

# I HOPE THIS DAY WILL BE REMEMBERED... INTRODUCTION

*“King Edward the Confessor of England did not prepare well for his death, to avoid trouble he promised his kingdom to King Magnus Olafsson of Norway (a claim inherited by Harald Hardrada), King Sweyn Estridsson of Denmark, Duke William of Normandy, and Earl Harold Godwinson of Wessex. When Edward died on the fifth day of January 1066 these four powerful warlords raised armies to back their claims by force. William the Conqueror won the crown but had to defend his new kingdom from fresh invasions and rebellious barons. To formalize his control of the kingdom after twenty years of conquest he ordered a Great Survey in 1085, a record so final and unalterable that it was named **DOMESDAY** (Doomsday).” —Philip Jelley*

It’s time to clean the rust off the chainmail for another trip back to 1066, as we take a dive into the campaigns in which dynasties rose and fell, a time in which wars seemed endless, devastating the countryside. Here, we present our own version of the tumultuous events that shaped the history of England, courtesy of designer Phil Jelley. Not to be content with a cracking game on the battle of Hastings, Phil has offered up a complete breakdown of events that led to William exchanging the cognomen of “the Bastard” for “the Conqueror”, along with a number of fascinating sidelights showing some of the backgrounds and implications that surround the fateful year of 1066.

Beyond that, Paul Comben delivers the first part of his examination of how the way of war was evolving thanks to Hastings and the dynastic struggles surrounding the Normans, their friends, and their foes. All in all, we are bringing you the total package, laying out the panorama of medieval maneuverings both on and off the battlefield. If you enjoy this, please check out our other offerings at [atomagazine.com](http://atomagazine.com), or our sister, Turning Point Simulations ([turningpointssimulations.com](http://turningpointssimulations.com)). Thanks, and read on!

*Andy*

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# DOMESDAY

## EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

*He was a man from the simplicity of his manners little calculated to govern but devoted to God, and in consequence directed by Him, for while he continued to reign there arose no popular disorders which were not immediately quelled, no foreign war, all was calm and peaceable both at home and abroad, which is the more an object of wonder because he conducted himself so mildly that he would not even utter a word of reproach to the meanest person.*

—William of Malmesbury

Viking attacks on Anglo-Saxon England began in 789, increasing in intensity until they overran the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of East Anglia (Norfolk and Suffolk), Northumbria (north of the Humber), Mercia (between the Thames and Humber) and Wessex (south of the Thames). King Alfred the Great beat the invading King Guthrum at Edington (Wiltshire) in 878 and they made Watling Street the border between the Anglo-Saxons and Danelaw, the land conquered by the Danish Vikings. Alfred’s son Edward the Elder took Danelaw in 899-924 and made himself the first King of England, but allowed the Vikings to keep their own laws, language and customs.



Viking raids resumed in 939, and in 991 Olaf Tryggvasson routed an Anglo-Saxon army at Maldon (Essex). The cowardly King Ethelred the Unready paid Olaf a fortune in *Danegeld* to leave, but this only made the Vikings return in even greater numbers. To stop them using Norman ports as winter bases, Ethelred formed an alliance with Duke Richard II of Normandy and married his sister Emma. Ethelred said the Anglo-Danes living in England were “like weeds in the wheat” and had them massacred, but the survivors turned to King Sweyn Forkbeard of Denmark for protection and revenge. Sweyn invaded England and forced Ethelred, Emma, and their sons Edmund, Alfred, and Edward to flee to Normandy in 1013. The *Witan* (Royal Council) agreed to make Sweyn King of England in order to end the war, but five weeks after he was crowned, Sweyn was killed when he fell off his horse while looting an abbey. Ethelred and his son Edmond Ironside returned to contest the kingdom with Sweyn’s teenaged son Canute, but Ethelred died in 1016, soon followed by the exhausted Edmond. Canute convinced the Witan that he should be king instead of Ethelred’s young sons Alfred and Edward, who fled back to Normandy, while Edmond’s son Edward the Exile escaped to Hungary. Canute strengthened his position by marrying the ambitious Queen Emma and ruled according to Anglo-Saxon laws, even invading Denmark and Norway with an Anglo-Danish army. He appointed talented new earls to govern the country, the Anglo-Danish Earl Siward of Northumbria, Anglo-Saxon Earl Godwine of Wessex (who married Canute’s sister-in-law Gytha Thorkelsdóttir), and Anglo-Saxon Earl Leofric of Mercia (whose wife Lady Godiva rode naked through the streets of Coventry to reduce the extortionate taxes they were being asked to pay).

When Canute died in 1035 the Witan declared Hardicanute (his son by Emma) as the new king, but Hardicanute was in Denmark fighting Magnus the Good of Norway, so his elder half-brother Harold Harefoot was made regent, but in 1037 Harefoot exiled Emma and declared himself king. Alfred saw his chance and invaded with 600 Norman mercenaries but was captured by Harefoot while a guest of Earl Godwine and killed by having red hot pokers thrust through his eyes. Hardicanute made a deal with Magnus that he would rule Denmark and England, while Magnus ruled Norway, and if either died the other would inherit all three kingdoms. When Harefoot died in 1040 Hardicanute sailed to England to be crowned king, and invited his half-brother Edward from Normandy before he drank himself to death in 1042. Prompted by Godwine, the Witan chose Edward as their new king, but the brothers Sweyn and Beorn Estridson (the nephews of both Canute and Godwine) arrived with the news that Magnus was claiming England and Denmark as Hardicanute’s heir and was calling on the Anglo-Danish Vikings to rebel. Godwine secretly told both Magnus and Sweyn they would succeed the unmarried, childless, celibate, 39-year-old Edward if he remained king, and left them to fight over Denmark and Norway.

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