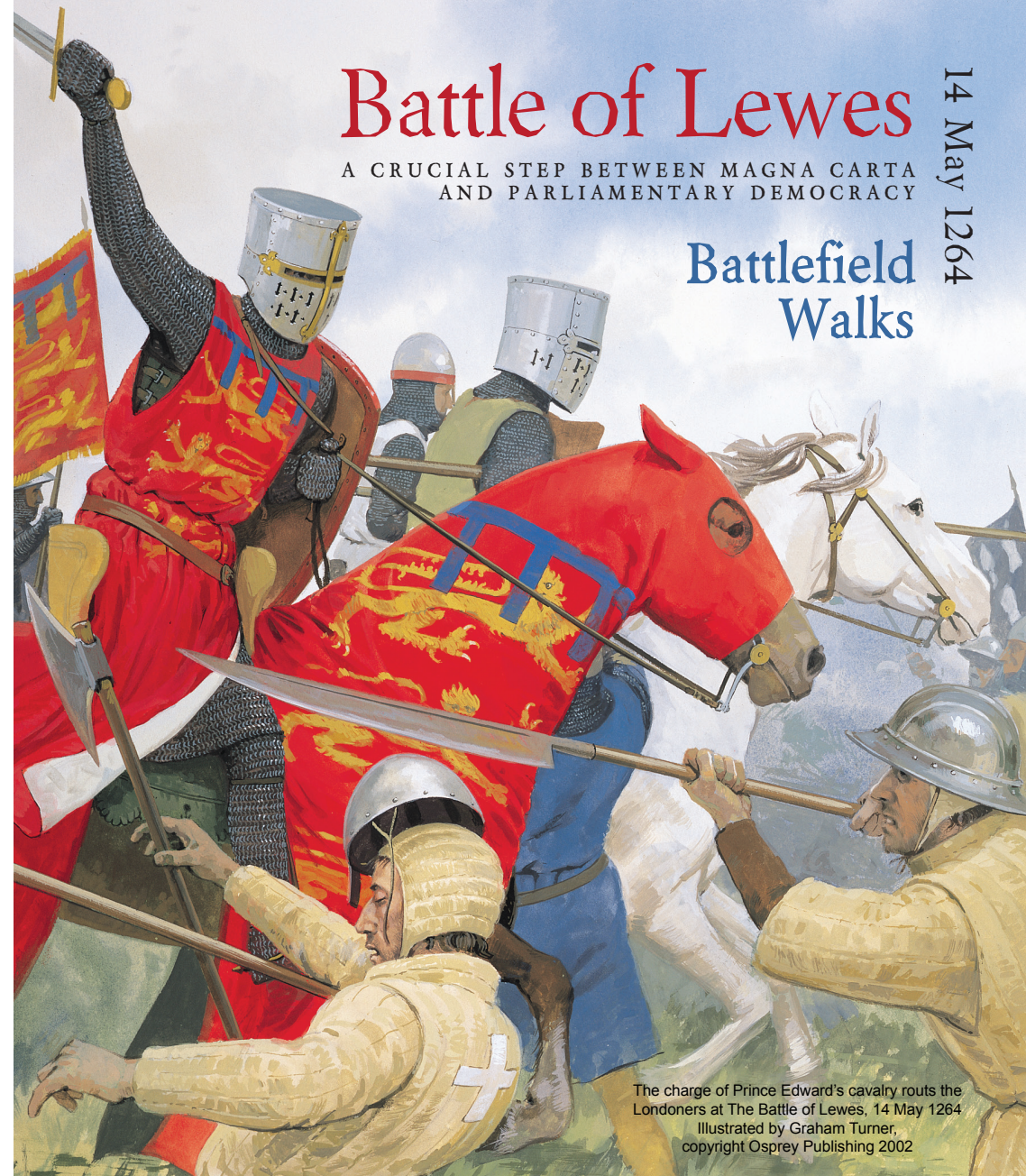


- ① **Lewes Castle** built by the De Warenne family, loyal supporters of the monarchy since the lands were granted to them by William the Conqueror after the Battle of Hastings in 1066. Base for Prince Edward.
- ② **The High Street** inhabited by many Lewesians who were injured or killed when their houses were set ablaze during the Battle of Lewes. Escape routes from the walled town were few, one being over the **bridge** ③.  
Parts of the medieval town wall still exist at **Westgate Street** ④.
- ⑤ **Lewes Priory** King Henry III arrived on the 12 May for the celebration of the feast of St Pancras. The King returned here after the battle and was joined by Prince Edward.
- ⑥ **Probable site of mill** at epicentre of battle (opposite the Black Horse pub).
- ⑦ **Official battlefield site** on Landport Bottom.
- ⑧ **Anne of Cleves House** C15, Sussex Past Museum.



# Battle of Lewes

A CRUCIAL STEP BETWEEN MAGNA CARTA  
AND PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

Battlefield  
Walks

14 May 1264

Further information on the Battle of Lewes can be found on  
[www.battlefieldstrust.com](http://www.battlefieldstrust.com) and [www.sussexpast.co.uk](http://www.sussexpast.co.uk)

Information on Lewes Priory can be found on [www.lewespriory.org.uk](http://www.lewespriory.org.uk)  
and opening times for Lewes Castle on [www.sussexpast.co.uk](http://www.sussexpast.co.uk)

Information on Landport Bottom is on [www.lewes.gov.uk](http://www.lewes.gov.uk)

For information on Magna Carta 800th commemorations visit [www.magnacarta800.com](http://www.magnacarta800.com)



Redesign and printing funded by the Battlefields Trust,  
based on an original leaflet designed by  
Sussex Archaeology Society.  
Supported by Lewes District Council and Lewes Town Council.

## Two walks

- 1) Battlefield walk on the Downs at Landport Bottom, with views over Lewes
- 2) Town Centre visiting Lewes Castle and the Priory



## Who?

King Henry III, his son Prince Edward (later King Edward I), his brother Richard Earl of Cornwall and loyal barons were fighting against Simon de Montfort, his sons and rebel barons.

## Why?

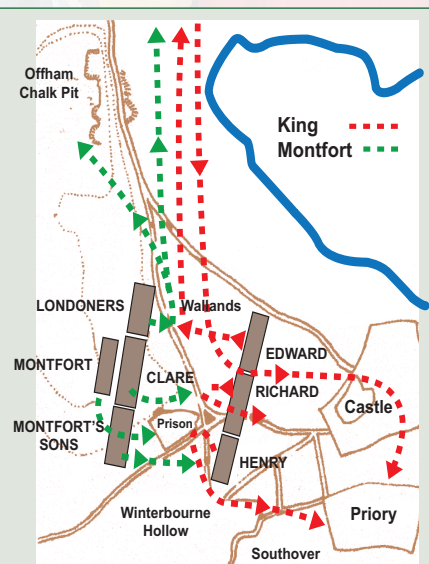
Henry had reluctantly agreed to The Provisions of Oxford installed in 1258 by a group of barons led by Simon de Montfort. They forced him to accept a new form of government in which power was placed in the hands of a council of twenty-four members, twelve selected by the crown, twelve by the barons. Henry reneged on this accord and conflict broke out culminating in the Battle of Lewes.

## How?

Simon de Montfort's forces sheltered in Warningore Wood (North of the Downs) before going up to Black Cap where they could not be seen by the royal army which was quartered in the town, King Henry III in the Priory and Prince Edward in the Castle.

The battle happened in three phases

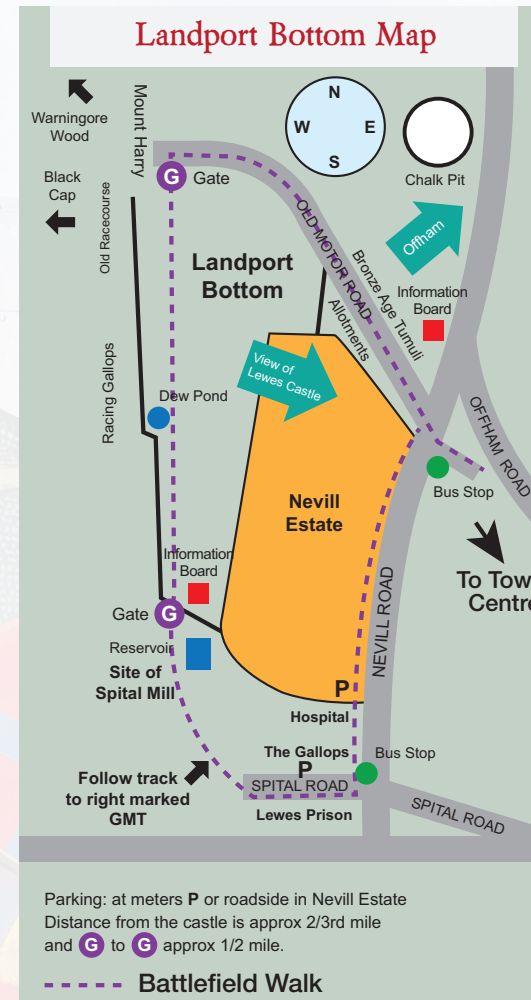
- 1) encounter between Prince Edward's cavalry and baronial army's left flank of apprentices from London
- 2) main clash between the remainder of the rival armies
- 3) fighting in the streets of Lewes and around the castle, with the King's Army withdrawing to the Priory.



The best estimates are that King Henry III had 1,500 mounted Knights and Simon de Montfort 500. Each side may have had 2-3,000 foot soldiers. In 1810 pits were discovered near the prison site containing 1,500 bodies.

## Where?

The battlefield of Landport Bottom is bounded by Lewes Prison, Cuckoo Bottom, Mount Harry, Offham, the River Ouse and Lewes Castle.



Parking: at meters P or roadside in Nevill Estate  
Distance from the castle is approx 2/3rd mile  
and G to G approx 1/2 mile.

--- Battlefield Walk

Simon de Montfort's army gathered at the site of Spital Mill. The inexperienced young Londoners, mainly apprentices, were outnumbered by Edward's cavalry in the first phase. Riding up from Lewes Castle he pursued them past what is now Offham Chalk Pit and to the River Ouse where many drowned trying to escape. The second phase was the clash of the soldiers of de Montfort and Gilbert de Clare against King Henry III and Richard.

The third phase of the battle was the rout where the King's forces retreated to the strongholds of the castle and the Priory past what is now the prison, Western Road and the High Street. St Anne's Church was nearly 200 years old in 1264 and it's thought that the mill in which Henry's brother Richard was reputed to have taken shelter was near the Black Horse pub. As the two sides descended from the Downs, soldiers from the castle shot volleys of flaming arrows onto the thatched roofs of the houses below in order to prevent de Montfort's troops from

taking defensive positions. Townsfolk were forced to flee and Simon de Montfort claimed a principled victory marked by Henry's signature on the Mise of Lewes agreeing to continue negotiations for a parliament.

Simon de Montfort organised the first Parliament in January 1265 to include Knights and Town Burgesses – the first shoots of Parliamentary democracy was born.

Conflict between King John and his Barons over issues of high taxes and justice led to the Sealing of the Magna Carta in June 1215 at Runnymede. Nearly fifty years later those issues surfaced again. The result was the Battle of Lewes and Simon de Montfort's first true Parliament.

