

How did William take control after the Battle of Hastings? KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

1. Why did the Earls surrender to William?

- William and all surviving troops returned to Hastings. He waited to see if Anglo-Saxon nobles would accept his victory, but no one came. Survivor's of Harold's army fled back to London. The Witan elected Edgar Aetheling as King. Stigand (Archbishop of Canterbury) and Ealdred (Archbishop of York) supported Edgar, so did Earls Edwin and Morcar.
- It was important that William got the south coast under his control so that reinforcements and supplies could be brought over. William led his troops from the south coast to London. If the Anglo-Saxons were not going to surrender, William had to make them. Normans destroyed homes and farms. Towns on the way to London surrendered, but London did not. Instead of attacking, William led his troops to Berkhamstead.
- William met Edgar Aetheling at Berkhamstead along with Edwin and Morcar. They submitted to William and swore oaths to obey him. They offered him the crown. The earls felt that submission was better than fighting.
- **Strength of the Earls** – London was strongly fortified, many Earls and Nobles supported Edgar's claim and Mercia and Northumbria were two strong Earldoms (1/2 country)
- **Weaknesses of the Earls** – Edgar had little support and took no decisive action as King, many Anglo-Saxons thought God had decided to punish them as they were defeated at Hastings.
- **Strengths of William** – he was quick to seize the royal treasury, he was a very effective leader and used terror to make people submit to him
- **Weaknesses of William** – he had no secure place for him and his troops, the Witan had already chosen Edgar as the next King and his army was weak and small after battle of Hastings.

2. How did the Marcher Earldoms differ to Saxon earldoms?

- Wales had been a threat to Edward the Confessor's rule and William wanted the border between England and Wales made safe. Previous Anglo-Saxon Kings had built defences, but William established three new Earldoms – Hereford, Shrewsbury and Chester – they were called Marcher Earldoms.
- Marcher Earldoms were smaller and more compact, making them easier to control. The Marcher Earldoms gave their Earls the rights the King normally had to encourage people to settle. In Marcher Earldoms the sheriffs worked for the Earl which meant Earls became key figures in law. Earls did not have to pay tax to the King in Marcher Earldoms, unlike Earls in England which was seen as a reward for their loyalty. Marcher Earls were also free to build castles wherever, whereas Earls in England has to apply to the King.
- Marcher Earls had a lot more independence from the King. They were not the King's equals and still had to provide military service.



3. How hostile were Norman castles?

- Castles were key for William to establish control over England. 500 were built during his reign. Castles were common in Normandy, but no in Anglo-Saxon England – they were also different from burhs and shires. One of first things William did when he invaded was to build a castle at Pevensey, where he landed.
- Castles were often built in strategic locations – near river crossings/ hills. They were used as a base by the lord. They were used to dominate territory newly brought under Norman control and were often built in towns (e.g. Warwick and York). Castles were symbol of Norman power. Everyone in the area would see the castle towering over them.
- Many houses were demolished to make them. Local people were made to build. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 1067 says the Normans built many castles, oppressing the unhappy people.

Key features of castles: The design of motte and bailey castles made them quick to build and difficult to attack. A palisade (strong fence) made castles protected. Access to the castle was controlled through the gatehouse. The bailey was the enclosure below the motte and also protected by the palisade and outer defences. A ditch was cut that surrounded both the bailey and the motte. Sometimes the ditch was filled with water, protecting the palisade. A strong wooden tower called the keep provided a lookout point. The motte was a large mound of earth around 5-7 metres high. Motte and bailey castles took between 4-9 months to construct,

4. How did William reward his followers?

- On the 25th December 1066 William was crowned King. He swore an oath that he would rule England fairly if English people were loyal to him. He wanted a trouble-free takeover as so allowed some Earls (such as Edwin and Morcar) keep their Earldoms.
- William also needed to reward his own followers with the promise of land and money. He sent rich gifts to the Pope, he set a geld tax and declared that all land in England now belonged to him. He was free to grant land to those who served him. All those that fought against him lost their lands (inc Wessex, which had once belonged to the Godwins).
- William heavily rewarded his family and closest advisers – all were Normans. William's half brother (Odo) received all of Kent, William FitzOsbern (close adviser) was given the Isle of Wight and Hampshire and Robert of Montgomery was given Essex and Sussex.

5. How did William maintain his royal power?

- **Military strength** – he was ruthless and crushed rebellions. He was respected by many Anglo-Saxons because he was a great warrior and crushed his enemies.
- **Legitimate Successor** – reminded people that he was promised the throne by Edward the Confessor. He was close to Edward, Harold had broken his oath and God had chosen William.
- **Royal ceremonies** – William swore to preserve Edward the Confessor's laws, protect the Church and rule with justice. He wore his crown three times a year (e.g. Easter and Christmas) and also when he put down Edgar Aethling's rebellion in 1069 to show his power as King of England.
- **Coinage and writs** – took control of minting coins, with the image of William on them.
- **Journey's across England** – he and the royal court travelled around the country meeting important families and officials to remind people of who was King.
- **Owning the land** – he owned all land in England. He took back land from rebels or those who died without heirs, granted it again and made judgements on how land should be used.
- **Oath-taking** – all men would swear to serve him. These oaths were taken very seriously by William.

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Rebellions against William— Knowledge Organiser

1. Why did Edwin and Morcar rebel against William?

- In 1067 William felt England was secure enough to return to Normandy with Edgar Aetheling, Earl Edwin, Earl Morcar and Earl Waltheof. By December Norman control was under threat.
- Causes of the revolt** - 1. William went back on his word that Earl Edwin would marry his daughter and made his earldom smaller. 2. Odo and William FitzOsbern were reported to have seized land from Anglo-Saxons during their time in control. 3. Earl Morcar's Earldom was reduced in size. 4. Many Earls reported that William had taken away their land. 5. Castles were resented as they were the symbol of Norman domination and because houses were demolished to build them. 6. William raised a heavy geld tax in December 1066, in which the money would be used for the good of Normandy and would not benefit the English.
- Events** – In 1068 Edwin and Morcar fled William's court and joined a rebellion against him. Other Earls included Waltheof, Gospatric of Northumbria and Edgar Aetheling. William found out and sent men North. Edwin and Morcar quickly surrendered. York sent William hostages to show their obedience. Nottingham had fallen. Edgar fled to Scotland, where Malcolm III took him in – others begged for forgiveness.
- Outcomes** – Edwin and Morcar were pardoned. A new resistance grew in Scotland. William's control of the revolt showed that further attempts would fail. It is unlikely that the rebels were united in their cause. One reason William had no need to compromise was because his castle building proved effective in imposing enough control.

2. How successful were the rebellions in the North?

- Series of rebellions began in the North in 1069. Rebels from Northumbria joined forces with Edgar Aetheling, who had the backing of Malcolm III. King Sweyn of Denmark sent ships and warriors.
- After being betrayed by Gospatric William named Robert Cumin as new Earl of Northumbria, who launched attacks on towns and villages. In Durham the bishop warned him violence had caused resentment. The rebels killed Cumin.
- A similar uprising occurred in York, which killed the governor and many Norman troops. Edgar the Aetheling came down from Scotland and joined the rebels. William arrived quickly with a large army. Edgar escaped back to Scotland.
- King Sweyn arrived in September 1069. The Danes met up with Edgar's troops. Anglo-Saxons across England joined Edgar. This army marched on York. 3,000 Normans were killed and castles destroyed.
- After the victory in York, the Danes sailed to the coast of Lincolnshire and Anglo-Saxon rebels scattered. William's army went to hunt them down, but the rebels had disappeared. The rebellion started again once William left. William knew he could not fight the Danes by land or sea and so he paid them a large amount of money to leave. He also embarked on a campaign, known as the 'Harrying of the North' (1069-1070).

3. Was the Harrying of the North justified?

- Robert Cumin and many more had been slaughtered at York and William swore revenge. William had not realised how different the North was to the South of England. The area that William's troops laid waste to were from the River Humber to the River Tees. Around 100,000 people died. Without any crops of livestock and with little protection after their homes were burned down, people starved or froze to death. Seeds for next years crops were destroyed and thousands fled. Some reports claim there was cannibalism and people selling themselves into slavery for food.
- Long term impacts** – the Harrying of the North was a deliberate attempt to remove a threat to Norman control. 60% of Yorkshire was classed as waste and without livestock. There were between 80,000 and 150,000 fewer people than in January 1066. Northumbria was no longer suitable for a Danish invasion. The Harrying of the North was a turning point as William decided to replace many from Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. William was criticised by the Pope for his actions and spent years trying to make amends.

4. How did William defeat Hereward the Wake?

- In 1070 a Danish fleet returned to England with King Sweyn, who was set up on the Isle of Ely. East Anglia was part of the Danelaw and Sweyn made alliances with Hereward the Wake. Hereward's lands had been seized and given to a Norman.
- Hereward led an attack on Peterborough Abbey whose abbot had been replaced by a Norman (Turolf). He and his Danish allies seized the abbey's treasures and held the isle for over a year. In 1071 Morcar joined the rebels. William knew it was easy for the Danes to sail up local rivers and trigger further rebellions. William sent messengers to King Sweyn offering him money if the Danes would go home. The Danes sailed home. He surrounded the Isle of Ely and ordered men to build a bridge, but it collapsed. The second bridge proved stronger so William's cavalry could cross on to Ely. In the chaos of fighting, Hereward probably escaped and Morcar was imprisoned. Some rebels had their hands or feet cut off.

5. Why did William's own people rebel?

- In 1075 Norman Earls rebelled against William. Their leader was Ralph de Gael. Ralph plotted with Roger de Breteuil and Waltheof to overthrow William and divide the country between them. Ralph asked the Danes for help.
- Reasons for the revolt** – loss of lands, William's absence, loss of privileges, powerful allies, loss of power and Anglo-Saxon rebelliousness. Roger had lost land, Ralph had lost power and wealth and Waltheof's motives are unknown.
- Ralph told Roger and Waltheof of the planned revolt at a wedding feast. Ralph and Roger anticipated support from Anglo-Saxons and Danes. The revolt did not get support from Anglo-Saxons and the Danes arrived too late. Waltheof did not want to be involved and informed Archbishop Lanfranc. Lanfranc wrote letters to Roger trying to stop him. He reminded him of how loyal his father had been to William. He excommunicated Roger until he stopped his plans. Roger was prevented from crossing the River Severn and Ralph was stopped from leaving East Anglia. William returned and was met with Danes who had 200 ships. However, rather than invade, the fleet raided up the east coast, sacked York cathedral and returned home. Ralph escaped to Brittany. Waltheof fled abroad, but returned when William convinced him, but was executed. William imprisoned Roger for life. William travelled back to Normandy and attacked Ralph's castle.