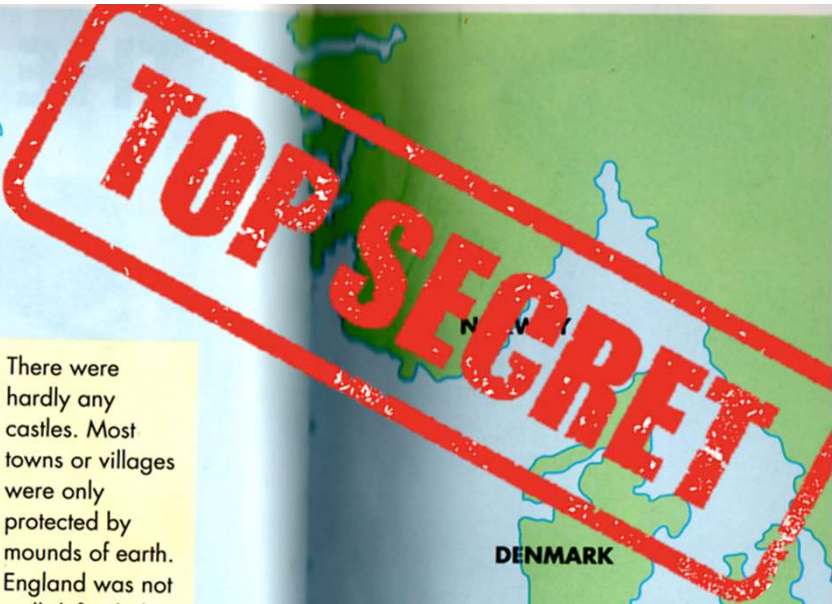


**Key**

Land belonging to English earls

- 1 Morcar
- 2 Edwin
- 3 Gyrrh
- 4 Harold
- 5 Waltheof
- 6 Leofwine
- towns

0 100 km



England was governed by King Edward the Confessor from Westminster in London. Edward had trouble keeping the country under control. England was divided into a number of areas, each ruled over by a powerful EARL, a nobleman. These earls were meant to be loyal to the King, but sometimes they rebelled against him.

Very few people lived in the northern and western parts of the country. They were spread out over a wide area.

There were hardly any castles. Most towns or villages were only protected by mounds of earth. England was not well defended.

Much of the southern half of the country was still covered by forest. There were small villages here and there, where the forest had been cleared and the land was farmed.

Across the English Channel, Normandy was growing stronger. William, Duke of Normandy, had recently defeated some of the neighbouring countries. William also had ambitions to become King of England.

The English army consisted of:

- around 3000 'housecarls', tough soldiers who fought with double-bladed axes which could split a man in half
- earls in command of the mainly untrained peasants they brought with them from their villages
- soldiers paid by townspeople to fight for them.

It was a good fighting force but difficult to gather together.

