

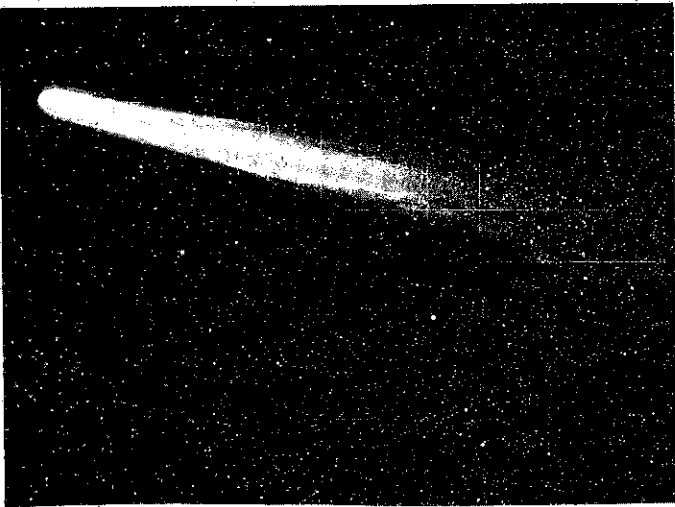
# 1 Duke William Beats King Harold 1066

**knight mail oath**  
**comet conqueror**

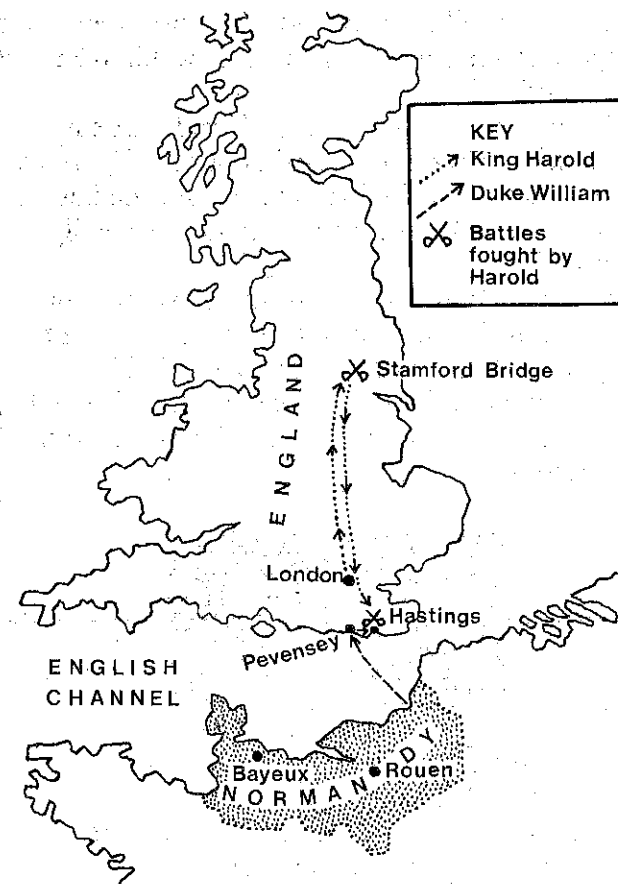
In January, 1066, Edward the Confessor, the King of England, died. He had no children to replace him as king. Instead, Harold, the King's brother-in-law, was picked. But Harold had two important enemies. One was his own brother Tostig. The other was William, the Duke of Normandy.

Some people said that Edward had promised William that he would be the next king. They also said that Harold had made a solemn **oath** or promise to help William. But others replied that William had forced Harold to make that promise, so it did not count. They believed that, when Edward was dying, he had chosen Harold to take over from him.

Whatever had been said, Harold was quickly made king when Edward died. William was very angry. He began to get ready to attack England and defeat Harold.



This was the comet which the English saw. It is now called Halley's Comet and appears at intervals of roughly 76 years.



Map showing where the armies went, leading up to the Battle of Hastings.

Then, an unusual thing happened. In April, a bright comet appeared in the sky. For a week, its long rays could be seen each night. People thought it meant there would be great changes in England. They believed it was a sign from God and they were frightened. They waited to see what would happen next.

In September, Harold heard some bad news. Three hundred ships had landed in the north. They brought an army led by Tostig and the King of Norway. They had come to attack England.

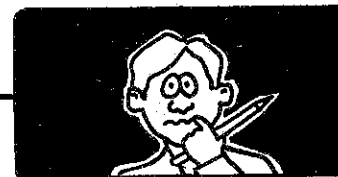
But Harold had been waiting in the south in case Duke William attacked. Now, he had to hurry north to deal with this new threat.

His army fought the Norwegians at Stamford Bridge, where Harold won a great victory. Both Tostig and the King of Norway were killed. Their army was crushed. The survivors only needed 24 of their ships to get home.

Meanwhile, Duke William had been busy. He had got together men and supplies, put them in 100 ships and set sail for England. Just three days after Harold won his battle in the north, William landed in the south.

This was more bad news for Harold! His men were resting when they heard about it. The army was tired out after the long march and the battle. Many men had been killed. Others were badly wounded.

Harold was advised to wait until his army had recovered and he had found fresh troops. But he thought a delay would be dangerous. While William was building a wooden castle at Hastings, Harold set off to march the 400 kilometres south to meet him.



- Who died in January 1066?
- Who were Harold's enemies?
- Why were people frightened by the comet?
- a) Draw the map in your book.  
b) Look at your map. Do you think Harold was right to march south so quickly to fight William?
- Why do you think William built a *wooden* castle at Hastings? Why didn't he build a stone castle?
- a) If you had been William, what sort of supplies would you have brought to England?  
b) Look at evidence B, which shows the Normans loading their supplies. Write down anything you can see which you missed out from your last answer.
- In evidence A, which man do you think is Harold? How did you decide?
- Draw the scene when Harold is made king. Make your drawing like those from the Bayeux Tapestry.
- Find a book about the Bayeux Tapestry in your library and look for the picture of Harold being crowned. How is yours different?



These pictures are from the Bayeux Tapestry. It is made of wool woven on linen and tells the story of the Norman invasion. It is like a huge strip-cartoon, about 70-metres long. (That is about the width of a football pitch.)

A Harold makes his promise to Duke William.



B These men are loading up the ships with supplies.

