



Edgar the Outlaw (Aethling) (c1051-1126)

- The nearest relative and the great nephew.
- Only 14 years old.
- He had no money, no soldiers and no military experiences.
- His grandfather, Edmund Ironside, was Edward's half-brother.
- Edmund's son, Edward the Exile had been named as successor by Edward the Confessor in 1056.
- But he had died after his return to England in 1057.
- Edgar and his sister had lived with Edward and his wife Edith, since they were small children.
- Edgar was an Anglo-Saxon and had the support of many earls.



Harald Hardrada: The Viking Warrior. (c1015-1066)

- Harald was the King of Norway and had ruled for 20 years.
- He was a seasoned warrior.
- He was the leader of the famous Varangian Guard.
- His name means 'hard ruler.'
- He had the support of Harold Godwinson's brother Tostig.
- Tostig flattered Hardrada and offered him the support of the north of England.
- Many people in the North were Scandinavian and so felt they should support him.
- He was a powerful Viking with a large and successful army.
- He was related to King Cnut who reigned from 1016 to 1035.
- His claim was that, as Edward had no sons a relative of the previous king should be chosen.
- It was said that Hardrada's father Magnus had been promised the throne by Cnut's son, Harthacnut.
- Edward had claimed the throne, throwing Hardrada aside.

The Succession Crisis in 1066:

- England had a troubled history in the 50 years leading up to the succession crisis of 1066.
- There were no clear rules in place for succession to the English throne.
- Edward the Confessor had been a weak ruler. He increased Norman influence at court and allowed the Godwin's to increase their power.
- Harold was hurriedly crowned just one day after Edward's death. The haste reflected how insecure he felt. He knew he would face challenges from the other claimants.

The Rival Claimants

In 1066, Edward was seriously ill but a succession crisis was just around the corner. There were 4 men who believed they had a right to be the next king of England. **Edward was 62 when he died but had no heir.**



Harald Godwinson: (c1022-1066)

- He was the most important earl in England as the EARL OF WESSEX.
- He was not a blood relation but he was the King's brother in law as he was married to his sister Edith.
- The Godwins had tried and failed to overthrow Edward in 1051.
- They were exiled but dominated the Witan so they were allowed to return to England just a year later.
- Harold inherited his father's earldom in 1053.
- He was the richest man in England.
- He was a skilful military leader.
- He was the Sub-regulus' a deputy king who ran England for Edward and represented him in battle from 1060 onwards.
- Harold said that Edward had promised him the throne on his deathbed.
- He had the support of the Witan.
- He had support of the English Nobles.
- William of Normandy alleged that Harold had earlier sworn him a sacred oath of fealty to support his own claim to the throne.
- Harold did not deny making the oath but he said he only swore it as he was a prisoner by William and his life was threatened so it wasn't binding.

William, Duke of Normandy. (c1028-1087)

- William took over as Duke of Normandy at the age of 7 and faced many attempts against his life in this position.
- William was a successful and brutal warrior.
- In 1047, William and his army won the battle of Val-es-Dunes and cut off the heads and feet of his enemies after they made a comment about his mother.
- He was a distant cousin of Edward through Edward's mother, Emma.
- William claimed that Edward had promised him the throne earlier in his reign.
- In 1051, the Godwins rebelled against Edward, and William travelled to England to give his support to Edward and as a result Edward promised him the throne.
- William said Harold Godwinson had sworn to support his claim to the throne in 1064.
- Wessex and Normandy had been allies since 988. They were natural trading partners and helped each other when facing threats such as the Vikings.
- This relationship had the blessing of the Pope.
- William had proved himself a capable ruler of Normandy and hoped to expand his power into England.



Key Words:

- Aethling
- Bayeux Tapestry
- Sub-regulus
- Novissima verba
- Post obitum
- Witan