Where are we in English history?

WHY DID HENRY V CLAIM LANDS IN FRANCE AND THE FRENCH CROWN?

KINGS OF ENGLAND – A ROYAL TIMELINE

1066-1087	**William I**	House of Normandy	– William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy
1087-1100	**William II**	House of Normandy	
1100-1135	**Henry I**	House of Normandy	
1135-1154	**Stephen**	House of Blois	
1154-1189	**Henry II**	House of Angevin	
1189-1199	**Richard I**	House of Angevin	– Richard the Lionheart
1199-1216	**John**	House of Angevin	
1216-1272	**Henry III**	House of Plantagenet	
1272-1307	**Edward I**	House of Plantagenet	– Edward 'Longshanks' (last seen in 'Braveheart'!)
1307-1327	**Edward II**	House of Plantagenet	
1327-1377	**Edward III**	House of Plantagenet	
1377-1399	**Richard II**	House of Plantagenet	
1399-1413	**Henry IV**	House of Lancaster	
1413-1422	**Henry V**	House of Lancaster	
1422-1461	**Henry VI**	House of Lancaster	

LOCAL

Stephen's brother, Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, built the first Palace here and laid out the town of Bishop's Waltham

King Stephen fought a long civil war against his cousin Matilda – at the end of it, Matilda's son Henry became king. Henry's father was Geoffrey of Anjou so Henry inherited lands in France and then married Eleanor of Aquitaine who had even more! – see Panel 2

King John, who's always had a bad press (e.g. Robin Hood), managed to lose all the English lands in France!

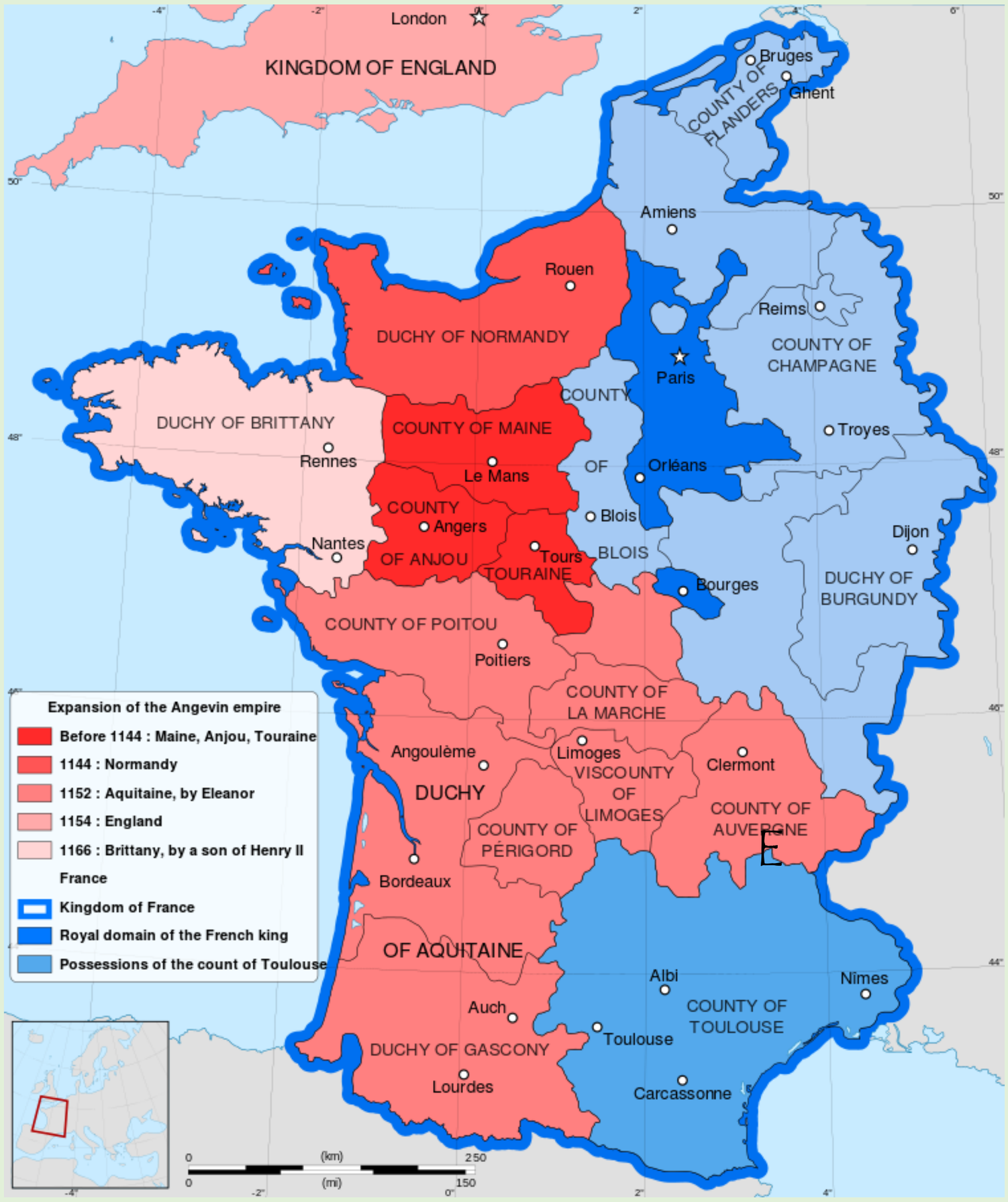
Edward III was a warrior king who claimed the crown of France and (by the Treaty of Bretigny) won back much of the land that had been lost. But the French King then took them back again… Without knowing it, Edward had started the Hundred Years War!

Henry usurped the unpopular Richard II, but didn't find it easy hanging onto the throne. But he did manage to leave it to his son…

We are here! In 1415…

BISHOP'S WALTHAM MUSEUM

The lands of King Henry II and his wife Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1154



"France 1154-en" by Reigen - Own work

Henry II's mother, Matilda, was one of Henry I's daughters. When Henry's son drowned, he made Matilda his heir. But when Henry died, her cousin Stephen of Blois rushed to England and claimed the throne. Years of civil war followed.

Matilda was married to the Holy Roman Emperor but he died. So, as an 'Empress', she wasn't impressed when her father married her off to a mere Count: Geoffrey of Anjou!

Geoffrey and Matilda had a son, Henry, who inherited Maine, Anjou, Touraine and Normandy from Geoffrey. In 1152 he then married Eleanor of Aquitaine and acquired her vast lands in southern France. He then invaded England on his mother's behalf and King Stephen made him his heir.

These lands, known as the Angevin Empire, were claimed by successive English Kings.

Geoffrey of Anjou

Matilda, daughter of King Henry I

King Henry II

Eleanor of Aquitaine

= LOTS AND LOTS OF LAND

This illustration of Geoffrey of Anjou is one of the earliest to show heraldic devices on a shield – it was a new idea. You can see that his son, Henry II, took the same lions for his badge too. They are still on the Royal Coat of Arms today!

This line of Kings is called Plantagenet because Geoffrey used to wear a sprig of broom in his cap – the Latin name for broom is *planta genista*. Hence *plantagenet*…

BISHOP'S WALTHAM MUSEUM

Henry V – the early years
Great training for a future king…

Henry IV

Henry was born in 1386, the oldest son of Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford. In 1398, his father was exiled by King Richard II and all his lands were confiscated.

Henry, aged only 12, was left behind in the care of the King and went with him on campaign to Ireland where he was knighted.

The following year, 1399, his father came back to claim his lands and usurped the throne. The young Henry was suddenly a Prince and heir apparent.

In 1402, aged 16, Henry spent a year at Queen's College, Oxford, under the tutelage of his uncle Henry Beaufort, the future Bishop of Winchester.

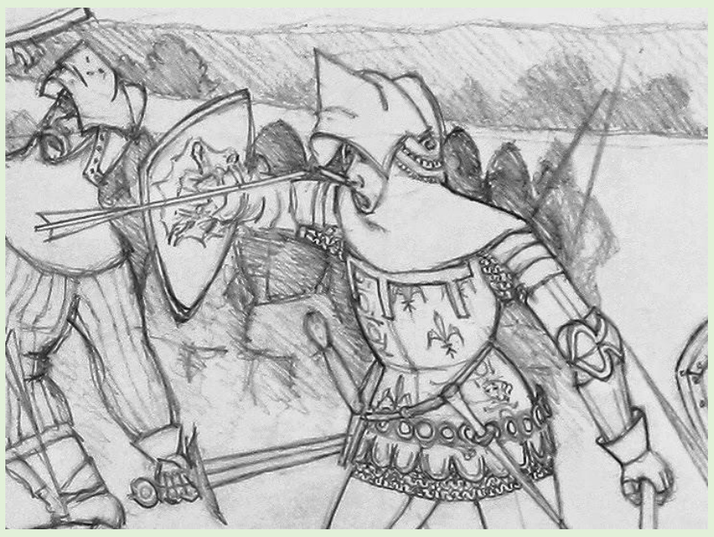
Beaufort would play a central part in Henry's reign as his Lord Chancellor and trusted confidant.

LOCAL

You can see this bust here, in the passageway through the door marked 'HB'. When Beaufort was made Bishop of Winchester, Bishop's Waltham Palace became his. So it is no surprise that Henry stayed here in 1415 'on the road to Agincourt'.

Bishop's Waltham Palace

Bust of Henry Beaufort
Bishop of Winchester



Still aged 16, Henry joined his father to fight Harry Hotspur's rebellion at the Battle of Shrewsbury. He commanded a wing of the army but was horribly wounded by an arrow in the face. He refused to leave the field until he knew the battle was won.

Over the following days he nearly died until a remarkable surgeon, John Bradmore, invented a tool to unscrew the arrow head that was embedded in the inside base of his skull!

Aged 20, Prince Henry led the King's fight against Owen Glendower's rebellion in Wales. Underfunded, short of soldiers and supplies, he learnt a great deal about waging war!

Aged 26, in 1413 he was crowned King of England. He took over an unsettled kingdom, where doubts about his right to a throne that his father had usurped might resurface!

A 'war bodkin' arrowhead of the type used by the Cheshire bowmen at the Battle of Shrewsbury. It probably glanced off someone else's helmet and entered through his cheek, becoming lodged at the back of his skull, behind his teeth.

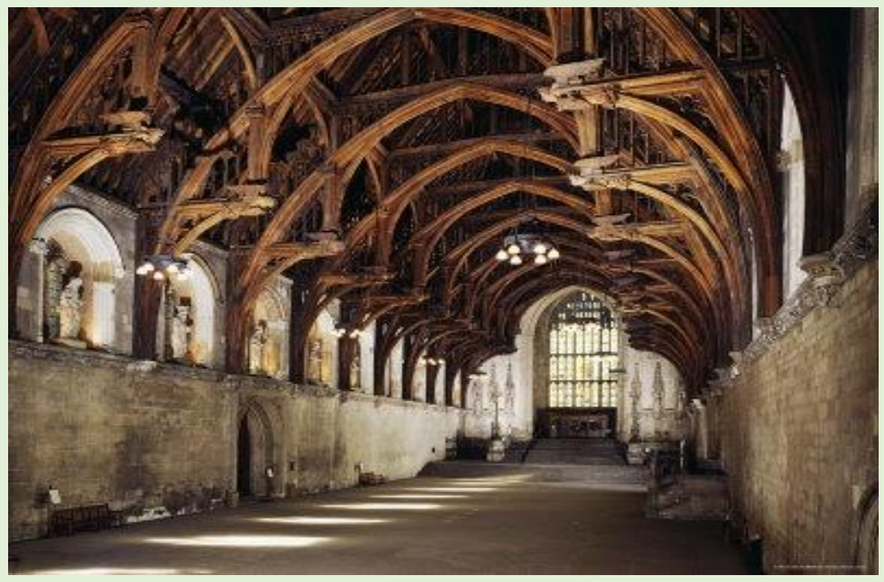
BISHOP'S WALTHAM MUSEUM

Henry's master plan: peace at home and war abroad…

At home…

An early 15th century Royal Pardon

Once crowned, Henry set to work to reunite his kingdom. He settled differences with his father's enemies, allowed exiles home and offered royal pardons. He won over parliament, which had opposed his fathers expenditure, by sharing his plans with them. His deeply held religious attitudes won strong support from the Church.



Westminster Hall, where the King met with his Royal Council and the Parliament

Abroad…

Henry then bought time by agreeing a series of short truces with the French.

But by July 1414 Henry was demanding that the Treaty of Bretigny be honoured in full. Meaning that the French would have to surrender more than half of France (the **whole of Normandy, Brittany, Flanders, Aquitaine, Anjou, Maine, Touraine and half of Provence – see map on Panel 2)** and that 1.6 million crowns be paid.

Remember… this is still the Hundred Years War. No peace has been declared, but fighting is intermittent now, after **80 years of war!**

In January 1415 English envoys went to France to negotiate Henry's marriage to Charles VI's daughter, Catherine, but Henry demanded 2 million crowns as a dowry. The last negotiations were in Wolvesey Castle in Winchester in July 1415 – again, the terms were raised so high that the French ambassadors could not agree. But Henry had apparently made an effort to negotiate – a justification for war!

Meanwhile, in France…

The country had been descending into chaos because King Charles VI had became mentally unstable. So his Queen ruled through a Regency Council. But the Royal houses of Orleans and Burgundy both wanted to dominate the Council.

Maestro di Boucicaut

King Charles VI of France (1368 – 1422)
The King went mad in 1392 and sometimes believed he was made of glass!

Then, in 1407, John, Duke of Burgundy, arranged the assassination of the King's brother, Louis Duke of Orleans, in a Paris Street.
By 1415, France was descending into civil war.
Now was a good time to strike!

And so to war…

BISHOP'S WALTHAM MUSEUM

Steps to war: preparations for a Medieval D-Day!

Step 1: First find the money!

Henry's good relationship with his parliament meant that in 1414 it agreed that two new rounds of taxes could be raised.

But still that was nothing like enough. So he raised loans from the clergy, nobility, towns and cities. He also borrowed from 'substantial men of the realm', meaning merchants and trade guilds. He even collected money from foreign traders and bankers.

However, the King had to 'pawn' his gold and silver plate, crowns, jewellery, swords and other possessions to secure the loans…

Step 2: Raise an army…

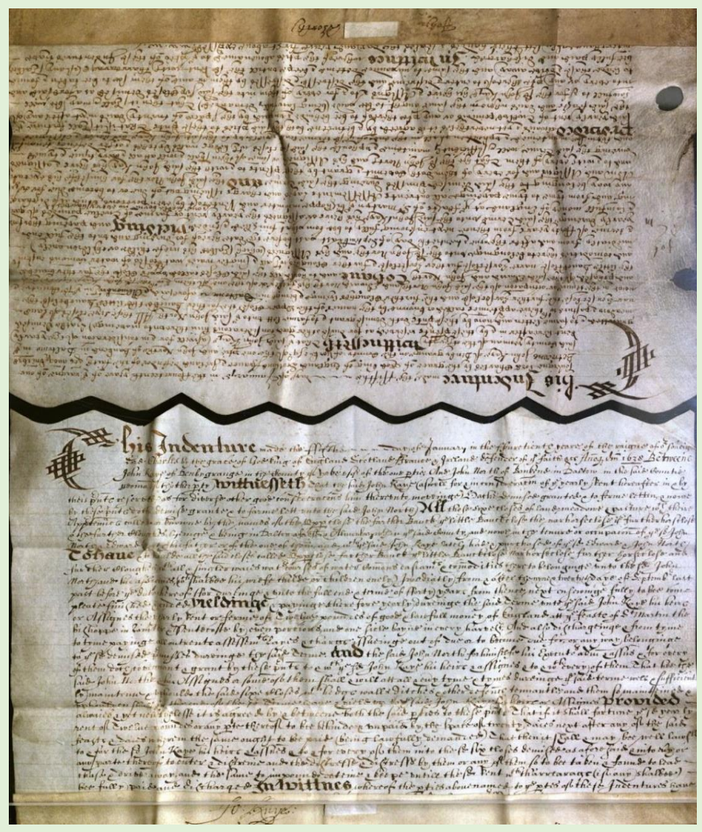
But even before he raised an army, Henry had to secure his borders, so he made sure the Scottish and Welsh Marches (borderlands) were organised for defence. He didn't want surprises!

Henry ordered new cannon to be forged at the Tower of London. He had siege engines made and others shipped from Bordeaux. Hundreds of thousands of arrows had to be made. His army took an estimated 130,000 sheaves of 24 arrows each. That's over 3 million arrows! Each new arrow took half an hour to make. Henry also ordered bows, lances, cannonballs and gunpowder and much else…

Societe de Oriflamme

In April 1415, Henry issued more than 300 Indentures. Each indenture commissioned a captain (lord, knight, esquire or gentleman) to raise and provide a specified number of soldiers – men-at-arms and/or archers. All to be paid by the King.

The detailed agreement was written in duplicate on the same piece of parchment, but from opposite ends. Once signed, it was cut in half with a zigzag pattern. This ensured that there was a perfect match, and that neither half of the agreement could be changed!



A typical indenture of the type issued by Henry

In total an army of **11,248 men** were raised:

Of the 11,248, some 2,266 were men-at-arms while 8,982 were archers.

Henry also recruited 560 miners, smiths and carpenters to help lay siege to towns or cities. And each lord or knight took along his own chaplain and, often, two pages.

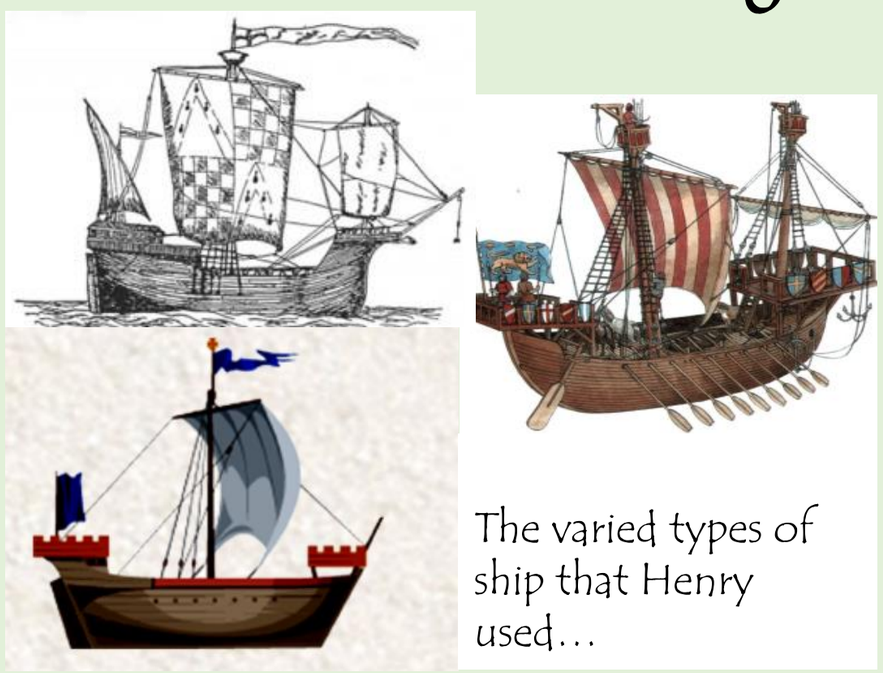
Men-at-arms wore full armour, just like this, shown here on a gravestone.

LOCAL

Joyce Sadd, who has lived in Bishop's Waltham for 40 years, has an ancestor called John Crocker who served at Agincourt. He was young and may have been a page, but he distinguished himself by his bravery!

BISHOP'S WALTHAM MUSEUM

Steps to war:



The varied types of ship that Henry used…

Step 3: Find a fleet of ships…

In May 1415 all English ships able to carry 20 tons, from Newcastle in the north to Bristol in the west, were commanded to the Solent. Any foreign ships of a similar size, currently in port, were also commandeered.

Eventually, some 1,500 ships would arrive, seeking shelter in the creeks and inlets facing the Isle of Wight, as well as the harbours at Southampton, Portsmouth and Portchester.

The King had to employ 22,000 mariners to sail his huge fleet!

HORSES

The army had to be prepared to march so most soldiers brought a horse. Since some lords took a number of horses (one took over 20) there were probably 20,000 horses to be shipped. All had to be suspended on board in cloth slings to prevent harm to them or the ship.

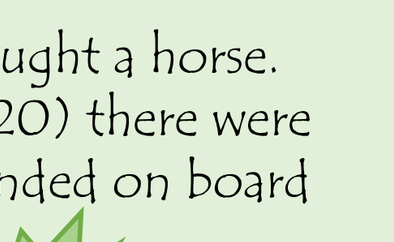
Bibliothèque nationale de France

Step 4: Feed your army…

In order to feed the thousands of men in his army, as they gathered in Hampshire, the King ordered the Sheriffs of Kent, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, Dorset, Somerset and Hampshire to send between 100 or 200 oxen each (1,000+ cattle).

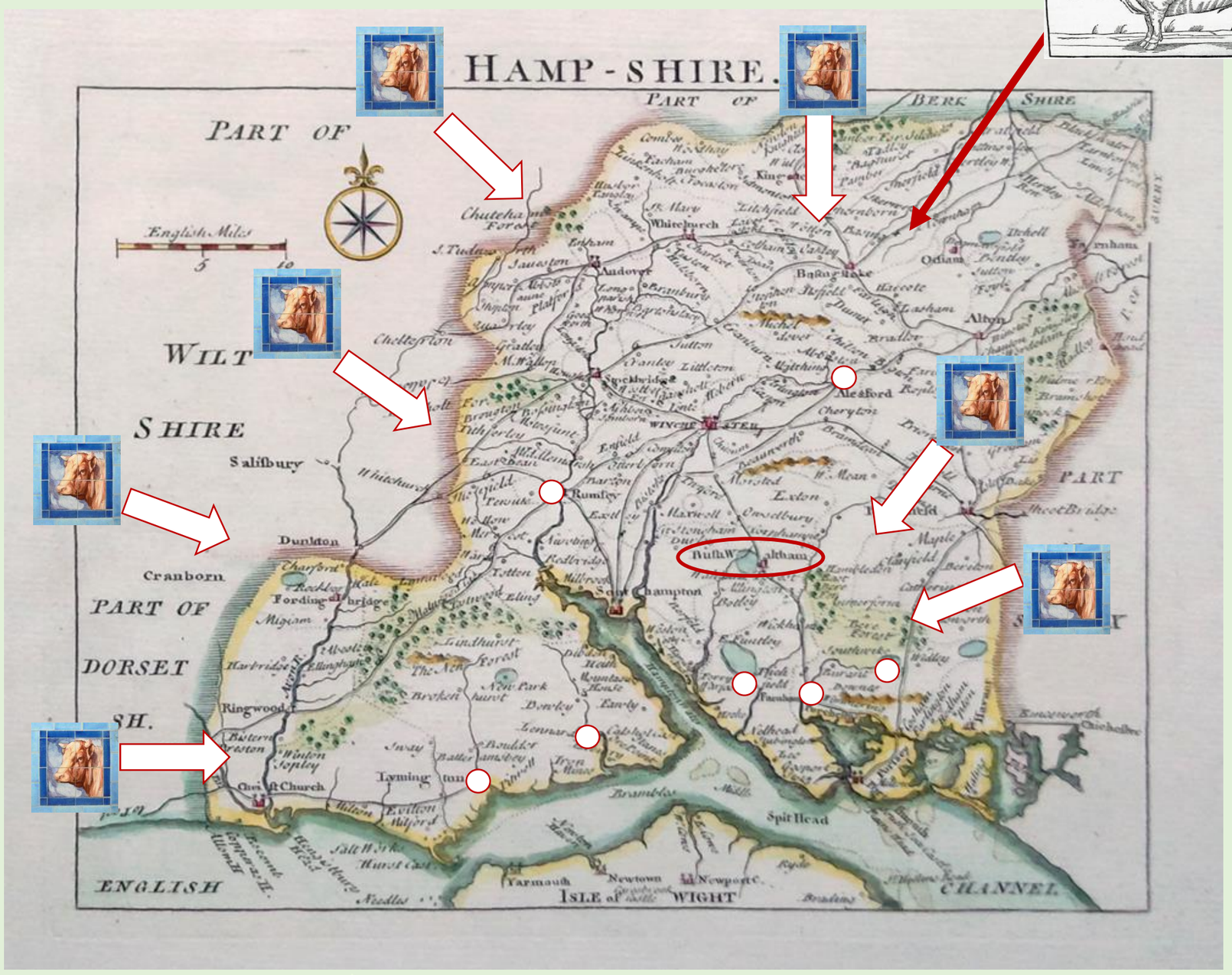
LOCAL

○ The oxen were to be driven to Lymington, Beaulieu, Romsey, Southwick, Alresford, Fareham and Titchfield.



LOCAL

Every Hampshire town and hamlet was involved too!



John Rocque and Thomas Read c. 1741

On 27 May 1415 the Sheriff of Hampshire was ordered "at his peril, under pain of the King's grievous wrath…etc." to proclaim in Winchester, Southampton and all other market towns and hamlets, that all lieges dwelling therein to whom it pertains shall by personal oversight of the sheriff or under sheriff bake and brew against the coming of the king to those parts with his retinue… as the sheriff is aware that the King is shortly sailing to foreign parts in order to recover the heritage and rights of the crown, long wrongfully withheld. Signed by the King.

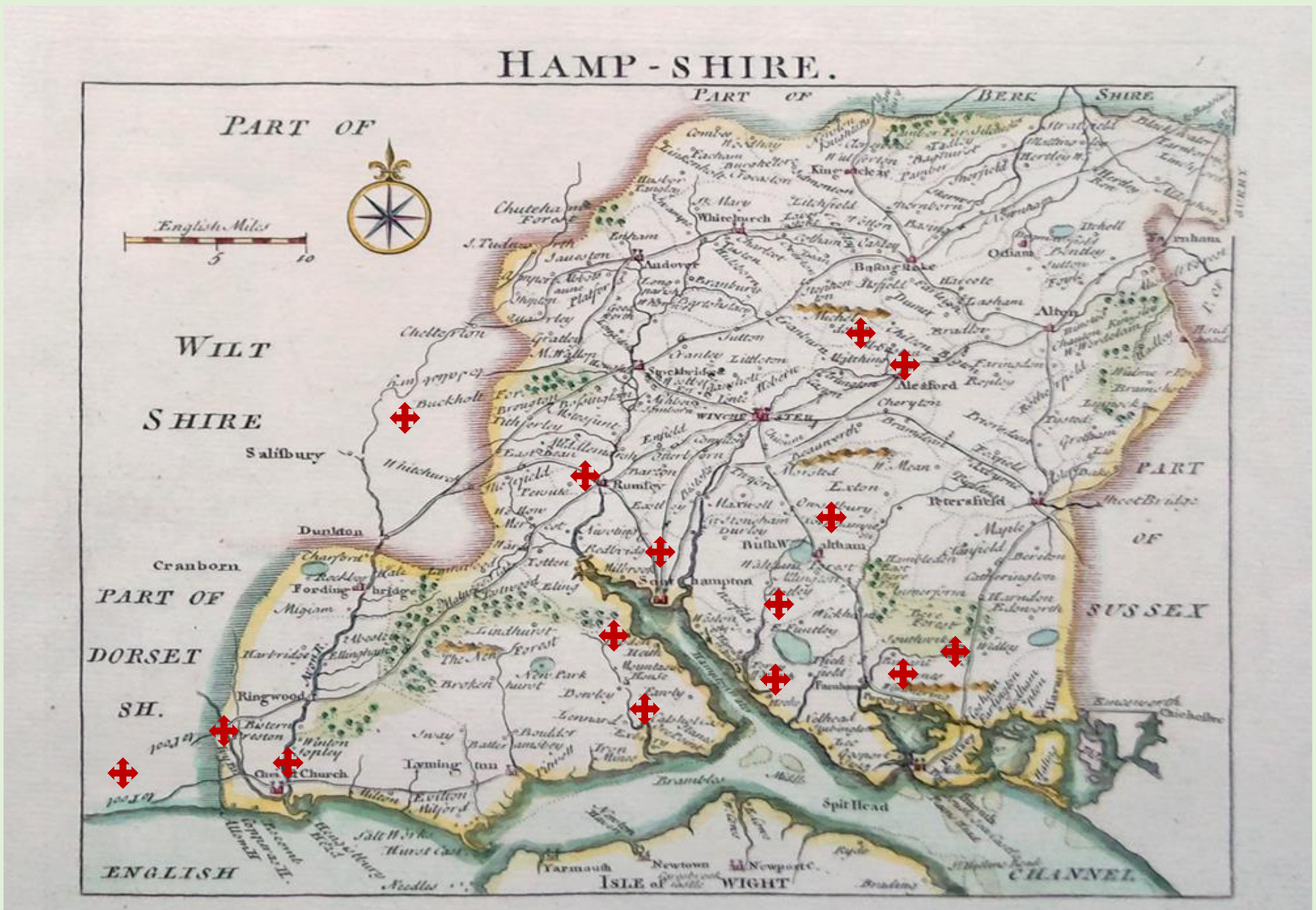
Henry was also concerned about spies, so in May 1415, foreign nationals were forbidden from leaving England and then, in early July, all main English ports were closed. All trade with the continent ceased as the country was put onto a war footing.

BISHOP'S WALTHAM MUSEUM

Ready for war:

Step 5: Muster your army…

During late June and July 1415, Henry's army started to gather across Hampshire. The King himself had visited Southampton during June to make the final decisions about where they would encamp.



Retinues of soldiers, under their captains, mustered at Swanick, Southwick, Titchfield, Christchurch, Canford, Poole, Beaulieu, The Wallops, Southampton Heath, Hythe, Romsey, Alresford, Candover, Portsdown, Hampton Hill (in Swanmore) and elsewhere.

LOCAL

Part of a 15th century camp

John Rocque and Thomas Read c. 1741

The King left London for Winchester on June 15th and sailed for France on August 11th. So for two months he ruled the kingdom from Hampshire whilst making sure everything was ready for war.

During his time here he stayed at Wolvesey Castle in Winchester, Southampton Castle, Titchfield Abbey, Portchester Castle and Bishop's Waltham Palace.

LOCAL

Bishop's Waltham Palace was indeed a palace, with a 1,000 acre deer park. It was owned by Henry's Chancellor and close advisor Henry Beaufort. The latest research shows the King staying at Bishop's Waltham for around ten days in July and August. It seems he might have preferred the luxury of his uncle's Palace, and some deer-hunting – to the rigours of dank medieval castles.

Courtesy English Heritage

Courtesy English Heritage

LEFT: The Palace from the south west showing its moat, orchards and the village of Bishop's Waltham beyond.

RIGHT: The Bishop of Winchester entertaining guests seated at the high table in the Great Hall of the Palace.

BISHOP'S WALTHAM MUSEUM

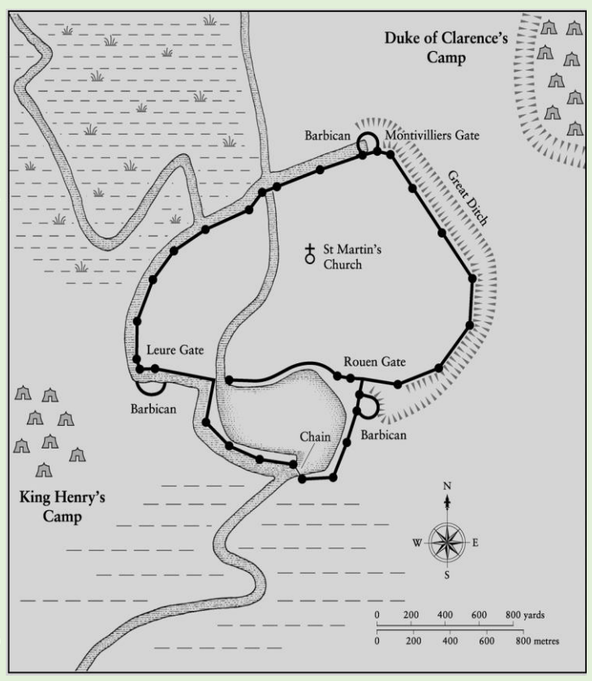
To France!

Henry and his army sail…

On 8th August 1415, Henry took a barge from Portchester out to his flagship, the *Trinity Royal*, which was crewed by 300 sailors. He ordered the yard supporting its huge purple sail to be half-raised. This was a signal for all the ships scattered along the coast opposite the Isle of White to load their cargoes of men and animals and make their way to the upper Solent. By 11th August a vast flotilla had formed and, at about 3 pm, the great sail was fully raised and the fleet set out for Harfleur at the mouth of the Seine..

Why Harfleur?

Henry wanted to threaten Paris – further up the Seine – whilst having an escape route up to Calais (in English hands). All his ambassadors had passed through Harfleur for the previous two years and reported back in detail on the very well fortified town.



Agincourt: Bernard Cornwell. Harper Perennial

Harfleur showing its fortifications

Once landed, Henry's army laid siege. Surrounded by such a large force it would have been expected that Harfleur would surrender quickly. But the 100-man garrison had been unexpectedly reinforced by a further 300 men-at-arms. The siege would now take weeks!

The King and his brother camped on different sides of the town, but the swampy ground between them became a devastating source of dysentery (the 'bloody flux'). Hundreds of Henry's soldiers sickened and some died.

Once Harfleur fell on September 11th, Henry was faced with a problem. Should he return to England or press on and try to bring the French to battle?

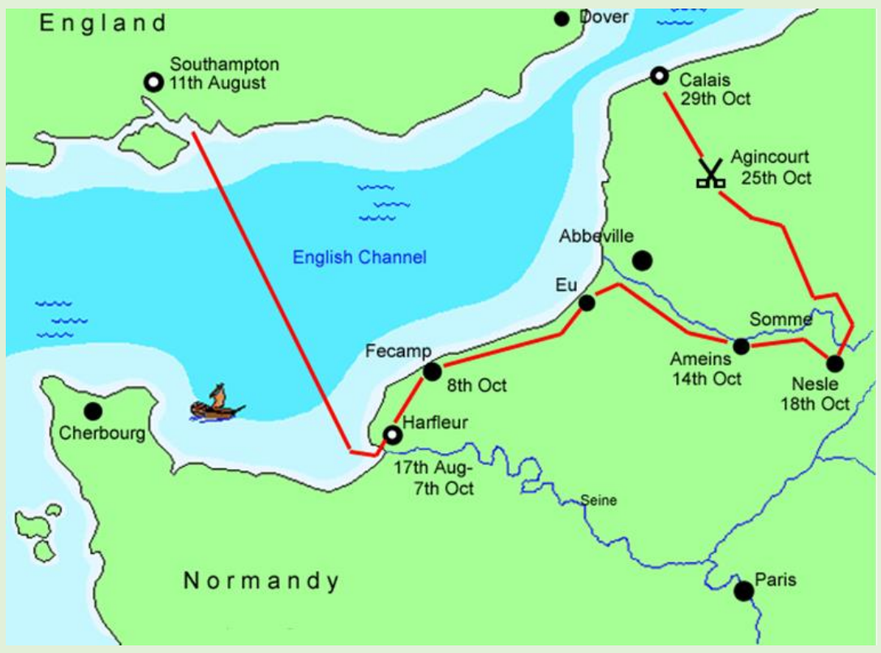
Against his Council's advice he chose to march to Calais with a smaller army, one that was already weakened by dysentery.

In medieval times, pitched battles were very rare. Skirmishes, sieges, ambushes were normal. Battles were not! That's why the Hundred Years War dragged on. There were very few decisive victories or defeats!

The English army behind palisades at the siege of Harfleur

The march to Calais…

Having sent nearly 2,000 sick and wounded soldiers and captains back to England, Henry set out on 7th October carrying enough food for the eight days they expected it to take to reach Calais.



The march went well until they found the crossing on the Somme, at Abbeville, defended. They had to march well inland to find the crossing near Nesle on October 18th.

Seven days later, now desperately short of food and still miles from Calais, they found a huge French army blocking their path near a small village called Agincourt.

At Agincourt

On 24th October 1415 the English army, led by a screen of scouts, marched through the Picardy town of Frévent, now within 30 miles of Calais and safety. As the army entered the valley beyond the town, the scouts galloped back with the news that an immense army now blocked the road ahead.

One army is exhausted, hungry, weak from dysentery, the other is fresh, eager and delighted to have cornered a weakened English army. Henry expects a battle there and then but the French make no signs of attack. Eventually the English stand down and endure a cold October night of heavy rain (no fires, no talking).

The two armies represented very different attitudes. For the French, chivalry and glory was everything and bowmen were seen as no more than armed peasants. In England, since Edward III's reign, practising archery every week was the legal requirement for all men over 15 years old. As the figures show (right), the two armies relied on very different tactics!

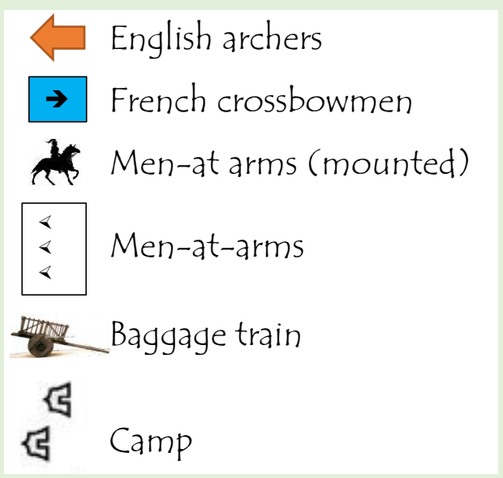
French army of 12,000+

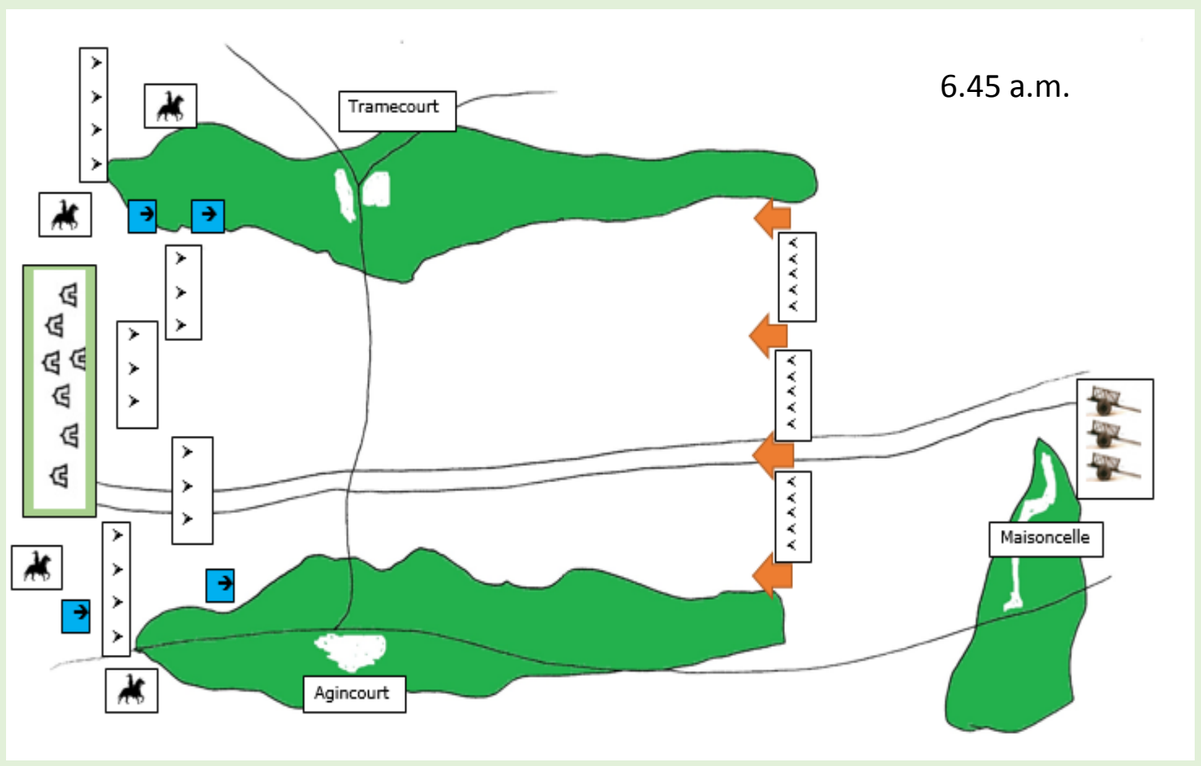
8,000 men-at-arms
4,000 crossbowmen

English army of 9,000+

1,600 men-at-arms
7,600 archers

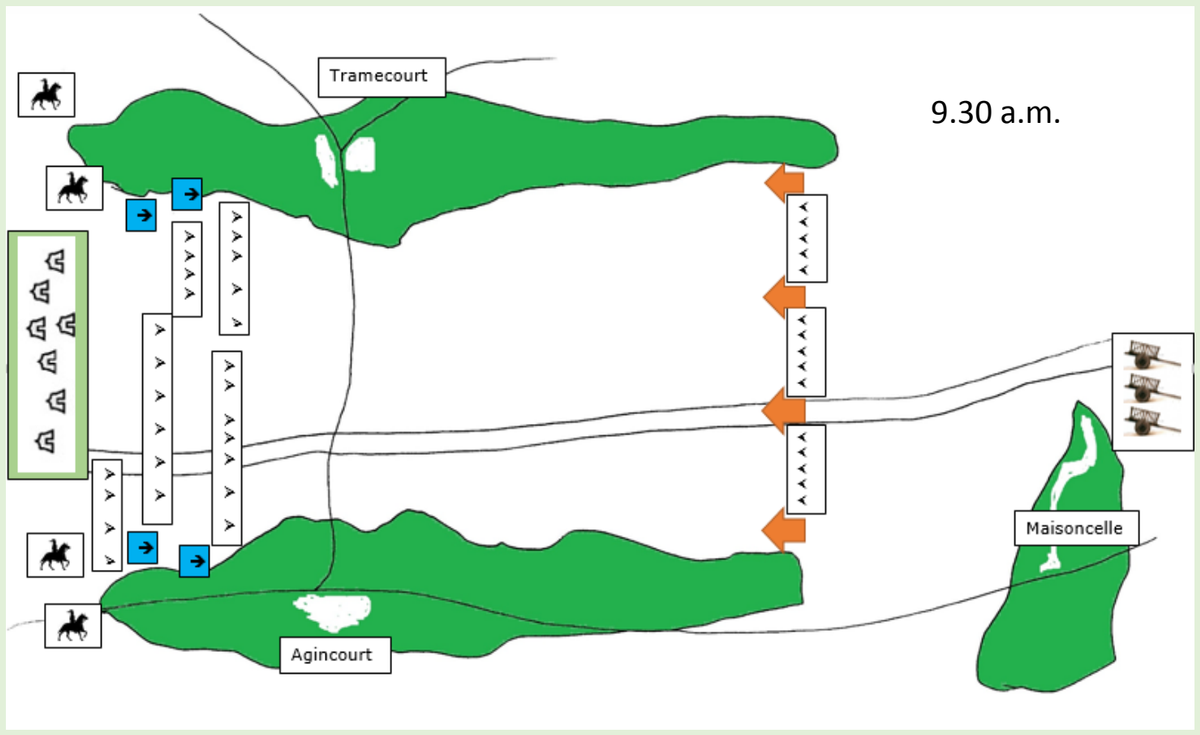
These figures are conservative and are based on modern research. Historically the French army has been estimated at two, five and even ten times this number.

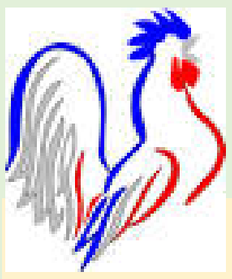




It is dawn the next morning, St Crispin's Day. Henry's army slept in the rain near Maisoncelles but at dawn is drawn up, facing the French, between the woods on either side. The French army is just stirring and horses are being exercised.

Nearly three hours later, at 9.30 a.m. the French show little sign of mounting an attack. Because reinforcements are constantly arriving, they are in no hurry. Henry's army is cold, underfed and feeling increasingly daunted by the huge force visibly growing in front of them.





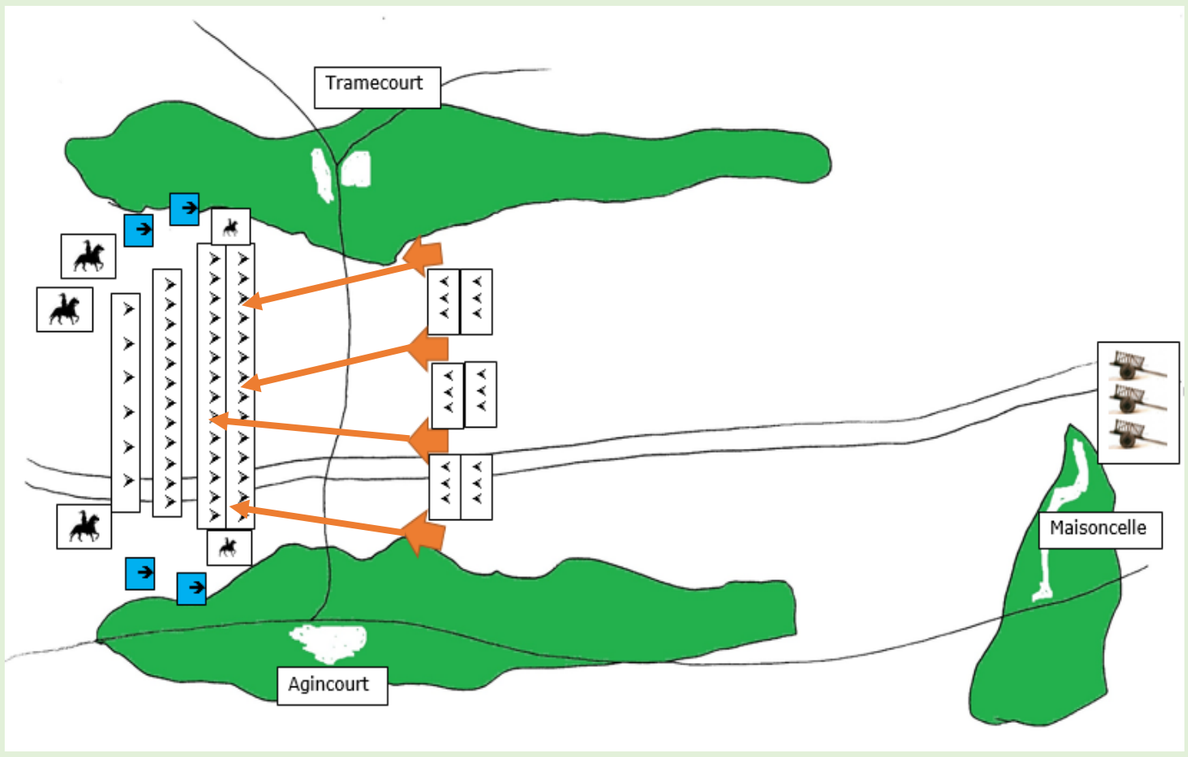
The French Problem:

The French had drawn up a battle plan some time in advance. This anticipated an attack by three battle lines of dismounted men-at-arms preceded by a charge with a large force of mounted knights intended to disperse and destroy the lightly armoured English bowmen. This would leave the English men-at-arms at a huge numerical disadvantage. Such is the confidence of the French that all their important nobility insist on being in the first battle line. It is, in their view, the only way to gain glory and any chance of taking prisoners for ransom. All earlier plans are ignored!

BISHOP'S WALTHAM MUSEUM

At Agincourt: the battle

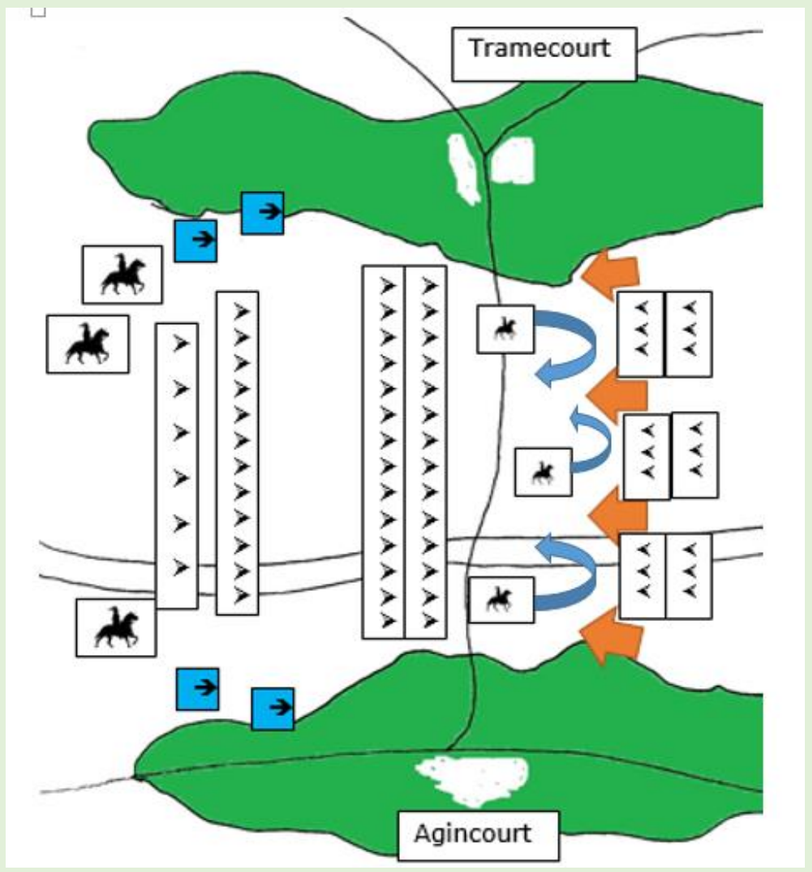
Aware that morale is being sapped by the prolonged wait and realising that the French are gaining strength by the hour, Henry now flouts all existing military wisdom and orders his weaker army to advance.

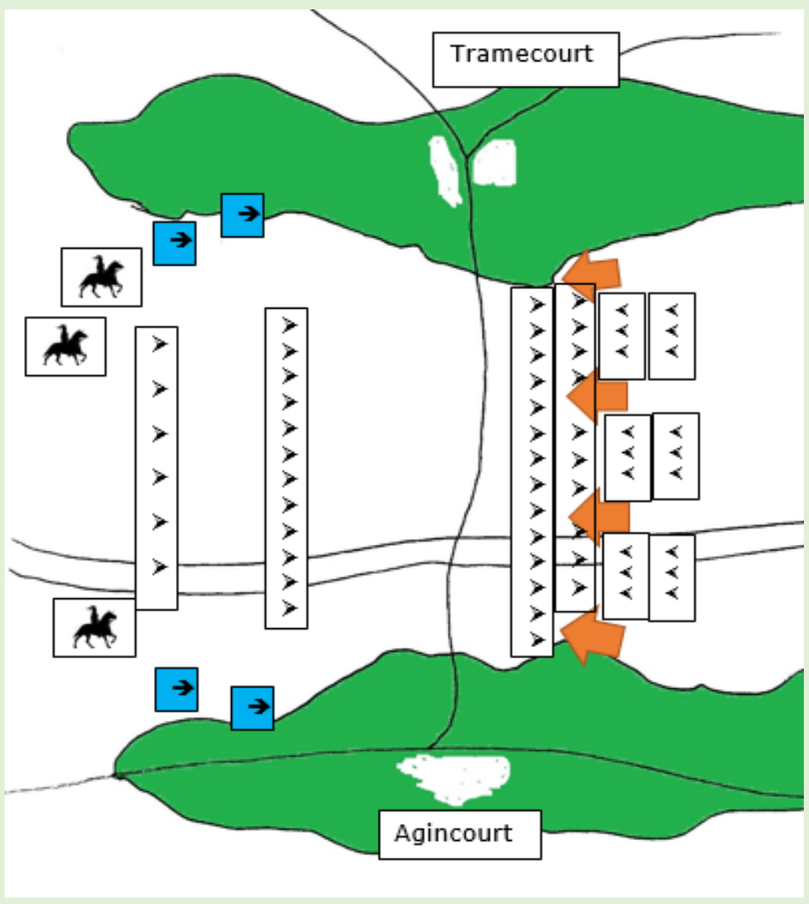


His bowmen pull their 6 foot wooden stakes from the ground, shoulder them, and move forward with the men-at-arms alongside. Henry takes up a new position at the narrowest point on the field. Shocked, the French hurriedly try to prepare for battle. The English archers open 'galling' fire into the French ranks – designed to enrage their enemy.

In response, some groups of French knights try to charge the archers down. But, protected behind their wooden stakes, the bowmen unleash waves of arrows at both men and mount. The horses refuse to ride into the stakes, shy away, fall in the mud or unseat their riders. The few remaining horsemen and many unmounted horses, still chased by showers of arrows, ride back into the advancing, dismounted men-at-arms and cause mayhem.

The hasty and partial charge is a catastrophe. Thick wet clay has been churned into a sea of mud through which the disordered French battle lines now have to struggle!





Some sources say that in the battle the French were so crowded that there were four French men-at-arms per square metre!

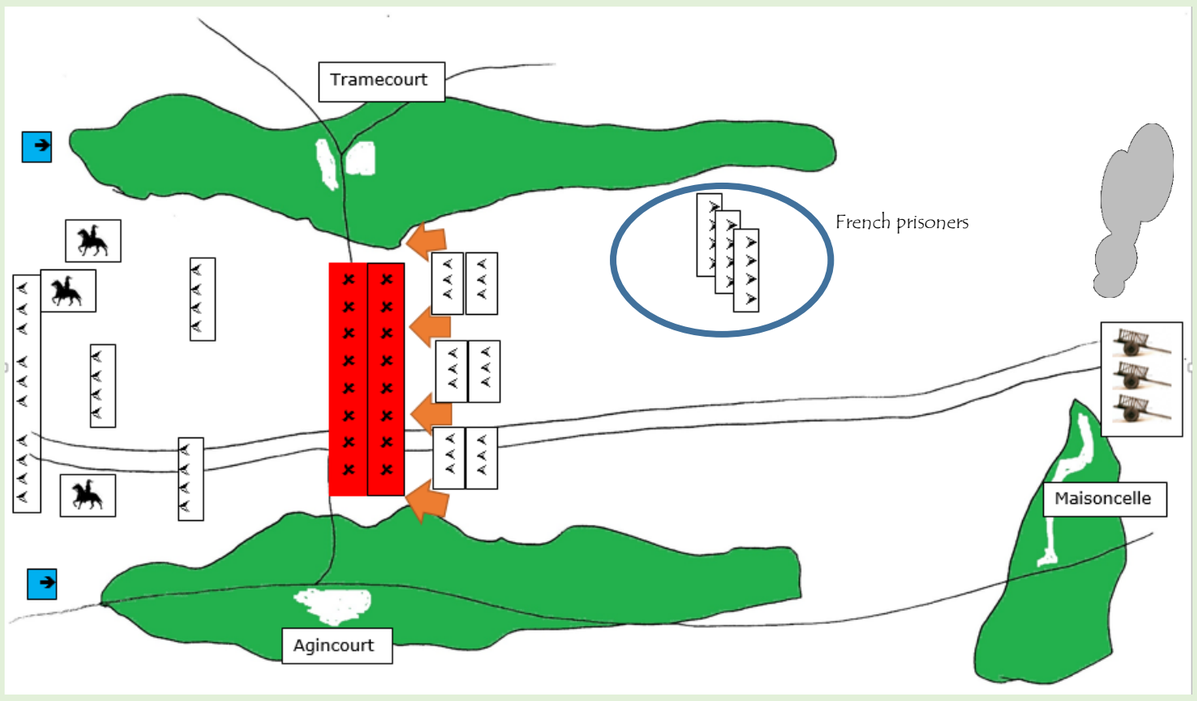
The nobility of France advances, on foot, under an arrow storm –70,000 arrows a minute are now falling on them. Weighed down by armour, blinded by sweat and recently charged by terrified horses, they struggle on through the slippery, clinging clay. Hardly able to see through the slits in their helmets, they clamber over dead and dying men and horses. Some reports suggest that near the English line the mound was already six foot high! And they have yet to strike a blow!

Eventually battle is joined, but funnelled together by the woods on each side and pressed by a second line behind, they are so tightly packed that many cannot even raise their weapons. Archers leap out from their protective stakes using daggers to stab through eye-slits, throat and groin joints to kill their lumbering foe.

Armour typically weighed the same as 20 bags of sugar!

Agincourt: the aftermath

The fight is bloody and where sheer momentum pushes back the English men-at-arms, the French have a chance to do battle. But so many are already dead or wounded that the remains of the second line retreat in disarray. Seeing this, the third battle line – made up of those too lowly in rank to join the vanguard, leave the field. The battle is over – or is it?



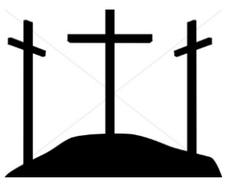
The English have taken between 1,500 and 2,000 prisoners, many are worthy of ransom. These prisoners are held behind the English lines, guarded by a few soldiers.

As the English sort through the dead and dying, lying in their hundreds in front of them, they see the French forces apparently forming up again. There has already been an attack on Henry's baggage train at Maisoncelle and so Henry is now faced with an awful dilemma.

If the French re-group and attack again, and if he is in danger of attack from the rear, he cannot risk having as many French prisoners in his midst as he has men-at-arms! So, he takes the terrible decision to have them put to death – apart from a few hundred of the most noble (and valuable) of them.

It turns out that it is simply new French reinforcements appearing on the field, before departing again in haste, and a localised raid that set fire to the baggage train. But it is too late. Hundreds of prisoners have been put to death. Nevertheless, despite this possible stain on his reputation, Henry is victorious.

Estimates of the dead vary greatly.



Conservatively, the English lost around 120-400 killed

The French (equally conservatively) lost between 4,000 and 6,000 dead with an additional 1-2,000 being wounded or taken prisoner.

Burial pits for 5,800 dead were dug, whilst others had their body taken home for local burial.

Henry returned via Calais to England. He had, by 'God's Will', proven his right to be King of England and to be the rightful claimant to the French throne. He was feted in England and recognised across Europe as a true warrior king to be feared and respected.

Henry V and Catherine of Valois marry in 1420

After a successful campaign the following year, Henry was formally recognised as the heir to the French throne (thus disinheriting the French King's son, the Dauphin). He married the King's daughter Catherine in 1420 and in December 1421 they had a son who could claim to be the King of both England and France: Henry VI.

Less than a year later Henry V, aged just 35, died of dysentery on campaign in France. His nine-month old son, Henry VI, on whom so much depended, became the pawn of power-hungry guardians. This led directly to the War of the Roses in England and a prolonged period of civil war in England.

LOCAL

A Henry VI half-groat from the 1420s, minted in Calais, was found in a garden in Bank Street, Bishop's Waltham in 2002.

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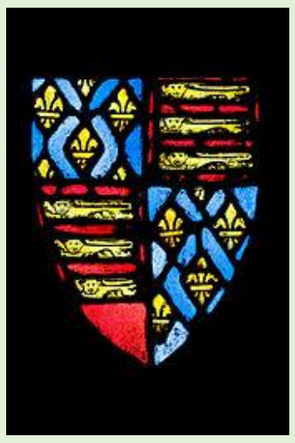
Henry's role model: King Edward III, his great-grandfather.



Stained glass window
circa 1350

To underline his claim, Edward's coat of arms was re-designed to quarter the French fleur-de-lys with the English lions. Heraldic devices often made strong statements.

There seems little doubt that young Henry took his great-grandfather, Edward III as a role model. Renowned as a warrior king who had beaten the Scots and the French, Edward's reign had been long and prosperous.

Edward III with the crowns of Scotland and France impaled on his sword

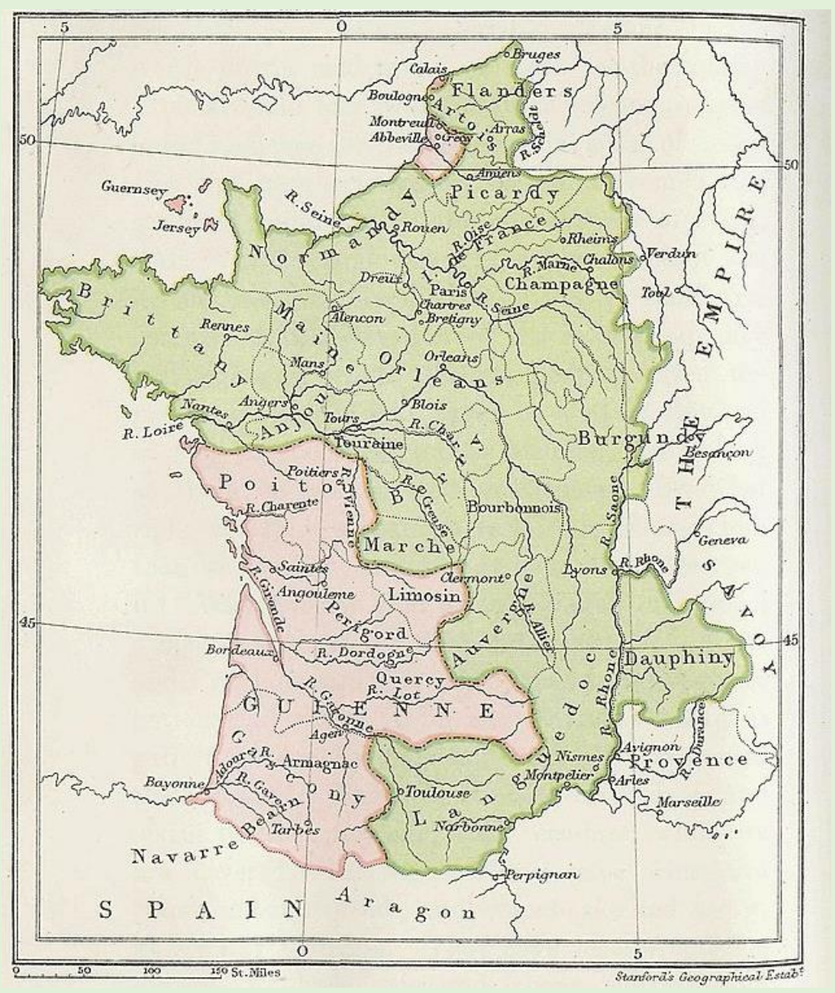
Provoked by the French king's seizure of English-held Aquitaine and Ponthieu, Edward had set out to regain all of Henry II's lands in France and to reclaim the French crown [see Panel 2].

Although he couldn't know it at the time, Edward had just started what was to become known as the '100 Year's War'

In 1346 Edward invaded Normandy with a force of 15,000 men. He sacked Caen and then marched across northern France. At Crécy, just north of the Somme, he fought and, with the help of his archers, soundly defeated a much larger army led by the French King. He then went on to take Calais.

"Edward III counting the dead on the battlefield of Crécy" by Jean Froissart.

The taking of Calais was the greatest English venture of the entire Hundred Years' War, involving an army of 35,000 men.



Areas of France (pink) ceded by Treaty of Brétigny (1360) to the English crown

Edward's son, the Black Prince, then fought and won the Battle of Poitiers. So complete was the victory that it delivered a devastating blow to the French crown and France ceded a large part of its northern and western territories to England in **the Treaty of Brétigny** (1360). In return, Edward gives up his claim to the French throne.

But 13 years later, in 1369, Charles V retook **all the English territory** except Guienne (Bordeaux/Gascony) and Calais.

But in 1348 the Black Death struck England with a vengeance – killing around a third of the population! So thereafter, for generations, the numbers that could be raised for armies was much smaller.

Henry V used his great-grandfather's claim to lands in France, and indeed the French throne, to provide a common cause which would unite England against a common enemy. In particular he used the unfulfilled Treaty of Brétigny to pursue his claims!

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