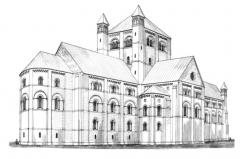
***The 11th Century***

***This century holds the most remembered date in English history – 1066. It’s regarded as so important that in the past England used to start the medieval period from 1066. It’s not even strictly true to say that it the last time England was successfully invaded, but it’s a date that’s stuck well and truly in the popular memory.***

**Power and conflict**

The big event of the century for England was the Norman Conquest in 1066. In fact, 1066 was a year of three major battles and two of them took place within a few miles of York. Although William was related to the English royal family and there are more continuities before and after 1066 than was once assumed, it is true to say that big changes happened for the powerful. If you were English and powerful (and therefore writing about events), then 1066 marked a time when you lost out to invaders. Norman barons, loyal to William, were granted land across the country and put up castles to secure territory for their Duke and displaced the old local rulers. If you were a poor Anglo-Saxon person, then it is quite likely that you noticed very little difference and eventually life improved for some – as long as you weren’t in the north. But then poorer people rarely write the history books!

**Faith and Fears**

The Normans built fine churches, including a new York Minster. This is an artists’ impression of what the Norman Minster looked like.

**Home and health**

Following rebellion in 1069, William rode north and harried the land. People and animals were slaughtered, houses and crops burnt. The Domesday Book, which recorded the wealth of England in 1086, still described much of the North as ‘wasteland’. However, the Normans do seem to have stopped the practice of keeping people as slaves.

**Art and Architecture**

The Bayeux tapestry is one of the most famous artworks of the 11th century. Stitched by English needlewomen, it tells the story of 1066 from a Norman perspective.

**News and views**

The Anglo-Saxon chronicles were written all through this period and they provide an invaluable source of information about what was going on in England. The century began with Danish invasions and soon England once more had a Danish king – Canute. The chronicles record harsh winters and the creating of bishops, the actions of earls and high taxes, high winds and comets. We don’t know who wrote them, but they left us a window into their world.

**Wider world**

The [spherical astrolabe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armillary_sphere#History), long employed in medieval [Islamic astronomy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_astronomy), was introduced to Europe by Gerbert d'Aurillac, later [Pope Sylvester II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Sylvester_II).

The Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christian churches split in 1054. Scotland became a single kingdom. Southern Spain was ruled as part of an Islamic caliphate. Chinese science and technology excelled. The Chola dynasty dominated southern India with its naval power. The kingdoms of Oyo and Benin flourished. Meanwhile Europeans besieged Jerusalem on Crusade and the mystic, poet, composer and abbess, Hildegard of Bingen was born.

**Medieval remains**

Baille Hill and the motte of Clifford’s Tower remind York of the castles William built to control the city. There are still Norman remains in the crypt of the current Minster. The White Tower in the Tower of London was built for William. Many of the richest and most powerful families in England are still the ones who did well under William, with names of French origin. The language of English took on new words: pork, beef, duke, noble… The White Tower