



The Provisions

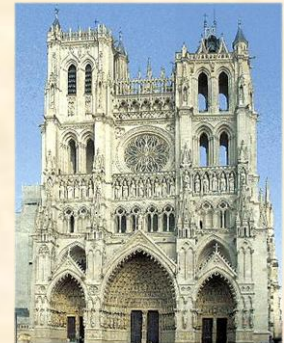


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Simon de Montfort 2014

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And so 2014 is upon us, three-quarters of a millennium since that singular year in English history, when the Montfortian party overthrew the Plantagenet dynasty and set up a constitutional monarchy that lasted all of fifteen months. From the spectacular victory at Lewes to the summoning of the feudal host to defend the realm, not for centuries before or since was the English nation, whether bishop, baron, knight, freeholder, peasant, or street urchin, united in what they saw as the defence of a great cause. Whether Simon de Montfort was an equally great leader or just another pied piper in the Brechtian sense will assuredly remain a matter of debate.

Our look at the events defining that year begins in Amiens and the Mise issued by Louis IX on January 23rd. By categorically quashing the Provisions, he guaranteed England would soon be wracked by civil war. He may have been influenced by Simon's absence or by the Provençal sisters, in particular the 'serpentlike fraud' of the queen of England in the words of the Tewkesbury chronicler. The only thing for sure is Louis tried to cover his tracks by reaffirming the pope's nullification of the Provisions. Curiously, the bull was already six months old when Louis seemingly approved the statutes in Boulogne back in September 1263. He did keep his hands off the Charter, however, which Thomas de Cantilupe had carefully woven into the Montfortian case. It provided the only escape clause from their oath to observe the award, a weak one perhaps, but the chroniclers in general had no qualms about it.



The cathedral at Amiens. What was Louis thinking?

The simon2014 website now offers '[The king came a-calling](#)', a new article that recalls the famous meeting between Henry and Simon on the banks of the Thames in July 1258. It follows up the call in the November Provisions to commemorate this little vignette of history with a marker on the present-day Durham House in London, close to Charing Cross, something akin to the 'George Washington Slept Here' approach to preserving national heritage and no doubt already in widespread use.



There's also a Durham House in London

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