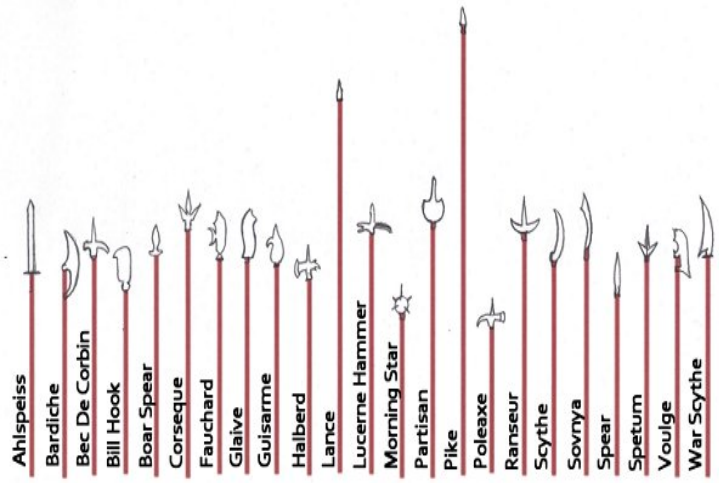



The Battle of Falkirk maps from Wiki.

**84 War, Tournaments and Victory**

We spend a bit of time in this episode having a bit of a catch-up: about arms, armour and armies, and about warfare for real and for pretend. Despite that we also find time to talk about the seeming final surrender of the Scots in 1305 - so how about that for value then?

Knighted cavalry and noblemen, painting by Jan van Eyck (c. 1390-1441). From Wiki




Long, sharp pointy things...

The Palfrey or riding horse

The Destrier or war horse

A Tournament

**85 Crime and Punishment**

A digression this week - the state of the crime and punishment in 14th century, and the story of the theft of the crown jewels in 1303. We also get the final and rather gruesome end of William Wallace in 1305.

**The statute of Winchester, 1285**

The Statute of Winchester was one attempt by Edward to control the rising tide of crime; in fact war and the focus of the king on Wales, France and Scotland meant that the crime wave continued. But it gives an interesting insight.

The Chapters of the Statute of Winchester

| Chapter | Title |
|---|---|
| 1 | Fresh Suit shall be made after Felons and Robbers from Town to Town, &c. |
| 2 | Inquiry of Felons and Robbers, and the County shall answer if they be not taken. |
| 3 | This Act shall be respited until Easter next. |
| 4 | At what Times the Gates of great Towns shall be shut, and when the Night Watch shall begin and end. |
| 5 | Breadth of Highways leading from one Market-Town to another. |
| 6 | That View of Arms be made. Hue and Cry* shall be followed. Fairs or Markets shall not be kept in Church-yards. |

*In common law, a **hue and cry** is a process by which bystanders are summoned to assist in the apprehension of a criminal who has been witnessed in the act of committing a crime.... that the hue and cry must be kept up against the fleeing criminal from town to town and from county to county, until the felon is apprehended and delivered to the sheriff.

(This information from Wiki.)

lol...

**86 Handing over**

In 1305 two Scottish lords had a fall out next to the altar of a church in Dumfries. One of them, Robert Bruce, resolved the argument by sticking a knife in the other, John the Red Comyn. Robert then raised the standard of rebellion and with the support of Robert Wishart, and the Scottish war was back on. Two years later, campaigning in Scotland, Edward finally reached the end of his death. Hate him or loathe him, Edward can at least say that no-one could ignore him. And there is something relentless about his tomb and inscription that sums up the man.

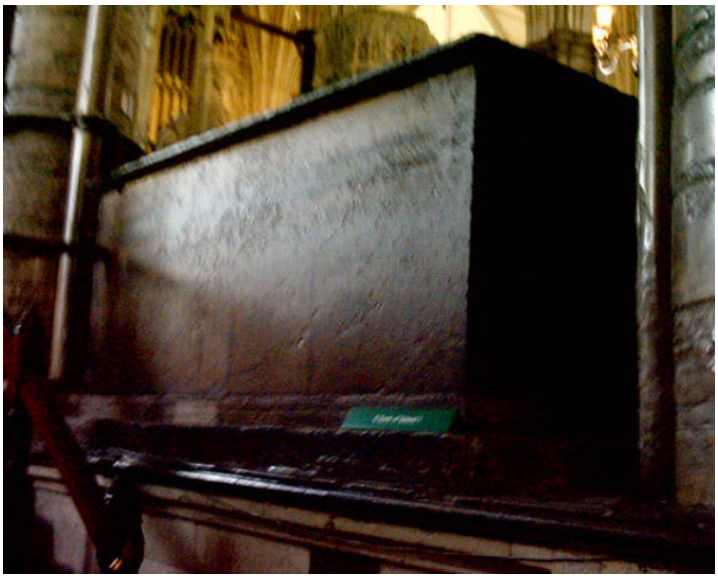
The tomb of Edward I is really rather remarkable edifice. It is surrounded in Westminster Abbey by gorgeous gilt tombs and shrines; the Shrine of Edward the Confessor for example is a gilded monstrosity, nearby Henry III's tomb is less grand but certainly covered in gilt. Edward I gets an almost unmarked black granite block, with no effigy. It has been said that the reason was that the feckless Edward II couldn't be bothered to tart it up, but that's very doubtful. And when you look at it, perched high above the ambulatory, it's somehow entirely appropriate. Here lay a man of substance, an implacable opponent.

All of which is reinforced by the inscription:

*" Edwardus Primus Scottorum Malleus hic est, 1308. Pactum Serva"*

*(Here lies Edward Ist, hammer of the Scots. Keep the faith.)*

Now the inscription you see was actually put onto the tomb in the 16th century but it's entirely possible it reflected an inscription of the time. Here was Edward grimly telling his folk to remember the feast of swans, and their vow to avenge the death of John Comyn.



Edward I

**87 Scandal was brought upon the Kingdom**

This week, an introduction to Edward II, quite probably the most reviled king in English history. So this week we have a bit of a survey of how history has treated the lad, and the chroniclers that have given him his reputation. And then we kick of the reign.

This extract from the contemporary chronicler has formed the basis of opinion for many other contemporaries. I've taken it from Seymour Phillip's book 'Edward II'.

"King Edward was a man handsome in body and of outstanding strength, but, if common opinion is to be believed, most inconsistent in behaviour. For shunning the company of the nobles, to sought the society of jesters, singers, actors, carriage drivers, diggers, oarsmen, sailors and the practitioners of other kinds of mechanical arts. He indulged in drink, betrayed confidences lightly, struck out at those standing near him for little reason and followed the counsel of others rather than his own. He was extravagant in his gifts, splendid in entertainment, ready in speech but inconsistent in action. He was unlucky against his enemies, violent with members of his own household, and ardently attached to one of his familiars, whom he sustained above all, enriched, preferred and honoured. From this obsession opprobrium came upon the lover and obloquy to the loved one; scandal was brought upon the people, and the kingdom was damaged. He also promoted unworthy and incapable men to office in the church, a practice which was to be a beam in his eyes and a lance in his side. In his days there was also to be a dearth of grain and constant mortality among farm animals, such as had scarcely been seen before."

**The books I've used for Edward II**

Here are the main books I've used:

- Michael Prestwich, 'Plantagent England' - general survey, textbook, and bit dull
- Seymour Phillips, 'Edward II' - everything you ever wanted to know in 600 pages
- Michael Prestwich, 'The Three Edwards' - really good - not too long, the main themes and sweep of history
- Ian Mortimer, 'The Greatest Traitor' - Lively, immediate and a great read as ever with Ian Mortimer.

Then there's a quite amazing blog, Edward II by Kathryn Warner.

http://edwardthesecond.blogspot.co.uk/

Slightly chippy it must be said, but brilliantly written, incredibly comprehensive and easy to find whatever information you want. The best history blog I have come across by some distance.

**88 Politics, Scandal, Intrigue and Turmoil**

The period between 1308 and 1311 was dominated by the attempts of the barons to resolve the issues left unsolved from Edward I's reign; and by the scandal and disruption caused by the king's favourite, Piers Gaveston. The conflict and turmoil led to another constitutional shuffle forward with the powers and role of parliament in the Ordinances of 1311.

The marriage of Edward and Isabella

**The outrageous Piers Gaveston**

How outrageous was Piers Gaveston? At one end of the spectrum is the view that Gaveston and Edward were in a homosexual love affair, Gaveston stole the queen's jewels and exported treasure from the kingdom; he controlled all access to the king and was insufferably arrogant.

The reality is probably rather less dramatic. It's really impossible to know if Edward and Gaveston were lovers in a physical sense - what's clear is that they loved each other, and Edward idolised Gaveston.

The stuff about stealing the queen's jewels and exporting treasure from the kingdom is probably not true - the chroniclers vie with each other to do the guy down. But there's little doubt the guy was guilty of hideous arrogance. Here's a quote:

He adopted such a proud manner of bearing towards them that the Earls coming before him to discuss business were forced to kneel in order to bring their reasons before him because he did not value them and did not heed the advice of the sage who said "A sudden reverse awaits those who, raised high in pride from poverty know neither reason nor measure and have no care."

Gaveston had to go because he upset the system of patronage and access to the king on which medieval politics relied.

Here's a quote from the Annales Paulini that Hannah Kilpatrick emailed me, with some comments from Hannah also on the langauge used.

... In an excess of love, the king called Piers his brother; the common people, however, called him the king's idol ("regis ydolum"), whose displeasure the king feared as that of a father, and whom he sought to please as one would a master [awkward idiom, but that's the sense of it]. The king gave to this Piers the bestowal on his subjects of many kinds of favours/graces [gratia], which by royal prerogative belonged to the king himself alone and ought not descend to others. For example, if any one of the earls or magnates would request any particular grace [gratiam] of the king regarding the proceedings of any business [aliquo negotio expediendo], the king would send him to Piers; and anything that Piers said or instructed would soon be enacted, and the king would allow it [acceptaret, which is a beautifully passive verb that you could almost justify as translating 'would submit to it'].

[And just in case we've missed why this corruption of the less physical royal coinage is a bad thing:]

And so all the people [populus universus] were resentful [indignatus, which is this chronicler's favourite adjective for this period], seeing two kings reign in one realm, both in word and in action.

**The Coronation Oath**

The Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Winchelsea was still in France, since he was ill and had been in dispute with Edward I and the Pope. So the oath was administered by the Bishop of Winchester, assisted by the Bishops of Chichester and Salisbury.

By and large the oath is pretty standard – preserving the laws and customs, the church and administering justice. The rather radical thing was the phrase in bold below – 'the just laws and customs that the community of your realm *shall* determine'. Now that's very new, and sounds like something of a hostage to fortune.

The phrase derives from the Boulogne Declaration by a group of magnates and church leaders that they were loyal to the crown as much as the monarch – itself a new idea. Essentially, the barons wanted no repeat of Edward I's reign where the king broke promises he had made to reform; and there were already signs that Edward II was not to be trusted.

Sire, will you grant and keep and by your oath confirm to the people of England the laws and customs given to them by the previous just and god-fearing kings, your ancestors, and especially the laws, customs, and liberties granted to the clergy and people by the glorious king, the sainted Edward, your predecessor?

I grant and promise them.

Sire, will you in all your judgments, so far as in you lies, preserve to God and Holy Church, and to the people and clergy, entire peace and concord before God?"

I will preserve them.

Sire, will you, so far as in you lies, cause justice to be rendered rightly, impartially, and wisely, in compassion and in truth?

I will do so.

Sire, do you grant to be held and observed **the just laws and customs that the community of your realm shall determine**, and will you, so far as in you lies, defend and strengthen them to the honour of God?

I grant and promise them.

**The Ordinances, 1311**

The Ordinances were an attempt by the Barons to both resolve the problems and differences they had had with Edward I and which had continued into the new reign, and put an end to the crisis caused by Edward II's reckless favouritism towards Piers Gaveston.

It has been described as 'oligarchical'; the phrase 'community of the realm' doesn't appear, the ordinances stress the role of the baronage in parliament. In fact, it's doubtful that the barons had any intention of removing the powers and rights of knights and towns; more that they were simply not present at the parliament where the barons forced acceptance on Edward.

The ordinances have a number of groups of issues they try to address:

- Exactions of the king – the vexed questions of impositions such as prise and purveyance
- Control of royal officials – such as forest officials, household officers
- Legal reform – such as trying to stop malicious accusations
- Specific individuals – the 'evil counsellors' the barons didn't like

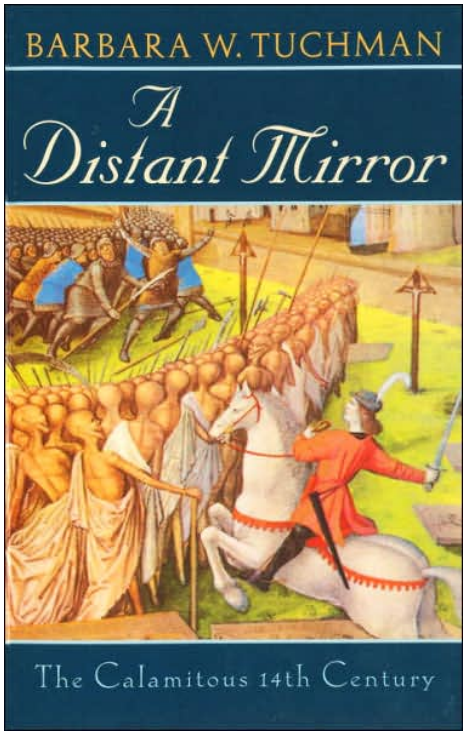
In the end, the ordinances started a period of conflict – between Thomas, Earl of Lancaster and his supporters, and the king, rather than bringing one to an end. But despite the fact that there are few innovations in the Ordinances, most clauses hark back to the Articles on the Charters of Edward I's reign, there are significant changes. Never before had the king been required to answer to parliament so comprehensively – such as appointing his officials, or leaving the country, or changing the currency.

The Ordinates and the coronation oath available here

http://historyofengland.typepad.com/documents_in_english_hist/

**89 The Great Famine**

For a long time we have been having a ball, economy wise - the medieval warm period, towns spring up all over the place, prices gently rising, population growing. So the Great Famine of 1315-1317 came as a terrible shock. Over 500-750,000 people died, as years of bad weather destroyed the feeling of economic well being. The question is whether or not this was a blip or part of a wider trend?




Book Reccomendation

When God saw that the world was so over proud,

He sent a dearth on earth, and made it full hard.
A bushel of wheat was at four shillings or more,
Of which men might have had a quarter before....
And then they turned pale who had laughed so loud,
And they became all docile who before were so proud.
A man's heart might bleed for to hear the cry
Of poor men who called out, 'Alas! For hunger I die ...!'
—'Poem on the Evil Times of Edward II', c. 1321.

Arms of Piers Gaveston

Plague victims being blessed, shown with symptoms from a late 14th-century manuscript

*Omne Bonum* by James le Palmer (Wiki)

Danse Macarbre H. Holbein