

English King Edward the Confessor

Summation by D. A. Sharpe

Edward the Confessor was born January 5, 1003, being among the last of the Anglo-Saxon Kings of England.

"The Confessor" Edward is the son of 3rd great grandfather of "Count Poitou" William, the 14th [great grand uncle of husband of my 7th great grandmother, Alice Carpenter](#)

Saint Edward the Confessor



King of England, Confessor

The penultimate Anglo-Saxon king, Edward III was the oldest son (and seventh son) of Aethelred II and Emma. He had gone to Normandy in 1013, when his father and mother had fled from England. He stayed there during the reign of Canute and, at his death in 1035, led an abortive attempt to capture the crown for himself. He was recalled, for some reason, to the court of Hardicanute, his half-brother. His Christian faith was Roman Catholic.

Canute had placed the local control of the shires into the hands of several powerful earls: Leofric of Mercia (Lady Godiva's husband), Siward of Northumbria and Godwin of Wessex, the most formidable of all. Through Godwin's influence, Edward took the throne at the untimely death of Hardicanute in 1042. In 1045, he married Godwin's only daughter, Edith.

Resulting from the connections made during Edward's years in Normandy, he surrounded himself with his Norman favorites and was unduly influenced by them. This Norman "affinity" produced

great displeasure among the Saxon nobles. The anti-Norman faction was led by (who else?) Godwin of Wessex and his son, Harold Godwinsson, took every available opportunity to undermine the king's favorites. Edward sought to revenge himself on Godwin by insulting his own wife and Godwin's daughter, Edith, and confining her to the monastery of Wherwell. Disputes also arose over the issue of royal patronage and Edward's inclination to reward his Norman friends.



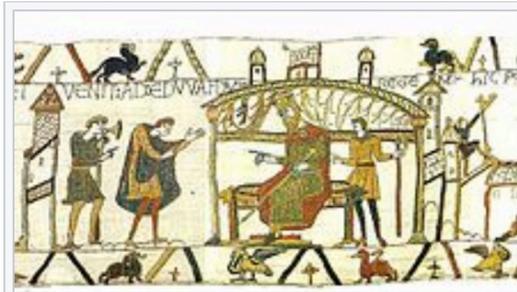
Penny of Edward the Confessor

A Norman, Robert Champart, who had been Bishop of London, was made Archbishop of Canterbury by Edward in 1051, a promotion that displeased Godwin immensely. The Godwins were banished from the kingdom after staging an unsuccessful rebellion against the king but returned, landing a force invading the south of England in 1052. They received great popular support, and in the face of

this, the king was forced to restore the Godwins to favor in 1053.

Edward's greatest achievement was the construction of a new cathedral, where virtually all English monarchs, from William the Conqueror onward, would be crowned. It was determined that the minster should not be built in London, and so a place was found to the west of the city (hence "Westminster"). The new church was consecrated at Christmas, 1065, but Edward could not attend due to illness.

On his deathbed, Edward named Harold as his successor, instead of the legitimate heir, his grandson, Edgar the Aetheling. The question of succession had been an issue for some years, and remained unsettled at Edward's death in January, 1066. It was neatly resolved, however, by William the Conqueror, just nine months later.



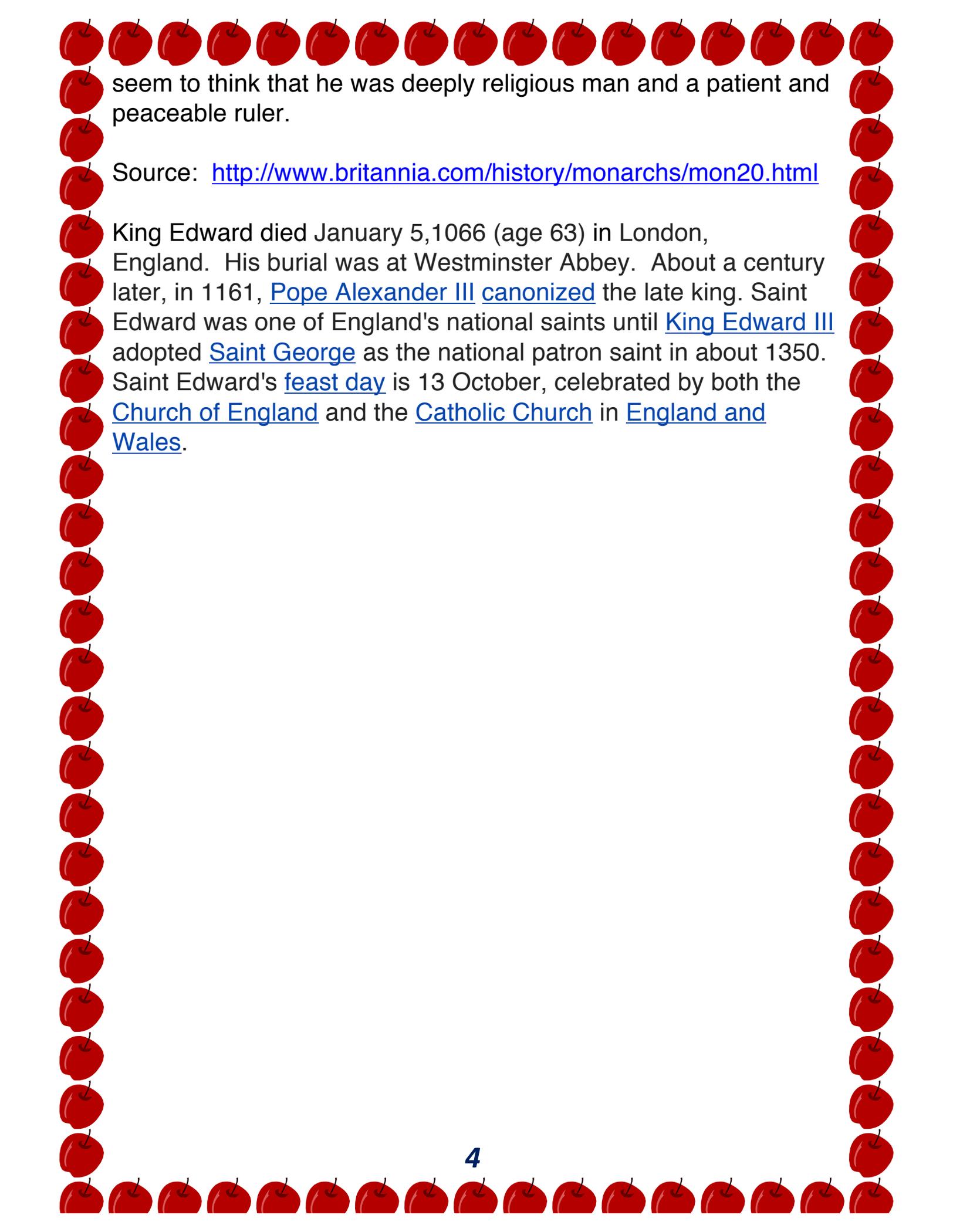
Harold meeting Edward shortly before his death, depicted in [scene 25 of the Bayeux Tapestry](#)

Edward and William were first cousins, once removed. The ancestor in common to them was King Richard I, the grandfather of Edward and the great grandfather of William.



Edward's seal: SIGILLVM EADWARDI ANGLORVM BASILEI (Seal of Edward crowned/King of the English).

There is some question as to what kind of person Edward was. After his death, he was the object of a religious cult, and was canonized in 1161, but that could be viewed as a strictly political move. Some say, probably correctly, that he was a weak, but violent man, and that his reputation for saintliness was overstated, possibly a sham perpetrated by the monks of Westminster in the twelfth century. Others



seem to think that he was deeply religious man and a patient and peaceable ruler.

Source: <http://www.britannia.com/history/monarchs/mon20.html>

King Edward died January 5, 1066 (age 63) in London, England. His burial was at Westminster Abbey. About a century later, in 1161, [Pope Alexander III canonized](#) the late king. Saint Edward was one of England's national saints until [King Edward III](#) adopted [Saint George](#) as the national patron saint in about 1350. Saint Edward's [feast day](#) is 13 October, celebrated by both the [Church of England](#) and the [Catholic Church](#) in [England and Wales](#).

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