

ABOUT : your timeline

1066 - Harold II is defeated by William the Conqueror, at the battle of Hastings.

The Bayeux Tapestry is a 70m long embroidered cloth that depicts this battle, which also includes King Harold being shot in the eye by an arrow. The tower of London was one of the many forts and castles, built by the Normans, helping to assert their authority upon the country.

1215 - The Magna Carta, means great charter and was a list of rules that the king should follow, rather than doing what he wanted. This was forced upon King John by the English barons, because he had abused his power, and it became the basis of protecting the rights of the individual and ensuring that even the King was subject to the laws of the land. Though King John didn't fully adhere, this is regarded as the start of the country becoming a democracy. The picture shows the Magna Carta being signed at Runnymede, near Windsor Castle.

THE NORMANS etc - *more information...*

ABOUT : the Norman period

The last Anglo-Saxon king, Edward III (the confessor) died in 1066, leaving no heir. Harold, though not a blood relative, was the brother of Edward's wife, very popular, and is thought to have been the choice of the King's council. So he became King, but this was contested by the Duke of Normandy, in France. The Duke, a distant cousin of Edward had been promised the throne by Harold and Edward and was willing to fight for it. Harold, however, first had to fight off a Viking challenge to the throne from Harald of Norway and his brother Tostig. Having beaten them, near York, he immediately had to march south to face the Duke of Normandy. He lost this battle and rule across the country changed from Saxon to Norman.

The Normans built over 100 castles around the country, and the existing Barons had their lands taken and given to Norman Nobles in a ruthless take over. Even the language was changed to French.

A lasting legacy of the Normans is the Domesday book, which was initiated by Norman the Conquerer and it documented land ownership across the whole country.

Further Information :

<http://www.great-britain.co.uk/history/william.htm>

<http://www.bl.uk/magna-carta/articles/magna-carta-an-introduction>

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