

◆ The Battle of Lewes, 1264

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In 1987 David Carpenter published a new account of the battles of Lewes and Evesham, which included a radical re-interpretation of the evidence for the site of the former.¹ To commemorate the battle's 750th anniversary, we revisit the engagement of 14 May 1264, augmenting the 1987 text with information which has emerged since then (and which further bolsters its findings), and offering further thoughts on the nature and significance of the clash between Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, and King Henry III and his son the Lord Edward.

INTRODUCTION

The battles of Lewes and Evesham were contests of huge political significance. At stake was the future shape of kingship in England. Was the king to be free to choose whom he liked as his ministers or was he to be controlled by a council of nobles responsible in some vague way to the kingdom as a whole? More narrowly, was King Henry III or Simon de Montfort Earl of Leicester to rule England? Montfort's defeat of King Henry at the battle of Lewes on 14 May 1264 provided one answer to these questions, his own defeat and death at Evesham on 4 August 1265 quite another.

The two conflicts were also remarkable from the military viewpoint. Set-piece battles in the high middle ages were rare events: battles like Lewes and Evesham, where large contingents on both sides fought on horseback even rarer. The age of the mounted knight in English warfare was comparatively short. It began in 1066 at Hastings. It petered out in the 14th century when the extreme vulnerability of horses to the longbow meant that everybody fought on foot. At Lewes and Evesham the age reached its climax. The two battles are almost as unique to the era of the mounted knight as Jutland is to the era of the battleship. But if Jutland was something of an anti-climax, that was certainly not the case with Lewes and Evesham. Indeed, no campaigns give the lie more effectively to the old myth that there was no strategy in medieval warfare. In 1264–5 we see confronting each other two generals of the highest calibre, on the one side Montfort himself, on the other, King Henry III's son and heir, the future Edward I.

Not surprisingly a good deal has been written about both these battles. But until 1987 there was still no account based on all the available sources.²

That was the gap Carpenter's book sought to fill. It set out to indicate the authority for its statements since misconceptions about the battles had been perpetuated through a failure by previous authors to do so. By employing sources rarely or never used before, Carpenter attempted to cast important new light both on the battles and on the campaigns which preceded them.³

ARMS AND ARMOUR IN 13TH-CENTURY ENGLAND

Although cavalry played a central part in the battles of Lewes and Evesham, in terms of numbers infantry probably formed by far the largest component in both armies. The 13th-century foot soldier was armed with a sword, dagger, and pike, and with a bow and arrows. The bow was almost certainly the longbow: it is quite wrong to think that this came into use only at the end of the century. What had yet to evolve, however, was the tactic of using archers massed together in very large numbers. It was that which was to make the longbow such a devastating weapon in the Hundred Years War.⁴ Equally there is no sign in 1264–5 of the tactic of forming pikemen into divisions as a means of resisting cavalry charges. Thus the foot soldier, protected only by a steel helmet and some form of padded doublet, remained extremely vulnerable to attack by the heavily-armoured mounted knight.

The main ingredient of the knight's armour was the hauberk, the mail shirt, with long sleeves and a hood (*coif*) which covered the head but could be unlaced and thrown back when one was not in combat.⁵ In battle the head was given additional protection by a helm, an intimidating headpiece of which several survive from the later middle ages. It was impossible, of course, to wear mail next to



Fig. 1. An armed knight performs homage, c1250: the Westminster Psalter, BL MS Royal 2 A XXII f. 220.

the skin and contemporary drawings often show, hanging down beneath the hauberk, some form of cloth undergarment. Mail was also used to protect the legs, either in the form of a stocking (*chausse*) or as a sort of shin-guard laced up behind the calf. In addition the thighs and knees were sometimes protected by a form of quilted material (a *gamboised cuisse*), which was worn over the mail. The outfit was completed by the surcoat placed over the hauberk, a long garment of cloth or silk which dropped to one's ankles, and was frequently decorated with heraldic devices (Fig. 1).

The knight's weapons were his shield, emblazoned with his coat of arms; his spear (normally topped with a pennon); and his sword, a long, magnificently balanced instrument, frequently hung on a splendid sword-belt or baldrick. Indeed the ceremony of knighthood involved being girded with a sword, rather than being dubbed with one as in current practice.

Lastly, there was the war-horse (in Latin the *dextrarius*), a specialised beast, quite separate from the horse used for ordinary riding. Its nearest modern equivalent is probably a large hunter.

Arms and armour expressed a knight's social status; hence it was in armour that they were depicted in the effigies on their tombs. As with the motor-car today, degrees of wealth and social aspiration were reflected in a whole range of models. Some knights at Lewes and Evesham were already adding to the flexible mail elements of plate armour to protect the knees, elbows, and shins. Mounted sergeants, on the other hand, might have no more than a helmet and a hauberk or some form of body-armour in quilted cloth or leather. The fact was that the price of the best equipment was very high. The war-horse itself could cost as much as £40, double the income the government considered qualified one for knighthood. In the 1260s Prince Edward ran up a bill of £70 in three years for horses killed in French tournaments, and it was worth litigating at Westminster over the costs of veterinary care for horses supplied for jousting and injured.⁶ Not surprisingly, many men tried to delay or avoid the assumption of the rank, so that increasingly the knights became an elite group. By the end of the 13th century there may have been no more than 1250 of them in England.⁷

A knight had constantly to practice his skill in arms, and there were tournaments at which he could do so. If the body of the mid-14th century knight, Bartholomew Burghersh, is anything to go by, constant use of lance and sword developed large muscles in the right arm and made it longer than the left.⁸ The idea that a knight's armour was phenomenally heavy – that he was hoisted onto his horse by some sort of crane – is nonsense. What is true is that the helm imparts a sense of claustrophobia and considerably restricts the field of vision, which may be why, judging from 13th-century drawings of warfare, many knights chose to fight without it.

How was it, then, that war came to England in the 1260s?

THE PATH TO WAR, 1258–1264

In 1258 King Henry III, then 51 years of age, could look back on a long period of domestic peace. Warfare had been virtually absent from England since the conclusion of the Magna Carta civil

war in 1217, right at the start of his reign. The king could take some of the credit for this.⁹ He was a warm-hearted man, quick to anger, but also quick to forgive, loving, generous, accessible and amiable. He was pious, assiduously attended mass, distributed alms on a large scale, washed the feet of paupers and lepers, and re-built Westminster Abbey in tribute to his patron saint, Edward the Confessor. The Confessor had been famous for the peace of his reign, and peace too was Henry's aim. To that end he handled his magnates with care: he did not challenge their liberties or foreclose on their debts, and through a series of marriages he tried to bring them within the circle of his family and court. But harmony was not easily achieved. The king lacked political judgement. As his numerous contemporaries complained, he was a *vir simplex*, a naïve man (Fig. 2). His incompetence was displayed in the 1250s in his absurd scheme (as many saw it) to place his second son on the throne of Sicily. At the same time his court became rent by factional struggles. Much of the trouble was caused by Henry's half-brothers, particularly William de Valence who had become lord of Pembroke, and Aymer who was bishop-elect of Winchester. These men, known as the Lusignans, were hated partly because they were foreigners from Poitou whom the king was trying to establish in England, partly because their conduct was arrogant and violent and the king's protection seemed to place them above the law. In addition, the queen resented their increasing association with Edward, her dashing eldest son, born in 1239.

In 1258 an explosion occurred.¹⁰ A group of courtiers, led by Montfort and the earls of Gloucester and Norfolk, turned on the Lusignans and expelled them from England. Under the Provisions of Oxford in June 1258, a council of 15 magnates was imposed on King Henry. Without its consent he could no longer rule. At the same time there was a thorough reform of local government, which was widely felt by knights and gentry to be oppressive and corrupt. These reforms correspond to a fundamental principle, eloquently expressed in the great Latin poem written after Montfort's victory at Lewes (the *Song of Lewes*), that it was the duty of a king to rule for the benefit of the whole community, and the duty of the magnates to act to save that community if he did not.

The system of government set up in 1258 lasted until 1261, when Henry recovered power.



Fig. 2. Bearded king, thought to represent Henry III, from the sedilia at Westminster Abbey, c1308.

He was helped by the support of the pope and by the return to England of his brother Richard Earl of Cornwall, who had become king of Germany. But, above all, Henry's success was made possible by divisions within the ranks of the magnates who had pushed through the reforms of 1258. Properly handled, the king's triumph might well have ended the movement of 1258 once and for all. Instead, thanks in part to Henry and Edward having quarrelled in 1262–3 with a number of individual magnates, in 1263 there was a renewed attempt to saddle the king with the Provisions of Oxford. It also brought about the intervention of Montfort himself (Fig. 3).

Montfort, a younger son of the Simon de Montfort who led the Albigensian crusade, had come to England to seek his fortune in the 1230s.¹¹ Henry had warmed to him (they were much of an age) and Montfort was allowed to realise an



Fig. 3. Seal of Simon de Montfort, attached to a document of 1258: British Library Additional Charter 11296.

hereditary claim to the earldom of Leicester, and marry the king's sister. From then on Montfort was an integral, if often difficult, member of Henry's court. In 1258 he was a central figure in the reform movement; but it was only in 1263 that he emerged as its sole leader. There was one reason above all for this rise to pre-eminence: Montfort was the only great magnate who had refused to accept the king's recovery of power in 1261. Rather than do so he had withdrawn to France. This unique record of political consistency revealed the temper of the man. Montfort had a heart of steel. He would hold to what he believed, with followers or without. He had other qualifications for leadership. He was skilled in the art of war and knew how to exploit key political issues – like the popular antipathy to foreigners, although ironically he was himself one.

In 1263, therefore, Montfort returned to England and tried to re-impose the Provisions of Oxford. But he won no clear-cut victory. His party was something of a ragbag. At its heart were his three sons, Henry, Simon, and Guy, and some long-time associates, like Peter de Montfort (no relation), Hugh Despenser and Walter de Cantilupe, the bishop of Worcester. Contemporaries also pointed to the prevalence of young men in the party, notably Nicholas of Seagrave, Henry of Hastings, Geoffrey de Lucy, John de Burgh and John fitz John. One young man above all underpinned

the movement – Gilbert de Clare, whom the king had alienated by making difficulties over his succession, while still under age, to the earldoms of Gloucester and Hertford. Montfort also enjoyed the passionate support of the church, which despite Henry's personal piety had been much oppressed by the king's government, and the sympathy of the gentry who had welcomed the reform of local administration in 1258. Finally there was London, where a popular revolution had undermined the position of the king's friends and placed Montfort's partisans in power.

For all this, Montfort's party was but a fraction of that which had supported the reform movement in 1258. By the end of 1263 most of the great magnates were on the side of the king. There were many reasons for this. There was a feeling that the king had learnt his lesson; indeed he had accepted some of the reforms of local government promulgated in 1258–9. There was also a big difference between pressurizing the king, as in 1258, and being prepared to fight against him, as seemed increasingly necessary, in 1263. Above all, however, there was the problem of Montfort himself. Montfort's explanation for his conduct was clear and compelling. He had taken an oath to support the reforms of 1258, and he would not break it, even though others might do so. But the great earl's enemies saw a murkier picture where pride, arrogance, and ambition were all intermingled. Already in 1258–9, had not Simon held up the ratification of the Treaty of Paris because of grievances over his wife's dower, thus placing private interests above the public good? Now in 1263 one of his first acts was to bestow on a son the confiscated lands of the king's servant John Mansel, who had been instrumental in obtaining papal annulment of the Provisions of Oxford.¹² Better King Henry than King Simon.

For these reasons, in 1263 Montfort found himself unable to reimpose the Provisions on the king for more than a few months. The country hovered on the brink of civil war. All that could be agreed was to refer the quarrel to the arbitration of Louis IX, the king of France. In January 1264 Louis delivered his verdict. It was wholly in the king's favour. The Provisions of Oxford were condemned outright. The king was to be free to appoint whom he liked as his ministers, including foreigners. This verdict Montfort and his followers could not accept and the result was civil war. In February 1264 there

had already been fighting in the Welsh marches where Montfort's sons, with the support of Robert de Ferrers, Earl of Derby, tried to seize Worcester and Gloucester. Early in March, Henry took up quarters at Oxford and summoned his supporters to join him there in arms. Further negotiations with Montfort served only to define the differences between the two sides. On Thursday 3 April 1264 the king unfurled his dragon standard and marched out of Oxford. The civil war had begun.

THE ROAD TO LEWES

The strategic considerations which governed the early phases of the war in 1264 and brought the two sides together at Lewes are clear. Geographically, Montfort had two great areas of strength. The first was in the South where he held London and the castle of Dover, 'the key to England'. Specifically in Sussex, soon after the forfeiture of William de Mortain in 1106, several manors had been hived off from his lordship of Pevensey and added to the Honour of Leicester.¹³ The second was in the Midlands. His own most important castle was at Kenilworth on which he had lavished money, constructing walls and waterworks. In the vicinity of Kenilworth, and of Montfort's borough of Leicester 25 miles to the north-east, lay lands belonging to many of his closest supporters – magnates and knights such as Peter de Montfort, Hugh Despenser, Stephen of Seagrave, Henry of Hastings, Ralph Basset of Drayton, Thomas of Astley, William of Birmingham, Richard Trussel, Robert fitz Nicholas and Robert of Hartshill. As a shield to this Midlands base, and as a point from which he could advance south, Montfort had long recognised the importance of Northampton, 30 miles south-east of Kenilworth. The town was walled and boasted a substantial castle and in December 1263 Montfort had taken oaths of fealty from its burgesses.¹⁴ The Honour of Leicester had many fees in the county and as in Sussex, its strength in Northamptonshire had been augmented by several former Mortain manors, some held by Sussex tenants or in conjunction with land in Sussex.¹⁵

The royalist strategy was inspired by this division of Montfort's spheres of influence. By raising his standard at Oxford the king drove a wedge between the Montfortians in the Midlands and the South, and made it easy to unite his forces

with Edward, who had just beaten off an attempt by Montfort's sons to capture Gloucester. How far Henry, a *rex pacificus*, masterminded this strategy we may wonder. Almost certainly the leading spirits behind it were Edward, a magnificent warrior, and the king's brother Richard, who was a canny politician.

The movements of the Montfortians were dictated by the king's presence at Oxford. After the failure at Gloucester, young Simon returned to Northampton with Peter de Montfort. Henry de Montfort, together with John Giffard of Brimpsfield, went to Kenilworth. Conversely Montfort, having gone to Brackley (some 20 miles north of Oxford) in March for abortive negotiations with the king, went back to London.¹⁶ He had no alternative but to wait and see in which direction the king would move.

In the event, having sent John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, and Roger of Leybourne south to secure the castles of Rochester and Reigate,¹⁷ the king's destination, when he left Oxford on 3 April, was Northampton. The move was astonishingly successful. The town should have been capable of prolonged resistance. Instead it was taken almost at once (on April 5) by a clever *ruse de guerre*, the castle surrendering on the next day. Young Simon, Peter de Montfort and many other knights were made prisoner.¹⁸

Montfort, on hearing of the siege, had set out from London in order to raise it. But he got only as far as St Albans before news arrived of the disaster. He also heard rumours that the London Jews were preparing some sort of rebellion. Montfort returned at once to the capital and (in the week before Palm Sunday, 13 April) subjected the Jews to an orgy of pillage and destruction.¹⁹

After the fall of Northampton the royalists did not move on London, as Montfort had probably expected. They also shied away from tackling Kenilworth, from where Henry de Montfort and John Giffard moved successfully on Warwick Castle.²⁰ Instead, it was decided to clean up other rebel centres in the Midlands and the North. The king marched, therefore, to Leicester which he entered without opposition, probably on 11 April, and then spent a week at Nottingham (12-20 April), while Edward seized Tutbury, the chief castle of the Earl of Derby, and ravaged his lands.²¹ The king, according to one chronicler, had intended to press on to Lincoln but on 20 April, as he celebrated

Easter Day at Nottingham, alarming news arrived. Montfort was laying siege to Rochester.²²

Montfort had indeed changed his tactics and seized the initiative. Having settled matters in London, he moved not north but south. His aim was to eliminate in Rochester the one royalist stronghold which might threaten London. At the same time he probably calculated that his move would draw the royalists south, though ideally not before Rochester had fallen. The siege began on 17 April. Gilbert de Clare, coming from his castle of Tonbridge, attacked the town from the south, while Montfort, advancing from London, established himself in and around Strood, on the opposite bank of the Medway from the castle. The townsmen pulled down the bridge on Montfort's side of the river but, leaving it running out into the water on their own side, used it as a bulwark and repulsed two assaults. Montfort solved the problem with the mixture of stratagem and daring which was his hallmark. Towards evening on 18 April he sent down a fireboat to burn the remains of the bridge and, in the confusion, 'crossing' as one chronicler put it, 'the river between Strood and Rochester with a few followers he took the city in a wonderful fashion and on the following day (Easter eve, 19 April), he took the castle though not the tower.'²³ As in 1215, when it had resisted King John for so long, the great keep of Rochester Castle remained a problem. Montfort laboured throughout the next week to take it until, on the night of Friday 25 April, he learnt that the king's army was approaching London.

The king's reaction to the siege of Rochester had been immediate. On Easter day itself (20 April) he had moved to Grantham, probably to join the main London road. Chroniclers were impressed by the speed of his journey south, Wykes mentioning nights with little sleep. By 26 April the army was at Aylesbury, having covered the 80 miles (as the crow flies) from Grantham in five days, an average of 16 miles a day, no small pace for what was probably a large army. Some of the cavalry may then have pressed ahead without the army's foot and baggage, for by the evening of 26 April the king was 45 miles further on at Croydon, hardly more than 25 miles from Rochester.²⁴

On 26 April, therefore, it was clear that the king was skirting London and making straight for Rochester. Montfort had been half successful. For reasons which will become apparent, he had

brought the royalists south, but he had not taken Rochester Castle. Already by the night of 25 April, whether the king made for Rochester or tried to enter London, the danger was obvious. According to Guisborough, the Montfortians discussed among themselves the danger of being 'shut up in a corner of the land'. There were also alarming rumours that elements in London might hand the city over to Henry and Edward. Montfort accepted failure, and withdrew at once, 'in the silence of the night' as Wykes put it. Next day (26 April), as the king hurried towards Croydon, Montfort re-entered London.²⁵ See Fig. 4 for a map of the armies' movements between 26 April and 11 May.

The king probably heard at once of Montfort's withdrawal, which explains why he had time to double back on 27 April to receive the surrender of Clare's castle at Kingston. He then pushed on to Rochester where he probably stayed on 28–29 April and broke up the remnants of the siege. Once again the initiative was firmly with the royalists. Nonetheless, instead of immediately investing London, they decided to mop up and gather allies in the South. On 30 April, therefore, the king was at Tonbridge where Clare's castle surrendered without fuss on the next day, allowing Leybourne and Warenne to join the royal army.²⁶ The king then marched south 'wishing', as the Battle abbey chronicle puts it, 'to win the [Cinque] Ports over to his side'. The route from Tonbridge to the sea took the king's army through the hilly, wooded Weald of Kent and Sussex, with many narrow ways, where lurking local archers forced the knights to stay in their armour and preyed on those not so well protected. On 2 May, as the army passed the priory of Combwell at Goudhurst in Kent, Thomas the king's cook, riding out in front, was killed 'by a certain pleb'. In revenge, that evening '315 archers were beheaded in the Weald in the parish of St Mary, Ticehurst, in the place called Flimwell in the presence of the king, all of whom had been called deceitfully to the king's peace only then to incur that death through the counsel of Richard king of Germany'.²⁷ Next day the king reached Battle Abbey and was received by the monks in 'solemn procession'. He presented to them 'a face of anger' and extracted 100 marks from the abbot on the grounds that the latter's men had been amongst those executed at Flimwell. The king then moved on to Winchelsea (4?–8 May) where the army got drunk on the wine in the port – a welcome relief

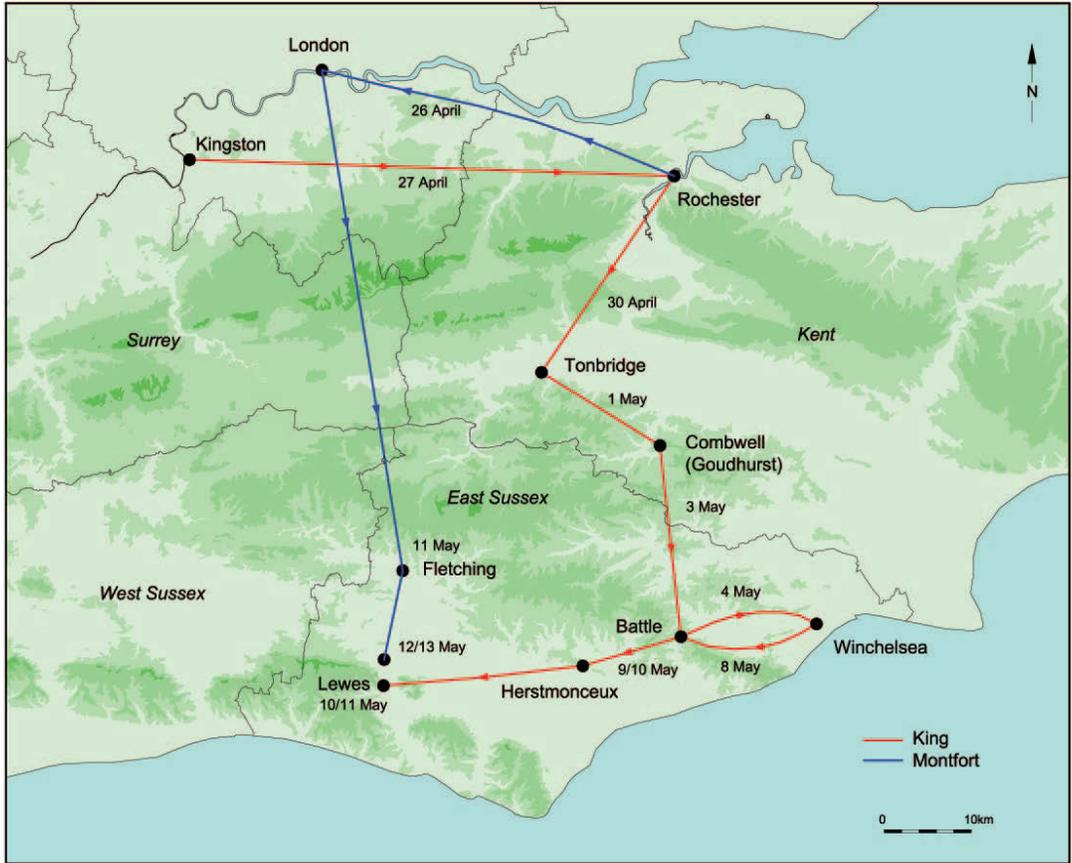


Fig. 4. Movements of the king's and Montfortian armies, April–May 1264.

after the dearth of provisions in the Weald. The king received hostages and oaths of fealty from the men of the Cinque Ports, and ordered them to prepare a fleet in order to blockade London.²⁸

The royalists must have felt sanguine about the course of events. If the art of war is to keep the initiative and make the enemy dance to your tune they had apparently succeeded. Only once, by attacking Rochester, had Montfort caught them off balance. For the rest, it was he who had done the dancing. Quite apart from the early failure to capture Gloucester, he had lost Northampton, Leicester, Kingston and Tonbridge, had twice ignominiously returned to London fearing for its security, and was now on the point of facing a blockade. The situation, however, was about to be transformed. On 6 May Montfort's army marched out of London.²⁹ From now on it was the great earl who would call the tune.

The fact was that, by bringing the king's army south, Montfort had wrought a complete change in the strategic situation. However successful that army's progress, it had sacrificed its position between the two centres of Montfortian power. Montfort could now unite his forces. He waited in vain for the Earl of Derby, but Henry de Montfort, John Giffard and doubtless many others were able to leave Kenilworth and join the main army in London.³⁰ Nonetheless, Montfort's decision to leave the safety of London was still momentous. Although there were some negotiations before the battle of Lewes, Montfort must have known that they had little chance of success. He left London essentially to fight. But great set-piece battles, as opposed to sieges, were rare and frightening events. Not a single person on either side in 1264 had ever been in one. The civil war which broke out in 1215 lasted for nearly two years before its

one major land-battle was fought at Lincoln. A leader in 1264 with less confidence in his military prowess, and with less clarity of mind about the impossibility of a political settlement, would have sat tight in London and seen how things developed. Montfort was not like that. He had the courage and confidence to go out and fight 'with all for all'.

The king heard the news of Montfort's advance on 9 May when at Battle, whence he had returned from Winchelsea. He was taken completely by surprise, having intended to be in Canterbury on 12 May to meet the royalist troops being raised in the Weald. The next move would have been either a siege of Dover Castle or an advance on London.

Instead the orders for the Canterbury rendezvous were cancelled and the Wealdsmen were summoned to join the king, who moved immediately from Battle to Lewes, on the way spending a night (that of 9 or 10 May) at Herstmonceux, where according to the Battle chronicler the army fed off the game in the park of its lord, the Montfortian Waleran de Monceaux.³¹ The same chronicler, observing the king's departure, noted that, informed of Montfort's movements by scouts, he was now behaving 'more cautiously' and was in armour, as was all his army.³² The decision to go to Lewes (just over 20 miles west of Battle) was sensible. With Montfort's army on the loose, it was the one place in the immediate vicinity where the king could be secure, the lord of the town (where there was a great castle) being the loyalist John de Warenne, the hero of the siege of Rochester. Thus, on 10 or 11 May, while the king's army established itself at Lewes, Henry himself, no doubt with a sigh of relief, settled down in the great Cluniac house of St Pancras in the suburb of Southover, just outside the town's walls.³³ After weeks on the move, the king might have looked forward to the ceremonies and celebrations marking the patronal feast of the house on 12 May as a source of both physical and spiritual comfort.

The king's move to Lewes set Montfort a problem because there was nowhere comparable in the area where he could establish his own base. The solution was to set up camp (probably on 11 May) at Fletching, a parish dominated by Montfort's demesne manor of Sheffield and by manors held by his tenants of the Honour of Leicester – John de Mucegros, James de Sancto Andrea, Thomas de Aldham and Robert de Nevill. In the Weald

eight miles north of Lewes, the surrounding forest protected his army from surprise assault just as effectively as any walls; indeed the Worcester chronicler calls Fletching a wood.³⁴ None of the sources mentions Sheffield and it is possible that Montfort fortified Fletching church, which may well have been the only stone building in the area. Using churches as treasuries, arsenals and siegeworks was not unusual. At the Lambeth session of the eyre *de terris datis* in 1269 William de Sutwell, the lord of Bodiam and presumably a royalist, brought two pleas against four men of Sussex and 16 of Kent for breaking into Bodiam church and removing the arms and armour stored there, worth 77 marks;³⁵ Pevensey and Westham churches were badly damaged during the siege of Pevensey Castle by young Simon in the autumn of 1264, presumably as a result of having been fortified, and were subsequently rebuilt by the royalist Denise de Norton with the (belated) help of Queen Eleanor.³⁶

THE BATTLE OF LEWES

1 THE PRELIMINARIES

Until 1987, there was no coherent account of the events of 12 and 13 May, the two days before the battle. This is partly because historians had hardly used a narrative covering this period which was discovered by J. P. Gilson (hereafter called the Gilson fragment) and published in *English Historical Review* for 1896. The account was written on the last leaf of a volume containing Bernard of Parma's handbook to the Decretals, now preserved in the British Library. Unfortunately it breaks off before the end of the battle, but it gives a highly detailed account of the preceding period. Quite probably it was written by a clerical eye-witness of the events described. It is partly too because the evidence for the negotiations between the two sides is so confusing. In particular, a famous letter, which the Montfortians wrote to the king, bears the date 13 May in the most clearly dated copy, but what are obviously the replies to it, one from the king and one from Richard and Edward, are dated 12 May, the day *before*. The great majority of historians have attempted to solve this problem by assuming that all the letters were written on 12 May,³⁷ but as a consequence the course of the negotiations before the battle have become virtually unintelligible.³⁸ The Montfortian message was effectively a letter of defiance (as were the replies) yet we are asked by

historians to believe that it was written, not after the failure of the negotiations, but at the same time, or even before the Montfortians were advancing proposals for a peaceful settlement.

These tangles are avoided if all the letters were written on 13 May after the failure of the negotiations. There are reasons for thinking that was the case. The 13 May date, which is found in the copy of the Montfortian letter in the Dover chronicle, runs thus: 'given in the wood by Lewes on the Tuesday after the day of St Pancras', that is on the Tuesday after Monday 12 May.³⁹ It is very difficult to see how there could be a mistake over a clause as detailed as this. The Gilson fragment, moreover, shows that Montfort was indeed near Lewes rather than at Fletching on 13 May. Most of the other copies of the Montfortian letter (six in all) do not contradict the 13 May date for they bear no date at all. Only two, both from Ramsey Abbey, have 12 May (*xij die Maii*) and this may well have been supplied from the date in the royal letters. In respect of the latter, where the 12 May date is certainly usual, we would suggest that a mistake was made at an early stage in the process of transmission, perhaps in a news letter through which the letters were made known. The simple omission of one minim would convert *xiij die Maii* to the *xij die Maii* form found in the letters.⁴⁰ The narrative that follows, therefore, assumes that all the letters of defiance were written on 13 May, the day before the battle.

On 11 May, as we have seen, Montfort had established himself at Fletching, eight miles north of Lewes. Next day (Monday 12 May), if we follow the Gilson fragment, 'some who were with the Earl of Leicester appeared near Lewes'. Probably this was a party sent to reconnoitre the high downland which dominates the town to the west, for the king's army, ordered out to pursue them, ascended 'the summit of the hill west of Lewes'. From there they saw Montfort's army 'in the valleys near a wood'. This is fairly easy to interpret. The 'summit' is clearly what is now called Mount Harry. This is on the extreme northern edge of the Downs. Running northwards beyond the cliff-like edge there is a half-mile belt of lower greensand soil which provides good arable land and high-quality grassland. Beyond the lower greensand there is a band of heavy clay soil (gault), and the remains of thick woodland which this land sustained can still be seen in Long

Wood, Warningore Wood and The Wilderness. The king's army, therefore, looked down from Mount Harry and probably saw Montfort's army in the grass or arable between the edge of the Downs and the woodland near the present Warningore Wood. But, as the Gilson fragment says, it did not 'descend' to fight. The only action 'in a valley near the hill' (perhaps Coombe Hollow), was a skirmish involving Warenne and a Montfortian foraging party. Around noon the king's troops returned to Lewes (see Fig. 5).

Montfort then sent the bishop of Chichester and a party of friars to the king. They offered a peace settlement. The Provisions of Oxford were to be re-affirmed but points in them could be submitted to the arbitration of a panel of learned ecclesiastics.⁴¹ At the same time the bishops of London and Worcester came on a related mission from the Montfortians; they offered a payment of around £30,000. This was both compensation for the damage suffered by the royalists in the war and also, in effect, an inducement to accept the 'form of peace' (as Wykes put it) tabled by the bishop of Chichester and the friars. The offer was particularly directed at Richard, whose damages had been huge and whose influence over the king was very great.⁴²

The offer of compensation met a major royalist grievance and it was put about afterwards that the king had wished to accept the settlement but was prevented by Edward and Richard.⁴³ Edward, according to the *Song of Lewes*, demanded that the Montfortians hand themselves over with halters round their necks for hanging and drawing. Richard's conduct at this critical hour has been ascribed to 'pride and thirst for revenge'.⁴⁴ But Wykes tells us that he rejected 'the form of peace', 'realising that, in effect, it threatened to disinherit the king of England and his heirs and depress their power.' This got to the heart of the matter. The Provisions of Oxford, even if (as perhaps during the Brackley negotiations during March)⁴⁵ reduced to the stipulation that the king remove aliens from the country and govern through Englishmen, still amounted to an unprecedented fetter on the crown's rights and powers. Hitherto the king had always been free to choose whom he liked as his servants and ministers. The royalists had rejected a compromise on this central issue in March. They were hardly likely to accept one now after a successful campaign.

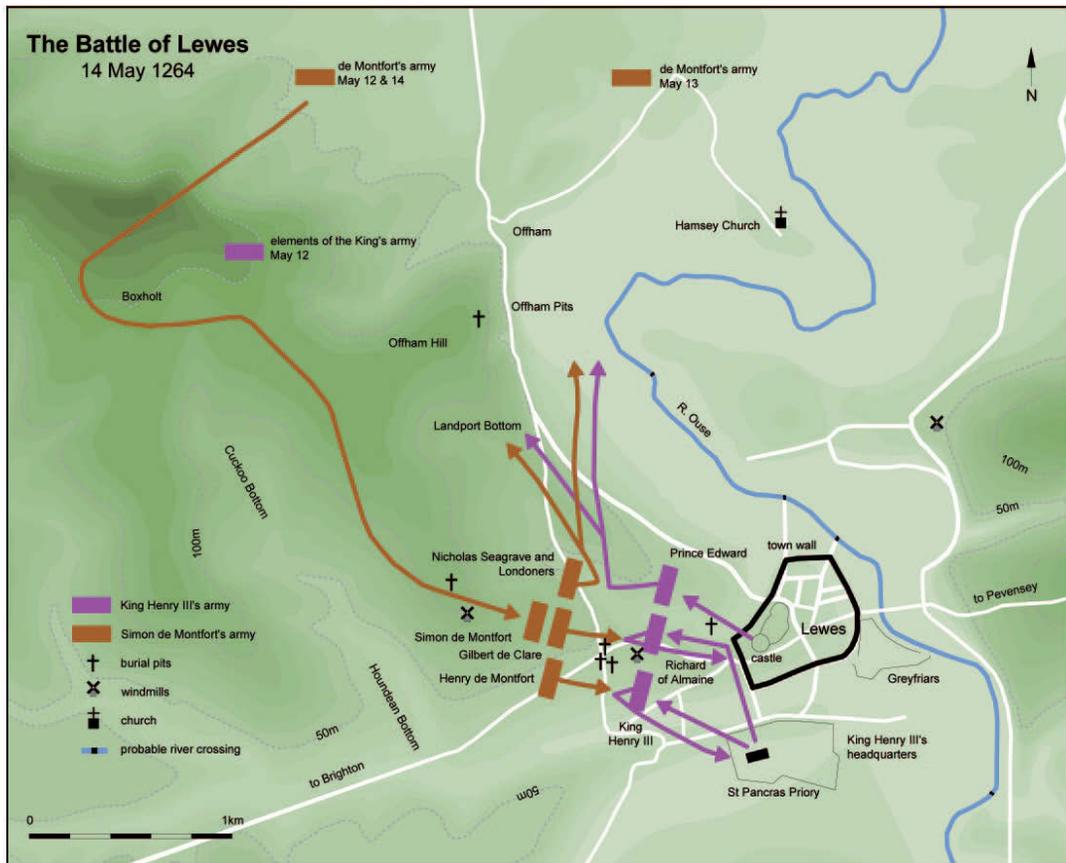


Fig. 5. Schematic representation of the action at Lewes on 14 May 1264.

On the next day (13 May), with his peace offer scornfully rejected, Montfort's army, according to the Gilson fragment, approached 'nearer Lewes than before'. Perhaps it edged round the north-east corner of the Downs above the town and, with its back to the woods, took station between Offham and Hamsey. Thus, from 'the wood by Lewes', the letter of defiance discussed above was sent to the king. The Montfortians promised continuing fidelity to Henry but declared their intentions of 'attacking according to our power our enemies who are also yours and those of all your kingdom'.

This was to declare war while trying to preserve the fiction of fealty to the king. Henry, in the reply which we have related to 13 May, spurned the professions of loyalty and defied the Montfortians as his enemies. In their accompanying letter, Richard and Edward threw down their own

challenge, vowing to do all they could to injure the persons and possessions of Montfort, Clare and their accomplices. On receipt of these letters the Montfortians went through the last formal ritual and withdrew their homage and fealty from the king.⁴⁶ Montfort may have wished to fight at once, for the Gilson fragment asserts that the aim, in approaching 'nearer Lewes than before', was 'to provoke the king's army to battle.' If so he was disappointed. The king's army, for reasons which we will suggest in the next section, 'did not go out that day.' Montfort, however, was to bring it to battle, in circumstances of his own choosing, on the morrow.

2 THE ACTION

The chief feature of the action on 14 May is beyond dispute: while Edward drove the Londoners off the

field of battle, the main body of the royalist army was defeated. Beyond that outline there is much that has perplexed historians. What was the size of the armies and how large were the casualties? Was the king captured on the field, or did he get back to the priory and continue resistance there with Edward? Above all, of course, where was the battle fought? Of these questions only the first is largely unresolvable. See Fig. 5 for a schematic representation of the action at Lewes.

The Winchester chronicler's claim that there were 60,000 troops in the king's army and 40,000 in Montfort's is obviously fanciful, perhaps multiplied by a factor of ten or more. Other estimates, however, are more modest. The author of the Gilson fragment heard it said that there were more than 3000 royalist cavalry at Lewes while Montfort had 500 cavalry properly armed, and a few more protected only with helmets. The Canterbury/Dover chronicler also places the Montfortian cavalry at 500 but reduces the royalist numbers to 1500. The Trinity fragment, leaving aside the conflict between Edward and the Londoners, says that a mere 200 Montfortian horse put 1200 royalist cavalry to flight. There may have been only 1000 to 2000 knights in England at this time, and far from all of them would have been at the battle; but the knights who were present would have brought as large a 'power' as they could raise, including esquires and mounted sergeants. A figure of 2000 for the cavalry at Lewes would not be out of line with the 1000 to 2000 cavalry we know were present in Edward I's armies in Wales.⁴⁷

By far the largest number of troops on either side, however, were infantry, if the composition of the armies of Edward I is anything to go by. For the Falkirk campaign of 1300, Edward had between 2000 and 3000 cavalry and 25,700 foot soldiers. This, however, was by far his greatest military effort. In the Welsh wars of the 1270s and 1280s it was rare to find more than 3000 to 4000 foot in one army.⁴⁸

One clue to the number of foot at Lewes could lie in the number of casualties. Several chroniclers state or imply that the great bulk of these were foot soldiers, and certainly we know that only a handful of knights perished.⁴⁹ According to William of Newburgh, most of those who fell were *mediocres ... de vulgo*, especially Scots, who Rishanger and the St Albans chronicle tell us had been brought to the fray by their lords, including John de

Balliol, Robert de Bruce and John Comyn, all of whom were taken prisoner.⁵⁰ The most common figure given by chroniclers for the slain is 2700 (or in another version 2070), excluding those who drowned or were killed in flight. This figure gains some credence from its appearance in the annals of Lewes Priory, while elsewhere it is claimed as deriving from 'those who buried them' or from the town's Franciscan friars.⁵¹ It is also significant that, in 1810, three pits were discovered near the site of the present Lewes Prison, containing 'by estimate quite 500 bodies in each' (marked by the three crosses in Fig. 5). Other major finds of bodies, alas, without estimate of numbers, were made in the 18th century and later in the 19th, although the continuing tendency to attribute any unexpected burial found in Lewes to a victim of the battle is almost certain to have inflated the numbers.⁵² We have, however, no way of testing the figures given by the chroniclers and excavators. Another chronicle source gives the killed, again on the authority of the men of religion who buried them, at only 600 excluding the drowned and those who were slain in flight.⁵³ And in any case we cannot know the proportion between casualties and total participants, although the death-rate amongst lightly armoured foot soldiers may have been high. Probably the best that can be said is that both sides had several thousand foot soldiers while it is not impossible that the royalist cavalry numbered about 1500 and Montfort's about 500.

Whatever the precise sizes of the armies, there can be little doubt that the king's was considerably the larger. This is stated by numerous chroniclers, including Wykes, who was a royalist partisan.⁵⁴ Faced with an inferiority of numbers, another commander might have stood on the defensive or retreated. That was not Montfort's style. He had marched out of London to meet the king's army. He now seized the initiative again and brought it to battle. His precise tactics were dictated by a sure eye for the terrain around Lewes. The river Ouse, which runs just to the east of the town, prevented any attack from that direction. An approach from the north, down the west bank of the river, meant having to pass through a marshy defile less than five hundred yards wide between the river and the Downs at Offham chalkpits.⁵⁵ If the Gilson fragment is right in saying that on 13 May Montfort tried to provoke the king's army into battle, he may have been trying to lure it into this defile.

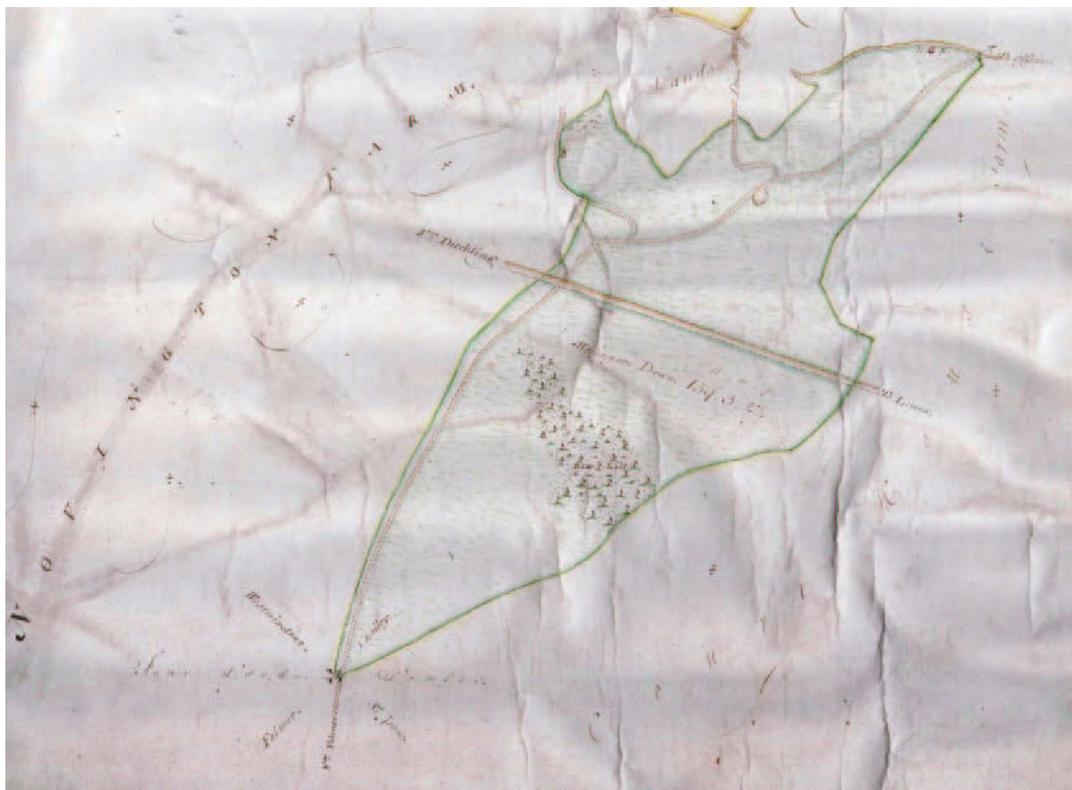


Fig. 6. Plan of Warningore Down by Thomas Marchant, 1772, showing Boxholt: ESRO SHR 2250.

The royalists wisely refused to be drawn, just as the day before they had not attempted the equally hazardous descent from the Downs.

If, then, Montfort was to attack his enemies at a time and a place of his choosing, the only viable approach was from the west where he could ascend the Downs above Lewes (reconnoitred as we have seen on 12 May) and then advance upon the town. Montfort could never have reached the top of the Downs, however, if the king's army had been stationed there to meet him. Surprise was vital and to achieve it Montfort moved at night, though not in the way commonly supposed. One of the great myths about Lewes, endorsed by all modern authorities, is that Montfort's army marched the ten miles from Fletching in the early hours of 14 May. But this is hardly consistent with the evidence of the Gilson fragment. If the latter is right in placing Montfort's army near Lewes on 12 and 13 May, we can scarcely suppose that it had been commuting back to Fletching each night. In fact, the march from

Fletching on 14 May rests on the sole testimony of Rishanger, a somewhat doubtful source, who may have known no more than that Montfort had been at Fletching at some point before 14 May.

On 13 May, therefore, Montfort's army was already 'in the wood by Lewes', as the dating clause of his letter of defiance put it. In the early hours of the next morning, certainly well before sunrise at 4 a.m. (for the battle, according to several chroniclers, began about the first hour, that is between sunrise and 5.20 a.m.), the army 'traversed the dark covering of the woods' (Wykes) and came up on the Downs.⁵⁶ Historians have always assumed that Montfort ascended via the track leading up from Offham. They have totally ignored the evidence of the Gilson fragment which states that 'the army of the barons came to Boxholt, which place is two leagues (almost certainly in this context two miles) distant from Lewes.' Boxholt can be located by reference to two maps of 1772.⁵⁷ (Fig. 6) It is on the edge of the Downs five hundred



Fig. 7. The ascent to Boxholt.

yards south-west of Blackcap, and some three miles north-west of Lewes, and a mile and three-quarters west of Offham. The site is presently occupied by a small wood. There is in fact an easy ascent direct to Boxholt by an ancient droveway which comes up from beneath Blackcap, and it was doubtless this which was used by Montfort's army (Fig. 7). Montfort had good reasons for avoiding the more direct ascent from Offham. This would have taken him immediately onto the Downs above Lewes where the king had posted sentinels, although, in the event, they were negligent or asleep.⁵⁸ He also had good reasons for choosing Boxholt as a rendezvous: it was the customary meeting-place of the southern hundreds of the Rape of Lewes, and its location would have been well known to any local inhabitant.⁵⁹

At Boxholt Montfort's army presumably sorted itself out. It then proceeded south-east along the edge of the Downs until it reached the flat expanse of ground currently occupied by the south-eastern track of the old Lewes racecourse. From here Montfort could look over the crest of the Downs and see Lewes, dominated by the castle and the bell-tower of the priory, lying before him. Behind

the crest he could prepare unobserved. Perhaps it was here, as many chroniclers indicate, that he knighted Gilbert de Clare and several others, and addressed the troops. Their cause was just. They were fighting for the kingdom of England and the honour of God. The soldiers threw themselves to the ground with arms extended in the form of a cross and prayed for victory. Sins were confessed and white crosses donned both as distinguishing marks and to signify the holy nature of the cause.⁶⁰

Montfort's stratagem of moving onto the Downs in the dark had worked to perfection. The Franciscan friar, Richard of Durham, liked to think that the royalists had spent much of the night enjoying wine, women and song before the very altars of the priory, perhaps in an extended aftermath of the patronal festival. In any case, they were still asleep when roused with the news of Montfort's approach by a returning foraging party.⁶¹ There is a view, which the Westminster chronicle could be taken to support, that Edward sallied out at once, well before the rest of the royal army. But the balance of the evidence is against this. Many chronicles imply that the king's army was properly drawn up, and the Battle chronicle



Fig. 8. View from Lewes Castle over the parish of St Anne, c1869 (Reeves).

actually says that it was Henry and Richard who waited for Edward, the conflict beginning only when he arrived. In fact the royalists almost certainly made time for a council of war, for a document was sealed on 14 May in the presence of Henry and Richard, and their sons Edward and Henry and Roger of Leybourne. That can have happened only on the morning before the battle since by the evening after it Richard was in captivity. It was doubtless at this council that the royal line of battle, which we will examine later, was decided. Then Henry and Richard, having arranged their divisions, left the priory, 'preceded by the banner of the red dragon which portended general death to their enemies.'⁶²

We now come to the crux of the whole battle. Where was it actually fought? In trying to solve this problem we have both re-interpreted old evidence and deployed new. Ramsey, Burne and Lemon all believed that the royalists ascended to the top of the Downs and that the first engagement took place a mile and a half north-west of the castle on the open ground between Offham pits and the grandstand of the old Lewes Racecourse. It is accordingly in this area that the Ordnance Survey map marks the site of the battle. There can be no doubt, however, that this is wrong. Rather, the evidence strongly

supports the view, advanced by Blaauw and Lord Chelwood, that, aside from Edward's pursuit of the Londoners, the battle was fought between the walls of the town and some point on the slope leading up to the ridge of the Downs, which begins at the present Lewes Prison, half a mile west of the castle. Much of this area today is built up, but in the 13th century, apart from houses either side of the road as far as St Anne's church, the open land extended to the suburb of Southover and the walls of Lewes; the town's west gate lay less than 200 yards beyond the castle, and on the north west its walls were those of the castle itself. The land falls away towards The Wallands on the north and Winterbourne Hollow on the south.⁶³ Lewes in 1264 was thus much the same as Lewes in 1869, when a splendid Reeves photograph captured the scene before later developments, and gives by far the best impression of the terrain over which the battle was fought (Fig. 8).

There are four chronicles which attempt to fix the site of battle. The Trinity fragment, hitherto unused, states that the Montfortians 'came half a league outside Lewes ... and found there the kings of Germany and England and Edward with a great army gathered together'. Since a league could be used either to mean three miles or one mile, this



Fig. 9. The ruins of St Nicholas Hospital depicted by James Lambert the elder, 1772: Sussex Archaeological Society, LEWSA 1997.7 f25.

places the battle either on top of the hill or exactly by the prison.

In locating the battle, the other three accounts all make reference to a mill. When Carpenter first wrote on this subject in 1987, he concluded that they were probably all referring to the same mill, the site of which, as we shall see, was on or near the present reservoir on the south-east corner of St Anne's Crescent and Western Road. He now thinks it more likely that two mills were involved – one marking Montfort's initial position on the top of the Downs overlooking Lewes, the other, that indeed on the reservoir site, marking the heart of the battle.

The Gilson fragment, continuing its narrative, says that having got to Boxholt, Montfort's army 'proceeded at a slow step, having formed into divisions, to the mill which is outside the house of the lepers of Lewes, and there the king came to meet them.' It is likely that the house of the lepers in 13th-century Lewes was the hospital of

St Nicholas, which lay immediately east of the present prison at the junction of the road out of Lewes and that leading to London. The triangular site is currently occupied by buildings of the 19th and 20th centuries, but until at least 1820 a massive stone gable of the late 11th century was still to be seen (Fig. 9).⁶⁴ Like many leper hospitals it was, therefore, well out of the town.⁶⁵

The most plausible candidate for the site of the mill outside the leper-house is that shown by a map of 1769. There two mills appear on the summit of the Downs above the slope running up from the present prison. They also appear in the photograph of 1869, as does the prison mill. The latter must be the source of the sign of a beershop on the northwest corner of the triangle forming the site of the hospital of St Nicholas, and on that basis William Figg, the Lewes cartographer and antiquarian, believed that King Harry's mill was in that area.⁶⁶

One of the mills shown in 1769 is described as the Spital Mill, that is the mill of the hospital, the remains of St Nicholas's hospital, 880 yards away in the outskirts of the town being the nearest building to it. It may also of course have once been owned by the hospital. It would, therefore, be natural to describe a mill on this site in 1264 as the mill outside the house of the lepers. A mill was shown in this area in 1724, and James and Thomas Kenward were rated for a second mill from 1750; perhaps it was built from the fabric of Inkersoll's mill (for which see below), which James Kenward sold in 1742 to provide a site for the Pesthouse. The lack of evidence before the 18th century does not invalidate the hypothesis, for it seems possible that there had been earlier mills on such an ideal site.⁶⁷

The Gilson fragment, in stating that Montfort's army came to the mill which is outside the house of lepers, clearly indicates the initial position where it was drawn up in battle array. Such a position is exactly what one would expect, given the strategic value of being on the brow of the ridge overlooking the town. The London chronicle is probably referring to the same mill when it says that 'the army of the barons moved towards a certain mill near Lewes against the king whom they saw come with his army against them.' Here again this seems to be fixing the point of Montfort's starting line, from which he could look down and see the approach of the king's forces.

Both the Gilson and London accounts have the king coming to meet Montfort, but neither has to be read as meaning that he reached the top of the ridge, with the battle consequently fought on the top of the Downs. It seems inconceivable that Montfort would have sacrificed his advantage and not charged down the hill as the king's forces came up. Indeed, that is exactly what the Westminster chronicle says happened. Likewise both Wykes and the chronicle of St Benet at Hulme have Montfort's army descending the hill to give battle. If that happened one can well imagine the initial clash, and the heaviest fighting, taking place around the prison, and the royal division under Richard Earl of Cornwall being driven back towards the town walls past the area of our second mill.

That the front lines met near the prison is supported by repeated discoveries of mass graves in the course of the re-alignment of the Brighton road to the south and west of the hospital of St Nicholas in the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1810

three pits, each with 500 bodies 'by estimate', were found at its entrance; the newspaper reported that a 'great quantity of human bones' had been dug up a few years before in exactly the same area. On at least one occasion, the bones were re-interred within the former hospital precinct.⁶⁸

Archaeologists failed to locate such graves, or their redeposited contents, when a small part of the site was excavated in 1994; discounting healed fractures and minor injuries, only six of the 103 skeletons discovered revealed any signs of a violent death. Based on associated finds (no scientific dating was initially undertaken), burials continued from the 12th to the early 16th century.⁶⁹ Indeed one skull, when subjected to radio-carbon dating in 2014, produced an estimated date a full two centuries before the battle.⁷⁰

The best source for the topography of the battle ought to be the chronicle of Lewes Priory. In his all too brief account of the fight, the chronicler concludes 'all these things took place at the mill *suelligi*.' At least that is the text as published by Blaauw in 1849. *Suelligus*, since the time of Blaauw, has been considered a corruption of *sullingus* or *sulling*, a measure of land comparable to a hide, hence the usual translation 'the mill of the hide'.⁷¹ That rendering was encouraged by the existence, between Southover and the road out to St Nicholas's hospital, of an area called 'The Hides', an area which emerged as a manor in the 16th century.⁷²

There can, however, be little doubt that this identification is incorrect, for *sulling* is an entirely Kentish term. It is much more likely that Blaauw's transcription of 'suelligi' is wrong: the 'u' should be an 'n' (the two letters are virtually indistinguishable in medieval hands), and that he missed a suspension over the 'i'. That would produce *molendinum Snellingi*, or the mill of [someone called] Snelling.⁷³ This fits perfectly with other evidence. Not only was Snelling a common personal name in 13th-century Lewes,⁷⁴ there is clear evidence that the mill on the reservoir site was called Snellings Mill. The mill is so named in an account roll of 1343, a will of 1535 and 'Sknellings Mill Downe' appears in church court depositions and a coroner's inquest in 1575.⁷⁵ The place-name's survival over three centuries may well indicate the cementing in the town's folklore of the events which took place there at the end of the engagement.



Fig. 10. Snelling's Mill and the Spital Houses and St Anne's Church from the vignette of Lewes on John de Ward's map of the River Ouse, 1620: ESRO ACC 2187.

The crucial evidence comes from these two judicial proceedings. An inquest following the death of Richard Shoulder, an Iford husbandman, found that on 17 July 1575 he had wandered into the path of a flying sledge-hammer during a game of 'throwing the sledge', with fatal results. The contest took place at 'Sknellinges Mill Downe', stated to be in St Anne's parish, while several of the jurors had connections with Southover, where the inquest was held. Six of them are also to be found as deponents in a case in the court of the Archdeacon of Lewes to decide the boundary between the same two parishes. This would fit exactly with the sledge being thrown southwards, from near a mill just west of St Anne's church down the hill (then open land) toward the boundary with Southover parish some 300 yards away.

But we can do better than that. A map of 1618 and two of 1620 show a great windmill on the high road leading out of Lewes, some 200 yards to the east of St Nicholas's hospital and 100 yards west of St Anne's church (Figs 10–14). The map of 1618 labels it 'Enker Sole his Mill', linking



Fig. 11. Snelling's Mill (then called Enkersoll's Mill) and the Spital Houses from John de Ward's map of Landport and Houndean Farms, 1618, redrawn 1838:ESRO ACC 3412/3/387.

it to a mill mentioned by John Enkersoll in his will of 1588, and sold by James Kenward to the Pesthouse Trustees in 1742. It is by far the most likely candidate for the site of the Snelling's mill of 1264, 1343, 1535 and 1588, and thus the place where the Lewes chronicler sited the battle.⁷⁶

This need not mean that Montfort's army confronted the king's at that exact point; the mill dominated the surrounding area and was probably being used as a very general landmark. The bodies by the prison, unless they were moved nearly four hundred yards west from the mill, suggest that an initial clash took place in that area, before the fight moved on past the mill towards the town. We have also to remember that the armies were divided into divisions and their total frontages may have been as much as 1000 yards.⁷⁷

The account of the battle which follows is, therefore, based on the assumption that it was fought not on the top of the Downs, but in the area between the ridge above Lewes and the west gate of the town itself.

It is Guisborough who gives the most detailed information about how the two armies were divided. There were three royal divisions; the first under Edward, Warenne and William de Valence, the second under Richard with his son Henry

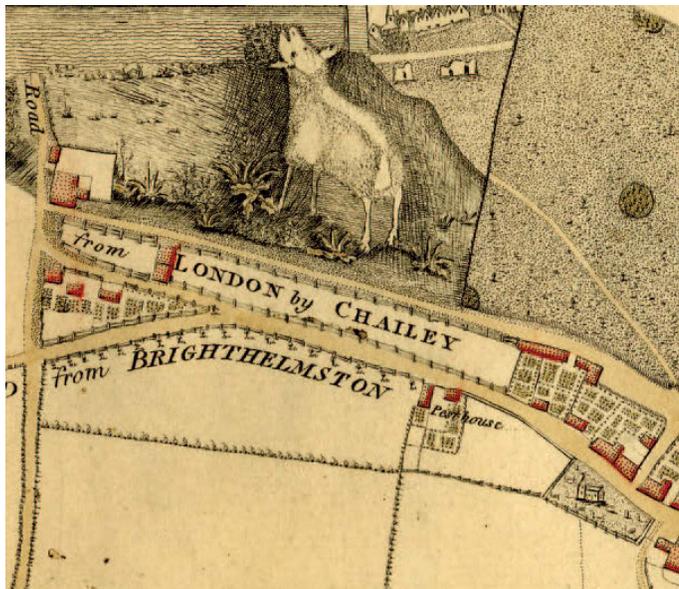


Fig. 12. Detail from a map of Lewes by James Edwards, 1799, showing the Spital Houses, the Pesthouse (the site of Snelling's Mill) and St Anne's church: ESRO SHR 2869.

and the third under the king. Since the *Battle chronicle* states that Edward came out of the castle and Henry and Richard from the priory, it seems certain that Edward's division was on the right. Probably it formed up in the area of the Paddock and the Wallands. Richard, in the centre, left the priory by St James and Antioch Street (now partly lost) and travelling outside the town walls turned onto the present High Street to deploy just west of St Anne's church. The king, having gone down Southover High Street, formed up on the Hides.⁷⁸

Montfort, on the hill, must have seen all this going on. Guisborough tells us that he divided his army into four divisions.⁷⁹ If these are described in the same order as those of the king's army then the first, under Montfort's sons Henry, Simon and Guy together with John de Burgh and Humphrey de Bohun, was on the right. Probably it was placed on a north-south axis running down into Winterbourne Hollow. The second division was under Clare, John fitz John and William de Munchensy. This would have been stationed just behind the covered reservoirs on the ridge behind the prison. The third division, containing the Londoners, was under Nicholas of Seagrave and (if we follow Wykes) his close friend Henry of

Hastings. Since this was certainly the division which confronted Edward, it was clearly on the left of Montfort's line. Probably, before descending, it was stationed above the area now covered by the houses west of Nevill Road. That left the fourth division, under Montfort himself and the constable of London, Thomas of Pulesdon; commentators may be correct in thinking that this was held in reserve, though Guisborough does not say so specifically. We will see that the Londoners, who were almost certainly on foot, seem to have been placed behind a cohort of cavalry, and it may be that all the divisions were organised in this way, with cavalry in front and foot following.

Montfort's army, as we have seen, was probably outnumbered. But it had certain advantages. One was its ability to attack down the

hill as the royalists struggled up it. Another was that it had a reserve division and the king's army did not. Guisborough explains this in terms of the number of troops which the king had left behind to guard Tonbridge Castle, though Henry could surely have formed a fourth division had he deemed it necessary. Perhaps he considered that Warenne's castle and walled town at his rear would serve the purpose well enough. Lastly Montfort had far more command of what was going on. The field over which the battle of Lewes was fought is shaped rather like a saddle. In the centre the land runs out of the town past St Anne's church, the prison and up to the summit of the Downs. On either side, the terrain falls sharply away, on the south into Houndean Bottom, Winterbourne Hollow and Southover; on the north into the Paddock and the Wallands. Thus the right of each army was invisible to the left. Only Montfort, in a central reserve position on the heights behind the present prison, could have seen, by moving a few yards either way, what was going on.

Montfort's army, therefore, came down the hill to meet its foes. The first blows in the battle were struck, or at least the most decisive point came, in the confrontation between Edward and the

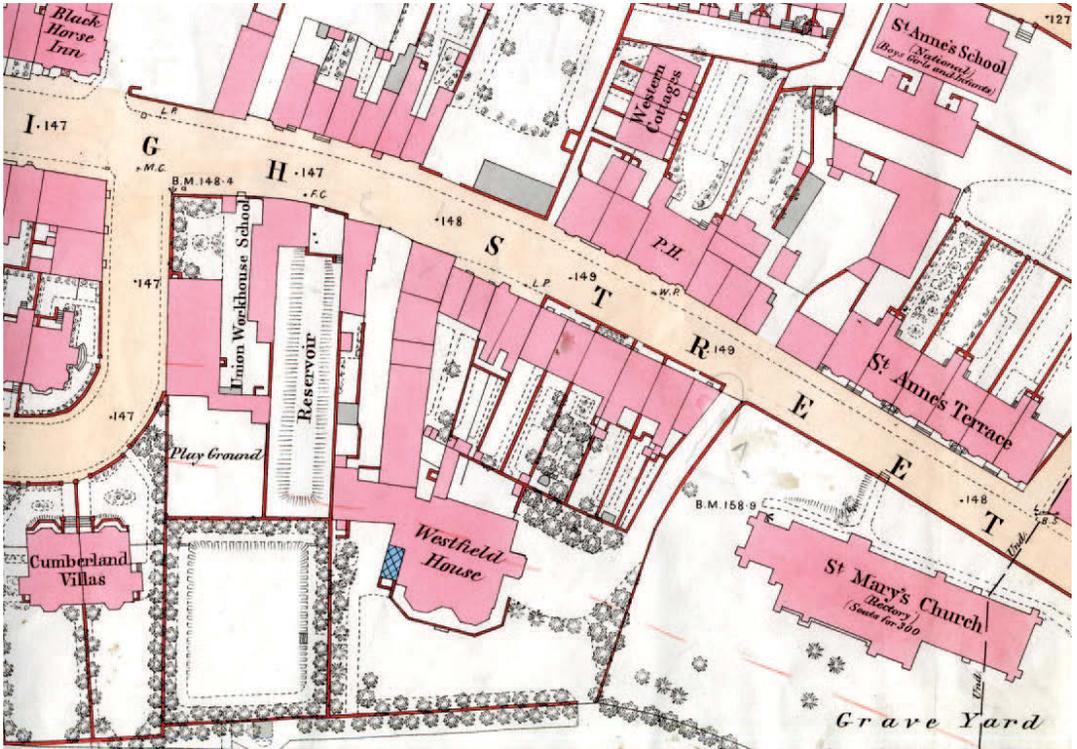


Fig. 13. St Anne's (formerly St Mary's) church and reservoir (the site of Snelling's Mill) in 1873: OS 1:500 Sussex 54.13.10.

Londoners. The collision may have taken place in the Wallands, where eight or nine skeletons were dug up in the 19th century.⁸⁰ Edward was gloriously successful. According to the Westminster chronicle, he routed the first enemy 'cohort' killing and taking prisoner several nobles; then he smashed into the rear division (*acies posterior*), in which were the Londoners, and put it utterly to flight. The first 'cohort' mentioned here may well have been a cavalry contingent behind which the Londoners advanced. It may have contained John Giffard who, so the St Albans chronicle says, aspiring to strike the first blow on the Montfortian side, was captured and taken to the castle, which, as we have seen, was Edward's base.⁸¹ Other nobles who fled with the Londoners and may have been in this first cohort were the Earl of Oxford, Geoffrey de Lucy, and Humphrey de Bohun, who was badly wounded.⁸² The Londoners and those with them probably scattered in many directions, some taking to the Downs where holes containing six to nine bodies have been discovered in the area

above Offham pits.⁸³ Others rushed north where they tried to find places to cross the Ouse and begin the journey back to London. Guisborough mentions the drowning, in flight from Edward, of 60 'knights'. Edward himself, with no knowledge of what was happening elsewhere on the field, kept up the pursuit for between two to four miles, his appetite for the slaughter whetted by an insulting attack the Londoners had made on his mother the previous year as she left the safety of the Tower.⁸⁴

There may be something in Wykes' assertion that 'the flower of all the army' had been with the heir to the throne. Certainly Edward's contingent included Warenne, William de Valence, Hugh Bigod, Roger Mortimer and the Marcher barons. In any case, while he was away disaster overcame the rest of his father the king's army. Montfort's centre charged down the slope above the hospital, and smashed into Richard's division, probably as it began the steep ascent by the present prison. Hence the numerous bodies buried there; hence, too, Richard being forced to take refuge in a windmill,



Fig. 14. St Anne's reservoir and the spire of the church, 2014 (C. Whittick).

almost certainly Snelling's Mill, on the direct line of retreat to the town's west gate.⁸⁵ According to the Melrose chronicle, perhaps informed by those elements of the Scottish contingent who returned home, he was taunted by the victorious barons who mocked at his grand titles as king of the Romans, *semper augustus*, calling to him to come out of the mill: 'Come down, come down, you worst of millers: Come out, come out, you evil master of the mill'.⁸⁶

Montfort's right, meanwhile, attacked Henry's division as it struggled along the difficult sloping terrain of the Hides and Winterbourne Hollow. At some point Montfort must have thrown himself in with the fourth division. The fighting was clearly very fierce. Montfort's standard-bearer William le Blund was killed. So, on Henry's side, was the judge Sir William of Wilton, who the previous autumn had accompanied the king to France to consult Louis IX on the crisis. The clerk William of Axmouth, paymaster to the king's knights and sergeants, died later of his injuries. Philip Basset,

the king's justiciar, refused to surrender so long as he could stand, and received more than 20 wounds.⁸⁷

King Henry himself, according to the annals of Lewes priory, 'was much beaten by swords and maces and two horses were killed under him.' Many chroniclers liked to think that he was taken prisoner on the field, surrendering to Clare, but Guisborough, who gives the more detailed account of the battle, is specific that Henry's attendants got him back to the priory (in the natural line of retreat if the division had been fighting in the Hides), and once there the gates were closed and many knights placed on guard. The Montfortians then entered the town where the number of dead and wounded created confusion, making it difficult to distinguish friend from foe.⁸⁸ It was still perhaps no more than mid-morning, the Lewes chronicle providing outside limits for the main action in its statement that the 'greater part' of the king's army was destroyed between prime, which began at sunrise (4 a.m.) and noon.

On his return to Lewes, therefore, Edward found his father's army scattered. His first reaction was to attack Montfort's baggage train which was placed, at least according to the St Albans chronicle, up on the Downs. Edward's action was allegedly inspired by the sight of Montfort's banner fluttering from a coach which had been used to convey him during a recent leg injury, though in fact the present occupants were only some royalist citizens of London, who in December 1263 had caused Montfort to be trapped in Southwark in front of the king's forces. They were now slaughtered before they could explain their true identity. This episode caught the imagination of chroniclers who came to believe that the coach and its contents had been deliberately placed to act as bait. But since, if we follow Guisborough, it was attacked only on Edward's return to Lewes, it was not a decisive factor in the course of the battle.⁸⁹

After this diversion Edward rallied his troops and approached the town. The Montfortians came out to meet him, battle was joined, and Warenne, William de Valence, Guy de Lusignan and Hugh Bigod fled. Edward, with the remainder of his force, circled the town as far as the castle and, not finding his father there, managed to join him in the priory.⁹⁰

3 THE SETTLEMENT

With both Henry and his son shut up in the priory, many commentators have determined that Montfort's victory was complete. In fact, that was far from the case. Hence, as we shall see, the conciliatory nature of the settlement after the battle – the Mise of Lewes – which has often baffled historians.⁹¹ The priory lay just outside the town and was surrounded with its own wall. Once the king was inside, as we have noted, the gates were shut and 'many knights' placed on guard. Edward had then arrived with Roger Mortimer and other Marcher barons. Richard's son, Henry, was also in the priory. Five hundred yards away the royalists still held the castle and a valuable prisoner in John Giffard.⁹²

An initial attempt by Montfort to clear up this situation failed. In an effort to rescue Giffard and the other prisoners the castle was attacked, but the garrison put up a vigorous defence and their burning arrows set a great part of the town on fire.⁹³ Montfort's army moved on to lay siege to the priory where it set the church alight with

arrows, although the fire was soon extinguished. Edward then, according to Guisborough, 'having gathered together many of his followers, since he still retained a number of warlike men, planned to go out again to fight.'⁹⁴

It was vital for Montfort to prevent him from doing so. Perhaps the chances of Edward cutting his way through to freedom were not great, but they existed. Equally serious would be the death of the king's son, for the ensuing horror and scandal would make any political settlement extremely difficult. The same would be the case if the priory was taken by storm or starved into submission. Finally, unless everything could be wrapped up quickly, there was the possibility that royalist forces from elsewhere in the country would gather, or that divisions would open in the Montfortian ranks. What Simon wanted now was a quick settlement.

In order to prevent Edward renewing the struggle, first Montfort threatened to execute Richard, Philip Basset and his other prisoners.⁹⁵ However, as the royalists held John Giffard, they could reply to this in kind. Montfort therefore sent envoys into the priory, offering political concessions, to bring about a peace. As it was by then late in the evening, if not night, negotiations were postponed till the next day. On 15 May, therefore, friars went backwards and forwards between Montfort and the king and a settlement, known as the Mise of Lewes, was reached.⁹⁶ Those in the priory formally surrendered to Montfort, the king giving up his sword to Clare, and it was accepted that the Provisions of Oxford should stand 'unbroken'. All this looked like total victory. But there were two concessions. Firstly, the Marcher barons in the priory, Roger Mortimer, James of Audley and their ally Roger of Leybourne were allowed to go free. Although, in return for this and for the general maintenance of the settlement, Edward and Richard's son Henry were to remain in custody as hostages, by freeing Roger Mortimer, Simon had let off the leash one of his greatest personal enemies. These liberated Marcher barons were to play a central role in Montfort's downfall. Secondly, Montfort re-iterated his offer that, if anything in the Provisions of Oxford needed correction, it could be submitted to a process of arbitration. It almost seemed that he was offering the same terms after the battle as before it. In fact, once Montfort had got Henry and Edward out of the priory and into his hands he did not proceed with

the arbitration. The royalists must have guessed this would happen. But the concession was worth having. By disregarding the promise Montfort left himself open to charges of bad faith and the legitimacy of his regime was weakened. In Sussex, during the winter and spring of 1264–5 Peter of Savoy's castle at Pevensey withstood a long siege by young Simon, and was the point by which many influential royalists, including John de Warenne, would escape to France.⁹⁷ Up to a point, therefore, the gradual collapse of Montfort's government in 1264–5 stemmed directly from his failure to achieve an outright victory on the field at Lewes.

The constitution which Montfort was to impose in June 1264 differed in detail from, but embodied all the principles of, the Provisions of Oxford. The king was subjected to a council of nine chosen by three electors, of whom one was Montfort, the others Clare and the bishop of Chichester. This arrangement concealed the fact that Montfort himself was now the effective ruler of England. By August 1264 it was envisaged that the new constitution might last throughout the reign of King Henry (then aged 57), until an undetermined date in that of his son.

Montfort's miraculous victory at Lewes had produced a great wave of euphoria among his supporters. A learned author, probably a friar in the bishop of Chichester's entourage, who had witnessed the events, poured forth his feelings in the *Song of Lewes*, 968 lines of impassioned Latin verse, celebrating the virtue of the great earl and justifying the righteousness of his cause.⁹⁸ The victory also called forth popular ballads, written in English and thus for an audience of free tenants and peasants. One laughed at how Richard, king of Germany (Almayne), had taken refuge in a windmill.

*The king of Almayne thought to do well,
He seized the mill for a castle*

*The king of Almayne gathered his host,
He made him a castle of a mill post.*⁹⁹

There were, however, differences of opinion even amongst Montfort's supporters. The account of the battle in Pershore abbey's *Flores Historiarum*, written soon afterwards, had the barons fighting 'pro patria', united in 'faith and will'. Yet the battle was also an event 'of calamity and misery, a day terrible beyond measure and exceedingly bitter.' In

the period after Lewes, the author became increasingly concerned about the emasculation of royal power and the humiliation of the king. For others at Pershore, this was all too lukewarm, and they altered the account of the battle to proclaim the 'fame' of Montfort's victory and its God-given nature.¹⁰⁰

But monastic enthusiasm aside, it proved extraordinarily difficult to secure any general acceptance for Montfort's constitution, and in the event, of course, his regime was short-lived. The king, in whose name the government functioned, was reduced to a mere puppet. Both Edward and Richard were kept in prison. Montfort struggled to bring the recalcitrant Marcher barons to heel; he faced condemnation by the pope, hostility from the king of France and the prospect of an invasion from Flanders masterminded by the queen. It was his desperate need for support which prompted Montfort to summon representatives of the counties and boroughs to a parliament in January 1265, the first time they had been convoked together in English history.

Montfort's greatest problem, however, was caused by his erstwhile ally Clare, who was becoming increasingly disaffected. He resented what he saw as Montfort's arrogance and overweening power, and quarrelled with him over who was entitled to the ransoms of prisoners taken at Lewes, notably Richard Earl of Cornwall and William de la Zouche. The latter had surrendered to John Giffard, who had been in Montfort's retinue at Lewes but had subsequently allied himself to Clare.¹⁰¹ By April 1265 Clare and Giffard were in open opposition, and were in the process of striking a dangerous alliance with the Marcher barons whom Montfort was attempting to force into exile. Towards the end of the month, Montfort went to Gloucester in the hope of reaching a settlement with Clare who was encamped outside the town. While negotiations were proceeding Montfort heard disturbing news. Warenne and William de Valence, who had fled abroad after Lewes, had made a landing in Valence's lordship of Pembroke. As a consequence Montfort moved (with the king and Edward) to Hereford, which he reached on 8 May. Here he was well placed both to block the movement of Warenne further east and to operate against the Marcher barons – Roger Mortimer's great castle of Wigmore was less than 20 miles to the north.¹⁰²

Things, however, did not work out as planned. On 28 May Edward was allowed to exercise some

horses outside Hereford. He tired out his own mount and those of his guards and when only one fresh horse remained, galloped off on it to Wigmore. Next day, in a meeting at Ludlow, Edward reached an agreement with Clare and the two quickly gathered a large army. Warenne and William de Valence joined them, probably having sailed up the Bristol Channel from Pembroke.¹⁰³

The war, which was to end with Montfort's defeat and death at the battle of Evesham on 4 August 1265, had now begun. The terrible mutilation of his body, and the many killings on the field, so different from Lewes (the last of the chivalric battles) shows the depth of hostility engendered by his career. Yet such hostility was far from universal. Soon after Evesham Gilbert of

St Leofard, incumbent of Petworth and a future bishop of Chichester, was reportedly cured of painful and distressing symptoms by vowing a pilgrimage to the tomb of Simon de Montfort. He 'realised that for his cure a sufficient medicine was to think upon the suffering of Simon and the other knights who were martyred with him at Evesham.'¹⁰⁴

But whether loved or hated, Montfort's idealistic vision and grasp of practical realities had pointed a way to the future. In January 1265 the great parliament he convened at Westminster, attended as it was by both knights representing the counties and burgesses the towns, was the first such assembly to include what would become the House of Commons.

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APPENDIX 1: THE SOURCES

There are two main types of written primary source for the campaign which ended at Lewes. The first are the numerous letters (writs) issued by the king and recorded on rolls kept by the chancellor. The place and dating-clauses of these letters let us know the king's itinerary. The roll of letters close (loosely, letters addressed to individuals) covering the Lewes campaign is printed in *Close Rolls 1261–64* (HMSO, 1936). The relevant rolls of letters patent (loosely, letters addressed generally) and of letters of 'liberate' (letters concerned with money payments and allowances) are found respectively in *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1258–66* (HMSO, 1910) and *Calendar of Liberate Rolls 1260–67* (HMSO, 1961). The second type of source are accounts by chroniclers. For the battles themselves they provide almost the only written information. What follows is a list of the more important of these chronicles indicating first the form of citation used in the notes, second where the chronicle is printed and the pages covering the campaign. For full discussion of these chronicles see A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c.550–c.1307* (London, 1974).

Battle: C. Bémont, *Simon de Montfort* (Paris, 1884), 375–80. The chronicle of Battle abbey. Important for the king's approach to Lewes.

Canterbury/Dover: *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury* 2, ed. W. Stubbs (Rolls Series, 1880), 234–8, 243. Chronicles (virtually the same) of Christ Church, Canterbury and Dover priory.

Dunstable: *Annales Monastici* 3, ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series, 1866), 229–32, 239. Chronicle of Dunstable priory.

Fitz Thedmar: *Cronica Maiorum et Vicecomitum Londoniarum*, ed. T. Stapleton (Camden Soc., 1846), 61–5, 73–6.

Translation: H. T. Riley, *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs of London* (London, 1863). Probably written by the London alderman, Arnold fitz Thedmar. A new edition is being prepared by Ian Stone. The volume which contains the chronicle also has the recently discovered text of Montfort's alliance with the Londoners in 1264: Ian Stone, 'The rebel barons of 1264 and the commons of London: an oath of mutual aid', *English Historical Review* 129 (2014), 1–18.

Furness: *Chronicles of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I* 2, ed. R. Howlett (Rolls Series, 1885), 541–4, 546–9. Chronicles of Furness abbey.

Guisborough: *The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, ed. H. Rothwell (Camden Soc., 89, 1967), 188–96, 198–202. Walter, a canon of Guisborough priory, began writing about 1300 but for the years 1264–5 he used a contemporary narrative close to the events. (Sometimes cited as Walter of Hemingburgh.)

Gilson fragment: J. P. Gilson, 'An unpublished notice of the battle of Lewes', *English Historical Review* 11 (1896), 520–2. A vital and neglected source, this account of the battle and its prelude is inserted into Bernard of Parma's handbook to the Decretals.

Lewes: W. H. Blaauw, 'On the early history of Lewes priory... with Extracts from a MS Chronicle', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 2 (1849), 28. Chronicle of Lewes priory with translation.

London: *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II* 1, ed. W. Stubbs (Rolls Series, 1882), 61–4, 67–9. A London chronicle.

Melrose: *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. J. Stevenson (Bannatyne

Club, 1835), 192–7. Chronicle of Melrose abbey. Some good stories and perhaps informed by Scottish participants in this battle.

Osney: *Annales Monastici* **4**, 142–9, 161–73. Chronicle of Osney abbey.

Richard of Durham: *Chronicon de Lanercost*, ed. J. Stevenson (Maitland Club, 1839), 73–4, 75–7, 79. Translation: H. Maxwell, *The Chronicle of Lanercost* (Glasgow, 1913). Richard was a Franciscan friar. More good stories.

Rishanger: *The Chronicle of William de Rishanger*, ed. J. O. Halliwell (Camden Soc., 1840), 21–34, 42–7. Rishanger, a monk of St Albans, wrote this in 1312. It is largely copied from the *Flores Historiarum* of St Albans but does have some original material. An overrated source.

Robert of Gloucester: *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester* **2**, ed. W. A. Wright (Rolls Series, 1887), 746–50, 755–67. Translation: J. Stevenson, *The Church Historians of England*, **5**, pt.1 (London, 1858). Though derived in part from the Waverley annals, has much original material.

St Albans: *Flores Historiarum*, ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series, 1890), **2**, 487–98; **3**, 1–6. Translation: C. D. Yonge, *Matthew of Westminster's Flowers of History* (London, 1853). It is now argued that from 1261 to 1265 this chronicle was written at Pershore Abbey: D. A. Carpenter, 'The Pershore *Flores Historiarum*: An unrecognised chronicle from the period of reform and rebellion in England, 1258–1265' *English Historical Review* **127** (2012) 1343–66.

St Benet of Hulme: *Chronica Johannis de Oxenedes*, ed. H. Ellis (Rolls Series, 1859), 200–3, 206–8. Chronicle of the abbey of St Benet of Hulme.

Trinity: Trinity College, Cambridge R5/40, ff.75–75v. Hitherto unused account of Lewes (brought to light by Dr D. W. Burton) perhaps connected with Gilbert de Clare.

Waverley: *Annales Monastici* **2** ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series, 1865), 356–7, 362–5. Chronicle of Waverley.

Westminster: *Flores Historiarum* **3**, 258–61, 264–5. Probably written at Westminster Abbey in the 1300s but contains original material.

William of Newburgh: *Chronicles*, **2** (2), ed. R. Howlett (Rolls Series, 1885), 541–4.

Winchester: *Annales Monastici* **2**, 101–2.

Worcester: *Annales Monastici* **4**, 450–2, 453–5.

Wykes: *Annales Monastici* **4**, 143–52, 162–75. Wykes was closely associated with Richard of Cornwall. He retired to Osney Abbey in 1282. Wykes, fitz Thedmar and the Westminster chronicle are the only pro-royalist sources.

The final sources of course are the battlefields themselves and the traditions connected with them. We would like to thank John Bleach, Jane Carpenter, Paul Brand and the late Vanessa Brand, Kate and John Gillingham, Tamar and Michael Mendelblat and the late Margaret Whittick for tramping over one or both fields with us. Both John Bleach and Colin Brent have been of great assistance in the preparation of this article and we are most grateful to them for their contribution, as we are to the British Library and Westminster Abbey for permission to reproduce Figs 1–3 and to Justin Russell for drawing the maps.

NOTES

- ¹ D. A. Carpenter, *The Battles of Lewes & Evesham 1264/65*, British Battlefields Series (Keele: Mercia Publications Ltd, 1987); the book's account of the battle of Evesham was subsequently overturned by a newly-discovered account, published in 2000: Olivier de Laborderie, J. R. Maddicott and D. A. Carpenter, 'The last hours of Simon de Montfort: a new account', *English Historical Review* **115** (2000), 378–412.
- ² For the primary sources and how they are cited in the notes, see Appendix 1.
- ³ Description of the battles will be found in W. H. Blaauw, *The Barons' War, including the Battles of Lewes and Evesham*, 2nd edn (London, 1871); G. W. Prothero, *The Life of Simon de Montfort* (London, 1877); Sir J. H. Ramsay, *The Dawn of the Constitution* (Oxford, 1908); C. W. C. Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages*, revised edn **1**, (London, 1924); A. H. Burne, *The Battlefields of England* (London, 1952); for Evesham: *More Battlefields of England* (London, 1952); for Lewes: C. H. Lemmon, 'The Field of Lewes', in Sir F. M. Powicke *et alii*, *The Battle of Lewes 1264* (Lewes, 1964); T. Beamish (Lord Chelwood), *Battle Royal* (London, 1965), which in 1987 remained the best account of Lewes.
- ⁴ See J. Bradbury, *The Medieval Archer* (Woodbridge, 1985).
- ⁵ For armour, see C. Blair, *European Armour* (London, 1958).
- ⁶ J. Baker, 'Covenants and the law of proof, 1290–1321' in S. Jenks, J. Rose and C. Whittick (eds), *Laws, lawyers and texts, Studies in medieval legal history in honour of Paul Brand* (Leiden, 2012) 177–99 at 185–9.
- ⁷ See N. Denholm-Young, 'Feudal Society in the Thirteenth Century: the Knights', in *Collected Papers* (Cardiff, 1969).
- ⁸ See M. Prestwich, *The Three Edwards* (London, 1980), 137–8.
- ⁹ For the nature of Henry's rule, see M. Clanchy, *England and its Rulers 1066–1272* (Glasgow, 1983), ch. 9 and D. A. Carpenter, 'The Personal Rule of King Henry III', *Speculum* **60** (1985), 39–70, reprinted in his *The Reign of Henry III* (London, 1996).
- ¹⁰ For the crisis of 1258, see D. A. Carpenter, 'What happened in 1258?', in J. Gillingham and J. C. Holt (eds), *War and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of J. O. Prestwich* (Woodbridge, 1984), also reprinted in *The Reign of Henry III*; H. Ridgeway, 'The Lord Edward and the Provisions of Oxford 1258', in P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (eds), *Thirteenth Century England* **1** (Woodbridge, 1986); the most detailed account of the 1258–63 period is found in R. F. Treharne, *The Baronial Plan of Reform* (Manchester, 1932).
- ¹¹ See D. Williams, 'Simon de Montfort and his Adherents',

- in W. M. Ormrod (ed.), *England in The Thirteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 1985). The classic biography of Simon de Montfort is J. R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge, 1994), author of both the entry in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) (hereafter ODNB) and of a Group Article 'The Montfortians' in the same work. There is also a superb narrative account of the whole revolutionary period in A. Jobson, *The first English revolution: Simon de Montfort, Henry III and the Barons' Wars* (London, 2012).
- ¹² R. C. Stacey, 'Mansel, John (d. 1265)', ODNB.
- ¹³ W. Hudson, 'The manor of Eastbourne', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* (hereafter SAC) **43** (1900), 166–200 at 196 and 200; for a retrospective analysis of the Honour of Leicester's fees in Sussex, conducted in 1307, see *Cal Inq. Miscellaneous* **1**, no. 2030. In 1384 this division lay at the root of the dispute between John of Gaunt and Sir Edward Dallingridge and others, all of them tenants of Leicester fees within Gaunt's Honour of Pevensey; the otherwise admirable account by S. Walker, 'Lancaster v. Dallingridge: a franchisal dispute in fourteenth century Sussex', *SAC* **121** (1983) 87–94, omits this crucial element of the case.
- ¹⁴ Dunstable, 226.
- ¹⁵ Hudson, 'The manor of Eastbourne', 200; for an inquest into the estates of over 30 Montfortians in Northamptonshire, see *Cal Inq. Miscellaneous* **1**, nos 833–46.
- ¹⁶ Dunstable, 228–30; Worcester, 448; Robert of Gloucester, lines 11328–9; St Albans, 489; fitz Thedmar, 62.
- ¹⁷ St Albans, 489; Rishanger, 22; Wykes, 146.
- ¹⁸ For the siege of Northampton, see R. F. Treharne, *Simon de Montfort and Baronial Reform* (London, 1986), ch. 9.
- ¹⁹ Canterbury/Dover, 235; Dunstable, 230; Guisborough, 191; fitz Thedmar, 62.
- ²⁰ Dunstable, 229; St Albans 489.
- ²¹ St Albans, 488–9; Wykes 146; Dunstable, 230; London 61–2.
- ²² Osney, 145; see *Cal. Patent Rolls 1258–66*, 313–4; Wykes 146.
- ²³ British Library (hereafter BL) MS Cotton Nero A IX, f.71; St Albans, 489–90; Canterbury/Dover, 235; Dunstable 230–1.
- ²⁴ *Close Rolls 1261–4*, 342; *Cal. Patent Rolls 1258–66*, 315; *Cal. Liberate Rolls 1260–7*, 135–6.
- ²⁵ The balance of the evidence is that Montfort learnt of the king's approach on the night of 25–26 April rather than on the following night: compare Canterbury/Dover, 236, Dunstable, 231, London 62.
- ²⁶ Guisborough, 192; *Close Rolls 1261–4*, 342; *Cal. Patent Rolls 1258–66*, 315; Canterbury/Dover, 236.
- ²⁷ BL MS Cotton Nero A IX, f.71v, compare Battle, 375; Wykes, 147–8.
- ²⁸ Battle, 375–6; St Albans, 491–2; *Close Rolls 1261–4*, 384; Wykes, 147.
- ²⁹ Fitz Thedmar, 62.
- ³⁰ Deduced from the presence of Henry and John at Lewes; for Derby, see Battle, 376; Gilson, 522.
- ³¹ Waleran remained loyal to Simon's cause and was among the garrison with which Countess Eleanor attempted to hold Dover Castle in the summer of 1265: *SAC* **4** (1851) 134–5, citing Battle 376. Battle was a good source for events at Herstmonceux: its barn or garner, a staging-post between its great downland manor of Alciston and the abbey, stood at the main-road settlement known until recently as Gardner Street: Henry Huntington Library, San Marino, California, BA 51/882.
- ³² Battle, 376; *Cal. Patent Rolls 1258–66*, 316, where the letter must be earlier than 10 May since it was cancelled on 9 May; *Close Rolls 1261–4*, 384.
- ³³ Guisborough, 192; Worcester, 451; Gilson, 521, London, 62.
- ³⁴ St Albans, 492; Worcester, 451; *Cal. Inq. Miscellaneous* **1**, nos 921, 2030.
- ³⁵ S. Stewart, *Royal Justice in Surrey, 1258–1269*, Surrey Record Society **45** (2013) 112, 113.
- ³⁶ The National Archives (hence TNA) SC6/1089/21, m4, account of the steward of the Honour of Pevensey, 1287–88, cited by L. F. Salzmann, 'Documents relating to Pevensey Castle', *SAC* **49** (1906) 6–7; for Denise, a Pevensey merchant who traded in wine and wool as a *femme sole*, and the depredations of her property by Montfortians, see Stewart, *Royal Justice in Surrey*, 155.
- ³⁷ C. L. Kingsford, *The Song of Lewes* (Oxford, 1890), 69–70, 152; J. R. Maddicott, 'The Mise of Lewes, 1264', *English Historical Review* **98** (1983), 588–603; but compare Blaauw, 160 n.2 who argued for 13 May.
- ³⁸ One aspect of the problem was appreciated by N. Denholm-Young, *Richard of Cornwall* (Oxford, 1947), 128 n.1.
- ³⁹ Kingsford, 70.
- ⁴⁰ For the copies of the letters see Maddicott, 'Mise', 589 and n.2; Trevet, 257–9; Trinity, f.75; Bodleian Library Oxford, MS Bodley 712, ff. 366v–367. We suggest that the clause 'given at Fletching' found in six copies of the Montfortian letter (of which three, along with the royal letters copied alongside, bear impossible dates – either 6 or 8 May) is simply a deduction from the known fact that Montfort had been at Fletching at some point before 14 May; compare St Albans, 492–3, Rishanger, 27–8.
- ⁴¹ Gilson, 521; Canterbury/Dover, 236; Battle, 376; Kingsford, *Song of Lewes*, lines 193–206; see Maddicott, 'Mise', 588–91.
- ⁴² Rishanger, 29–30; Wykes, 148–9; *The Political Songs of England*, ed. T. Wright (Camden Soc., 1839), 69, reprinted with a new introduction by P. Coss (Cambridge, 1996); it would not be until the Dictum of Kenilworth of 30 October 1266 that the question of compensation was addressed, and claims adjudicated by the special eyre *de terris datis*, commissioned on 17 September 1267 and suspended in April 1272; for an edition of a roll from the eastern circuit, covering Surrey and Sussex, see Stewart, *Royal Justice in Surrey*.
- ⁴³ Trinity, f.75; Rishanger, 30; Furness, 543.
- ⁴⁴ Denholm-Young, *Richard of Cornwall*, 129.
- ⁴⁵ London, 61.
- ⁴⁶ Winchester, 101; Wykes, 149; Battle, 376.
- ⁴⁷ J. E. Morris, *The Welsh Wars of Edward I* (Oxford, 1901), 35, 45; see Denholm-Young, *Collected Papers*, 85.
- ⁴⁸ M. Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance under Edward I* (London, 1972), 92–3, 95, 113.
- ⁴⁹ Canterbury/Dover, 237; Guisborough, 194; St Albans, 496; Battle, 377; Furness, 544.
- ⁵⁰ Newburgh, 544; Rishanger 27; St Albans 496.
- ⁵¹ Lewes, 28; Worcester, 452; and for 2070 Trinity, f.75v; BL Cotton Cleopatra D IX, f.54v.

- ⁵² Blaauw, 357; [P. Dunvan], *History of Lewes* (Lewes, 1795), 370–1; Beamish, 201–2; the 600 bodies discovered outside the east end of Lewes Priory in 1845 and since attributed to the battle are far more likely to derive from the clearance of a potentially pre-conquest cemetery in advance of the rebuilding of the priory church on a grand scale in the 12th century, for which see Colin Brent, *Pre-Georgian Lewes* (Lewes, 2004), 76–86; for a parallel from Winchester, see B. Kjøbye-Biddle, 'The disposal of the Winchester dead over 2000 years', in S. Bassett (ed.), *Death in Towns* (Leicester, 1992), 227; it is hoped to publish an analysis of finds of skeletons from Lewes in a future volume of SAC.
- ⁵³ BL MS Cotton Nero A IX, f.72; numerous chronicles give higher figures than 2700.
- ⁵⁴ See, however, Guisborough, 194.
- ⁵⁵ For this appreciation, see Lemmon, 107–8.
- ⁵⁶ Lewes, 28, Worcester, 451, Trinity, f.75.
- ⁵⁷ East Sussex Record Office (hence ESRO) AMS 4810 and SHR 2850. We would like to thank Dr Richard Coates for advising about the place-name *Boxholt*.
- ⁵⁸ St Benet of Hulme, 200–1.
- ⁵⁹ Each rape had its own meeting-place: Hastings at either Darwell in Mounthelf or Netherfield in Battle, Pevensey at Duddleswell in Hartfield (for the northern hundreds) or at Ripe or Ludlay in Selmeaton (for the southern hundreds); the Rape of Bramber met at Heathen Burials in Steyning, and the Rape of Chichester at Nomansland in Up Waltham. The evidence for Boxholt dates from conveniently close to the battle: the bishop of Chichester's claim to his liberties before the justices in eye at Lewes in 1279 was confirmed by the jury, subject to the duty of his tenants to do suit to the sheriff's tourns: the tenants of Manwood, Aldingbourne and Amberley at Nomansland, those of Henfield at Heathen Burials, Bishopston at Ludlay, Bexhill at Netherfield and Preston in the Rape of Lewes at Boxholt: *Placita de Quo Warranto* (Record Commission, 1818), 758, and A. J. Taylor (ed.), *Records of the Barony and Honour of the Rape of Lewes*, *Sussex Record Society* **44** (1943), 3; as late as 1426 the sheriff's tourn, with a jury of the Rape of Lewes, was styled as sitting at Boxholt: TNA E40/15549.
- ⁶⁰ St Benet of Hulme, 200–1 which gives the fullest version of Montfort's speech; St Albans, 495; Battle, 376; Waverley, 356–7; Canterbury/Dover, 237; for the crosses, Furness, 543; Rishanger, 31.
- ⁶¹ Guisborough, 193; Wykes, 149–50.
- ⁶² *Foedera*, ed. T. Rymer (Record Commission, 1816) **1**, 440; Battle, 376.
- ⁶³ Blaauw, 354–8 left the clash between Edward and the Londoners on the heights by Offham chalkpits. Beamish, 146–50, rightly, brings this too down nearer the town. It should be stressed that the Appendix in Blaauw, 354–8 is by Blaauw himself and not by C. H. Pearson, as is often stated.
- ⁶⁴ For a detailed history of the site, see Christopher Whittick, 'The history of the hospital of St Nicholas, Lewes and its successors', *SAC* **148** (2010), 111–27.
- ⁶⁵ The other hospital in Lewes, St James's, was ill-placed for lepers because it was just outside the priory. For the hospitals see *Victoria History of the County of Sussex* **2** (1907), 103–4; for a 'messuage' of the lepers in Southover in the 13th century, see TNA E40/15508.
- ⁶⁶ W. Figg, 'Some Memorials of Old Lewes', *SAC* **13** (1861), 6.
- ⁶⁷ ESRO ACC 2933/1/3/1; West Sussex Record Office (hence WSRO) Add MS 5970; Richard Budgen's county map of 1724, published in facsimile in Harry Margary (ed.), *25 years of mapmaking in the county of Sussex 1575–1825* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1970) 6; ESRO PAR 411/10/1, 30/1; no mills are shown in this area on George Randall's map of 1620 (ESRO ACC 3746).
- ⁶⁸ Blaauw, 357; [Dunvan], 370–1. The greatest number of bodies found in any one pit on the downs is nine, Blaauw 354; probably those resulted from Edward's pursuit of the Londoners rather than the initial clash between them; the discovery of bones and skulls at the Spital in July 1770 need not relate to the battle as indeed was 'not to be wondered at, as it was formerly a burying-ground': *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*, 23 July 1770, 4c.
- ⁶⁹ Luke Barber and Lucy Sibun, 'The medieval hospital of St Nicholas, Lewes, East Sussex', *SAC* **148** (2010) 79–109, human remains by Sue Browne at 101–107; for discoveries of bones in 1770 see note 69.
- ⁷⁰ Based on osteo-archaeological research by Dr Malin Holst of the University of York, reported in *Sussex Past and Present* **133** (August 2014) 6; further skeletons are currently undergoing analysis and it is hoped to present the results in a forthcoming volume of SAC.
- ⁷¹ Blaauw, 202, n.2.
- ⁷² *Victoria History of the County of Sussex* **7** (1940), 34–5.
- ⁷³ The word read as 'suelligi' (Blaauw, 201 n.2) is now obscured in the MS of the Lewes chronicle: BL MS Cotton Tiberius A X, f.170.
- ⁷⁴ For example, TNA JUST 1/909A, m.15; JUST 1/912A, mm.13d, 18d; E40/15596, 15609.
- ⁷⁵ Arundel Castle Archives M529, ESRO PBT 1/2/1, p.20; R. F. Hunnisett (ed), *Sussex coroners' inquests 1558–1603* (PRO Publications, 1996), no. 152; West Sussex Record Office Ep II/5/4. ffs 21–6 etc.
- ⁷⁶ ESRO PBT 1/1/8, p.259 (will of John Inkersoll of Westout, 1588); ESRO ACC 3412/3/387 (map of Wallands by John de Ward, 1618, copied by William Figg in 1838); ACC 2187 (vignette of Lewes on a map of the river Ouse by John de Ward, 1620); ACC 3746 (George Randall's map of Lewes, 1620); we are grateful to Colin Brent for these references, gathered in his account of the battle in *Pre-Georgian Lewes*, 62–6; the prehistoric burials covered by the mound on which Snelling's Mill and its successors had stood, almost certainly an iron-age barrow, survived until the creation of the reservoir in 1834: J. Bleach, 'A Roman-British (?) barrow cemetery and the origins of Lewes', *SAC* **135** (1997) 131–42; in the 13th century there were two watermills in Southover but these, *pace* Blaauw, can scarcely mark the site of the battle.
- ⁷⁷ Lemmon, 113.
- ⁷⁸ Compare, Westminster, 259–60.
- ⁷⁹ See, however, St Benet of Hulme, 201; Richard of Durham, 74.
- ⁸⁰ Beamish, 202.
- ⁸¹ The chronicle may have elided the two events for dramatic effect; it seems certain that Giffard took William de la Zouche prisoner – his ransom was one of the causes of Montfort's subsequent dispute with Clare – and William of Newburgh improbably attributes Richard Earl of Cornwall's capture to Giffard as well; see note 92.

- ⁸² Gilson, 522; Dunstable, 232; Guisborough, however, had placed Bohun with Montfort's sons.
- ⁸³ Blaauw, 195, 354; see also Lemmon, 115.
- ⁸⁴ Guisborough, 194; St Albans, 496; see also Richard of Durham, 74-5.
- ⁸⁵ *Political Songs*, 69-70; Melrose, 196.
- ⁸⁶ Melrose, 196, quoted in N. Vincent, 'Richard, first earl of Cornwall and king of Germany (1209-1272)', *ODNB*.
- ⁸⁷ TNA E372/113, m.2; Worcester, 452; Canterbury/Dover, 237; Robert of Gloucester, lines 11396-7; for Wilton, see A. Harding, 'Wilton, Sir William of (d. 1264)', *ODNB*.
- ⁸⁸ Guisborough, 195; Westminster, 260.
- ⁸⁹ Guisborough, 195; see St Albans, 495-6; Wykes, 150; Melrose, 194-5; for the Londoners – Augustine de Hadestok, Richard Picard and Stephen of Chelmsford – see I. Stone, 'The rebel barons of 1264 and the commons of London: an oath of mutual aid', *English Historical Review* **129** (2014), 1-18; we are grateful to Ian Stone for his assistance.
- ⁹⁰ Guisborough, 195; Westminster, 260.
- ⁹¹ For what follows see D. A. Carpenter, 'Simon de Montfort and the Mise of Lewes', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* **58** (1985), 1-11.
- ⁹² Westminster, 260; Trinity, f.76; Canterbury/Dover, 237; William of Newburgh 543 states that Giffard had also captured Richard Earl of Cornwall, which has been followed by his biographers Denholm-Young and Vincent in *ODNB*. But since Giffard was a royal captive in Lewes Castle at the end of the action, it is hard to reconcile Newburgh with the other sources, unless he was taken at the very end of the action (as opposed to the very beginning as implied by the St Albans chronicle).
- ⁹³ Guisborough 317-8.
- ⁹⁴ Canterbury/Dover, 237; Westminster, 260.
- ⁹⁵ Westminster, 260.
- ⁹⁶ For the Mise, see Maddicott, 'The Mise of Lewes'.
- ⁹⁷ Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* 282; Newburgh 543.
- ⁹⁸ Kingsford, *Song of Lewes*.
- ⁹⁹ *Political Songs*, 69-71.
- ¹⁰⁰ Carpenter, 'Pershore Flores', 1362-3.
- ¹⁰¹ London, 65.
- ¹⁰² *Close Rolls 1264-8*, 119; *Foedera* **1**, 455; St Albans, 1.
- ¹⁰³ Wykes, 164-5; Westminster, 260.
- ¹⁰⁴ (Rishanger 103); for St Leofard, see C. Whittick, 'St Leofard, Gilbert de (c.1230-1305)', *ODNB*; it is an intriguing possibility that Gilbert had formed part of Stephen Bersted's staff during the negotiations at Lewes.

