

# Edward the Black Prince (1330-1376)



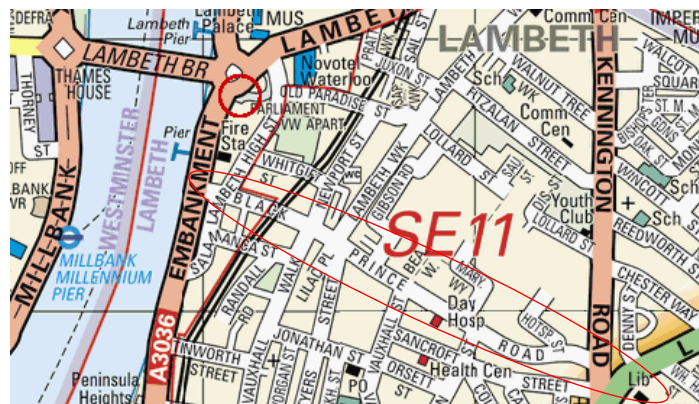
Edward, the Black Prince (1330-1376), Prince of Wales, who distinguished himself as a military leader during the Hundred Years' War.

Edward was born at Woodstock, Oxfordshire, on June 15, 1330, the son of King Edward III of England. During his lifetime, he was called Edward of Woodstock; the name Black Prince was given him because of the black armour he wore(\*). In 1346 Edward accompanied his father on the English campaign in Normandy, and during the Battle of Crécy, when he was only 16, the prince won high renown for his command of the right wing of the English army.

In 1355 Edward was appointed his father's lieutenant in Gascony. He led the English army in a series of raids across southern France and in 1356 defeated a French army at Poitiers, took King John II of France prisoner, and returned in triumph to England with his captive. In 1361 he married his cousin Joan, Countess of Kent (1328-1385) known as the Fair Maid of Kent. A year later his father created him prince of Aquitaine and Gascony, and he went to his domains in southern France. As lord of those lands, Edward became, under feudal law, a vassal of the French king.

During his rule the prince fell out with the Gascon nobles, who believed that he was curtailing their feudal rights. After almost six years of peace, Edward, in 1367, led an expedition to Spain in order to restore Peter the Cruel, the deposed King of Castile, to his throne. During the successful Spanish campaign, Edward contracted an illness from which he never recovered; Peter furthermore refused to repay Edward the vast sums that had been expended on his behalf. On his return to Aquitaine, the prince levied taxes to pay for the expedition, but the disgruntled nobles protested to Edward's feudal lord, King Charles V of France. The prince refused to answer to the charges against him, and Charles renewed the war against England. A revolt against Edward spread through Aquitaine and Gascony, and despite his illness the prince led his troops against the city of Limoges, capturing it in 1370 and massacring its defenders. A year later he returned to England and resigned his principality.

During the last years of his life, Edward was a leader of the political faction that rebelled against the misrule of his younger brother, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. Edward finally succumbed to his illness and died at Westminster on June 8, 1376. He was buried in Canterbury Cathedral, in which parts of his armour still hang.



*Text Source Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 2001. © 1993-2000*

(\*) The name the Black Prince is not recorded until the 16th cent.