

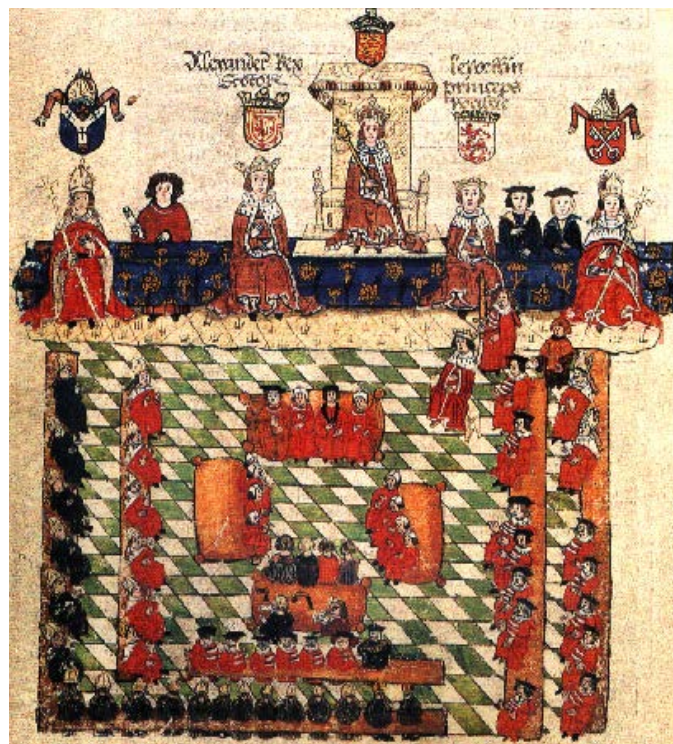
90 How to hold a parliament

The *modus tenendi parliamentum* is a very unusual document from around this time. It describes how parliaments should be held, but also includes a number of very interesting claims about the primacy of the commons. It's interesting for the procedures and atmosphere around parliaments - as long as we take it with a pinch of salt. Also this week we hear and the political war with Lancaster, the physical war with the Scots and defeat at Bannockburn.

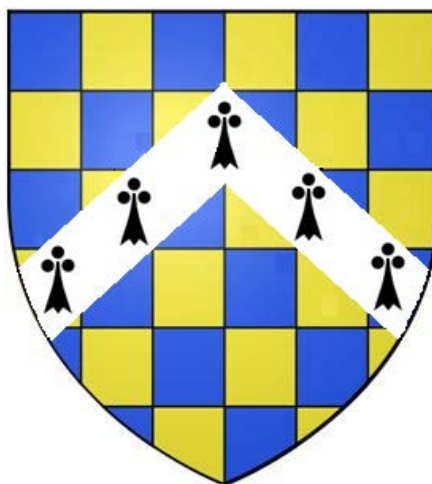
Bannockburn, 1314

Edward's defeat at the hands of the Scots undid all the good work he'd achieved since the death of Gaveston. But if you want to hear about the battle itself, you aren't going to hear about it from me, no more than I'd do a blog on David Sole and his 5 Nations win against England all those years ago.

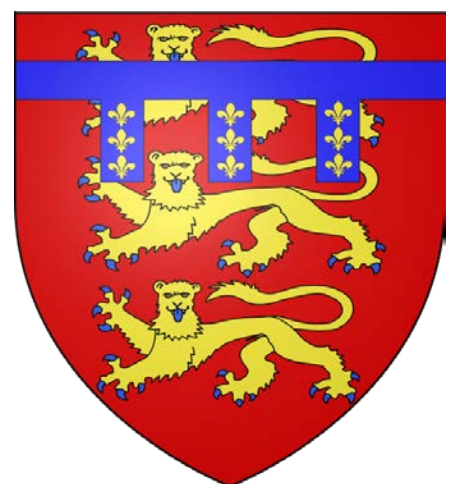
But I know a man who will - so go and visit Zack Twambley's *When Diplomacy Fails* podcast. There are lots of other goodies there as well.



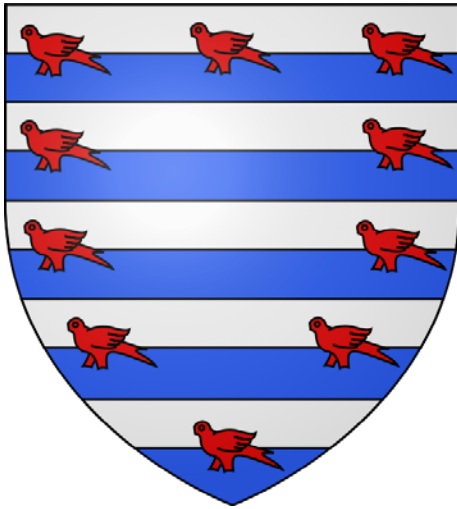
Arms of Despencer



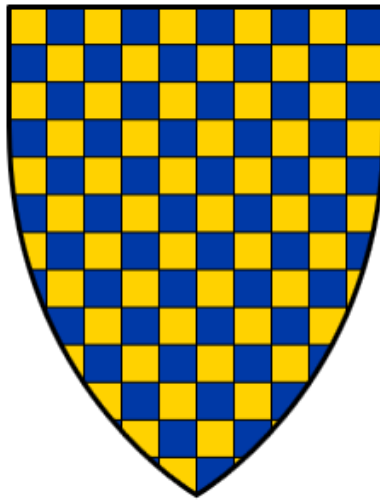
Arms of Warwick



Arms of Lancaster



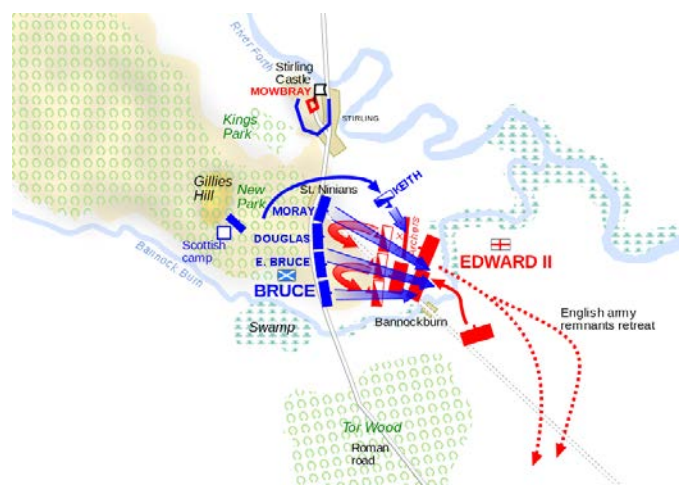
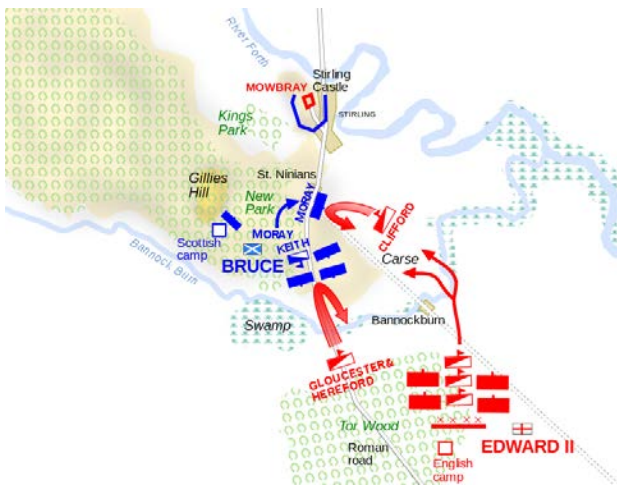
Arms of de Valance (Pembroke)



Arms of Warren (Surrey)



Arms of de Bohune (Northampton)



The Battle of Bannockburn Day 1 (L) Day 2 (R)



A Crwth



Cake!

91 The New Favourites

In the 1310's, Robert Bruce's ambitions grew - not simply content with throwing the English out of Scotland, or burning the north of England - he now wanted to establish his own Empire. And so his brother Edward was sent to invade Ireland, where he would face the king's friend - Roger Mortimer. Meanwhile in England Edward and Lancaster tried to work it out and live together in peace and harmony - and failed.

The invasion of Ireland, 1315-1318

Edward Bruce landed in the north west of Ireland and tried to call on a sense of Irish-Scottish brotherhood.

"Our people and your people, free since ancient times, share the same national ancestry and are urged to come together more eagerly and joyfully in friendship by a common language and by common custom."

Bruce initially carried all before him, defeating an army of the Irish allies of the English, and then defeating the English Earl of Ulster. The Scots went on the rampage heading toward Dublin. In their way was Mortimer's great fortress at Trim and at Kells the combined army of the de Lacy's and Mortimers. The ensuing battle was again a triumph for the Scots. The Lacys abandoned Mortimer during the battle and as far as Mortimer was concerned it was treachery. At Ardscoil in 1316, the Scots again defeated the English, but in fact this was the high water mark. Bruce was left in a devastated countryside, but unable to take Dublin castle, and forced to retreat. Mortimer took his revenge on the Lacys.

The final defeat of Bruce came in 1318 at the hands of John de Bermingham at the battle of Faughart. His head is surgically removed and sent back to Edward II, and the dream of a Scottish Empire is dead for the moment.



92 The Fall of Lancaster

Lancaster and Edward have been picking at each other for years. In 1322, things finally came to a head, and rebellion was out in the open. Lancaster must have had a fighting chance, but it all goes to show that the reign of Edward is essentially about a struggle between mediocrities.

Rebellion, 1322

Edward and the Despensers played it pretty well. They provoked rebellion, and picked off the rebels one by one.

The first was Bartholomew of Badlesmere. Isabella gave Edward a *causus bellum* when refused entry from Badlesmere's wife to Leeds Castle (brilliant place to visit, by the way). Edward moved to take Leeds, while Mortimer, Hereford and Badlesmere dithered, and Lancaster ordered them to leave Badlesmere to his fate - he hated Badlesmere. And so Leeds surrendered, and Edward strung them up.



Leeds Castle

Defeat in the Marches

Next up were Mortimer and Hereford. They had now retreated beyond the River Severn, looking to hold all the crossing's against the king. Still no help from Lancaster! But a lord called Gruffudd Llewyl in Wales remained loyal, and in their rear captured castles for the king. Mortimer threw in the towel, on the promise of the king's leniency - and then Edward chucked him in the Tower anyway. So Hereford fled north to join Lancaster.

Boroughbridge

Lancaster had found that the phrase 'King in the North' was just a phrase, not reality. He found it impossible to raise men against the king. He failed to realise that Edward would not just smile nicely, call him cousin and let him off. Lancaster's retainer Clifford eventually had to shake a sword in his face to get him to see sense - and Lancaster and Hereford fled north, heading for Dunstanburgh.

Sadly for them, Edward's Sherrif in Cumberland, Andrew Harclay held the bridge and ford at Boroughbridge. Lancaster attacked the ford, and Hereford the bridge. As Hereford laid about him, a spearman snuck underneath the bridge, and shoved his spear into Harclay's backside.

Lancaster called a truce to gather his energy overnight. In the morning he found that his army had melted away. Edward found him kneeling in a chapel.

Aftermath

The aftermath was a bloodbath. Lancaster was 'tried' - although he wasn't allowed to say anything in his defence - and beheaded. 6 more people were executed at the same time as Lancaster, and afterwards 117 families lost their lands.

The Declaration of Arbroath and a truce

In 1320 Bruce had issued the **Declaration of Arbroath** - a magnificent document well worth reading, and you can find it here or below. Edward had one more go at retrieving his reputation - taking north an army of over 20,000 men. He found a country empty of food, and was forced to retreat. Once again as he did so, the Scots re-appeared and fired the north of England. So at last Edward signed a truce - but no recognition yet of Bruce as a king.



The Declaration of Arbroath

92a The Cult of Thomas of Lancaster

Medieval man loved the saints. Remember the Anglo Saxons? Saints popping up all over the place! The Martyrdom of Thomas Beckett I suppose is reasonable, but cult of Simon de Montfort a bit more odd! Edward II, unpopular though he is, also had a period of saintliness. In this episode, Hannah looks at the afterlife of Thomas of Lancaster - how a pretty miserable bloke got a following that saw him as a saint. Hannah looks at the Brut, and how the chronicler subtly positions Lancaster's story to support his new status.



93 The Wages of Tyranny

With the fall of Lancaster, the Despensers were off the leash, and able to vent the full force of their avarice on England. Their power and Edward's inability to control them even came between the king and Isabella - so that after a diplomatic mission to France Isabella refused to return. And then in 1326, she landed in England with 1,500 men and her rebel lover, Roger Mortimer.

Edward and Hugh Despencer fled to Despencer's power base, the Welsh marches. But even there, they could find no support. They were eventually captured trying to get back to Despensers powerful fortress at Caerphilly. Despencer was given the same treatment Edward had given Lancaster - refused the chance to speak in his defence, and hanged, drawn and quartered.



The Execution of Hugh Despencer....Eeeewww!

94 The Reign of Isabella and Mortimer

After Edward II's abdication in January 1327, England was ruled on behalf of the new King Edward III by Queen Isabella. But while Isabella probably wanted a life of respect, comfort and personal wealth Mortimer was hungry for power. This wasn't to be a story about the forces of life overturning the power of darkness. It was to be a new tyranny.

Deposition - and abdication

In high drama, at the parliament at Westminster Hall, Mortimer staged a session where it was demanded that Edward II must be replaced with good king Edward III. And so a solemn group went to meet with Edward at Kenilworth Castle. Poor Edward did not take it in a manly. There was a lot of sobbing, and sorrow that his people were grumpy with him. And then, helpfully, Edward abdicated. And so he became Edward of Caernarfon again, and by September 1327 he had died in Berkeley castle - of which more later. Edward III was duly crowned.



Westminster Hall

The Scots

Bruce and the Black Douglas continued to dance rings round the English. The campaign of 1327 was a fiasco for the English. The English marched to the north of England to teach the Scots a lesson. But the Scots danced around the English and Mortimer, probably quite sensibly refused to allow the English to attack when the Scots held strong positions. The result was peace with Scotland at last. Edward III was furious.

The fall of Henry of Lancaster

Henry of Lancaster, brother of Thomas of Lancaster, believed himself to be the obviously choice for royal adviser to Isabella. But in the end his supporters proved no more steadfast in the face of the name of the king, and January 1328 saw him kneeling in the January mud in front of Isabella, begging for mercy. He kept his life, but lost any political power

The Tournament at Wigmore

By 1328 Mortimer was in his pomp. He had been made Earl of March. He had land and power. He sat by his lover the Queen in the guise of King Arthur. The chronicler Geoffrey le Baker says it all:

"Roger Mortimer shone with all too transient honour and as Isabella's Chief Adviser his word was law...No one dared to address him by name, but only by the title of earl of March. Indeed as the earl went about he was accompanied by a greater band of courtiers than the king himself. He condescended to rise in the king's presence; when walking with the king he would arrogantly walk at his side never giving him precedence but sometimes indeed walking before him."

His son Geoffrey called him King of Folly.

The Execution of the Earl of Kent

In March 1330, the Earl of Kent, half brother to the king, was dragged before the court. The evidence against him was pretty clear - for some reason, he'd become convinced that Edward of Caernarfon was alive and living at Corfe Castle. He was tried, and found guilty - but everyone expected him to be let off, after all he was the king's uncle and of royal blood. But Mortimer forced the young Edward to have him executed.

From that point, Edward and Mortimer were irreconcilable.



Wigmore Castle

94a The Mysterious Death of Edward II

Now, traditionally, Edward II is supposed to have died after an unfortunate meeting with a red hot poker, which had always been my firmly and fondly held belief.

But ladies and gentlemen, history sleuths, other views are, in fact, available. So this episode is all about whether Edward was

- A) Murdered in 1327 on the orders of Roger Mortimer
- B) Died but we don't know where or how
- C) Edward III killed him, not Mortimer!
- D) Escaped and with the active connivance and knowledge of said Mortimer lived incognito for many years as an ex-pat
- E) Dunno

Want to know more?

You might like to do a bit of research - you may be fascinated. If you are, there are some links to a couple of sites on the web page.

Happy sleuthing!



Edward's Nemesis! Again...Eeeewww!

95 The History of Medieval Europe - Part III

Frederick II renewed the argument that had been going on since the time of Otto the Great - Emperor or Pope? This time there would be a solution one way or t'other. Meanwhile the unity of Christendom itself was under threat - ironically from one of its greatest thinkers.

Frederick II - Stupor Mundi

Frederick II was the last effective Hohenstaufen, though the line of Barbarossa did not end until Conradin's death in 1268. Frederick was a child of Sicily, despite his life's mission to keep the Holy Roman Empire together, and establish the supremacy of the Emperor over the pope.

This meant he was a rather exotic mix of East and West; his menagerie, harem and Muslim bodyguard were distinctly un-Christian. Despite his talent, Frederick was never quite trusted.

For many years after his accession to the Imperial crown, Frederick managed to keep the Pope from the door as it were, by promising to go on Crusade. But when he did finally regain Jerusalem for the West - by negotiation - his bargaining chip had gone.

Just like Barbarossa, the key to the Empire was Lombardy in northern Italy. Despite early success, defeat at Parma in 1248 effectively finished his cause and that of the Hohenstaufen.



Frederick II-Stupor Mundi

96 A history of Medieval Europe - Part IV

With the defeat of the Hohenstaufen, surely the Papacy had finally won its battle for supremacy? Actually not! A new challenge rode into town in the form of Phillip IVth of France. And meanwhile the very success of the struggle against the Emperor was to contribute towards the start of the end for that most medieval thing - the unity of Christendom.



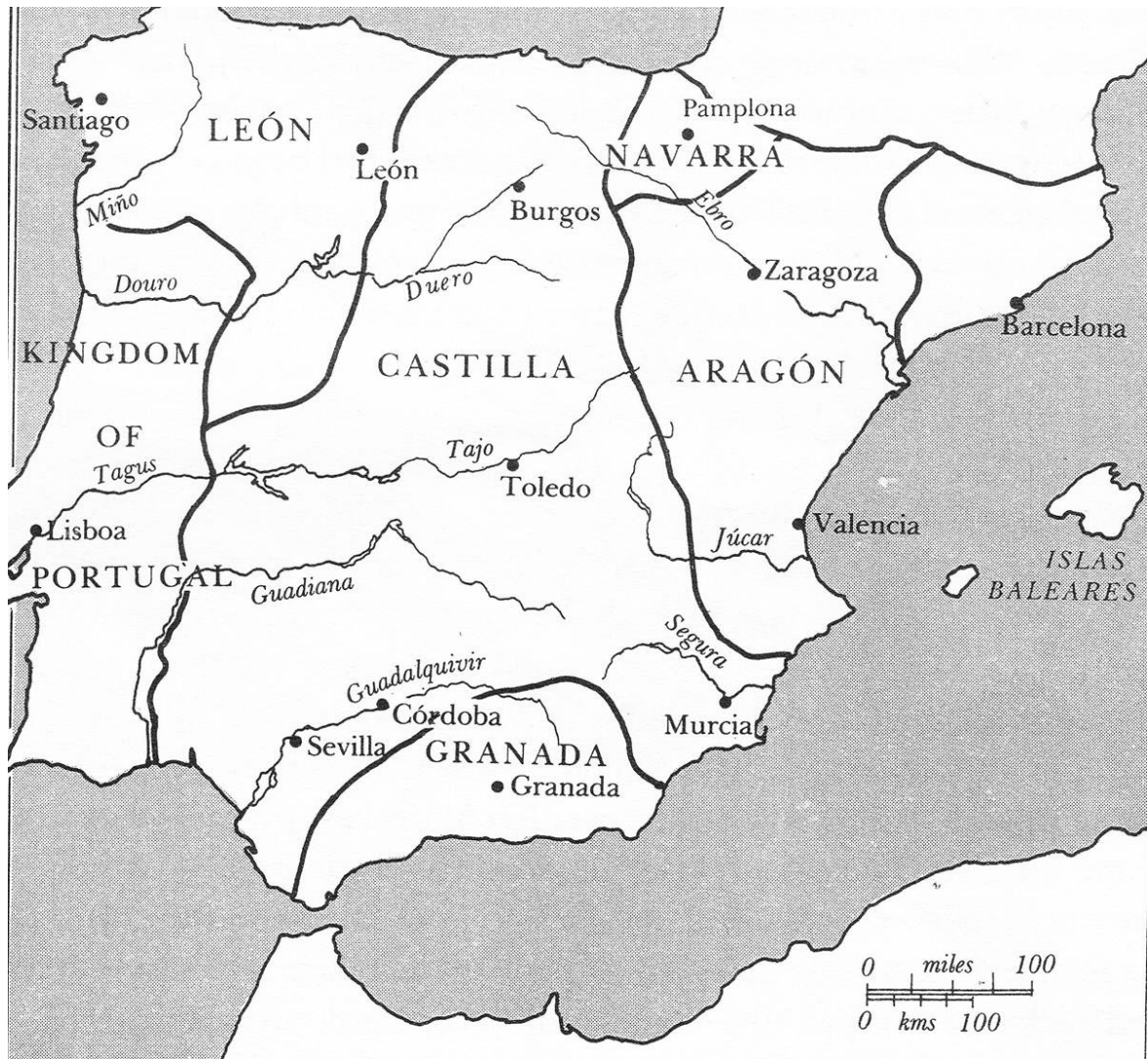
Boniface VIII

Boniface VIII and Phillip the Fair

Boniface was the antithesis of his saintly (and hopeless) predecessor Celestine; he was a player, a power broker, and he held a high view of the role of the Pope. But in his struggle with Phillip the Fair of France it became clear that the world had changed forever. The Pope could no longer hope to sit at the head of a united Christendom; despite the defeat of the Hohenstaufen, the kings of France, England, Leon-Castile all now stood at the head of kingdoms increasing conscious of their own differences and local loyalties. Boniface was captured by Philip and his Italian Allies, the Colonna, at Agnagni but the local people were outraged by this treatment of the Pope, and freed him. But Boniface died later the same year, 1303, and the Papacy passed into one of its darkest periods, including the exile to Avignon.

The growth of Spain

As the Spanish kingdoms grew and consolidated, they begin to enter more into the mainstream of European politics - such as the struggles over Sicily between the Angevins and Aragonese. By the time of the Black Death Aragon was a successful maritime trading nation; Leon-Castile dominated the interior and the last Muslim kingdom of Granada. Portugal increasingly began to look to the Atlantic - leading to the great explorations of the 15th & 16th Centuries.



96a Sharyn Eastaugh -The Templar Knights

The Templar Knights are endlessly fascinating; a glamorous and powerful order of warrior monks, with all kinds of mystique. In a guest episode, Sharyn Eastaugh gives a potted history.



97 Above all Princes of his Age

In 1330 a group of Edward's friends gathered together at the foot of the rock on which Nottingham castle stands. They had learnt of a secret passage that led to Mortimer's private chambers, and were looking to free their lord from Mortimer's fierce grip. This week, then, the start of Edward's majority, a survey of how history has treated Edward and a few of the Chroniclers we will talk about.

The end of Isabella and Mortimer's reign



Nottingham

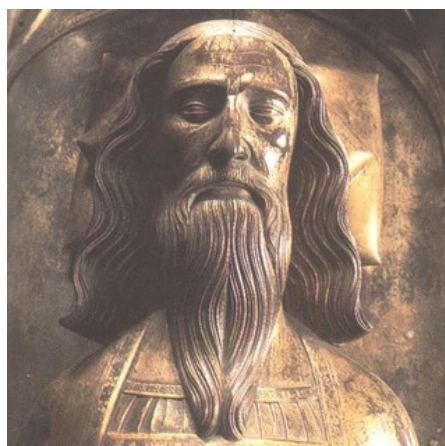
Edward's friends snuck through Nottingham castle, captured Mortimer and Edward's majority had begun. Here are a few of the dramatis personae - worth noting, since one of the things about Edward was the group of great captains that he gathered around him - and some of them were in this group.

There was **Edward de Bohun**; just 18 in 1330, and the son of the Humphrey de Bohun who had died with a spear in his bottom at Boroughbridge. He would die on campaign, but his brother **William** would become **Earl of Northampton** and one of Edward's most successful commanders

Ralph Stafford was a knight with lands worth about £200; so not a loser, but not part of rarefied heights of the upper baronage either. His father had died when he was just 7, and most of his childhood had been spent with his mother's relatives in the west midlands. Now he was 29 in 1330. He'd fought with Prince Edward in Scotland. He would become **Earl of Stafford**, and make it almost all the way through the reign.

Robert Ufford was a knight from Suffolk, 32 at this time. He'd fought alongside the Earl of Kent in Gascony, and was a bannerette in the young prince's household. He would become **Earl of Suffolk**.

William Clinton was another household knight. We don't know exactly how old he was at the time, but certainly less than 30. He'd been part of the entourage that had brought Phillipa of Hainault over to England to marry the young prince. He would become **Earl of Huntingdon**.



A brief historiography of Edward III

Bishop Stubbs drew a parallel between Richard I and Edward III; and you can see that in other ways. Both were seen by contemporaries as the epitome of Christian kingship. Later, both lost their reputation and became criticised as feckless war mongers and fun-havers.

The Contemporary view.

The Brut is typical; Edward was a shining example of Christian kingship:

Full gracious among all the worthy men of the world, for he passed and shone by virtue and grace given to him from God, above all his predecessors who were noble men and worthy'

The Early Modern Era

Through the 15th-18th century, Edward's reputation remained the highest, and he acquired even more praise. Ian Mortimer singles out Joshua Barnes' book 'The History of that most victorious monarch Edward III...' Here's a quote from it:

He was of quick apprehension, judicious and skilful in nature, elegant in speech, sweet, familiar and affable in behaviour; stern to the obstinate, but calm and meek to the humble. Magnanimous and courageous above all princes of his days

The Victorians

And then we get the Victorians. They were not so keen - they saw history through their own lens; this was a view of history as progress towards the then modern glories. The idea that Medieval Christendom valued stability and consensus was not a virtue in their minds. May McKisak commented on them:

'Historians whose whole thinking has been conditioned by notions of development, evolution and progress sometimes find it hard to recognise fully or remember consistently that these meant nothing to medieval man'

So let us take [Bishop William Stubbs](#), a wonderful historian and a great read - but very much NOT the modern historian. Here's his view of Edward III:

Edward III was not a statesman, although he possessed some of the qualifications which might have made him a successful one. He was a warrior; ambitious, unscrupulous, selfish, extravagant and ostentatious. His obligations as a king sat very lightly on him. He felt himself bound by no special duty either to maintain the theory of royal supremacy or to follow a policy which would benefit his people. Like Richard I he valued England primarily as a source of supplies, and he saw no risk in parting with prerogatives which his grandfather would never have resigned.

The Modern view

The modern view has swung back, by viewing Edward and his achievements in context. W. M Ormrod quotes George Holmes:

'In Edward III the Plantagenet line found its happiest king. Not perhaps the greatest..., he was essentially a successful warrior, who loved fighting and was good at it.

But it's probably May McKisak who did most to rehabilitate him. Here are some quotes:

Edward III succeeded, where nearly all his predecessors had failed, in winning and holding the loyalty of his people and the affection of his magnates....he raised that dynasty from unexampled depths of degradation to a place of high renown in western Christendom.

For all his failings, it remains hard to deny an element of greatness in him, a courage and magnanimity which go far to sustain the verdict of one of the older writers that he was a prince who knew his work and did it.

Read some more...

Some extra reading if you want to know more about how history has treated Edward

Ian Mortimer '*The Perfect King*' pages 4-16

W.M Omrod '*The reign of Edward III*' pages 197-203

May McKisak '*Edward III and the Historians*', History Magazine, Volume 45 Issue 153 Pages 1-15

98 The Disinherited

In the early 1330's, Edward was a hero searching for a way to undo the humiliations visited on him by Mortimer and by the French. And Edward Balliol, son of the ex king of Scotland John Balliol, gave him his chance. At the battle of Dupplin Moor, Balliol against all the odds defeated a much larger Scottish army, but could not hold Scotland. Edward now had the chance to prove himself - if he could keep the French as bay.

The Disinherited

When Edward I and II had fought in Scotland, they had granted the estates of the Scottish lords to various English followers; and of course some Scottish lords had remained loyal to Edward, such as the Earl of Atholl, for example. The 'Shameful Treaty' of 1328 at Northampton removed their rights to these lands.

Edward Balliol and the Battle of Dupplin Moor, August 1332

Edward Balliol, son of John Balliol went north in 1332 with an English army of the Disinherited to claim his birthright. There he met the confident Earl of Mar who had much greater force - and the tiny army of 1,500 put the Scots to flight. But Edward Balliol had no real support - and despite being crowned at Scone was surprised at Annan and by the end of the year was chased back to England.

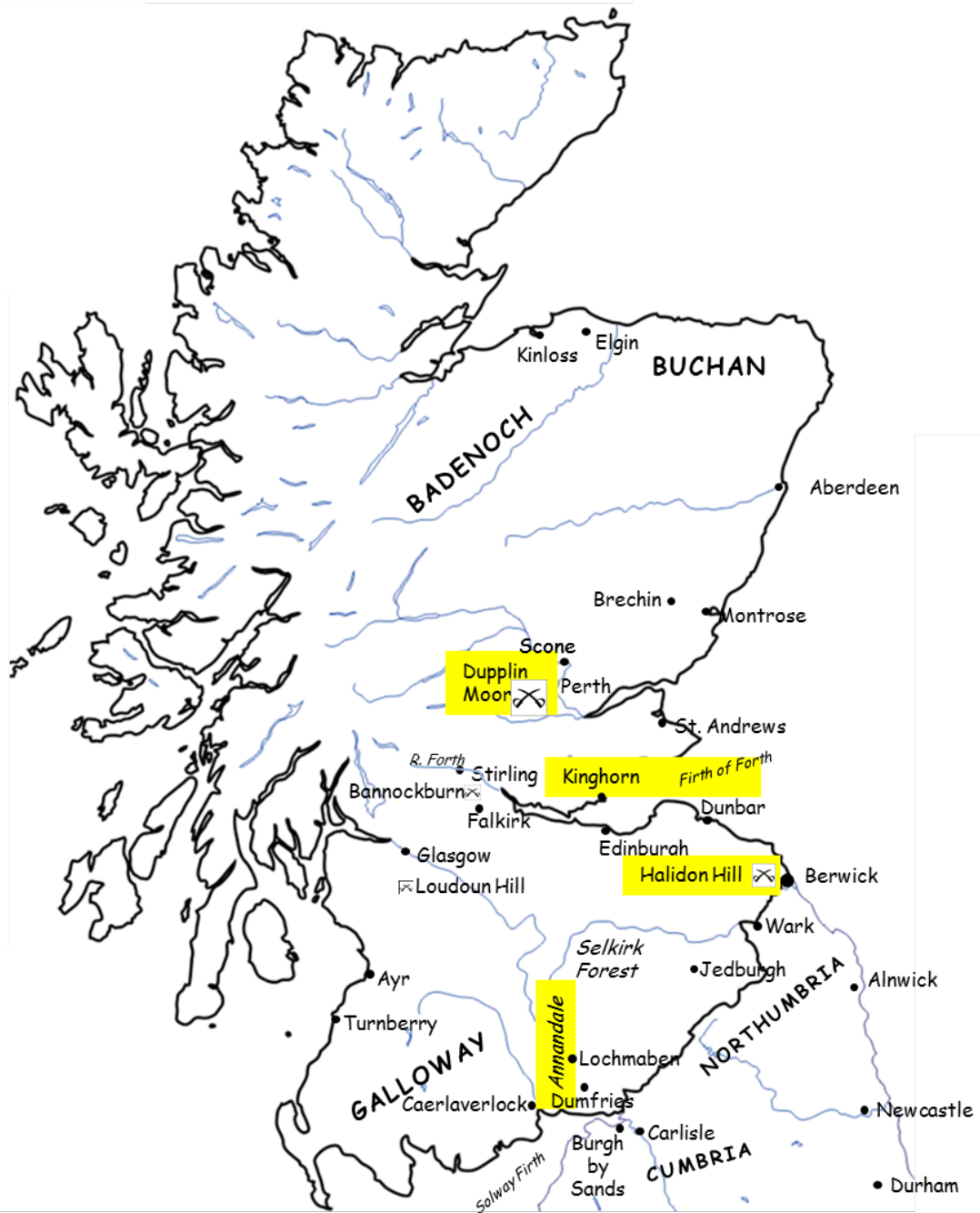
The Battle of Halidon Hill, July 1337

Edward III came out in open support, and marched north to besiege Berwick. When the Scots came to meet them and drive them away they were routed at the battle of Halidon Hill.

The battle was more important for the impact it has on tactics than the long term impact on Scottish history. Because although King David was forced to flee to Chateau Gaillard, and Edward Balliol enjoyed a brief moment of power, he still had no support and would soon be back in England - and the Scottish wars would drag on. But in terms of tactics - here we see the English fighting with dismounted knights in the centre, and archers on the flanks - and the devastation it caused.



Halidon Hill



A Very Handy Map!

99 Year One of a Hundred

Edward had traditionally received much of the blame before the start of the Hundred Years War. But in fact there were many reasons why France and England ended up going to war, and many of them relates to french aggression and support for the Scots. And in fact the catalyst for war is the declaration by Philip VI that he has removed the Duke of Aquitaine from his lands - i.e. Edward. This is as straightforward a declaration of war as you are ever likely to see.

The Vow of the Heron

In the 1340's a political poem appeared, which has been remarkably influential in keeping the blame of Edward's side for the start of the war. It's all terribly unfair, really it's not. [Vow of the Heron](#) available from the website



A Heron...un-roasted!

What started the Hundred Years' War?

So here's a quick list:

1. Edward was a young lad looking for a spot of fame and glory
2. Philip VI aggressively supported the Scots - and there's no way Edward could put up with this
3. Philip VI raided the English coast - Edward couldn't put up with this either
4. Philip refused to accept English influence in Flanders and Brabant, which drove him to aggression against England
5. The Kings of France could not accept the control of Aquitaine by a vassal as powerful as the King of England.

