



### 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.
- Edmunds 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 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 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.**

What do I need to know:  
➤ to reasons for their claims to the throne.  
➤ Strengths and weaknesses of claims.



**Key Words:**

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



### 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.

### 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.