Abstracts

Lewes: the campaign and the battle
*Prof David Carpenter*

In his talk David Carpenter considers the key questions about what actually happened at the battle of Lewes. Was it fought on the hill above the town or down in its outskirts? Was King Henry III captured on the battle field or did he get back to the priory and only surrender on the following day? Where was the famous mill, subject of a contemporary ballad, in which the king's brother, Richard earl of Cornwall and king of Germany, took shelter? What were the sizes of the armies, how many people were killed and where were they buried? Behind all these questions lies the extraordinary fact of Simon de Montfort's victory. How was it possible for him to defeat what all the contemporary sources agree was a much larger army of the king?

How did all this political turmoil begin: what were the causes of the revolution of 1258?
*Dr Huw Ridgeway*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>JOHN (1199-1216) m</th>
<th>Isabella of Angouleme (ii) Count of La Marche (Lusignan)</th>
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<td>HENRY III m. Eleanor of Provence (1216-1272)</td>
<td>Richard earl of Cornwall (King of Romans) m. Sanchia of Provence</td>
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<td>EDWARD I m. Eleanor of Castile (1272-1307)</td>
<td>Edmund, earl of Lancaster</td>
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The Battle of Lewes and the civil war of 1264-1267 were the direct result of an unprecedented rebellion against royal government. In 1258 King Henry III, in the forty-second year of his long reign, was forced to surrender his royal power to a Council of Magnates operating within a constitutional framework, the 'Provisions of Oxford'. This 'Baronial Regime', lasting from 1258-1261, attempted to reform both central and local government with measures benefitting all sections of society. Not surprisingly, '1258' has even been called 'the First Revolution in English History'. This talk will outline recent ideas about the causes - long and short-term, political, social and economic - of the 1258 crisis. There is now a debate, still unresolved, amongst Historians whether '1258' was a 'Revolution orchestrated from above' (i.e., the royal Court) or the response to 'pressure from
below. All agree, however, that it was an upheaval which launched remarkable political ideas - but also years of instability leading ultimately to civil war.

**HENRY III**

Some key dates

**Minority**
1216   Aged 9, succeeds King John  
1216-17 Civil war  
1219-32 Hubert de Burgh, Justiciar, in power  
1232-34 Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester (a foreigner) in power

**Personal Rule**
1234   Henry III's personal rule begins  
1236   Marries Eleanor of Provence. Last major 'Parliamentary' tax (1237)  
1239   Birth of Henry's heir, 'The Lord Edward' (future Edward I)  
1242-3 Poitou campaign  
1244   Probable date of the 'Paper Constitution' (some demands for elected officials revived in 1248,1249 and 1255)  
1247   Arrival of the Lusignans at Court; 1252 'Alien' factions first quarrel  
1253-4 Gascon Campaign  
1257   New Councillors' Oath; Richard of Cornwall becomes King of Germany; Welsh Campaign (Welsh revolt since 1256)

**'Baronial Reform and Rebellion’**
1258   Provisions of Oxford  
1259   Provisions of Westminster; Treaty of Paris completed  
1259-60 Rebellion of Lord Edward and Simon de Montfort  
1261   Henry III recovers power, with support of Pope and King of France  
1263   (early Summer) Second rebellion of Simon de Montfort: temporarily victorious  
   (October) Henry III recovers power  
   Battle of Lewes (14 May): Simon de Montfort in power  
1265   Battle of Evesham (4 Aug): Henry III restored  
1266   Rebellion of earl of Derby & 'The Disinherited'  
   (October) The Dictum of Kenilworth  
1267   Rebellion of earl of Gloucester

**Aftermath**
1269   Westminster Abbey completed  
1270-74 Lord Edward sets off on Crusade etc  
1272   Death of Henry III (and Richard of Cornwall earlier in the year)
The road to civil war: implementing the baronial reform programme and the royalist reaction, 1258-65
Dr Adrian Jobson

In the revolution of April 1258, the barons seized control of England’s government. Over the next two years they embarked upon an ambitious programme of legislative and administrative reform that was issued in two major enactments: the Provisions of Oxford and the Provisions of Westminster. Authority was now invested in an elected council that would exercise power on the king’s behalf, a development far more radical than anything proposed by their forefathers in Magna Carta. Henry III eventually overthrew the baronial regime in 1261, but the desire for reform remained undiminished. There followed more than two years of political manoeuvrings as the balance of power regularly shifted between each side. Ultimately, however, only force could break the deadlock and the spring of 1264 saw the country descend into civil war.

Today’s talk will look at some of the major reforms that were initiated by the baronial leadership and, in particular, discuss how each one was intended to remedy a grievance harboured by a certain section of thirteenth-century English society. The reformers soon encountered many obstacles that seriously impeded their efforts at implementing reform effectively, the consequences of which will be examined in some detail. The baronial movement itself was not a single homogenous entity, and consideration will be given to the competing personalities and motivations that impacted upon its long-term success. Henry’s recovery of unfettered power in 1261 will be analysed, with particular attention being paid to his skilful exploitation of the divisions within the reformers’ ranks. The subsequent shifts in the relative political fortunes of both the royalists and the barons from 1261-64 will be examined along with the many failed attempts at finding a negotiated settlement. Next will be a discussion on Montfort and his followers’ growing radicalisation as well as the associated hardening of attitudes within both political camps. Finally the talk will consider the Mise of Amiens in January 1264, the controversial outcome of which precipitated the resultant civil war.

Simon de Montfort, the Battle of Lewes and the development of parliament
Dr John Maddicott

Simon de Montfort is often seen as the founder of parliament. He was not that, but he did play an important part in parliament’s development, particularly in the months following the battle of Lewes. This talk will first consider the general position of parliament in the mid thirteenth century: who attended parliament, what it did, when and where it met, and what part it played in politics. We shall then narrow our focus to look at the part played by parliament in the baronial reform movement of 1258-65 and, in particular, at the two notable parliaments following the battle of Lewes. It was to these parliaments that the county knights
were summoned by Montfort and given a role in political decision-making at the highest level. Some thoughts on the standing and importance of the knights, and how these were enhanced as a result of the battle, will conclude the talk.

Eleanor de Montfort
Dr Louise Wilkinson

In his magisterial study, *Henry III and the Lord Edward* (1947), F. M. Powicke celebrated Eleanor de Montfort as ‘the most vigorous and passionate of the daughters of King John and Isabella of Angoulême, a greater force in affairs than her sisters the queen of Scots and the empress [of Germany]’ (p. 205). Yet the life of this remarkable woman has long been overshadowed by the controversial career of her second husband Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, and his death at the battle of Evesham in 1265. This paper will explore Eleanor’s role during the Barons’ War. As the sister of King Henry III, an aunt of the Lord Edward (the future King Edward I) and the wife of Earl Simon, Eleanor straddled the bloody conflict between Henry III and the barons who wished to reform his government. In spite of this, she remained resolutely committed to her husband’s cause, sharing his political ambitions and remarkable energy. Drawing extensively on Eleanor’s surviving household roll for 1265, this talk looks at Eleanor’s position at the heart of a Montfortian network of influence in southern England in 1264-5 and the part that she played in supporting her husband and sons during the dramatic months before and after Evesham. In particular, it considers her flight across Hampshire, Sussex and Kent during the summer of 1265.

Sussex in the Barons' War
Dr Andrew Spencer

It was no accident that the crucial fighting in the First Barons’ War of 1264 took place in Sussex. Many of the principal actors in the drama were Sussex lords, including Simon de Montfort himself; John de Warenne, earl of Surrey and the lord of Lewes; Peter of Savoy, Henry III’s uncle; John Mansel, the king’s éminence grise; and Stephen Bersted, bishop of Chichester, one of the three men chosen to rule England after the battle of Lewes. This paper will look at how Sussex was affected by the period of Reform and Rebellion from 1258 and particularly during the Barons’ Wars in 1264 and 1265 and their aftermath. It will examine the shifting allegiances of the county’s landowners and how far they participated in the fighting that swept over the county. It will look at how the Montfortian regime tried to re-order the county after their victory at Lewes and how the royalists fought on at Pevensey and elsewhere. Finally it will look at the unhappy legacy of the wars in Sussex, how the victorious royalists fell out with each other and how Edward I sought to restore order.
**Medieval weapons trauma: conflicting evidence from Towton and beyond**  
*Tim Sutherland*

The ability to identify weapon trauma on human skeletal remains is important if victims from historic battles are to be recognised as such, either from a battlefield mass grave or a single grave in a cemetery. Experience in examining weapon related trauma is a definite advance, if post mortem bone damage is not to be mistaken for trauma and real evidence of trauma missed on potential victims of historic conflict. This paper highlights evidence from skeletal material that exhibits both types of evidence. Skeletons from mass graves from the battle of Towton (AD 1461) are discussed as well as material from other archaeological excavations in order to highlight the various forms of battle-related skeletal trauma.

Figure: How did this person die?