

Edward I Penguin Monarchs A New King Arthur

Edward the Confessor, the last great king of Anglo-Saxon England, canonized nearly 100 years after his death, is in part a figure of myths created in the late middle ages. In this revealing portrait of England's royal saint, David Woodman traces the course of Edward's twenty-four-year-long reign through the lens of contemporary sources, from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the *Vita Edwardi Regis* to the Bayeux Tapestry, to separate myth from history and uncover the complex politics of his life. He shows Edward to be a shrewd politician who, having endured a long period of exile from England in his youth, ascended the throne in 1042 and controlled a highly sophisticated and powerful administration. The twists and turns of Edward's reign are generally seen as a prelude to the Norman Conquest in 1066. Woodman explains clearly how events unfolded and personalities interacted but, unlike many biographers, he presents a capable and impressive king at the centre of them.

Written by Philip Ziegler, one of Britain's most celebrated biographers, George VI is part of the Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers in a collectible format. If Ethelred was notoriously 'Unready' and Alfred 'Great', King George VI should bear the title of 'George the Dutiful'. Throughout his life, George dedicated himself to the pursuit of what he thought he should be doing rather than what he wanted to do. Inarticulate and loathing any sort of public appearances, he accepted that it was his destiny to figure conspicuously in the public eye, gritted his teeth, battled his crippling stammer and got on with it. He was not a natural king, but he made an admirable one, and was the figurehead of the nation at the time of its greatest trial, the Second World War. This is a brilliant, touching and sometimes funny book about this reluctant public figure, and the private man. Philip Ziegler is the author of the authorised biographies of Mountbatten, Harold Wilson and Edward Heath. His other books include *The Duchess*, *William IV*, *The Black Death* and most recently *Olivier*. Initially a diplomat, he worked for many years in book publishing before becoming a full-time writer.

Part of the Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers in a collectible format. Henry VII was one of England's unlikeliest monarchs. An exile and outsider with barely a claim to the throne, his victory over Richard III at Bosworth in 1485 seemed to many like only the latest in the sequence of violent convulsions among England's nobility that would come to be known as the wars of the roses - with little to suggest that the obscure Henry would last any longer than his predecessor. In a cycle of division, usurpation, deposition and murder, he had both to maintain a grip on power and to convince England that he was both rightful and effective. Here, Sean Cunningham explores how, in his ruthless, controlling and personal kingship, Henry VII did so; in the process founding the Tudor dynasty and, arguably, helping to lay the foundations for modern government. Sean Cunningham is a Principal Records Specialist at The National Archives. A Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, he has published widely on late medieval and early Tudor England. His books include, most recently, a historical biography of Henry VII.

In 1461 Edward earl of March, an able, handsome, and charming eighteen-year old, usurped the English throne from his feeble Lancastrian predecessor Henry VI. Ten years on, following outbreaks of civil conflict that culminated in him losing, then regaining, the crown, he had finally secured his kingdom. The years that followed witnessed a period of rule that has been described as a golden age of peace and economic and industrial expansion, which saw the establishment of a style of monarchy that the Tudors would develop. Yet, argues A. J. Pollard, Edward, who was drawn to a life of sexual and epicurean excess, was a man of limited vision. His reign remaining to the very end the narrow rule of a victorious faction in civil war. Ultimately, his failure was dynastic: barely six months after his death in April 1483, the throne was usurped by Edward's youngest brother, Richard III.

Edward VIII (Penguin Monarchs)

Henry VIII (Penguin Monarchs)

Charles II (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward VI

Edward IV

Oliver Cromwell (Penguin Monarchs)

William I (Penguin Monarchs)

Known as 'the anarchy', the reign of Stephen (1135-1141) saw England plunged into a civil war that illuminated the fatal flaw in the powerful Norman monarchy, that without clear rules ordering succession, conflict between members of William the Conqueror's family were inevitable. But there was another problem, too: Stephen himself. With the nobility of England and Normandy anxious about the prospect of a world without the tough love of the old king Henry I, Stephen styled himself a political panacea, promising strength without oppression. As external threats and internal resistance to his rule accumulated, it was a promise he was unable to keep. Unable to transcend his flawed claim to the throne, and to make the transition from nobleman to king, Stephen's actions betrayed uneasiness in his role, his royal voice never quite ringing true. The resulting violence that spread throughout England was not, or not only, the work of bloodthirsty men on the make. As Watkins shows in this resonant new portrait, it arose because great men struggled to navigate a new and turbulent kind of politics that arose when the king was in eclipse.

Like his mother Queen Victoria, Edward VII defined an era. Both reflected the personalities of their central figures: hers grand, imperial and pretty stiff; his no less grand, but much more relaxed and enjoyable. This book conveys Edward's distinct personality and significant influences. To the despair of his parents, he rebelled as a young man, conducting many affairs and living a life of pleasure. But as king he made a distinct contribution to European diplomacy and - which is little known - to London, laying out the Mall and Admiralty Arch. Richard Davenport-Hines's book is as enjoyable as its subject and the age he made.

Part of the Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers in a collectible format. In the popular imagination, as in her portraits, Elizabeth I is the image of monarchical power. The Virgin Queen ruled over a Golden Age: the Spanish Armada was defeated and England's enemies scattered; English explorers reached almost to the ends of the earth; a new Church of England rose from the ashes of past conflict, and the English Renaissance bloomed in the genius of Shakespeare, Spenser and Sidney. But the image is also armour. In this illuminating new account of Elizabeth's reign, Helen Castor shows how England's iconic queen was shaped by profound and enduring insecurity-an insecurity which was both a matter of practical political reality and personal psychology. From her precarious

upbringing at the whim of a brutal, capricious father and her perilous accession after his death, to the religious division that marred her state and the failure to marry that threatened her line, Elizabeth lived under constant threat. But, facing down her enemies with a compellingly inscrutable public persona, the last and greatest of the Tudor monarchs would become a timeless, fearless queen. The reign of Edward II (1307-27) was a series of total disasters, making him unsuccessful to an extent almost without equal. At some level Edward simply did not inspire trust or respect. He failed to be kingly, preferring ditching and cart-racing to jousting and falconry. He relied on favourites and seemed to alienate even the most natural supporters of the throne. His reign was convulsed by rebellion and attempts to reform the king's behaviour. In an attempt to throw off the spectre of his regal, soldierly father, Edward I, he invaded Scotland and suffered catastrophic defeat at the Battle of Bannockburn. After twenty ruinous years, betrayed and abandoned by most of his nobles and by his wife and her lover, Edward was imprisoned in Berkeley Castle where he was murdered. Christopher Given-Wilson's remarkable book gives a glimpse into the abyss: the terrors of kingship--where royal authority is based around strict succession by the eldest son, what happens when that eldest son is incapable of doing the job?

Mary I (Penguin Monarchs)

Stephen (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward the Confessor (Penguin Monarchs)

A Failed King?

Edward VII, 1901-1910

An Evil King?

Edward IV (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward VI, the only son of Henry VIII, became king at the age of nine and died wholly unexpectedly at the age of fifteen. This book gives full play to the murky, sinister nature of Edward's reign, and also an account of a boy learning to rule, learning to enjoy his growing power and to come out of the shadows of the great aristocrats around him.

The acclaimed Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers - now in paperback The elder daughter of Henry VIII, Mary I (1553-58) became England's ruler on the unexpected death of her brother Edward VI. Her short reign is one of the great potential turning points in the country's history. As a convinced Catholic and the wife of Philip II, king of Spain and the most powerful of all European monarchs, Mary could have completely changed her country's orbit, making it a province of the Habsburg Empire and obedient again to Rome. These extraordinary possibilities are fully dramatized in John Edward's superb short biography. The real Mary I has almost disappeared under the great mass of Protestant propaganda that buried her reputation during her younger sister, Elizabeth I's reign. But what if she had succeeded?

The acclaimed Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers - now in paperback Like his mother Queen Victoria, Edward VII defined an era. Both reflected the personalities of their central figures: hers grand, imperial and pretty stiff; his no less grand, but much more relaxed and enjoyable. This book conveys Edward's distinct personality and significant influences. To the despair of his parents, he rebelled as a young man, conducting many affairs and living a life of pleasure. But as king he made a distinct contribution to European diplomacy and - which is little known - to London, laying out the Mall and Admiralty Arch. Richard Davenport-Hines's book is as enjoyable as its subject and the age he made.

A major new title in the Penguin Monarchs series In his fascinating new book in the Penguin Monarchs series, Richard Abels examines the long and troubled reign of Aethelred II the 'Unraed', the 'Ill-Advised'. It is characteristic of Aethelred's reign that its greatest surviving work of literature, the poem The Battle of Maldon, should be a record of heroic defeat. Perhaps no ruler could have stemmed the encroachment of wave upon wave of Viking raiders, but Aethelred will always be associated with that failure. Richard Abels is Professor Emeritus at the United States Naval Academy. He is the author of Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England and Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

The Failed King

George VI (Penguin Monarchs)

The Reign of Anarchy

Edward I

The Dutiful King

The Summer King

Edward IV, 1461-1483

Edward I (Penguin Monarchs)A New King Arthur?Penguin UK

Frank Barlow's magisterial biography, first published in 1970 and now reissued with new material, rescues Edward the Confessor from contemporary myth and subsequent bogus scholarship. Disentangling verifiable fact from saintly legend, he vividly re-creates the final years of the Anglo-Danish monarchy and examines England before the Norman Conquest with deep insight and great historical understanding.

"Deploying all the resources of formidable scholarship, [Barlow] has recovered the real Edward." —

Spectator

Richard II (1377-99) came to the throne as a child, following the long, domineering, martial reign of his grandfather Edward III. He suffered from the disastrous combination of a most exalted sense of his own power and an inability to impress that power on those closest to the throne. Neither trusted nor feared, Richard battled with a whole series of failures and emergencies before finally succumbing to a coup, imprisonment and murder. Laura Ashe's brilliant account of his reign emphasizes the strange gap between Richard's personal incapacity and the amazing cultural legacy of his reign - from the Wilton Diptych to Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Piers Plowman and The Canterbury Tales.

Like his mother Queen Victoria, Edward VII gave his name to an era. Both reflected the personalities of their central figures: hers insular and stiff; his attuned to the need for royal performances in public, European-minded, pleasure-loving, money-conscious and worldly. This highly entertaining book by celebrated biographer and social historian Richard Davenport-Hines conveys Edward's distinct personality and significant influences throughout his life. Brought up in strict isolation, 'Bertie' rebelled as a

young man, to the despair of his parents, conducting many affairs, indulging his love of food, gambling and hunting and living a life of pleasure. But he was also a pioneering philanthropist, travelled widely and made a valuable contribution to European diplomacy. He also turned London into the leading royal capital of Europe, with opulent shops, and laid out the Mall and Admiralty Arch, which would become the main stage for royal public events in the twentieth century. Richard Davenport-Hines's Edward VIII as pleasurable as its subject and the age of glamour and leisure, social reform and social brilliance, that Edward made.

Athelstan (Penguin Monarchs)

The Father of His People

The Unexpected King

The Quest for Fame

A Study in Insecurity

The Holy King (Penguin Monarchs)

A New King Arthur?

For a man with such conventional tastes and views, George V had a revolutionary impact. Almost despite himself he marked a decisive break with his flamboyant predecessor Edward VII, inventing the modern monarchy, with its emphasis on frequent public appearances, family values and duty. George V was an effective war-leader and inventor of 'the House of Windsor'. In an era of ever greater media coverage--frequently filmed and initiating the British Empire Christmas broadcast--George became for 25 years a universally recognised figure. He was also the only British monarch to take his role as Emperor of India seriously. While his great rivals (Tsar Nicolas and Kaiser Wilhelm) ended their reigns in catastrophe, he plodded on. David Cannadine's sparkling account of his reign could not be more enjoyable, a masterclass in how to write about Monarchy, that central--if peculiar--pillar of British life. Edward III lived through bloody and turbulent times. His father was deposed by his mother and her lover when he was still a teenager; a third of England's population was killed by the Black Death midway through his reign; and the intractable Hundred Years War with France began under his leadership. Yet Edward managed to rule England for fifty years, and was viewed as a paragon of kingship in the eyes of both his contemporaries and later generations. Venerated as the victor of Sluys and Crecy and the founder of the Order of the Garter, he was regarded with awe even by his enemies. But he lived too long, and was ultimately condemned to see thirty years of conquests reversed in less than five. In this gripping new account of Edward III's rise and fall, Jonathan Sumption introduces us to a feted king who ended his life a heroic failure."

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Edward VI, the only son of Henry VIII, became king at the age of nine and died wholly unexpectedly at the age of fifteen. All around him loomed powerful men who hoped to use the child to further their own ends, but who were also playing a long game - assuming that Edward would long outlive them and become as commanding a figure as his father had been. Stephen Alford's wonderful book gives full play to the murky, sinister nature of Edward's reign, but is also a poignant account of a boy learning to rule, learning to enjoy his growing power and to come out of the shadows of the great aristocrats around him. England's last child monarch, Edward would have led his country in a quite different direction to the catastrophic one caused by his death.

Aethelred the Unready (Penguin Monarchs)

Treason and Trust

Edward the Confessor

The Sainted King

A Second Arthur?

Elizabeth I (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward V (Penguin Monarchs)

Charles II has always been one of the most instantly recognisable British kings - both in his physical appearance, disseminated through endless portraits, prints and pub signs, and in his complicated mix of lasciviousness, cynicism and luxury. His father's execution and his own many years of exile made him a guarded, curious, unusually self-conscious ruler. He lived through some of the most striking events in the national history - from the Civil Wars to the Great Plague, from the Fire of London to the wars with the Dutch. Clare Jackson's marvellous book takes full advantage of its irrepressible subject.

In September 2015 Queen Elizabeth II becomes Britain's longest-reigning monarch. During her long lifetime Britain and the world have changed beyond recognition, yet throughout she has stood steadfast as a lasting emblem of stability, continuity and public service. Historian and senior politician Douglas Hurd has seen the Queen at close quarters, as Home Secretary

and then on overseas expeditions as Foreign Secretary. Here he considers the life and role of Britain's most greatly admired monarch, who, inheriting a deep sense of duty from her father George VI, has weathered national and family crises, seen the end of an Empire and heard voices raised in favour of the break-up of the United Kingdom. Hurd creates an arresting portrait of a woman deeply conservative by nature yet possessing a ready acceptance of modern life and the awareness that, for things to stay the same, they must change. With a preface by HRH Prince William, Duke of Cambridge

Edward I (1272-1307) is one of the most commanding of all English rulers. He fought in southwest France, in Wales, in Scotland and in northern France, he ruled with ruthlessness and confidence, undoing the chaotic failure of his father, Henry III's reign. He reshaped England's legal system and came close to bringing the whole island of Great Britain under his rule. He promoted the idea of himself as the new King Arthur, his Round Table still hanging in Winchester Castle to this day. His greatest monuments are the extraordinary castles--Caernarfon, Beaumaris, Harlech and Conwy--built to ensure his rule of Wales and some of the largest of all medieval buildings. Andy King's brilliant short biography brings to life a strange, complex man whose triumphs raise all kinds of questions about the nature of kingship - how could someone who established so many key elements in England's unique legal and parliamentary system also have been such a harsh, militarily brutal warrior?

Although he styled himself 'His Highness', adopted the court ritual of his royal predecessors, and lived in the former royal palaces of Whitehall and Hampton Court, Oliver Cromwell was not a king - in spite of the best efforts of his supporters to crown him. Yet, as David Horspool shows in this illuminating new portrait of England's Lord Protector, Cromwell, the Puritan son of Cambridgeshire gentry, wielded such influence that it would be a pretence to say that power really lay with the collective. The years of Cromwell's rise to power, shaped by a decade-long civil war, saw a sustained attempt at the collective government of England; the first attempts at a real Union of Britain; the beginnings of empire; a radically new solution to the idea of a national religion; atrocities in Ireland; and the readmission to England of the Jews, a people officially banned for over three and a half centuries. At the end of it, Oliver Cromwell had emerged as the country's sole ruler: to his enemies, and probably to most of his countrymen, his legacy looked as likely to last as that of the Stuart dynasty he had replaced.

George V (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward III (Penguin Monarchs)

Mary I

John (Penguin Monarchs)

Henry II, 1154-1189

The Uncrowned King

The Red King

In his own time Edward IV was seen as an able and successful king who rescued England from the miseries of civil war and provided the country with firm, judicious, and popular government. The prejudices of later historians diminished this high reputation, until recent research confirmed Edward as a ruler of substantial achievement, whose methods and policies formed the foundation of early Tudor government. This classic study by Charles Ross places the reign firmly in the context of late medieval power politics, analyzing the methods by which a usurper sought to retain his throne and reassert the power of a monarchy seriously weakened by the feeble rule of Henry VI. Edward's relations with the politically active classes—the merchants, gentry, and nobility—form a major theme, and against this background Ross provides an evaluation of the many innovations in government on which the king's achievement rests.

An authoritative life of Edward the Confessor, the monarch whose death sparked the invasion of 1066 One of the last kings of Anglo-Saxon England, Edward the Confessor regained the throne for the House of Wessex and is the only English monarch to have been canonized. Often cast as a reluctant ruler, easily manipulated by his in-laws, he has been blamed for causing the invasion of 1066—the last successful conquest of England by a foreign power. Tom Licence navigates the contemporary webs of political deceit to present a strikingly different Edward. He was a compassionate man and conscientious ruler, whose reign marked an interval of peace and prosperity between periods of strife. More than any monarch before, he exploited the mystique of royalty to capture the hearts of his subjects. This compelling biography provides a much-needed reassessment of Edward's reign—calling into doubt the legitimacy of his successors and rewriting the ending of Anglo-Saxon England.

The elder daughter of Henry VIII, Mary I (1553-58) became England's ruler on the unexpected death of her brother Edward VI. Her short reign is one of the great potential turning points in the country's history. As a convinced Catholic and the wife of Philip II, king of Spain and the most powerful of all European monarchs, Mary could have completely changed her country's orbit, making it a province of the Habsburg Empire and obedient again to Rome. These extraordinary possibilities are fully dramatized in John Edward's superb short biography. The real Mary I has almost disappeared under the great mass of Protestant propaganda that buried her reputation during her younger sister, Elizabeth I's reign. But what if she had succeeded?

'After my death,' George V said of his eldest son and heir, 'the boy will ruin himself within twelve months.' The forecast proved uncannily accurate. Edward VIII came to the throne in January 1936, provoked a constitutional crisis by his determination to marry the American divorcée Wallis Simpson, and abdicated in December. He was never crowned king. In choosing the woman he loved over his royal birthright, Edward shook the monarchy to its foundations. Given the new title 'Duke of Windsor' and essentially sent into exile, he remained a visible skeleton in the royal cupboard until his death in 1972 and he haunts the house of Windsor to this day. Drawing on unpublished material, notably correspondence with his most loyal (though much tried) supporter Winston Churchill, Piers Brendon's superb biography traces Edward's tumultuous public and private life from bright young prince to troubled sovereign, from wartime colonial governor to sad but glittering expatriate. With pace and panache, it cuts through the myths that still surround this most controversial of modern British monarchs.

Edward VII

A Heroic Failure

The Star King

A Brittle Glory

The Steadfast

Henry VII (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward I (Penguin Monarchs)

In 1461 Edward earl of March, an able, handsome, and charming eighteen-year old, usurped the English throne from his feeble Lancastrian predecessor Henry VI. Ten years on, following outbreaks of civil conflict that culminated in him losing, then regaining the crown, he had finally secured his kingdom. The years that followed witnessed a period of rule that has been described as a golden age- a time of peace and economic and industrial expansion, which saw the establishment of a style of monarchy that the Tudors would later develop. Yet, argues A. J. Pollard, Edward, who was drawn to a life of sexual and epicurean excess, was a man of limited vision, his reign remaining to the very end the narrow rule of a victorious faction in civil war. Ultimately, his failure was dynastic- barely two months after his death in April 1483, the throne was usurped by Edward's youngest brother, Richard III.

King John ruled England for seventeen and a half years, yet his entire reign is usually reduced to one image: of the villainous monarch outmanoeuvred by rebellious barons into agreeing to Magna Carta at Runnymede in 1215. Ever since, John has come to be seen as an archetypal tyrant. But how evil was he? In this perceptive short account, Nicholas Vincent unpicks John's life through his deeds and his personality. The youngest of four brothers, overlooked and given a distinctly unroyal name, John seemed doomed to failure. As king, he was reputedly cruel and treacherous, pursuing his own interests at the expense of his country, losing the continental empire bequeathed to him by his father Henry and his brother Richard and eventually plunging England into civil war. Only his lordship of Ireland showed some success. Yet, as this fascinating biography asks, were his crimes necessarily greater than those of his ancestors - or was he judged more harshly because, ultimately, he failed as a warlord?

No English king has so divided opinion, both during his reign and in the centuries since, more than Richard III. He was loathed in his own time for the never-confirmed murder of his young nephews, the Princes in the Tower, and died fighting his own subjects on the battlefield. This is the vision of Richard we have inherited from Shakespeare. Equally, he inspired great loyalty in his followers. In this enlightening, even-handed study, Rosemary Horrox builds a complex picture of a king who by any standard failed as a monarch. He was killed after only two years on the throne, without an heir, and brought such a decisive end to the House of York that Henry Tudor was able to seize the throne, despite his extremely tenuous claim. Whether Richard was undone by his own fierce ambitions, or by the legacy of a Yorkist dynasty which was already profoundly dysfunctional, the end result was the same: Richard III destroyed the very dynasty that he had spent his life so passionately defending.

On Christmas Day 1066, William, duke of Normandy was crowned in Westminster, the first Norman king of England. It was a disaster: soldiers outside, thinking shouts of acclamation were treachery, torched the surrounding buildings. To later chroniclers, it was an omen of the catastrophes to come. During the reign of William the Conqueror, England experienced greater and more seismic change than at any point before or since. Marc Morris's concise and gripping biography sifts through the sources of the time to give a fresh view of the man who changed England more than any other, as old ruling elites were swept away, enemies at home and abroad (including those in his closest family) were crushed, swathes of the country were devastated and the map of the nation itself was redrawn, giving greater power than ever to the king. When, towards the end of his reign, William undertook a great survey of his new lands, his subjects compared it to the last judgement of God, the Domesday Book. England had been transformed forever.

Henry I (Penguin Monarchs)

The May King

The Last Boy King

Edward VII (Penguin Monarchs)

The Cosmopolitan King

The Cosmopolitan King (Penguin Monarchs)

Edward II, 1307-1327

Charismatic, insatiable and cruel, Henry VIII was, as John Guy shows, a king who became mesmerized by his own legend - and in the process destroyed and remade England. Said to be a 'pillager of the commonwealth', this most instantly recognizable of kings remains a figure of extreme contradictions: magnificent and vengeful; a devout traditionalist who oversaw a cataclysmic rupture with the church in Rome; a talented, towering figure who nevertheless could not bear to meet people's eyes when he talked to them. In this revealing new account, John Guy looks behind the mask into Henry's mind to explore how he understood the world and his place in it - from his isolated upbringing and the blazing glory of his accession, to his desperate quest for fame and an heir and the terrifying paranoia of his last, agonising, 54-inch-waisted years.

The formation of England occurred against the odds: an island divided into rival kingdoms, under savage assault from Viking hordes. But, after King Alfred ensured the survival of Wessex and his son Edward expanded it, his grandson Athelstan inherited the rule of both Mercia and Wessex, conquered Northumbria and was hailed as Rex totius Britanniae: 'King of the whole of Britain'. Tom Holland recounts this extraordinary story with relish and drama, transporting us back to a time of omens, raven harbingers and blood-red battlefields. As well as giving form to the figure of Athelstan - devout, shrewd, all too aware of the precarious nature of his power, especially in the north - he introduces the great figures of the age, including Alfred and his daughter Aethelflaed, 'Lady of the Mercians', who brought Athelstan up at the Mercian court. Making sense of

the family rivalries and fractious conflicts of the Anglo-Saxon rulers, Holland shows us how a royal dynasty rescued their kingdom from near-oblivion and fashioned a nation that endures to this day.

William II (1087-1100), or William Rufus, will always be most famous for his death: killed by an arrow while out hunting, perhaps through accident or perhaps murder. But, as John Gillingham makes clear in this elegant book, as the son and successor to William the Conqueror it was William Rufus who had to establish permanent Norman rule. A ruthless, irascible man, he frequently argued acrimoniously with his older brother Robert over their father's inheritance - but he also handed out effective justice, leaving as his legacy one of the most extraordinary of all medieval buildings, Westminster Hall.

The youngest of William the Conqueror's sons, Henry I (1100-35) was never meant to be king, but he was destined to become one of the greatest of all medieval monarchs, both through his own ruthlessness and intelligence and through the dynastic legacy of his daughter Matilda, who began the Plantagenet line that would rule England until 1485. A self-consciously diligent and thoughtful king, his rule was looked back on as the real post-invasion re-founding of England as a new realm, integrated into the continent, wealthy and stable. Edmund King's wonderful portrait of Henry shows him as a strikingly charismatic and thoughtful man. His life was dogged by a single great disaster, the death of his teenage heir William in the White Ship disaster. Despite astonishing numbers of illegitimate sons, Henry was now left with only a daughter. This fact would shape the rest of the 12th century and beyond.

Edward VI (Penguin Monarchs)

Last of the Royal Blood

Elizabeth II (Penguin Monarchs)

The Making of England

England's Conqueror

The Daughter of Time

Richard III (Penguin Monarchs)

The acclaimed Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers - now in paperback Henry II (1154-89) through a series of astonishing dynastic coups became the ruler of an enormous European empire. One of the most dynamic, restless and clever men ever to rule England, he was brought down both by his catastrophic relationship with his archbishop Thomas Becket and his debilitating arguments with his sons, most importantly the future Richard I and King John. His empire may have ultimately collapsed, but in Richard Barber's vivid and sympathetic account the reader can see why Henry II left such a compelling impression on his contemporaries. Richard Barber has written for Penguin The Penguin Guide to Medieval Europe, The Holy Grail and Edward III and the Triumph of England. He is a major figure in medieval studies, both as a writer and as a publisher.

Part of the Penguin Monarchs series: short, fresh, expert accounts of England's rulers in a collectible format. The cultural richness of the reign of Edward the Confessor marks the high point of Anglo-Saxon England. The saintly Edward has become one of the legendary figures in English. James Campbell's brilliant little book is the most insightful look at his personality and reign yet published.

Edward III lived through bloody and turbulent times. His father was deposed by his mother and her lover when he was still a teenager; a third of England's population was killed by the Black Death midway through his reign; and the intractable Hundred Years War with France began under his leadership. Yet Edward managed to rule England for fifty years, and was viewed as a paragon of kingship in the eyes of both his contemporaries and later generations. Venerated as the victor of Sluys and Crécy and the founder of the Order of the Garter, he was regarded with awe even by his enemies. But he lived too long, and was ultimately condemned to see thirty years of conquests reversed in less than five. In this gripping new account of Edward III's rise and fall, Jonathan Sumption introduces us to a fêted king who ended his life a heroic failure.

Richard II (Penguin Monarchs)

England's Protector

William II (Penguin Monarchs)