

Theme 2:

William in Power: Securing the Kingdom, 1066-87



Establishing Control

The Submission of the Earls, 1066



What happened after Hastings?

The Witan elected **Edgar Aethling** as king.

William sent troops to seize **Winchester** and marched towards London. He needed control of the south coast to get supplies over from Normandy. The Normans forced people to submit by destroying homes and farms as they went.

However, William and many of his troops fell ill at Dover.

At **Berkhamstead** (near London) Edgar, archbishops Ealdred and Stigand, Edwin and Morcar **submitted** to William. They swore an oath to obey him.



THE EARLS' ADVANTAGES

- London was fortified, so hard for William to attack
- Edgar had a better claim to the throne, and had been elected by the Witan
- William had control of Wessex, but the earldoms of Mercia (Edwin) and Northumbria (Morcar) supported Edgar
- William's army was tiny compared to a fyrd levied from the earls. Also, many of William's men were ill

WILLIAM'S ADVANTAGES

- William had control of the **treasury** at Winchester, so he could reward his followers
- William was a strong leader, whereas the teenage Edgar was unprepared
- England's best warriors had been killed at Hastings
- William's strategy of destruction meant people submitted easily
- William's route threatened to cut London off from the north

William was crowned on **Christmas Day 1066**. He swore an oath that he would rule England like the best Anglo-Saxon kings had, if the English would be loyal to him.

Rewarding Followers

Rewarding Anglo-Saxons

- William wanted a trouble-free takeover.
- Earls like Edwin and Morcar kept their earldoms.
- Archbishops like Ealdred (York) and Stigand (Canterbury) kept their positions.
- He promised that Edwin could marry his daughter.

Rewarding his own followers

William had promised land and money to the people who had helped him invade.

- **He sent rich gifts** to the pope and Church supporters in Normandy.
- **He introduced a heavy geld tax** to raise money to pay mercenaries (fighters hired from other countries).
- **He gave land** to family members and advisers. His half-brother, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, was given all of Kent. **Gospatric** was made Earl of north Northumbria.

Establishing Control of the Borderlands

William wanted to make the border between England and Wales more secure.

He established the **Marcher earldoms** – three new earldoms centred on **Hereford**, **Shrewsbury** and **Chester**. (*March was an Anglo-Saxon term for border*).

All three earldoms were given as **rewards** to people who had been loyal to William.

Earldom of Chester

Given to Hugh d'Avranches. *His father had provided 60 ships for the invasion.*

Earldom of Shrewsbury

Given to Roger Montgomery. *He had governed Normandy while William was away.*

Earldom of Hereford

Given to William FitzObern. *He was William's right-hand man in the invasion.*

The Marcher earldoms were different to other earldoms:

They were much smaller than other earldoms . This made them easier to control.	The Marcher earls had special rights that usually only the king had, e.g. they could create towns and establish churches.	The Marcher earls had almost full control of the legal system in their earldom.	The Marcher earls did not have to pay tax on their lands.	Marcher earls were free to build castles without applying to the king.
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These features meant the king and earls could **control** the border areas and quickly **put down any unrest**. The special rights also attracted people from Normandy to come and settle the regions (**colonisation**).

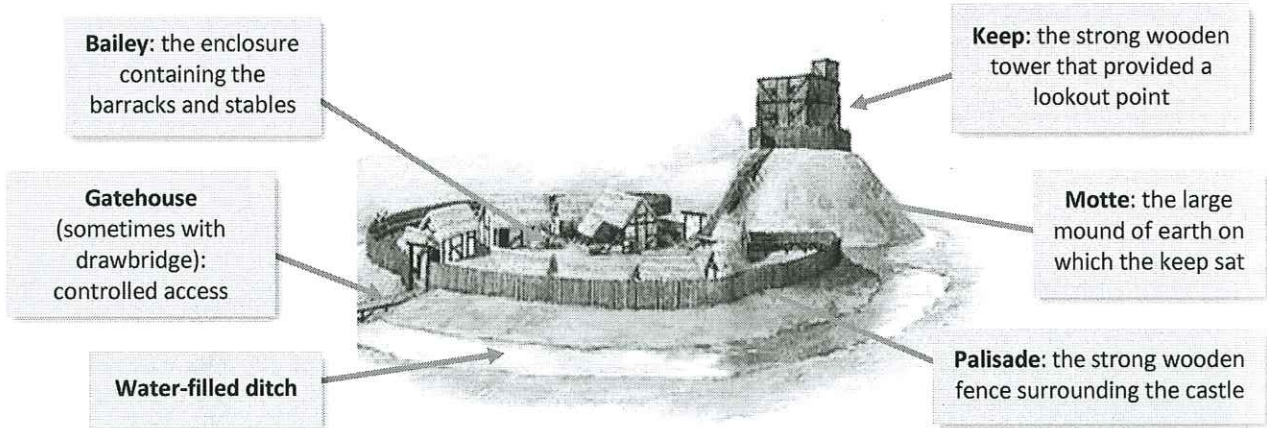
After the Battle of Hastings, the Witan elected _____ as king. The Normans _____ houses and farms on their journey towards London, and the Anglo-Saxon nobles submitted to William at a place called _____. Though some important Anglo-Saxons got to keep their positions, William also gave lots of _____ to his own family and supporters as a _____ for their loyalty. He created the _____ earldoms in order to protect the border between England and Wales, and gave special privileges to their earls. These included control of the legal system, the freedom to build _____, and not having to pay _____ on their land.



- Berkhamstead
- land
- tax
- castles
- Edgar
- Aethling
- reward
- destroyed
- Marcher

Building Castles

William built around 500 castles to establish his control around the country.



They were built in **strategic places**, such as near rivers or mountain passes. The Marcher earls built castles all along the English-Welsh border.

They were used as a **base** by the local lord and troops would be based inside.

Castles were different to the burhs (Anglo-Saxon fortified towns).

- Burhs were public, whereas castles were generally **private**.
- Castles were much **smaller** and easier to defend.
- Castles were much **harder to burn down** because they were protected by earthworks.
- Castles were designed to **control** people; burhs were meant to protect people.



Local people were made to build the castles, and in many cases houses would be demolished to make way for them.

Castles dominated the local skyline and were a **symbol of Norman power**.



SALAD PIE	<i>The strong wooden fence surrounding the castle.</i>	
TETMO	<i>The large earth mound on which the keep stood.</i>	
PEEK	<i>The strong wooden tower on top of the motte.</i>	
LAYBIE	<i>The enclosure below the motte, containing the barracks and stables for the troops.</i>	
GOATEES UH	<i>The building that controlled access to the castle.</i>	
DRAB RED WIG	<i>A wooden walkway over the ditch, which could be raised to prevent access to the castle.</i>	

Anglo-Saxon Resistance, 1068-71

The Revolt of Edwin and Morcar, 1068

William went back to Normandy in spring 1067. He took with him Edgar Aethling, Earl Edwin, Earl Morcar and Earl Waltheof.

When he came back in December, Norman control was under threat.

In **1068**, Edwin and Morcar fled north and began a **rebellion** against William. They went north, where they were joined by others including Edgar, Waltheof and Gospatric.

Reasons for the revolt:

Morcar's anger:

William had given parts of Morcar's earldom (Northumbria) to other people.

Edwin's anger:

William had gone back on his promise that Edwin could marry his daughter, and had made Edwin's earldom smaller.

William's heavy **geld tax** was hated.

Castles were hated because they were a symbol of Norman control.

William **gave away even more Anglo-Saxon land** when he returned in 1067.

Odo of Bayeux and William FitzObern had **seized land illegally**.

William and his forces headed north, building castles as they went. When William took control of **Warwick**, Edwin and Morcar **surrendered**.

- William pardoned Edwin and Morcar, but kept them as 'guests' at his court.
- Edgar and other rebels fled to Scotland, creating a new centre of resistance there.
- William's strength would have convinced many that further revolt was useless.
- Edwin and Morcar may just have been testing William's response – this would explain why they surrendered so quickly.

The Rebellions in the North, 1069

Robert Cumin

After being betrayed by Gospatric in the 1068 rebellion, William chose a new Earl of northern Northumbria: **Robert Cumin**. Cumin violently attacked towns and villages as he went north, and a group of angry Northumbrians retaliated by killing him in **Durham**.

The uprising in York

An uprising began in **York** in around February 1069, and Edgar Aethling came down from Scotland to join the rebels.



William put down the rebellion and Edgar escaped back to Scotland. William had a new castle built at York and put William FitzObern in charge of it. He then returned to Winchester for Easter – **carrying out royal ceremonies was important for William to be seen as a 'real' king.**

The Anglo-Danish attack on York

William's control came under more pressure throughout 1069.

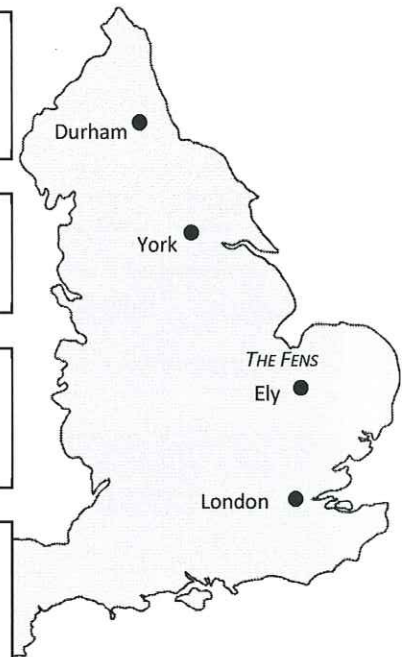
In September 1069, Edgar's forces joined forces with a fleet sent by **King Sweyn of Denmark**. Together they attacked York, where they destroyed the castles and killed around 3000 Normans.

However, the rebels scattered when William arrived and the army split up. The Danes sailed to the swampy coastal area of Lincolnshire.

William tried hunting the rebels down but they were hard to attack. Meanwhile, more rebellions broke out in Devon, Chester and Shrewsbury.

William knew it was pointless to keep hunting the rebels; as soon as he dealt with one rebellion, another one flared up. **Instead, he paid the Danes a large amount of money to leave.**

He then began a campaign of destruction – the **Harrying of the North**.



Hereward the Wake and Rebellion at Ely, 1070-71

The Danes returned in **1070**, this time led by King Sweyn himself. He set up on the **Isle of Ely**, in the middle of the **Fens**.

Sweyn made alliances with locals, including **Hereward the Wake**, a thegn whose land had been given away to Normans. The Archbishop of nearby Peterborough had also been replaced by a Norman.

Hereward was fighting a **guerrilla war** against the Normans in the swampy fens.

Hereward and the Danes raided Peterborough Abbey to stop the Normans getting its riches – but the Danes made off back to Denmark with the treasure. Hereward was helped by Morcar, but William captured Ely - Hereward escaped, while Morcar was imprisoned.



The defeat at Ely marked the end of large-scale Anglo-Saxon rebellion.

	How did William deal with it?	What happened to the rebels?
The revolt of Edwin and Morcar, 1068	William headed north, building castles as he went. The rebels surrendered.	Edgar fled to Scotland. Edwin and Morcar were kept at William's court, where he could keep an eye on them.
The uprising in York, 1069		
The Anglo-Danish attack on York, 1069		
The rebellion at Ely, 1070-71		

The Legacy of Resistance to 1087

The Harrying of the North, 1069-70

After the attack on York in 1069, William began the **Harrying (devastation) of the North**. This involved burning crops, killing livestock and destroying villages.

SHORT-TERM IMPACTS

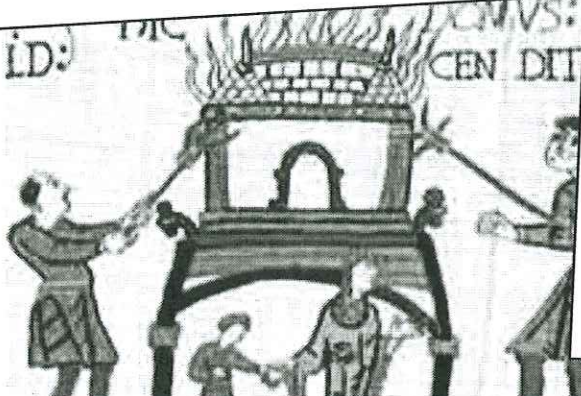
Around 100,000 people died and the region was totally devastated.

- People had no food or shelter. **They starved or froze to death.**
- Thousands of **refugees fled the region.**
- People resorted to **cannibalism** or selling themselves into **slavery**.

LONG-TERM IMPACTS

The Harrying of the North was intended to remove Northumbria as a threat for good.

- William's troops salted the earth, so that nothing could grow again. This meant the area would be wasted for years to come. When the Domesday survey was produced in 1086, **60% of Yorkshire was still classed as waste, with no economic activity.**
- Removing many Anglo-Danes from Northumbria **reduced the threat of future Danish invasion.**
- William now decided to **replace Anglo-Saxon nobles**, rather than win them over.
- William **regretted** the Harrying – he later gave money to the Church to make amends.



Changes in Landownership, 1066-87

Between 1066-1087, William replaced the Anglo-Saxon landholders with Normans. The rebellions had showed that he could not trust the Anglo-Saxon nobles.

By 1087, less than 5% of the land was held by Anglo-Saxon aristocrats. Only two of England's **tenants-in-chief** were Anglo-Saxons. (Tenants-in-chief were the large landholders who held their land directly from the king.)

How did Anglo-Saxons lose their land?

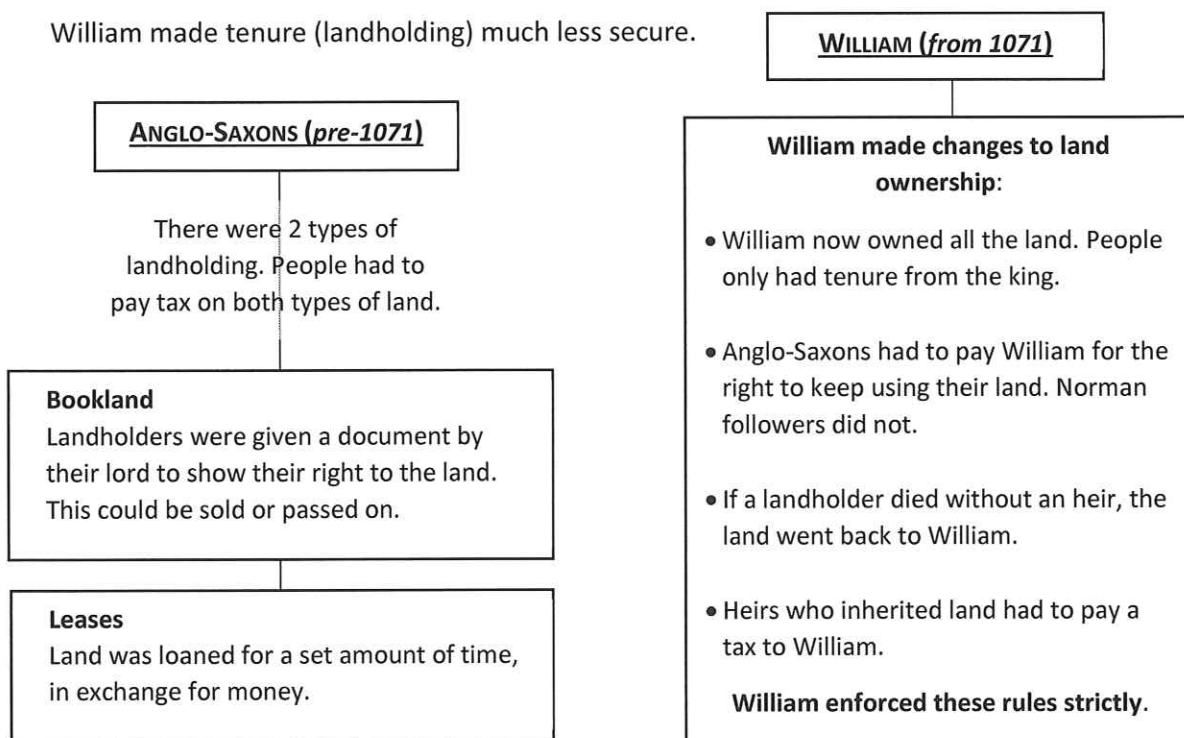
- **Forfeit** - Landowners simply lost their land as a punishment. William took it and gave it to Normans instead.
- **New earldoms** - William made new earldoms, e.g. the Marcher earldoms, and gave them to his followers. They were created to defend trouble spots.
- **Land grabs** - This way was illegal – Normans either seized land, or took it through corrupt dealings which left Anglo-Saxons with less than before. Norman sheriffs were known for doing this.



After 1071 William **combined** blocks of territory to form large blocks, rather than earls having pieces of land all around the country.

William's changes to landholding:

William made tenure (landholding) much less secure.





William’s tenants-in-chief, the new lords, now had power over the thegns:

- They could reallocate land when a thegn died.
- They could replace thegns who acted against them.

Thegns had to be obedient **vassals** and follow their new lord.

Peasants’ lives became harder, as the new tenants-in-chief wanted to get more money from their land. Ceorls (free peasants) became rarer.

All of these land changes made William’s power stronger, and resistance less likely.

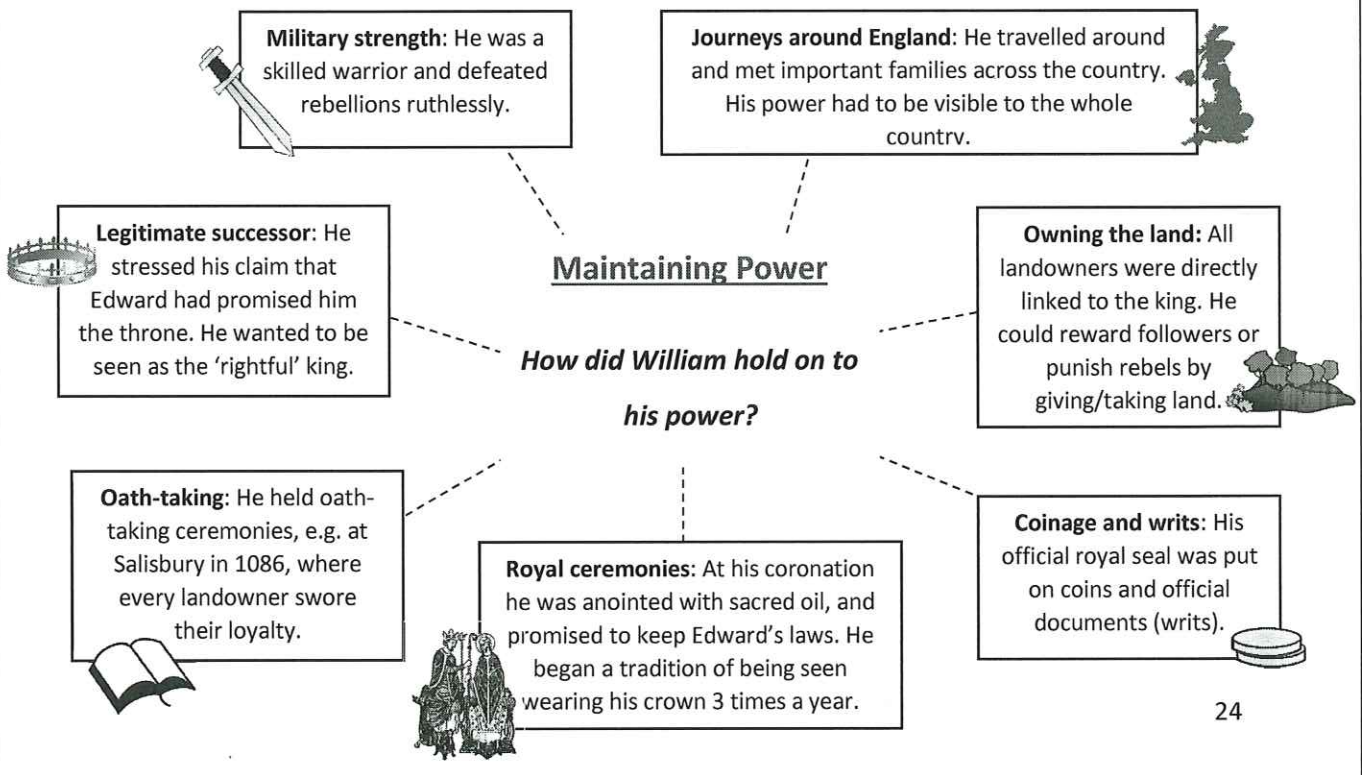
Write a definition for each of these:



Harrying of the North

Tenants-in-chief

Land forfeit



The Revolt of the Earls, 1075

There was another revolt in 1075, but this time it included Normans rebelling against William, and Anglo-Saxons defending him.

Who was involved?

<p>Ralph de Gael (NORMAN)</p> <p>EARL OF EAST ANGLIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ralph's father had been given land in East Anglia by William in 1066.▪ Ralph succeeded his father in around 1069.▪ In 1075 he married Roger de Breteuil's sister.	<p>Roger de Breteuil (NORMAN)</p> <p>EARL OF HEREFORD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The son of William FitzObern.▪ Succeeded his dad as Earl of Hereford in 1071.	<p>Waltheof (SAXON)</p> <p>EARL OF NORTHUMBRIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Previously Earl of Northamptonshire, before being given Gospatric's land in Northumbria in 1072.▪ The son of Siward, who had been Earl of Northumbria before Tostig.
<p>Reasons for revolt:</p> <p>Loss of power and wealth. His landholdings had been made smaller than his father's.</p>	<p>Reasons for revolt:</p> <p>Loss of authority and land. William had introduced his own sheriffs into the Marcher earldoms.</p>	<p>Reasons for revolt:</p> <p>Unclear – he may have played both sides, choosing to inform when the revolt's success looked unlikely.</p>

The leader of the revolt was **Ralph de Gael**. He plotted with **Roger de Breteuil** and **Waltheof** to overthrow William and split the country between them.

Reasons for the revolt

The men were angry about their **loss of land, loss of privileges** and **loss of power**.

William had been in Normandy since 1073, leaving **Archbishop Lanfranc** in charge of England. His absence gave the conspirators an ideal opportunity to rebel.

Planning the revolt

Ralph and Roger first discussed their plans with Waltheof at the wedding feast of Ralph and Emma (Roger's sister). Lots of important earls and bishops were there.

Waltheof was the last surviving Anglo-Saxon earl and had good contacts with King Sweyn of Denmark. The men expected Danish support for their plan.

What went wrong?

1. Most Anglo-Saxons supported William.
2. Waltheof changed his mind and told Archbishop Lanfranc what was going on.
3. Lanfranc wrote to Roger, trying to convince him not to revolt. He threatened to **excommunicate** him (cut him off from the Church).
4. Lanfranc organised counter-measures. Norman and Anglo-Saxons worked together to prevent Roger and Ralph from breaking out of their earldoms.
5. By the time the Danish fleet finally arrived, William was back in England. The Danish leaders dared not fight him. They simply raided the east coast then went home.

The defeat of the revolt



Ralph escaped to Brittany, while his wife Emma held out in Norwich castle.



Roger was imprisoned for life (like Morcar).



Waltheof fled abroad, then returned thinking he would be forgiven. William had him executed in 1076.

William then tried to attack Ralph's castle in Brittany – however, he had to retreat because there was so much resistance.

The significance of the revolt

William now had to be careful of his own earls, who resented his power. From this point on, rebellion against William came from Normans.

The Danish threat seems to have shaken William. When there was another Danish invasion threat in 1085, he went to extreme measures to boost England's defences.

Anglo-Saxons helped to stop the revolt – this suggests some Anglo-Saxons now supported William. However, the execution of Waltheof shows that William continued to come down hard on Anglo-Saxon rebels.

Ralph de Gael

Roger de Breteuil

Waltheof

Archbishop Lanfranc

Earl of Northumbria, and the last remaining Anglo-Saxon earl. He was executed for his part in the revolt.

The leader of the revolt, who escaped to Brittany afterwards. The revolt was planned at his wedding feast.

The man left in charge of England while William was in Normandy. He tried to convince Roger not to revolt.

One of the Marcher earls, and the son of William FitzObern. He was imprisoned for life after the revolt.

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- The Anglo-Saxon earls submitted to William in 1066.
- William rewarded followers and supporters with land and money.
- He built castles and created the Marcher earldoms to establish control over England.
- There were several rebellions in the years 1068-71, mainly due to resentment over land.
 - The revolt by earls Edwin and Morcar in 1068 was defeated quickly.
 - Rebellions in the north (1069) and east (1070-71) were serious because Danish support was involved.
 - William used brutal tactics, such as the Harrying of the North, to end the Anglo-Saxon rebellions.
- After the rebellions, William changed landownership to make thegns more dependent on their new Norman lords.
- William's skill and strength helped him to maintain power.
- The Revolt of the Earls in 1075 was a serious threat because it involved 3 powerful earls and a large Danish force, but it failed due to Anglo-Saxon support for William.

Topic Test 2: William in Power: Securing the Kingdom

1. Who did the Witan name as their king after Harold's death?

2. Where did the earls submit to William?

3. Name 2 ways in which William rewarded his followers and supporters.

4. Name the 3 Marcher earldoms.

5. Name one way in which the Marcher earldoms were different to other earldoms.

6. Name 2 features of a Norman castle that made them difficult to attack.

7. What happened to Edwin and Morcar after their 1068 revolt?

8. How did William deal with the Anglo-Danish attack on York in 1069?

9. Describe what happened during the Harrying of the North.

10. Name 2 of the 3 ways in which William transferred land from Anglo-Saxons to Normans.

11. Name one change that William made to landholding after 1071.

12. Name 3 factors that allowed William to maintain control over England.

13. Name the 3 earls who plotted against William in 1075.

14. What happened to the 3 earls after the revolt was defeated?
