Chapter 8: Relations with Scotland

Medieval England: the reign of Edward I, 1272–1307

For thirteenth-century Edward I, Scotland was a constant worry. He was determined to extend his power over the whole of Britain. He was an English king with a Scottish problem. Scotland was a separate kingdom, which had its own parliament, its own laws and its own King. There was no English right to rule Scotland.

Situated on the northern border of England, Scotland was frequently a source of trouble. It had been occupied by the English in 1266, and in 1286 Edward I’s brother Edward, the Black Prince, had taken part in the successful attack on Berwick and Edinburgh. Edward I proposed a treaty with the Scots, but the Scots did not accept it.

Edward believed that the English army was too strong for the Scots to attempt any further invasion. However, his thought was that the Scots wanted to be independent from England. For Edward, the only way to achieve this was to defeat the Scots at their capital city, Stirling. Edward was determined to become the new king of Scotland.

Edward I believed that by defeating the Scots at their capital city, he could bring Scotland under English rule. He was right. The Battle of Stirling Bridge, fought in 1297, ended in victory for the English. However, the victory was short-lived. The Scots under William Wallace were victorious at the Battle of Falkirk in 1298.

Although Edward I had won the battle, he had lost the war. The Scots were able to continue their struggle for independence. Wallace had become a national hero in Scotland. His reputation was such that he was able to raise a large army, which forced Edward to retreat.

Edward I was a skilled diplomat and he knew that the Scots were not willing to accept English rule. He needed to find a way to bring Scotland under English control. However, he was unable to defeat the Scots. His army was defeated at the Battle of Falkirk in 1298, and he was forced to retreat. The Scots were able to continue their struggle for independence.

Conclusion

Edward I was a skilled diplomat and he knew that the Scots were not willing to accept English rule. He needed to find a way to bring Scotland under English control. However, he was unable to defeat the Scots. His army was defeated at the Battle of Falkirk in 1298, and he was forced to retreat. The Scots were able to continue their struggle for independence.

Study Tip

Edward I was a skilled diplomat and he knew that the Scots were not willing to accept English rule. He needed to find a way to bring Scotland under English control. However, he was unable to defeat the Scots. His army was defeated at the Battle of Falkirk in 1298, and he was forced to retreat. The Scots were able to continue their struggle for independence.

Key Words

This was an extraordinary period that saw the end of the Anglo-Saxon dynasties and includes arguably the most famous battles in English history. Most of the changes imposed by William the Conqueror remained for centuries and many are still evident today. The Normans changed many areas of life in England from religion to the way local areas were governed and taxes were collected. Whilst the Normans have had a reputation for violence, it cannot be denied that this was one of the most exciting periods of English history.

### Medieval England

- **1066**
  - January - King Edward dies, Harold Godwineson crowned King of England
  - September - Battle of Fulford Gate, Battle of Stamford Bridge
  - October - Battle of Hastings

- **1069**
  - The Harrying of the North

- **1070**
  - The revolt of the Norman earls

- **1071**
  - The East Anglia rebellion of Hereward the Wake and his allies

- **1075**
  - The revolt of the Norman earls

- **1076**
  - The results of the Domesday Survey collated and the Domesday Book created

- **1080**
  - Edward becomes king

- **1081**
  - Scottish rebellion, King Malcolm of Scotland killed in 1093

- **1085**
  - William Rufus recognised as the ruler of Normandy

- **1086**
  - Norman barons and Robert Curthose rebel against William Rufus, Rufus responds quickly, cutting off their support

- **1090**
  - Scottish rebellion, King Malcolm of Scotland killed in 1093

- **1091**
  - The East Anglia rebellion of Hereward the Wake and his allies

- **1100**
  - King William II killed and his brother Henry crowned King Henry I

- **1105**
  - The revolt of the Norman earls

### Norman England

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  - January - King Edward dies, Harold Godwineson crowned King of England
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Edward I was a powerful and intimidating king, succeeding a man who had shown himself to be a weak leader – his father Henry III. He oversaw huge changes to the legal system, made Parliament more representative and made England a powerful player in world trade. His conquests of Scotland and Wales were brutal affairs bringing him into conflict with Llewelyn ap Gruffydd and William Wallace, national heroes in their countries to this day. It was a time of great political, social, cultural and economic change and Edward was at the heart of it.
Elizabeth I grew up surrounded by people who said that no woman was capable of ruling England. Yet the Elizabethan age saw great change in all areas of society. From the exploration of Walter Raleigh and Francis Drake to the plays of Shakespeare, and from the defeat of the Spanish Armada to the first Poor Laws, the queen was at the heart of it all. In this British Depth Study, you will gain an understanding of the complexities of Elizabethan society and how its different aspects fit together.

Elizabethan England

Timeline

1587 Roanoke colony is established in North America
February - Mary Queen of Scots is executed

1586 July - The Babington Plot is discovered
October - Mary, Queen of Scots goes on trial

1588 The Spanish Armada

1590 First of several bad harvests leads to food shortages; many country people begin to move to the towns

1599 Opening of the Globe Theatre in London

1600 Elizabeth I dies and is succeeded by James I

Restoration England

1660 May - Charles rides into London having been officially returned to the throne. London theatres reopen.
August - The Indemnity and Oblivion Act fulfils Charles’s promise to pardon all those who fought against his father apart from the regicides

1666 The Great Fire of London

1667 The Dutch raid on the Medway

1668 The Cabal Ministry rises to power after the downfall of Clarendon

1670 The Secret Treaty of Dover

1673 The Test Act bars Catholics from holding public office

1674 The end of the Cabal and the rise of Lord Danby

1679 Lord Danby is forced to resign and narrowly avoids trial in the House of Lords for secret negotiations with the French

1680 The Exclusion Bill Parliament

1682 The Licensing of the Press Act limits the freedom to publish anything that challenges the Church of England
April - Charles marries Catherine of Braganza and receives the Indian port of Bombay as part of her dowry

1685 The Rye House Plot

1685 Death of Charles II, the Duke of York becomes James II

1685 The Royal African Company is given the right to trade slaves
1685–75 The Third Anglo-Dutch War

1687 The Popish Plot

1662 The Popish Plot

1665 The Great Plague

1663–67 The Second Anglo-Dutch War

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3.2 Historic Environment: Elizabethan country houses

Many great houses were built during Queen Elizabeth’s reign. These homes would not only show the wealth and power of the owners, but also demonstrate that the inhabitants were cultured, fashionable people. What were the features of great Elizabethan houses? Who built them, and how did they show the prosperity of their owners?

A culture of comfort

The Elizabethan period saw growing prosperity amongst the gentry in a time of stability in England, and houses reflected this. A country house was no longer the communal centre of a village (such as in the medieval period), but a private residence for a cultured noble. Architects, such as Robert Smythson, who designed Hardwick Hall, one of the grandest houses of the period, could focus on how the house looked and its comfort, rather than the security of the owner.

What was the Elizabethan style?

During the Renaissance, it was the height of fashion to be inspired by ancient or classical civilisations, since it demonstrated a cultured mind and refined taste. The design of the building was symmetrical, usually built around an E or an H shape, which allowed for open courtyards as opposed to closed, secure ones. Rich oak wood paneling and geometric plasterwork set off walls hung with colourful tapestries. Glass was expensive and could only afford for the wealthy, so walls full of windows allowed the owner to show their wealth on the inside and outside of the building. Chimneys were based on classical columns and were often in stacks of two or three.

What was it like to live in an Elizabethan house?

The medieval hall was replaced by a great chamber as the main room in Elizabethan houses. Houses still had a hall, but guests passed through it to go up to the great chamber and the other rooms. With the move to greater privacy, servants’ quarters were set away from areas for the owner. The number of rooms in a house showed the family’s importance and wealth, and Elizabethan houses had more rooms which allowed individual privacy. Rooms were accessed by a great staircase: they were made comfortable by the heat of a fireplace, and lit by light from the many glass windows.

Timeline

- **1527**
  - Bess of Hardwick born: Bess was born into the gentry but had risen in status and power through her four marriages to become the richest woman in England after Queen Elizabeth.
- **1557**
  - Bess’ second husband, Sir William Cavendish, whom she married in 1547, was a wealthy key figure in King Henry VIII’s court. When he died in 1557, Bess became a much wealthier woman.
- **1565**
  - Bess’ third husband was Sir William St Loe, who was from a well-established family and a favourite of the queen. This marriage gave Bess a place at court. When he died in 1565, Bess inherited his fortune.
- **1590–97**
  - In 1567 Bess married the Earl of Shrewsbury and became nobility. Bess arranged the marriage of her daughter, Elizabeth, to Charles Stuart, Mary, Queen of Scots’ distant cousin. Any children they had would have a claim to the throne. A daughter was born and Queen Elizabeth was enraged. Bess returned to her old home at Hardwick Hall without her husband and built a new house. Hardwick Hall was a home fit for a noblewoman.

Work

1. Conduct research about why and how Bess Hardwick built Hardwick Hall. Do you think its status as ‘one of England’s greatest Elizabethan houses’ is justified? Why or why not?
2. Compare the features of Hardwick Hall with other Elizabethan houses (such as Spake Hall in Liverpool or Burghley House in Lincolnshire), and create a list of the architectural features they have in common.

Key Words

- great chamber
- overmantel
- lattice
- loggia
- Renaissance

Study Tip

Compared with Medieval buildings, Elizabethan country houses, like Hardwick Hall, had many new technological and design features. What were they? What can we learn about the people who built and lived in such buildings from their external appearance and internal features?

Historic Environment: Elizabethan country houses

A 'Golden Age'

Chapter 3

Elizabethan England c1567–1603