

William The Conqueror

(King William I of England 1028-1087)

William was the Duke of Normandy. (Normandy is in North France). The Normans were themselves descended from the Vikings. William's ancestor was *Rollo*, the first Viking ruler or 'Duke' of Normandy. William's father was *Robert I*, Duke of Normandy.

Robert never married and William's mother was a peasant woman called *Herleva*.

Because his parents were not married and his mother was a peasant, many people (including relatives of William), didn't want him to become Duke when his father died. (In 1035). There were many attempts to kill him when he was younger. By 1047 William had defeated many of his enemies in Normandy, he married *Matilda of Flanders* in around 1051 and the state of Flanders became William's powerful ally. He finally gained control of Normandy in 1060. William was a cousin of the English King *Edward The Confessor*. Sadly, *Edward The Confessor* had no children and William claimed that *Edward* had promised the throne of England to him after he died. But *Harold Godwinson*, a powerful Saxon earl, had said that *Edward* had promised him the throne instead. William claimed that he should be king of England and that *Harold* had in fact, sworn to support William earlier in 1064.

But *Harold* had himself crowned King of England in January 1066, after *Edward the Confessor* died. William built a huge fleet of ships and sailed for England in September 1066. On October 14th, that same year, William defeated *Harold* at **The Battle Of Hastings** and was crowned king of England on Christmas day 1066 in Westminster, London. He did not gain total control of England until 1075. In his reign, he built many castles and cathedrals in England and Normandy, but he had many troubles to deal with, including his eldest son *Robert*, who rebelled and fought against in a battle. William died after a stomach wound got infected (following a riding accident, at a siege in Mantes, Northern France in 1087). He was buried in Caen, Normandy. It is said that his body burst open at the funeral and spread a foul smell through the church.

Why not colour him in?

He is covered in mail, a type of armour made from thousands of tiny, metal rings, linked together.

How can you make this look like metal? Light greys perhaps?

Look at his shield, this is based on a shield shown on the Bayeux tapestry. (Look up The Bayeux Tapestry)

Name _____

Class _____

Can you label William?

Use these words to help:

Conical helmet (on his head)

Coif (hood of mail, in some cases these were part of the hauberk)

Hauberk (body armour made of mail)

Shield (this style is called a 'kite shield')

Chausses (mail leg coverings)

Boots (made of leather)

Sword (iron blade)

Fact: In 1086 William ordered that a huge survey of England was done. This became known as the **Domesday Book**. Why not look this up online?

