

EPISODE 1

Segment 1

I. Make sure you know the following word combinations:

-The outcome of the battles;

-the fate of nations;

-to be obvious;

-to succeed the king;

-an heir;

-to give a blessing/a curse;

-an evil omen

II. Comprehension check:

1. Why did the noblemen gather round Edward the Confessor?
2. Did the people know who would be an heir? Why?
3. What did Harold Godwinson hope for?
4. What ominous sign was seen in the sky?

III. Prepare artistic reading of this segment. Try to imitate the narrator.

Segment 2.

I. Which of the following refers to a) British History b) the Battle of Hastings c) the English governing class d) the peasants e) the English:

-to come out at smb with a rush

-the conquered

-to be given as spoils to the victorious foreigners

-to move at a glacial pace

-to be dispossessed

-to pay taxes

-to belong to an inferior class

-to look suitable for a county fair

-to plough fields

-to replace smb with smb

-the site of a national trauma

-to look more suitable for a mass slaughter

-to wipe out everything

-to be annihilated truckload of trouble knocking you down

-to pray to avoid poverty and pestilence

II. Answer the questions:

1. What place does the narrator call the site of a national trauma?

III. Interpret or extend the statement:

You lived in England but it was no longer your country.

Segment 3.

I. Make sure you know the following word combinations:

- to run the shires
- maritime empire
- a scheming, ruthless man
- an unsparing fight for the throne
- treachery
- mutilation
- to be par for the course
- to prosper
- to soak up

II. Say whether these statements are TRUE or FALSE:

1. Invasions were common before 1066.
2. Although Canute was a Viking, he didn't change much in Anglo-Saxon England.
3. London in those times was rather poor and neglected.
4. Canute's closest advisor was a very kind and noble person.
5. Canute's death caused a chain of events that led to the national disaster.

Segment 4.

I. Watch the segment and find the English equivalents:

- унаследовать не только корону
- держат под контролем
- типичный англо-саксонский король
- беженец
- отстаивать свою независимость в ожесточённой борьбе
- такие же крепкие и непобедимые как нормандские вельможи
- незаконнорожденный сын
- ягнёнок, брошенный на съедение волкам

II. Answer the following questions:

1. Whose descendant was Edward the Confessor?
2. Why did Edward know little about governing a country?
3. Why did Edward hate Earl Godwine?
4. Where did Edward spend his youth? What was his mother tongue?
5. Why is William called a lamb thrown to the wolves?

III. Extend the statements. Explain why it was so:

- Normandy was not just an asylum for Edward.
- Duchy of Normandy was in no sense just a piece of France.

Segment 5.

I. Watch the segment and fill in the gaps with the words from the box:

out of the country; everything; to my liking; patron of churches; back; King of England; assassination attempts; to rid himself of; steely and ruthless; childhood; battle over; enemy; the king; ambitions for; loyal and clever brothers

-So Edward would have seen how William survived the traumas of his _____, narrowly escaping _____; how William was forced, aged just ten, to witness the brutal murder of his beloved steward in his bedchamber, before his very eyes. Edward must have marveled at the way the stripling boy grew into a _____ young man, eventually triumphing in _____ a formidable league of rebel nobles.

-But in 1051, Edward seized his chance _____ .

-Edward brought over Norman allies, established them in castles, made one Archbishop of Canterbury. Feeling his moment had now come, he confronted Godwine with the crime of his brother's murder and threw him _____.

-His bid to rid himself of his sworn _____ failed miserably. In exile, the Earl of Wessex was just as dangerous as at home, and sailed _____ with a fleet to humiliate _____.

-Godwine clearly had _____ the future. He'd foisted his daughter Edith on Edward to get a young Godwine as the next _____.

-Now Edward had an even more mischievous thought: "All right, if Godwine wants an heir to the throne of England so badly "I'll give him one but one more _____."

-Harold Godwineson seemed to have _____: Land, power, riches, charisma, an aristocratic wife and a supporting troop of _____. He even managed to make himself _____, like this one at Bosham in Sussex.

II. Remember the statement from the episode:

...And then all at once an ill wind blew away this fair-weather vision.

What vision was it?

Segment 6.

I. Find the most suitable Russian equivalents for the following English expressions:

- to confirm smb's offer of the crown
- to do smth against one's own interest
- to be regarded as the most skilled stitchers of Europe
- the most grandiose piece of Norman propaganda
- to be arrested and handed over
- liege lord
- to find oneself in an alien world
- predicament
- to be all charm and generosity to smb
- to return the favour by doing smth
- steel-tipped hospitality
- to involve a two-way obligation
- to be obliged to do smth
- to swear some sort of oath to smb
- to become even more binding
- to reveal a reliquary containing the bones of a saint
- the family hothead
- to provoke a rebellion against
- to fleece abbeys and monasteries
- to act like a greedy tyrannical brat
- to declare smb an outlaw
- to put ambition before brotherly love
- merciless war of brothers

II. Answer the following questions:

1. What have you learned about the Bayex Tapestry?
2. Where did Harold and his men sail? Why?
3. How were they met by William?
4. William made Harold one of his knights. Why was that so important to medieval mind?
5. What is the contradiction between the English and Norman chroniclers?
6. What was Tostig, Earl of Northumbria, like?
7. How did it happen that Harold turned his brother into a mortal enemy?

III. Fill in the missing words:

I. The embroiderers make it 1) _____ clear that Harold and his 2) _____ now find themselves in an alien world. The Saxons are moustachioed at 3) _____ stage of the story, rather 4) _____, with a certain air about them, 5) _____ their predicament. The Normans, 6) _____, shave the backs of their 7) _____. They're the scary half-skinheads of the early 8) _____ world.	a) this b) despite c) dramatically d) feudal e) by contrast f) fine-looking g) men
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<p>II. Harold was 1)_____by King Edward to 2)_____ the mess and was immediately 3)_____ two tough choices. He could back his 4)_____ brother Tostig against the rebels, but that might create a 5)_____. Or he could forget about 6)_____ and support Tostig's enemies. 7)_____, they might feel grateful enough to offer him 8)_____ crucial support when the time came for him 9)_____ his bid for the English throne.</p>	p>h)heads a)In return b)faced with c)civil war d) to make e)sort out f)their g)blood ties h)sent i)younger
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I.	1)	2)	3)	4)	5)	6)	7)	8)	
II.	1)	2)	3)	4)	5)	6)	7)	8)	9)

EPISODE 2

Segment 1

I. Answer the questions:

- 1) What sign was very important for the people surrounding Harold?
- 2) Why are there two Harolds shown on the Tapestry?
- 3) What news made William a man outraged? Why?

Segment 2

I. Match the two columns so that you can read the expression from the film

Lethally dangerous position Enticement To turn the matter into Harold was A despoiler of A protector of bishops against To proclaim a crusade Flocked to join the legions of To build an awe-inspiring	the blessed against the infidel Harold of looking ridiculous an international crusade bullying barons expeditionary force churches an infamous oath breaker of new lands and wealth
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II. Put the sentences in the chronological order:

- 1) What the Norsemen saw on the banks of the River Derwent was not a forlorn group of hostages but a massive army.
- 2) Tostig together with the Norwegian king had landed in Northumbria with as many as 12,000men.
- 3) William was afraid to look ridiculous.

- 4) Two great armies faced each other across a little strip of water.
- 5) Norman ships were loaded with bows, arrows, spears, etc.
- 6) William turned the matter into an international crusade.
- 7) Tostig was killed at the battle of Stamford Bridge.
- 8) Harold demobilized the fyrd and sent the soldiers home.
- 9) The Pope blessed William and invested him with his ring and banner.
- 10) The Norsemen could almost smell triumph in the summer winds.
- 11) Harold could call on elite of perhaps 3,000 "huscarls"(professional soldiers). The core of army was 5,000 Thanes.

III. Watch the episode and fill in the gaps:

It was the _____ who broke the Viking line, and the remaining Norse warriors cowered around their chiefs. We must _____ the great Hardrada swinging his axe beneath the Landvaster flag, before finally sinking down with an _____ in the throat; Tostig picking up the Raven flag and, in his turn, being cut down.

An old Roman fort guarded the beach. Within its empty shell, William's _____ erected a prefabricated timber castle, later to be rebuilt in stone, as if declaring that they were now heirs to the _____.

Expeditions for food and forage from the base camp took the usual _____, burning everything that couldn't be seized, striking terror into the hearts of the locals.

Segment 4.

I. Make sure you know the following expressions:

- to turn refugee
- the most grueling battle
- bruised and battered remains of the army
- an ancient blasted tree
- to echo through European art

II. Try to remember and explain why Harold got such names:

Harold the Perjured
 Harold the Oath Breaker
 Harold the Perfidious

III. Answer the following questions:

- 1) What unforgettable image is depicted in the Bayex Tapestry?

2) What made Harold hesitate about the next battle?

IV. Read the extracts from the episode and fill in the gaps:

<p>I) One of 1) _____ details in the entire Bayeux Tapestry is this 2) _____ incidental detail of a mother and child 3) _____ refugee, fleeing from their burning house, maybe even Hastings, resigned 4) _____, not looking back. This is the first of the images that will echo through 5) _____ art; through Rubens, Goya and Picasso's Guernica, of the 6) _____ war, of civilians, of innocence.</p>	<p>a) turned b) victims of c) to their fate d) seemingly e) European f) the most unforgettable</p>
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<p>II) It would be a long shot, but 1) _____ Stamford Bridge perhaps Harold felt he could actually trust his 2) _____ luck. 3) _____, William's public name-calling - Harold the Perjured, Harold the Oath Breaker, Harold the Perfidious - had 4) _____ it personal now, a mortal 5) _____. Let the hand of God decide the righteous party, who 6) _____ prevail.</p>	<p>a) made b) gambler's c) would d) duel e) besides f) after</p>
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I	1)	2)	3)	4)	5)	6)
II	1)	2)	3)	4)	5)	6)

Segment 5.

I. Join the sentence halves:

- 1) You stand on the brow of the hill
- 2) They have the horses
- 3) Behind them the part-timers, the fighting farmers,
- 4) All around you can hear the scraping of metal
- 5) Then came the slow advance of the archers
- 6) If the axeman stood firm against the oncoming horse
- 7) If he missed,
- 8) But William threw back his helmet
- 9) The Bayeux Tapestry is shockingly explicit in
- 10) It seems to me perfectly clear that the words "Harold Rex" occur

11) What we do know is that

- a) the extent of the carnage and mutilation.
- b) around half the nobility of England perished on that battlefield.
- c) and look down hundreds of yards away at the opposition.
- d) the sharpening of blades, the mounting of horses.
- e) he'd still only get one good swing.
- f) who must have time to find their courage.
- g) but they have to ride them uphill.
- h) unloosing their first arrows under a hail of enemy spears.
- i) he was left open to the slash of the sword from the rider above.
- j) directly and significantly above the arrow-struck figure.
- k) to prove he was very much alive.

EPISODE 3.

Segment 1.

- I. Read the following extracts from the film and explain the meaning of the King's ravings

- 1) As King Edward the Confessor lay on his deathbed, he was visited by a strange and terrible dream which he insisted on relating to all who gathered around him.

"Two monks came to my deathbed and told me that because of the sins of its people God had given England to evil spirits. I said, "Will God not have mercy?" And they replied, "Not until a growing tree, cleft in two by a lightning storm should come together of its own accord and grow green again." Only then will there be pardon."

- 2) Harold left London at full speed. He gathered what he could of a new army by an old grey apple tree, an ancient blasted tree that stood on a hill at the crossing of the track leading out of Hastings. There Harold planted his banner, "The Dragon of Wessex". The Normans called this place "Senlach", meaning "Lake of Blood".
- 3) William had sworn that should God give him the victory he would build a great abbey of thanksgiving at the exact spot where Harold had planted his flag, and here it is - a statement, if ever there was one, of pious jubilation.

-What pardon does the author speak about?

- II. Answer the questions:

- 1) How did William make sure he'd won not a single battle but the war of England?
- 2) Where was William crowned?
- 3) What ominous incident occurred during the coronation?
- 4) Why couldn't William assimilate himself into Anglo-Saxon England?
- 5) Which part of England resisted the Normans the most? Why?

- III. Read the expressions and underline those which describe the situation shortly after William's coronation.

Massacre; bumper harvest; plague; mass murder; potential revolt; cheerful smiles; burned without pity; a great famine; starvation; engines of terror; grateful thanks; wealthy families; men, gruesomely butchered; prosperous villages; flourishing years

Watch the segment and check yourself.

Segment 2.

I. Make sure you know the following expressions:

- to be written from the victors perspective
- to sketch the starkest contrast between
- nauseating chorus of congratulations
- a brutal ruthless act of aggression and cruelty
- to belong to the conquering class
- to mince the words
- to grow wealthy with the spoils of England
- to convey the traumatic magnitude of
- to be wiped out overnight
- to command obedience and reverence
- to incorporate smth into smth
- to pass on whole estates intact to one heir
- to launch a campaign for information
- to send men into every shire
- to owe one's existence to smth
- the monument to the power and strength
- the advanced machinery of government
- to be collected at lightning speed
- to be handed the keys to the kingdom
- the handing over of the Book

II. Answer the questions:

- 1) Why are the words of the monk Orderic Vitalis the most valuable?
- 2) Why does the author say that after 1066 England was a completely new country?
- 3) What changed in the architecture?
- 4) Why did the Normans incorporate places into the surnames?
- 5) What is Domesday Book? What is its historic role?
- 6) What ceremonies took place on Lammas Day, 1087?

III. Explain why it is so:

a) *William the Conqueror was the first database king.*

b) *...For the Book ultimately WAS England.*

Segment 3.

I. Answer the questions:

1) What does the author call the Norman Conquest?

2) What happened to William in 1087?

3) What are the stories about Harold's grave?

II. Extend the sentence. Why is William's death called a fitting end?

So the man who spent his life taking whatever he could by whatever means, was finally robbed of everything, even his dignity. Perhaps the hand of God had decided that this was a fitting end.

SUPPLEMENT

Alfred the Great – (849-899) – king of Wessex (871-899) the southwestern part of England. At this time, the rest of England was mostly controlled by Danes (people from Denmark), and Alfred fought against them to win back English land. He is usually considered to be the first king of England.

The Bayeux Tapestry – a tapestry (a large piece of heavy woven cloth) made in Bayeux, Northern France in the 11th or 12th century, whose pictures tell the story of the Norman Conquest of England in 1066.

Canute – Canute the great – King of England (1016 – 1035) – was a Viking king of Denmark, England, Norway and part of Sweden. Canute was one of the most powerful and wise kings in medieval Europe but unfortunately he is remembered today as an idiot who tried to hold back the tides. But that is not the real story in its entirety. Canute had actually demonstrated and even stated to his men that the forces of nature are more powerful than any king on earth. Unfortunately, these wise words were lost in oblivion.

The Domesday Book – a record of all the lands of England, showing their size, value, ownership etc., made in 1086 on the orders of William the Conqueror. The Domesday Book has been very valuable in the study of English history.

King Harold II (?-1066) the last Anglo-Saxon king of England, who became king at the beginning of 1066, but later that year died in battle against William the Conqueror at Hastings. He is supposed to have been killed by an arrow that hit him in the eye.

Hastings – a town on the southeast coast of England. The Battle at Hastings took place near there in 1066, when King Harold II of England was defeated and killed by the French army of William the Conqueror, the Duke of Normandy. The battle is shown in the Bayeux Tapestry.

Lammas Day – the day on which, in Anglo-Saxon times the first fruits were offered.

Minster – (now usually part of a name) – a large important church, especially one that formed part of an Abbey.

The Norman Conquest – the period when the Normans, led by William the Conqueror, took control of England after defeating the previous English King, Harold II, at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. Those events had a very great influence on England's history, culture and language, and French became the main language of the ruling class.

Northumbria – an Anglo-Saxon kingdom in the North of England and south of Scotland that was politically important from the 7th to the 9th centuries. This name is often used unofficially to mean Northumberland.

Northumberland - a county in N.E. England, just south of Scotland and on the North Sea coast, known for its hills and forests and for Hadrian's Wall.

The Stamford Bridge – a village in N. England where the English king Harold won a battle against the King of Normandy, a short time before he was killed at the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

Wessex – an ancient Anglo-Saxon kingdom in the south and southwest of England, which continued until England became united in the 10th century

William the Conqueror – (1027-1087) the king of England from 1066 until his death, also called William I. William was the Duke of Normandy (in northern France), and became the king of England by defeating King Harold at the Battle of Hastings in 1066/ His arrival brought great changes in English society, and is seen as the end of the Anglo-Saxon period and the beginning of the Middle Ages. He gave a lot of land and power to other Normans, so that French became the language of the ruling class, and he built many castles to control the English.

EPISODE 1

Segment 1

00:00:06,270 -->

It was the hand of God that decided the outcome of battles, the fate of nations and the life or death of kings. Everyone knew that.

It was winter, the season of frost and death.

A king lay dying. His name was **Edward the Confessor**. He was dying childless and it wasn't obvious who would succeed him. As there was no heir, many thought they should be the next king, including some foreign princes like **Duke William of Normandy**.

Among those gathered round the bed of the dying Saxon king was the next most powerful man in England, **Harold Godwineson** and he thought the crown would look well on his head. He was hoping for a sign that King Edward felt the same way.

Then Edward stretched out his hand and touched Harold. But was he giving him a blessing or a curse? Was this the hand of God making Harold king? Nobody knew for sure, but Harold had no qualms. He seized the crown. The question now was for how long would he keep it?

Then, in the April sky, the hand of God showed itself as a comet, a hairy star, and everyone knew this was no blessing but an evil omen.

The year was 1066.

Segment 2

00:02:23,030 -->

Historians like a quiet life and usually they get it. For the most part, history moves at a glacial pace, working its changes subtly.

In Britain we like to think there's something about our history, like our climate, our landscape, that's naturally moderate, not given to earthquakes and revolutions. But there are times and places when history, British history, comes at you with a rush, violent, decisive, bloody - a truckload of trouble knocking you down, wiping out everything that gives you your bearings: Law, custom, loyalty and language. And this is one of those places.

I know it doesn't look like the site of a national trauma. These days it looks more suitable for a county fair than a mass slaughter. But this is the battlefield of Hastings, and here one kind of England was annihilated and another kind of England was set up in its place.

Some historians say that for most people of England **Hastings** didn't matter that much, that 1066 was mostly a matter of replacing Saxon lords with Norman knights. Peasants still ploughed their fields and paid taxes to the king, prayed to avoid poverty and pestilence and watched the seasons roll round.

But the everyday can rub shoulders with the catastrophic. The grass grew green again, but there were bones beneath the buttercups and an entire governing class of the English had been dispossessed, their men, land and animals taken from them and given as spoils to the victorious foreigners. You could survive and still be English but now you belonged to an inferior race, the conquered. You lived in England but it was no longer your country.

Segment 3.

00:04:47,630 -->

Anglo-Saxon England was no stranger to invasions. Viking raids had been part of life for a century, but since the days of **Alfred the Great**, it was a country stable enough to soak them up. Longboats came and went but still the king's law ran the shires. His churches and abbeys were built more beautifully than ever, and a town that would one day be called London was beginning to grow and prosper on the banks of the Thames. Then one invasion succeeded where the others had failed, and there was a Viking on the throne. His name was **Canute**, the man we remember for trying to hold back the tides. While he turned Anglo-Saxon England into part of his vast maritime empire, he went out of his way to change nothing. He even chose as his closest advisor one of the most powerful Anglo-Saxon nobles, **Godwine, Earl of Wessex**. A scheming, ruthless man, Godwine became virtual co-ruler with Canute over what was still recognisably Anglo-Saxon England.

But with Canute's death in 1035 began a chain of events that would culminate in the one invasion that Anglo-Saxon England would be unable to swallow. And what a saga it was. It started with a bloody and unsparing fight for Canute's throne amongst the surviving elite. Treachery, murder and mutilation were par for the course.

Segment 4.

00:06:25,710 -->

The last man standing with any kind of claim to the throne was a descendant of Alfred the Great, a prince of the Saxon royal house. Called Edward, he would become forever known as **The Confessor**. He was crowned on Easter Day, 1043. He inherited more than just the crown. He also got **Earl Godwine**, in no mood to lose power just because there was a new king. Unlike Canute, Edward had good reason to hate the right-hand man forced on him. For Godwine had arranged his older brother's murder.

There was nothing he could do about his bloodstained rival, not yet anyway. He knew that Godwine held the keys to the kingdom. When Godwine offered Edward his daughter in marriage, what could he do but take her?

Godwine was not Edward's only problem. He'd also to learn how to govern a country he knew little about. For he'd grown up in exile in a very different world across the English Channel in Normandy.

We tend to think of Edward the Confessor as the quintessential Anglo-Saxon king. In fact, he was almost as Norman as William the Conqueror. After all, his mother Emma was a Norman and he'd lived here in Normandy for 30 years, ever since she'd brought him as a child refugee from the wars between the Saxons and the Danes.

But Normandy was not just an asylum for Edward, it was the place which formed him politically and culturally. His mother tongue was Norman French. His virtual godfathers were the formidable Dukes of Normandy. The Normans were descendants of Viking raiders, but had long since traded in their longboats for powerful war-horses. The Duchy of Normandy was in no sense just a piece of France.

Though the Dukes did formal homage to the kings of France, they were fiercely independent, possessed of castles, patrons of churches. These warlords were constantly in the saddle imposing their will on vassals, fighting off revolts and forging shaky coalitions.

But the duchy was also humming with energetic piety. In the 11th century, handsome stone monasteries and churches with Romanesque arches began to appear. Grandiose stone castles, as tough as the Norman lords who'd built them, became part of the landscape.

So until the throne of England tempted him back across the Channel at the age of 36, this was Edward's home, and while he was here a child was growing up who would change the course of British history.

It was at the site of this castle at Falles in 1027 that William, known to his contemporaries though not to his face as William the Bastard, was born. He was the illegitimate son of the Duke of Normandy and the daughter of a tanner called Ellave. And in the cut-throat world of feudal Normandy, it was important that he learn, and quickly, how to survive. He was only a child when his father died on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, leaving William, just eight years old, as his heir. A lamb thrown to the wolves.

Segment 5.

00:10:23,150 -->

Certainly Edward would have known the young William. There were even suggestions that he was one of the hand-picked companions entrusted by William's father, Duke Robert, with keeping an eye on the vulnerable young boy. So Edward would have seen how William survived the traumas of his childhood, narrowly escaping assassination attempts; how William was forced, aged just ten, to witness the brutal murder of his beloved steward in his bedchamber, before his very eyes. Edward must have marveled at the way the stripling boy grew into a steely and ruthless young man, eventually triumphing in battle over a formidable league of rebel nobles.

While William was securing absolute power in Normandy, Edward was, by now, in the middle of a nervous reign, continually having to look over his shoulder at his biggest threat, Earl Godwine. But in 1051, Edward seized his chance to rid himself of his rival.

Edward brought over Norman allies, established them in castles, made one Archbishop of Canterbury. Feeling his moment had now come, he confronted Godwine with the crime of his brother's murder and threw him out of the country.

His bid to rid himself of his sworn enemy failed miserably. In exile, the Earl of Wessex was just as dangerous as at home, and sailed back with a fleet to humiliate the king.

Out went Edward's Norman cronies, back came the Godwines stronger than ever.

Edward was now little more than a puppet king. He turned to the religious life, spending days in meditation and prayer, becoming at last, The Confessor, devoting himself to the foundation of his Benedictine abbey upstream of London, his "**West Minster**".

Impotence though, has its uses. Godwine clearly had ambitions for the future. He'd foisted his daughter Edith on Edward to get a young Godwine as the next King of England.

But Edward had his own ideas. Yes, he'd married Edith but he'd never sleep with her. His revenge would be her childlessness.

Now Edward had an even more mischievous thought: "All right, if Godwine wants an heir to the throne of England so badly "I'll give him one but one more to my liking."

It's at this point, Norman chroniclers claimed, that Edward apparently promised the succession to the Duke of Normandy, William the Bastard.

Of course, nobody knew anything about this in England, least of all Godwine, who in 1053 died suddenly of a stroke while at dinner with the king.

There were plenty of other Godwines ready to step into the Godfather's place. His sons now took over where he left off, controlling England virtually unchallenged. And presiding over the family empire was the eldest son, Harold.

Harold Godwineson seemed to have everything: Land, power, riches, charisma, an aristocratic wife and a supporting troop of loyal and clever brothers. He even managed to make himself patron of churches, like this one at Bosham in Sussex. And though he didn't dare make too brazen a move, any dispassionate observer arriving in England in the early 1060s would have to conclude that once Edward was gone the throne was Harold's for the taking. And then all at once an ill wind blew away this fair-weather vision.

Segment 6.

00:14:31,990 -->

It all started with a voyage that no one can explain, even to this day. In 1064, Harold and a group of men set sail across the Channel for Normandy. Maybe it was to rescue his younger brother, Wulfstan, who had been taken hostage by William. For the Norman chroniclers, the journey could only have one purpose. Harold was confirming Edward's offer of the crown.

Why would Harold do something so against his own best interests? Perhaps that's why it makes up the first bit of the story of the most grandiose piece of Norman propaganda, the 70-metre long **Bayeux Tapestry**. The tapestry was commissioned by William's half-brother, Bishop Odo of Bayeux, a few years after the conquest.

It may have been made by English embroiders in Canterbury, who were regarded as the most skilled stitchers in Europe. Who else would have made such a glamorous hero?

Something seems to have gone wrong in the Channel, perhaps a storm. Landing in the territory of Guy of Ponthieu, they were arrested and handed over to Guy's liege lord, William of Normandy.

The embroiderers make it dramatically clear that Harold and his men now find themselves in an alien world. The Saxons are moustachioed at this stage of the story, rather fine-looking, with a certain air about them, despite their predicament. The Normans, by contrast, shave the backs of their heads. They're the scary half-skinheads of the early feudal world.

Realising his lucky number has come up, William can afford to be all charm and generosity to his prisoner, cleverly bringing him into his military entourage. William took Harold on campaign with him in Brittany, where Harold returns the favour by rescuing two of William's soldiers from the quicksands of Mont Saint Michel, one on his left arm, one on his back.

But William's hospitality is steel-tipped. He makes Harold one of his knights, a solemn ceremonious business involving a two-way obligation. William, now his liege lord, would be obliged to protect Harold, his new knight. Harold would have had to make his own promises, and there seems no doubt he did swear some sort of oath to the Duke.

To the medieval mind, there was nothing more serious than an oath, and the tapestry maker makes it clear that this was a religious act by having a witness point to the word "Sacramentum". His oath was a kind of sacrament as it went to the heart of the matter.

What would happen to England after Edward died?

Now the English said that Harold agreed to be William's man only in Normandy and that it had no bearing on the English succession. The Norman chroniclers, though, said Harold had sworn to help William take the throne of England.

The oath became even more binding when in a cheap theatrical trick the cloth was whipped from the table over which Harold had sworn. Underneath was revealed a reliquary containing the bones of a saint. Well, how much trouble was he in now? Had Harold promised something he couldn't deliver, or had he made no promises at all about the English crown? Norman chroniclers like to imagine the returning Harold haunted by guilt, saying one thing but doing another.

In England, there was no sign of a queasy conscience at all. To get his hands on the crown, Harold now did something inconceivable for a Godwine, something which one day would have disastrous consequences. He sold his own brother, Tostig, down the river.

Tostig was the Earl of Northumbria and also the family hothead, and had managed to provoke a northern rebellion against him. He'd been fleecing abbeyes and monasteries, creating his own

private arm and acting like a greedy tyrannical brat. Inevitably, the local nobles rose against him, declared him outlaw and put in their own man to be the new earl.

Harold was sent by King Edward to sort out the mess and was immediately faced with two tough choices. He could back his younger brother Tostig against the rebels, but that might create a civil war. Or he could forget about blood ties and support Tostig's enemies. In return, they might feel grateful enough to offer him their crucial support when the time came for him to make his bid for the English throne.

In the end, Harold put ambition before brotherly love. He threw out Tostig and replaced him with the Earl Morcar. Harold had broken Godwine clan solidarity and turned his own brother into a mortal enemy.

It was this merciless war of brothers which in the end cost Harold his throne and his life. More than anything else, it was the cause of death of Anglo-Saxon England.

EPISODE 2.

Segment 1.

00:20:54,830 -->

The winter of 1065 was marked by tremendous gales which destroyed churches and uprooted great trees.

As King Edward the Confessor lay on his deathbed, he was visited by a strange and terrible dream which he insisted on relating to all who gathered around him.

“Two monks came to my deathbed and told me that because of the sins of its people God had given England to evil spirits. I said, “Will God not have mercy?” And they replied, “Not until a growing tree, cleft in two by a lightning storm should come together of its own accord and grow green again.” Only then will there be pardon.”

But no one paid much attention to the ravings of an old man. What was much more important was that Edward had touched Harold's hand.

The king had fallen short of actually declaring him his heir but it was enough of a sign for Harold and the northern earls who supported him.

On January 6th 1066, Westminster saw the funeral of one king in the morning and the coronation of another in the afternoon.

There are two Harolds depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry, but which was the real one - the confident king who now issued coins bearing the optimistic slogan "Pax", the Latin for peace, or the guilty, twisted usurper, stricken by omens, haunted by a vision of ships?

The phantom fleet which the embroiderers set in a border of the tapestry suggests Harold could all too well imagine the reaction across the Channel to his coronation.

A Norman historian has William hearing the news while out hunting.

“When the Duke heard the news, he became as a man outraged. Oft he tied his mantle, oft he untied it and spoke to no man. Neither dared any man speak to him.”

Segment 2.

(HOWLING)

00:23:31,870 -->

For ten years, William had confidently let it be known throughout Europe that he'd soon add England to his territories. He was now in a lethally dangerous position of looking ridiculous. He consulted his feudal magnates in a series of assemblies and by no means all of them were particularly thrilled with the idea of an invasion of England.

The risks seemed a lot more daunting than the enticement of new lands and wealth. So the Duke went to strategy number two, turning the matter into an international crusade.

Couldn't the Pope see that his cause was just, that Harold was an infamous oath breaker, a despoiler of churches? William on the other hand was a builder of abbeys, a protector of bishops against bullying barons. It was completely absurd and it worked like a dream. The Pope was won over, gave William his Papal blessing and invested him with his ring and banner.

It was now much more than a dynastic feud. William used the consecration of his wife's abbey, here at La Trinite in Caen, to proclaim a crusade against the infidel Harold. The barons who'd fought shy of risking their necks on the Duke's personal vendetta now flocked to join the legions of the blessed.

The Bayeux Tapestry shows work immediately got under way to build an awe-inspiring expeditionary force. Rows of Normandy trees went down to the axe to emerge as 400 dragon-headed ships.

Loaded onto the ships were coats of mail, bows, arrows, spears and the most indispensable item of all, vast casks of wine. Packed so tightly into the boats they supported each other, were perhaps 6,000 horses, three for each knight.

Across the Channel, Harold responded by proving that he too was a phenomenal military organiser. As the crack troops of his army, Harold could call on the elite of perhaps 3,000 "huscarls", professional soldiers trained to handle a two-handed axe that, if swung right, could slice through a horse and its rider at one blow.

The core of the army was 5,000 Thanes - or noblemen - of England. In addition there were the 13,000 part-time soldiers, the "fyrd", mobilised by their lords, obliged to give the king two months service each year.

With amazing speed, this army was stationed along the south coast. By August 10th, William had his army in place along the Normandy coast. Two great fighting forces bent on each other's annihilation faced each other across a little strip of water to determine the destiny of England.

And there they sat, William waiting for a southerly wind that never came, and Harold waiting for William, who never came.

This waiting was particularly serious for Harold. By the first week in September he'd kept the fyrd in battle position for at least two weeks longer than their two-month obligation.

What's more, it was now harvest time. So, with who knows what misgivings and uneasiness, on September the 8th Harold demobilised the fyrd and sent the soldiers home.

He was right to feel uneasy. Just eleven days later Harold had a very nasty shock - his younger brother was back.

Tostig, together with the Norwegian king, Harold Hardrada, had landed in **Northumbria** with as many as 12,000 men. Tostig had spent his time in exile looking for allies to pursue his vendetta against Harold.

It was a coup for him that he'd enlisted the support of the awesome King of Norway. Hardrada was quite simply the most feared warrior of the age. Built like a Norwegian cliff face, he had the reputation for super-human strength and elaborately creative cruelty. Hardrada also had a flimsy claim to the English throne that went back to Canute, and he wasn't one to flinch at a military challenge that could win him the disputed crown.

Harold Hardrada sailed southwest from Norway on August the 12th. En route, he stopped here in the Viking earldom of the Orkneys to pick up yet more men and ships to add to his already formidable fleet. Expectations must have been high.

The Norsemen could almost smell triumph in the summer winds. There would have been feasting, singing and the reading of poems, some of them doubtless written by Hardrada himself. And it may be here that Tostig joined the Viking fleet. If he did and looked out and saw the 300 ships, his little heart must have skipped a beat to think of the catastrophe awaiting his brother. Together, Tostig and Hardrada would be unstoppable, invincible. Or would they?

Having landed on the Northumbrian coast, the Viking army headed for York, where it fought off the northern earls to take control of the city.

Complacent with victory, Hardrada and Tostig travelled with just one third of the army, eight miles east of York, to Stamford Bridge, where they'd arranged to collect 500 hostages.

What they saw on the banks of the River Derwent was not a forlorn group of hostages but a massive army, their weapons glittering like sheets of ice, as the Viking bard put it. Tostig knew it meant trouble. It was his big brother.

Getting his army in position to surprise the Norsemen was an epic feat by any standards. Harold had travelled from London, picking up his army on the way, covering 187 miles in four days - 37 to 45 miles a day. Imagine then, thousands of men going as fast as their horses, or, in many cases, as fast as their legs could carry them. Up the Great North Road to Peterborough, Lincoln, Tadcaster. The ultimate high-impact hike with the heaviest backpacks imaginable. At the end of it, Harold fought one of the bloodiest battles in English history.

Segment 3.

(SHOUTS AND CRIES)

00:31:36,430 -->

It was the English who broke the Viking line, and the remaining Norse warriors cowered around their chiefs. We must imagine the great Hardrada swinging his axe beneath the Landvaster flag, before finally sinking down with an arrow in the throat; Tostig picking up the Raven flag and, in his turn, being cut down.

The carnage was so complete that it took just 24 of the 300 ships that had sailed to England to return the pitiful remnant of the Norse army back to Norway. In a final act of respect, Harold found his dead brother and took what was left of him to be buried at York Minster.

He had no time to grieve or exalt over the death of Tostig, for the day after the Battle of Stamford Bridge, the Norman fleet, at last, felt the wind change direction.

So, with great haste, the Duke went to sea, with his fleet sailing swiftly to the coast of England. Their first sight of land would have been the cliffs at Beachy Head, and they landed in the nearby sheltering harbours at Pevensey.

An old Roman fort guarded the beach. Within its empty shell, William's men erected a prefabricated timber castle, later to be rebuilt in stone, as if declaring that they were now heirs to the Romans.

Expeditions for food and forage from the base camp took the usual form, burning everything that couldn't be seized, striking terror into the hearts of the locals.

Segment 4.

00:33:49,990 -->

One of the most unforgettable details in the entire Bayeux Tapestry is this seemingly incidental detail of a mother and child turned refugee, fleeing from their burning house, maybe even Hastings, resigned to their fate, not looking back. This is the first of the images that will echo through European art; through Rubens, Goya and Picasso's Guernica, of the victims of war, of civilians, of innocence.

But William soon discovered there was no easy route from Pevensey to London. The country behind the town was waterlogged, crossed by little river valleys that fed into the sea. But there was one old Anglo-Saxon trail that could take him to the Roman road north through Kent, and it was for mastery of this ancient, muddy, rutted track, that the most gruelling battle in early British history would be fought.

Having beaten back the threat of the Vikings and his own brother, it must have seemed inconceivable to Harold that he'd have to do it all over again within a week or two. It would not be easy. Who could he call on?

The bruised and battered remains of his army.

It would be a long shot, but after Stamford Bridge perhaps Harold felt he could actually trust his gambler's luck. Besides, William's public name-calling - Harold the Perjured, Harold the Oath Breaker, Harold the Perfidious - had made it personal now, a mortal duel. Let the hand of God decide the righteous party, who would prevail.

Harold left London at full speed. He gathered what he could of a new army by an old grey apple tree, an ancient blasted tree that stood on a hill at the crossing of the track leading out of Hastings. There Harold planted his banner, "The Dragon of Wessex". The Normans called this place "Senlach", meaning "Lake of Blood".

Segment 5.

(CHANTING)

00:36:15,510 -->

Imagine yourself on the morning of Saturday 14th October, 1066. You're a Saxon warrior, a huscarl as it happens, and you've survived Stamford Bridge. You know your position here couldn't be better. You stand on the brow of the hill and look down hundreds of yards away at the opposition. You only have to prevent the Normans from breaking through to the London road. They have the horses but they have to ride them uphill. You look along the hillside to see a densely-packed crowd of Englishmen.

At the front are the huscarls, a wall of solid shields, and with them the axemen. Behind them the part-timers, the fighting farmers, who must have time to find their courage. At the foot of the hill you can hear the whinnying of Norman horses... ..and what sounds like the chanting of psalms.

You're a Norman foot-soldier and you hope to God the gentlemen on horses know what they're doing. All around you can hear the scraping of metal, the sharpening of blades, the mounting of horses. You look up to the brow of the hill and you see a glittering line of men and you cross yourself. You finger the rings on your coat of mail, your hawberg, and wonder how solid they are. You wonder what use they'll be against an axe. You've never seen axes in battle before. Then you catch sight of the Papal banner and take heart. Surely God is on your side.

The real beginning must be imagined as the cavalry raced up the hill, one by one getting into range, hearing the rhythmic chant of "Oot, Oot!" - Out, Out! - from the Saxons, and then hurling their javelins at the front line.

Then came the slow advance of the archers, unloosing their first arrows under a hail of enemy spears.

And finally the foot-soldiers breaking into a run behind them.

Then there was just the murderous smashing and crashing of horses, the slicing and thrusting of weapons, the screams, cries of the wounded and dying.

If the axeman stood firm against the oncoming horse he'd still only get one good swing. If he missed, he was left open to the slash of the sword from the rider above.

It was the initial success of the English that threatened their downfall. On the left flank of William's army, horses stumbled and retreated. The right flank of Harold's army, many of them inexperienced fyrdmen, decided to chase them down the hill.

But Harold, always conservative in his tactics, refused to allow others to follow. He seems to have lost momentary control of his troops, who couldn't resist following the horsemen, elated by the thought that the Duke of Normandy was lost. But William threw back his helmet to prove he was very much alive. He rallied the ranks of the Norman centre round the rear of the pursuing Saxons and set about slicing them to pieces.

The battle wasn't over yet. It was going to take at least six hours to decide.

The Bayeux Tapestry is shockingly explicit in exposing the extent of the carnage and mutilation. But it was the English army that was eventually, and very, very slowly, ground down. William began exploiting weak points, settling into an alternating rhythm of archers and cavalry. The arrows now shot high into the air and fell, not onto the front line but the heads of the unprotected men behind them.

How did Harold himself die? Lately there has been an attempt to read the death scene in the Tapestry as though he was the figure cut down by the horseman, not the warrior pulling the arrow out of his eye, the story you and I grew up with. It seems to me perfectly clear that the words "Harold Rex" occur directly and significantly above the arrow-struck figure.

Then certainly the knights would have been on him, cutting him down, leaving him disembowelled. The Thanes bravely mounted a last stand, defending the body of their king, but for many it was a lost cause. It was time to save one's neck, to get out of the way.

There are such sad stories of what follows, and perhaps some of them are true. One of them has Harold's lover, Edith Swan Neck, walking through the heaps of gory corpses to identify the dead king by marks on his body, known only to her.

What we do know is that around half the nobility of England perished on that battlefield.

EPISODE 3.

Segment 1.

00:42:27,950 -->

William had sworn that should God give him the victory he would build a great abbey of thanksgiving at the exact spot where Harold had planted his flag, and here it is - a statement, if ever there was one, of pious jubilation.

But William had to make sure he'd won not just a single battle but the war for England. This was done in the time-honoured way, cutting a swathe of fire, rape and plunder through the countryside of south-east England. One by one the Anglo-Saxon cities folded.

William was crowned at Westminster on Christmas Day 1066. But the event was more like a shambles than a triumph. At the shout of acclamation, the Norman soldiers stationed outside thought a riot had started, to which their response was to burn down every house in sight. As fighting broke out, many inside the Abbey, smelling smoke, rushed outside. The ceremony was completed in a half empty interior, with William, for the first time in his life, seen to be shaking like a leaf.

When he emerged from the smoke and chaos of the coronation, just what kind of king did the surviving remnant of the old governing class imagine they had? Did they fondly suppose he was going to be another Canute, who now that he'd won, would disband his army and send them home? If they did, they were in for a very nasty shock, because even if William had wanted to do this, it was quite impossible. His whole campaign had been based on the promise of the lure of land, the pledge to hand over Saxon land on a golden plate of conquest.

So there was never the remotest chance that William was going to be another Canute and assimilate himself into the world of Anglo-Saxon England. His conquest turned the country around. England's orientation now was south, away from Scandinavia and towards continental Europe. The part of the country offering most resistance was the north of England, which still retained strong Viking sympathies.

Just three years into William's reign, York opened its gates to King Swein of Denmark, hailing him as a liberator from the new king of England. William's response was to mount a campaign of oppression in the north which was not just punitive but an exercise in mass murder - thousands of men and boys gruesomely butchered, their bodies left to rot and fester in the highways.

Every town and village burnt without pity. Fields and livestock destroyed so completely that any survivors were doomed to die in a great famine.

Hard on the heels of massacre and starvation came plague.

All across England, William built at least 90 castles, dominating areas of potential revolt, engines of terror that helped William control over two million Saxons with just 25,000 Normans.

Segment 2.

00:46:17,630 -->

Most of the voices that have come down to us describing the events after 1066 are written from the victor's perspective, unapologetic and crowing, sketching the starkest possible contrast between the Machiavellian perjurer Harold and the noble, betrayed William.

But among this nauseating chorus of congratulation there's at least one that dares break rank, that in fact sees the conquest as it surely was - a brutal, ruthless and completely successful act of aggression and cruelty. The voice is all the more credible because it belongs to someone who by rights, should have found nothing to fault in the Norman Conquest - the monk Orderic Vitalis, whose family came over with William and belonged, therefore, to the conquering class.

In the early 12th century, he began to pen his account of the Conquest and its aftermath, and, in complete contrast to the others, Orderic never minces his words about what he thought of as a colonisation.

Foreigners grew wealthy with the spoils of England, while her own sons were either shamefully slain or driven as exiles to wander hopelessly through foreign kingdoms.

His account conveys the traumatic magnitude of what happened in England in the years following 1066. Pre-Conquest England was an old country, as Orderic describes it. Afterwards, it was a completely new one.

Of course, not everything changed, and to look at a list of governing institutions you might suppose nothing had changed; that one class of governors had kicked out another class of governors. Big deal!

But I rather think it was a big deal. Imagine the county gentry of England - priests, squires, judges - all wiped out overnight, half of them dead, the rest humiliated, broken, replaced by an alien class. They speak differently, they look different, they take what they want when they want, and then rubber-stamp the decision in your courts. They also build differently.

Ely Cathedral is one of those places where the intimate scale of Saxon churches was replaced by a statement of massive triumphalism. These columns speak of authority and raw power. They command obedience and reverence. They are, in the most literal sense, awesome.

It was the difference between the immense Romanesque bulk of the great Norman cathedrals and the small spaces of the Saxon chapel. There is another telling difference between the old and new rulers of England: Anglo-Saxons didn't use surnames. They were Cedric or Edgar of somewhere or other. But the Normans incorporated places into their own names like an act of possession. They were Roger of the beautiful hill - Roger Beau-Mont - as the place was theirs and they owned it lock, stock and barrel.

In fact, preserving the estate intact was what the Norman nobility was all about. It was they who introduced the practice of passing on whole estates intact to one heir, to the eldest son.

The unsentimental, decisive way with things was the Norman way, giving a hard-nosed edge to the fuzzy tangles of contracts and customs that had been used by the Anglo-Saxons. And it was

in this spirit that William, in 1085, held court in Gloucester and launched arguably the most extraordinary campaign of his entire reign, a campaign for information.

We tend to think of William as more or less permanently in the saddle. He grew up in a world, after all, where authority was usually delivered on the blade of a sword. So it's all the more impressive that he seems to have understood instinctively that information could also be power. William the Conqueror was the first database king.

His immediate need was to raise a tax, but the compilation of the Domesday Book was more than just a glorified audit. It was a complete inventory of everything in the kingdom, shire by shire, pig by pig; who had owned what before the coming of the Normans and who owned what now; how much it had been worth then and how much now.

“The king sent his men all over England, into every shire, and had them find out how many hundred hides there were in each shire, what land and cattle the king himself had in the county. So very narrowly did he have it investigated there was no single hide nor - shame to relate it, but it seemed no shame to him was there one ox or one cow left out and not put down in record.”

While some of the information was taken verbally by William's scribes, some must have owed its existence to Saxon records. The most extraordinary paradox about the Domesday Book is that what we think of as a monument to the power and strength of the Normans owed itself to the advanced machinery of government left in place by the old Anglo-Saxon monarchy. And it was thanks to this that the data was collected at such lightning speed, less than six months. The results were presented to William here at Old Sarum, an ancient Iron Age fort inside which he'd built a spectacular royal palace.

When he took hold of the Domesday Book, it was as though William had been handed the keys to the kingdom all over again, as if he'd re-conquered England, but this time statistically, because its information was more impregnable than any castle. It was called The Domesday Book, after all, because it was said its decisions were as final as the Last Judgement.

“The Church itself holds Wenlock. There are 20 hides, four of which are exempt from tax under King Canute. There are 15 slaves, two mills serve the monks, plus one fishery. Enough woodland to fatten 300 pigs, and two hedged enclosures. Value now twelve pounds.”

Two ceremonies took place on Lammas Day, 1087, at Old Sarum. First, every noble in England gathered here to take an oath of loyalty to the king. Then came the handing over of the Book, the ultimate weapon to keep them in line. Nobody could hold back anything, and it was this book, the Domesday Book, that made the gathering at Old Sarum unique in the history of feudal monarchy in Europe. For the Book ultimately WAS England.

Segment 3.

00:53:49,910 -->

For centuries after, this was the secret of English government, a partnership between the power of the landed classes and the authority of the state, between the guardians of the green acres and

the keepers of knowledge. In the right hand corner, the gentry; in the left hand corner, the civil service. In between them, the eternal umpire, the king.

But the umpire was finally feeling the strain of it all. Not surprising when, aged 60, William still couldn't resist playing the warlord.

In 1087, he subdued a border dispute in France by totally destroying the town of Mantes.

But perhaps this last devastation was one too many, for a flaming timber from a house burned by his soldiers fell right in front of the king. William's horse suddenly bucked, throwing the now overweight king violently against his saddle, his gut taking the force of the blow. Mortally wounded, William was taken to a priory at Rouen.

At the very end, Orderic Vitalis puts into William's mouth an extraordinary deathbed confession, so penitential, so utterly out of character that it seems on the face of it completely incredible. But whether William actually spoke those words or not, they clearly reflected what some, perhaps many people, felt about William the Conqueror - that when all the battles were won, when the laws were all laid down, he was what he had always been, a brutal adventurer. And the conquest of England not a righteous crusade, but just a grand throw of history's dice.

“I appoint no one my heir to the crown of England for I did not attain that high honour by hereditary right, but wrestled it from a perjured King Harold in a desperate battle with much effusion of human blood. I have persecuted its native inhabitants beyond all reason. Whether gentle or simple, I cruelly oppressed them. Many I unjustly disinherited. Innumerable multitudes, especially in the county of York, perished through me by famine or the sword. Having therefore made my way to the throne of that kingdom by so many crimes, I dare not leave it to anyone but God alone, lest after my death worse should happen by my means.”

Once he had gone, in the early hours of the morning of the 9th September, 1087, a shocking scene took place. His closest followers now paid their last respects to William by all deserting him, racing to the four corners of the kingdom to secure their land leaving the corpse to be looted by the servants naked, bloated and beginning to putrefy on the monastery floor. So the man who spent his life taking whatever he could by whatever means, was finally robbed of everything, even his dignity. Perhaps the hand of God had decided that this was a fitting end.

As for his old antagonist, Harold, he certainly didn't stay buried on the shore facing the Channel, as some Norman historians suggested. Rumours had it that he'd escaped and was living as a hermit. But another story is much more likely to be the truth - that once it was safe, the female survivors of the family took Harold's remains and had them interred here at Waltham Abbey. According to William and the Pope, Harold was supposed to have been a despoiler of the Church, deserving of destruction. But the monks at Waltham didn't seem to agree, for they secretly buried him and prayed for his soul. Somewhere, then, beneath the columns and arches of this Romanesque church, is the last Anglo-Saxon king, literally part of the foundations of Norman England.