

## 1. Why did Edwin and Morcar rebel against William?

- In 1067 William felt England was secure enough to return to Normandy with Edgar Aetheling, Earl Edwin, Earl Morcar and Earl Waltheof. By December Norman control was under threat.
- Causes of the revolt** - 1. William went back on his word that Earl Edwin would marry his daughter and made his earldom smaller. 2. Odo and William FitzOsbern were reported to have seized land from Anglo-Saxons during their time in control. 3. Earl Morcar's Earldom was reduced in size. 4. Many Earls reported that William had taken away their land. 5. Castles were resented as they were the symbol of Norman domination and because houses were demolished to build them. 6. William raised a heavy geld tax in December 1066, in which the money would be used for the good of Normandy and would not benefit the English.
- Events** – In 1068 Edwin and Morcar fled William's court and joined a rebellion against him. Other Earls included Waltheof, Gospatric of Northumbria and Edgar Aetheling. William found out and sent men North. Edwin and Morcar quickly surrendered. York sent William hostages to show their obedience. Nottingham had fallen. Edgar fled to Scotland, where Malcolm III took him in – others begged for forgiveness.
- Outcomes** – Edwin and Morcar were pardoned. A new resistance grew in Scotland. William's control of the revolt showed that further attempts would fail. It is unlikely that the rebels were united in their cause. One reason William had no need to compromise was because his castle building proved effective in imposing enough control.

## 2. How successful were the rebellions in the North?

- Series of rebellions began in the North in 1069. Rebels from Northumbria joined forces with Edgar Aetheling, who had the backing of Malcolm III. King Sweyn of Denmark sent ships and warriors.
- After being betrayed by Gospatric William named Robert Cumin as new Earl of Northumbria, who launched attacks on towns and villages. In Durham the bishop warned him violence had caused resentment. The rebels killed Cumin.
- A similar uprising occurred in York, which killed the governor and many Norman troops. Edgar the Aetheling came down from Scotland and joined the rebels. William arrived quickly with a large army. Edgar escaped back to Scotland.
- King Sweyn arrived in September 1069. The Danes met up with Edgar's troops. Anglo-Saxons across England joined Edgar. This army marched on York. 3,000 Normans were killed and castles destroyed.
- After the victory in York, the Danes sailed to the coast of Lincolnshire and Anglo-Saxon rebels scattered. William's army went to hunt them down, but the rebels had disappeared. The rebellion started again once William left. William knew he could not fight the Danes by land or sea and so he paid them a large amount of money to leave. He also embarked on a campaign, known as the 'Harrying of the North' (1069-1070).

## 3. Was the Harrying of the North justified?

- Robert Cumin and many more had been slaughtered at York and William swore revenge. William had not realised how different the North was to the South of England. The area that William's troops laid waste to were from the River Humber to the River Tees. Around 100,000 people died. Without any crops of livestock and with little protection after their homes were burned down, people starved or froze to death. Seeds for next years crops were destroyed and thousands fled. Some reports claim there was cannibalism and people selling themselves into slavery for food.
- Long term impacts** – the Harrying of the North was a deliberate attempt to remove a threat to Norman control. 60% of Yorkshire was classed as waste and without livestock. There were between 80,000 and 150,000 fewer people than in January 1066. Northumbria was no longer suitable for a Danish invasion. The Harrying of the North was a turning point as William decided to replace many from Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. William was criticised by the Pope for his actions and spent years trying to make amends.

## 4. How did William defeat Hereward the Wake?

- In 1070 a Danish fleet returned to England with King Sweyn, who was set up on the Isle of Ely. East Anglia was part of the Danelaw and Sweyn made alliances with Hereward the Wake. Hereward's lands had been seized and given to a Norman.
- Hereward led an attack on Peterborough Abbey whose abbot had been replaced by a Norman (Tuold). He and his Danish allies seized the abbey's treasures and held the isle for over a year. In 1071 Morcar joined the rebels. William knew it was easy for the Danes to sail up local rivers and trigger further rebellions. William sent messengers to King Sweyn offering him money if the Danes would go home. The Danes sailed home. He surrounded the Isle of Ely and ordered men to build a bridge, but it collapsed. The second bridge proved stronger so William's cavalry could cross on to Ely. In the chaos of fighting, Hereward probably escaped and Morcar was imprisoned. Some rebels had their hands or feet cut off.

## 5. Why did William's own people rebel?

- In 1075 Norman Earls rebelled against William. Their leader was Ralph de Gael. Ralph plotted with Roger de Breteuil and Waltheof to overthrow William and divide the country between them. Ralph asked the Danes for help.
- Reasons for the revolt** – loss of lands, William's absence, loss of privileges, powerful allies, loss of power and Anglo-Saxon rebelliousness. Roger had lost land, Ralph had lost power and wealth and Waltheof's motives are unknown.
- Ralph told Roger and Waltheof of the planned revolt at a wedding feast. Ralph and Roger anticipated support from Anglo-Saxons and Danes. The revolt did not get support from Anglo-Saxons and the Danes arrived too late. Waltheof did not want to be involved and informed Archbishop Lanfranc. Lanfranc wrote letters to Roger trying to stop him. He reminded him of how loyal his father had been to William. He excommunicated Roger until he stopped his plans. Roger was prevented from crossing the River Severn and Ralph was stopped from leaving East Anglia. William returned and was met with Danes who had 200 ships. However, rather than invade, the fleet raided up the east coast, sacked York cathedral and returned home. Ralph escaped to Brittany. Waltheof fled abroad, but returned when William convinced him, but was executed. William imprisoned Roger for life. William travelled back to Normandy and attacked Ralph's castle.