



Sir John Chandos

Sir John Chandos

The Perfect Knight



Stephen Cooper

For the late Maurice Keen (1933-2012)

Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, 1961-2000

A knight there was, and he a worthy man,
Who, from the moment that he first began
 To ride about the world, loved chivalry,
Truth, honour, freedom and all courtesy.
Full worthy was he in his liege-lord's war,
And therein had he ridden (none more far)

Geoffrey Chaucer, *General Prologue, The Canterbury Tales*

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Advowson	the right to present a priest to an ecclesiastical position
<i>Appannage</i>	a princely estate carved out of the French kingdom for members of the royal family
<i>Aqueraux</i>	a kind of siege engine
Argent	heraldic term for the colour silver
Bachelor	a junior knight
Banneret	a senior knight who commanded a large body of troops
Bascinet	a type of helmet
<i>Bascot</i>	a soldier of fortune
<i>Bourc</i>	Gascon title meaning 'bastard'
<i>Captal</i>	Gascon title roughly equivalent to Count
Champerty	the (illegal) practice whereby a third party finances a law suit
Chantry	a chapel where priests sang masses for the benefit of souls in Purgatory
Chase	area where the right of hunting belonged to a subject
Constable	commander-in-chief, for a battle, campaign or permanently
<i>Corvée</i>	forced labour
Courser	horse bred for speed
Deodand	a physical object which caused a person's death. Under medieval law it was forfeit to the Crown – or to the Earl of Chester, in the Palatinate of Cheshire
Destrier	a warhorse, bred for size and strength
Dower	the provision in land, accorded by the law to a widow
Escheat	what happens when property reverts to the Crown (or in the Palatinate of Cheshire, to the Earl of Chester) on the death of a person with no heir
Escheator	the officer who supervises the process of escheat
Estovers	the right to carry wood from common land for the repair of houses, and fuel
Eyre	legal proceedings held locally by the King's Justices
Feraunt horse	an African horse, or bay
Fief	the basic unit of the feudal system – land (and later money) granted to a person on terms of service
Forest	(1) a legal term for a place the King had the right to keep deer; (2) extensive area of woodland

<i>Fouage</i>	French hearth tax
Grand jury	a jury of 24 men which determined whether there was enough evidence for a trial to take place. Abolished in England in 1933, but survives in the USA.
Greek fire	liquid fire ejected from siege engine, similar to napalm
Guienne	the English version of Aquitaine. The English used 'Guienne' and 'Gascony' interchangeably, though they were not strictly coterminous.
Free Companies	bands of mercenaries of varying size which did not recognise any traditional leader
Gules	heraldic term for the colour red
<i>Guisarme</i>	weapon like a spear but with a hooked or axe-shaped blade
Habergeon	a short coat of chain mail, usually sleeveless
Hackney	a common type of all-purpose horse
Haqueton	a stuffed or leather jacket, worn under a coat of mail, or plated with mail
Hauberk	a shirt of chain mail, usually reaching to the mid-thigh and including sleeves
Homage	the act of allegiance to a feudal superior
Incontinent	immediately
Inquisition	inquiry e.g. after someone's death
Jack	jacket
Kettle-hat	type of helmet
Lance	(1) A weapon; (2) A group of men, consisting of knight or squire supported by servants and auxiliarier
Liege homage	the homage owed to an overlord or suzerain
Marshal	officer whose job was to marshal the army in the field
Moiety	half
Mortmain	land granted to the Church by a layman
Or	heraldic term for the colour gold
Palfrey	a well-bred riding horse
Park	place where deer were husbanded, hence areas of woodland
Park pale	hedge or ditch surmounting a bank around a deer park
Pannage	the right for pigs to roam in the forest
Petty jury	a trial jury of 12 men, contrast grand jury
Pile	heraldic term for a column
Prebend	a stipend drawn from the revenues of the Church by an important dignitary e.g. a Dean
Remainderman	the person who is entitled to land, after the expiry of a life interest or other limited term
<i>Ressort</i>	right to appeal to one's lord for justice
Reversion	what is left to someone after expiry of a life interest or limited term in land

Sarcenet	soft silk cloth
Seneschal	steward/person holding high office, especially in France
Spear	see lance
Specialty	debt contracted under seal
Sumpter horse	horse used for carrying supplies
Swanimote court	local forest court responsible for judicial and administrative regulation of the forest
Trailbaston	a type of itinerant judicial commission, intended to punish serious crime, at the King's suit.
Tryst	hunting term for a place to wait or meet
Tun	quantity of wine
Turbary	the right to take turves
Vassal	person who owed feudal service to another
<i>Ventaille</i>	piece of armour
Yeoman	substantial farmer, below a gentleman or knight

Notes on currency. Before decimalisation, there were 20 shillings (s) in a pound and 12 pennies (d) to the shilling. In medieval times a mark was worth 6s 8d.

Preface and Acknowledgments

It was the late Maurice Keen who first inspired my interest in medieval history many years ago and who suggested the idea for this book. My wife Gaye encouraged me to write it and my brother Ashley helped with composition. Derbyshire County Record Office provided information as to the whereabouts of records relating to the early history of the Chandos family, Jennie Pegram helped me with the history of Radbourne; and I benefited greatly from a correspondence with Robert Ducluzeau, author of *Le Connétable du Prince Noir, Jean Chandos* (Alan Sutton 2004).

I would like to thank the Dean and Canons of Windsor for permission to reproduce the photograph of Chandos's Garter Plate in St George's Chapel, Windsor; the British Library for permission to reproduce the image of Chandos in his Garter robes from the Bruges Garter Book; the *Koninklijke Bibliotheek*, The Hague, for permission to reproduce the illustration of Chandos's death at Lussac; and the website www.castles.nl/eur/fr for the illustration of St Sauveur-le-Vicomte.

All other photographs were taken by me. Thanks also to Dr Simon Harris, Dr Malcolm Vale and Professor Anne Curry for their assistance with information about the Gascon Rolls Project; and to Noel Brindley for the suggestion about *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Much of the narrative is based on Jean Froissart's Chronicles. Where I have quoted from these, the quotation is usually from Thomas Johnes's two-volume edition of 1848. Modern historians tend to distrust Froissart's account of the facts; we have to understand the chronicler's way of thinking to understand a man like John Chandos. I have referred to Henry of Grosmont, 1st Duke of Lancaster, as 'Henry of Derby' to avoid confusion with John of Gaunt, who succeeded him as Duke of Lancaster in 1361.

Introduction: The Perfect Knight?

In 1996 Desmond Seward wrote that he was ‘more than ever conscious that England did France a great wrong’ during the Hundred Years War.¹ This assumes that there was such a thing as ‘the Hundred Years War’; that the belligerents were the nation states of England and France; and that ‘the English’ were to blame for starting and continuing to fight the War. The truth is that there was a whole series of wars in the Middle Ages between the Plantagenet and Valois dynasties; that it was only in the 19th century that a (French) historian labelled those which occurred between 1337 and 1453 as the Hundred Years War; that the Valois started the War in 1337 and restarted it in 1369 and that, in the end, they won. Seward’s view, which is widely shared, is only possible because the English were so unexpectedly successful between 1340 and 1360, and because most of the fighting took place in France.²

If we were to look at the world through the eyes of an English soldier living when the War broke out, we would see things very differently. Such a man would have regarded the kingdom ruled by the Valois as a great and menacing power, which meant harm to the Plantagenets and their subjects. He might take the view that, although it was Edward III of England who declared war, it was the French who had started it, by declaring the Plantagenet Duchy of Aquitaine forfeit and by hostile action at sea. Yet this same Englishman, within a few years, would see his King carry the war to the French and win a series of crushing victories, both on land and at sea.

Sir John Chandos (c. 1314-1370) lived throughout the whole of the first phase of the Hundred Years War. He fought at the Battles of Crécy (1346), Poitiers (1350) and Winchelsea (1350), and probably at Sluys (1340) and the siege of Calais (1346-7). He helped to win a war, but also played a part in negotiating and monitoring the peace which followed. As a result of the Treaty of Brétigny in 1360 he was awarded the Viscountcy of St Sauveur in Normandy and sent to France with viceregal powers, to take the French surrender in those areas ceded by the peace treaty. As Constable he helped the Black Prince to govern the new Principality of Aquitaine, created by Edward III for his son in 1362, but also continued to act as King’s Lieutenant. He acted as an ambassador, in France, Navarre, Castile, Aragon, and papal Avignon. He participated in proxy wars in the Duchy of Brittany and the Kingdom of Castile, commanding English contingents at the battles of Auray (1364) and Nájera (1367). Chandos was a witness to nearly all the military triumphs of Plantagenet England in the 14th century. His story should have something to tell us about the reasons for this series of English victories.

¹ *The Hundred Years War*, 2nd edition, 1996, 14.

² Curry, 31.

Yet Chandos also witnessed the limits of military success. As King's Lieutenant in France, he found that his commands were not always obeyed, despite the highly favourable terms negotiated at Bretigny. In Cahors and elsewhere, the French were reluctant to surrender, though they were ordered to do so by their King. Victory on the battlefield was not enough to compel allegiance: Chandos discovered that some effort had to be made to win 'hearts and minds' as well. As Constable of Aquitaine, he found that the Black Prince might be a brilliant tactician but he was not a skilful politician. There are signs that he advised against the decision to intervene militarily in Castile, and the policy of imposing a new tax to pay for the Spanish war; but the Black Prince overruled him and he had to accept both decisions. Indirectly, these led the French to declare war and re-invade English Aquitaine in 1369 and, when they did, the edifice of English rule collapsed quickly and almost everywhere – indeed it had started crumbling the previous year. Chandos was still active, in the defence of Quercy and Poitou, where he became Seneschal. He was still commanding his men in the field when he was killed, at the very end of 1369; but by this time the French were everywhere resurgent. The English had found that they could win battles, mount long-distance armed raids with impunity, capture the largest French fortresses and force the French to the negotiating table; but politics and diplomacy were more difficult.

Nevertheless the English victories require some explanation. France had been a great power in the time of Charlemagne, who was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 800, and assumed that status once more during the reigns of the Capetian kings Philip II and St Louis (Louis IX, 1226-1270). St Louis had been known, not only as a great judge but as the arbiter of Western Christendom and a Crusader. French armies had fought in the Low Countries, Spain, Italy and the Holy Land, and French dynasties were established in Provence, Naples, Sicily, Navarre, Cyprus, Greece and Hungary. France was not only dominant militarily, she had a cultural pre-eminence which was widely recognised. French was the international language and the language of chivalry, war, poetry and love and the French kingdom was regarded, at least by French poets and intellectuals, as the new seat of learning and civilisation, once found in Greece and Rome. When he founded the ill-fated Order of the Star in 1350, King Jean II wrote that his ancestors had 'always triumphed over all the rebels they wished to reduce... and established a profound peace and security in the realm.³

In contrast the English kingdom was a newcomer on the international stage, and the English were geopolitical underdogs. A French-speaking Duke of Normandy had conquered Anglo-Saxon England in 1066, breaking its close links with the Nordic world. As a result, English monarchs and English aristocrats still spoke French, the language of government and law, when Chandos was growing up. English kings frequently married French princesses and the aristocracy copied French architecture, fashion and customs. The French had played the leading role in the Crusades, the foundation of the monastic orders, the building of new cathedrals

³ Kaeuper and Kenney, introduction to Charny, 60.

and monasteries and even in reforming the Church. The Avignonese Popes of the 14th century were all French, and Avignon itself was surrounded by French territory. The French kingdom, though not as large as it was to become in the reign of Louis XIV, was still twice as large as the English and the population was at least three times as big, while Paris was the largest city in Europe and had the most distinguished and famous University. In 1340, the French could, in theory, put 27,000 knights in the field, whereas the largest number the English ever had available was around 5,000. It must have been questionable whether the English kingdom could survive a new French invasion, especially since the French had the better fleet, based in Rouen.

We have been led, by centuries of myth, to believe that England was an unconquerable 'sceptred isle' after 1066, surrounded by the impassable 'moat' of the English Channel; but this idea is an Elizabethan invention, put into John of Gaunt's mouth by William Shakespeare. In the late 14th century, when Chandos and John of Gaunt (1340-1399) lived and died, these Islands were extremely vulnerable to foreign invasion. The English lacked a Royal Navy; and, as a result, the English could neither control the Channel nor mount a blockade of the sea-lanes. The French frequently raided the South coast, and threatened invasion in the 1330s, 1360s and 1380s. In time of war, the French could generally call on their allies the Scots, who had secured their independence by a crushing victory over Edward II at Bannockburn in 1314.

The Valois were bent on aggrandisement and France was a hostile power. King Philip 'the Fair' (1268-1314) made use of the Treaty of Paris of 1259 (when Henry III of England had agreed to do homage for Gascony) and summoned the English king to Paris for non-compliance with his feudal obligations. In 1294, he confiscated the Plantagenet Duchy of Aquitaine. The French occupied the entire Duchy between 1294 and 1303 and again during the War of St Sardos (1323-5), when the English lost the area around Agen. By the time Edward III came to the throne, English Aquitaine was reduced to a rump around Bordeaux and the *Landes*, its continuing existence constantly threatened by interference from Paris 'intricate legalism', and 'chicanery of feudal jurisprudence'.⁴

And yet, between 1340 and 1360, the English repeatedly defeated the French. They did so by land and at sea and they captured Calais, after a siege which lasted a year. The War was fought almost entirely on French soil and, on several occasions, King Edward III and his generals marched across the length and breadth of France, on devastating mounted raids known as *chevauchées*, and they were largely unopposed. Although Edward III did not occupy Paris, as his great-grandson Henry V was to do, he was able to dictate peace to his great Adversary. By the Treaty of Brétigny of 1360, Jean II (whom the Black Prince had captured at Poitiers) ceded around a third of his kingdom. These English victories resounded around the Christian world. The Italian poet Petrarch (1304-1374) wrote that, in his youth, the

⁴ Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century* (Oxford 1962), 123-8.

English had been regarded as ‘the most timid of all the uncouth races’; but that now they were ‘the supreme warriors [who] have destroyed the reputation of the French in a succession of startling victories... men who were once lower even than the wretched Scots have crushed the realm of France with fire and steel’.

How did this drastic reversal of fortune come about? Many theories have been advanced: the ‘battle-seeking’ strategy of Edward III; the English tactic of using archers in combination with men-at-arms who fought on foot; the superiority in logistics enjoyed by a relatively compact English kingdom, organised for war; but it may be still be interesting to re-tell the story from the point of view of one individual.

When I first wrote about Chandos, five years ago I noted that the archival references to him were relatively few. Since then the Gascon Rolls Project has published the Rolls for the period 1317-1468. These may now be consulted online. In the words of the editors they are a record, drawn up by the English royal administration in Westminster, ‘recording a wide range of business and mentioning many people and places’; and here Sir John Chandos certainly does appear, on numerous occasions.⁵ This has enabled me to supplement the information contained in Rymer’s *Foedera* and test the accuracy of Froissart’s narrative at some points.⁶ It remains true that there are no campaign diaries or ‘letters from the front’, written by the man himself. Moreover, Chandos was not a major landowner and, although some relevant deeds have survived, there are no household or estate accounts and no private correspondence, at least none that I know of. However, Chandos is mentioned frequently in the Black Prince’s Register, in Rymer’s great compilation of government records, in the Papal Registers kept in Avignon and in the records of homages taken in Aquitaine in the early 1360s.

By contrast, Sir John appears as a protagonist of the first importance in the *Chronicles* of Jean Froissart, the *Song of Bertrand du Guesclin* written by Cuvelier, and the *Life of the Black Prince* written by his own anonymous herald.⁷ Yet a word of warning is necessary here. These works were intended to entertain a chivalric audience. Accurate reporting takes second place to a good story, especially if it is a martial or amorous adventure; and none of these writers felt any need to refrain from inventing direct speech for his favourite characters. Chivalric literature was also intended to have a moral and didactic purpose. As Froissart explained, the aim was to record the ‘honourable enterprises, noble adventures and feats of arms, so that brave men should be inspired thereby to follow such examples.’

⁵ www.gasconrolls.org.

⁶ Froissart has often been criticised, see *Froissart, Historian* (ed. Palmer), in particular Palmer’s introduction. It is noticeable that modern historians of the Hundred Years War, for example Sumption and Curry, have little time for his narratives, when it comes to the facts. Yet archival sources can themselves be misleading.

⁷ No-one knows who Chandos Herald was; but it is thought that he came from Hainault, like Froissart; and indeed that Froissart obtained much information from him: Barber, *Triumph*, 16-17.

When we read Froissart, Chandos sometimes appears as a knight errant rather than as a plain English soldier. He rescues damsels in distress during the *chevauchée* of 1346; he is too busy advising the Prince of Wales to take prisoners at the Battle of Poitiers ten years later; yet he engages in single combat at Nájera eleven years after that, though he had become one of the most important commanders. He is almost portrayed as the ‘perfect gentle knight’ of Chaucer’s imagination: almost, but not quite, because Froissart also relates the harsh realities of war and the disappointments which accompany the exercise of power. It is he who tells us that Chandos disagreed with his master about the idea of intervening in Spain in 1366 and imposing a new tax in Aquitaine in 1368.

On the whole, it is the chivalric view of Chandos which has prevailed amongst historians. Benjamin Fillon, following Froissart and starting a trend, wrote an extended essay on Chandos in 1856, when Britain and France were allies in the murderous Crimean War. He wrote that Sir John was the leading knight of his time, of any nationality, *le chevalier sans peur et sans reproches* and ‘the last representative of that chivalry whose aim was to protect the weak from the strong’. Even Bertrand du Guesclin, Constable of France between 1370 and 1380 whom the French came to regard as ‘the Tenth Worthy’ of Christendom, was not his equal. After Sir John died, ‘there followed, between the two peoples, a war full of hate, which was only extinguished by the blood of twenty generations, and after 500 years of relentless struggle.’⁸

There were several notes of dissent in the late 19th century, when Anglo-French relations had once again turned sour. In his *History of the Castle and Lords of St Sauveur* of 1867, Leopold Delisle portrayed Chandos as a typically perfidious member of Albion’s race. When he should have been looking after the interests of the French population of Normandy, Chandos was intriguing with rogue English mercenaries to destroy them, and allying himself with Charles, King of Navarre and Count of Evreux. Delisle based his account on the accounts kept by Charles of Navarre’s officials; but one cannot help thinking that he was also influenced by the French tradition which called this monarch ‘Charles the Bad’.

A second note of dissent was sounded in Bardouillet’s *Procès-verbal de délivrance à Jean Chandos*, also published in 1867. This is a record of how Chandos took the surrenders in Aquitaine in 1361. Here we find an account of how, when Sir John reached Verteuil-sur-Charente, the captain of the town refused to co-operate; but Chandos compelled him to surrender by finding his brother, parading him before the walls of Verteuil and threatening to behead him.

Lastly, in 1899, Henri Denifle produced his extraordinary *La Guerre de Cent Ans et la Désolation des Églises, Monastères et Hôpitaux en France*. Denifle was a priest who undertook a vast amount of research in ecclesiastical archives, showing the extent to which English armies had been responsible for devastating France during the Hundred Years War. In this light of this work it was impossible for him to take a

⁸ Fillon, 22, 24, 26.

favourable view of commanders like Chandos. He thought that the French had very good reason to rejoice when the Englishman was killed in 1369, since he was their ‘most redoubtable enemy’.

Curiously it is the benign view of Chandos which is popular in France today. Delachenal’s massive and influential *History of Charles V* began to appear after the *Entente Cordiale* was signed in 1904 and was not finished until after the First World War. In his fourth volume (published in 1928) Delachenal praised Froissart’s description of Sir John’s ‘last stand’ at Lussac as one of the finest in the Chronicle; and he reproduced Froissart’s favourable assessment of Sir John and his career.⁹ In the early 21st century, Britain and France are (at least for the time being) partners in the European Union as well as allies in NATO. Ancient and tribal hostilities remain in theory but are dwarfed by the daily exchanges of trade, business and tourism. It is in nobody’s interests to take the Francophobia and Anglophobia of former times all that seriously. Moreover, Chandos is widely admired in France, particularly in Poitou, where he is something of a local hero. He is thought to have treated the French fairly when he held high office in Aquitaine and Normandy, and the depredations committed by him in earlier years seem to have been forgiven, if not forgotten. In the view of Robert Ducluzeau, whose excellent biography appeared in 2004, Sir John’s essential goodness was appreciated in the France of his own day, since his subjects in Normandy ‘anxiously awaited his return during troubled times’.

There is nothing wrong with this point of view; but chivalry is not the whole story and, on its own, it cannot explain Edward III’s defeat of the French monarchy. That must be explained in terms of power, military and political. The English victories during the period 1340-1360, and English rule in Aquitaine and Normandy during the decade which followed, did not depend on the ‘joy, peace and quietness’ which were to be found at the Black Prince’s court in the 1360s, according to Chandos Herald. Chandos himself was more than just the ‘sweet-tempered knight, courteous, benign, amiable, liberal, courageous, prudent and loyal’ of Froissart’s Chronicle. He may well have been the closest thing there was to Chaucer’s ‘perfect gentle knight’; but he was also one of Jean le Bel’s ‘fine and daring warriors’ - a man who knew how to fight, and fought to win.

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⁹ Delachenal, vol IV, 224-226.

Chapter 1

Squire and Knight, 1337-50

Northern Roots

John Chandos was born into a world where the purpose of government was war, rather than economic growth or social welfare, was; but the right to make war was not yet the exclusive prerogative of the Crown. Violence was a normal way of settling private disputes. Armed gangs roamed the English countryside and town gates were still shut at night against intruders.

Edward I had established a special type of court, known as the 'trailbaston' commission, to punish felonies (homicide, theft, arson, and rape) and certain kinds of trespass (assaults, extortion, and violent dispossession). Among the many cases which came before the courts in the County of Derbyshire at the beginning of the 14th century was one relating to the villages of Radbourne and Mugginton, where the jurors laid information that:

Stephen son of Molle of Radbourne killed William Sarles of Mugginton, on the Sunday next after the feast of the Beheading of St John the Baptist [Aug. 29], in the 32nd year of the reign [1304].¹⁰

Chandos was born in Radbourne in the early years of the 14th century. Some have assumed that this was around 1310, but it could have been as late as 1320, which would mean that he was 19 when he was first knighted (in 1339) and 20 when he became the companion of the much younger Black Prince (1340). A later date of birth would also explain, more convincingly, how he still came to be fighting so vigorously at the time of his death in 1369. Benjamin Fillon, who published a short life of Chandos in 1856, thought that Chandos was about 55 when he was killed.¹¹

Chandos's father, Sir Edward, may have been knighted by Edward III in 1327.¹² He owned fiefs in Radbourne and Mugginton, as well as in Egginton and Attklow nearby. These places were all within the wapentake of Appletree and near the City of Derby, so that in cultural terms Chandos was a Northerner. Many

¹⁰ *Trailbaston, Derbyshire*, C.E.Lugard (Ashover, Derbyshire 1933).

¹¹ Fillon, 22.

¹² Barber, *Triumph*, 46, citing CPR 1330-1334, 173.

thought (then as now) that the North of England began when the traveller reached the Trent and, linguistically, the Derbyshire dialect was similar to that of Yorkshire. There was a 'King of Heralds, on this side of the Trent, from the North' in the late 13th century; and Ranulf Higden, author of a 'Universal Chronicle' written in Chester in the fourteenth, thought that Northern English, especially that spoken in Yorkshire, was virtually unintelligible in the South.¹³

John Chandos became lord of Mugginton some time before 1346, when he paid 40 shillings for an 'aid', levied by the Crown on the occasion of the knighting of the Black Prince.¹⁴ By that date, he was a member of the royal household and a friend of the Prince, as well as a knight. His father gave him a property in Egginton in 1345 and in 1358 John also acquired land in Radbourne, together with the advowson of 'the fourth part of Egginton and Mugginton church'. These properties lay within the lordship of Tutbury and were part of the vast estates belonging to the Duchy of Lancaster.¹⁵

Chandos became the Prince of Wales's right hand man, although he was a mere squire from a relatively humble Northern background, at a date when King hardly ever travelled in the North of England. We may ask how this came about. The answer may well be that Radbourne was part of the 'honour' of Tutbury and it is only six or seven miles from Tutbury castle; and that Chandos joined the royal household in the late 1330s, when Tutbury belonged to Henry of Grosmont, Earl of Derby, the wealthiest peer in the land. Although we have no direct evidence for this, it may have been Henry of Derby who recruited the young Chandos, and sent him up to the royal court.

Derbyshire lies next door to Cheshire and Chandos was to acquire important responsibilities there when he joined the Black Prince's household. As Earl of Chester the Prince enjoyed an establishment of his own from 1333, though he was only three at the time. His mother remained in control for some years; but the Prince was precocious and he attended his first tournament at the age of six, acquired his first suit of armour two years later and developed a passion for hawking by 1340.

¹³ Prestwich, *Plantagenet England*, 556; Wagner, 39.

¹⁴ The family history is obscure because many relevant deeds were lost around 200 years ago: Jeayes, introduction, citing BM Add MSS 6671; *Feudal Aids*, vol I, 259.

¹⁵ Jeayes: introduction, items, xlvi, xliv and xvii. In 1372 Chandos's heirs were called upon to pay an aid for the marriage of the eldest daughter of the Duke of Lancaster (John of Gaunt). The sum in question was payable to John Acard, 'bailiff of the honour of Tutbury'. This is curious, since there are two daughters for whom it might have been levied, but both were under age in 1372, and neither of them was to marry for several years. The first was Philippa, Gaunt's daughter by Blanche of Lancaster, who was born in 1359 and only married in 1387. The second was Blanche, illegitimate daughter of Gaunt's mistress Marie de St. Hilaire of Hainaut, also born in 1340, who only married in 1381. On the other hand, Gaunt had a great need for money in 1372: he had just married his second wife, Princess Constance of Castile, and the couple are known to have stayed in Tutbury in 1372, where they lived in lavish style and are supposed to have introduced several curious customs, such as bull-running: Goodman, 24-5 and 27.

He was created Duke of Cornwall in 1337, when he was assigned his first tutor and, as he acquired titles and estates, he acquired servants and officials to go with them.

Chandos first appears as a member of the Prince's entourage in 1340, when he was one of the boy's companions. It is recorded that at the end of April the Prince was at the royal manor of Byfleet in Surrey, playing or gaming with his companions; and on 2 May he lost 12d to Chandos. The Prince's biographer Richard Barber has written that 'gambling, and a general careless about expenditure, was to be a hallmark of the Prince's character'. On one occasion, when he was still only ten, he lost a staggering 37/- to his mother, at dice.

It is difficult to define the position which Chandos held at court. Originally, he may have been no more than a bodyguard, but he certainly became a close friend. Much later, he was to be described as *li plus especial de son conseil*. By 1343 the Prince's household had emerged as an independent entity, in which hunting and jousting played a central role. In 1344-5 Chandos and another of the Prince's household knights were given money to arm themselves for a tournament at Winchester.¹⁶ Thereafter, expenditure on tournaments featured regularly in the Black Prince's Register.

Cheshire was a Palatinate - one of only three counties where the King delegated sovereignty. As Earl of Chester the Prince exercised extraordinary legal powers, including the right to grant pardons, appoint judges and issue writs and indictments. Criminal offences were said to be committed against the Earl's peace, rather than the King's.

The Prince owned large estates in Cheshire, and exploited the county's extensive forests; but his administration also aimed to develop the area economically, by transforming those forests from game reserves into pasture. For example, the area called 'the Lord's Park' in Macclesfield was used for fattening cattle and war-horses imported from Wales. (Chandos received a gift of 24 bullocks in September 1358).¹⁷ The Prince's officials regulated the rights of pannage, estovers and turbary in his demesne lands. They issued ordinances relating to the use of dogs in the forests and providing for the holding of *swanimote* courts. The Prince ordered that no bows or arrows were to be carried off the highway; and they were only to be allowed on the highway if the bowstrings were removed. As part of a general investigation, he issued *quo warranto* proceedings in Chester, requiring all landowners to prove their title to the lands they held. The citizens of Chester agreed to pay a fine of £300 to ratify their charters and obtain a declaration of the bounds of their liberties.

At the same time, Cheshire had a reputation for lawlessness. Her archers provided large contingents for Edward III, the Black Prince and Richard II, and in particular, they participated in the Prince's famous raids in France in 1355-6. The importance of part-time soldiering in the county is attested by the number of

¹⁶ Morgan (1981), 103; Fillon, 18; Barber, POW 40, 93, 105-7, 241, 493.

¹⁷ Davies, ed., 12; Tonkinson, 12-14; Booth, ed. (2003).

longbows found in the homes of Cheshire men, according to tax records.¹⁸ Violence was not confined to the battlefield; and it was once thought that there was an armed revolt in Cheshire in 1353, and that the Prince's visit to the area that year was undertaken in order to suppress it. This so-called 'rebellion' became a 'fact' in histories of the County and even found a place in the first edition of the *Oxford History of England*, but the myth has now been exploded.

What actually happened in 1353 was that the Prince planned an expedition to his domains in the North of England and in Wales but, in the event, only visited Cheshire. He announced in advance that there would be a general eyre to look into the 'grievous clamours and complaints' which had reached him 'of wrongs, excesses and misdeeds' and that there would also be a more specific 'eyre of the forest'. He arrived with his bodyguards on 10 August; he hunted in the Park at Shotwick in Wirral on the 12th; he gave a dinner for the local nobility in Chester Castle on the 15th, and went on to visit Macclesfield, staying in the manor house and hunting in Macclesfield Park. Chandos was with the Prince throughout this time, along with other members of the household – Sir John Wingfield, Sir Richard de Stafford, Sir Bartholomew Burghersh the younger, Sir Edmund de Wauncey (the steward) and Sir Nigel Loring (the chamberlain).¹⁹

On Monday 19 August, the royal justices Sir William Snareshull and Sir Roger Hillary, opened a 'general eyre' in Chester castle. This involved a wide-ranging enquiry into all aspects of local justice, criminal and civil; and the proceedings were immediately met with resistance. Local lawyers argued that the eyre was contrary to local custom (an argument which Chandos was to encounter again, nine years later in Aquitaine). However, the men of Chester were willing to pay, to avoid the close attention of the Prince's justices. They offered 5,000 marks, payable over four years; surprisingly perhaps, the Prince accepted. He took the money and postponed the general eyre for thirty years, cancelling the forest eyre altogether; but he did not give up his attempt to bring law and order to Cheshire. He ordered the two royal justices to hold a *trailbaston* assize instead. This was done, and the military members of the Prince's household were given the job of protecting the two judges during the hearings. The proceedings lasted several weeks. The men of Chester may well have felt that they had agreed to pay the 5,000 marks and received very little in return.

The records of the *trailbaston* assize in Chester in 1353 have survived. A total of 135 cases came before the court, concerning homicide, rape, housebreaking, abduction and forced marriage, the theft of fish, damage to a boat, poaching in the Abbot of Chester's warren and cattle rustling; but there were also cases of corruption, extortion and perversion of justice, and the culprits here were often the Prince's own officials – his bailiffs and under-foresters, but also a Serjeant of the Peace, the Coroner of Wirral, a former sheriff of the County, a Constable of Chester Castle, and the Master Forester of Wirral. In other words, the records seem to show

¹⁸ Tonkinson, 139-143 (the heriot tax).

¹⁹ Booth & Carr (1991), Appendix 3; Barber, POW, 106.

that in many cases it was the very people who should have been enforcing the law who were breaking it!²⁰

Some of the worst crimes involved Adam de Mottram, who was rent-collector and hereditary jailer of the Manor Macclesfield. During the Prince's stay in Cheshire he supplied the court with 10 oxen, 3 cows, 3 bullocks, and 22 cartloads of hay. Three years later, he provided 127 archers for the Prince's army. Yet Mottram was an accomplice in Case 19 at the trailbaston assize, when Sir John Hyde pleaded guilty to causing grievous bodily harm to his own servant John Scott. Hyde admitted that he had taken Scott out of Maclefield jail in 1350 'with the consent of the gaoler Adam Mottram', that he had castrated the poor fellow, allowed him to recover and then put him back in the jail.²¹ Further, in Case 89 Mottram was accused of nine charges of extortion and oppression, though he was found guilty on two counts only. The first charge involved his hereditary right to take 4d from every felon whom he held in custody at Macclesfield. It was found that he had in fact been taking 6d from all prisoners (felons and lesser criminals alike) and that his groom had been taking an extra 1d. The second charge was that he had also been extorting larger sums from some of his prisoners: sometimes £10, sometimes £5; and, at the time of the Black Death of 1348, a colt worth 6s 8d. The court rejected Mottram's argument that he had only been taking 'prison-sweetening dues', as was his right.

The Prince of Wales was keen to avoid the legal technicalities which could obstruct the administration of justice. The most curious of these was the ancient local custom of *thwertnic*. The whole business is obscure; but it seems that this allowed a man, charged with certain kinds of criminal offence before the Earl of Chester's court, to deny the charge by pronouncing the word *thwertnic* or *thwart-unay*. This put an end to the proceedings, which were then transferred to a more local court (and possibly never heard of again). The custom therefore amounted to a secular equivalent of benefit of clergy. There is no record of anyone entering a plea of *thwertnic* before the trialbaston assize of 1353; but, at the end of the proceedings, the custom was declared 'contrary to common law, the origin of trouble and

²⁰ TNA, Palatinate of Chester, Chester Plea Rolls, printed as *The Trailbaston Proceedings in Chester 1353, Cheshire History* 1983, '84 and '85, with notes by P.H.W. Booth: esp. Cases 22, 81, 121. The Constable was Richard Done. He was involved in Case 42 (extortion); Case 43 (causing someone to be falsely indicted); Case 46 (packing a jury); Case 47 (intimidation of a jury); Cases 48, 49, 50, 51 & 86 (extortion). In the last case, he was accused of arresting victims for the very crimes which had been committed against them; and subjecting them to 'cruel and horrible punishments' until they paid him the money demanded. His defence was that he was entitled to take monies from prisoners, including 'prison-sweetening dues' from those indicted for felony, provided no force was applied; but he was found guilty, fined £66 13s 4d and imprisoned.

²¹ One wonders what was behind the castration, though this had once been a normal punishment for adultery. Hyde was later pardoned, by command of the Prince. Too late, one fears, unless the castrator was negligent.

destructive to peace', and was done away with. Chandos witnessed the charter which recorded its abolition.²²

Another indication of the Prince's attitude to the machinery of justice comes in the last case heard by the royal justices in 1353, Case 135, *The County v Roger Hopewell, Master John Burnham and Hugh Hepwas*. These defendants are amongst the highest office-holders in the Palatinate, being the former Lieutenant of the Justiciar of Chester, the Chamberlain of Chester and the former Escheator of Cheshire. They are accused of various corrupt practices by the grand juries of several hundreds in the county, who declare that they 'have not served the Earl well in their respective offices'. They have taken 'robes and fees and other gifts and remunerations from a considerable number of the great men of Cheshire who have transgressed against the Earl on many occasions....' As a result 'the Earl has been lord in name only up to the present day'. Moreover, all three are 'known to have been common poachers and destroyers of the game in the lord Earl's forests of Macclesfield, Delamere and Wirral.' Unfortunately, there are defects in the indictments, since these do not mention precise dates, places and occasions when the crimes were committed. The defendants deny their guilt and demand trial by jury. This leads to an extraordinary court-room drama, because the justices now issue a public proclamation, asking that anyone who has a complaint about any of the three should come forward and be heard; but no-one is willing to put himself in the firing-line.

The Prince is clearly determined to 'nail' these men; but corroborative evidence is lacking and the authorities are reluctant to put the existing evidence put before a petty jury. The result is that all charges are dismissed; and the Judges even go so far as to declare that 'it was perfectly lawful for the officials of the Earl to accept robes, fees and other rewards from the great men of the county' and that 'such gifts had not been specifically forbidden by the Earl and they are given to the great men of their own free will and without compulsion.' Accordingly, 'the said crimes presented above are void and without any foundation and so Roger, John and Hugh can go free'.

Forest law had been a key part of royal administration since the Norman Conquest. Two provisions in Magna Carta had sought to reduce both the size of the forests and the jurisdiction of royal foresters;²³ but their function was still of great importance, when the Prince appointed Chandos as Master Forester, Keeper and Surveyor of the Forest of Macclesfield, at an annual fee of £3, in March 1353. The appointment was notified to all the prince's 'lieges and subjects' in the County, and was said to be 'on account of [the Prince's] affection for the person of John Chaundos, knight [sic] and in reliance on his proved fidelity'. In addition Chandos

²² The abolition of the *thwertnic* defence was provided for in the charter witnessed by Chandos and several other household knights, on 10 September 1353: CChR, vol V, 313-4. Most confusingly, the date is given as 10 September 1346 instead of 10 September 1353, and the Charter is printed under the year 1389; Tonkinson, 13-14; VCH Cheshire, II, 170; R. Stewart Brown, *Thwert-ut-nay and the Custom of 'Thwertnic' in Cheshire*, EHR vol 40, 157 (Jan.1925), 20-21.

²³ Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, 28.

was appointed Steward of the Manor of Macclesfield, and Bailiff of the Hundred; and a new post was also created for him, that of Keeper and Surveyor of all the Prince's forests in the county, which included not only Macclesfield but also Delamere, Wirral, Mondrem, Fens, Lyme and Rusty, in the central and western parts of Cheshire.²⁴ It is likely that these appointments were part of a programme to improve financial administration and increase revenue after a long period of neglect, and were linked with the general and forest eyres which the Prince was planning at the time.

What were Chandos's duties as a forester? On August 10 1353 the Prince ordered him 'to cause six roes to be taken quickly in the said forest, without frightening the other beasts of the forest there, and to send them to Chester by Wednesday next.' At the same time he was ordered to ask certain persons, whose names were attached (but have not survived) to dine with the Prince at Chester 'on Thursday next, the Feast of the Assumption'.²⁵ This may have been typical of the kind of thing he was asked to do; but Chandos was also responsible, at least in name, for policing the forest, collecting feudal dues and apprehending malefactors.²⁶ In September 1353, in consideration of the 'great costs' he had incurred 'in the management of the forests and the game and of putting them in a better condition', he was awarded £53 13s 4d a year in addition to his regular fee of £10 as steward. He was also given a bonus of £3 'which he takes for finding a riding-forester in the forest of Macclesfield, notwithstanding the ordinance made by the Prince that all the issues and profits of the County should be paid to the Treasurer of his household for the expenses thereof.' In May 1355 his fees were stated to be 100 marks a year.²⁷

²⁴ BPR III, 53, 95, 122 and 314-6; Booth, 136; Barber (1979), 106-7; Davies, ed., 3, 27; VCH Cheshire II, 181.

²⁵ BPR III, 112.

²⁶ For timber see BPR vol III, 315 (Sep 13, 1358, 'dry leafless oaks for fuel') and 316 (Sep 14 1358, 'two oaks fit for timber as a gift from the Prince towards the repair of the mill of Bollington'), 399 (July 11 1360, 12 oaks fit for timber in the wood of Lymm), 407 (Feb 10 1361, 'as much wood suitable for timber in the wood of Lymm as he requires for the repair of his houses in the town of 'Ponyngton' (Poynton, on the eastern edge of the Cheshire plain), 451 (August 15 1362, 6 oaks from the wood of Lym for the repair of the church of Longdendale), 460 (Nov. 23, 1363, 4 oaks), 480 (1365, 3 oaks suitable for timber in the wood of Lyme, suitable for building houses) and 484 (Nov. 12 1365, notification to Chandos of gifts of timber 'for the repair of their houses which are said to have fallen down while they were with the Prince in Aquitaine'). For venison see 351 (July 8 1359, 'three bucks of this season of grease') and 461 (Nov. 23, 1363, a hind and a roe). For feudal dues, 259. For the Forest Court, Davies, ed., 6, 24. For lawlessness, Tonkinson 139-40.

²⁷ BPR, III, 122, 199 (the fees fell into arrears: see, 211, 213). We know that Chandos was in Chester in June, when he received a sum of 66s 8d on behalf of the Prince, to be used in the repair of certain houses at Tarvin, belonging to one of the Prince's clerks BPR III, 122, 123, 127. In November 1354 there is an order from the Prince to Chandos regarding 'four oaks fit for timber in the wood of Lymm in the forest of Macclesfield, which the Prince has granted at the request of the archdeacon, provided always that the stumps of the oaks be marked as previously ordered'; and a similar order was issued in March 1355: *ibid.*, 183, 195. The chief forester at *La Mare* (Delamere), subordinate to Chandos, was obliged to account to him when permission was given for the felling of three oaks, for timber.

The forests in Cheshire were subject to forest law. One question which fell to be resolved was how far people who lived in them were allowed to make 'assarts', or clearings, and what the status of any cleared land was. There was a running battle between the Prince and the Burgesses of Macclesfield in particular, since they claimed special privileges; and tensions rose to the surface in July 1357 when the Prince issued the following order:

To Sir John Chandos, steward of Macclesfield, or his lieutenant – on information that the whole of the land of Roughwood, which certain men of those parts maintain to be boroughhold, is really forest land assarted – to cause all the tenants thereof to be distrained to pay their reliefs for time past, as others who do hold such lands in the same forest, unless they can shew specialty whereby they ought to be discharged therefrom.²⁸

In August 1357 Sir John Wingfield, who had fought at Crécy and Poitiers and was the Prince's chief administrator for England, issued an order in respect of the bailiwick of William de Stanlegh in Cheshire, requiring a survey of the number of harts, hinds, bucks, does and ground-game (*rascaille*) in the forest of Wirral. He referred to an order to the same effect issued by the Prince and directed that the estimate be prepared (if possible), in the presence of 'the prince's bachelor Sir John Chandos, surveyor of the forest, if he is in the country'.²⁹

This reference to Chandos's absence, or possible absence, raises the question of whether his appointment was a success in remedying the mischiefs revealed by the assize of 1353. Those proceedings do not seem to have been very effective, in the light of the complaints which continued to reach the Prince in the years that followed.³⁰ They certainly did little to reduce the power of men like Adam of Mottram, upon whom the Prince continued to rely, in particular for military service in Gascony; and four years later, Chandos fell foul of that egregious hereditary gaoler of Macclesfield. In December 1357 we find an order, addressed to Chandos and his deputy, alleging that he had broken some protocol or other, for he was ordered to tread very carefully in future

Order to Sir John Chaundos, Steward of Macclesfield, or his lieutenant, - on information that he has detained Adam de Mottram in the court at Macclesfield in a plea between him and John, his son, defendants, and Thomas son of Thomas Fitton of Gawsworth, plaintiff, touching certain lands in the forest of Macclesfield, in contravention of the late order to him, not to allow any inquisition to be taken or judgement rendered on the said lands against the laws and customs of the said manor because of an estate or seisin made outside the said courts, - not to allow the above plea, or any other plea that might turn to the disherison of the

²⁸ BPR III, 275.

²⁹ The order refers to the difficulty of conducting a survey in 'the present season' because 'the crops are high and the trees and bushes are thick and covered with leaves'.

³⁰ BPR III, 129, 135-6, 145, 185-6, 194, 263, 264, 269.

Prince or his tenants of the said manor, to be begun, pending or determined before him on account of such estate or seisin.

By command of J. de Wingfield

Adam de Mottram was clearly not a man to be crossed; and it looks as if Chandos, or his deputy, had slipped up; but he did not fall out of favour altogether. On the contrary, when the Prince made a second visit to Cheshire in September 1358 he enlarged Sir John's jurisdiction, granting him the stewardship of Longdendale in Lancashire 'with the keeping and supervision of the Prince's chase', as well as stewardship of the forest of Rusty in Hopedale and the parks at Peckforton and Lloytecoyt (Lloydcoed or Lwydcoed?), with a fee of 100 marks a year and 2d a day for Longdendale, and power to appoint a lieutenant and deputy.³¹ His duties, powers and privileges as forester are spelled out

*To preserve the Prince's lordship, chase, vert and venison, hold the Prince's courts, collect the Prince's monies arising from the issues of the courts, and from rents, farms and other matters, and answer to the Prince therefor, taking 2d a day as his wages out of the issues of the said bailiwick. The said Sir John may remove the ministers of the said chase, forest and parks whenever he shall find faults in them, for which they ought to forfeit their bailiwicks, and appoint others in their place for whom he will answer, unless the ministers hold their bailiwicks in fee.*³²

There is only one entry in the Prince's Register for the Palatinate which mentions Chandos in the same breath as Wales, though the Palatinate and the Principality adjoined one another. In January 1361 the Prince refers to a grant he has made, at Chandos's request, to a Welsh squire attached to Chandos's service and called only 'Wilym Ll.', of certain bailiwicks in the County of Carmarthen in South Wales, said to be worth £10 a year, for life, on condition that £10 of rent, 'held by Sir John for life of the prince's grant in Cheshire', be retained by the Prince as compensation. The Prince orders John de Burnham to cause £10 of land or rent to be retained 'wherever it shall be least inconvenient to Sir John and most profitable to the Prince'. Burnham was the Chamberlain of Chester at the time.

There is no doubting the importance of the posts held by Chandos in the forests of Cheshire. In 1361-2 the Chamberlain prepared an official copy of his accounts for Chandos's benefit; and when the bailiff of Rudheath paid him an annuity of £40, he did so before he made his liveries, or returns, to the Chamberlain. By the late 1360s, Chandos was Chief Forester of the High Peak as well as Constable

³¹ Booth and Carr, 127; M. L Bazely *The Extent of the English Forest in the 13th century*. TRHS 4th Series vol 4 (1921), 140-172; R. Grant *The Royal Forests of England* (Sutton, Stroud, 1991); and *Forests and Chases of England and Wales ca 1000-1500*, (Oxford St John's College) Oxbow Books. *An Atlas of Forests and Chases* (Phillimore) has a forest of Llwydcoed, also called Hirwaun, near Cardiff.

³² BPR III, 314.

of Peveril Castle, the royal stronghold in Castleton, Derbyshire;³³ but did these posts require any work, or were they sinecures? Chandos never married and seems to have lived the life of a peripatetic household knight, travelling wherever the Black Prince went. He never left the Prince's service (apart from a few brief months in 1368) and he remained at all times a trusted servant of the King, acting as his vice-chamberlain in 1359, and as King's Lieutenant in France after 1360.³⁴ Could he have spared the time for forest duties in the North of England?

There are frequent references in the archives to a deputy, or lieutenant, in Cheshire. As early as 1353 there is a reference to Robert de Legh of Adlington the elder, who had been bailiff of the Hundred of Macclesfield and belonged to one of the most important of families in Cheshire. In 1361-2 Chandos had a 'general attorney', one Robert Morton. Accordingly, it does look as if men like Robert de Legh and John Tieu did most of the hard work, the former as deputy keeper of Maclefield Forest in 1353, 1355, 1360, and 1361, and the latter as lieutenant of Longdendale lordship in 1359-61. This evidence, and Sir John's heavy responsibilities in France, have led writers on Cheshire history to conclude that he was essentially an absentee in the North of England; and some have been very critical of his role in the county. In his painstaking study of the financial administration of Cheshire between 1272 and 1377, P. H. W. Booth even take the view that Chandos's appointment as Master Forester was 'wholly unnecessary,' and a prominent example of the 'subordination of administrative efficiency to the needs of military expenditure and patronage.'³⁵

This seems rather harsh. We know nothing about the division of responsibility between Chandos and his various deputies; and he may have done more work than there is evidence for. Moreover, he would have had time to resume his direct responsibilities after the Prince's campaigns in France in 1355-6 and before Edward III's last campaign there in 1359, though he may have been in Brittany in 1357 and was almost permanently in France after 1360. He certainly continued to exercise influence in the North of England, even when he was active in the South of the country: there are two pardons, signed in 1359 at Sandwich in Kent, which show his influence at work:

*Pardon, at the asking of John Chaundos, to Simon le Harper of Kirkeham for all trespasses of venison in the forest of High Peak, whereof he is indicted, and of any consequent outlawries.*³⁶

³³ CPR, 1367-70, 374. Like Chester castle, Peveril castle was originally a Norman castle, but whereas the former is still in use, the latter is utterly ruinous.

³⁴ Tout, vol V, 308, 386. When confirming the grant of St Sauveur in 1360, Jean II of France referred to Chandos as Edward III's chamberlain, rather than vice-chamberlain, but of course he was not to know Sir John's precise position: Rymer 1745, *Foedera*, vol III, part II, 30.

³⁵ Green, 102; Booth and Carr, 156, 180-1; Booth 137, 112 (n43); Booth repeated his view in Booth & Carr (1991), 127.

³⁶ CPR, 1358-61, 295.

Pardon to William Lateprest of Beighton, 'fol', of the king's suit against him for having taken a book from the prior of Monk Bretton, in the County of Yorkshire and from Henry Pogge £2 by extortion, and for having stolen £6 7s from Robert Jenkinson of Skeggeby, in the County of Nottingham, and a black mare, a linen shroud [charnam lini] and seven brazen pots from William Gere of Beighton, in the County of Derbyshire, whereof he is indicted or appealed, and of any consequent outlawries.

By the K[ing] on the information of John Chandos.³⁷

Perhaps the truth is that Chandos had more time for the affairs of Cheshire and Derbyshire in the 1350s than he did later on. The lesson of the *trailbaston* assize of 1353 was, after all, that the Prince could not rely on local people alone to operate the machinery of justice with fairness and integrity. Too many of them had lined their own pockets, instead of looking after his interests. On the other hand, Chandos was his right hand man, a person he could totally rely on. His promotion of Sir John at local level could have been part of a plan to bring the smack of firm government to Cheshire, for the benefit of his estates and the public weal.

However, by the 1360s Chandos's posts in the North of England had inevitably become sinecures. His commitments in France were such that he had to go and live there, on a more or less indefinite basis. When the Prince issued orders to deliver three oaks for timber to the escheator of Cheshire, Adam de Kyngeslegh on 1 December 1363, they were, as usual, addressed to Sir John 'or his lieutenant'; but it is obvious now that it was the deputy who would arrange the delivery. By this date, Chandos had become Constable of Aquitaine as well as Viscount of St Sauveur in Normandy, and was one of the most important men in France.³⁸

Was Chandos still able to visit his family in Derbyshire, or at least keep in touch with them? The evidence is again circumstantial, but at least one of his sisters continued to live in Radbourne and he retained the family estates there, despite acquiring land in France. In addition, we know that, in 1358, he was one of three individuals granted a 'licence in mortmain' for the foundation of a chantry in the church of St Werburgh in the City of Derby, with land in the surrounding county. Divine service was to be celebrated daily at the altar of St Mary; and prayers were to be said

³⁷ CPR, 1358-61, 298, 64. Beighton is now a suburb of Sheffield. Monk Bretton was a Priory just outside Barnsley, the ruins of which survive. As it happens, we know something about the man Lateprest. He had 'form' in three counties: 'July 10 1358 [Westminster]: Pardon to William Lateprest of Beighton, 'fol,' of the king's suit against him for having taken by force from Robert son of John de Skeggeby £10 3/4d, ridden in Sherwood and elsewhere as a common robber, beaten men going to their ploughs, taken sums of money from them and burned their houses; also for having taken from Ralph son of William de Beighton 1 mark at Sheffeld fair, from William de Staynton at Beighton, £10 and from William de Plumley, £10 whereof he is indicted or appealed, and of any consequent outlawries'. What does the word 'fol' mean? Possibly that the man was a jester; conceivably, that was mad.

³⁸ BPR IV, 514-5.

for the good estate of the king and his children and the grantors, for their souls when they were departed this life, and for the souls of the king's progenitors, as well as for the souls of the ancestors of the said John [Chandos], and [the other grantors].

Chantry chapels were a very common feature of religious life in late medieval England; but in Chandos's case this document shows an attachment to his home county of Derbyshire, and to the Northern Saint St Werburgh, the daughter of an Anglo-Saxon Mercian king who was still widely venerated in the North Midlands.³⁹

There is another question which arises in connection with Chandos's responsibilities as a forester in the North. Is it possible that the medieval poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, written in the North Midlands dialect around 1380, was written in memory of Sir John, and reflects his fondness for hunting; that the castle of *Hautdesert* is Peak Castle in Derbyshire; and that the mysterious 'Green Chapel' is Peak Cavern? Noel Brindley has suggested a close connection, though Nicholas Mee has suggested that the Green Knight may be based on John of Gaunt (Duke of Lancaster and therefore lord of Tutbury).⁴⁰

Cambrai and Sluys

1337 is usually regarded as the start of the Hundred Years War; but Edward III could not know how long the war would last when he launched it. Moreover, the dispute had its origins in the 12th century, when Henry II had acquired a large part of the South-West of France by virtue of his marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine. There had been disputes between the English and French kings about the Duchy of Aquitaine ever since. For centuries the French Kings had sought to weaken the English hold on the Duchy and, after the Treaty of Paris of 1259, they had exploited their position as feudal overlords, which was recognised by the Treaty. The French had chipped away at the boundaries and, on three occasions they had declared the whole Duchy forfeit. Primarily then, Edward III wanted to vindicate his position in Aquitaine (known in England as 'Guienne' or less accurately 'Gascony') and it was not until 1340 that he claimed the French throne. When he did that, it was largely to satisfy his Continental allies, who needed a better reason to make war on the French king than the Duchy of Aquitaine.

In the early years of the war Edward's strategy was to invade the Low Countries and form alliances with local powers hostile to the French monarchy. He

³⁹ CPR, 1358-61, 86. St Werburgh's Derby is now a redundant Anglican church. Werburgh, or Werburga, was the name of at least two Anglo-Saxon saints.

⁴⁰ See Noel Brindley, www.hautdesert.webnode.com/news/john-chandos, where he kindly acknowledges this book. For Nicholas Mee's article *Patron's Place* see *History Today* vol 62 issue 1 (also January 2012).

convened a conference at Valenciennes, in the independent County of Hainaut, where his ambassadors secured him an army of 7,000 men at a cost of £160,000. The allies, with Edward in command, laid siege to Cambrai in September 1339. Jean Froissart, who came from Valenciennes, takes up the story of this siege in the first book of his chronicle

During the siege of Cambrai there were many skirmishes and combats; Sir John of Hainault, and the Lord of Fauquemont, as usual, made their excursions together, and burnt and destroyed much of the country of Cambrésis. These lords, with 500 lances and 1,000 other men at arms, came to the city of Oisy, in the Cambrésis, and assaulted it so furiously, that it would have been taken, if the knights and squires within had not most valiantly defended it for the Lord of Coucy, so that little damage was done, and these lords returned to their quarters.

The Count of Hainault and his forces came one Saturday to the gates of St Quentin and made a vigorous attack upon them. John Chandos, as yet but an esquire (of whose prowess this book will speak much), flung himself between the barrier and the gate, at the length of a lance, and fought very gallantly with an esquire of Vermandois, called John de Saint Dizier: each of them performed great feats of arms; and the Hainaulters got possession by force of the barriers.

We can see that Chandos was involved in the Hundred Years War from the very beginning of the hostilities, though he was still a squire.

The English decided to break off the siege of Cambrai when it became clear that it was taking too much time. They marched thirty miles to the South, and eventually encountered a French army between Buirenfosse and La Capelle. Although there was no battle, the armies were drawn up for a fight, there was a special distribution of wine, and it was here that John Chandos was made a knight

When Friday morning was come, the two armies got themselves in readiness, and heard mass, each lord among his own people, and at his own quarters: many took the sacrament and confessed themselves...

The third battalion, which was the greatest, was commanded by the king of England in person. With him were, his cousin, the Earl of Derby, son of the Earl of Lancaster, the Bishop of Lincoln, the Bishop of Durham... and many others whom I cannot name. The King created many knights; among whom

was Sir John Chandos whose numerous acts of prowess are recorded in this book.⁴¹

Knighthood raised Chandos far above the ranks of the squires and the yeomen (to say nothing of the common soldiery); and it entitled him to a higher rate of pay. It placed him immediately below the rank of baron. To maintain his position, he needed an income other than his soldier's wages. If a man did not already have sufficient wealth to generate that income, the King often gave him land. In Chandos's case a special arrangement was made, because an estate was not immediately available. The Patent Rolls record that, on 15 November 1339, the King gave Chandos

for his better support in the estate of knight, which he has received from the king on this side [of] the seas... an annuity of 20 marks, at the Exchequer, until the king grant him an equivalent of land or rent for life.

Chandos was a *King's knight*. The reference to his being made a knight 'on this side of the seas' would seem to confirm that he had been dubbed by Edward III in person on the battlefield in Flanders, but that the knighting had also been confirmed in England. It was probably at this time, too, that Chandos acquired his plain but distinctive coat of arms: *argent, a pile gules*; the crest being 'a man's head, wreathed about the temples'. These arms are still displayed in St George's Chapel, Windsor, on Sir John's Garter-plate, which is the eleventh on the Sovereign's side of the Chapel.⁴²

As a King's knight Chandos enjoyed special privileges. The Ordinances and Regulations for the royal household in the years 1344 and 1348 have survived, and these show the wage-rates which applied. There were 102 'knights bachelor' on the payroll at this time. In time of war, they received 2/- a day; but in time of peace, there were various rates of pay, expressed in annual terms. 36 of these bachelors received 10 marks a year, while the remainder received only 8. The 'pay band' for bannerets was also split: some received 20 marks while others were paid only £10 13s 4d. Yeomen received 13s 4d a year, archers 10/-.⁴³

Froissart recorded many feats of arms but Edward III's campaign in the Cambrésis in the autumn of 1339 was not a success, either militarily or

⁴¹ Luce, I, 179. The Rome Ms states specifically that Chandos was knighted on a Friday, and at Buironfosse: Luce, I, 471.

⁴² CPR, 1338-40, 397; Keen, *Chivalry*, 168; Sumption, vol I, 287; Froissart (Johnes), Chapter 41, vol I p. 56 (the footnote to Johnes states 'Neither Lord Berners nor Lord Sauvage's edition [of Froissart] make mention of this creation, but speak of Chandos as already a knight'). The description of the coat of arms is taken from Burke's *General Armory*, 1884. The head on the crest may be that of a wild man, or Saracen, similar to those which appear in statuary in Wingfield parish church, Suffolk, on the tombs of the de la Pole Dukes of Suffolk.

⁴³ *Ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household*, ed. J. Nichols (Society of Antiquaries, London 1790).

diplomatically. Nor was the grand strategy pursued between 1337 and 1345; but in 1340, the English won a dramatic victory in a famous sea-battle off Sluys in the Low Countries. Despite his extreme youth – he was ten - the Black Prince was intensely interested in this encounter. He arranged to be rowed out to his ship in the estuary of the Orwell and left his own messengers to watch, all along the South-East coasts of England. Henry Knighton wrote a detailed chronicle of these years which tells that Chandos was amongst those who sailed to Flanders with the King, and were ordered to scout along the Flemish coast

And King Edward sent Sir Reginald Cobham, Sir John Chandos and Sir Stephen Lambkin⁴⁴ to reconnoitre and see how the fleet lay, and they rode on the land so close to the ships that they could well see how they were equipped; and they saw nineteen ships of such splendour and size as they had never seen before, of which one was called the *Christopher* because of its pre-eminence. In the same way they found 200 ships-of-war drawn up close to the shore in three regular lines, with other lesser ships and barges; and, on the morrow, that is to say St John the Baptist's Day [24 June 1340] the fleet left the haven of the Zwin for the Grogne, arrayed in lines as has been said.⁴⁵

The level of detail here is impressive; but the reference to the *Christopher* is misleading. She had at one time been Edward III's own ship, but she was captured by the Genoese in 1338 and she now occupied pride of place in the enemy fleet, and was renamed *La Christophe*.⁴⁶ So it was the French fleet which Chandos and his companions were observing here, not the English. Could Chandos have made these observations and still have taken part in the battle? One would have thought it unlikely, since the main English fleet sailed from the Orwell in Suffolk and Morley's subsidiary squadron must also have sailed from home waters; but, if Knighton's account can be believed, Edward had landed at Blankenberge with a reconnaissance force, and subsequently managed to join his fleet; and it may be that Chandos joined the King on the other side of the Channel, rather than in England.

Froissart certainly numbers Chandos as one of those who fought at Sluys

This battle was very murderous and horrible. Combats at sea are more destructive and obstinate than upon land, for it is not possible to retreat or flee - every one must abide his fortune and exert his prowess and valour...

⁴⁴ According to Cushway, the name was Lambyn and he was one of the King's admirals: Cushway, 94.

⁴⁵ Knighton (1979) 28-9. It may be Knighton's account which caused Barber (1979) to doubt that Chandos fought at Sluys; but Charles de la Roncière, author of a history of the French navy, published in 1899, mentions Chandos as present.

⁴⁶ Cushway, 227.

The King, who was in the flower of his youth, showed himself on that day a gallant knight, as did the Earls of Derby, Pembroke, Hereford, Huntingdon, Northampton and Gloucester; the Lord Reginald Cobham, Lord Felton, Lord Bradestan, Sir Richard Stafford, the Lord Percy, Sir Walter Manny, Sir Henry de Flanders, Sir John Beauchamp, Sir John Chandos, the Lord Delaware, Lucie Lord Malton, and the Lord Robert d'Artois, now called Earl of Richmond.

I cannot remember all the names of those who behaved so valiantly in the combat; but they did so well, with some assistance from Bruges, and those parts of the county, the French were completely defeated, and all the Normans and the others were killed or drowned, so that none of them escaped. This was soon known all over Flanders; and when it came to the two armies before Thin-l'Evêque, the Hainaulters were as much rejoiced as their enemies were dismayed.

Froissart also claims that none of the French dared tell King Philip of the disaster which had befallen his fleet, until his court jester disclosed it with a quip:

'Our Knights are much braver than the English' he said.

'How so?' replied King Philip.

(The jester delivers the punch-line)

'Because the English do not dare jump into the sea in full armour'.

Crécy and Calais

Edward III adopted an entirely new strategy in the 1340s. The old one, which involved expensive alliances with friendly powers in the Low Countries, had almost bankrupted the Crown; but in 1346 Edward sent Henry of Derby to make war in Aquitaine, while he invaded Normandy. He landed at Cap de la Hogue at the tip of the Cotentin peninsula, captured Caen, and marched in the direction of the Channel ports, plundering and burning as he went. This was one of the first occasions on which the *chevauchée* was used: a long-distance armed raid, designed to show who was master, undermine the enemy's morale, and destroy his tax base. Some think that Edward deliberately courted battle, knowing that new battle tactics developed in Scotland were very likely to bring him victory; but it seems more likely that it was the French who forced him to fight, since they got ahead of him on the march, as he was making his way towards Calais. In any event, Edward III decisively defeated

the French at Crécy in Picardy, just as Henry V was to do seventy years later, at Agincourt.

The Crécy expedition is narrated by the chronicler Jean le Bel (c.1290-1370) as well as by Froissart, who used le Bel's chronicle extensively; but whereas le Bel does not mention Chandos, Froissart does.

Now it befell that just at this time [the King] crossed the sea to Normandy. With right noble following, barons, bannerets, and earls . . . he landed in the Cotentin. There was many a good and true knight, the noble Earl of Warwick, of high esteem, and the right noble Earl of Northampton, the Earl of Suffolk, and the Earl of Stafford, of the stout and bold heart, and the Earls of Salisbury and Oxford; and John de Beauchamp was there, the valiant Reginald de Cobham, Sir Bartholomew de Burghersh, bold in deed, the good Guy de Brian, the good Richard de la Vache, and the good Richard Talbot of great prowess. And Chandos and Audeley were there, who smote mightily with the sword, and the good Thomas de Holland, of great prowess, and a great number of others, whose names I cannot tell.

Edward had an important French ally with him, in the person of Sir Godfrey de Harcourt. Harcourt was lord of St Sauveur-le-Vicomte, the most important fortress in the Cotentin, which might have effectively blocked the way from Cherbourg to Lower Normandy and Caen, if it had remained in enemy hands. Twenty years later, Chandos was to become Viscount of St-Sauveur and remain its lord for almost ten years.

On the day after the landing at Cap de la Hogue, the King knighted the Prince of Wales and the Prince immediately exercised his new right to make other knights. Chandos was already one of his senior 'bachelors'; and we can trace Sir John's probable movements by reference to those of the vanguard, which was nominally under the Prince's command, and usually quartered about two or three miles distant from the King's division, when the army was on the march. We know too that the Prince played an important part in the capture of Caen, on 26 July.

The story of the march which the English made across Normandy and Picardy in July and August 1346 is a story of terrible destruction, inflicted on towns and districts, churches and monasteries. The booty taken at Caen, in particular, was legendary. This first great *chevauchée* of the Hundred Years War made a lasting impression on the French, partly because Normandy had never suffered like this before and partly because the French were never able to retaliate in kind. Their raids on England were always hit and run affairs, which damaged little beyond the shipping and the ports of the South coast.

The capture of Caen handed the English a significant propaganda victory, for it was here that they found documentary proof that the French had planned to invade England, in 1338. The invasion plan was taken to London, where the Archbishop of Canterbury preached a sermon at St Paul's Cross, revealing the

dastardly scheme. The plan assumed a walkover for the French in the event of their being able to land in England.⁴⁷ The English certainly thought that the consequences would have been dire, and the King spread a rumour that the French had intended to abolish the use of the English language. Henry Knighton (who wrongly thought that the invasion had been planned for 1346) was duly grateful to Edward III for saving the nation, when he successful invaded Normandy.

Nor should it be forgotten that if King Edward had not crossed the Channel and fought a successful campaign over there, the French would have come to England, for they had made plans, and were ready to invade with a force of 4,000 men at arms, 5,000 foot and 5,000 crossbowmen, of whom the commander was called Jean le Franc, being the son of King Philippe de Valois, who had been appointed by the French parliament, and was expected to earn the name of Conqueror.

Likewise it was ordained in that parliament that [Philippe VI] should give the lands which he won in England to the nobles who went with him, to each according to his degree, and that in that way the lands of England would be permanently secured for France... but God struck them with such terror by our king's blessed advent in those parts that they abandoned the whole plan, and so on that occasion their scheme was undone.'⁴⁸

Despite the horrors of war, Froissart was able to sustain his story of chivalric endeavour, and at time Chandos helped the process along, by rescuing some damsels in distress:

The next day, the King and his whole army marched forward, burning and wasting all the country as they went, and lay that night at a village called Grandvillier. On the morrow he passed near to Argis: his scouts not finding anyone to guard the castle, he attacked and burnt it, and passing on, destroyed the country, and came to Poix, which was a handsome town with two castles. The lords of both were absent and no one was there but two handsome daughters of the lord of Poix, who would soon have been violated, if two English knights, Sir John Chandos and lord Basset, had not defended them.

In order more effectively to guard them, they brought them to the king, who, as in honour bound, entertained them most graciously. He enquired whither they wished to go? And they answered 'Corbie', to which place they were conducted in safety.

⁴⁷ *Black Book of the Admiralty*, vol. 1, 420-5; *The Rolls of Parliament*, vol. IV, 390.

⁴⁸ *Knighton's Chronicle*, 59; Prestwich, *Plantagenet England*, 555.

The Battle of Crécy took place on 26 August 1346 and was a stunning English victory. The tactic of deploying archers and dismounted men at arms together in was used for the first time against a main French field army. It had worked against the Scots and now it worked against the greater foe, to devastating effect. The Black Prince played a leading role in the battle, although he was only 16. It is likely that Chandos was never far from him

The King ordered, through his Constable and his two Marshals, that the army should be divided into three battalions. In the first, he placed the young Prince of Wales, and with him the Earls of Warwick and Oxford, Sir Godfrey de Harcourt, the lord Reginald Cobham, Lord Thomas Holland, Lord Stafford, Lord Mauley, the Lord Delaware, Sir John Chandos, Lord Bartholomew Burghersh, Lord Robert Neville, Lord Thomas Clifford, the Lord Bourchier, the Lord Latimer, and many other knights and squires whom I cannot name. There might be, in this first division, about 800 hundred men at arms, 2,000 archers, and 1,000 Welshmen. They advanced in regular order to their ground, each lord under his banner and pennon, and in the centre of his men...

The king then mounted a small palfrey, having a white wand in his hand, and attended by his two marshals on each side of him: he rode a foot's pace through all the ranks, encouraging and entreating the army, that they would guard his honour and defend his right. He spoke this so sweetly, and with such a cheerful countenance, that all who had been dispirited were directly comforted by seeing and hearing him. When he had thus visited all the battalions, it was near ten o'clock: he retired to his own division, and ordered them all to eat heartily, and drink a glass after.

In the Rome Manuscript of his Chronicle, Froissart is more specific about Chandos's place by the Prince's side.

The King dismounted, with all his men, and he sent for his son, the Prince. They brought him, and he was accompanied by four of his own knights [*chevaliers de son corps*], whose names were Sir John Chandos, Sir Bartholomew Burghersh, Sir James Audley and Sir William Pennel. He kneeled down before his father: the King took his hand and kissed him and made him a knight, and then sent him back into the battle line, requesting and ordering these four knights that they take good care of his son; and they replied, bowing low to the king, that every man would do his duty...

One of the most famous moments in the battle was when the King of France ordered his men to turn upon their own allies, the Genoese crossbowmen.

The English, who were drawn up in three divisions, and seated on the ground, on seeing their enemies advance, rose undauntedly up, and fell into their ranks. That of the Prince was the first to do so, whose archers were formed in the manner of a harrow,⁴⁹ and the men at arms in the rear... As soon as the King of France came in sight of the English, his blood began to boil, and he cried out to his marshals

'Order the Genoese forward; and begin the battle in the name of God and St. Denis'

There were about 15,000 Genoese crossbowmen; but they were quite fatigued, having marched on foot that day six leagues, completely armed, and with their crossbows. They told the constable, they were not in a fit condition to do any great things that day in battle. The Earl of Alençon, hearing this, said:

'This it what one gets by employing such scoundrels, who fail us when there is any need for them'.

When the Genoese were somewhat in order, and approached the English, they set up a loud shout, in order to frighten them; but they remained quite still, and did not seem to attend to it. They then set up a second shout, and advanced a little forward; but the English never moved. They hooted a third time, advancing with their crossbows presented, and began to shoot. The English archers then advanced one step forward, and shot their arrows with such force and quickness, that it seemed as if it snowed. When the Genoese felt these arrows, which pierced their arms, heads, and through their armour, some of them cut the strings of their crossbows, others flung them on the ground, but all turned about, and retreated, quite discomfited. The French had a large body of men at arms on horseback, richly dressed, to support the Genoese. The King of France, seeing them thus fall back, cried out:

'Kill me those scoundrels; for they stop up our road, without any reason'.

⁴⁹ Froissart uses the word *herce*. Much ink has been spilt by historians on the meaning of this word, and there is no real consensus, or about the number of *herces* deployed. I have translated the word conventionally as 'harrow'; but Michael Prestwich points out that Froissart, being a clerk, probably meant a frame used to carry candles in religious services, rather than an agricultural implement; and that the *herce* was 'broad in front and narrow in flank', with the apex of the triangle at the back, and not at the front, as is often suggested: Ayton, ed., 145-6; Rogers, 267. However, Richard Barber takes the view that the word derived from the Latin *ericius*, which originally meant 'hedgehog' or 'porcupine', which could describe 'an array of carts with archers on them, shooting arrows like quills': Barber, *Triumph*, 232.

You would then have seen the above-mentioned men at arms lay about them, killing all they could of these runaways.

No English commander ever treated his own men, or their allies, in this way, though there were certainly some ruthless types amongst King Edward's forces.

In the English army there were some Cornish and Welshmen on foot, who had armed themselves with large knives: these, advancing through the ranks of the men at arms and archers, who made way for them, came upon the French when they were in this danger, and, falling upon Earls, Barons, knights and squires, slew many, at which the King of England was afterwards much exasperated.

The Prince of Wales was in the centre of the vanguard, with his household knights and the two Earls, and his standard, carried by Sir Richard Fitzsimon, and therefore had to face wave after wave of French attacks. Some reports state that the Duke of Alençon, who led the first charge, beat down the Prince's standard just before he fell. The second charge penetrated into the centre of the division, and the Prince was now in considerable danger. Some accounts say he was forced to his knees, and even captured for a few moments by the Count of Hainault, only to be rescued by Sir Richard Fitzsimon. The King sent twenty knights, led by Thomas Hatfield, Bishop of Durham, to the rescue. However, when they reached him, he and his companions were leaning on their swords and resting, having repulsed the French by their own efforts. Froissart has a version of these events which has become famous, though it did not appear in Jean le Bel.

Early in the day, some French, Germans, and Savoyards had broken through the archers of the Prince's battalion, and had engaged with the men at arms; upon which the second battalion came to his aid, and it was time, for otherwise he would have been hard pressed. The first division, seeing the danger they were in, sent a knight in great haste to the king of England, who was posted upon an eminence, near a windmill. On the knight's arrival, he said

'Sir, the Earl of Warwick, the Lord Stafford, the Lord Reginald Cobham, and the others who are about your son are vigorously attacked by the French; and they entreat that you would come to their assistance with your battalion, for, if their numbers should increase, they fear he will have too much to do'.

The king replied:

'Is my son dead, unhorsed, or so badly wounded that he cannot support himself?'

'Nothing of the sort, thank God' - rejoined the knight - 'but he is in so hot an engagement that he has great need of your help.'

The king answered,

'Now, Sir Thomas, return back to those that sent you, and tell them from me, not to send again for me this day, or expect that I shall come, let what will happen, as long as my son has life; and say, that I command them to let the boy win his spurs; for I am determined, if it please God, that all the glory and honor of this day shall be given to him, and to those into whose care I have intrusted him.'

This is a nice story, firmly in the tradition of Froissart's tales of chivalrous and chivalric behaviour. We may speculate that it was Chandos, or one of his companions, who provided it to the chronicler, during the course of a fireside conversation.

It was at Crécy that the Black Prince acquired the ostrich feather emblem which still forms part of Prince of Wales's coat of arms. It had previously been part of arms worn by King John the Blind of Bohemia, who fought on the French side that day. Froissart relates

The valiant King of Bohemia was called John of Luxembourg; for he was the son of the gallant king and emperor, Henry of Luxembourg. Having heard the order of the battle, he enquired where his son, the Lord Charles, was. His attendants answered that they did not know, but believed he was fighting. The King said to them

'Gentlemen, you are all my people, my friends and brethren at arms this day: therefore, as I am blind, I request of you to lead me so far into the engagement that I may strike one stroke with my sword'

The knights replied that they would directly lead him forward; and, in order that they might not lose him in the crowd, they fastened all the reins of their horses together, and put the king at their head, that he might gratify his wish, and advanced towards the enemy.

The King rode in among the enemy, and made good use of his sword; for he and his companions fought most gallantly. They advanced so far that they were all slain; and on the morrow they were found on the ground, with their horses all tied together.

Froissart also tells us that, on the day after the battle, the King congratulated his son.

When, on this Saturday night, the English heard no more hooting or shouting, nor any more crying out to particular lords or their banners, they looked upon the field as their own, and their enemies as beaten. They made great fires, and lighted torches because of the obscurity of the night. King Edward then came down from his post, who all that day had not put on his helmet, and, with his whole battalion, advanced to the Prince of Wales, whom he embraced in his arms and kissed, and said

‘Sweet son, God give you good perseverance: you are my son, for most loyally have you acquitted yourself this day: you are worthy to be a sovereign.’

The Prince bowed down very low, and humbled himself, giving all honour to the king his father. The English, during the night, made frequent thanksgivings to the Lord, for the happy issue of the day, and without rioting; for the king had forbidden all riot or noise.

There is a stark contrast to this story in the account of a Hainaulter whose sympathies lay with the French. This tells how the King asked the Prince afterwards what he thought of the battle, but the latter ‘said nothing and was ashamed’.⁵⁰ However, we may question the truth of this, given that the Prince had been schooled to knighthood from his earliest years, and the English had just won a shattering and triumphal victory against their greatest adversary.

After their great victory, the English withdrew to the North; but, instead of taking ship for home, they laid siege to Calais. After eleven months, the burghers of Calais surrendered, amidst scenes immortalised by Froissart and Auguste Rodin. From a military and logistical point of view, the organisation required to capture it was even more impressive than the victory at Crécy, though it was the latter which captured the public imagination.

Froissart does not record that Chandos took any part in the siege of Calais; and he certainly appears to have been in Chester on 10 September 1346, after the siege had started; but it is possible that he was present for at least some of the time, and that he was involved in putting down an attempt which was made to betray it to the French, soon after the city surrendered in 1347. On this occasion, the King and the Prince, with a small group of knights, made their way to Calais, laid an ambush for the French conspirators and captured their leader, Geoffrey de Charny (author of the well-known *Book of Chivalry*). The story reveals once again Froissart’s enthusiasm

⁵⁰ Barber, ODNB 2004, citing K. de Lettenhove, *Récits d'un Bourgeois de Valenciennes*, 234).

for daring feats of arms and hand-to-hand fighting, rather than with tactics and strategy.⁵¹

Calais was to prove of great military and economic importance to England throughout the Hundred Years War: it has been described as the first English colony. Edward's officials expelled at least part of the French population and re-peopled the town with English nationals. The machinery of government became entirely English. A large garrison was installed and the area surrounding Calais was gradually conquered and re-inforced with numerous castles and other fortifications, so that within a few years there was a 'pale' of settlement known as the Calais March. Calais was viewed as one of the 'bastions' of English power and stayed in English hands until 1558.

The anonymous author of the *Chronique des Quatre Premier Valois* relates that Chandos played in consolidating the Pale of Calais. He says that, in 1353, while the barons of France were celebrating a festival, King Edward and the Prince came to Calais, and that the Earl of 'Glos', the '*sire d'Ancelle*' and '*monseigneur Jehan de Chendos*' took the castle of Guines by escalade (*furent escheller le chastel de Guines*). Unfortunately this is hard to believe. The chronicler wrote nearly thirty years after the events he describes; and, although Guines did fall to the English, neither Froissart nor Chandos Herald mention that any important personage came over from England to take part in its capture. However, the story does confirm that Chandos went on to acquire a formidable reputation in the French kingdom, along with many of his masters and companions.⁵²

Knight of the Garter

There is no portrait or statue or effigy of John Chandos, but there is an illustration of him which appears in a roll of arms prepared by William Bruges, the first Garter King of Arms, in about 1430; and it is possible that this was based on something drawn from life.⁵³ It shows a bearded Chandos, dressed in Garter robes and wearing a long decorated surcoat. The only other description we have of him is Froissart's – 'he was of great stature and strength, well made in all his limbs.'

⁵¹ Barber, ODNB 2004. Wrottesley, in *Crécy and Calais* (London 1898) does not mention Chandos at the siege of Calais. My evidence for saying he was in Chester is based on his witnessing a charter there: CChR, vol V, 315.

⁵² CQPV, 23-4 (and Preface). Guines was captured on 6 January 1352 by a small band of men from Calais, recruited by a squire called John Dancaster: Sumption, II, 88.

⁵³ B.L., Stowe 594, ff. 12v-13. Chandos and Sir Otto Holland brother of Sir John Holland) are shown wearing blue Garter mantles over plate armour and surcoats.

The great chronicler tells us that Edward III founded the Order of the Garter at Windsor Castle in January or February 1344, at the same time as he planned building works there:

About this time, the King of England resolved to rebuild and embellish the great castle of Windsor, which King Arthur had first founded in time past, and where he had erected and established that noble round table from whence so many gallant knights had issued forth, and displayed the valiant prowess of their deeds at arms over the world. King Edward, therefore, determined to establish an order of knighthood, consisting of himself, his children, and the most gallant knights in Christendom, to the number of forty. He ordered it to be denominated 'knights of the blue garter' and that the feast should be celebrated every year, at Windsor, upon St. George's day.

Archaeology has confirmed that Edward III did start to build an enormous 'House of the Round Table' in Windsor in 1344, but also that the work was soon abandoned; and it is now believed that the foundation of the Order of the Garter coincided with the establishment of the College of St George, Windsor, four years later in 1348.⁵⁴

Originally, the Order of the Garter was to consist of twenty four Knights, including the Sovereign; but this was increased to twenty-six at some date between April 1349 and November 1352. The Order was to gather at Windsor each year on 23 April—the feast of St George. The motto which Edward adopted for it, *Honi soit qui mal y pense* ('Shame on him who thinks badly of it'), probably related to the King's claim to the throne of France, rather than to the King's attraction to the Countess of Salisbury's legs, as was traditionally believed.⁵⁵ The Prince of Wales was actively involved in the project and some of the earliest references to the Order are in the financial records of the Prince's household. His wardrobe-keeper bought twenty-four garters in December 1348.

Nine of the original Garter knights, including Thomas Beauchamp, Miles Stapleton, and Jean de Grailly, had been crusaders in Prussia; but no less than eighteen of them had fought at Crécy. Here is Froissart on the founding of the Order:

The King summoned, therefore, all the earls, barons and knights of his realm, to inform them of his intentions; they heard it with great pleasure; for it appeared to them highly honourable, and capable of increasing love and friendship. Forty knights were then elected, according to report and estimation the bravest in Christendom, who sealed, and swore to maintain

⁵⁴ Froissart, Chapter 100; *Edward III's Round Table at Windsor*, eds. Julian Munby, Richard Barber and Richard Brown (The Boydell Press 2007).

⁵⁵ There are various legends, the most popular involving the Countess of Salisbury. Supposedly, she was dancing with or near King Edward at Eltham Palace when her garter slipped. While the court sniggered, the king picked it up and tied it to his own leg, exclaiming '*Honi soit qui mal y pense*'.

and keep the feast and the statutes which had been made. The king founded a chapel at Windsor, in honour of St. George, and established canons there to serve God, with a handsome endowment. He then issued his proclamation for this feast by his heralds, whom he sent to France, Scotland, Burgundy, Hainault, Flanders, Brabant, and the empire of Germany, and offered to all knights and squires that might come to this ceremony passports to last for fifteen days after it was over.

The names of the first Knights of the Garter were recorded in the Order's Statutes, according to the order in which they took their seats in St George's Chapel. Chandos's name appears towards the bottom of the list; but in a sense these founding knights were all in a special category because, unlike those who came after them, they were all appointed rather than elected.

Royal family

King Edward III (1312-77)

Edward of Woodstock ('the Black Prince'), 1330-76)

Henry of Derby, Earl of Derby and (later) Duke of Lancaster (the King's cousin, (c.1310-1361)

Earls or future earls

Thomas Beauchamp (11th Earl of Warwick (1313/14-1369)

Sir Thomas Holland (Earl of Kent, c.1315-60)

Sir William Montagu (2nd Earl of Salisbury, 1328-97)

Roger Mortimer (later 2nd Earl of March, 1328-60)

Ralph Stafford (later 1st Earl of Stafford, 1301-72)

Barons

John Lisle (2nd Lord Lisle, d.1356)

John Mohun (2nd Lord Mohun, c.1320-75)

John Grey (1st Lord Grey of Rotherfield, 1300-59)

Jean de Grailly, Captal de Buch (a Gascon, d.1377)

Bannerets

Sir John Beauchamp (d. 1360)

Sir James Audley (c.1318-69)

Knights from the Households of the King and the Prince

Sir Bartholomew Burghersh the younger (d.1369)
Sir Hugh Courtenay (d.1349)
Sir Richard Fitzsimon (d.in or after 1348)
Sir Miles Stapleton (c.1320-64)
Sir Thomas Wale (d.1352)
Sir Hugh Wrottesley (d.1381)
Sir Neil Loring (c.1315-86)
Sir John Chandos (d.1370)
Sir Otho Holland (d. 1359)
Sir Henry Eam (d.1358-60)
Sir Sanchert d'Abriquecourt (a Picard, d. 1348)
Sir Walter Paveley (1319-75)

The Order of the Garter was designed to bind its members together, in loyalty to the Crown and to the King's cause in France, regardless of social differences; but it is very noticeable that, when the chronicler Adam Murimuth described King Edward's project he named the chief noblemen involved (the Earls of Derby, Warwick, Arundel, Pembroke and Suffolk) but no others. In social terms, Chandos may have joined a very select club, but he was still a mere 'bachelor' knight – one whose dependence on his master's favour was total.⁵⁶ He eventually became a banneret, but never accumulated the estates to justify the grant of a peerage, though David Green describes him as on 'the lower rungs of the aristocracy'.⁵⁷

Chandos's name often appears alongside that of Sir James Audley, though the latter was a banneret when the Order of the Garter was founded; and it is worth asking at this point if they were more than just companions. They have sometimes been called brothers-in-arms, though there is no written evidence of a formal partnership, providing for the division of the profits of war.⁵⁸ Any idea that there was anything more to their relationship, based on the fact that Chandos never married, and his name was only linked once with a woman's (though Audley had a wife) must remain in the realm of speculation.⁵⁹

The Garter was an Order of chivalry and Chandos's garter plate can still be seen in St George's Chapel, where his arms are also displayed. Underneath is a

⁵⁶ Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, 85.

⁵⁷ Green, *The Hundred Years War, A People's History*, 252.

⁵⁸ See Maurice Keen, *Brotherhood in Arms*, *History* vol 47 (1962).

⁵⁹ Although he never married and is not known to have fathered any children, Wikipedia's English article states categorically that Chandos was the founder of the Canto family in Portugal, citing the article at www.familiacantomedievalnfpmjcfg-en.blogspot.com. However, the only evidence produced is circumstantial, rather than documentary; and it is stated that Chandos visited the Iberian peninsula. He did visit Castile, in 1367, but not Portugal. Personally, I wonder if the 'Mr João do Canto' about whom the writer speculates may have been John of Gaunt, rather than John Chandos or John of Kent (an alternative explanation which the writer considers and rejects). Gaunt was a well-known womaniser, and was heavily involved with the Portuguese when he invaded Castile in 1386 (long after Chandos had died).

garter belt, with the inscription 'Sir John Chandos first founder' (in French). Above is a helm with a tattered mantle, surmounted by a crest in the form of a wild man's, or possibly a Saracen's, head.⁶⁰

The Order had an annual Feast on St George's Day, where there was a tournament; but there was also a strong religious element to the proceedings. The Knights were closely associated with the College of St George, which was established at the same time for charitable and spiritual purposes; and there is no question about Chandos's devotion to the Church of Rome. In 1349 Pope Clement VI addressed two letters to groups of Englishmen (and women). The first granted a 'plenary indulgence' – a kind of general pardon for sin; the second gave permission to choose confessors, 'who shall give them, being penitent, plenary remission at the hour of death, with the usual safeguards'. Among the names in the second group of those who benefited was that of

John Chandos, knight, of the diocese of Lichfield.⁶¹

By 1350 Chandos had been a member of the Black Prince's entourage for over ten years and he had seen the boy grow into a man. In the decade which followed, he was a prominent member of the Prince's household, and he wore his livery. That household was now fully independent from the Prince's father's, and had several departments, dealing with various aspects of government: Wardrobe, Great Wardrobe, Chamber and Exchequer. The main item of expenditure was always war, though in the early 1350s there was a truce in place and a lull in the fighting; but the Black Prince's Register also records a large number of gifts made to Sir John. He was clearly a favourite, if not the only one. In 1351 Chandos was given a cartload of hay and four quarter of oats, for feeding his horses during a stay in Calais. The following year he was given two tuns of wine. At Christmas 1353 he was given a further tun, and at New Year an item of jewellery: a 'small round *ouche* of gold with three small pearls... bearing a lion reversed on a staff.' In 1354, while at Berkhamstead Castle (one of the Prince's favourite residences), he was given six bowls. Several more gifts of silver bowls and saucers are recorded. In 1357 he was given a cloth of gold 'nakes' (mother of pearl).

There were several gifts of money (including £66 13s 4d in 1353 'when the Duke of Lancaster [Henry of Derby] set out for Paris'); and in 1352 Chandos was given no less than five horses: a 'courser' named *Bayard Pilgrim*; a sumpter-horse called *Grisell Dow*; a horse called *Lyard Saul*; a 'feraunt' horse; and a fifth which was neither named nor described. The 'courser' was more versatile than a 'destrier', or warhorse. It was bred for speed, rather than strength. The fact that Chandos was given *Bayard Pilgrim* may reflect his ability as a scout, which was clearly

⁶⁰ ODNB, *Founding Knights of the Order of the Garter*; Begent & Chesshyre, 91; Collins, 289; Juliet Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry* (The Boydell Press 1982); Murimuth, 156.

⁶¹ Cal.Pap.Reg., vol I, 167; vol III, 326-7.

demonstrated two years later in France. In 1358, after the Prince's expedition to Gascony, Chandos and another knight received £7 6s 8d, 'the value of two trotting-horses at Plymouth.'

There were gifts of armour and clothing, sometimes for use at tournaments, sometimes for use in war. In 1352 (clearly a good year) Chandos was given 30 buckles, 60 girdle-tips (*mordantz*) and 60 bars 'for his robes of the Prince's livery', at the same time as the Prince was buying garters 'for the knights of the companionship of the Garter'. We learn of a tournament, held in January 1355, when the Prince ordered that £6 13s 4d be paid to a London armourer, 'for two pairs of plates covered with black velvet which the Prince caused to be taken from him on 31 December 1353 for the jousts of Eltham and [given] to his bachelors Sir James Audley and Sir John Chaundos'. In 1358, Chandos was given three bascinets with a *ventaille* of steel, a sword and a pair of plates, while his younger brother Edward was given a habergeon and a kettle-hat. The range of items given on this occasion suggests that this was in connection with a projected invasion of France, which was eventually undertaken in 1359; and indeed the entire list of payments is headed 'out of the moneys of the tenth and the fifteenth assigned by the King to the Prince', in other words, from the taxes voted by Parliament for the War.

The reference to Chandos's brother indicates the importance of the royal households in terms of patronage. Edward Chandos was in the Prince's household at Christmas 1355 when he was given 40s: the money was shared with Roger Audeley, and was 'a gift from the Prince to buy robes for themselves against Christmas'. Roger Audley may well have been a brother of Chandos's *doppelganger* James Audley. Edward and Roger were described as 'the Prince's squires', indicating that Edward Chandos was a good deal younger than Sir John, who had been knighted in 1339. We know very little else about this young man.⁶²

⁶² BPR IV, 9, 53, 67, 69, 72-3, 108, 112, 124, 139, 157, 245-7, 253, 295. Green, 45, notes that the black armour purchased for the Eltham tournament was not purchased for the so-called 'Black Prince', who purchased plates covered with red velvet for the occasion.

Chapter 2

Tactician, 1350-60

The pandemic we call the Black Death hit the South of England in 1348 and the North in 1349, wiping out around a third of the population. The disease was a combination of bubonic and pneumonic plague and it became endemic, recurring as early as 1361, when it killed a large number of children; but there was no question of the English and French monarchs putting aside their differences in face of the general disaster. The plague was looked upon as a visitation from God, for which there was no earthly remedy. It was not a reason to make peace.

There was a lull in the fighting but otherwise it seems to have been business and warfare as usual. There is very little evidence that the plague interfered with the recruitment of soldiers in England, perhaps because the epidemic carried off a disproportionate number of the old and the very young. Nor was 'King Death' the 'great leveller' he is usually thought to have been. On the contrary 'He' seems to have been a great respecter of persons, because important people, like the courtiers in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, could afford to take evasive action, by fleeing the towns. In England, none of the founding members of the Garter died of plague during the first great outbreak, though Henry of Grosmont died of it in 1361.

The Black Prince tried to mitigate the after-effects of the plague while he was staying in Macclesfield in the summer of 1353. Survivors had difficulty in paying and collecting rents and land values had fallen; but the Prince remitted arrears of rent and made sundry grants of money, to alleviate their plight. Chandos must have been involved in this relief work, since he Steward of the Forest of Macclesfield, as well as being one of the Prince's closest companions.⁶³

'The Spaniards on the Sea'

The sea-battle known as *Les Espagnols sur Mer* ('the Spaniards on the Sea') took place off Winchelsea on 29 August 1350 and has traditionally been regarded as another great English victory, almost equalling Sluys ten years before. A fleet of around 50 ships, commanded by the King and the Prince, defeated a Castilian fleet of around

⁶³ *Scalacronica*, 196-7; Booth, 89-93; Davies, ed., 24-7.

40. Between 14 and 26 of the Spanish vessels were captured or sunk but only two English ships were lost. One of the plaques on the statue commemorating the Prince in Leeds City Square shows him on board a ship, confronting the foe, while arrows fired by his stalwart English archers fill the air. The statue was erected in 1903, when Britannia still ruled the waves; but the picture of the battle it presents is not altogether unrealistic. We get a different impression, however, when we read the leading authority on the naval history of Britain, N.A.M.Rodger, who points out that there was no Royal Navy in the 14th century, that the monarchy had little understanding of the importance of sea power, and that honours were even at Winchelsea.

The traditional view derives from the *Chronicles of Froissart*. He had no doubt that the English had won; and he even spiced up his story with a jolly tale relating to Chandos:

The King posted himself in the fore part of his own ship: he was dressed in a black velvet jacket, and wore on his head a small hat of beaver, which became him much. He was that day, as I was told by those who were present, as joyous as he ever was in his life, and ordered his minstrels to play before him a *German dance* which Sir John Chandos had lately introduced. For his amusement, he made the same knight sing with his minstrels, which delighted him greatly.

This story has been seen by some as an indicator of a close personal relationship between King Edward and Sir John, both of whom are said to have had a common interest in music;⁶⁴ but it is possible to read it another way. If the emphasis is on the fact that Edward 'made' Chandos sing, this may indicate how subservient Chandos's status as a bachelor knight was.⁶⁵ The King may have been more like Joseph Stalin and less like Old King Cole than lovers of English history like to think; and it is known that Stalin habitually forced his generals to perform for him, when they were drunk, whether they wanted to or not.

Where did this German dance come from? In his biography of the Black Prince (1976), Hubert Cole suggested that Chandos learned it whilst on crusade in Prussia, but there is no evidence that he ever went there. He is not named in the list of Englishmen who accepted invitations from the Teutonic knights, which do survive in some quantity. On the other hand, this may not be conclusive, because there were no less than three occasions in the late 1340s when it was simply recorded there that 'forty', or 'a number', or 'many' Englishmen had joined the Crusade. It is also possible, as Robert Ducluzeau suggests, that Chandos learned the dance when he was sent on a diplomatic mission to the Holy Roman Emperor, though again there

⁶⁴ See for example Noel Brindley, *A Medieval Mystery*, www.hautdesert.webnode.com/news/john-chandos.

⁶⁵ Compare Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, 85.

is no hard evidence of this.⁶⁶ Terry Jones considers that, although the *dance* was German, the *song* is likely to have been performed in French, because Chandos's Herald's *Life of the Black Prince* was written in French; but this does not follow. Chandos Herald's poem was composed in the mid-1380s, over thirty years after the Battle of Winchelsea and, in any event, French was the language of chivalric literature in England, not the language of popular song. A ditty, or sea shanty, especially if sung to a German tune and with the accompaniment of minstrels, may well have been sung in English. At any rate, the jovial, or drunken, atmosphere on board the ships moored off Winchelsea did not last long.⁶⁷

An engagement at sea in the late Middle Ages resembled a very large tournament, and the tactics employed were much the same, the fighting being done by soldiers rather than sailors.

When the King of England saw from his ship their order of battle, he ordered the person who managed his vessel, saying

'Lay me alongside the Spaniard who is bearing down on us; for I will have a tilt with him'.

The master dared not disobey the King's order, but laid his ship ready for the Spaniard, who was coming full sail. The King's ship was large and stiff; otherwise she would have been sunk, for that of the enemy was a great one, and the shock of their meeting was more like the crash of a torrent or tempest; the rebound caused the castle in the King's ship to encounter that of the Spaniard: so that the mast of the latter was broken, and all in the castle fell with it into the sea, when they were drowned. The English vessel, however, suffered, and let in water, which the knights cleared, and stopped the leak, without telling the King any thing of the matter. Upon examining the vessel he had engaged lying before him, he said;

'Grapple my ship with that; for I will have possession of her'.

His knights replied 'Let her go her way: you shall have better than her'.

That vessel sailed on, and another large ship bore down, and grappled with chains and hooks to that of the king. The fight now began in earnest, and the

⁶⁶ Cole, *The Black Prince*, 77; Werner Paravicini, *Die Prussenreisen des Europäischen Adels* (Jan Thorbecke Verlag Sigmaringen, Paris 1989), Table 9. A man called Audley is recorded as having gone on the Winter *Reise* of 1357-8. There is no mention of Chandos making the journey to Prussia in Anstis or Collins's works on the Garter; but, one would not expect to find anything there, since Chandos was a founding knight and was not elected, so there was no citation. Ducluzeau, 46, suggests a mission to Louis of Bavaria, but the chronology does not fit.

⁶⁷ Jones, *Medieval Lives*, 56 (n1). Cushway thinks they were drunk and Chandos's dance 'outrageous': Cushway, 138.

archers and cross-bows on each side were eager to shoot and defend themselves.

Chandos's part in the fight is not related but it is fair to assume that he stayed close to the Prince (and if so would have been on board *La Bylbauwe*)⁶⁸:

The young Prince of Wales and his division were engaged apart: his ship was grappled by a great Spaniard, when he and his knights suffered much; for she had so many holes, that the water came in very abundantly, and they could not by any means stop the leaks, which gave the crew fears of her sinking, they therefore did all they could to conquer the enemy's ship, but in vain; for she was very large, and excellently well defended. During this danger of the Prince, the Duke of Lancaster came near, and, as he approached, saw he had the worst of the engagement, and that his crew had too much on their hands, for they were baling out water: he therefore fell on the other side of the Spanish vessel, with which he grappled, shouting,

'Derby to the rescue!'

The engagement was now very warm, but did not last long, for the ship was taken, and all the crew thrown overboard, not one being saved. The Prince, with his men, instantly embarked on board the Spaniard; and scarcely had they done so when his own vessel sunk, which convinced them of the imminent danger they had been in.

King Edward boasted of victory and a new coinage, struck in 1351, reflected his claim to be 'King of the sea'. He was shown standing in his ship, proudly displaying his arms and his crown and ruling the waves like Britannia.

Chandos was now given a belated reward for his services. In 1352 one Richard Damory (who had fought on the Crécy campaign) was locked up in the Fleet prison for debts of £2,000 which he owed to the King. He claimed that he had evidence that he had paid these off, but he could not produce the proof immediately. As a result, Edward III ordered him to forfeit his lands; and Chandos was the beneficiary. Damory enfeoffed Sir John with his estates in the County of Oxford.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Cushway 139,226.

⁶⁹ By 1360 Damory's situation had improved and his recognisance for £2,000 was cancelled. Chandos gave the land in Oxfordshire back, but did not part with all his interest in the property: he conveyed a life interest only and retained the reversion. However, the retained interest was itself only a life interest. Similarly, and also in 1360, Damory was permitted to enfeoff Chandos with the manor of Headington and two nearby hundreds, but Chandos was to regrant the same to Damory, leaving Sir John with a reversionary interest: CPR, 1358-61,102, 163; and 372 for Headington.

The Black Prince's Raid

English knights and men at arms became famous for fighting on foot, supported by wedges of archers; but the French also lived in fear of the *chevauchées*, the long-distance cavalry raids, the most spectacular and successful of which was undertaken by the Black Prince in 1355. The idea was that the riders fanned out, burning, looting and carrying off anything that was moveable. They would only attack a town or a castle if it could be taken without a prolonged siege: otherwise, they moved on. If they could bring the enemy to battle, well and good; but the principal aim was to lay waste to enemy territory and de-moralise French civilians. Bordeaux was a convenient base from which to launch such a raid across the South of France. There had been many provocations there by the French (particularly the Counts of Armagnac); but, in addition, the English had been invited to intervene.

Chandos Herald relates how the Prince came to be in Bordeaux in 1355;

And at that time there came from Gascony the doughty and valiant Captal [Jean de Grailly, 'Captal' de Buch], who was right brave and courageous and greatly beloved of everybody. He was welcomed right nobly. The Prince, who rejoiced greatly at his coming, took fresh courage. One day he said to the King his father and to the Queen his mother:

'Sire', quoth he 'For God's sake, you know well that thus it is, that in Gascony the noble and valiant knights cherish you so greatly that they suffer great pain for your war and to gain you honour, and yet they have no leader of your blood. Therefore if you were so advised as to send one of your sons they would be the bolder'.

And every one said that he spoke truly. Then the King let summon his great Parliament. All were of accord likewise to send the Prince into Gascony, because he was of such renown, and ordained forthwith that with him should go the noble Earl of Warwick, of high esteem, and the Earl of Salisbury, of great valiance, the gallant Earl of Suffolk (Ufford was his name), and the Earl of Oxford, the good Earl of Stafford, Sir Bartholomew de Burghersh, bold in deed, Sir John of Montagu, proud and impetuous Lord Despenser, and Basset of high renown. There were also Chandos and Audeley: these two were of great renown and were appointed chief advisers.

They sailed over the sea [from Plymouth] until they arrived at Bordeaux, whereat the noble barons of the country made high revel. There you might see great and small come straight to the Prince, who courteously welcomed them... Thither came all the barons of Gascony, and right well did the Prince know how to entertain them. At Bordeaux he sojourned a short space until he

had made his preparations and well rested his horses. Right speedily after, he was ready and took the field with more than 6,000 fighting-men.

The raid was therefore a joint venture, between English and Gascons. The Prince left Bordeaux on 4 October 1355 and led his men all the way across the Languedoc, from the Atlantic almost to the Mediterranean. He swept past Toulouse and Carcassonne before turning back at Narbonne. Returning by a different route, he was back in La Réole by 2 December. This was a startling achievement in more ways than one. We can imagine the awe which must have struck Englishmen like Chandos when they saw the mighty walls of Carcassonne; but equally, Geoffrey le Baker emphasizes the dangers involved in crossing the great rivers of Languedoc. When the Anglo-Gascon army crossed the Garonne in single file, on the return 'leg' of the journey, local people were astonished. They had never seen this done before, at least not by a large body of men; and they ascribed English success in crossing the river to the hand of God. Le Baker also relates a curious episode when:

After a long day, the army camped in the open fields, where, for lack of water, they gave the horses wine to drink; [and] the following day they were drunk, and could not keep a steady footing, with the result that many horses were lost...⁷⁰

When the army reached the River Save on the way back from Narbonne, a French force gathered to attack:

That day Bartholomew Burghersh, John Chandos and James Audley, at the head of 80 lances, set out on a scouting mission and, reaching the tail of the French army, they captured 32 knights and squires, among them the lord of Romery; they also killed many carters and destroyed the enemy's provisions.

There is a somewhat different version of the same episode in a letter which was written by the Prince to the Bishop of Winchester on Christmas Day 1355.

At this we marched towards them, sending on Bartholomew Burghersh, John Chandos, James Audley, Baldwin Botetourt and Thomas Felton and others, about thirty in all, to get definite information about the enemy. They rode on towards the enemy until they came to a town where they found 200 of the latter's men at arms, with whom they fought and captured 35 of them. This made the enemy retreat in great fear to their camp.

⁷⁰ Barber (1979), 67, 69.

Chandos has been described, at this point, as ‘nipping at the heels’ of the retreating French. He seems to have possessed all the essential skills needed for scouting: horsemanship, courage and powers of observation.⁷¹

The *chevauchée* of 1355 was a bold manoeuvre and the English certainly regarded it as a great success. It showed that the French king could not defend his subjects (let alone invade England). The French had stayed in the background as the English passed by, not daring to come out and fight. In addition, there were solid material gains. Sir John Wingfield, who had an eye for economics, wrote to the Bishop of Winchester, detailing the damage the army had inflicted on the enemy:

Carcassonne and Limoux, which is as large as Carcassonne, and two other towns near there, produce for the king of France each year the wages of 1,000 men at arms and 100,000 old crowns towards the cost of the war. According to the records which we found, the towns around Toulouse, Carcassonne and Narbonne which we destroyed, together with Narbonne itself, produced each year, over and above this, 400,000 old crowns as war subsidies; and the citizens of the larger towns and other inhabitants, who should know about such matters, have told us this.⁷²

Chandos Herald tells us about the minor operations which followed the return to Bordeaux, though it was winter time, and some of the English opted for a quiet life in winter quarters.

Thereafter the Prince turned back towards Bordeaux and abode there until the whole winter was passed. He and his noble knights were there in great joy and solace. There was gaiety, noblesse, courtesy, goodness, and largesse; and he quartered his men, as I think, in his castles round about, and there they took up their abode. Warwick was at La Réole, Salisbury at Sainte-Foy, and Suffolk, as I think, at Saint-Émilion; at Libourne and all round his men were disposed.

When all were thus lodged, the good Chandos and Audeley, with the noble Captal, went to camp in the open. There they remained a long time. Many a fair encounter they had, and many a time they fought to conquer them a lodging. Up to Cahors and towards Agen they undertook their expedition and took Port-Sainte-Marie. Thereafter they returned all up the river and went to take Périgueux, a city of great fame. There they camped a great part of the winter. Right noble was their sojourn, for many an assault and many an attack they made against the castle, for there was naught but a little meadow between the castle and the town.

⁷¹ Le Baker, 136 and 298(n); Barber (1979), 54, 68; Rogers, 320, citing Le Baker and Avesbury; Barber POW, 126; Moisant, 42.

⁷² Barber (1979), 49, 52; Denifle, 93.

Sir John Wingfield wrote to Sir Richard Stafford, who had been sent home to bring reinforcements, telling him that his own retainers were safe and that he need not be concerned. He also told him that Chandos and Audley had led their men on a daring raid into inland areas where the English had not exercised effective control for decades.

My dear lord and most trustworthy friend... this is to tell you that five fortified towns have surrendered... and seventeen castles... Sir John Chandos, Sir James Audley and your men who are with them, and the other Gascons in their company, Sir Baldwin Botetourt and his company, and Sir Reginald Cobham took the town of Castelsagrat by assault, and the bastard de Lisle, who was captain of the town was killed as they attacked, by an arrow which went through his head.

Sir Reginald has turned back towards Lanedac and Sir Baldwin towards Brassac with their troops; and Sir John [Chandos] and Sir James [Audley] with their men have stayed at Castelsagrat, and have enough of all kinds of supplies to last until midsummer, except only for fresh fish and greens, according to their letters. So you need not worry about your own men. There are more than 300 armed men in the town, 300 foot soldiers and 150 archers. And they have raided towards Agen, burning and destroying all their mills, and have burned and broken all the bridges across the Garonne...

Chandos had penetrated both the Agenais and Quercy, regions which were relatively remote from Bordeaux and the great castles surrounding it. To reach Castelsagrat, it would appear he had taken a circuitous route, out of Libourne, across the Dordogne, East into Quercy, across the Lot, and back again to the Garonne. He had bypassed Agen itself and moved instead to Castelsagrat and Brassac before establishing a base from which to mount further operations.⁷³ His march was itself a (minor) *chevauchée* - a classic example of the use of the strategic weapon which had proved so effective the year before, when wielded by his master.

The Battle of Poitiers

Winter was a time for planning and the Black Prince spent December 1355 in Bordeaux, where his household acted as his military headquarters. Minor expeditions were launched along the valleys of the Garonne and Dordogne; but in January 1356 the Prince moved across the Gironde to Libourne, where he learned of his father's plan for the year to come. The King decreed that the English would

⁷³ Barber (1979), 49-56; Rogers, 328, citing Chandos Herald.

invade Northern France for the first time since 1346, but this time from Calais; and also send reinforcements to Brittany and Gascony. The Prince must have been pleased to hear this, though it was June before his allocation of English troops arrived in Bordeaux. Within a few weeks he had assembled an army at Bergerac and set out on another great *chevauchée*, this time in a northerly direction. He had met with virtually no opposition in 1355. Events were to turn out very differently this time.

Did the Prince intend to provoke a battle with the French in 1356, or merely to repeat his coup of the previous year, in a different part of their kingdom? There are historians who argue that, like his father, he was so confident that he deliberately sought a pitched battle; but there can be no real certainty about this, because no minutes were ever taken of the meetings where his plans were laid. What we do know is that, as the Prince rode north from Bergerac, Jean II rode south from Chartres to meet him.

What part did Chandos play when the Prince's army was on the move? Lt-Colonel Burne, who served as a soldier in the First World War, first thought that Sir John was 'chief of staff'; but he eventually concluded that this could not be right, because Chandos roamed as far as twenty-five miles from the main column; and the chronicler Geoffrey le Baker tells us that Chandos and Audley were 'scouts in the enemy countryside'. They seem to have performed this role efficiently, since the Prince was never taken by surprise. On the other hand, they were not successful in everything they did. When the army reached the Cher, the two knights peeled off, heading at speed for the Loire, in hope of seizing a river crossing near Aubigny; but they were unable to do so. They defeated a force of 80 or so Frenchmen who attacked them and they captured eighteen, but were unable to find a convenient bridge or ford.

At the end of August the Prince reached his furthest point North, and he besieged and captured the town of Romorantin; but the citadel remained in enemy hands. According to Froissart, the Prince sent for Chandos at this point and told him:

'John, go up to the barriers and speak to the knights inside there. Ask them if they would be ready to surrender quietly, without undergoing an assault.'

Leaving the Prince, Sir John rode up to the barriers and made signs that he had something to discuss. The guards inquired his name and who had sent him. He told them who he was and said that he had come from the Prince. Lord Boucicault and the Hermit of Chaumont came down to the barriers, where Sir John saluted them and said

'Sirs, I have been sent to you by the Prince, who is willing to make you what I think is a very generous offer. He says that, if you will become his prisoners

and surrender this fortress which is not defensible, he will spare your lives and give you the most honourable treatment.'

'Sir John', replied Lord Boucicaut, 'very many thanks to the Prince for his generous offer, but we do not feel disposed to accept it. God forbid that he should capture us so easily.'

'What, Lord Boucicaut' said Sir John, 'do you think yourselves such splendid knights that you can hold this fortress against the Prince and his army, with no prospect of relief from any quarter?'

'Chandos, Chandos', replied Boucicaut, 'I don't consider myself a splendid knight but we should be mad to accept the kind of terms you are offering, and madder still to give ourselves up when there is as yet no need for it. Please tell my lord the Prince to do whatever he thinks best, and we will await him here in all confidence.'

One can understand Boucicaut's reluctance to enter into negotiations, in view of the ghastly punishments sometimes meted out by their own side, to commanders who were thought to have surrendered prematurely; but Chandos was proved right:

On the next morning, the men at arms prepared themselves, and the archers advanced under their respective banners, and made a sharp attack upon the castle. The archers, who had posted themselves on the ditches, shot so justly, that scarcely any one dared to show himself on the battlements. Some got upon hurdles and doors, with pickaxes and mattocks in their hands, and swam over the ditch, when they began to undermine the walls. Those within flung down upon them large stones and pots of hot lime. On this occasion, there was slain, on the part of the English, a squire called Remond de Gederlach, who belonged to the division of the Captal de Buch...

Some of the wisest thought that they might use lances and arrows forever in vain; and they ordered cannons to be brought forward, used *aqueraux* and projected Greek fire into the lower court of the castle, so that it was all in a blaze. The fire increased so much, that it gained a large tower which was covered with thatch. When those within the castle found that they must either surrender themselves or perish by fire, the Lord of Craon, the Lord of Boucicault and the hermit of Chaumont came down from the castle, and surrendered themselves to the Prince, who made them ride and attend him, as his prisoners: many other knights and squires who were in the castle were set at liberty, and the castle was destroyed.

Soon after this the rival armies encountered each other near Poitiers. There was some preliminary skirmishing and then, on Sunday 18 September, the Prince

ordered his men to prepare for battle. Chandos stayed by the Prince's side. Then the French Cardinal Talleyrand de Périgord tried to engineer a further round of talks. The Prince was represented by the Earls of Warwick and Suffolk, and three knights: Burghersh, Chandos and Audley; and the negotiations lasted a day, but failed, each side claiming later that they had been tricked. The English thought that the French had used the time lost to bring in reinforcements, the French, that the English had used it to improve their defences.

14th century chroniclers usually wrote more about war than they wrote about love; but Froissart now tells us a romantic tale. Chandos was riding out in the field on the day before the Battle of Poitiers, when he came across a French knight who was wearing the same armorial badge as he was.

These knights, who were young and in love – for that must certainly have been the explanation – were both wearing on their left arms the same emblem of a lady in blue, embroidered in a sunbeam. They always wore this on their outer garment, whether they were in armour or not. Sir Jean de Clermont was by no means pleased to see his emblem on Sir John Chandos and he pulled up dead in front of him and said:

'I have been wanting to meet you, Chandos. Since when have you taken to wearing my emblem?'

'And you mine?' said Sir John.

'I deny that', said Sir Jean de Clermont, 'and if there were not a truce between us, I would show you here and now that you have no right to wear it.'⁷⁴

Who was this 'lady in blue'? Froissart does not tell us, nor what became of her; but it has often been suggested that she was a woman whom Chandos was in love. In his *History of Histories* in 2007 the late John Burrow used this incident as an example of 'a recurrent theme in chivalric literature', that a knight who was in love had an advantage in combat.⁷⁵ However, Froissart's story is not so simple. Hundreds of manuscripts of his chronicles have survived and they are not all the same; and something may sometimes be lost in translation, since Froissart wrote in French. For example, in the 16th century Lord Berners, who produced the first English translation, wrote of a 'blue Madonna worked in embroidery, surrounded by sunbeams' rather than of a 'lady in blue'; and in the early 19th Thomas Johnes of Hafod in Cardiganshire translated the key passage as follows:

⁷⁴ Luce, V, 27-9, 257.

⁷⁵ Burrow, (Penguin 2007), 269.

It chanced, on that day, that Sir John Chandos had rode out near one of the wings of the French army, and Lord John de Clermont, one of the [French] King's marshals, had done the same, to view the English. As each knight was returning to his quarters, they met. They both had the same device upon the surcoats which they wore over their other clothes; it was a Virgin Mary, embroidered on a field azure, or, encompassed with the rays of the sun argent.

So was this mysterious lady Chandos's mistress, or was she the Mother of God? It is difficult to be sure. It is certainly possible that two knights, English and French, might have courted the same lady: Chandos spent much of his time in France, and he had spent the winter of 1355-56 in winter quarters near Bordeaux. Moreover, to quote Jonathan Sumption, 'chivalry was a small world, in which the same men encountered each other time and again';⁷⁶ but knights often quarrelled over the law of arms. In the 1380s, the case of Scrope v Grosvenor, which was a dispute about the right to bear the arms *azure a bend or* kept the English Court of Chivalry busy for several years. These two young knights may have been wearing similar religious symbols, rather than sporting emblems of allegiance to their lady love.

What was there to argue about? The Madonna does not feature in the coat of arms of either Chandos or Jean de Clermont; but Froissart is not describing a coat of arms as such, but an armorial device, 'worn on the outer garment'. Badges like this were commonly worn by pilgrims and knights; and, for what it is worth, Chandos is shown wearing another, with the arms of St George, in William Bruges's Garter Book of 1430. Further, when we examine the French versions of Froissart's chronicle printed by Siméon Luce in the late 19th century, we find that these all refer to *une bleue dame*; and the Virgin Mary was often depicted as wearing blue, against the background of the sun's rays. The Book of Revelations was thought by some to refer to her, when it described:

A great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

Looking at Froissart's story again, therefore, we might well conclude with Thomas Johnes that the two knights quarrelled over an ideal woman rather than an individual, and that the lady at the heart of the dispute was indeed the Blessed Virgin, rather than someone they were romantically involved with. Yet, if this is certainly a possibility, it is also possible that Froissart had misunderstood his informant.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Sumption, II, 309.

⁷⁷ The story became even more complicated when Benjamin West (1738-1820), in his painting *King John After the Battle of Poitiers*, showed Chandos standing next to the Black Prince and holding a shield

Whoever the ‘blue lady’ was, this is the only occasion, during a long career, when Chandos’s name is linked with that of a woman. As we know, he remained unmarried, something which was unusual in a man of property with feudal estates, though not so uncommon for someone who spent most of his life as a household knight.⁷⁸ For his part, de Clermont was a Marshal of France. Men like this were inclined to stand on their dignity; but the duel between them never took place. They were due to meet next day on the battlefield but de Clermont was killed in action at Poitiers, along with many of his compatriots, while Chandos survived.

Froissart’s attention now turns to the composition of the Prince of Wales’s army at Poitiers:

I wish to name some of the most renowned knights, who were with the Prince of Wales. There were Thomas Beauchamp Earl of Warwick, John de Vere Earl of Oxford,⁷⁹ William Montacute Earl of Salisbury, Robert Ufford Earl of Suffolk, Ralph Lord Stafford, the Earl of Stafford, the Lord Richard Stafford, brother to the Earl, Sir John Chandos,⁸⁰ the Lord Reginald Cobham, the Lord Edward Spencer, the Lord James Audley and his brother the Lord Peter, the Lord Thomas Berkeley (son of the Lord Maurice Berkeley, who died at Calais nine years before)... and other English.

From Gascony, there were the Lord of Pumiers, the Lord d’Albret, the Capital de Buch... the Lord Souldich de la Trane,⁸¹ and many more whom I cannot remember. Of Hainaulters, there were Sir Eustace d’Ambreticourt, the Lord John de Guystelle, and two other foreigners, the Lord Daniel Phaselle and Lord Denis de Morbeque. The whole army of the Prince, including every one, did not amount to 8,000, when the French, counting all sorts of persons, were upwards of 60,000 combatants; among whom were more than 3,000 knights.

We note once more that that was an Anglo-Gascon force, rather than purely English; but that the English contingent did include prominent members of the aristocracy and of the Order of the Garter, including founder knights.⁸²

with a Madonna *and Child* depicted, apparently, on the inside, and surrounded by the rays of the sun! There was no warranty for this in Froissart; but Brindley points out that the hero in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* had an image of the Virgin painted on the inner side of his shield, so as to derive encouragement when he looked at it: www.hautdesert.webnode.com/news/john-chandos.

⁷⁸ His name often appears alongside that of James Audley. Both were ‘bachelor’ knights in both senses of the word and founder members of the Garter: Barber, *Triumph*, 313.

⁷⁹ This was John de Vere, 3rd Earl of Oxford, whose third son, Aubrey (later 10th Earl), will appear below in an altercation with Chandos. Froissart relates there that Aubrey also fought at Poitiers in 1356.

⁸⁰ Chandos’s presence at Poitiers is confirmed by the CQPV, 45, 49, 52, 54. Luce, V, 31, 261.

⁸¹ Aka *Sandich*.

⁸² Collins, 289.

In accordance with literary custom, the chroniclers tell us that the Prince now spoke to the men, in similar vein to Henry V before Agincourt, if Shakespeare is to be believed:

'Now, my gallant fellows, what though we be a small body when compared to the army of our enemies; do not let us be cast down on that account, for victory does not always follow numbers, but where the Almighty God pleases to bestow it. If, through good fortune, the day shall be ours, we will gain the greatest honour and glory in this world: if the contrary should happen and we be slain, I have a father and beloved brethren alive, and you all have some relations or good friends, who will be sure to revenge our deaths. I therefore entreat of you to exert yourselves, and combat manfully; for, if it please God and St. George, you shall see me this day act like a true knight.'

Chandos played his part in the fighting, but not a leading role, since he was required to stay close to the Prince and act as his adviser. His own herald devoted only two lines to his master's role in the battle:

There you might see Chandos fight,
Who this day gained great praise.

Likewise, it was James Audley, rather than Chandos, who was the star in Froissart's account of Poitiers:

By such words and arguments as these, the Prince harangued his men; as did the marshals, by his orders; so that they were all in high spirits. Sir John Chandos placed himself near the Prince, to guard and advise him; and never, during that day, would he, on any account, quit his post.

The lord James Audley remained also a considerable time near him; but, when he saw that they must certainly engage, he said to the Prince:

'Sir, I have ever served most loyally my lord your father, and yourself, and shall continue so to do, as long as I have life. Dear sir, I must now acquaint you, that formerly I made a vow, if ever I should be engaged in any battle where the king your father or any of his sons were, that I would be the foremost in the attack, and the best combatant on his side, or die in the attempt. I beg therefore most earnestly, as a reward for any services I may have done, that you would grant me permission honourably to quit you, that I may post myself in such wise to accomplish my vow.'

The Prince granted this request, and, holding out his hand to him, said

'Sir James, God grant that this day you may shine in valour above all other knights.'

It is now that we learn of the death of Chandos's rival in love or religious devotion, Marshal Clermont; and Froissart links this explicity with the quarrel the two men the previous day:

In another part, the Lord John Clermont fought under his banner as long as he was able; but being struck down, he could neither get up again nor procure his ransom: he was killed on the spot. Some say, this treatment was owing to his altercation on the preceding day with Sir John Chandos.

However, another explanation is also given for the French marshal's death, which is perhaps more convincing:

Rarely have skilled fighting-men suffered such losses in so short a time as were inflicted on the battalion of the Marshals, for they became jammed against each other and could make no headway.

The chronicler now shifts the focus of attention several times, to give a vivid impression of the fighting. Sometimes we are looking at the Prince, sometimes at Audley, sometimes at Chandos. He even puts direct speech into Chandos's mouth

Sir John Chandos said to the Prince;

'Sir, sir, now push forward, for the day is ours: God will this day put it in your hand. Let us make for our adversary the king of France; for where he is will lie the main stress of the business: I well know that his valour will not let him fly; and he will remain with us, if it please God and St. George: but he must be well fought with; and you have before said, that you would show yourself this day a good knight.'

The Prince replied;

'John, get forward; you shall not see me turn my back this day, but I will always be among the foremost.'

He then said to Sir Walter Woodland, his banner-bearer,

'Banner, advance, in the name of God and St. George.'

The knight obeyed the commands of the Prince...the Prince was much enraged, and... was desirous of striking off the head of the Castellan of

Amposta, who had been made prisoner, notwithstanding⁸³ he belonged to the Cardinal, but Sir John Chandos said,

'My lord, do not think of such things at this moment, when you must look to others of the greatest importance: perhaps the Cardinal may excuse himself so well, that you will be convinced he was not to blame.'

The English hit the jackpot at Poitiers when they captured a number of French noblemen and, most importantly, the French King Jean II himself; but Froissart tells us that Chandos took no part in the process:

The Prince of Wales, who was as courageous as a lion, took great delight that day to combat his enemies. Sir John Chandos, who was near his person, had never quitted it during the whole of the day, nor stopped to make prisoners.

Froissart portrays Chandos as a paragon of chivalry here. While others engage in an unseemly brawl over the French King, Sir John refrains from taking prisoners altogether; but it would be wrong to conclude that Chandos had no involvement, ever, in the mercenary side of medieval warfare. Records confirm that he and his fellows were paid a large sum early in 1356 for 215 head of cattle they had taken as booty;⁸⁴ and, later the same year he was given a life interest in the manors of Drakelow and Kirkton. Drakelow was in Cheshire and the gift of this manor was specifically 'for good service rendered in the parts of Gascony, and especially at the battle of Poitiers'. (In addition, Chandos was given £40 a year of rent from the Prince's tenants of Rudheth 'who are nearest to the said manor of Drakelow').⁸⁵ Kirkton was in Lincolnshire but was administered as part of the Prince's Duchy of Cornwall; and again the gift of this manor, in January 1359, was 'for gratuitous service done in Gascony and especially at the Battle of Poitiers (*Peyters*)'.⁸⁶ Later, Chandos was given an interest in the manor of Beckele in Oxfordshire, 'for good service in Gascony'; and, in April 1357, 600 gold crowns [*ecus d'or*] out of the issues of the toll [*peage*] of Marmande on the Garonne 'in consideration of his good service

⁸³ Johnes notes "this is incorrectly translated; the castellan's connection with the Cardinal was the very reason why the Prince desired his death." Thus Lord Berners properly has 'because' rather than 'notwithstanding': Johnes, vol. 1, 219(n).

⁸⁴ Hewitt, *Organisation of War*, 103.

⁸⁵ BPR III, 267, 482. The Prince varied this gift at least twice in subsequent years, ordering that a sum of £10 a year be deduced from it and then (in 1365) that this be restored in full, 'as the Prince wishes to do him a special favour.' There is now (2010) a place called 'Rudheath' in Northwich, Cheshire, which is some 2-3 miles from Drakelow farm. The accounts of the manor of Drakelow are considered in detail by Booth, 22-5.

⁸⁶ Tout, vol V, 291(n1); ODNB 2004; Barber, POW 153; CPR, 1358-61, 163; BPR IV, 193, 200, 210, 223, 238, 257, 279, 318

and the very great position he has held with the Prince, especially at the Battle of Poitiers, at which he was appointed to be in attendance on the Prince's person'.⁸⁷

There must even be a degree of doubt about Froissart's suggestion that Chandos did not profit from the ransoms of prisoners taken at Poitiers, since it was quite possible for a commander to make money in this way, even when he took no prisoners himself. A captain was entitled to a percentage of the profits made by their men; and we know that in May 1358 Chandos, Audley and Sir Robert Nevill were paid £565 12s 6d for one particular prisoner, though this valuable individual could have been captured either in 1355 or in 1356.

Whatever one thinks about the profits of medieval warfare, there is no doubt that Poitiers was a great victory for the English, or rather for the Anglo-Gascons. The capture of King Jean II enabled Edward III to dictate terms to the French for the next few years. The triumph is usually awarded to the Black Prince; but it is interesting that, in the opinion of Edouard Perroy, who *Guerre de Cent Ans* was first published in 1945, the real architects of victory were Chandos and the Captal de Buch.⁸⁸

The War in Brittany

Poitiers was devastating for the French, militarily and politically. Their King had been captured and taken to London, and many of his counsellors had been killed or taken prisoner. The Dauphin Charles was forced to take charge, but he was slow to impose his authority and France was now wracked by civil disorder. There was an urban revolution in Paris and a terrifying peasant rebellion, which came to be known as the *Jacquerie*, paralysed wide areas of the countryside. Yet Poitiers was not a knockout blow. Although King Jean was now their prisoner, the English were unable to dictate terms to their opponents. France was reeling but she was still in the fight.

A proxy war had broken out between rival contenders for the succession to the Duchy of Brittany, John of Montfort and Charles of Blois, in 1341. Edward III had backed de Montfort, while French had backed his opponent. English expeditionary forces had been sent to the Duchy as early as 1342; and between 1342 and 1345 Edward had enjoyed the right to collect ducal revenues and garrison any town port or castle he chose, in return for the military assistance he provided to the Montfortians. John de Montfort did homage to Edward and his son was brought up in England. The English occupied most of the Breton-speaking areas, but English garrisons were also established at strategic points in the French speaking areas - at Bécherel, Ploërmel, Fougerat and Chateau-Blanc. Brittany was therefore an exception to the rule that, during the first phase of the Hundred Years War, the

⁸⁷ BPR, IV, 193; 235; Lodge, 199; BPR IV, 358-9.

⁸⁸ Edouard Perroy, *The Hundred Years War* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1965).

English did not occupy aim to occupy France; but they had not succeeded in overrunning the entire Duchy. Charles of Blois's supporters held out in the French-speaking areas and enjoyed the support of the French kings, despite Charles's capture by Sir Thomas Dagworth in 1347.

After Poitiers, Henry of Derby, 1st Duke of Lancaster, was sent to Brittany with around 1,000 men at arms and 1,500 archers. Modern historians of the Hundred Years War, who tend to rely on archival material, rather than their chroniclers, tell us that Henry of Derby laid siege to Rennes; that the siege lasted from October 1356 to 5 July 1357; and that Bertrand du Guesclin – who was then no more than a mere Breton squire, engaged in guerrilla war behind the English lines – fought on the French side. By contrast, they say nothing of any visit made by John Chandos to Derby's camp. Nor do they say anything about the English siege army moving the 30 or so miles from Rennes to Dinan, or for that matter to Bécherel, which is midway between the two.⁸⁹ Yet the French poet Cuvelier, who wrote both a chronicle and an epic poem about du Guesclin, tells us that Chandos was present in 1357, when his hero visited Derby's camp (which he locates this in Dinan).⁹⁰

According to Cuvelier, du Guesclin is told that his younger brother Olivier has been captured by an English knight called Sir Thomas of Canterbury, in breach of the laws of war, since there was a truce in operation at the time. Incensed, the hero goes to the English camp to rescue Olivier – who is still a boy (*enfant*) – and finds Henry of Derby, the Earl of Pembroke, Robert Knowles *and* John Chandos. Derby welcomes Sir Bertrand to the camp in courteous fashion and Chandos offers him a drink of wine:

Sir Bertrand du Guesclin, we wish you a welcome here;
Drink of my wine before you leave.
Sir, said Bertrand, I will take no wine here
Until justice is done!⁹¹

Chandos replies that justice will of course be done, and without delay:

Then spoke John Chandos, a valiant knight,
Good Sir, in our host a knight as great as you
Will come to no harm if we have anything to say about it,
You will have your remedy, and quickly.

⁸⁹ Fowler, *King's Lieutenant*, Chapter XIII; Sumption, II, 250-1; 267-8; 272; 285-6; Vernier 170; Ducluzeau, 121; Fowler (1967), 166. Fillon (7) accepted Cuvelier's account that Chandos was at the siege of Dinan.

⁹⁰ Sumption, II, 271. Sumption and Jones both dismiss Cuvelier as a 'mediocre writer; but see Vernier 9, 53-5 and Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant*, 162. Cuvelier is at least mysterious. He wrote more than one work, and there was more than one individual of this name.

⁹¹ *Chronique*, lines 2245-9; *Chanson*, lines 2614-2618.

Derby calls for Thomas of Canterbury and seeks to persuade him to resolve the matter amicably; but Thomas refuses to accept that he has done wrong and suggests that the matter be put to the test. Du Guesclin accepts the challenge and defies Thomas of Canterbury, calling him a false knight and traitor; and he swears – in the name of the Holy Trinity – that he will eat ‘no more than four morcels of bread’ until he has killed his opponent or died in the attempt. Arrangements are made for a duel. At this point, Chandos intervenes again. He can see that Bertrand is, as it were, ‘playing away’ and may not be properly equipped. He offers to help him, by letting him mount his own magnificent *destrier*.

I will ensure that you are well armed,
And will give you my best warhorse,
Because I really want to see the two of you fight.

Du Guesclin now shows that he is the tough guerrilla-fighter of legend. He stabs his opponent’s horse, pounces on him as he lies on the ground and beats him about the head with his spiked gauntlets. Strangely perhaps, the English lords, including Chandos, are taken aback and beg him to stop. They separate the two combatants and have no hesitation in declaring du Guesclin the winner. The Duke orders Olivier du Guesclin to be freed and be paid 100 *livres* in compensation, while Bertrand is awarded Thomas of Canterbury’s horse and his arms. Thomas is described by Derby as a ‘felonious knight’ and leaves the English camp in disgrace. Later on, Cuvelier tells us that Chandos was at the siege of Bécherel, and

... John de Chandos, looking like a lord,
He was a good knight, well-versed in chivalry,
He had been sent there by the King of England,
Riding down there as His Lieutenant.

Can we believe the French poet’s account? There are some details which suggest that Cuvelier may have been wrong when he referred to a siege of Dinan, rather than Rennes but did not invent the entire episode. Moreover, Cuvelier is not the only source which mentions Chandos’s presence at a duel between du Guesclin and Thomas of Canterbury in Brittany: this is also related in the French Chronicle of Richard Lescot, who places Chandos (and Audley) at the siege of Rennes in 1357, but has the duel taking place at Dinan the following year.⁹²

There is no confirmation of Cuvelier’s story in Froissart. He relates that Henry of Derby laid siege to a fortress in Brittany at this time; but the fortress was Rennes, not Dinan; and, although he mentions a duel involving du Guesclin, the

⁹² Lescot, ed. Jean Lemoine (Paris 1896), 110-111. In his ODNB article on Chanods, Richard Barber gives details of yet another version of the story: ‘according to du Guesclin’s biographer the two men had encountered each other in Brittany in 1359–60, at the siege of Bécherel.’

Frenchman's opponent is Nicholas *D'Augourne* (Dagworth), not Thomas of Canterbury, while Chandos is not listed amongst the bystanders.⁹³ However, it remains possible that Chandos was in Brittany early in 1357. We know that he was with the Black Prince in Bordeaux the previous year and that the Prince did not return to England until April 1357. There would still have been time for Sir John to visit Derby's camp in the February and be back in Bordeaux by springtime.

Even if we suppose that Cuvelier's account of the siege of Rennes (or Dinan) is pure fiction, it still tells us something about Chandos. Cuvelier wrote some time after 1380, and by that date, he clearly thought it right to include Sir John whenever he wrote about the most dramatic moments in the life of du Guesclin. Both men had died, Chandos in 1369, du Guesclin in 1380; but both remained famous. Cuvelier may well have thought that it boosted his hero's prestige to place him alongside the English paladin, especially in relation to events in 1357, when du Guesclin was still a relatively obscure figure. Cuvelier's fiction, if that is what it was, tells us much about the reputation which Sir John Chandos already enjoyed on the international stage.

The Rheims Campaign

Henry of Derby had several ideas as to how best to capturing Rennes – he tried an assault; he undermined the town walls and battered them with stones, then he blockaded the place, all through the winter of 1356-7; but none of these tactics worked. Rennes held out and eventually the King ordered him to lift the siege. He was reluctant to do so and pleaded that he was 'not conducting the quarrel of his liege lord, but the quarrel of the Duke de Montfort'. He protested that it was dishonourable to give up, but in the end had to agree. With the consent of the defenders, he was allowed to plant his banner on the walls, hold the keys of the town for a few hours, and even to enter Rennes to take wine with du Guesclin, before he withdrew his forces.

Chandos now found the time for more peaceful pursuits. He held office in the South of England as well as the North and, on 28 April 1358, the Black Prince's Register records that:

Sir John Chandos has the keeping of Stowe Park, where with the rabbit-runs and warrens pertaining to the said lordship.⁹⁴

⁹³ Luce, V, 86, 304-7. Johnes comments in a footnote that 'the historian of Brittany' has du Guesclin duelling with a knight called William de Blancbourg, rather than Thomas of Canterbury; and that it cannot have been Canterbury because Dugdale makes no mention of the incident.

⁹⁴ BPR IV, 248.

Chandos's name is also linked at this time with the manor and forest of 'Beckele' (Beckley), near Wallingford in Oxfordshire. In 1357 Sir John complains that the tenants of the manor have been summoned to appear in the Prince's court of North Osney for trespass, when they have always been under the jurisdiction of Beckley. In 1359 he is ordered by the Prince to deliver 29 oaks, suitable for timber, to James Audley, for the repair of his manor of Stratton Audeley.⁹⁵

The Clarendon group of forests comprised Clarendon itself, Groveley, Melchet and Buckholt in Wiltshire and Hampshire; and the Patent Rolls tell us that Chandos was 'Keeper' here in 1361, when the King issued the following orders from Woodstock near Oxford:

Jan. 2 1361

Commission to Simon Luscote and Robert de Wychedford of Wylton to sell wood to the value of £20 in the park of Claryndon and to the value of £10 in the forest of Grovele, where this can be done with least damage of the underwood in the said park and forest, and receive the moneys arising from the sale; also to pay out of such moneys, if sufficient for this, by the supervision of Robert Russell, lieutenant of John Chaundos, Keeper of the park, wages to the king's three foresters in the park, and two foresters in Bocholt forest, two foresters in Grovele forest and one forester in Melchet forest, to wit to each of them 2d. a day and to two pallisers in the park, to wit to each of them 1^{1/2} d a day.

Chandos had great influence a court throughout the whole of England, even when serious crimes had been committed:

February 3 1359 [Westminster]

Pardon at the request of John Chandos to, John Syward, parson of the church of Hoo, indicted of having struck one William le Rede of Hoo on the head with a staff, whereof the latter died, of the King's suit for the death, and of any consequent outlawry.

February 16 1359

Pardon to John de Legh of the King's suit for the death of John Rude and of any consequent outlawry; as Ralph, Earl of Stafford and John Chaundos have testified that he killed him in self defence.

July 9 1359

Pardon to John de Staunton of the King's suit for the death of John de la Hethe, knight, and of any consequent outlawry; because Roger de Mortuo Mari [Mortimer], Earl of March and John Chaundos have testified that

⁹⁵ BPR IV, 209, 301 & 305.

Thomas de la Hethe, brother of the said knight, and the said John de Staunton are agreed touching a debate there was between them on account of the said death that the latter is not guilty thereof.

But perhaps the most intriguing entry is this one, for July 19 1360

Robert Grymbald, apprentice of John de Seinte Fredeswide of Oxford, in the company of Thomas de Holland, Earl of Kent, as John Chandos has testified, for all felonies and trespasses done by him in the last conflict between the masters and scholars of the university of Oxford, of the one part, and the laymen of Oxford and the surrounding country, of the other part.⁹⁶

(It would seem that the tensions between ‘town’ and ‘gown’ in Oxford are of very long standing).

The Bible tells us that a man cannot serve two masters; but in Chandos’s case, he seems to have served both the Black Prince and his father the King at the same time, and without any difficulty. Indeed it is sometimes impossible to know whether he was a member of the royal household, or of the Prince’s. He was certainly assigned to the Prince’s service when the latter was a boy; but by the late 1350s he appears to have been moving back in the direction of serving the King, though never to the exclusion of the Prince. In July 1359 he was given an annuity of £100 ‘for service done in the office of under-Chamberlain in which the King has newly put him as well as in other ways.’ However, the appointment proved temporary. By the end of 1359 Chandos was fully occupied with military duties once more; and by 1363 he had certainly ceased to be under-Chamberlain, his place being taken by Richard de la Vache.⁹⁷

The negotiations between the English and the French which followed the Battle of Poitiers were unsuccessful. The English demanded too much for the release of their royal prisoner Jean II, and the de facto French government was unwilling to make the necessary concessions. In 1359 Edward III resorted to force of arms once more and decided to strike at Paris. Chandos was fully involved in this, the last campaign led by the English king. He acted as a witness in November 1359 when Edward III handed over over the royal seals as he was about to embark for France.⁹⁸

Froissart describes the *chevauchée* which Edward launched from English Calais at the heart of the French kingdom:

⁹⁶ CPR 1358-61, 508, 163, 173, 237, 394.

⁹⁷ CPR 1358-61, 255, July 29 1359. It was also stated that the gift was ‘for life or until the king cause him to be provided for in an equivalent of land and rent.’ Gifts of money might be thought to less valuable than land, since the Crown was habitually late to pay, sometimes years late. Clearly land was thought to be the better bet: Tout, vol III, 225, 235; vol VI, 46.

⁹⁸ CCR ED III Nov 5 1359.

[The King] left the town of Calais on the next morning, and took the field with the largest army and best appointed train of baggage-waggons that had ever quitted England. It was said, there were upwards of 6,000 carts and waggons, which had all been brought with him. He then arranged his battalions: they were so richly and well dressed that it was a pleasure to look at them: he nominated his cousin the earl of March, whom he much loved, his constable.

The chronicler stressed the quality of the army of 1359, as well as its size

I wish now to name the great lords of England who crossed the sea with the king, and the Duke of Lancaster his cousin-german: — First then, there were his four sons already named; Henry Duke of Lancaster; John Earl of March, Constable of England; the Earls of Warwick and Suffolk, marshals of England; the Earls of Hereford, Northampton, Salisbury, Stamford, Oxford; the Bishops of Lincoln and Durham; the Delawarre; Sir John Chandos, Sir Richard Pembridge... Sir James Audley, Sir Bartholomew de Burghersh, the Lord Scales, Sir Stephen Cossington, Sir Hugh Hastings, Sir John Lisle, Sir Nesle Loring, and a great many others whom I cannot recollect.

Chandos now had his own company. Indeed it has been calculated that this ‘surpassed in size and quality that of most of the baronage, and even one or two Earls.’⁹⁹ On 20 August 1359 the King issued letters of protection for a clerk called Richard Foune ('member of the company of John Chandos') to go abroad and stay there until the following Easter. On 24 September, he issued similar letters in relation to fourteen other members of the company. These were all named individually, and they included the clerk Lambert Thrylicngham, a third clerk called Richard of Meaux, Thomas Constable of Frisemersk, Robert Morton of Blyth, John of Saltefleteby, William Rogerson of Kirkton, John the son of Nicholas of Scorby in Yorkshire, Roger of the Hall of Daventry. Chandos crossed the Channel somewhat later.¹⁰⁰

The army disembarked in October 1359, which was late in the year for a campaign, and the English encountered more resistance than they had expected. Edward III's first objective was Rheims, where the Kings of France were traditionally crowned, but the Dauphin was able to delay the enemy's progress. The three wings of the English army, led by the King, the Prince and the Duke of Lancaster, had to march 30 miles apart in order to find sufficient supplies. They mounted a blockade of Rheims but it proved ineffective, and they were forced to move on without being able to enter the town; but Chandos had not been idle. As Froissart relates:

Whilst this siege lasted, many knights left it, to seek what good fortune they might find. Among others, Sir John Chandos, Sir James Audley, the Lord of

⁹⁹ Hewitt, *Organisation of War*, 31, citing A.E.Prince, *The Indenture System under Edward III*.

¹⁰⁰ Rymer's *Foedera* 1825, III, I, 444, 452.

Mucident, Sir Richard de Pontchardon, with their companies, advanced so near to Châlons in Champagne, that they came to Cernay-en-Dormois, where there was a very handsome and strong castle. Having carefully examined it, they were very desirous of gaining this castle, and directly made an assault on it. Within it were two good and valiant knights as governors: the name of one was sir John de Caples, who bore for arms *a cross anchored sable, on a shield or.*

The attack was sharp and long: the two knights and their garrison defended themselves well: and it behoved them so to do, for they were assaulted very roughly. The Lord of Mucident, who was a powerful and rich lord in Gascony, advanced so forward at this attack, that he received a severe blow from a stone on his helmet, through which it found a passage to his head: he was so badly wounded, that he could not be carried away, but died in the arms of his people. The other barons and knights were so enraged at the death of the Lord of Mucident, they swore they would never quit the place until they had conquered the castle, and all that were in it. They renewed the assault with double vigour: many gallant deeds were performed: for the Gascons, being irritated by the loss of their lord, rushed into the ditches, close to the walls of the castle, without sparing themselves, and, placing their shields over their heads, climbed up them: the archers, in the meantime, kept such a continual volley of arrows, that no one dared to appear. The castle was so briskly assaulted that it was won, but it cost them dear. When the English were masters of it, they made the two knights prisoners who had so valiantly defended it, and some other squires and gentlemen: the rest of the garrison they put to the sword. They destroyed much of the castle of Cernay, because they did not wish to keep it, and returned to the king and his barons, to relate what they had performed.

Henry Knighton's account was based, at least in part, on contemporary newsletters. He reported that a mixed force, consisting of some of Lancaster's men and some of the Prince's, mounted a winter campaign in North-East France between December 1359 and January 1360. This resulted in the capture of the towns of Autry-en-Dormois, Cernay-en-Dormois, Cormicy and Manre; and Knighton confirms that Chandos was present at the capture of Cernay on 30 December. Using Latin reminiscent of Virgil's when he wrote about the fall of Troy, the chronicler describes how the English took Cernay by rapid assault (*ad insultum improvise*), despite the fact that the town was strongly fortified with a double ditch, strong walls and towers, and well-garrisoned. Some of them climbed the walls and engaged the defenders in hand-to-hand fighting; but were faced with a second line of fortifications; but they attacked again and carried all before them. Then they entered

the town itself, killing those they found within, though many fled. Some were defenders drowned in the waters and marshes surrounding Cernay.¹⁰¹

The English spent the winter of 1359-60 on the march; and Edward decided to attack again in the spring, not least because the French sacked Winchelsea on 15 March. The history books tell us that the Reims campaign faded out somewhat ingloriously, and that Edward then turned to peace; but it is not clear that he ever really stopped fighting. On 6 April 1360 he ordered that, because of his loyalty, 'circumspection' and strenuous efforts on behalf of the Crown, Chandos should take control of the castle of Fretty and the 'tower' of St Christopher in Normandy, for the duration of the war; and that he should enjoy the revenue and draw any supplies he required from those places.¹⁰²

At the end of the Rheims campaign the King returned to the negotiating table. Chandos had acted as a negotiator before, in 1356 and in 1357, when he was serving the Prince. Now, he was one of the royal representatives during the preliminary talks at the leper house at Longjumeau south of Rheims on Good Friday 1360. The English delegation, headed by Henry of Derby, also included the Earls of Northampton and Warwick and Sir Walter Mauny. No record exists of these discussions and it is unlikely that Edward III took them very seriously, since they were not resumed the following day;¹⁰³ but the negotiations were resumed at Brétigny near Chartres; and Chandos was again one of those who represented the English Crown.¹⁰⁴ A treaty was at last agreed in May 1360. Its terms included a provision that Edward III was to have Aquitaine as a sovereign state and that King Jean II's ransom should be 3 million francs. Chandos was a witness to several of the documents, signed at Brétigny and at Calais, which constituted the final treaty, when the Kings of England and France swore eternal friendship and alliance.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant*, 204; Knighton (1995), 171-2. See also xxxv (comment on Knighton's source by his editor G.H.Martin; POW, 162).

¹⁰² Sumption II, 436; Rymer's *Foedera*, 1825, III, I, 480.

¹⁰³ C des R, I, 257.

¹⁰⁴ C des R, I, 265 & 297.

¹⁰⁵ Rymer, *Foedera* 1825, III, I, 494; Luce, VI, 33, VII, 90.

Chapter 3

King's Lieutenant, Seneschal, Constable and Viscount, 1360-67

King Jean II was taken to Westminster Palace, where Edward III explained the Treaty of Brétigny to him, and then to Windsor, where he took his leave of the English court. An escort consisting of the Black Prince, Henry of Derby, the Earl of Warwick, Chandos and other knights accompanied him home to Paris.¹⁰⁶

The 'Treaty of Brétigny' was in fact two treaties. A preliminary version was signed in Brétigny in May 1360 but the final text was agreed in Calais in October.¹⁰⁷ On 20 January 1361 Chandos was appointed 'Lieutenant and Captain-General, and special Conservator' of the peace, with power to evacuate all towns and fortresses due to be handed back to the French. On 5 February he was given a separate commission, empowering him to grant letters of pardon. Reports of his appointment reached Bordeaux,¹⁰⁸ and Northumbria, where Sir Thomas Gray was writing a history of England entitled *Scalacronica*. Gray reflected on the wide powers conferred on Sir John:

John de Chandos, knight, was sent on behalf of the King of England to undertake the implementation of the treaty, having a sufficient commission, to deliver the conquered castles and strongholds in various parts of the kingdom of France. This he did, as he had loyally been commanded by the King of England, according to the agreed conditions.

Gray also gave an indication of the kind of problem Chandos was about to encounter:

The English, who had continued this war of France on their own account, banded themselves together with various nations; they were called the Great Company. They left France, at the command of the King of England, gained

¹⁰⁶ Luce, VI, 23, 247 (though the Amiens manuscript does not refer to Chandos by name).

¹⁰⁷ Chaplais, 146-7.

¹⁰⁸ Rymer's *Foedera* 1825, III, I, 555; *Livre des Coutumes, Archives Municipales de Bordeaux* (Bordeaux 1890).

the town of Pont-Saint-Esprit, and made war in Provence, living marvellously from pillaging.¹⁰⁹

The Problems of Partition

Chandos's role in France in the early 1360s was quite extraordinary. Other Englishmen had been royal Lieutenants in Aquitaine but they had been great aristocrats, like Henry of Derby (appointed 1345), Ralph Stafford (1352), the Black Prince (1355) and Thomas Holland (1360). Apart from Stafford, they were also relatives of the King. Chandos was neither aristocrat nor royal relative. He was a knight, though admittedly a Knight of the Garter. His appointment was a remarkable sign of Edward III's confidence in him.¹¹⁰

We have details of Chandos's itinerary, when he was engaged with the evacuation of allied fortresses in Normandy, Anjou, Maine, Touraine and Poitou. He had taken control of Barfleur in Normandy the previous August but, when he crossed to France in February 1361, he took sixteen ships and disembarked at St Vaast La Hogue (where he had landed with Edward III in 1346). He travelled with a retinue of 39 men at arms and 60 archers, but almost immediately added a further 30 men at arms and 36 mounted archers. He was near Bayeux on 5 March and in his own fortress of St Sauveur in the Cotentin on 20 July.

On 1st July 1361, Chandos and others (including Richard de Stafford, Seneschal of Gascony) received the royal order from Westminster, to 'request, take, receive and retain in the King's name, from the King of France. all the counties, cities, castles, towns, lands and places, with their appurtenances, which ought to but have not been delivered to the King by virtue of the peace made between Edward III and Jean II.'¹¹¹ On the 23rd July he received 5,986 *ecus*, the arrears of ransoms due from various captains for the evacuation of Saint Vaast and Lingèvres. According to the *Chronique Normande* he was with the French commissioner Louis de Harcourt when they arranged with English captains for the fortresses in Neufbourg, Honfleur, Auvillers and several other places fortresses to be vacated. On the 24th July he received further orders from Edward III to visit Jean II. It was probably around this time that he received pledges from fourteen individuals for the 9,000 *royaux* due in respect of the evacuation of yet another (unnamed) English fortress in Lower Normandy.¹¹² On 29 July 1361 Chandos left St Sauveur-le-Vicomte in Normandy for Paris, but he did not succeed in meeting the French King right away. Robert Ducluzeau gives an amusing account of how his hosts gave the Englishman the 'run-around', telling him that the King was at Melun and then at the Abbey of Barbeau,

¹⁰⁹ *Scalacronica*, 194-5.

¹¹⁰ Renouard, 382; Fowler, MMI, 40 and n 59; Vale, *Ancient Enemy*, 8; Fowler, *Henry of Grosmont*, 46-50.

¹¹¹ Gascon Rolls, C61/74, 55.

¹¹² Rymer, *Foedera* 1825, III, I, 507; Fowler, MMI, 40, citing Bardonnet etc; *Chronique Normande du XIV^e Siècle*, 155.

places which are some way south of the French capital, before they eventually arranged a meeting at Vincennes, a few miles to the east of it.¹¹³ This was probably for a reason: Paris was the largest city in Western Europe, but it was insanitary and the French royal family habitually lived in palaces beyond the perimeter. In the 13th century Vincennes had been the site of a forest, where Louis IX had famously dispensed justice under a tree. It was King Jean's son Charles V (1364-80) who started to build the enormous keep or *donjon* which dominates Vincennes today. Chandos stayed there until 22 September 1361, partly because he was awaiting the arrival of the French commissioners Boucicaut and Audrehem; and partly because his hosts tried to delay proceedings by insisting that certain English fortresses in Northern France should be evacuated before the commissioners as a whole went South. In the end Chandos told Boucicaut that 'he had no intention of tolerating further delay or being taken out of his course by verbiage'; and the joint commission began its work. Meanwhile, on 20 July 1361, he had been appointed 'captain and superior governor' of the castle of La Rochelle and all the King's lands in Saintonge, in succession to Johan de Montferrand, and Pierre Bernard, the receiver of La Rochelle and Saintonge, had been ordered to pay him the wages due to him and his men as a result. There were also several subsidiary orders issued, to strengthen and confirm Chandos's position in that area.¹¹⁴

The peace commissioners now spent several months, late in 1361 and early in 1362, touring the principal towns and communities of the newly-expanded dominion agreed upon at Brétigny, while Chandos took homages, on behalf of his King; and we know that it was at this time, and specifically on 12 November 1361, that Edward III appointed Chandos 'to the office and governance of the Seneschalcy' of the Duchy of Aquitaine, in succession to Richard de Stafford, who had occupied the office for only four months.¹¹⁵ We may speculate that the King did this to reinforce Sir John's authority at a difficult time, and in a difficult place. The situation in Aquitaine after 1360 was quite new. Edward III had succeeded the French King as overlord of the entire duchy. This was highly unusual; and not all the King's new Gascon subjects were content. Bordeaux was always firmly pro-English, but there were several provinces in the duchy: Poitou, Saintonge, the Angoumois, Périgord, the Limousin, Quercy, Rouergue and Bigorre. Some of these had not been ruled by an English Duke for a very long time indeed; and Quercy and Rouergue had *never* been part of the English Duchy, as well as being a long way from Bordeaux on horseback.¹¹⁶ Now, they were being asked to sever their links with France. The English wanted full control of South-West France, so that no-one there

¹¹³ Ducluzeau, 92-3 (giving more details of Chandos's indenture); 99-101.

¹¹⁴ Gascon Rolls, C 61/74, 80, 81, 82. See item 96 for confirmation of Chandos's right to a wine subsidy, which 'certain people, both of France and elsewhere' had plotted to divert from English coffers; and item 117 for evidence that the outgoing captain Montferrand was one of the conspirators.

¹¹⁵ Gascon Rolls, C 61/74, 113 & 114.

¹¹⁶ Vale, *Ancient Enemy* Map 2.

would be able to bring an appeal against a King of England before the courts of the King of France.

The ceremony of homage did not always take the same form. As the author of a recent work on *Magna Carta* explained, it normally meant that the vassal knelt down, placed his hands between the hands of his feudal lord and declared 'I become your man for [the fief] which I hold of you, and I will bear you fealty in life, limb and earthly honour' – or words to that effect; but, where a large number of men were involved, it could involve something less formal, possibly involving the raising of hands, after the manner of a Fascist salute.¹¹⁷ Either way, the taking of homages involved the new Seneschal in months of hard work, in the field and in the saddle. As a result, he submitted a claim for expenses in 1362 which included compensation for the deaths of 100 horses, at an average value of 10 marks each; and he was paid in full.¹¹⁸ Froissart gives us the following vivid account of the proceedings:

Soon after King Jean was returned to France, the commissioners appointed by the king of England crossed the sea, to take possession of the lands, countries, counties, bailiwicks, cities, towns and castles, that were to be given up to him, according to the articles of the peace. But this was not so soon accomplished; for many of the nobles in Languedoc at first absolutely refused to obey them, or to surrender themselves to the King of England, though the King of France had acquitted them of their fidelity and homage to him: for they thought it highly contrary and adverse to their interests to be obliged to obey the English. [Some] wondered much that the King of France should force them from his jurisdiction. Others said, it was not in his power thus to free them; and it was not his right so to do; for, as they were Gascons, they had very old charters and privileges from the noble Charlemagne (who was King of France), which placed them under the jurisdiction of his court, and of no other.

On which account, these lords would not at first yield obedience to the commissioners; but the King of France, who wished to uphold and maintain what he had sworn and sealed, sent thither his dear cousin, Sir James de Bourbon, who appeased the greater part of these nobles; and those who were bounden became liege men to the king of England; such as the Count d'Armagnac, the Lord d'Albret, and many others, who at the entreaties of the King of France and of Sir James de Bourbon, obeyed, but very unwillingly.

On the other hand, it was very displeasing to the barons, knights and inhabitants of the towns on the sea-coast, and in the country of Poitou, the Rochellois and all Saintonge, that they should be given up to the English: in particular those in the town of La Rochelle would not consent to it; they made

¹¹⁷ David Carpenter, *Magna Carta* (Penguin, 2015), 125, 137.

¹¹⁸ Sumption, II, 473; Prestwich, 97, citing TNA E101/28/70.

frequent excuses, and would not, for upwards of a year, suffer any Englishman to enter their town. The letters were very affecting which they wrote to the King of France, beseeching him, by the love of God, that he would never liberate them from their fidelity, nor separate them from his government and place them in the hands of strangers; for they would prefer being taxed every year one half of what they were worth, rather than be in the hands of the English.

Articles 28 and 29 of the Treaty of Brétigny specifically provided for a mutual exchange of fortresses by October 1361; but Chandos did not even begin work until August that year. When the commissioners arrived outside a town, the normal practice was for the gates to be closed while the senior French commissioner read out Jean II's letters, commanding his subjects to transfer their allegiance to Edward III. The gate would then be opened and the keys delivered up. Chandos would proceed to some public place to take the oaths of allegiance of the chief citizens. A seneschal was appointed in the provincial capitals. Lesser officials were continued in office. The arms of the King of England were displayed over the town's gates. Froissart tells us that that, when Jacques de Bourbon was in Montpellier, he simply 'put Sir John Chandos in full possession of the cities, lands, towns and castles of the Duchy' (whilst telling us Bourbon was killed soon afterwards, by the Free Companies); but things did not always go smoothly.

Between 27 August and 31 November 1361, Chandos was engaged in taking the surrender of the towns and strongholds of Poitou and Saintonge: Poitiers and Saintes, Niort, Angoulême, Cognac, Ruffec, Parthenay and Thours; and here, Froissart's brief account of the proceedings can be supplemented by reference to the extraordinary *procès verbal* published by Bardonnet in 1867. Bardonnet gave his book a remarkable sub-title, which displays his patriotic feelings - 'a record of the surrender to John Chandos, commissioner of the King of England, of the French places abandoned by the Treaty of Brétigny'. The word 'abandoned' says it all.

The abbey of St Maixent surrendered without protest, and had its charters confirmed.¹¹⁹ However, as the commissioners rode north from Angoulême towards Ruffec, they came across the fortress of Verteuil-sur-Charente, where the captain Peyran du Saut made it clear that he would not surrender without a fight. Chandos's response was quite out of character, if we believe that he was a paragon of chivalry and nothing more, for it was now that he revealed a mailed fist. Instead of passing by, he proceeded straight to Ruffec, found the brother of the recalcitrant captain, and had him thrown into prison. When this had no effect on the captain, Sir John returned to Verteuil with the brother, placed him next to an executioner armed with a large two-handed sword, and in full view of the drawbridge, and ordered him to beg Peyran to surrender the town, 'Or they would show him in no uncertain terms how he would be compelled to give it up'. The tactic worked, Peyran duly

¹¹⁹ Rymer's *Foedera* 1830, III, II, 860; Ducluzeau (2002), 109. See also Gascon Rolls, C 61/82, 44.

surrendered, and Bertrand did not lose his head. Chandos appointed the Captal de Buch, the Prince's most trusted Gascon ally, captain of Verteuil and rode back to Ruffec.¹²⁰

After taking the surrender of Parthenay and Thouars, Chandos moved on to Limoges, increasing the size of his escort as he did so. Limoges was the most northern of the territories newly acquired by Edward III in 1360; and her citizens were reluctant to believe that the French King had agreed to transfer their city to the King of England. The commissioners produced a direct order to this effect from King Jean himself, given at Vincennes on 12 August 1361; but the Limousins only submitted when they had their privileges confirmed by Edward III.¹²¹ La Rochelle took a whole year to submit.¹²² In Rouergue, the provincial estates met to consider the matter and were addressed by the Count of Armagnac (who was to become an inveterate enemy of English rule in Gascony). He advised them to hold out for the right to appeal to the King of France, in the last resort, against acts of their new lord. A council held in Rodez (the principal city in the Rouergue) agreed that it was essential to do so. Rodez eventually submitted, but the townsmen refused to paint the arms of the new sovereign on its walls until 1365. Meanwhile, Millau considered open resistance and only submitted with great reluctance, though also with some ceremony. We learn that the inhabitants presented Chandos with:

37 chickens, 14 goats, 2 calves, 4 pigs, a measure of claret, 12 pounds of dried fruit, fish taken from the town's moats, bread, wine and *avoine*.

According to the historian Moisant, gifts like these were 'customary' (*d'usage*) in the case of persons of high status.¹²³

There were English ambassadors involved in monitoring the implementation of the Treaty of Brétigny, in particular Thomas de Uvedale and Thomas de Donclent; but these men were dependant on Chandos for information as to what was happening on the ground.¹²⁴ Towards the end of 1361 the ambassadors lodged various complaints that the French were not living up to their commitments. One such concerned the failure to hand over the 'towns, castles, villages, lands, territories, islands and districts' agreed upon. In reply King Jean stated that his men *had* now handed over the whole of Poitou, Saintonge and Périgord, but that there had been unexpected delays. This was partly because the French commissioner Boucicaut had been seriously ill, and partly because Chandos had not wanted to press on into various districts, because of an outbreak of plague [*mortalité*]. If Edward III wanted to deal with the problem by appointing new commissioners, Jean

¹²⁰ Bardonnet, 60.

¹²¹ Luce, VI, 63, 259 (Amiens Ms); Rymer, *Foedera* 1830 III, II, 660-1; Lodge, 91.

¹²² Moisant, 68-70-2 and Appendix 196-207 (*Requête de la Ville de Cahors*); Sumption, II, 475.

¹²³ Lodge, 93-4. Millau was one of the first places to throw off English sovereignty in 1369: see below.

¹²⁴ Chaplain, 149.

would agree to that.¹²⁵ He seemed anxious to please: he was an honourable man; and he said he wanted the Treaty to be implemented, because he had been released from imprisonment in London on that understanding. He wrote to his own men, telling them not to delay. The story was much the same when Jean wrote to Edward again ten days later:

The [French] commissioners were in place in some territories... but Sir John Chandos arrived late to receive [the surrender], and also the country has been much affected by the war and the presence of English and other companies, and also Sir John Chandos and other commissioners did not wish to go into any region where there was plague; but the King wishes to see the matter attended to with all due diligence... and has written to Sir John Chandos and the other commissioners to suggest that they now go into the Limousin and other places where the plague has been to complete the surrender of the territories to be handed over there.¹²⁶

Jean II appears to have meant what he said, and in February 1362 he repeated these same excuses, sending them with a messenger who was one of Chandos's squires. This was 'Symkin Burley' – almost certainly the same man who, as Sir Simon Burley, was to become tutor to, and then favourite of, Richard II. At the same time, Jean complained that Edward had not kept his side of the bargain. He said that there had been occasions when the surrender of *those strongholds which should have been handed over to the French* had been delayed, or had been handed over subject to unacceptable conditions. One specific complaint concerned fortresses which Chandos had agreed to deliver up under a separate agreement reached with Louis of Harcourt in March 1361. A ransom of 20,000 écus had been demanded for those.

Edward's reply to this was that, when he had signed the Treaty of Brétigny he had not intended to prejudice the private property rights of his subjects. Where a fortress had been captured by a private individual (and there were many such), it was only right that he be compensated for his loss of profit, and he should certainly be paid for any supplies he was prepared to leave behind. This was a highly dubious argument, since the Treaty was silent on the point; and the question was still unresolved when the castles in question were handed over.¹²⁷

Edward III was not satisfied with Jean II's reply to his complaints. He may have thought that the French king protested too much; and he had also received information of a more disturbing kind from Chandos. Sir John had written to tell him that, in some places where territories had already been handed over, those who had done homage had sought to impose conditions. Specifically, they had expressed

¹²⁵ Chaplais, 12-13, item 4; C des R, III, 90.

¹²⁶ Chaplais, 20, item 8.

¹²⁷ Timbal, 432 and items CXXIV and CXXV. The matter was ultimately litigated in the Paris *Parlement*.

reservations in relation to the question of ultimate sovereignty, and the right of resort [*soverainté et darrein resort par especiales paroles*]. This was totally unacceptable to Edward. He wrote from Windsor on 1 January, to complain of it in the strongest of terms. At the same time, he seems to have decided, on Chandos's recommendation, that he would secure his position in the event of a breakdown in diplomatic relations, by taking possession of the castle at La Roche-sur-Yon, the most important stronghold on the borders of Poitou and Brittany.¹²⁸

Chandos did not always find the French so difficult to deal with. Most of the nobility performed the act of homage as required, though the Count of Armagnac refused to do so and the Count of Foix refused homage for the county of Béarn, which he regarded as an independent state. In addition, the accounts for the Seneschalcy of Saintonge for the years 1360-3 show Chandos engaged in routine administrative work, appointing officers to the numerous posts of government throughout the province. For example, on 13 October 1361 he appointed a new Master of Forests and Waters, William Elyngton, while on 11 October 1362 he appointed Sir John Basset guardian and governor of the Island of Oléron. These two men were Englishmen; but subordinate posts went to Frenchmen, and even to Frenchmen who had served the previous regime. The most notable example here was the Poitevin Guichard d'Angles, Sénéchal of Saintonge between 1350 and 1360 and a French negotiator in 1356. Chandos confirmed him in his position as captain and provost of the castle of Rochefort. Subsequently, Guichard became Seneschal of Saintonge in 1364 and a Marshal of Aquitaine. (Later still, he took refuge in England and was made Earl of Huntingdon). Other Frenchmen who were confirmed in office included Guillaume de Séris, who accompanied Chandos on his travels around Saintonge and travelled to England.¹²⁹ Pierre Bernard, who was confirmed as the receiver of Saintonge, also accompanied Sir John. In March 1362, he rode to Bordeaux to deliver his accounts to the constable of the city, and the lieutenant-controller of the castle.¹³⁰

Chandos's difficulties were not confined to his dealings with the French. He also faced a considerable problem with the so-called 'Free Companies'. For it was one thing for Edward III to sign a peace treaty, agreeing to evacuate his forces, and quite another to enforce it, when those forces consisted of hard men who had made a good living by raiding, and in some cases considered that they had good title to what they had won by force of arms. As Froissart explained:

There were some knights and squires attached to England who obeyed, and surrendered, or made their companions surrender such forts as they held: but there were others who would not obey, saying that they had made war in the name of the king of Navarre. There were also some from different countries,

¹²⁸ Chaplain, 26, items 17 & 18.

¹²⁹ Ducluzeau 2002, 94, 110; *Comptes*, 75, 79-80-5.

¹³⁰ *Comptes*, 85.

who were great captains and pillagers, that would not, on any account, leave the country; such as Germans, Brabanters, Flemings, Hainaulters, Gascons and bad Frenchmen, who had been impoverished by the war: these persons persevered in their wickedness, and did afterwards much mischief to the kingdom.

When the captains of the forts had handsomely delivered them up, with all they contained, they marched off, and when in the plain, they dismissed their people: but those who had been so long accustomed to pillage, knowing well that their return home would not be advantageous for them, but that they might perhaps suffer for the bad actions they had committed, assembled together, and chose new leaders from the worst disposed among them.

The English might have been expected to go home after Brétigny; but sometimes they simply stayed put. In March 1362, Chandos took the surrender of the town of Espalion in the Rouergue, which had been captured by the Englishman John Amory and his lieutenant John Cresswell the previous year. These men had served the Black Prince in 1355-7; but they now demanded – and received – ‘substantial indemnities’ in return for surrendering the fortress. In January 1363, the King was still asking Sir John to pursue and punish rogue English captains who were making a nuisance of themselves in France. Nevertheless, Chandos’s formal work as peacemaker was drawing to a close. The French commissioners were prepared to let him have his ‘letters of acquittance’ as early as the spring of 1362;¹³¹ and, by an order of 6 October, he was allowed to take part of his remuneration from King Jean’s ransom.¹³² Edward also took steps to ensure that payments to Chandos should not become bogged down by incompetence. For some reason the royal bureaucrats concluded that Sir John had already begun to receive payments and had caused him to be ‘distrainted and troubled’ for that money. Chandos complained to the Crown, explaining that he had not yet taken anything for himself. Edward ordered them to desist, on 24 October 1362.¹³³

Chandos in Quercy

¹³¹ Fowler, MMI, 43.

¹³² Rymer, *Foedera* 1745, vol III, part II, 70 (first reference); 1830, III, II, 678.

¹³³ CCR, Edward III; Rymer, *Foedera* 1745, vol III, part II, 70 (second reference); 1830, III, II, 679. Chandos was not the only one to have trouble with the government accountants over the revenues he received in France. Sir Matthew Gournay (d. 1406) was imprisoned in the Tower of London over the financing of several castles he held in Normandy prior to Bretigny and in 1362 paid a fine of 3,600 ecus to settle the matter: ODNB, Gournay (Michael Jones).

The men of Quercy, whom Chandos encountered in 1362, were doubtless very different in all manner of ways, from the men of Cheshire; but they shared a concern to preserve their customary rights in a time of radical change. The capital city of Quercy was Cahors. With its bridge over the River Lot, this was an important resting-place for pilgrims on the road to Santiago de Compostella, and the Bishop of Cahors was the most important local dignitary. At the same time Cahors was renowned for its usurers, who had given it a bad name: in the 13th century Dante had linked it with Sodom in his *Inferno*. When John Chandos arrived, the town's consuls, who represented local merchants and businessmen, were worried about the activities of local barons, the lawlessness created by the Free Companies and more ordinary bandits, and the threat posed by the Treaty of Brétigny to their position. After all, they had not been consulted when Jean II agreed to cede Quercy and Rouergue to Edward III; and the transfer of power which this involved was unprecedented. They did not understand what it meant, for their relations with the new English Aquitaine, or with their old masters across the newly-created border with the French kingdom.

Chandos arrived in front of the Saint-Michel gate on Saturday 8 January 1362. Marshal Boucicaut and Sir Géraud de Joli, the French Seneschal of Quercy, were there, and had received orders from King Jean to deliver up the town. Chandos assured the Seneschal that he was willing to confirm the town's privileges and to suppress the activities of all malefactors, including any roving bands of Englishmen and Gascons; and the town was duly surrendered, or so it seemed.

Appearances proved deceptive, because the town consuls arranged for the entire population of Cahors to be summoned to a general assembly the following day, in the great church of Saint-Étienne. Those present argued that they were not obliged to swear any oath of allegiance to the King of England, because this would be infringe ancient rights; but, if they were wrong about this, the consuls should swear on their behalf. Chandos was reluctant to accept either proposition, because he had been given to understand that everyone, commoners, Churchmen and nobility alike, would take the oath. The impasse was only overcome when it was agreed that consuls, notables and bourgeois would all take the oath, either in person, or in the case of outlying districts, by proxy; but then the Cahorsins, who were much attached to local law and custom, and deeply suspicious of innovation, presented a list of 52 demands conditions. Like *Magna Carta*, this is a mixture of the grand and the trivial. Unlike the Great Charter, however, it represented the demands of the *bourgeoisie*, not the baronage.

The *Request of the Town of Cahors* was recorded in Latin, but the answers which Chandos gave were in French. It is likely that both were prepared by professional scriveners or notaries; but at the same time there does not appear to be much logic to the order in which they were presented. This may reflect the fact that the *Request* was put together in haste, or that it was drafted by a committee. For his part, Chandos had to be careful. As King's Lieutenant he had with very wide powers, but he was not the Sovereign; and there were several matters, such as the grant of

honours, which were not within his gift, since they touched the royal prerogative. More importantly, he had to avoid concessions which might embarrass Edward III politically. Accordingly, when Chandos addresses the Cahorsins, he does not always give a straight answer. Sometimes, he says yes, and sometimes no, and he has several ways of saying each. More often he simply says 'That will be attended to when the King arrives in person', or 'The King will provide appropriately' or 'That will be remedied if you provide proof of your grievance'.

The most fundamental demand appeared as item 40 of the *Request*. The Cahorsins wanted to ensure that what had happened at Brétigny would not happen again; and they asked that the King of England should never transfer their allegiance (*mettre Cahors hors de sa main*), at least not without prior consultation. Chandos readily agreed to this. Several requests were the product of a desire for stability and continuity, and Chandos was content to agree to these. He confirmed the appointment of the consuls, the Seneschal and the Justices of Cahors, Quercy and Montauban, as well as giving a general assurance that the Cahorsins would continue to enjoy their goods and possessions. He granted the consuls immunity from suit (both in civil and criminal matters) so long as held office, together with the right to create a first consul, and chose their own successors. There should be no reprisals against the consuls, or their subordinates, or the Cahorsins in general, for what they had done during the long War. The consuls would control the city gates. Local merchant were to enjoy Chandos's protection as they went about their business in Aquitaine and England; and yes, they could have their own bell, with which to summon the populace to local assemblies.¹³⁴

Several requests related to the office of Seneschal. The 23rd was that there should be one Seneschal appointed for Périgord and one for Quercy, while the 41st was that this man should not be related to anyone in the district, either by blood or 'alliance'. The 47th repeated the demand made in the 23rd, pointing out that the existing Sénéchal, Sir Géraud de Jaulino, seigneur of Villeneuve, had been appointed by the French King on these terms. The 49th asked that a royal bailiff (*bayle royal du ressort de Cahors*) should be appointed to ensure that the town should continue to enjoy all existing privileges, including those which had been agreed to, but not yet formally granted; but Chandos was unwilling to agree to agree that royal discretion should be fettered in this way. Any privileges which were said to exist would have to be proved: *je le veuil de touz les privilèges quil porront duement monstrer et enseigner*. Likewise, when he was asked (in the 44th request) to approve a Concordat reached between the Bishop of Cahors and the town consuls, Chandos was willing to agree in principle, but only on production of the document.

The Free Companies were still a problem in many parts of France and the second demand in the *Request* was that 'pillagers and other evil-doers' of English allegiance who, 'on the pretext that they were waging a legitimate war', had continued to cause damage since the Treaty of Brétigny, should made an example of;

¹³⁴ Requests 1, 10, 26, 27, 28, 29, 46, 51.

and their victims should be properly compensated. Chandos agreed wholeheartedly and promised to take action. In addition, a series of local truces had also been negotiated, and the Cahorsins asked that those guilty of any breach of these should be brought to justice, and have their goods confiscated. Malefactors who had seized territory from its rightful owner, using it as a 'lair' from which to raid the surrounding area, should be hunted down and punished. Those who had robbed and murdered pilgrims and other travellers on the public highways should be dealt with in the same way. Chandos was happy to agree to all these requests.¹³⁵

The Cahorsins also demanded that the King of England should have a representative prepared to live in Gascony, albeit near the sea, to save his new subjects the expense of travelling to England. Chandos agreed only that the King would make a suitable appointment when he arrived. In the meantime he would fill the post. There was also a demand that no man belonging to a ducal 'company' should hold public office in the Duchy. Chandos's reply to this was certainly equivocal: the King would appoint enough suitable men as would be necessary for the good governance of the country.¹³⁶

How was law and order to be maintained in the future? The Cahorsins had firm views here as well. In future proceedings at inquests and depositions made by witnesses in criminal trials should be made public. (Chandos agreed). No man should be able to challenge another to a duel without just cause. (He was content to confirm local custom). Neighbouring communities, and above all the local nobility, should make peace with the King of England and enter into his obedience, to reduce the possibilities for internal division and conflict. (This request must have been music to Chandos's ears, and he replied that he would ensure that this was done as soon as possible). However, Sir John purported to be 'astonished' by the demand that no taxes should be levied in future to pay for any wars the King of England might wage outside the province of Quercy, or in Languedoc, or against the King of France. Yet there was also a demand that, if circumstances should make it necessary to garrison Cahors with royal troops, this should only be done with the consuls' permission, and at English expense. Chandos flatly refused to countenance this: 'My Lord the King will place captains and men at arms in such places and at such times as seems right to him, for the benefit and security of the area.'¹³⁷

Several demands related to legal procedure. The Cahorsins pointed out that men of property had often been unable to pay their taxes, because of war damage. They did not think it right that these men should suffer forfeiture on that account and they requested that some flexibility be shown. Chandos was willing to comply. He agreed that the authorities should take due account of the poverty created by the war; that Judges should be wise, competent and men of integrity; that the number of notaries should be increased, but their fees controlled; and that registrars [*greffiers*]

¹³⁵ Requests 2, 9, 38, 45, 48.

¹³⁶ Requests 35 & 37.

¹³⁷ Requests 31, 39, 50, 7, 14.

should not be allowed to be proctors in the same courts where they practised advocacy [*ventilantur*].¹³⁸

Sir John was more cautious when it came to other aspects of the machinery of justice. The 24th request was that certain posts held by court officials (*bailliage, resort, viguerie* and *greffes*) should not be sold. This, he thought, was a matter for the King, when he should visit the area. The 25th request was that an assessor, well versed in the law and honourable (*honneur*), should be employed at the King's expense, to advise the *bailli*, if he lacked the necessary training (*formation*). This was because the *baillis* had often been found to be incompetent as well as grasping (*cupides*). Chandos could see that this request raised delicate issues and he avoided giving a straight answer, saying only that the King would make 'such appointments as would benefit his subjects'.

Chandos was not a lawyer, but some of the matters raised with him involved substantive questions of law. It is perhaps surprising that he was prepared to intervene at all in this area; but intervene he did. The Cahorsins asked that people should not be able to give land to the Church (*mettre ses biens en main morte*), at least not without permission. Chandos agreed, perhaps because there was similar legislation in England already.¹³⁹ He also agreed that civil appeals should be dealt with in Cahors; that debtors should not be able to avoid their debts simply by pleading that this had been made impossible by wartime conditions. He was asked to extend the limitation period for bringing proceedings for debt (apparently twelve years), on the grounds that it had been difficult for debtors to honour their obligations during the War. He agreed that something should be done, since the conflict had lasted for more than twelve years; but he also decided that, now that the War was at an end, proceedings for old debts should be commenced within a year.¹⁴⁰

There were limits as to how far Chandos was prepared to go. He had encountered the strength of local feeling when it came to ancient privileges in Cheshire in the 1350s, and he experienced it again now, in deepest Aquitaine. In addition to the numerous specific demands we have already listed, the Cahorsins demanded that all local laws and customs be respected, at least where they were 'beneficial', and that no new laws be imposed. His response here was guarded: justice would be done and 'novelties' avoided, but he needed proof that the 'good old customs' which the men of Cahors claimed they were trying to protect, did in fact exist.¹⁴¹

Finally, Chandos was presented with a number of demands which raised concerns about the local economy and the way in which society was organised. He had no difficulty with a request for sound currency, or the right to hold a local Fair;

¹³⁸ Requests 19, 32. Chandos to ensure that judges were selected on the advice of judges and 'other good people of the country'; and that they would do 'justice and reason' (*ils feront et garderont raison et droiture*), 36, 43.

¹³⁹ Requests 5 & 12.

¹⁴⁰ Requests 6, 8, 22 and 34.

¹⁴¹ Request 33.

but when the Cahorsins asked for liberty to exchange money without regulation (*formalité*), he replied 'I cannot and ought not to agree, because it would be contrary to the interests of my Lord the King, and his people.'¹⁴² The Cahorsins also asked that free passage up and down the River Lot should be restored, alleging that local barons had taken advantage of the recent disturbances to impose new tolls. Chandos replied that recent tolls would be abolished, but that men should pay the old ones, as required by custom. Likewise the sales tax on certain types of merchandise sold in Cahors, or in transit, would be kept; and visitors to the Fair (and their animals) would have to pay before entering the town (provided it was shown that this was indeed the local custom). Half the income so collected would be used to compensate those who had suffered most in the War; but Chandos refused to grant exemption from customs duties on trade with Aquitaine and England, saying that it was not within his power to agree to this (*mon pouvoir n'est pas tel que je le puisse.*) All he could do was to promise that he would try to persuade the King about the matter, when he should visit the area. The Cahorsins also wanted exemption from tolls for merchants travelling into the French kingdom; but Chandos sat firmly on the fence here, pointing out that this was a matter for the King of France, though he would support the argument.¹⁴³

The truly *bourgeois* character of the men who put this long list of demands to Chandos is apparent. The Crown should provide protection (*sauvegarde royale*), for the townsmen against the barons and other members of the nobility. (Chandos said he would do whatever he could to keep the country safe and ensure that there were no private wars). The nobility should be required to protect local merchants, and pay compensation if they failed to do so. (Chandos replied only that the King would provide security, 'God willing'). No member of the nobility, claiming jurisdiction over a particular locality, should be able to prevent a citizen from collecting what was due to him there, or stop local people from bringing their wheat into Cahors. (Chandos could only agree). Lastly, all citizens who followed the profession of arms, even those who were not of noble birth, should be eligible to be made knights. (Here, once again, Chandos again drew the line. He was unwilling to engage in social engineering. He replied that this matter was not within his power at all. It was something for the King alone: *c'est grâce royal, qui appartient au roy*).¹⁴⁴

After all this wrangling, Cahors did submit; and, on the face of it, Chandos therefore achieved a great success in Quercy. Yet, reading the *Request* as a whole, one has wonder whether English rule in the new Aquitaine could ever work. The Cahorsins were clearly men who knew their rights, and deeply resented the transfer of sovereignty which the Treaty of Brétigny involved. In addition, there was something more at stake than feudal rights and legal privilege. A strong emotional

¹⁴² Requests 3, 42, 13.

¹⁴³ Requests 15, 16, 17, 18, 30.

¹⁴⁴ Requests 4, 21, 52, 20. On the other hand, the 11th request, which was something which would benefit the local nobility, was something he did agree to: *On ne doit pas imposer des fiefs acquis ou à acquérir de nobles. Réponse : 'Le roy, mon seigneur, quand sera venu, en ordènera: B.S.E.L*

and cultural attachment to the French kingdom was also evident. It was France, after all, which had produced the greatest champions of Christendom, in the form of Clovis the Frank, the Emperor Charlemagne, the Crusader Godfrey of Bouillon and King Louis IX (who was also a Saint). Despite the popularity of the Arthurian legends, England was still a cultural and religious backwater by comparison; and the English language was not spoken outside England. Moreover, it cannot have escaped the attention of the Cahorsins that the King they were now being asked to accept as their monarch was the same whose son had inflicted widespread destruction, damage and loss of life throughout Languedoc only six years before. Yet here was Chandos asking them to recognise Edward III as their Sovereign, to the exclusion of all others. It is scarcely surprising that they needed some persuading; and it is reported that, when they did submit, some of them wept and groaned openly.

Viscount of St Sauveur

In 1360 Edward III settled for an enlarged principality in the South-West of France, agreeing to renounce his claim to the French Crown and vacate the English garrisons in the rest of French territory; but there were some exceptions to this territorial ‘deal’. In particular, he held on to the port of Calais, the county of Ponthieu on the Somme, the fortresses of Derval and Bécherel in Brittany and the castle of St Sauveur-le-Vicomte in the Cotentin, which he had inherited from its Viscount, Godfrey de Harcourt, in 1356. Edward was allowed to retain this stronghold on condition that he granted it to a man of his choice, and this was Sir John Chandos, who may therefore have been one of the first settlers in Normandy, over 50 years before the Duchy was conquered by Henry V and 600 years before the European Union was thought of.¹⁴⁵

St Sauveur occupied a strong position overlooking the valley of the Douve. In line 6182 of Cuvelier’s *Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin* the castle is described as ‘*sur la mer fermée*’ (situated on the sea), which is inaccurate; but it was nevertheless a fortress of great importance. Godfrey de Harcourt had been the chief landowner in the Cotentin and his *château* dominated the peninsula. Colonel Burne, author of *The Crécy War* (1956), who had an eye for ‘ground’, recognised the strategic importance of the castle to the English in 1360. It was granted to Chandos on 12 May, ‘for good service in the king’s wars, staying continually by his side’. The grant referred to:

The baronies of St Sauveur, Daunvers and Dongeville, and the lands of Sainte Marie du Mont, Farselles and Romilly, as well as of all lands late of the king’s kinsman Godfrey de Harcourt, deceased, which the king has in France of the

¹⁴⁵ Luce, VIII (1370-7), LXVII. As a rule, the English did not settle in France in the 14th century, apart from in Calais, although Knolles and Huet attempted to do so in Brittany and Matthew Gournay became Seneschal in the Landes: Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 50(n 1).

gift of the said Godfrey, to hold to [Chandos] *and his heirs*, with all jurisdictions, lordships, franchises, liberties, homages, royalties, emoluments, patronage of churches, fealties of prelates and other ecclesiastics and others, castles, towns, forests, parks, woods, waters, rivers, stanks, revenues and other profits.¹⁴⁶

The words used in the gift - 'to him and his heirs' - indicated that the estate would pass from Chandos to his heirs generally, rather being a mere life interest or entail.

The king ordered Thomas Holland (Earl of Kent), who was captain and warden of the castle and town of St Sauveur at the time, to deliver the entire estate to John Chandos without delay. More significantly, the transfer was confirmed by Jean II of France on 24 October. Froissart relates that:

because the lands of St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte, in Coutantin, came to the King of England from Sir Godfrey de Harcourt by the sale the said Sir Godfrey had made of them to the King, as has been before related in this history, and that the said lands were not included in the articles of peace, it was necessary for those who should hold the said lands to do homage and service to the King of France: the King of England, therefore, had reserved and given it to Sir John Chandos, who had done him and his children many notable services; and the King of France, through his great affection and love, confirmed and sealed it, at the entreaty of the King of England, to the said Sir John Chandos, as his right and lawful inheritance. It is a very fair estate, and worth full sixteen hundred *francs* of yearly rent.

The chronicler's account is corroborated by an official document printed by Rymer in the 18th century. We may also note that Chandos agreed to do homage for St Sauveur to the French king, though it is not certain that he ever did so.¹⁴⁷

Chandos's Viscountcy of St Sauveur placed him above a Baron, though below a Count, in the pecking-order of the French nobility. He made his *entrée* into his new domain on 20 July 1361 but almost immediately received orders which took him elsewhere. He left on the 29th and, although he returned on 17 October 1362, business was to keep him away for years on end. He was lord of St Sauveur for 10 years, but can only have been there for a few days in 1361 and a few months between June and November 1368. However, his long absence did not prevent him from commissioning substantial repairs and renovations. He almost certainly rebuilt the keep and he strengthened the curtain walls with new towers.¹⁴⁸ As in Derbyshire and Cheshire, he had a lieutenant, John Stokes, to discharge his office while he was absent.

¹⁴⁶ CPR, 1358-61, 329. For conveyancing procedures, Blackstone's *Commentaries*, vol 2, 104, 114.

¹⁴⁷ Luce, VI, 53; Rymer, *Foedera* 1745 vol. III, part II, 30; 1825, III, I, 543-4; Delisle, 144; Barber, *Triumph*, 319.

¹⁴⁸ Delisle, 121-2; Ducluzeau, 154-5.

What were Chandos's responsibilities in Normandy? In one sense he was simply an agent of Edward III who could be charged with duties affecting the local area. There is an entry in the Patent Rolls for 1361 which shows him handling ransoms on behalf of the Crown, in relation to the castle of St Vaast-la-Hogue:

Dec. 2 [Westminster]

Acquittance to Robert de Eves, his heirs and executors, for 5,333 gold crowns (*scutos*) of Philip received from him in the chamber, to wit 4,000 by the hands of John Chaundos, the king's lieutenant in France, 1,000 by the hands of John de Stoke, knight, and the remaining 333 by his own hands, for a third part of the residue due to the king in respect of ransoms which pertained to the castle of *Seintvath* in Normandy of the time when Robert had the keeping of the said castle in the king's name.¹⁴⁹

But Chandos's position was less straightforward than this simple order might make it appear, because the politics of Normandy were very complex. Between the death of Godfrey de Harcourt and the Treaty of Brétigny, the writ of the French king had virtually ceased to run in the Cotentin, divided as it was between the forces of Charles of Navarre and various English companies. Charles was King of Navarre and Count of Évreux, and owned extensive lands in Normandy, including parts of the Cotentin. He also had a good claim to the French throne and was a major player in the Hundred Years' War, in which he switched side several times. As Viscount of St Sauveur, Chandos therefore collected revenue from several sources. At Michaelmas 1361 he received 4,000 *royals* from the subjects of Charles of Navarre and 3,000 from the subjects of the French Dukes of Normandy and Orléans, by way of ransom money. In addition he enjoyed a pension of 500 *royals* charged on Navarrese territories in the Cotentin.

Despite the peace treaty, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Edward III played a double game in Normandy in the 1360s. While purporting to be interested in a lasting peace, he made only half-hearted efforts to disperse the Free Companies which continued to infest many parts of France; and it is difficult to know what Chandos's orders were. Was he merely told to turn a blind eye to the activities of the mercenaries and Navarrese in the Cotentin, or to actively co-operate with them? It is difficult to say; but there does seem to have been a degree of co-operation, as the French long suspected.

In Chandos's absence, the English garrison at St Sauveur certainly adopted an attitude towards local English Free Companies which was, to say the least, ambivalent. In 1362, a company led by the Englishman James Pipes captured the fortresses of Rupierre near Caen and le Hommet, between St Lô and Carentan. Superficially, Edward III disapproved of this as much as the French; and he ordered Chandos, the Count of Tancarville and William Felton (the Seneschal of Poitou) to

¹⁴⁹ CPR Edward III, 1361-4, 122.

take action to identify, hunt down and and punish the malefactors; but there is evidence that rogue members of Chandos's garrison at St Sauveur joined Pipes's band in their raiding, taking refuge in their castle afterwards; and eventually Pipes was *paid* to evacuate le Hommet and Rupierre, rather than being treated as a common criminal. Moreover, Pipes was not the only 'freelance' operating in the Cotentin at this time. Overall, the Normans found that they could not rely on local English soldiery to protect them; and the Rouennais had to raise funds to buy protection from others. The French historian Delisle concluded that St Sauveur provided comfort and support to the *routiers*.¹⁵⁰

Delisle also pointed to the closeness of English relations with Charles of Navarre, who was lord of Valognes, and whose counsellors included the Abbot of Cherbourg. In the early 1360s Charles went so far as to retain some of Chandos's principal household officers in St Sauveur, including his Marshal, Guichard d'Angle and his steward, Sir Harry Hay. Jonathan Sumption tells us that he was also planning a rising in Normandy and buying weapons in Bordeaux 'under the nose of the Seneschal' there; and there is also evidence of a plan to ally with Chandos and the Captal de Buch in an attack on French royal forces.

An examination of the account books of the Kingdom of Navarre confirms the worst fears of French contemporaries and historians. It shows that, throughout the 1360s Chandos and his men at St Sauveur were actually *paid* by Navarre's local representatives, and paid regularly. They were provided with food and drink at local banquets; and, as early as 1361, Chandos's lieutenant John Stokes was paid 4,000 *royals*. Further payments were made in 1362 and 1363. Among them was one payment, recorded under *retenue des chevaliers*, which tells us Chandos himself was in receipt of a Navarrese pension. The entries in question date from the years 1367-70 but it is clear that the arrangement had been in place since at least 1363, though it may not have been formalised until 1366, when it refers to 'Chandos, whom Monseigneur has retained for life to serve him, and for this reason has given him 1000 *royals* a year, payable in two instalments at Easter and Michaelmas'.¹⁵¹

Matters came to a head at the Battle of Cocherel (in the Vexin) in May 1364, when a French force led by Du Guesclin scored a decisive victory over a Navarrese force led by the Captal de Buch. Nevertheless the battle did not put a complete end to Navarrese activities in the Cotentin. During the summer the French continued their assault on the remaining Navarrese garrisons in Western France; and in July Du Guesclin invaded the Cotentin with an army of Bretons, capturing Valognes, only a few miles from St Sauveur.¹⁵² On 14 November 1364 Edward III issued an order to all his English subjects in the Kingdom of France, asking them not to assist Navarre in any way. He addressed a specific order in these terms to Sir Hugh Calveley and other captains, copying it to the Prince and to Chandos, and asking the

¹⁵⁰ Delisle, 124-7, 133; Rymer, *Foedera*, 1830 III, II, 685.

¹⁵¹ Izarn, 88-9; Delisle, 122, 129-30, 144 and *Preuves* 157, 160-70; Green, 108.

¹⁵² Christine de Pisan, *Le Livres des Fais*, 122; Sumption, II, 511-2.

latter to convene public assemblies and proclaim the instruction more widely.¹⁵³ Whether Edward really disapproved of the de facto alliance which had been formed by Chandos's men with the Navarrese is difficult to say. It is very unlikely that the garrison at St Sauveur ever acted without their master's approval, or that Chandos acted without Edward III's.

St Sauveur was where Chandos held court, during the brief time he was there, and it was where he had an establishment. We learn from the Gascon Rolls that Chandos had appointed an attorney called John de Humbleton as early as 30 September 1362; and the Papal Registers show that he had a Chancellor and Secretary in 1363 called 'John de Ouletone'. In 1366 Chandos refers to 'John Humbleton' as the 'governor of all his property in England'. Two years after that, he asks the King for permission to appoint an attorney, who will conduct legal proceedings in England on his behalf. The king agrees and, on 16 January 1368, 'John of Humbleton' is appointed to this office for a year. He was appointed as Chandos's attorney again (this time jointly with two other attorneys) on 3 February 1369. These appointments indicate that Chandos had accumulated at least a modicum of wealth in England by the late 1360s; and that Humbleton was his regular attorney for English affairs.¹⁵⁴

People who wanted to travel abroad needed permission from the Crown to do so. There was a particular reason for this when Edward III decided to obstruct papal appointments (after the Pope had refused permission for Prince Edmund of Langley to marry Margaret of Flanders in 1361). In December 1364 the King notified the sheriffs in all counties, and the mayors and bailiffs in the towns, that no-one should leave the country without permission, and that no-one, other than recognised merchants, should be allowed to export money and bills of exchange.¹⁵⁵ One of the people given permission to travel in 1367 Chandos's yeoman, a man described by the historian David Green as one of the Black Prince's 'stalwarts':¹⁵⁶

Nov. 11 [Westminster]

John Thurston, yeoman of John Chandos, [to travel] from [the ports of Dover, Southampton or Plymouth] to the town of St Sauveur, with three of his fellows, three hackneys, each below the price of 40s. a bascinet, a habergeon, a pair of gloves of mail, 24 bows, four dozen arrows and 6 cross-bows for the munition and the town of Saint-Sauveur, and 10 marks for his expenses.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Rymer's *Foedera*, 1830, III, II, 755; Delisle, 133.

¹⁵⁴ Gascon Rolls, C 61/75, 109; Rymer's *Foedera*, 1830, III, II, 841. Humbleton is referred to as an attorney in the Gascon Rolls on 24 October 1364, 26 January 1368 and 3 February 1369: Gascon Rolls C 61/77, 68; C 61/81, 1; C 61/82, 7.

¹⁵⁵ Palmer & Wells in Allmand, ed., 179.

¹⁵⁶ Green, 110.

¹⁵⁷ CPR 1367-70, 52, 56.

It was probably when he acquired St Sauveur that Chandos first employed a Frenchman from Valenciennes who became his herald, known to history as 'Chandos Herald'. In the 1380s, the Herald wrote a 'Life' of the Black Prince in verse, which was to become an important source for Froissart, and later historians.¹⁵⁸ Chandos Herald is first referred to in the historical record on November 18 1367, when he was given permission to travel from Dover to 'parts beyond the seas', which probably meant Normandy. He travelled with two grooms and three hackneys which he had previously brought to England from 'the parts of Gascony' and was paid ten marks for his expenses.¹⁵⁹

Likewise, one of Chandos's squires was given permission to travel from England to France in 1368, and again this probably meant that he was permitted to go to Normandy and St Sauveur (though it could have been to Bordeaux):

May 13, Westminster

John de Frechevill, one of the squires of John Chaundos from the ports of Dover, Sandwich, Southampton or Plymouth to the parts beyond seas with 3 yeomen, 4 horses, a bill of exchange for £10, and 20s for his passage.¹⁶⁰

Chandos received the income from the lordship of St Sauveur for several years, and he may have undertaken a certain amount of building work there. There is a *quittance* (or receipt) for a sum of 600 *royals*, paid to Chandos by Charles of Navarre on 29 October 1361, which refers to repairs (*perques du mur*), 'required to be made in the castle of Saint Sauveur by the subjects and inhabitants of towns belonging to the most noble and very excellent King of Navarre'; and, for what it is worth, the keep at St Sauveur is still known as the 'John Chandos Tower'. Sadly, however, it is likely that much of the re-apir work now in evidence was undertaken

¹⁵⁸ For the Herald as a source for Froissart, see Palmer, (ed.) *Froissart, Historian*, 31, 89.

¹⁵⁹ CPR, 1367-70, 57. It was once suggested that Chandos may have been the author of the *Vie du Prince Noir*: see the *Chronique de l'Etat Breton*, 291(n); but this seems extremely unlikely, since the author used a Northern French dialect. After Chandos's death, the Herald was made King of Arms by Richard II in 1377 and became herald to Thomas of Woodstock in 1381. He is mentioned in 1382 as 'the King of Arms of Ireland, Chandos by name.' He wrote his long poem on the life of the Black Prince in either 1385 or 1386: Pope & Lodge, Historical Introduction, liv. At least two of Chandos's servants found employment elsewhere after 1370, two of them in the household of John of Gaunt. These were (1) Lambert de Trekeingham, who had served Chandos and then the Duke of Brittany: *Le Premier Inventaire* ed., Jones, 250 and (n849); *Recueil des Actes de Jean IV, Tome III Supplément*, ed. Jones. 31, item 1207 and (n2). (2) A man known simply as 'Guyon' is described as Chandos's 'clerk' in an indenture dated 18 October 1370 (item 221 in Delpit, 132). Gaunt promised to provide the latter with board (*dépenses de bouche*) and an annual salary of 100 'gold francs in the coin of France' or its equivalent. Guyon's duties are not specified, but one wonders whether he was more than a mere clerk, because the phrase used (*au dit Guyon et a un sien clerc*) suggests that he had a clerk himself. Gaunt promises to obtain his release from imprisonment, within a month, if he is captured. It has been suggested that this Guyon was in fact Chandos Herald; but this is not accepted by all English authorities.

¹⁶⁰ CPR, 1367-70. 134.

by the ministers of King Charles V (1364-80) after the castle was re-captured by the French in 1375.¹⁶¹

Constable of Aquitaine

As we have seen, Chandos had been made Seneschal of Aquitaine in November 1361; but strangely Edward III appointed John de Chiverston as Seneschal in his place on 8 June 1362, and in doing so named Richard de Stafford (Chandos's predecessor) as outgoing Seneschal. This has caused the learned editors of the Gascon Rolls to question whether Chandos ever acted in that capacity.¹⁶² At any rate, it does seem that Chandos was no longer Seneschal of the Duchy, even in name, by the time the King addressed an order to de Chiverston on 14 June 1362. This refers to Chandos simply as 'Viscount of St Sauveur and Lieutenant of the King in parts of France'.¹⁶³ This style was used again in a royal order dated 20 June, which related to the city of Limoges. We have seen that Limoges had surrendered to Chandos, but it appears that the surrender had not restored harmony amongst her citizens. There was a conflict between the consuls and the local Viscount. Edward III sought to resolve this by ordering the Seneschal of the Limousin to see that the claims of the consuls to hold their town directly of the King, and to be independent of any intermediary such as the Viscount, were upheld. Chandos's ruling on the question was to be obeyed, since he was King's Lieutenant.¹⁶⁴ In addition Edward confirmed that Limoges should have the rights and liberties which Henry III had granted to the city in 1260. These ran to no less than 84 Articles, and the charter was attached to a letter which Chandos had signed, and 'sealed with his seal in green wax and silk cord', on 15 December 1361. According to Dr Simon J. Harris, this royal confirmation of Chandos's recommendation meant that Limoges was 'the biggest winner of royal largesse' in Aquitaine as a result of the settlement at Brétigny.¹⁶⁵

If we need a reason why Chandos's tenure of the office of Seneschal of Aquitaine was so brief, or so tenuous, it may be found in the fact that he was needed elsewhere, both in France and in England. There is another order issued by the King to the Seneschal of Périgord and Quercy on 22 June 1362, which refers to a dispute between certain burgesses of Périgueux. Chandos had heard the complaint but,

¹⁶¹ Delisle, *Preuves*, 157; *The Normans*, Christopher Gravett and David Nicolle (Osprey 2006), 223. Much of the work done in the 14th century was done in consciously archaic style; but this does not prove that it was done by the English.

¹⁶² Gascon Rolls, C 61/75, 36 & 37.

¹⁶³ Gascon Rolls, C 61/75, 24.

¹⁶⁴ Gascon Rolls, C 61/75, 42.

¹⁶⁵ Gascon Rolls, C 61/75, 48; and introduction to this Roll by Harris. Articles 52 and 60 dealt with latrines.

unfortunately, he been unable to give judgment, because he 'was with the King in England' at the time.¹⁶⁶

During the course of 1362, King Edward and his advisers decided to create a new state, to take the place of the old Duchy of Aquitaine. There was to be a new Principality in South-West France, with its capital in Bordeaux. The old officials - the Seneschals, receivers and councils for the various provinces - would remain; the language of government would remain French or Latin; and there would be no influx of English settlers, as there had been in Calais and the Calais March after 1348; but Aquitaine would become self-governing and self-financing and its ruler was to have his own seals and coinage.¹⁶⁷ The model of government would resemble that adopted in the Palatinates of Durham, Chester and Lancaster, though the King of England would remain as overlord.¹⁶⁸

The Black Prince was the obvious candidate to be the ruler of this new state, and it was predictable that his 'right-hand man' Chandos would hold high office under him. Sir John had previous experience of the political and legal complexities of ruling a palatinate, and his military expertise would also be indispensable, given the history and geography of Aquitaine. In a report sent to London on 8 March 1362 Chandos refers to himself as 'Lieutenant of the King of England in the whole *principality of Aquitaine*'. He must therefore have known of the plan to make the whole area a fief of the Prince's, or at least the outlines of the new system.¹⁶⁹

On 19 July 1362 the Prince did homage to Edward III for Aquitaine and began to receive its revenues. In August Chandos was given £20 a year for life out of the revenues of the manor of Chesterfield in Derbyshire, 'for past and future service and in consideration of the very great position he has held with the Prince.'¹⁷⁰ Froissart tells us how it came about that the Prince sailed for France:

There was, during this winter, a full parliament holden in England, respecting regulations for the country, but more especially to form establishments for the king's sons. They considered that the Prince of Wales kept a noble and grand state, as he might well do; for he was valiant, powerful, and rich, and had besides a large inheritance in Aquitaine, where provisions and everything else abounded. They therefore remonstrated with him, and told him from the king his father, that it would be proper for him to reside in his duchy, which would furnish him withal to keep as grand an establishment as he pleased.

¹⁶⁶ Gascon Rolls, C 61/75, 46.

¹⁶⁷ The Prince issued a gold coinage in 1364.

¹⁶⁸ Gascon Rolls, C 61/75, 50-54.

¹⁶⁹ Vale, *Ancient Enemy*, 49-52; for the coinage see Moisant, Appendix 6; Tout, vol V, 291(n2); POW 171.

¹⁷⁰ BPR, IV, 466, 537. On 24 October 1364, it is recorded in the Black Prince's Register that Thomas Holland Earl of Kent had given £20 a year for life out of the same manor. The Prince had learned that the auditors had disallowed £10 which the bailiff by command of the Princess paid to Sir John for Easter term 1361 – but the Prince now gave orders to cause the bailiff to be discharged of the said £10 on his account, and to allow him 40s a year as his fees.

The barons and knights of Aquitaine were also desirous of his residing among them, and had before intreated the king to allow him so to do; for although the lord John Chandos was very agreeable and kind to them, they still loved better to have their own natural lord and sovereign than any other. The Prince readily assented to this, and made every preparation becoming his own and his wife's rank. When all was ready, they took leave of the King, the Queen and their brothers; set sail from England, and were landed, with their attendants, at La Rochelle...

The Prince and Princess of Wales left England; soon after which they set out, and arrived at La Rochelle, where they were received with great joy, and remained four whole days. As soon as the lord John Chandos (who had governed the duchy of Aquitaine a considerable time) was informed that the Prince was coming, he set out from Niort, where he resided, and came to La Rochelle with a handsome attendance of knights and squires, where they feasted most handsomely the Prince, Princess, and their suite. The Prince was conducted from thence, with great honour and rejoicings, to the city of Poitiers. The barons and knights of Poitou and Saintonge, who at that time resided there, came and did homage and fealty to him.¹⁷¹

Froissart is often very inaccurate; and in fact the Prince was delayed by bad weather, and did not sail for Aquitaine until June 1363. Moreover, he made landfall in Bordeaux rather than La Rochelle; but it is true that there were elaborate ceremonies of welcome, in which Chandos participated as King's Lieutenant. Already governor of La Rochelle and commander in Saintonge, he was now appointed Constable of Aquitaine in July 1363. This was a military rather than a civilian post. Three years later, he was also appointed 'warden of lands and lordships in Poitou and Saintonge'.¹⁷²

At this point we may pause to reflect on the wisdom of Edward III's schemes for governing his possessions in South-West France. At Brétigny in 1360, he had agreed to give up his claim to the kingdom of France, in exchange for an enlarged Duchy of Aquitaine in full sovereignty; but (as early as 1361) he decided to create a new principality for his eldest son, of which he would, however, remain sovereign. In doing so, he was taking the continuing loyalty of the Gascons for granted; and the muddle created by this change of plan can be illustrated by reference to two events recorded in the Gascon Rolls, in which John Chandos played a played central role.

Firstly, it appears that in March 1361, Sir John ordered that certain criminal proceedings against Bernat Pelegrí 'and his people', begun by the King's proctor in Périgord and Quercy, be suspended 'until the coming of the Prince [of Wales]'. However, the local seneschal ignored his order and caused Pelegrí and his associate

¹⁷¹ Luce, VI, 80-1; 275-6.

¹⁷² Palmer, ed. 30; Delpit, 295; ODNB 2004 (The Prince, Barber); *AH de Poitou*, 268(n1).

Ramon Lestroa to be arrested and thrown into prison by the Constable of Bordeaux. Then, on 1 October 1362, the King ordered that these two should be released, and that Chandos's original orders be followed.¹⁷³ Yet we know that the Prince had not arrived in Aquitaine at this date, and it was to be another 9 months or so before he did. In these circumstances, it must have been difficult for men to know who was really in charge, and where they stood.

The second example relates to the Abbey of Saint-Maixent in Poitou. This had been in French hands for centuries; but, as we have seen, it was transferred from French to English sovereignty in 1360, and its privileges confirmed by Chandos. Then, when the Black Prince eventually arrived in Bordeaux, sovereignty was transferred to him, though his father preserved his position as suzerain; but the Gascon Rolls show that there was a further complication at the local level. Historically, St Maixent had come under the jurisdiction of Niort; but when the Edward III took control, this was transferred to Loudun, and when the Prince took charge, it was transferred again to Saintes. Both these places were much further away from St Maixent than Niort; and one wonders what the abbot and his community must have made of these changes, made at the whim of the English king, and in his interests.¹⁷⁴

The French agreement to cede Aquitaine in full sovereignty, and the decision by Edward III to create a new principality in favour of his eldest son, also had serious consequences in relation to homage, the foundation stone of loyalty in a feudal society. When Chandos had taken the homages in Gascony in 1361-2 he had done so on behalf of his King; but the royal grant to the Black Prince meant that these public demonstrations of fidelity were now of limited value. Edward III therefore informed his subjects in Aquitaine that they must now do homage again, to the Prince. We may wonder whether this did not devalue the importance of the ceremony.

The King appointed Chandos and the Earl of Warwick commissioners for the purpose;¹⁷⁵ but the taking of fresh homages proved very laborious. To begin with, there was an elaborate ceremony in the Cathedral of Saint-André in Bordeaux on 9 July 1363, attended by dozens of Gascon dignitaries: Counts, Viscounts, Barons, Knights, Squires, Gentlemen and others. The Constable of Bordeaux, Guillaume Séris, explained to those present that the Prince had been sent out as King's Lieutenant to receive their homages. This being agreed to, he read out two documents, by which the Prince was to hold Aquitaine and asked that the act of homage should be done yet again, this time to the Prince in person, as lord of Aquitaine (saving only sovereignty and *ressort* to the King). Only when this was also agreed did the main performance begin. Each vassal then knelt, bareheaded and without his belt, placing his hands between the Prince's own, while reciting the oaths of allegiance. When this was completed, Warwick and Chandos cancelled the homage done to the King, on the

¹⁷³ Gascon Rolls, 61/75, 99.

¹⁷⁴ Gascon Rolls, C 61/82, 44.

¹⁷⁵ Rymer, *Foedera* 1830, III, II, 668. See also Gascon Rolls, C 61/75, 84 & 86 (84 relates to Poitiers and Poitou, 86 to Aquitaine and Gascony).

basis that it was now done to the Prince and the vassal assented to this. 58 such homages were taken that day.¹⁷⁶

Between July 1363 and April 1364 the Prince received a further 1,047 homages, and from men of every rank: prelates; barons; knights, squires, mayors, consuls, sworn officials [*jures*] and citizens in the towns [*bourgeois*]. Numerous assemblies were held for the purpose, in the various capitals of the vast Principality: Bergerac, Perigueux, Angoulême, Saintes, La Rochelle, Niort, Poitiers and Agen. It was part of Chandos's duties to summon representatives from many places, large and small - Millau in Rouergue, the *bastides* of Villereal and Monflanquin in the Agenais and Port-Sainte-Marie on the Garonne - but many prominent individuals came in person.

Chandos was in Agen on 12 January 1364, when the Prince took the homage of Gaston Phoebus, Count of Foix. The proceedings were held in the *parlement* chamber of the House of the Friars Preacher and, although the Prince was present in person, the record shows that it was Chandos who was spokesman and master of ceremonies. Events took an unusual turn when the Count sought to equivocate about the nature and extent of the homage demanded of him. In reply Chandos asked him to clarify whether he was doing homage for the County of Béarn. Gaston Phoebus answered no, the homage related only to the Viscountcies of Marsan and Gavardan, because he was to be master in Béarn, in the same way as Edward was King of England and the Prince of Wales was lord of Aquitaine, though he added that, if anyone could prove that the county really did owe allegiance to the ruler of Aquitaine, he would gladly do what was legally required. The matter seems to have been left there, with the parties agreeing to disagree. This was probably unsatisfactory from the English point of view. Béarn may have had a complex legal history; but so did many places in France and England.¹⁷⁷

No-one was in a better position to describe the Prince's court than Chandos's own herald, though he was hardly impartial; and he clearly revelled in the experience:

[The Prince] reigned in Gascony seven years
In joy, peace and quietness.
Now I will tell you no untruth;
For all the lords and barons
Of all the neighbouring country

¹⁷⁶ The clerk who drew up the record of the proceedings refers to Chandos here as the Viscount of Saint-Sauveur. The records kept by the Black Prince when he was in Aquitaine (known as the Black Book) have largely disappeared; but parts have been reconstructed, including the homages taken in 1363-4. See *Le Livre des Hommages d'Aquitaine*, Jean-Paul Trabut-Cussac (Delmas 1959) item 528, pp 70-1 ; Moisant, 77; POW 179; Delpit, 295..

¹⁷⁷ Moisant, 80-81; Delpit, 86 et seq. 117-119 (Béarn). Monflanquin, in the Lot-et-Garonne, has a *Maison du Prince Noir*, where there is now a *Musée des Bastides* (2010). Two representatives were sent to do homage to the Prince in 1363-4.

Came to him to render homage.

Now I will tell you briefly,
Without any longer story,
Of his chief officers,
Who were right dear to him,
Whilst he was in Aquitaine,
With whom he was well contented.
In the first place,
John Chandos was his Constable.¹⁷⁸

Chandos had a household of his own even before he was appointed Constable of Aquitaine. Froissart describes how, when he was appointed 'regent and lieutenant of the King of England' in 1361:

[He] kept a noble and great establishment; and he had the means of doing it; for the King of England, who loved him much, wished it should be so. He was certainly worthy of it; for he was a sweet-tempered knight, courteous, benign, amiable, liberal, courageous, prudent and loyal in all affairs, and bore himself valiantly on every occasion: there was none more beloved and esteemed by the knights and ladies of his time.¹⁷⁹

This household came to include knights, squires, yeomen, clerks and various domestic servants, and a priest or priests. As early as November 1362 the King issued letters of protection (for a year) to Robert de Grendon, clerk, who was bound for Gascony as part of Sir Johns's 'company'.¹⁸⁰ The Prince's Register tells us that in the early 1360s Chandos had a squire, called Richard de Hampton, probably a Cheshire man.¹⁸¹ Among those allowed to leave England on 26 November 1367, by a permission issued at Windsor was:

John Wolse, esquire, from the ports of Southampton, Plymouth or Dartmouth to the parts of Aquitaine, to stay there in the company of John Chandos, with 3 men-at-arms, 6 archers, 24 horses, 6 horses bought for the said John Chandos, and £100 for his expenses.

By letter of secret seal.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ *Le Prince Noir*, lines 1598-1604; 4214-21.

¹⁷⁹ Luce, VI, 59.

¹⁸⁰ Rymer's *Foedera*, 1830, III, II, 682. When Chandos received a pension Charles of Navarre a priest called Jean Daillet was his receiver; and the receiver had a deputy, Haimon Gaillart: Izarn, 89.

¹⁸¹ Booth and Carr, 127. As we know, Chandos had been given the manor of Drakelow in Cheshire. In January 1363 Sir John granted Richard de Hampton £20 yearly out of the manor of Drakelow during his [Sir John's] life 'for past and future service'. The gift was confirmed by the Prince two years later in January 1365: BPR vol 3, 473.

¹⁸² CPR, 1367-70, 70-1.

The large amount this man was allowed to take with him, the use of the word 'company', the reference to archers and the stated destination might suggest that he was a soldier, charged with transporting wages for the troops, as well as animals. The following year, a man with the same name, but described this time as a *yeoman* rather than a squire, was also given permission to travel to Aquitaine, this time in an apparently civilian capacity:

Jan 14 [1368, Westminster]

John de Wolsley, yeoman of John de Chaundos, from the port of Southampton, Dartmouth or Plymouth to the parts of Gascony, with 2 servants, 2 grooms, 10 horses and 100 marks for his expenses.¹⁸³

Chandos must frequently have travelled between England and France. A variety of English ports were used for both the passage to Aquitaine and Normandy. He can seldom have travelled alone. Though he had no wife, brother or sons, he had his Herald, his men at arms and his manservants to accompany protect and entertain him, and record his feats of arms. One of these men at arms was Sir Simon Burley, who later became a favourite of Richard II.¹⁸⁴

Sir John was well rewarded for his service in Aquitaine. Moisant recorded that during the period of English rule in Aquitaine Chandos and other officials enjoyed the revenues of 22 *bailliages*, including those of la Sauvetat-de-Savères and of Castelsagrat, which he had captured during the Prince's great raid in 1355.¹⁸⁵ In the first edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (1900) – but not in the modern edition – it is stated that the Prince gave Chandos a life interest in the lands and barony of Chaumont in Gascony. Unfortunately, there are several places of that name in France, including Chaumont-sur-Loire, the site of a famous castle; but Chaumont near Périgueux is perhaps the most likely.¹⁸⁶ If so, the gift may not have been worth much, since this place is in a very remote region of Aquitaine, which in the event did not remain in Anglo-Gascon hands for long.

We learn very little about Chandos at leisure; but there is some evidence which shows him hunting in the Landes region south of Bordeaux. When relating Chandos's death in 1370, Froissart tells us that Sir John had lost an eye some five or

¹⁸³ CPR, 1367-70, 74.

¹⁸⁴ Chandos granted him 100 marks sterling for life out of the Viscountcy of St Sauveur: Rymer's *Foedera*, 1830, III, II, 1005-6. Burley was back in the Prince's service by the time of the English counterattack on Limoges in 1371. He became tutor to the young Richard II and was later a favourite at court. He gave evidence in the trial of Scrope v Grosvenor (1385-6), achieved high office and was beheaded during the troubles of 1388, when he also lost all his estates: *The Scrope v Grosvenor Controversy*, vol I, 206.

¹⁸⁵ Moisant, 116-7.

¹⁸⁶ Ducluzeau, 173, refers to the place as 'Chaumont-en-Gascogne'.

more years before, while hunting in the Landes near Bordeaux: *car il avoit l'oeil estaint, et avoit eu bien cinq ans, et le perdi ens es lands de Bourdiaus, en cachant un cerf.*¹⁸⁷ Sir John also seems to have had a lifelong interest in music. As we saw earlier, he may have introduced a dance from Germany in 1350 and he certainly employed minstrels in France. Four of them were given permission to travel from Dover to Gascony in March 1368, taking two yeomen and four hackneys (provided that they were worth less than 40s each), with their 'girdles, buckles and other gear'; 20s each for their expenses; and 'a bill of exchange for 200 marks'.¹⁸⁸

As Constable, Chandos took part in the great ceremonial occasions staged by the Prince and his courtiers. One of these took place in the spring of 1364, when Chandos led the escort which greeted King Peter of Cyprus at the gates of Angoulême. Peter had come to seek assistance against the Ottoman Sultan, who had captured Gallipoli in 1356, thereby establishing the first Turkish foothold in Europe. The King had led a counterattack, which succeeded in capturing Antalya on the Turkish mainland, but he desperately needed allies. Pope Urban V favoured a new crusade and Peter visited Paris, Normandy, England and Aquitaine to promote the idea. The rulers of England and France gave it a cool reception, though Jean II said that he would take the Cross once he was finally released from imprisonment in England.¹⁸⁹ However, Froissart emphasizes that Chandos played a leading role in providing King Peter with an escort:

As soon as the Prince was informed of the arrival of the King of Cyprus at Poitiers, he sent by special command, Sir John Chandos, attended by many knights and squires of his household, to meet him. They accompanied him, with great joy and respect, to the Prince, who received him most kindly and honourably...¹⁹⁰

[The King of Cyprus] was most graciously received by his royal highness, and by all the barons, knights and squires of Poitou and Saintonge who were then with the Prince, such as ...the lord of Partenay, Sir Louis de Harcourt, Sir Guiscard d'Angle; and, among the English, by Sir John Chandos, Sir Thomas Felton, Sir Nigel Loring, Sir Richard de Pontchardon, Simon Burley and several others, as well of that country as from England. The King of Cyprus was magnificently entertained by the Prince, Princess, and the barons and knights above-mentioned. He stayed there upwards of a month; and then Sir John Chandos accompanied him, for his amusement, into different parts of Poitou and Saintonge, and showed him the good town of La Rochelle, where there was a grand feast made for him. When he had seen everything, he

¹⁸⁷ Luce, vol. 7, 203.

¹⁸⁸ CPR, 1367-70. 131. The reference to this bill of exchange is especially interesting. It indicates that the new Italian methods of banking were being used by Chandos, possibly to pay his men.

¹⁸⁹ Renouard (1994).

¹⁹⁰ Luce, VI, 93.

returned to Angoulême, to assist at the noble tournament which the Prince held, where there were plenty of knights and squires.

Soon after this feast, the King of Cyprus took his leave of the Prince and of the knights of the country, but not before he had related to them the principal reason of his visit, and for what cause he had put on the red cross which he wore: how the Pope had blessed this expedition, which was deserving of every praise; and how the King of France through devotion, as well as many other great lords, had put it on, and had sworn to its execution. The Prince and the knights made him a courteous answer, saying, that in truth it was an expedition in which every man of worth or honour was interested; and that, if it pleased God, and the passage were open, he would not be alone, but would be followed by all those who were desirous to advance themselves. The King of Cyprus was well pleased with this speech and took his departure; but Sir John Chandos attended him, until he had quitted the principality...¹⁹¹

There was also a great day in Angoulême in March 1365, when the Prince's first son, Edward of Angoulême, born in the new Principality, was baptised. 154 lords and 706 knights attended, 18,000 horses were provided with stabling, and over £400 was spent on candles.

As Constable Chandos was commander-in-chief of all Anglo-Gascon forces in the South-West; and he was also responsible for hearing disputes about the profits of war (for example, the taking of prisoners and ransoms).¹⁹² In 1366, when he was assembling the army of invasion for Castile, he was called on to determine a very difficult case. The background to this was that a number of Free Companies had marched into English Aquitaine to serve the Prince and their leaders included Sir Perducas d' Albret, Sir Robert Cheney and other prominent Englishmen and Gascons. Their way was barred at Montauban by the Viscount of Narbonne, the Seneschals of Carcassonne and Beaucaire and a number of other French knights; but the mercenaries had the better of the fighting and took several important prisoners. In accordance with the law of arms, the mercenaries (or 'companions' as Froissart calls them) released their prisoners on parole, against the promise of ransoms. The complication was that the Pope had previously excommunicated all members of the Free Companies (and any who gave them succour); and he ordered the French not to pay what was due. The Free Companies, who had moved into English Aquitaine, complained to the Constable.

Chandos was in a difficult position. Politically and militarily it would have been expedient to help the 'companions'. After all, some of them were English, and all were potential recruits for the Prince's army; but, on the other hand, the law of arms was quite clear. The great jurist John of Legnano (c. 1320-1383), who was one

¹⁹¹ Luce, VI, 97.

¹⁹² Green, 76.

of the Pope's advisers, had written that it was only wars made on the authority of a prince which were lawful; and in his view:

If the person declaring war has no jurisdiction, but is merely defending himself and his property, then he may not capture and detain the assailant because he is only allowed to defend himself, and that only within the limits of justifiable defence...¹⁹³

In addition the Pope himself was a source of canon law, and he had specifically forbidden the French to pay what the Free Companies demanded.

It is to Chandos's credit that he was prepared to administer justice in accordance with the law, when the ties of loyalty (and self-interest) pointed in the opposite direction. He rejected the appeal made by the companions. Here is Froissart's account of the affair:

Pope Urban V... hated mortally these Free Companies, whom he had for a long time excommunicated on account of their wicked deeds. Upon being informed of this engagement, and how the Viscount of Narbonne, having exerted himself to the utmost to succeed in his attack upon them, had been miserably defeated, he was in a great rage. This was increased on learning that, having been given pledges for their ransoms, they were returned home. He immediately sent expresses to them, strictly forbidding them to pay any ransom, and at the same time dispensations and absolutions from all engagements on this subject.

Thus were these lords, knights and squires, who had been made prisoners at Montauban, acquitted of their ransoms; for they dared not disobey the orders of the Pope. It turned out luckily for some, but quite the contrary to the companions, who were expecting the money: indeed they were in want of it, and intended out of it to equip themselves handsomely, as soldiers should do who have a sufficiency, but they never received anything. The order of the Pope was so injurious to them that they made frequent complaints of it to Sir John Chandos, who, being constable of Aquitaine, had the superintendence of such affairs by right of office: but he turned them off as well as he could, because he was fully acquainted that they were excommunicated by the Pope, and that that all their thoughts and acts were turned to pillage. I do not believe they ever received any of this debt at any time afterwards.¹⁹⁴

Chandos continued to act as Lieutenant for Edward III in France as a whole, even when Aquitaine was transferred to the Prince. He was clearly regarded as a

¹⁹³ John of Legnano, *Tractatus de Bello*, ed. T.E.Holland (Carnegie Institution of Washington, Oxford University Press 1917), xii, 269, 275.

¹⁹⁴ Chaplain, 149-158; Keen, *Laws of War* 27(n 6); Ainsworth, 79; Luce, VI, 228; 380 (Amiens Ms).

safe pair of hands, and a man who commanded respect in all parts of the French kingdom, as well as having an important powerbase in Normandy. As King's Lieutenant, Chandos exercised wide powers, but he had subordinate officers, in particular the Seneschals, to whom he could delegate. For example, there was a dispute in Poitou in 1363 concerning the *guet* – the obligation to provide men for guard duty' in castles. The lord of Parthenay claimed the right to compel the inhabitants of the village of St Hilaire-sur-l'Autize (now St Hilaire-des-Loges) to guard the castle of Mervent, although this fell under the jurisdiction of the royal headquarters (*chatellerie*) of Fontenay-le-Comte. The Chapter of St Hilaire de Poitiers complained to Chandos, who ordered William Felton, Seneschal of Poitou, to deal with the case.¹⁹⁵ Similarly, on 5 November 1366 Edward III gave judgment in a suit between the church of St Severin in Bordeaux and Peter of Crayssana. In the course of the proceedings it was recited that Chandos had summoned Peter to appear before the *Parlement* of Aquitaine. It seems unlikely that he would have done that as Constable, since the latter was primarily a military office; and indeed the King refers to him in the relevant document as 'our Lieutenant in Aquitaine'.¹⁹⁶

One of Chandos's most important functions was to act as a diplomat and ambassador. As early as August 1361 the King issued a safe conduct to twelve knights who were passing through England on a mission to Scotland, on behalf of Charles of Navarre, and this was done at Sir John's request.¹⁹⁷

Edward III's main concern in the mid 1360s was to secure the balance of Jean II's ransom, agreed upon at Brétigny. Because of this, he was unwilling to release other French prisoners captured at Poitiers, though Jean himself was allowed to go home in 1360, on condition that further hostages were provided. The most important of these prisoners were 'the Four Lilies': the Dukes of Orléans, Anjou, Berry and Bourbon. They took up residence in England, in conditions of considerable luxury – Orléans had sixteen servants with him and a total retinue of around 60 - but they still wanted to go home as soon as possible. By the autumn of 1362, they had lost patience with the slow pace at which the king's ransom was being paid, and they decided to fend for themselves. On 1 November they concluded a private treaty with Edward, promising 200,000 écus and offering various fortresses as security, including Dun, Ainay and La Roche-sur-Yon in Poitou. Froissart was aware of these events:

About this time, the King of England showed much favour to four Dukes, that is the Duke of Orléans, the Duke of Anjou, the Duke of Berry, and the Duke of Bourbon. These lords had returned to Calais, whence they had liberty to make excursions whither they chose for three days; but they were to return on the fourth day by sunset. The King had granted this favour with the good intent

¹⁹⁵ Ledain, citing *Chartes de Sainte-Hilaire de Poitiers*.

¹⁹⁶ Rymer's *Foedera* 1830, III, II, 813.

¹⁹⁷ Rymer's *Foedera* 1830, III, II, 625.

of their being nearer to make solicitations to their friends, and that they might hasten their ransoms, which they were eager to do. During the time the four above-mentioned lords were at Calais, they sent many and pressing messages to the King of France, and to [Charles] the Duke of Normandy his eldest son, who had nominated them as hostages, to remonstrate with them on the subject of their ransoms, which they had sworn and promised to attend to at the time they went to England, otherwise they would have undertaken it themselves, threatening no longer to consider themselves as prisoners. But although these lords were, as you know, very near relations to the king of France, their solicitors and messengers were not listened to...

What Froissart does not report is the punitive action ordered by Edward III when the negotiations with the Four Lillies failed, but it appears from the archives that, on 12 May 1363, the King gave orders to Chandos, William Felton and William de Séris to value the hostages's properties, find out how much it would cost to maintain the strongholds there and report back. Some months later, he ordered the seizure of Dun, Ainay and la Roche sur Yon, as part of this exercise.¹⁹⁸ Further, in 1364, the King endowed his youngest son, Thomas of Woodstock (b. 1355) with the Duke of Orleans's confiscated estates in Poitou and Saintonge, despite the fact that these were now part of the Black Prince's new principality; and on 20 July 1366 he appointed Chandos and William de Séris to take possession of these places on Thomas's behalf.¹⁹⁹ It was clearly part of Chandos's job to continue to follow royal orders, notwithstanding his allegiance to the Prince; but there is an interesting sequel to this appointment. On 1 October 1369 Chandos was granted the keeping of three castles at Melle, Chizé and Civray, said to be part of Thomas of Woodstock's lands and lordships in Poitou, for a term of 10 years, at a rent of 500 marks a year. It might seem as if this was a handsome reward; but we should bear in mind that by this date, the war with the French had started up again; and with hindsight, the grant looks rather like re-arranging the deckchairs on *Titanic*.²⁰⁰

It was also part of Sir John's job to maintain links with the Free Companies operating in France, after the general peace of 1360. As the French suspected, Edward III had disbanded his field army, but maintain contact with these 'irregulars', and used them to put pressure on his adversary, despite the terms of the peace. Chandos was one of his main points of contact. He knew his way around France and, more importantly, he must have known many of the *routier* captains personally, since he had fought alongside them in the 1350s.²⁰¹

Chandos did not always have it all his own way. He rose very high – there was no higher post, from the military point of view, than Constable of Aquitaine.

¹⁹⁸ Luce, VI, 86; 280; Tuchman, 194; Rymer, *Foedera* (1830) III, II, 699 (order to value); (1740) III, II, 76 (order to take possession); Sumption, II, 452, 498-9.

¹⁹⁹ Gascon Rolls, C 61/79, 67 (and Simon Harris's note in the Introduction to this Roll).

²⁰⁰ Gascon Rolls, C 61/82, 171.

²⁰¹ Fowler, MMI, 99, 113, 198.

Yet, in the eyes of at least some members of the English aristocracy, he remained an upstart. Unlike his French friend Guichard d'Angle (who was eventually made Earl of Huntingdon) Chandos was never ennobled in England. Although he had been made a knight as early as 1339, he had to wait a long time – and until he had accumulated a sufficient estate – before he was even promoted to banneret, despite his closeness to the Prince, his membership of the Garter and his sterling service at Poitiers. Moreover, he suffered more than one challenge to his authority. As we shall see, Sir Hugh Calveley questioned his decision to put him in charge of the rearguard at Auray in 1364, while the Earl of Pembroke refused to serve under him in 1369.

Froissart records the most extraordinary episode under the year 1386 (over fifteen years after Chandos was killed). He tells us that Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford and a favourite of Richard II, was generally disliked for his bad manners. It was thought that these could be traced back to the way he had been brought up by his father, Aubrey de Vere; and we are told how the latter had behaved at the court of the Black Prince in Aquitaine. Supposedly, Aubrey de Vere had attended a banquet at the Inn of St Andrew in Bordeaux. A ceremonial cup, brimming with claret, was served to the Prince, who drained it. The cup-bearer then took it to Chandos, ignoring Oxford in the process. The Earl lost his temper when this happened since, in his book, servants should serve dinner-guests in order, according to their station in society. To make his point, he then proceeded to insist that the servant should, after all, serve Chandos before him; but Chandos declined to drink. Oxford then shouted that, if Chandos would not take the drink, he would have it thrown in his face.

Chandos could give as good as he got. He overheard what de Vere said and, instead of having a private word with him afterwards, reprimanded him before the other dinner-guests. He pointed out, not only that he was the Constable of Aquitaine, but also that he had commanded 60 lances at the Battle of Poitiers, whereas Oxford had commanded four; and he recalled, for the benefit of those present who might have been unaware of it, that Oxford had only been at Poitiers in the first place because Edward III had expressly commanded him to be. (Allegedly, the Earl had participated in the Prince's raid of 1355 but returned home prematurely, in breach of a promise he had made to the King. Edward had found out about this and ordered him to return to France within four days, on pain of death and the loss of his estates.)

This story was probably untrue. Although de Vere was in Aquitaine in 1366 and fought at Nájera the following year, he was the uncle, not the father, of Robert de Vere; and there is no evidence that he participated in the Battle of Poitiers. Nonetheless, Froissart's fable has much to tell us about Chandos and his place in society. It is the kind of story which men of the next generation expected to hear

about him: a story of true nobility triumphing over a man who was noble in name only.²⁰²

²⁰² Luce, XIV, 18-22; Ainsworth, 208; ODNB 2004 (article on de Vere by Anthony **Goodman**). Froissart spelt Oxford ‘Asquessufort’.



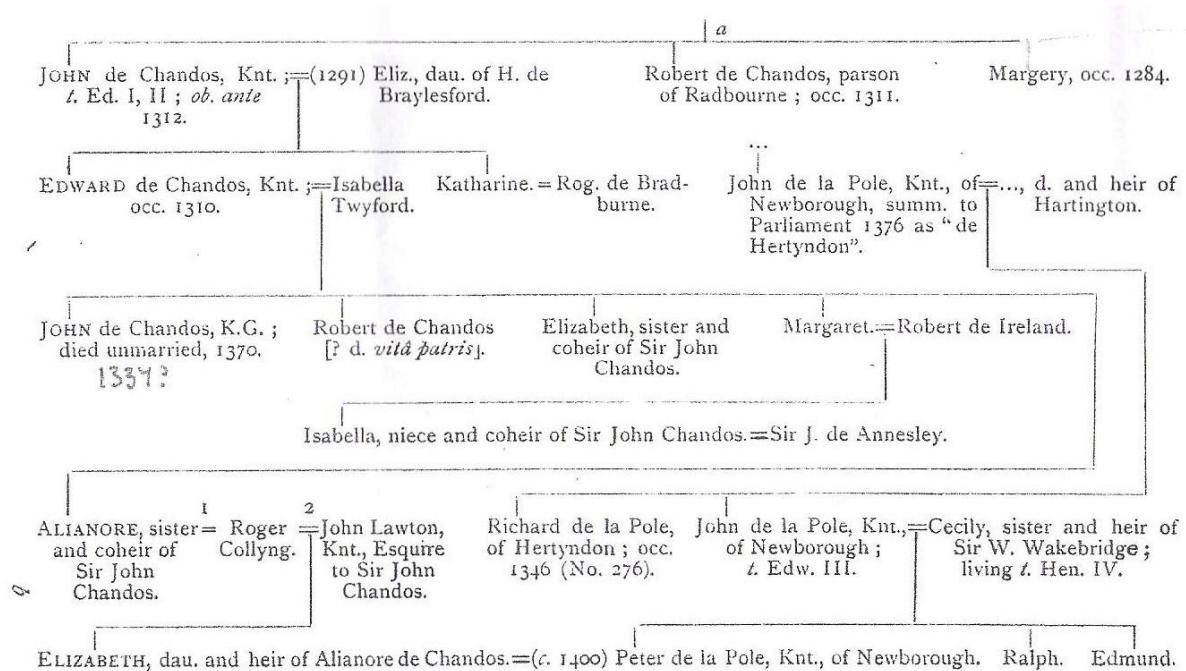
Radbourne Parish Church in Derbyshire



Mugginton Parish Church in Derbyshire



The Pole tomb in Radbourne Parish Church



The family tree of Sir John Chandos



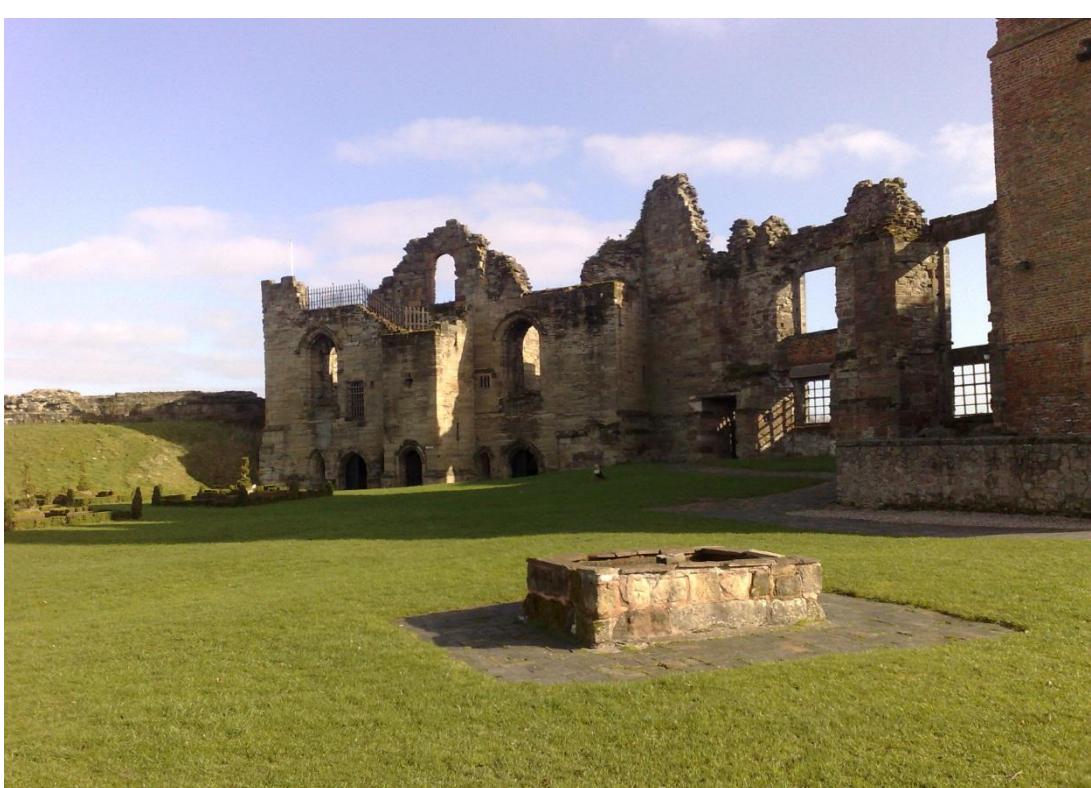
The North and South Towers at Tutbury Castle, Staffordshire



'John of Gaunt's Gate' at Tutbury



The North Tower and Gatehouse at Tutbury



The South Tower at Tutbury



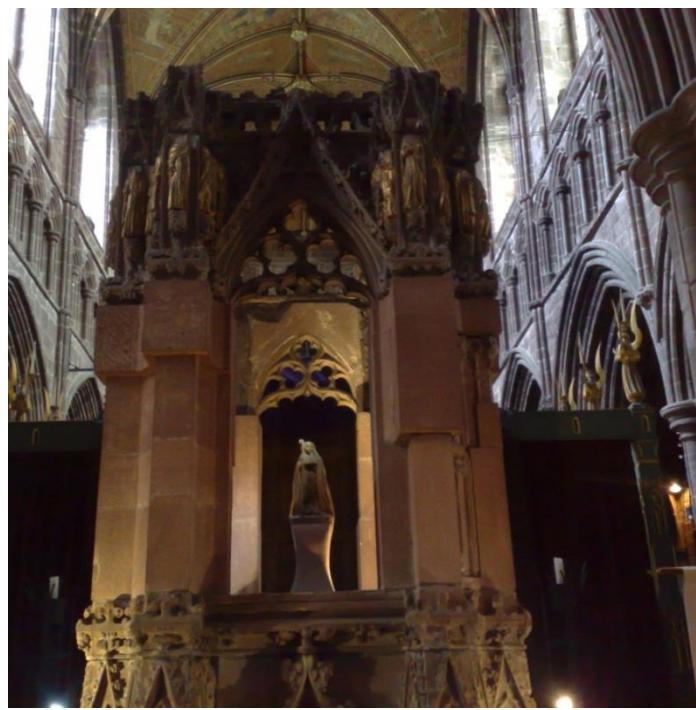
Chester Castle



The bridge over the River Dee at Chester



Chester Cathedral



The Shrine of St Werburgh in Chester Cathedral



The Albert Memorial Chapel at Windsor Castle



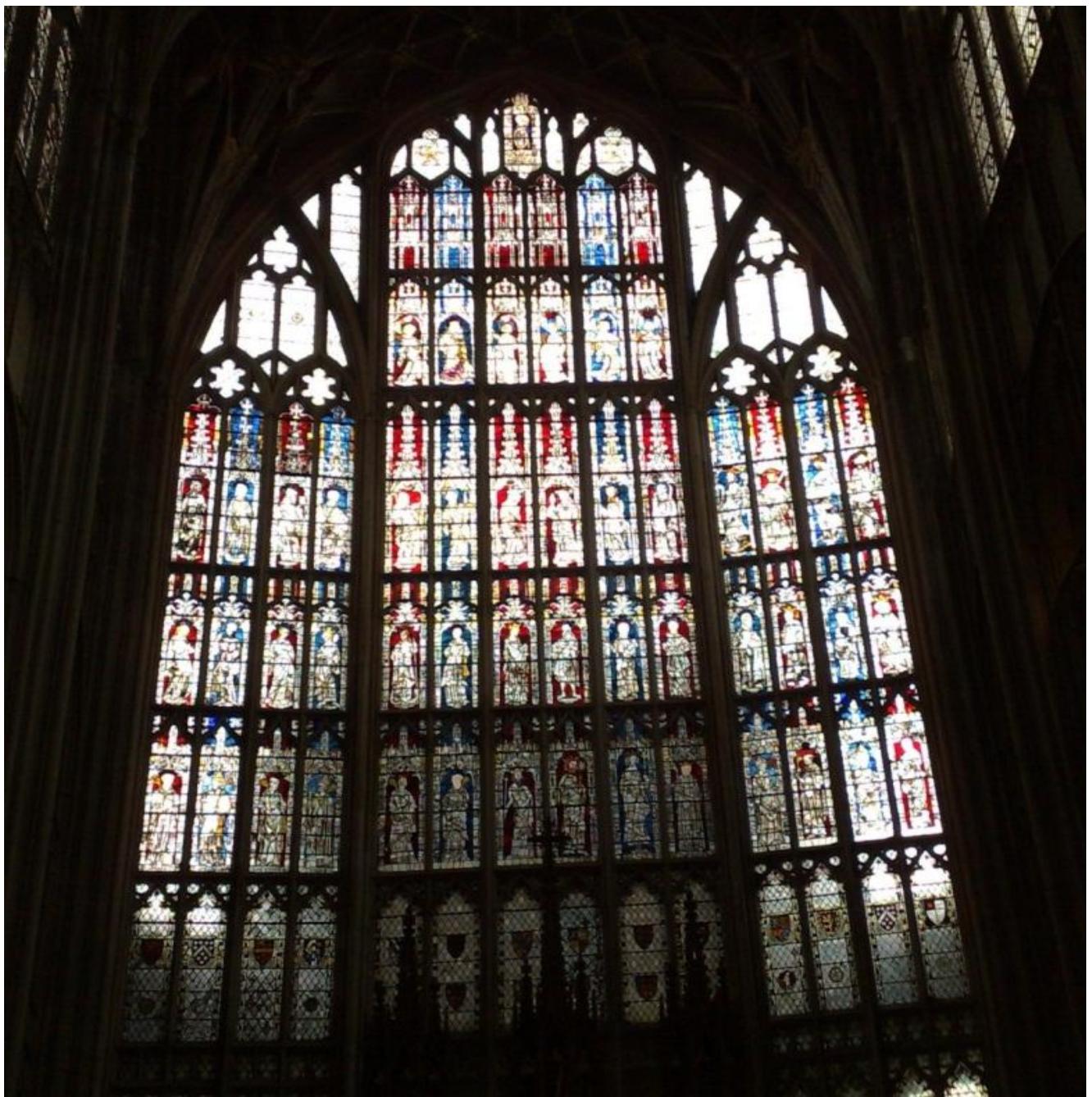
Chandos's Garter Plate in St George's Chapel, Windsor



Grosmont Castle in Monmouthshire



The 14th century chimney at Grosmont castle



The Crécy Window in Gloucester Cathedral



The tomb of Jean II at St Denis



King John of France After the Battle of Poitiers, Benjamin West (1738-1820)



The tomb of Charles V at St Denis



The tomb of Bertrand du Guesclin at St Denis



The Papal Palace at Avignon



The *Château* of Vincennes near Paris



The keep at St Sauveur-le-Vicomte



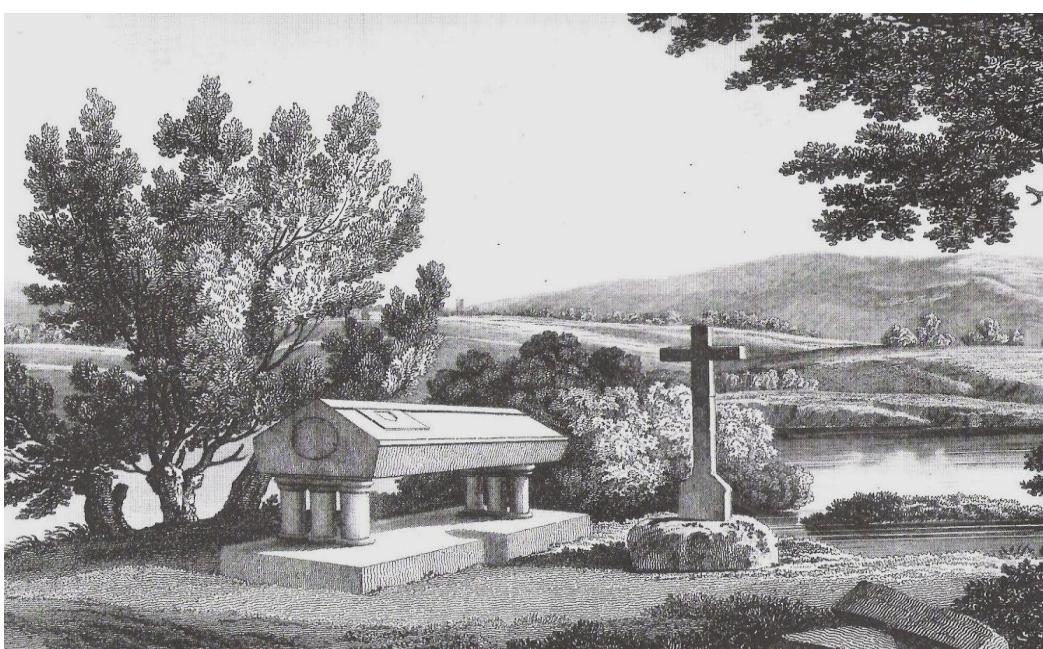
The Bridge at Cahors



Jean Chandos at Cahors, by Jacques Leman (1829-89)



The death charge at Lussac



Major Smith's illustration of Chandos's cenotaph (1821).



Lussac



Lussac

The Battle of Auray

King Henry V was wont to refer to the Treaty of Brétigny as ‘the Great Peace’; but the peace had been far from perfect. Armed conflict had continued in many parts of France after 1360 and there had been several proxy wars between the allies of the Plantagenet and Valois, from which the English and the French did not always stand aside. The *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois* tells us that, in 1364, a fort called Camerolles, not far from Orléans, was besieged by the Duke of Burgundy; and that Chandos, Hugh Calveley and Robert Knollys arrived with ‘a great company of English’ to relieve it.²⁰³ At the same time there was renewed fighting in Brittany, which involved Chandos and Bertrand du Guesclin once more.

The civil war in Brittany had been more or less continuous for over twenty years. The French continued to support Charles of Blois, while de Montfort accompanied the Black Prince on a tour of Aquitaine and Poitou in the winter of 1363-4. In addition, there were several Englishmen in de Montfort’s household, including John Basset, who had served with Sir John in 1361-2; John FitzNicol, who served him before becoming Admiral of Brittany; and Lambert de Trekeingham who initially worked as a clerk in Chandos’s household but who was then one of the Duke of Brittany’s ‘special messengers’.²⁰⁴

As the ruler of Aquitaine, the Black Prince made at least one attempt of his own to bring a peaceful end to the war in Brittany, and Chandos was a witness to these proceedings; but the negotiations proved abortive and, when French invasion threatened, the Prince decided to help de Montfort once again with troops. According to Cuvelier:

...John Chandos came into the area
As well as Knollys, a bold knight,
Together with 900 or 1,000 English archers.²⁰⁵

The chronicler of the Breton civil war, Guillaume de Saint-André, confirms that Chandos was amongst those who flocked to the standard of Jean de Montfort at Auray: there were Breton, English and German troops there, and amongst their leaders were Chandos, Olivier de Clisson, Latimer, William Felton, Robert Knollys and Hugh Calveley;²⁰⁶ but it is Froissart, as usual, who has the most detailed account:

²⁰³ CQPV, 151-2.

²⁰⁴ He was sent to England in February 1366 with a sum of money for a London merchant. For Trekeingham and Fitznicol see *Le Premier Inventaire* ed., Jones, 250 and (n849); 252 and (n863); *Recueil des Actes de Jean IV, Tome III Supplément*, ed. Jones. 31, item 1207 and (n2); Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 41(n4), 42(n2), 43(n2).

²⁰⁵ *Recueil des Actes de Jean IV*, ed., Jones, 90, item 32 ; CQPV, 159, 161; *Chronique*, lines 5389-5391.

²⁰⁶ *Chronique de l’Etat Breton*, 291.

As soon as [de Montfort] heard [of the French threat], he made it known in the Duchy of Aquitaine to the knights and squires of England who were there, and in particular to Sir John Chandos, earnestly entreating them to come to his aid in the difficulties he was about to encounter: adding, that he expected Brittany would afford such a field of honour, that all knights and squires who were desirous of advancing their name ought most cheerfully to come thither.

When Chandos saw himself thus affectionately entreated by de Montfort, he spoke of it to the Prince of Wales, to know how he should act. The Prince said, he might go there without any blame, since the French had already taken part against de Montfort, in support of the lord Charles; and he advised him to accept the invitation. Sir John was much rejoiced at this, and made accordingly grand preparations. He asked several knights and squires of Aquitaine to accompany him; but few went except the English. However, he conducted full 200 lances, and as many archers, and marching through Poitou and Saintonge, entered Brittany. He went straight to the siege of Auray, where he found de Montfort, who was very happy at his arrival; as were Sir Olivier de Clisson, Sir Robert Knollys, and the other companions. It seemed to them, that now no evil could befall them, since Sir John Chandos was in their company...²⁰⁷

Froissart also emphasizes Chandos's role in the action which ensued:

The commanders of the army then waited on de Montfort; first Sir John Chandos (whose advice he meant in particular to follow,) Sir Eustace d'Ambreticourt, Sir Robert Knollys, Sir Hugh Calverly, Sir Matthew Gournay ...though the Count of Montfort was the commander in chief, yet it was under the sole direction of Sir John Chandos: for the King of England had thus settled it with de Montfort. He had also ordered Sir John Chandos to have especial regard to whatever concerned the interests of his son-in-law; for de Montfort had received one of the king's daughters in marriage. In obedience to such orders, Chandos advanced before the knights and squires of Brittany who were about the person of de Montfort, and having well considered the dispositions of the French in his own mind, thought so highly of them, he could not remain silent, but said:

'As God is my help, it appears to me that all the flower and honour of chivalry is there, most wisely and expertly drawn up.'

He then added aloud to those knights who were within hearing:

²⁰⁷ Luce, VI, 149-152; 327-8.

'Gentlemen, it is time that we form our line of battle; for the enemy have set us the example.'

Those who heard him replied:

'Sir, you say truly; and, as you are our commander, you will form us according to your wish; for there is none higher than yourself to look to, and you know much better than any one how to order such things.'

Sir John Chandos formed three battalions and a rear-guard. He placed over the first, Sir Robert Knollys, Sir Walter Huet, and Sir Richard Burley. The second battalion was under the command of Sir Olivier de Clisson, Sir Eustace d'Ambreticourt, and Sir Matthew Gournay. De Montfort had the third, which was to remain near his person. There were in each battalion 500 men at arms, and 400 archers.

There now follows one of those disputes about rank and precedence which seemed to dog Chandos throughout his career, perhaps because as a mere knight he could never command the same unquestioning obedience as a member of the nobility peerage. To understand the problem, we must understand too that pride of place, for a medieval commander, required that one command a battalion, and preferably the vanguard.

When he came to the rear-guard, he called Sir Hugh Calvely to him, and said:

'Sir Hugh, you will take the command of the rear-guard of 500 men, and keep on our wing, without moving one step, whatever may happen, unless you shall see an absolute necessity for it; such as our battalions giving way, or being by accident broken: in that case, you will hasten to succour those who are giving way, or who may be in disorder: and assure yourself, you cannot this day do a more meritorious service.'

When Sir Hugh heard Chandos give him these orders, he was much hurt and angry with him, and said:

'Sir John, Sir John, give the command of this rear-guard to some other; for I do not wish to be troubled with it'; and then added,

'Sir Knight, for what manner of reason have you thus provided for me? and why am not I as fit and proper to take my post in the front-rank as others?'

Sir John discreetly answered:

'Sir Hugh, I did not place you with the rear-guard because you were not as good a knight as any of us; for, in truth, I know that you are equally valiant with the best: but I ordered you to that post, because I now you are both bold and prudent, and that it is absolutely necessary for you or me to take that command, I therefore most earnestly entreat it of you; for, if you will do so, we shall all be the better for it; and you yourself will acquire great honour: in addition, I promise to comply with the first request you may make me.'

Notwithstanding this handsome speech of Sir John Chandos, Sir Hugh refused to comply, considering it as a great affront offered him, and entreated, through the love of God, with uplifted hands, that he would order some other to that command; for, in fact, he was anxious to enter the battle with the first. This conduct nearly brought tears to the eyes of Sir John. He again addressed him, gently saying:

'Sir Hugh, it is absolutely necessary that either you or I take this command: now, consider which can be most spared.'

Sir Hugh, having considered this last speech, was much confused, and replied:

'Certainly, Sir, I know full well that you would ask nothing from me which could turn out to my dishonour; and, since it is so, I will very cheerfully undertake it.'

Sir Hugh Calvely then took the command of the battalion called the rear-guard, entered the field in the rear, on the wing of the others, and formed his line.²⁰⁸

As at Poitiers eight years previously, attempts were made to avoid Christian bloodshed:

Whilst either party was forming or dividing its battalions, the lord of Beaumanoir, a very great and rich baron of Brittany, was going to and from each army, with propositions for peace. Very willingly would he have laboured, if he had been able to ward off the perils that were on the point of happening. He was earnest in the business: and the English and Bretons on the side of Montfort allowed him to pass and repass, to parley with Sir John Chandos, and de Montfort... [But] in the course of this evening, some English knights and squires earnestly begged of Sir John Chandos that he would not listen to any overtures of peace between de Montfort and Charles of Blois; for they had expended their whole fortune, and were so poor, that they hoped by

²⁰⁸ Luce, VI, 155-9; 329-34 ; Palmer (*Froissart, Historian*, ed), 168(n51).

means of a battle, either to lose their all or to set themselves up again. The knight assented to the request...

When Sunday morning came, each army made itself ready, and armed. Many masses were said in that of Lord Charles, and the sacrament was administered to all who wished it. The same was done in the army of Montfort: and a little before sun-rise, each person posted himself in the same battle array as on the preceding day.

Shortly after, the lord de Beaumanoir, who had prepared different proposals of peace, and who would willingly have brought them to some agreement, had he been able, returned to the charge, and came galloping towards Sir John Chandos, who left his battalion and de Montfort, at the time with him, as soon as he perceived his intentions, and advanced into the plain to meet him. When the lord de Beaumanoir came up, he saluted him very humbly, and said:

'I entreat of you, Sir John Chandos, in the name of God, that we may bring these two lords to some agreement; for it is a great pity that so many good persons who are here should slaughter each other in support of their opinions.'

Sir John Chandos gave him a very different answer than he expected from what had passed on the preceding evening:

'Lord de Beaumanoir, I would advise you not to make any more attempts at peace to-day; for our men declare that, if they can enclose you within their ranks, they will kill you. You will say to Lord Charles de Blois, that happen what may, the lord John de Montfort is determined to risk the event of a combat. Have done, therefore, with all ideas of peace or agreements; for he will this day be Duke of Brittany, or die in the field.'

When the lord de Beaumanoir had received this answer from Chandos, he was mightily enraged, and replied:

'Chandos, Chandos, that is not less the intention of my lord, who has as good a will to fight as the lord John de Montfort: his army are also of the same mind.'

At these words, he set off without saying anything more, and went to Lord Charles and the barons of Brittany, who were waiting for him.

Sir John Chandos returned to the earl of Montfort, who asked,

'How goes on the treaty? What does our adversary say?'

'What does he say?' replied Chandos: 'why, he sends word by the lord de Beaumanoir, who has this instant left me, that he will fight with you at all events, and remain duke of Brittany, or die in the field.'

This answer was made by Sir John, in order to excite the courage of de Montfort; and he continued saying,

'Now consider what you will determine to do, whether to engage or not.'

'By St. George,' answered de Montfort, 'engage I will, and God assist the right cause: order our banners to advance immediately.'

With regard to the lord de Beaumanoir, he said to lord Charles de Blois:

'My lord, my lord, by St. Ives I have heard the proudest speech from John Chandos that my ears have listened to for a long time: he has just assured me, that the Earl of Montfort shall remain Duke of Brittany, and will clearly show to you that you have not any right to it.'

These words brought the colour into lord Charles' cheeks; when he answered,

'Let God settle the right, for he knows to whom it belongs'.²⁰⁹

Viewed through modern eyes, it may seem as if Froissart has damned Chandos here as the 'universal soldier', a mercenary captain who in the last analysis will always prefer to make money rather than save lives; but the truth is that neither side was willing to contemplate a peaceful settlement in 1364, any more than they had been before Poitiers in 1356; and in any case Chandos was never in a position to ignore his the wishes of his master and commander.

In Cuvelier' account Sir John played a much more positive part in these negotiations. He is portrated as thinking that a peace treaty might be a good idea:

'Here is a sensible compromise'.²¹⁰

And Chandos also invokes ancient precedent:

'Even rich King David, in the Bible,
Said that the man was blessed of God, who was righteous
But shared the land with his neighbour'.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Luce, VI, 161-2; 335-6.

²¹⁰ *Voici .I. bon traité... Chronique*, line 5498.

²¹¹ *Chronique*, (variant) lines 5503-16.

On the other hand, once it is clear that peace is not going to work, Chandos concentrates on raising the morale of his men for the battle to come:

'By my faith in God, who created everything,
And in the Prince of Wales, who sent me here,
And in the King of England, who is father to the Prince!
I will never give my assent to any agreement.
Let us assemble our people, and let them come thither,
They will all be accepted, believe you me;
Then we will see who loves honour,
Then de Montfort will see whose cause is just,
Then we will see who will gain the most prowess.
Let God curse the first to fail!'²¹²

Cuvelier relates the battle of Auray in great detail – after all, his hero Du Guesclin was a Breton; but he says nothing about any disagreement between Chandos and Calveley. Perhaps the dispute was of little interest to a French audience or readership.²¹³ At the same time Cuvelier does discuss tactics, for Chandos is made to suggest to his commander that the French be allowed to mount the first charge of the battle:

He said to him, Sir, I pray and request
That you let the French begin the assault,
And let us keep our squadrons under control,
Because one often sees – I say this without hesitation -
That woe comes to him who attacks first.²¹⁴

Froissart takes up the story of the fighting:

Sir John Chandos proved himself more able than his opponents: for he was at the same time bold and hardy, redoubted by his adversaries in battle, as well as wise and discreet in council, giving the clearest orders. He advised de Montfort in everything, and, in order to animate him and his people, said to them,

'Do so and so: march to this side or to that.'

The young de Montfort believed all he said, and followed his advice.

²¹² *Chronique*, lines 5629-5638; *Chanson*, lines 6525-6535.

²¹³ *Chronique*, lines 5955 et seq.

²¹⁴ *Chronique*, lines 5629-5638.

...Battalions and banners rushed against each other, and sometimes were overthrown, and then up again. Among the knights, Sir John Chandos shewed his ability, valorously fighting with his battle-axe: he gave such desperate blows, that all avoided him; for he was of great stature and strength, well made in all his limbs.

To speak truly, when once an army is discomfited, those who are defeated are so much frightened, that if one fall, three follow his example, and to these three ten, and to ten thirty; and also, should ten run away, they will be followed by a hundred. Thus it was at the battle of Auray.

These lords shouted again and again their cries of war, as well as their banner-bearers, which some who heard them answered; but others were too much in the rear, and from the greatness of the crowd could not advance, so that the Count of Auxerre was desperately wounded, and taken, under the pennon of Sir John Chandos: he gave his pledge as a prisoner, as well as the Count of Joigny and the lord de Prie, a great banneret in Normandy. The other battalions fought very valiantly, and the Bretons made a good appearance still. It must however, to speak loyally of this battle, be allowed, that they did not keep their line nor array (as it seemed) like the English and Bretons on the side of Montfort. The wing commanded by Sir Hugh Calvely was to them, in this battle, of the greatest advantage. When the English and Bretons of the Montfort party perceived the French to be in confusion, they were much rejoiced. Some of the French had their horses got ready, which they mounted, and began to fly as fast as they could.²¹⁵

It is now that du Guesclin appears, on the Franco-Breton side

Sir John Chandos then advanced with a part of his company, and made for the battalion of Sir Bertrand du Guesclin, where many courageous deeds were doing; but it had been already broken, and several good knights and squires slain. Many a hard blow was given by the battle-axes, and many a helmet opened, so that several were wounded and killed. To say the truth, neither Sir Bertrand nor his people were able to withstand the strength of their adversaries.

In Cuvelier's account, the Anglo-Breton victory is won at some cost. Chandos is made to witness a scene where one French knight kills an Englishman – not yet thirty years of age - by cleaving his helmet and spilling his brains. Sir John can do nothing to help and is reduced to expressing his grief over the young knight's death:

'Ah, my brother', he said, 'I am much vexed,

²¹⁵ Luce, VI, 165-9; 339-342.

I cannot win today without loss'....

Chandos was grief stricken, all he could do was to rage.
He said to his men in a voice high and clear:
'I cannot take my revenge, though I suffer such torment'.²¹⁶

After the battle is won, Chandos praises God for his victory over the enemy, in particular du Guesclin:

Said John Chandos: 'Praised be God Almighty,
Who has sent us such a noble victory'
No one has ever seen Sir Bertrand so discomfited,
And as for me, I have a joyful heart,
This will stay with me all my life,
Because you will have the peace now,
From King Charles of France,
That you have all wanted.²¹⁷

De Montfort won the battle, and with it the Breton civil war; and Chandos's help had been invaluable. Froissart makes this very clear in giving a roll-call of the principal English knights who were present, and recording various scenes which (as he tells us) were related to him by a Breton herald:

After the total defeat of lord Charles's army, when the field of battle was free, and the principal leaders, English and Bretons, were returned from the pursuit, Sir John Chandos, Sir Robert Knollys, Sir Eustace d'Ambreticourt, Sir Matthew Gournay, Sir John Bourchier, Sir Walter Huet, Sir Hugh Calvely, Sir Richard Burley, Sir Richard Taunton and several others, drawing near to de Montfort, came to a hedge, where they began to disarm themselves, knowing the day was theirs. Some of them placed their banners and pennons in this hedge, with the arms of Brittany high above all, in a bush, as a rallying post for their army.

Sir John Chandos, Sir Robert Knollys, Sir Hugh Calvely and others, then approached to the Count of Montfort, and said to him, smiling;

'My lord, praise God, and make good cheer, for this day you have conquered the inheritance of Brittany.'

He bowed to them very respectfully, and then said, loud enough to be heard by all around him;

²¹⁶ Chanson, lines 7090-4.

²¹⁷ Chanson, lines 7227-7233.

'Sir John Chandos, it is to your valour and prudence that I am indebted for the good fortune of this day: this I know for a truth, as well as all those who are with me: I beg you will, therefore, refresh yourself out of my cup.'

He then extended to him a flagon full of wine, and his cup, out of which he himself had just drunk, adding,

'After God, I owe more thanks to you than to all the rest of the world.'

...Whilst they were thus together, two knights and two heralds returned, who had been sent to examine the dead bodies in the field, to know what was become of the lord Charles de Blois: for they were uncertain if he had been slain or not. They cried with a loud voice,

'My lord, be of good cheer, for we have seen your adversary lord Charles de Blois among the dead.'

Upon this, the earl of Montfort rose up and said, he wished to see him himself, for that,

'He should have as much pleasure in seeing him dead as alive.'

All the knights then present accompanied him to the spot where he was lying apart from the others, covered by a shield, which he ordered to be taken away, and looked at him very sorrowfully. After having paused a while, he exclaimed;

'Ha, my lord Charles, sweet cousin, how much mischief has happened to Brittany from your having supported by arms your pretensions! God help me, I am truly unhappy at finding you in this situation, but at present this cannot be amended.'

Upon which he burst into tears. Sir John Chandos, perceiving this, pulled him by the skirt, and said:

'My lord, my lord, let us go away, and return thanks to God for the success of the day: for without the death of this person, you never would have gained your inheritance of Brittany.'

...Sir John Chandos had the whole honour of this battle; for all the knights, lords, and squires who had been engaged in it, declared that it was solely owing to his prudence and prowess they had gained the day.²¹⁸

²¹⁸ Luce, VI, 170.

The *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois* tells us that, before the battle, du Guesclin had insulted his opponents by calling them ‘*gars*’. However, once du Guesclin was taken prisoner, Chandos exacted his revenge by parading him on the battlefield and showing him the corpses of Charles of Blois and his noblemen.

‘Sir’, said Chandos, ‘behold these *gars* of Monfort! With their help, he has now become the Duke of Brittany.’²¹⁹

The victors took many prisoners that they created a problem for themselves, according to Froissart:

The English and the Bretons of Montfort’s party, such as Sir John Chandos and others, who had made prisoners at the battle of Auray, would not accept of ransoms for them, nor allow them to go and seek for money; because they were unwilling they should again assemble in a body and offer them battle: they sent them into Poitou, Saintonge, Bordeaux, and la Rochelle, to remain there as prisoners.

This did not mean that Chandos failed to reap any financial benefit from his victory. An inventory of the Duke of Brittany’s archives prepared in 1395 contains a letter which shows that he captured Guy, Vicomte of Le Faou (or Fou) in Finistère and also Girard, Sire de Rays (from Quimerc’h, in the same district), and de Rays later accompanied him on the Spanish expedition of 1367, as a means of paying the ransom.²²⁰ In addition, the Duke of Brittany entered into a number of transactions which were sealed in Vannes in the winter of 1365-66. One of these, dated 1 November 1365, refers to an agreement to pay Calveley and Chandos a *rent viagère* of 1,500 *livres* a year, redeemed by a payment of a lump sum of 11,000 *écus*.²²¹

The most important prisoner taken at Auray was undoubtedly Bertrand du Guesclin and most writers, English and French, agree that it was Chandos, or at least one of his men, who captured him. Froissart and the *Grandes Chroniques* both say that ‘Sir Bertrand was made prisoner by an English squire, under the pennon of Sir

²¹⁹ CQPV, 162; Vernier, 77..

²²⁰ Luce, VI, 177; *Le Premier Inventaire*, ed. Jones 192, 147; Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 44(n3). In the original the name appears as Fou rather than Faou. De Faou entered into an obligation to pay the Duke 1,000 francs, in view of the fact that the Duke had paid Chandos 1,000 to secure the Vicomte’s release after the battle.

²²¹ *Recueil des actes de Jean IV, Tome III supplément*, 28 item 1205; Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 29, 48. Since the annual payment was to have been for the lives of the two men, they had to promise, for themselves and their heirs, no longer to claim it. Frustratingly, most of the document is taken up with this and other legal technicalities, rather than informing the historian of the purpose of the payment. Chandos was a witness or a party to the rewarding of Robert Knollys: *Recueil*, 115, item 60. Tuchman, 347, states that de Montfort gave Chandos a town and a castle for his service in Brittany but that this enraged Clisson who assaulted and razed the castle and used the stones to reconstruct his own.

John Chandos'; and Cuvelier say the same.²²² Indeed, in Cuvelier's version of events, the entire battle of Auray is portrayed as if it were a personal contest between the two men. Chandos is closely involved in the fighting and his objective is made clear at an early stage:

When John Chandos picked his knights
He said to his people: 'I pray and request,
Attack du Guesclin - that is my chief desire.'²²³

And again:

Should anyone doubt the point,
Chandos's constant aim
Was to attack Sir Bertrand.²²⁴

There are two letters which confirm that it was Chandos who captured du Guesclin.²²⁵ On 8 January 1366 Chandos wrote from Belin in Aquitaine to remind Charles V that, although he had agreed to pay 20,000 francs for Du Guesclin's release, he had only paid 12,500 so far. Sir John asked for the balance and requested that 10,000 francs should be paid to Jean Aubert, citizen of Paris, since he had agreed to pay a sum of this kind to Aubert in respect of his friend Michael Dagworth. As a result Charles V issued three orders to his treasurers in Paris, in February, July and December 1366, telling them pay monies to Jean Aubert and others on Chandos's account. At the very end of the year, Chandos wrote a second letter to Charles V to confirm that he had received two instalments of 20,000 francs (from Raoul de Lile the treasurer) and 12,304 francs (from his clerk Pierre de Soissons), but now he really must insist that the balance be paid.²²⁶ In addition to the ransoms which he won, there is also evidence (admittedly dating from 1500) that Chandos received territorial rewards in Brittany.

After the Battle of Auray, Charles of Blois's widow was forced to sign the Treaty of Guérande, recognizing de Montfort as sole master of the duchy; and a further treaty of alliance was signed by de Montfort and the Black Prince. Chandos

²²² C des R, II, 6; *Chronique*, line 5279; *Chanson*, line 7182 (*Et livrez à Chandos, ainsi con je vous dis*).

²²³ *Chanson*, lines 7073-4.

²²⁴ *Chanson*, lines 7123-4.

²²⁵ Barber, ODNB; Fowler, MMI, 148; Prestwich, 106. The letters are printed in the *Pièces Justificatives* in Vol. II of Charrière's *Chronique de Bertrand du Guesclin* (Paris 1839).

²²⁶ The numbers are very confusing; but the explanation may be that the 20,000 referred to was only the second instalment of a larger sum originally agreed, and that an extra amount had been added for interest. McFarlane suggested that, at least in England, clerks routinely disguised interest charges as capital payments, for fear of falling foul of the Church's prohibition of usury.

was a witness and his confessor John Lyons was possibly an interpreter.²²⁷ De Montfort took possession of Auray itself and now set about reducing the rest of Brittany. He took the surrenders of Jugon and Dinan, and marched on Quimper Corentin. Chandos was amongst the knights who helped him to lay siege to this place. Charles V was asked to intervene again; but it was now that he decided on a remarkable change of strategy:

The King of France²²⁸ was duly informed of all that was going on: many councils were held to consider how he could turn these affairs of Brittany to his own interest; for they were in a desperate situation, unless promptly remedied, and he would be forced to call upon his subjects to support him in a new war against England on account of Brittany. This, his council advised him not to think of; but, after many deliberations, they said to him...

'We hear every day of the Count of Montfort conquering towns and castles, which he possesses as his lawful inheritance: by this means you will lose your rights, as well as the homage of Brittany, which is certainly a great honour and a noble appendage to your crown. This you ought to endeavour to keep; for, if the Count of Montfort should acknowledge for his lord the King of England, as his father did, you will not be able to recover it without great wars with England, with whom we are now at peace, and which we would advise you not to break. Everything, therefore, fully considered, we recommend to you, our dear lord, to send ambassadors and wise negotiators to the Count of Montfort, to find out what his intentions are, and to enter upon a treaty of peace with him...'

The King of France willingly assented to this proposal. The lord John de Craon, archbishop of Reims, the lord de Craon his cousin, and the lord de Boucicaut, were ordered to set out for Quimper Corentin, to treat with the Count of Montfort and his council, as it has been above related. These three lords departed, after having received full instructions how they were to act, and rode on until they came to the siege which the English and Bretons were laying to Quimper Corentin, where they announced themselves as

²²⁷ For Chandos's territorial gains in Brittany, see Jones, *Ducal Brittany*, 45, 48 & 50; *Recueil des Actes de Jean IV*, 105-6 items 49 & 50. Lyons was originally a Friar Preacher in the diocese of Bath. He became a papal chaplain in 1366. He accompanied Chandos when the latter acted as ambassador for the Prince 'in making the treaty of peace touching Brittany, Anjou and Sens', which must be the Treaty of Guérande of 1365. This must be the same man who, in October that year, was given permission by the Pope to hear the confessions of Englishmen in the service of the Prince of Wales and Aquitaine who 'were ignorant of the [French] language': Cal.Pap.Reg., (Petitions) vol I, 522, 536.

²²⁸ Charles V had succeeded his father Jean II shortly before the Battle of Auray.

ambassadors from France. The Count of Montfort, Sir John Chandos, and the members of the council, received them with pleasure.²²⁹

Thus the French approached the problem diplomatically; and, when approached in this way, de Montfort proved willing to reach an accommodation with Charles V. He was naturally unwilling to give up his Duchy; but he was willing to do homage to Charles if the French King facilitated the surrender of the towns and castles still holding out for the House of Blois. He was also ready to endow the widow of Charles of Blois with a suitable settlement and arrange for the release of her relatives who were prisoners in England. On these terms, peace was made.

The outcome of Chandos's intervention in Brittany was therefore mixed. Sir John (and others) had reaped handsome profits, and the English held on to several important fortresses; but de Montfort recognised the Valois, rather than the Plantagenets, as his feudal suzerains. In a sense, therefore, the English had won a battle but lost the war.²³⁰

The Avignon Papacy

Between 1309 and 1378 the Papacy was in Avignon, a small enclave of sovereign territory within the boundaries of the French kingdom; and all the Popes in question were French. Despite their absence from Rome (which continued to be the principal place for Christian pilgrimage) they continued to play a central role in European life in matters of Church and State. Joseph Stalin once famously asked ironically 'How many divisions has the Pope?' but in the 14th century, the Pope could afford to pay for mercenary armies and had the power to call for a Crusade. If his decrees were not obeyed, he could place whole kingdoms, under an interdict, denying the faithful access to the sacraments. This was a terrible weapon in its day.

There was widespread distrust of the Avignonese Papacy in England; but the Frenchman who became Urban V (1362-70) had never served the King of France, nor had he ever been at the French court. He was a holy man who had been a teacher of canon law at University level, his chief concern was to encourage learning and improve the standards of the priesthood, and he was later made a Saint. Nevertheless, he clashed with King Edward III on a number of occasions.

Edward's foreign policy in the mid 1360s was governed by the fact that (as he said) he 'had many sons to marry'. This was somewhat of an exaggeration, since by this time the Prince of Wales and John of Gaunt were both married and well-provided for; but it remained true of his third son, Edmund of Langley. The King had planned for Edmund to marry Margaret of Flanders, who had become 'the

²²⁹ Luce, VI, 179, 351 (Amiens Ms).

²³⁰ It was never clear that the French and the Bretons were *ad idem* about the nature of the homage which was done: Vernier 169 called it a 'quibbling homage.'

richest heiress in Christendom' in 1362; but the couple were within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity and the King needed a papal dispensation, which Urban V was reluctant to give. Chandos was thought to be in a position to help to persuade Urban to change his mind. The papal court was only 150 miles away from Rodez in the Rouergue; and it is likely that Sir John was one of several English ambassadors who were sent to Avignon to negotiate about the Prince's marriage. Unfortunately, this proved to be 'mission impossible', since the Pope proved obdurate. Eventually Urban simply prohibited the English match and allowed Margaret to marry the Duke of Burgundy, who was the French candidate.²³¹

Diplomatic traffic flowed in both directions. Just as Edward III used Chandos's services when he sought to persuade the Pope, so the Pope hoped to influence the Black Prince through Chandos. In May 1365 Urban decided to make an attempt to clear the Free Companies out of France. He wrote to Bertrand du Guesclin on the French side, asking him for help 'to break up the detestable companies which ravage some parts of the faithful'; and, at the same time, he wrote to Chandos and the Captal de Buch about the matter. In May 1366, when he wanted the Prince of Wales to make peace with Gaston Phoebus, Count of Foix, he sent the Archbishop of Toulouse to see the Prince and wrote to Chandos and others, asking them to assist. When he wanted the Prince to make satisfaction for the seizure of men and cattle taken by his men at Mende, in 'the Pope's native country' of Languedoc, he again wrote to Sir John, asking him to use his influence with his master.²³²

The Pope disliked the way in which the Black Prince behaved towards the Church in Aquitaine. The Prince insisted that the senior ecclesiastical figures in the new Principality should take oaths of loyalty to him. For example, he requested that the Bishop of Poitiers do homage in his cathedral of St Pierre. The Bishop was prepared to submit, but only if Chandos was present as King's Lieutenant; but Urban objected. His *nuncio* Master Raymund de Sancta Gemma delivered a letter to the Prince in March 1364, asking that all such oaths be annulled. At the same time, Urban wrote to Chandos, asking him 'to assist and give full credence to Master Raymund.' In September 1364, the Pope wrote again to the Prince, pointing out that he had received no reply, though further oaths had been taken in the meantime. He said this was a 'wrong done by the Prince's men against ecclesiastical liberty' and demanded that the process be stopped, indeed reversed. He sent a second *nuncio*

²³¹ J.J.N.Palmer & A.P.Wells, *Ecclesiastical Reform and the Politics of the Hundred Years War during the Pontificate of Urban V (1362-70)*, in C.T. Allmand ed; and Ducluzeau (2004), 144. 'Mission impossible' is Robert Ducluzeau's phrase. He states that Chandos was employed in negotiations with the Pope about the dispensation, though his name is not mentioned by Palmer and Wells, who name the English ambassadors as Sir Nicholas Loraine and Sir John Cobham.

²³² Cal.Pap.Reg. (Letters), IV, 16, 22 – June 1366.

(Peter, Bishop of Florence) to intervene; and once again wrote to Chandos and others.²³³

The outcome is unknown; but the fact that the Pope wrote to Chandos on several occasions has much to tell us about the relationship between Sir John and the Prince of Wales. Difficult and obstinate as he could be, the latter was no Oriental despot: he was a Christian sovereign who was expected to observe the rule of law, and respect the privileged position of the Church. He could be asked to change his mind, with some chance of success. Signs and even acts of dissent were not automatically treated as treason. Likewise, Chandos was no menial servant. He had the trust of his sovereign and could speak his mind. Correspondence with the Pope was not necessarily treated as suspicious, even when the pontiff was French; and Chandos's counsel must have been thought valuable. Otherwise, there would have been little point in the Pope trying to persuade him.

In 1366 the Pope issued a whole series of edicts in relation to Aquitaine. The papal registers show that the Prince wished to appoint Alexander Dalby, Dean of St John's in Chester and an Englishman, as Bishop of Bangor in North Wales. He used Chandos to persuade the Pope; but the Pope needed to be sure of Dalby's fitness for the job. He wrote to the Archbishop of Bordeaux, telling him to find out if Dalby was capable of preaching in Welsh. The Archbishop was ordered to make inquiries in Bordeaux and throughout Aquitaine. He was told to speak to Dalby himself, but also to five or six honest men (preferably men in holy orders) who knew Welsh, and to complete his inquiry within two months. Then he could have a further month to write his report.²³⁴ We are reminded that the Prince ruled a collection of territoires which stretched from Wales to the Basque country and included many nationalities; and we see that Urban V was just as concerned as any English Puritan that there be a preaching ministry. Pope Urban was also interested in questions of language. In October 1366 he granted a faculty which speaks volumes about the behaviour of the English abroad, throughout the centuries:

Whereas in Aquitaine there are many English in the service of the Prince of Aquitaine and Wales, who being ignorant of the [French] language, have died imperfectly confessed, the Pope [grant] to John de Lyons, papal chaplain and confessor of Sir J. de Chandos, to hear the confessions of such persons.

Granted for two years. Avignon, October [1366].²³⁵

In theory Urban wanted to abolish, or reduce, pluralism: in February 1363 and again in May 1366 he issued two bulls - *Horribilis et detestabilis* and *Consueta*, specifically condemning the practice. Yet he was prepared to grant exemptions, and

²³³ The Treaty of Brétigny provided that all Archbishops, Bishops and other prelates should hold their temporalities of the King of France or the King of England [Article 30]. Its provisions were to be approved by the Pope [Article 34]; Ducluzeau (2002), 127-8; Cal.Pap.Reg.,(Letters) IV 7, 11, 23.

²³⁴ Cal.Pap.Reg. (Letters), IV, 25; Hayez, V, item 17440.

²³⁵ Cal.Pap.Reg. (Petitions) vol I, 536 (John Lyons).

Chandos was therefore able to promote men who were useful to him. In 1366 Sir John arranged for his Chancellor and Secretary to be made a canon of Beverley in Yorkshire, (with the expectation of a prebend) despite the fact that this man was already archdeacon of Sudbury in Suffolk. The canon could remain non-resident archdeacon for two years, because Sudbury had no house or residence where he could live (nor for that matter, did it have a church!). The papal bureaucrats had considerable difficulty with this man's name: it appears in the registers as John de Ouletone, Obloton, Hobleton, Humbleston and Oblecone); but Urban was generous, because Sir John's Chancellor was allowed to hold several posts at once: in addition to those mentioned, he had a prebend in Saintes.²³⁶

Nor was this man alone. In 1366 again Chandos arranged for another of his secretaries, Henry Belle, a Scholar of Canon Law (S.C.L), to be given a living in the gift of the Bishop of Ely worth 40 marks. On behalf of Hamo de Deval, his chaplain for the past six years, he requested the church of Milton (Great Moulton?) in the diocese of Norwich. At the same time he requested a canonry at South Malling (with expectation of a prebend) on behalf his almoner, Simon Balle of Alvaston; petitioned for a canonry and prebend at Salisbury for his clerk John de Stratford, S.C.L.; and asked for a benefice in the gift of the Archbishop of Canterbury for his clerk John de Arderne, though this fellow already had a church in Normandy.²³⁷

The Pope allowed Chandos a degree of latitude in relation to his private devotions. In April 1366 Sir John was allowed to choose his confessor; to have any 'suitable' priest with him to celebrate the sacraments, whether he was a member of a religious order or not; and to have a portable altar and celebrate mass before daybreak. These exemptions from the normal rules were not unusual and were doubtless necessary for a busy man who spent much of his life in the saddle, and must often have been up and away before dawn; but Chandos was even permitted to attend mass and other divine offices 'in areas placed under ecclesiastical interdict'.²³⁸

²³⁶ Cal.Pap.Reg. (Petitions) I, 444 (Ouletone); Hayez, vol 2, items 5595, 7792; vol 9, item 22692.

²³⁷ Cal.Pap.Reg. (Petitions) I, 464 (Belle), 525 (on behalf of the Princess), 526 (Hamo de Deval, though Hayez vol 5, item 2148 indicates this request was made in 1363 rather than 1366.); 527 (Balle), 530 (Stratford, see also Hayez, vol 5, item 18155); Hayez vol 5, items 16556 (Arderne). Not all of these men may have been 'pluralists' in the true sense. In the cases of John de Stratford and John de Arderne, the licence to hold more than one benefice at the same time seems to have been a temporary measure, to allow enough time for a new man to be appointed in the old post, while the office-holder was translated to a new one. Arderne already had the church of Goe in the diocese of Coutances.

²³⁸ Cal.Pap.Reg. (Petitions) vol I, 524 (portable altar); Cal.Pap.Reg., (Letters) vol IV, 54 and 55; Hayez, vol 5, items 17140, 17096, 17097, 17098. Princess Joan, Sir Simon Burley and Thomas Felton were given similar privileges.

Chapter 4

Banneret, 1367-69

Chandos was repeatedly described in official documents as a ‘bachelor’ knight; and we might think he would have been in line for ‘promotion’ to ‘banneret’ when he was made Viscount of St Sauveur; but that would be to misunderstand the position. In the 14th century, being a ‘banneret’ did not merely imply a certain level of distinction in society, it involved a military command. Thus, when Sir John entered into the agreement of 1361 with Edward III, agreeing to serve as Lieutenant in France and Normandy, it was one of his subordinates who was banneret. It was not until the Battle of Nájera in 1367 that Chandos was able to unfurl his own banner for the first time, as the commander of a contingent of knights in the field.

The Spanish *Imbroglio*

In the late 14th century, there was no political entity known as ‘Spain’. Iberia was divided between several Christian kingdoms: Castile, Aragon, Navarre and Portugal, and the Muslims of Granada. Castile was the largest power, but she was inclined to ally with the French kingdom, and when she did, she was able to provide French with a very effective navy.²³⁹ Edward III and the Black Prince were concerned to change this situation, by diplomatic and military means if they could; and King Pedro of Castile signed a treaty of alliance with England in 1362; but this was only the beginning of a long story of English involvement in Spain.

Pedro is known as ‘the Cruel’ because the history of Castile was written by the victors, and in this case that meant those who overthrew and then killed him. The first stage in the tragedy was that, in 1366, Pedro was violently deposed by his illegitimate half-brother, Henry of Trastamara, with the aid of an army of mercenaries led by the Frenchman du Guesclin and the Englishman Hugh Calveley. He fled, first to Portugal and then to Aquitaine. Henry of Trastamara and his successors seized the throne of Castile and his chronicler, Ayala, wrote the history of the times. He also exploited the anti-semitic feeling which was rife in Spain, by depicting Pedro both as ‘King of the Jews’ and as a barbarian.

Du Guesclin and Calveley’s presence in Spain require some explanation. As we have seen, there was a determined effort in 1365 to rid Central France of the

²³⁹ For Aragon, see Norman Davies’s *Vanished Kingdoms* (Allen Lane, 2011).

mercenary Companies and this became confused with the idea of a Crusade against the Muslims of Spain. In February that year, Edward III was asked by the new King of France Charles V, and by Pope Urban V, to contribute forces for an expedition. The request was passed on, somewhat routinely, to the Black Prince and Chandos. Letters were then sent to fifteen captains of the Great Companies, suggesting they leave France, and find employment in Navarre.²⁴⁰ On 8 May the Pope also wrote to the Prince, Chandos and the Captal de Buch, informing them directly of his plans for the Breton captain to lead the Companies out of France and against the infidel, and recommending du Guesclin.

It might have been financially advantageous for individual English captains to join this expedition (which was in reality organised by friends of Henry of Trastamara); but it was not officially in the interests of England, as conceived by Edward III, who was bound by the terms of the Anglo-Castilian treaty of 1362. On 6 December the King now ordered Chandos, Calveley, Nicholas Dagworth and William Elmham to stop his subjects from joining any invasion of Castile; and this time, the order was in strong terms. Edward said that the matter 'lay close to his heart'; that the alliance with Pedro was a matter of personal honour; and that Chandos and the others should make it clear to anyone who became involved in the Spanish venture that they would meet with 'rigorous punishment'.²⁴¹ Unfortunately for Edward, by the time this order reached Bordeaux, it was too late, for many of the mercenaries were already on their way to Spain. Effectively, Chandos was unable to prevent the invasion, and was left with a watching brief.

This was how Henry of Trastamara's plans came to fruition. In recruiting Bertrand du Guesclin he obtained the services of one of the leading commanders of the day; and by February 1366, detailed terms had been agreed for the division of the spoils. The terms even agreed included a clause providing that, if Edward III, his sons, or Sir John Chandos entered the projected war in Spain, any Englishmen under his command would be free to join their countrymen, and they could also return to England if they were required to do so. This showed an acute understanding of the divided allegiances of many potential recruits, for it is clear that, despite Edward III's orders to the contrary, some English and Gascons did sign up. According to Chandos Herald, who thought that the venture was intended 'to make peace between the two kings [of Castile and Aragon] and open the country and the passes to [Moorish] Granada', du Guesclin was joined by Eustace d'Abrichicourt, Sir Matthew Gournay and Sir Hugh Calveley, and (as we know) the latter even assumed joint leadership of the 'Crusade'.²⁴² Chandos himself was approached, despite his position as Constable of Aquitaine, but of course he refused. Froissart records that:

²⁴⁰ Fowler, MMI, 113, 126, 170, citing French and Spanish archives.

²⁴¹ Rymer's *Foedera* 1830, III, II, 779.

²⁴² *Le Prince Noir*, lines 1690-1700; Vernier 51.

The Prince of Wales was informed of the intended expedition, as well as his knights and squires, but particularly Sir John Chandos, who was solicited to be one of the leaders of it, in conjunction with Sir Bertrand du Guesclin. He excused himself, and said he could not go.²⁴³

With du Guesclin and Calveley's help then, Henry of Trastamara seized the throne of Castile. King Pedro fled to Gascony, appealing to Edward III and the Prince for help and invoking the terms of the Treaty of 1362. His appeal was answered with rapid and positive action; but, ultimately, the Prince's response was to lead to the downfall of English Aquitaine.

In Chandos Herald's *Life*, history is painted black and white. There are heroes and villains: King Edward is expressly compared to King Arthur (*le roy Artus*), while the Black Prince and his companions resemble the knights who fought alongside Roland and Oliver in the epic *Chanson de Roland* – never more so than in 1367, when the Prince marches in Roland's footsteps when he crossed the Pyrenees. The Herald regards the Prince's victory at Nájera as the apogee of his career. For him, the war in Castile is fully justified (even though fought between Christians) and the victory is God's:

Nor is there any reason that I should pass over
A noble expedition into Spain;
But it is right that men praise him for it,
For it was the most noble expedition
Ever undertaken by Christian men;
For by his power he restored to his place
A king whom his younger and bastard brother
Had disinherited.

Chandos Herald was an eye-witness to these events, while the French author of the *Chronique des Quatre Premier Valois* was not, but the latter probably wrote soon afterwards. Like the Herald, he saw the Spanish adventure in personal terms, but portrayed it as an attempt by the Capital de Buch and Chandos to obtain their revenge on Bertrand du Guesclin, in particular for his 'strong language and boastfulness'.²⁴⁴ But in fact, the issue was political, rather than merely personal.

In Cuvelier's account it is Chandos who has the unpleasant task of telling his master that du Guesclin has crossed the Pyrenees and dethroned King Pedro, the Prince's loyal ally, and has done so with the aid of English mercenaries, on the pretext of a Crusade:

Said John Chandos, his chief counsellor:

²⁴³ See also Barber, *Triumph*, 457(n 69).

²⁴⁴ CQPV, 177.

'This is the work of Bertrand du Guesclin,
Who has so much to boast about,
But also of some of the best knights of England,
Who went into Spain a while ago to make war;
They were supposed to fight the Saracens,
And attack the Great Saracen in Granada,
Lay siege to towns, castles and citadels.
But they stopped to help Henry
And chase Don Pedro out of his lands.

Cuvelier tells us that Pedro comes to see Chandos, after his flight from Spain. He calls him 'my friend' and complains bitterly of the loss of his kingdom, and particularly of the part played by the English contingent led by Hugh Calveley, Matthew Gournay, Thomas 'celui d'Angone', 'Crecelle' (John Creswell?) and Robin Secot (Robert Scot). Chandos agrees that the King has been very badly treated but warns that sound planning will be required, if a counter-coup is to succeed. At the same time he thinks that the Prince may be able to help, if anyone can:

There is no king or lord under Heaven
Who can better help you, I know this for true.²⁴⁵

Froissart's account is much more complex. Here, the Prince receives a letter from King Pedro, explaining what has happened and requesting his assistance; and he is bemused, or even amused, by the news. He sends for Chandos and Thomas Felton, 'the two most important members of his council' and explains the contents of the letter, laughing as he does so (*si leur dist tout en riant*). He tells them again that they are the two advisers who are most special to him (*li plus especial de mon conseil*), whose opinion he values most. He wants their advice on Pedro's request and tells them to speak frankly:

'Speak, and say boldly what you really think' (*Dites, dites hardiement ce qu'il vous en semble*).

Chandos and Felton are unwilling to commit themselves on the basis of a letter. They advise the Prince to send for King Pedro in person. Felton is sent to Bayonne with an armed escort, which includes Nigel Loring and Simon Burley. He sails to Galicia in North-West Spain, in twelve ships protected by archers and men at arms. He brings Pedro back, first to Bayonne and then to Bordeaux, amidst chivalric display and general rejoicing (organised or not). The Prince rides out to meet Pedro and shows him every courtesy, deferring to him since he is a King and his superior, but as yet does offer to help. He merely tells Pedro that 'it is in God's power' to

²⁴⁵ *Chanson*, lines 11518-19.

remedy all injustice' and restore him to his patrimony. The royal party takes up residence in the Prince's house at St Andrew's in Bordeaux.

Modern historians have read more into Froissart's account of these proceedings than is warranted. In Fillon's account of 1856 Chandos becomes an advocate for intervention on King Pedro's behalf. He urges the Prince to commit his forces in Castile, thinking that this will not only curb French influence in Spain but also divert his master from the 'enervating pleasures' of court life in Bordeaux.²⁴⁶ In Moisant's account of 1894, however, Don Pedro makes a poor impression on Chandos:

John Chandos, who had a practical and sensible turn of mind, had no illusions about the character of the Castilian. He saw, in his face, all the signs that evil passions had drawn there, that mouth with a thin and miserable smile, those furtive looks which were a sure sign that the man was a sordid voluptuary and capable of sinister cruelty.

In fact, there is no evidence that Chandos had made up his mind about Pedro and his request for assistance at this stage, or that he was a mind-reader. Froissart simply tells us that a number of English and Gascon lords advised against intervention. They thought that Pedro had lost the support of his own subjects because he had persecuted some and caused others to be put to death. Moreover, he deserved his reputation for cruelty and tyranny and was well known as an enemy of the Church in general and the Papacy in particular. He had unjustly waged war on his neighbours in Aragon and Navarre and, worst of all, had murdered his first wife, who was a cousin of the Prince, as well as being related to the French royal family. In short, he had brought about his own downfall.

This was probably sound advice; but the Prince disagreed: he took a very simple view of the situation in Castile and of his obligations towards Pedro:

It is not proper nor right nor reasonable that a bastard should hold a kingdom where the law of inheritance prevails, nor that he should drive a brother, king and heir to the land by legitimate marriage, from his lands and heritage. No king or son of a king should, in any way, desire or consent to such a thing...

There is no sign, at this point, of any disagreement between the Prince and Chandos in their assessment of King Pedro, or about the decision to intervene.

Did the Prince have the right to invade Castile, even in support of an ally? The jurists were developing the idea that only a sovereign could engage in a just war; and the Prince was not a sovereign ruler in the strict legal sense, since he owed allegiance for Aquitaine to his father. The Prince therefore decided that he could not

²⁴⁶ Fillon, 16. Some knowledgeable but outraged reader has written the word 'untrue' at this point in the copy of Fillon's book kept in the British Library (April 2011).

help King Pedro without consulting his barons in France and his father in England. He summoned a Parliament in Bordeaux, which almost all the great men attended, including the Counts of Armagnac and Albret, but not the count of Foix, who was indisposed. It was decided to send four knights to England. They sailed for Southampton and eventually found Edward III in Windsor. Edward considered the matter in council and decided that, if the Prince wanted to restore Pedro, this was a legitimate cause and should be supported. He even wrote to the barons of Aquitaine, commanding them to assist his son. Again there is no sign of any dissension on Chandos's part.

The barons of Aquitaine were willing to help the Prince and his father; but they did ask who was going to pay them, since this was a foreign adventure, not a defence of their homeland. At this the Prince turned to Don Pedro, who said that he had been able to bring only a part of his treasure with him, but they could have that; and that he had thirty times as much again in Castile, which they could also have when he came into his own. According to Froissart, the Prince was re-assured; but in reality there was some hard bargaining done, in Bayonne and in Libourne near Bordeaux. A tripartite agreement was signed there on 23 September 1366, when Pedro agreed to surrender the Basque county of Vizcaya, together with several ports and the lordship of Castro Urdiales on the Cantabrian coast. For his part, Chandos witnessed the treaty, was ordered to take control of these territories, and was promised the lordship of Soria, in the old kingdom of Leon.²⁴⁷

Chandos and others advised that, if the expeditionary force were to cross the Pyrenees without fear of attack, it would be necessary to negotiate with Charles of Navarre. He knew this ruler of old, and he also knew that he had recently negotiated a treaty of friendship with Henry of Trastamara. The advice was accepted and Chandos was sent as ambassador. In one version of Froissart's chronicle, he travels with Felton to Pamplona, in another he accompanies John of Gaunt (the new Duke of Lancaster) to St Jean Pied du Port. In each case, the ambassadors return with a satisfactory agreement, subsequently confirmed at a Parliament in Bayonne or Dax. Froissart praises the envoys for their wisdom and skill. Chandos Herald confirms this version of events:

Then spoke Chandos,
And after him Thomas de Felton;
These two were companions in his most privy counsel,
And spoke to him in truth
That [the expedition] could not be accomplished,
Unless they had an alliance
With the King of Navarre,
Who then held the passage of the defiles.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ Rymer, *Foedera*, 1830 III, II, 800, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 825; Ayala, year 17, chapter 24:3.

²⁴⁸ The Pyrenees.

The Prince now ordered Chandos and Thomas Felton to prepare an expeditionary force for the invasion of Castile; but the composition of the army is unclear; and, in particular, we cannot be sure how many men were English. However, we know that some archers may have been sent out to Bordeaux in 1365; and more may have been summoned the next year; and John of Gaunt certainly brought some men with him from England. He landed in the Cotentin and travelled to Bittany, before riding the whole length of France to Bordeaux, only to find that the Prince had already departed for Castile. Gaunt and his men then crossed the desolate *Landes* region, before the two brothers were joyfully re-united in Dax, near the Spanish border. It is thought that Gaunt may have brought some English and some Bretons with him – perhaps 800 mounted archers, along with his own retinue.²⁴⁹

The bulk of the army had to be raised in Aquitaine and, ironically, some of the recruits came from the ranks of those English and Gascons who had gone to Spain with du Guesclin the previous year. Indeed the Prince gave orders that those amongst them who owed him allegiance should now return and join the new expedition. Amongst those who obeyed were Calveley, Gournay and many minor captains. As the army was assembling, the Prince also received information that the King of Aragon and Henry of Trastamara were each trying to recruit members of the Free Companies (said to number 12,000 men); but that the Count of Foix was doing his best to prevent the mercenaries from crossing the Western Pyrenees into Aquitaine. Once again, the Prince called on Chandos to help resolve the difficulty:

The Prince sent Chandos to meet and retain [the Companies]; and to assure the Count of Foix of his affection, and that he would pay double the amount of damage which [the Companies] might do in his territory.

Chandos, out of his love for the Prince, took these messages and left Bordeaux, and rode to the city of Dax in Gascony, and then into Foix, where he found the Count. He spoke to him so wisely and courteously that he soon reached a provisional agreement, to allow free passage through his country. The Companies marched through into the [French] Basque country. Chandos treated with them there, and they all agreed to serve the Prince on his new expedition, provided they were adequately rewarded. Chandos assured them they would be paid without fail. Then Chandos returned to the Count of Foix and asked him, tactfully, if he would indeed allow the Companies to pass through one of the corners of his land.

²⁴⁹ Goodman, *John of Gaunt*, 45-6; Barber, EPW, 194. The *Landes* are now largely forest, but before the modern era it was a vast marsh. In the late 19th century, some of the inhabitants were photographed, shepherding their flocks on stilts.

The Count of Foix, who wanted to please the Prince... agreed, provided that they did no damage to him or his lands. Chandos agreed to this, and sent one of his knights and a herald back to the Companies, telling them that the treaty between him and the Count was concluded; and he returned to the Principality. He found the Prince in Bordeaux and related his journey and how he had fared. The Prince, who trusted him and held him in high regard was well content with the outcome.

The Prince had good reason to feel pleased with the progress which his servant had made. Chandos Herald tells us that Sir John not only avoided a diplomatic impasse, but managed to recruit fourteen Companies for his master:

[The Prince] who had such virtue
Returned to Bordeaux
And got his forces in readiness.
Many a noble and valiant knight
Did he send for through all the land.
Nor did any delay, great or small.
Nor was Chandos inactive,
For of the Great Company
He collected companions,
To the number of fourteen pennons,
Nor reckoning those
Who returned from Spain
When they heard that the Prince wished to aid
The King Don Pedro in his right.
They took leave of the bastard Enrique [Henry]
Who gave it them without delay,
And paid them very willingly,
For he no longer had need of them...
There then came back at short notice
Sir Eustace d'Aubréchicourt,
Devereux, Cresswell and Briquet [Birkhead],
Who knew how to speak of their deeds,
And then the Lord d'Aubeterre
Who willingly carried on war,
With the good Bernard de la Salle.
All the companions of France
Returned to Aquitaine.

Froissart emphasizes the Prince's commitment to the war in Spain. He was in the 'flower of his youth' (though, actually, he was 36); he had spent his whole life fighting in the cause of chivalry; and now he had a just war of his own, he was

determined to drive it forward. However, he was still willing to listen to advice, and it was at this point that he asked his closest advisers again for their views as to the wisdom and feasibility of the enterprise. Chandos and Felton were candid about the difficulties he faced, though they did not explicitly advise him against continuing with his plans:

'Sire,

This is certainly a large and difficult enterprise, certainly more difficult than it was to throw King Pedro out of his kingdom in the first place. We say this because Pedro was a ruler who was hated by all his men, and they all abandoned him when he asked for their help [whereas] at present, the Bastard [Henry] enjoys the possession of the whole kingdom of Castile, and has the love of the nobles, the great men of the Church and the whole establishment, which has made him King. And they will want to keep him there... If you really want to proceed, you will have to make sure that you have great numbers of good men at arms and archers, because you will face stiff opposition when you invade Spain.

At the same time, the advisers offered a very concrete suggestion as to what the Prince should do to finance the expedition:

We urge and counsel you to break up the major part of your silverware and your treasure, of which you have plenty at present, and that you turn it into coin so that you can distribute it amongst the Companions who have agreed to serve you out of loyalty, because we do not think that you can rely on King Pedro to do anything of the sort. And also that you send to the King your father, asking him to help you with a loan of 100,000 francs, which is the sum the French King is supposed to pay him shortly. Raise money in this way however you can, because you will need it, instead of taxing your people. That way you will be better loved and served by them all.

The Amiens Manuscript of Froissart's Chronicle contains a different version of this episode, where Chandos alone advises the Prince, and his advice is unequivocally against war, and even that the Prince is at risk of losing Aquitaine if he should march into Castile. Chandos gives two reasons for thinking that this may happen: firstly, the Prince may be defeated by Trastamara, who is a lucky commander; and if that happens, the Principality is surrounded by enemies and could fall to any one of them; secondly, even if he succeeds in defeating Henry, the Prince will be in debt, in particular to the Free Companies, who are capable of doing his Principality great harm if they are not paid. However, the Prince rejects the advice, and is determined to help his ally and defend the principle of legitimacy. He does, however, accept the advice to accumulate as much money as he can in ready

cash, rather than rely on Pedro's promises. Accordingly, the Prince broke up, and melted down, two thirds of the contents of his treasury; minted coins of gold and silver; and sent to his father in England for help. Edward III provided a large subsidy, said to be 100,000 francs.

There were continuing problems with the Gascon lords. At an early stage in the preparations, when Chandos was negotiating with the Free Companies, the Prince suddenly asked the Count of Albret, in a light-hearted way, how many men he could provide, and Albret replied that if he could field 1,000 lances. The Prince was impressed and turned to Felton and the other English knights there, saying *in English*:

'By my faith, don't you love a country where any baron you turn to can raise a thousand lances!'

He immediately asked Albret to enlist all these men; and Albret appeared to agree; but, some time later, when the army was actually being assembled, the Prince thought better of the idea. He realised that he would need to garrison Aquitaine while he was away and that he only needed 200 of Albret's men for Spain. He wrote to the Count to tell him so. From a modern point of view, we might imagine that that this would have come as a welcome relief to Albret; but in fact he was most put out. He read the Prince's letter twice before replying and then fired off a blistering protest: he said he had been led to expect that all his men would be enrolled; as a result of the Prince's change of heart, most of these would now lose money, and have to make alternative plans. After all, if they had only known that they would not be required in Spain, they might have hired themselves out in Prussia, Jerusalem or Constantinople. What had the Count done to deserve such shabby treatment? What was he supposed to tell the 800 men who would now be left at home, without profitable employemt of any kind? How was he supposed to decide who should go and who should stay? It really was intolerable, so he had decided that he would send them all to Spain anyway.

The Prince was equally displeased by Albret's reaction. When he received the letter cited above, he turned once more to his counsellors and remarked, this time in English:

'This lord of Albret thinks he is a big man in this country [*uns grands mestres*], for he thinks he act in defiance of the orders of my Council. By God, he won't join the expedition on his terms. He must join on mine, or he can stay put, and neither he nor any of his 1,000 men will make the journey'.

An English knight intervened at this point to remind the Prince of the love the Gascons had borne towards him in the past – how they had invited him to come to Aquitaine back in 1355, and how they had rejoiced when he had won his great victory at Poitiers. This pleased the Prince but the atmosphere remained frosty.

Albret's uncle, the Count of Armagnac, heard about the quarrel and came to Bordeaux, where there was a conference, at which the Prince and Chandos presided. A compromise of some sort was reached; but Albret was still only enrolled for Spain with the reduced number of 200 lances; and relations between him and the Prince were never the same again.

Nevertheless, the expedition, including Gascons, the English from England and Anglo-Gascons from the Free Companies, got under way. Chandos led the vanguard across the Pyrenees, though Gaunt was in nominal command.²⁵⁰ The army marched out of St Jean-Pied-du-Port and up the pass of Roncesvalles, which led from Aquitaine into Spanish Navarre. It moved slowly through the winter snow, before reaching the safety of the pilgrim hospital and sanctuary, two miles or so beyond the summit. Roncesvalles itself was internationally famous, as a halt for pilgrims bound for Santiago de Compostella, and as the place where Charlemagne's commander Roland had died a heroic death in 778. This was an incident which most knights would have been familiar with from the *Song of Roland*.

Froissart gives this account of the march:

Between St Jean-Pied- du-Port and Pamplona are the defiles and strong passes of Navarre, which are very dangerous: for there are a hundred situations among them which a handful of men would guard and shut up against a whole army. It was very cold in these countries when the army passed, for it was the month of February. But before they began their march, though very eager to get forward, the principal leaders held a council to determine in what numbers and in what manner they should march through these mountains. They learnt that the whole army could not pass together; for which reason, they ordered it to be divided into three bodies, and to pass one at a time three days successively; that is to say, on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

On the Monday, the vanguard marched, under the command of the Duke of Lancaster. He was accompanied by the Constable of Aquitaine, Sir John Chandos, who had under him full 1,200 pennons, all ornamented with his arms, which were a *sharp pile gules on a field argent*. It was a handsome sight to behold. The two marshals of Aquitaine were also in this first division, namely, Sir Guiscard d'Angle and Sir Stephen Cossington, with whom was the pennon of St. George. There were also in this division, with the Duke, Sir William Beauchamp, son of the earl of Warwick, Sir Hugh Hastings, Sir Ralph Neville, who served under Sir John Chandos with thirty lances at his own expense and charges, out of what he had gained at the battle of Auray. There were likewise the lord d'Aubeterre, Sir Garses du Châtillon, Sir Richard Causton, Sir Robert

²⁵⁰ Chandos's leadership of the vanguard (*la premiere bataille*) is confirmed by CQPV, 172, 178.

Cheney, Sir Robert Briquet... All these, with their pennons, were under the command of Sir John Chandos, and might amount in the whole to 10,000 cavalry, who all crossed the mountains, as before related, on the Monday.

The Pyrenees is a formidable barrier and the pass of Roncesvalles is at 3,000 feet. Moreover, it is fifteen miles from St-Jean-Pied-du-Port to Roncesvalles by the pass, and the crossing was made in the Winter. All medieval chroniclers tended to exaggerate but Chandos Herald's account of the hardships experienced on the journey into Spain has the ring of truth:

Never was there a passage so narrow
For there were to be seen man and horse,
Enduring great sufferings,
Stumbling among the mountains.
There they had no assistance,
Nor could the father help the child,
So intense was the cold,
The snow and the hail,
That all were dismayed;
But, by the grace of God,
They passed in time and together,
About ten thousand horse and more
And the survivors quartered themselves in Navarre.²⁵¹

These numbers cannot be right but it is possible that they were not intended to be. When he said 10,000, the poet probably meant no more than 'a large number'. Ayala tells us that the Prince's captains – whom he names as Lancaster, Chandos (*conde estable de Guiana por el principe*), Knollys, Calveley and Olivier de Clisson, led a force of 'many' English and Breton knights and squires, and that there was a total of 3,000 men at arms, all fine men and very experienced warriors (*muy Buenos e muy husados de Guerra*).²⁵²

By the end of February 1367 the bulk of the Anglo-Gascon army had crossed the Pyrenees and they took up positions in Pamplona, though the baggage train may have marched into Spain by a coastal route. The King of Navarre, Charles 'the Bad', was still theoretically an ally, but on 11 March he arranged to be captured by the French, in an attempt to secure his position against any eventuality. The army was now divided. The Prince sent Sir Thomas Felton (Seneschal of Aquitaine) to the

²⁵¹ *Le Prince Noir*, lines 2296-2309. The reference to 'survivors' indicates that some members of the vanguard must have perished in the high mountains; but what of the curious phrase 'the father could not help the child'? Does it indicate that there were knights there who came from different generations of the same family? Or was this an example of poetic licence?

²⁵² Ayala, year 18, chapter 5:4.

West with a reconnaissance force of some 200 lances and 300 archers. Chandos did not go with him (if he had, we would almost certainly have been told about it by his Herald); but he would almost certainly have been privy to the decision to despatch the Seneschal, who was his subordinate in Gascony. The main army went North-West, by a circuitous route to Alsasua, where it is possible that the baggage train caught up with them, and then proceeded to Vittoria via Salvatierre. Chandos Herald tells us that there was a good deal of skirmishing:

Now God defend the right!
The Prince camped in front of Vittoria;
And round about there was no hovel, nor house
Not wholly full of his men.
But the Prince the next day was not aware
Of the expedition that Don Tello was preparing;
For know that, without sleeping,
He rose at midnight,
Rode the broadest road
Straight up the mountain,
Until he brought his company
Right down a valley.
First he met Hugh of Calveley,
Who was breaking up
And coming towards the Prince.
The scouts wrought great damage
To his sumpter beasts and waggons,
Whereat noise and shouting arose,
And the scouts ran up and down through the camp:
Many were killed in their beds.
There the vanguard would have been sorely surprised
Had it not been for the noble Duke of Lancaster,
Full of valour;
For as soon as he heard the shouting
He sallied forth from his lodging
And took his station on the mountain.
There his company rallied
And all the others as best they could;
And it is said that the Spaniards thought
To take this mountain;
But round the Duke and his banner
All the banners of the army gladly gathered.
Thither the Prince and Chandos came,
And there the army was drawn up;
There you might see the scouts repulsed with force.

The Battle of Nájera

The Prince moved south, from Vitoria (where Wellington defeated the French in 1813), to Santa Cruz, Aceda, Los Arcos and Logroño on the Ebro, where Felton's reconnaissance forced rejoined him. He encountered Henry of Trastamara's forces at Nájera in the province of La Rioja. The Prince's vanguard was largely composed of English troops, and Chandos was effectively in charge of it (though the titular commander was the Prince's younger brother, John of Gaunt). The battle which now took place was extensively reported, both by Froissart and Chandos Herald, who was almost certainly there.²⁵³ Froissart makes it clear it that Chandos was also in charge of the Free Companies:

It was on a Saturday, in the morning, between Najarra and Navarretta, that this severe and bloody battle was fought, in which multitudes of men were slain. In this engagement many were the brilliant actions performed by the Prince of Wales, his brother the Duke of Lancaster, Sir John Chandos, Sir Giscard d'Angle, the Captal de Buch [etc]... Under the pennon of St George, and under the banner of Sir John Chandos, were the Free Companies, who had in the whole 1,200 streamers.

Nájera was an extremely important day for Chandos, because it was here that he fought for the first time as a banneret. According to military law, 'no knight banneret could be made but in wartime, and in the presence of the King; or when his royal standard was displayed in the field'.²⁵⁴ Chandos Herald wrote:

Then Sir John Chandos
Came forthwith to the Prince,
And there brought his banner,
That was of silk, rich and costly.
And said right gently:
'Sire', says he, 'so God have mercy,
I have served you in time past;
And all the good that God has given me,
Has reached me through you;
And you well know that I am entirely yours
And always shall be;

²⁵³ Henry Knighton (194-5) recorded that Sir John was 'in the first formation' and was 'captain of the army', whereas the Prince of Wales led the middle formation, and a Spanish commander the third.

²⁵⁴ Sir William Segar, *The Booke of Honour and Arms* (London 1590), cited in *Le Prince Noir*, 301, note to line 120.

And if the place and time suit you,
That I might be a banneret,
I have enough of my own to serve the master
That God has given me.
Now do your pleasure,
See, I present it to you'.

Then the Prince directly
And King Pedro,
With the Duke of Lancaster also,
Unfurled the banner,
And presented it to him by the top;
And said without more ado:
'God enable you to profit by it.'

And Chandos took his banner,
Placed it among his companions,
And said to them with a glad countenance:
'Good sirs, here is my banner.
Defend it as your own;
For it is as well yours as mine.'

It is generally thought that the Herald is a better source for the Spanish campaign than Froissart; but it is Froissart who expressly tells us that this was the first time Chandos had unfurled a *banner* on the battlefield. He adds the detail that, upon being given permission to use the banner, he handed it to an English squire, *Guillaume Aleri* (William Hilary?) to carry for the rest of that day. Cuvelier tells a rather different, and less idealised, story. Like Napoleon, he knew that an army marches on its stomach:

Chandos presented his banner to everyone present:
'Sirs', he said, 'I have already promised,
That if we do our utmost today
We will eat and drink together at the end of it.
We have all earned this day;
But we must now fight as hard as we can,
Or we will all go to bed without our suppers.'²⁵⁵

In Cuvelier's version, the Prince thanks Chandos for all his years of faithful service, recognising that he has helped to win a trio (*tiercé*) of victories – Crécy,

²⁵⁵ *Chronique* lines 11534-11543; and *Chanson* 12496-12503.

Poitiers and Auray.²⁵⁶ Moreover, the Prince is relaxed about the lack of supplies in Spain: he says that there will be plenty to eat if they press on. King Pedro will provide. Chandos is less optimistic:

'I don't know about that', said Chandos the praiseworthy,
'I still see a number of Spaniards drawn up over there;
And for all I know they may already have set off:
Let us hope they wait for daybreak.'

Chandos sends his Herald to speak to the Henry of Trastamara and du Guesclin in the enemy camp; and, when he gets there, the Herald asks if they will surrender:

So the Herald greeted the barons,
And said to them, 'Listen here to me,
You lords and gentlemen sitting there,
And you, Sir Bertrand, I have come to speak.
My master is over there and his companies
All ready and drawn up for battle.
I have to tell you that if you attack us,
As it appears you will, and as you know how,
We will walk all over you, without even pausing for breath.
I beg you, gentlemen, surrender yourselves,
For I have really had enough of this country'.

Du Guesclin replies with equal confidence:

'Herald', said Bertrand, 'I think you are all hungry,
In fact, it's my belief you are famished.
I have observed that you have dug trenches
In which each one of you can all take shelter,
But you have made a big mistake, because the day has arrived.
You have nothing to eat, that's the truth,
In my view, we can easily deal with you'.

Du Guesclin may have made a big mistake here, in underestimating the opposition. He seemed to have thought that they had dug trenches because they were afraid, whereas (if they had) it was probably for tactical reasons. Experience had shown that English archers were at their most deadly when they were provided with cover.

²⁵⁶ Chanson 12473-12478.

We are used to seeing Chandos as a commander; and we have seldom seen him engaged in hand-to-hand fighting; but at Nájera he killed at least one Spanish knight with his bare hands. Froissart's tells us that:

Sir John Chandos shewed himself an able knight and performed many gallant deeds under his banner; but, in his eagerness in fighting and driving his enemies before him, he was surrounded, and in the crowd unhorsed. A large man of Castille, called Martin Ferrand, who was renowned for courage among the Spaniards, threw himself upon him with a determined resolution to kill him, and kept him down in the greatest danger. Sir John, however, bethought himself of a knife he had in his bosom, which he drew, and struck so well with it this Martin, in the sides and back, that he gave him a death-blow as he was lying under him; he then turned him over, and rose up as speedily as he could. His people were now all ready about him for they had with great difficulty broken through the crowd to come to the place where he had fallen.

In Chandos Herald's poem:

Great was the noise and the dust.
There was not a pennon nor a banner
That was not thrown to the ground.
Such was this fight.
Chandos was beaten down,
And there fell upon him a Castilian of great stature,
Martin Fernandez by name,
Who struggled hard
How he might kill him,
And wounded him through the visor.
Chandos, right boldly,
Took a dagger from his side,
Struck the Castilian
And plunged the sharp knife
Into his body.
The Castilian stretched out dead,
And Chandos leaped upon his feet,
Grasped his sword in both hands
And was again in the battle,
That was right hard and fearful
And wonderful to behold.
And he that was struck by him
Might be certain of his death.

The Herald does not say so, but it has been suggested that it was the wound received at Nájera which made Chandos blind in one eye – and that this played a part in his death three years later, though there is also a story that he received the wound in a hunting accident.

In Cuvelier's version of events, the French put up much more of a fight, in which Chandos lost one of his retainers and took his revenge, but was forced back by Trastamara:

And John Chandos, with his proud countenance,
Threw himself among the Spaniards valiantly.
But the Marshal of Spain behaved basely.
Right in front of Chandos, he killed Arnold of Madalent,
A squire and gentleman who was his chamberlain,
(A good sort of lad who used his sword heartily)
He struck him directly on the shield and hit his chest,
Easily running him through.
He fell dead on the ground, and could no longer speak.
God, how heavy was Chandos's heart!
He charged the Marshal fiercely;
With lance and spear he attacked him
So that he lay on the ground. One would have thought that
He was dead, to the great sorrow and grief of Henry
King of Spain, when he came up so furiously
On a charger worth more than silver and gold.
He scattered the crowd and picked up the Marshal,
Shouting at the top of his voice:
'Ah, gentle Marshal, you are so brave!'
Then he made Chandos go back across the wide acres
And forced his whole company into retreat.

When the day was done, it was clear that the Anglo-Gascon army had won an overwhelming victory and that du Guesclin had been captured for the second time. Froissart reported that:

Many gallant feats were performed. Sir John Chandos distinguished himself particularly. He governed that day the Duke of Lancaster, just as he had done the Prince of Wales at Poitiers, for which he was exceedingly praised and honoured, as was indeed but just. When such a valiant and good knight acquits himself thus towards his lords, he is indeed worthy of honour and respect. Sir John, therefore, during the day, never thought of making any prisoners with his own hand, but was solely occupied with fighting and pushing forward. However, many good knights and squires from Aragon, France and Brittany were made prisoners by his people, and under his

banner - particularly Sir Bertrand du Guesclin... with upwards of 60 knights...

This passage is highly complimentary to Chandos; but we should add that, under the laws of war, a captain whose subordinates captured a prisoner automatically became entitled to a share of the ransom money; and that Chandos was the leader of the Anglo-Gascon vanguard, and a banneret. Accordingly, it is almost certain that he gained substantially from the victory in money terms, as well as in reputation. (The French historian of the Hundred Years War, Edouard Perroy, believed that Chandos was famous even in his own lifetime, while David Green describes him as a 'luminary' amongst tacticians.)²⁵⁷ By the same token, the Prince of Wales must have reaped even greater rewards. It is difficult to assess the value of medieval money; but the 100,000 francs in ransom money which was demanded for du Guesclin was by any standards a large sum, even if it was no larger than had been paid for his release after the Battle of Auray. Yet this was not the largest ransom extracted from the prisoners taken at Nájera.²⁵⁸

Cuvelier has an attractive story regarding du Guesclin's ransom, which portrays Chandos in an extremely favourable light:

Great was the ransom extracted from Bertrand;
There was no baron so high, who was not astonished by it,
'Now I shall be free', said the gentle Bertrand,
But John Chandos asked 'But where will you find the money?'
'Sir', said Bertrand, 'I have many good friends
And I will be able to get help from them, of this I am sure.'
'By my faith' said Chandos, 'I would be most glad of it!
But if you need assistance, I would be most glad
To lend you 10,000, I have that much put by'.
'Sir', said Bertran, '5,000 thanks,
But I will see what my own countrymen can do.'

In the *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois* du Guesclin is brought before the Prince by Chandos and the Captal de Buch; Chandos says:

'Don Betrand, when I took you prisoner in Brittany, you swore an oath that you would never again take arms against the Prince, unless the King of France or his brothers made war on the King of England.'

Du Guesclin defends himself boldly against this charge:

²⁵⁷ Perroy, *Hundred Years War* (London, 1965), 178; Green, *The Hundred Years War, A People's History*, 128.

²⁵⁸ Barber (1979), 209.

But the Prince was not involved in [the Breton] war. It was he who decided to become involved in this one, on behalf of King Pedro; and I, on the other hand, as a good soldier of King Henry [of Trastamara] armed myself and came to his aid. And for this reason, I have in no way broken my oath.²⁵⁹

Unfortunately, it is very unlikely that this conversation ever took place, and certainly that these words were spoken in this way. The dialogue has probably been invented because it provides a drama, in which du Guesclin and Chandos stand for the French and English armies as a whole; but it is once again a mark of Chandos's international standing that he appears as the leading Englishman in a chivalric pageant, fictional or otherwise.

There are various stories relating to du Guesclin's release. Cuvelier has an elaborate scene involving the Prince, Chandos, d'Albret and Calveley, in which the Prince offers the prisoner the sum £10,000 and his freedom, if he will only promise to lay down his arms forever. Like much French writing about du Guesclin, this is designed to boost the Breton knight's image for posterity. Froissart's version of the story is quite different:

We will now relate how Sir Bertrand du Guesclin obtained his liberty. After the Prince was returned to Aquitaine, his brother the Duke of Lancaster to England, and all the other barons to their different homes, Sir Bertrand du Guesclin remained prisoner to the Prince and to Sir John Chandos; for he could not by any means obtain his ransom; which was highly displeasing to King Henry, but he could not remedy it.

Now it happened (as I have been informed) that one day, when the Prince was in great good humour, he called Sir Bertrand du Guesclin, and asked him how he was.

'My lord', replied Sir Bertrand, 'I was never better: I cannot otherwise but be well, for I am, though in prison, the most honoured knight in the world.'

'How so?' - rejoined the Prince

'They say, in France as well as in other countries' said Sir Bertrand, 'that you are so much afraid of me, and have such a dread of my gaining my liberty, that you dare not set me free and this is my reason for thinking myself so much valued and honoured'.

²⁵⁹ CQPV, 180-1.

The Prince, on hearing these words thought Sir Bertrand had spoken them with much good sense - for, in truth, his council were unwilling that he should have his liberty until Don Pedro had paid to the Prince and his army the money he had engaged to do. He answered:

'What, Sir Bertrand, do you imagine that we keep you a prisoner for fear of your prowess? By St. George, it is not so; for, my good Sir, if you will pay 100,000 francs, you shall be free'.

Sir Bertrand was anxious for his liberty, and now, having heard upon what terms he could obtain it, he took the Prince at his word replied

'My lord, through God's will, I will never pay a less sum'.

The Prince, when he heard this began to repent of what he had done. It is said that some of his council went farther, and told him:

'My lord, you have acted very wrong in thus granting him so easily his ransom.'

They wanted to break through the agreement but the Prince, who was a good and loyal knight, replied:

'Since we have granted it, we will keep to it, and not act any way contrary; for it would be a shame, and we should be blamed by every one for not agreeing to his ransom, when he has offered to pay so largely for it as 100,000 francs.'

From the time of this conversation, Sir Bertrand was taking great pains to seek the money, and was so active, that by the assistance of the King of France and the Duke of Anjou, who loved him well, he paid in less than a month 100,000 francs, and went to the aid of the Duke of Anjou, with two thousand combatants, in Provence, where the Duke was laying siege to Tarascon, which held out for the Queen of Naples.

The most famous prisoner taken at Nájera, after du Guesclin himself, was possibly the Count of Denia. He was captured by two English squires, Robert Hawley and Richard Chamberlain, but then appropriated by the Prince in return for a promise of compensation. The Count's ransom was apparently fixed at 150,000 *doblas*, the largest of any; but in fact this led to thirty years of litigation, diplomatic incident and a murder in Westminster Abbey. Thomas Walsingham, the chronicler of St Albans Abbey tells us about the murder, which was a cause of great scandal. It appears from this account us that Chandos was master of two squires, Hawley and

Shakell (an heir of Chamberlain), to whom the Count of Denia had been awarded ‘in the judgment of the Prince and John Chandos’.²⁶⁰

The Prince had won a great victory at Nájera; but the Spanish expedition as a whole proved disastrous. First, the Prince was already in poor health when he returned to Aquitaine, having contracted some kind of stomach complaint in Spain; and second, he was bitterly disappointed by King Pedro’s failure to honour his promise to pay the costs of the successful expedition, though this had restored him to his throne. Froissart also tells us that there were some embarrassing negotiations between the Prince and Pedro regarding the fate of the Castilian prisoners captured at Nájera, when Chandos was present. Pedro regarded the captives as traitors and wanted to execute them; but the Prince requested that they be pardoned. Pedro relented, but insisted on making an example of Gomez Carillo, whom he then killed with his own hands, in front of the entire army.

Pedro was unable (or unwilling) to make the payments agreed upon at Libourne; and Chandos Herald soon realised that his promises were worthless. The consequence was that, although the Prince and his troops stayed in Castile for over a year (seven or more months at Burgos and a further six in Valladolid), hoping that their presence would encourage Pedro to pay, their hopes were disappointed; and, at the end of that time, they decided to return to Bordeaux:

The Prince had well seen
That King Pedro was not
So trustworthy as he had thought;
Then he said he would return,
For many had told him
That the bastard Enrique
Had entered Aquitaine,
And caused much distress
Among the common people of the land;
At which the prince was greatly wroth.
Then he straightway returned
From Madrigal without delay;
So he travelled day and night
Till he came to the valley of Soria,
Where he remained one month,
And Chandos, with three others,
Negotiated with the Council of Aragon,

²⁶⁰ Walsingham, 69. In 1377 Hawley and Shakell were thrown into the Tower of London for refusing an order to hand over a hostage. They escaped from the Tower the following year, taking sanctuary in Westminster Abbey. The Constable of the Tower, Sir Alan de Buxhill (the same man who had taken a lease of St Sauveur-le-Vicomte after Chandos’s death) broke into the Abbey sanctuary with 50 soldiers and captured Shakell. Hawley was killed, during High Mass. This was multiple sacrilege and those responsible were excommunicated.

Which I know but little of.

The diplomatic position which resulted from the Prince's victory at Nájera was complex, since there were three Spanish powers interested in the outcome: Castile, Navarre and Aragon. Chandos, the Count of Armagnac and the Chancellor of Aquitaine were appointed to represent the Prince at a conference at Tarbes in southern Gascony, in November 1367. The negotiations were protracted; and Chandos was only one of a large number of dignitaries who acted as royal proxies when the English signed a treaty of alliance with Aragon in January 1369:

Jan 12 [Westminster Palace]

Powers to the archbishop of Bordeaux, the bishops of Bazas and Perigueux, the abbots of Saint Maixent and Sainte Croix, Bordeaux, palace and Saint Jean d'Angely, the dean of the church of Angouleme, scholastic of the church of Saintes, John Chandos (Constable), Thomas de Felton, Seneschal of Aquitaine, John de Grailly (Captal de Buch), the lord of Poyanne and the lord of Landiras, to take the oath for the king to observe the said treaty.

By the king's person in his general council.²⁶¹

The negotiations were in any event overtaken by events. Henry of Trastamara had escaped from the battlefield at Nájera and took refuge in France. In 1368, he signed a treaty with Charles V, agreeing to lend him a fleet in return for military assistance on land. Henry re-entered Castile in 1369, defeated Pedro at the Battle of Montiel, and then murdered him. He was immediately acclaimed King once more; Castile reverted to being a staunch French ally; and the Castilian fleet was once more at the disposal of French strategists and admirals.

The Spanish intervention also ruined relations between the Prince and a good number of his most important subjects in Aquitaine. Once he had returned to Bordeaux, the Prince had to decide how to pay for the expedition. Froissart reports that it was his controversial decision to impose a new tax on his subjects in Aquitaine, which caused Chandos to leave Aquitaine and return to Normandy for a period of around six months in 1368.²⁶²

We may wonder whether there were other factors at play. The expedition had also proved disappointing for Chandos. Firstly, he did not receive the gift of the lordship of Soria, as promised. In fact he was cheated of it, even before Pedro's murder. According to Ayala, Sir John was asked by the Prince to intercede with the Castilian Chancery in the effort to obtain payment for the Anglo-Gascon forces as a whole, but could not even obtain payment for himself. When he presented the King's letters patent authorising the gift of Soria, the Castilian Chancellor (Matheos Fernandez de Cáceres) asked for a fee of 10,000 *doblas*. Chandos did not have this

²⁶¹ See also Rymer's *Foedera*, 1830, III, II, 855-6.

²⁶² Froissart, chapter 244; Russell, 138(n1); Green, 98; ODNB, Barber on the Prince.

kind of money; and the gift was never perfected. Neither was the transfer of Vizcaya. Subsequent attempts to persuade King Pedro to intervene led nowhere. In Ayala's view, this incident also contributed greatly to the Prince's disillusionment with Pedro: when he returned to Aquitaine, he was already *desabenido del rey don Pedro*.²⁶³ Secondly, however, the Prince himself took the decision to release du Guesclin, in whom Chandos probably had a direct financial interest. Although a ransom was negotiated, there is no evidence that Chandos ever received any part of it. Accordingly, Sir John may well have had reason to feel displeased with his master, even before the latter decided to ignore his advice about the budgetary problem which his government faced in Aquitaine (of which we shall have more to say).

The prose version of Cuvelier's *Song of Bertrand du Guesclin* relates the familiar story of how the Black Prince led his army back to Bordeaux in a sad and dejected state, and disbanded it there; but it also says that Chandos was in charge of demobilisation. It was he who arranged for the troops to be sent into other parts of France, where they proceeded to cause immense destruction:

Sir John Chandos was in charge of this assembly of men, and he arranged for them to enter the country of the King of France. And they put that country to the sword; but the Pope laid an interdict on them, after which each man retreated to his own country.²⁶⁴

Cuvelier is not always the most reliable of historians; but he is probably right when he says that the French suspected that English soldiers connived and co-operated with the Free Companies in many parts of France, whatever denials English diplomats might make. Moreover, there is confirmation of this in Froissart's account. Although the latter does not implicate Chandos directly in this business, he does tell us that several mercenary captains who had fought under his banner at Nájera – including Robert Birkett, John Cresswell and the *bourc* Camus – were among those who returned to Aquitaine but, since they were not allowed to stay there, they crossed the Loire into the French kingdom, where they caused immense damage. It is very unlikely that they could have done this without Chandos's knowledge, and possibly his permission.

The Renewal of the War

²⁶³ Ayala, year 18, chapter 20 : 85-9; 92-3; 115-117 ; chapter 21:7, 30 ; chapter 23 :10 ; chapter 31 :8. Soria was later granted to Du Guesclin, and later again to Catalina of Lancaster: Russell, 609.

²⁶⁴ Cuvelier, ed. Michel, 268.

The Treaty of 1360 was intended to bring permanent peace; but the decade which followed was punctuated by proxy wars in Brittany and Spain, and widespread depredations by the Free Companies. The peace was always fragile because neither the French nor the English kept the promises made at Brétigny. The French never paid the ransom agreed upon for King Jean, while the English were slow to evacuate their garrisons. The French never really accepted that Aquitaine had been ceded in full sovereignty; and Edward III never finally renounced his claim to the French throne. It would only take a spark to ignite the fires set by mutual suspicion.

French historians date the revival of their fortunes to 1364, when Charles V became king. Jean II had been a soldier and became known as *Jean le Bon*, John the Good; but he was weak as well as unlucky. King Charles (1364-80), though not a soldier, was a thinker, planner and strategist, who became known as *Charles le Sage*, Charles the Wise. He was born in the royal hunting lodge at Vincennes in 1338, and it was there that he spent much of his time, erecting an enormous keep within six years of his accession, and surrounding it with walls, towers and moats. As Dauphin, Charles had never agreed to any policy which involved surrender, to the Parisians or the English; and he had never accepted the surrender of sovereignty in Aquitaine, which the Treaty of Brétigny involved. When he became King, he planned from the outset to recover what had been given away. His instrument was Bertrand du Guesclin, whom he sent first against Pedro the Cruel in Spain and then against the Black Prince in France itself.

Charles V proceeded carefully: he took legal advice and consulted his subjects. According to Froissart, he caused the papers relating to the treaty of 1360 to be brought to his council chamber and read out several times, particularly the articles which had provided that King Edward would renounce war and vacate the strongholds which his men had occupied throughout France. After these had been ‘maturely considered’:

The prelates and the barons of France told the King that that neither the King of England nor the Prince of Wales had kept or fulfilled the articles of the Treaty of Brétigny; but, on the contrary, had taken possession of castles and towns by force, and had remained in the aforesaid Kingdom of France, to its great loss; where they had pillaged and ransomed its subjects, by which means the payment for the redemption of the late King Jean was still part in arrear: that upon this, and upon other points, the King of France and his subjects had good rights and just cause to break the peace, to make war upon the English and deprive them of the possessions they had on this side the sea.

King Charles was also advised that, if he did choose to make war, many of the Gascon nobles would join him:

As for those of Poitou, Saintonge, Rouergue, Quercy and La Rochelle, from their nature they cannot love the English, who, in their turn, being proud and presumptuous, have not any affection for them, nor ever had.

Whether it was true that the Gascon nobility never had any affection for the English may be doubted; but the Gascons certainly had a new grievance with regard to taxation, the origin of which was the fiscal deficit resulting from the expense of the Spanish expedition. When King Pedro let him down, the Black Prince had little choice but to raise the money himself; but there was widespread resistance to the idea that the Gascons should pay for Pedro's incompetence and failures, especially when some of them thought that they had been treated better when they owed allegiance to the French Crown rather than the Prince of Wales:

The Prince of Wales was advised by some of his council to lay a tax on the land of Aquitaine: the Bishop of Rodez in Rouergue, in particular, took great pains to persuade him to it. The establishments of the Prince and the Princess were so grand, that no Prince in Christendom maintained greater magnificence. The barons of Gascony, Poitou, Saintonge and Rouergue, who had the right of remonstrating, as well as those from the principal towns in Aquitaine, were summoned to a council on this tax. This Parliament was held at Niort; when the bishop of Rodez, chancellor of Aquitaine, in the presence of the Prince, explained fully the nature of this tax, in what manner it was to be levied, and that the prince had no intention to continue it longer than for five years, or until he should have satisfied the large debt which had been caused by the Spanish expedition.

The deputies from Poitou, Saintonge, Limousin, Rouergue and la Rochelle were agreeable to this imposition, provided the Prince would keep his coin to the same standard for seven years; but it was refused by those from the upper parts of Gascony, namely, the Count of Armagnac, the Lord of Albret his nephew, the Count of Comminges, the Viscount of Carmain, the Lord of la Barde, the Lord of Cande, the Lord of Pincoret, and several great barons from the counties, cities and good towns under their jurisdiction, saying that in former times, when they were under the vassalage of the king of France, they were not oppressed by any tax, subsidy, imposition or *gabelle*, and that they never would submit to any such oppression so long as they could defend themselves: that their lands and lordships were free from all duties, and that the Prince had sworn to maintain them in this state. Nevertheless, in order to leave the Parliament of the Prince in an amicable manner, they declared, they would, when returned to their own country, consider this business more fully.

These lords and barons of Gascony being arrived in their own country, and having their opinions strengthened, were resolved neither to return again to the Parliament of the Prince nor to suffer this tax to be imposed upon their lands, even should they be obliged to oppose force in preventing it. Thus the country began its rebellion against the Prince.

The lords of Armagnac, d'Albret, de Comminges, the Count of Périgord, and several great prelates, barons, knights and squires of Gascony went to France, to lay their complaints before the court of the King of France (the King and his peers being present) of the wrongs the Prince was about to do them. They said they were under the jurisdiction of the King of France, and that they were bound to return to him as to their sovereign lord. The King of France, who was desirous not openly to infringe the peace between the king of England and him, dissembled his joy at these words.

Froissart's account is essentially correct. In particular, it is confirmed by correspondence between the Black Prince and the Count of Armagnac. Their letters reveal that the Count resolutely refused to pay the new *fouage* (or hearth tax). The Count took the view that he had already done enough by joining the Spanish expedition! At one stage, he did offer to pay the tax, provided that he was given a guarantee that those of his subjects who were too poor, should be granted relief; but when the Prince failed to agree, he appealed to Edward III; and when the latter failed to reply, he lodged a further appeal with the King of France, in 1369. The question for the lawyers (and the politicians) was whether such an appeal could be entertained, when King Jean II had purported to cede Aquitaine to the Prince's father in full sovereignty.

The Prince's attitude towards the resistance he encountered is evident in Chandos Herald's poem. There is little or no mention here of the hearth tax, or of aspect of the quarrel, and no mention of any difference of opinion amongst the Prince's officials with regard to financial matters. The Herald was a household servant, not an economist or administrator; and he had a simple view of the world. In his eyes, the Count of Armagnac and his accomplice the Count of Albret were traitors. They had done homage for their fiefs and they had supported the Prince in his war, and it was totally unacceptable now for them to question his right to raise taxes. Their duty was to obey their liege without question; but, instead, they conspired against him:

Then began duplicity
And treason to rule
Those that should have loved him.

In the Herald's mind there were also aggravating circumstances, in that the Prince was very seriously ill:

Some short time after this,
It happened that thither came to sojourn at Angouleme
The noble Prince of Aquitaine
And there, it is well certain
There began that illness
Which lasted to the end of his life:
Great pity indeed that it was so.

We may feel that the ‘traitors’, if technically guilty of treason, were at least motivated by sound economic and political motives. For example, Armagnac owed 200,000 gold florins in arrears of wages for his service in Spain;²⁶⁵ but Chandos Herald saw no mitigating circumstances. On the contrary, he saw the Devil (‘the old enemy’) at work:

It is no great marvel,
For the enemy, who is ever watchful,
Would rather trouble a nobleman
Than one of low birth, so it is.

Given the importance of homage and fealty in the world of chivalry, it is remarkable that there was any dissension in the ranks of the English administration in Gascony; but, according to Froissart, Chandos was against the new hearth tax from the start:

The Prince continued to persevere, and to make his council persevere in the affair of the hearth tax. Sir John Chandos, who was one of the principal of his council and a valorous knight, was of a contrary opinion, and wanted the Prince to desist: so that, when he saw he could not succeed, in order that he might not be accused nor have any blame, he requested leave of the Prince to visit his estate of St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte, of which he was lord, for he had not been there these three years. The Prince granted him leave; and Sir John Chandos set out from Poitou for the Cotentin, and remained in the town of St. Sauveur for more than a year. In the mean time, the Prince proceeded with this tax which, if it had been properly managed, would have been worth 1,200,000 francs.

In the Amiens Manuscript, Froissart gives a slightly different account of Sir John’s reasons for retiring to Normandy at this time:

²⁶⁵ Fowler, MMI, 232.

So that he would not be called upon to pay this tax and so that he would not be inculpated in the discussions. The Prince allowed him to go, but reluctantly.

Contemporary writers cited many instances of Chandos's bravery and military qualities; but nowadays his conduct in the matter of the hearth tax is cited as an example of political wisdom. One can understand why there was more to the problem, even in the 14th century, than a simple question of who owed feudal allegiance to whom.

The Count of Armagnac had lodged an appeal with Charles V, despite the provisions of the Treaty of Brétigny and despite the homage he had done to the Prince; but he could argue that Edward III had never renounced his claim to the French throne, and therefore that Jean II's renunciation of sovereignty over Aquitaine had never been made final. Moreover, a modern lawyer would argue that it was a breach of natural justice for the Prince to impose a new tax and deny the taxpayer any right of appeal to an independent body; and a medieval lawyer would question whether a sovereign prince was ever entitled to deliver his subjects to another jurisdiction, with retaining some ultimate right of resort. When the appeals of the Gascon lords were received in Paris, Charles V hesitated, and took legal advice, before deciding to admit them; but, once he had done so, he immediately summoned the Black Prince to give his response in person, and in Paris. It was this summons, and the Prince's refusal to obey it, which led to a renewal of the great War. Froissart explains how, in a very famous passage in his Chronicle:

Upon this, the King of France, to be better informed, and to preserve the rights of his Crown, ordered all the papers relative to the last peace, to be brought to the council-chamber, where they were read several times, that the different points and articles might be fully examined. The king of France was so strongly advised by his council, and so strenuously entreated by the Gascons, that an appeal was drawn up, and sent to Aquitaine, to summon the Prince of Wales to appear before the *Parlement* of Paris...

When the Prince of Wales had heard this letter read, he was more astonished than before. He shook his head; and after having eyed the said Frenchmen, and considered awhile, he replied as follows:

'We shall willingly attend on the appointed day at Paris, since the King of France sends for us; but it will be with our helmet on our head, and accompanied by 60,000 men'.

This was a memorable and dramatic reply, especially when we know that the Prince was already suffering from a mortal illness. Something of the kind must have been said, because Chandos Herald also recorded the incident:

[The Prince] was mightily provoked
And rose up from his bed
And said, 'Good sirs by my faith,
It seems from what I see
That the French hold me as dead;
But if God give me true relief,
And I can leave this bed,
Again will I cause them much annoyance.
For God knows well that they complain
Unjustly of me in this.

Then he wrote back to the King of France
In a stern and frank tone,
That willingly and certainly
Would he come at his bidding,
If God granted him health and life,
Himself and all his company,
Helmet on his head,
To keep him from mischief.

The Prince's reply, though brave, was scarcely diplomatic. We are left to wonder whether he might have been persuaded to give a more cautious reply if Chandos had been present; and, if so, whether war could have been avoided. As it was, the Prince was so angry that he ordered the French envoys who delivered Charles V's summons to be imprisoned. For his part, Charles V declared war and ordered his brother the Duke of Anjou to invade Aquitaine. In the following May the *Parlement* of Paris declared that the Principality was forfeit to the Crown of France.

The English were now both surprised and dismayed at how readily many of the Prince's Gascon subjects returned to French allegiance. An anonymous Englishman wrote to a friend on March 19 1369, explaining just how bad the situation had become in Aquitaine. The Duke of Anjou had invaded the Principality in such force that the Prince and his advisers scarcely knew how to defend themselves. They could do little more than try to hold on in the main towns.

Chandos was in Normandy when the French re-invaded, and would doubtless have preferred to continue to cultivate his own garden in St Sauveur; but the situation was desperate and the call of duty too strong. This was not a time to let his old friend and master down.²⁶⁶ Froissart tells us about the reconciliation:

²⁶⁶ Anglo-Norman Letters, item 138, pp.198-9; Green, 111.

News was very soon brought to the Prince of Wales, who at that time resided at Angoulême, how his high steward of Rouergue had been defeated by the Count of Périgord, and by those other noblemen who had summoned him by appeal to the Chamber of Peers in Paris. Much enraged was the Prince, when it was told him: he said, he would seek severe and early revenge for this, upon the persons and lordships where this outrage had been committed. He wrote directly to Sir John Chandos, who had retired to his estate at St. Sauveur le Vicomte in the Cotentin, ordering him to come to him, without delay, as soon as he should have received his letter.

Chandos, desirous of obeying the Prince, made all possible haste, and came to Angoulême to the Prince, who received him with great joy. Soon after, the Prince sent him to Montauban, with a large body of men at arms and archers, to make war upon the Gascons and French, who were every day increasing in numbers, making incursions upon the territories of the Prince... Sir John Chandos made the town of Montauban his headquarters, and gallantly defended the frontiers against the Gascons and French...

The reconciliation between the Prince and his life-long companion was greeted with 'great joy'. As we would expect of a man who had been a household knight for most of his life, Chandos had decided to do his duty; but we should not underestimate the depth of his opposition to the idea of fighting a new war. Another version of Froissart's Chronicle tells us explicitly that he returned to the Prince against his better judgement:

When Sir John Chandos received the news, he was not at all pleased, for he hated and abhorred the idea that war would be renewed and said that in his view, great evil would evils would flow from it.

What had Chandos been doing at Sauveur between June and November 1368? The French and the Navarrese had each looked for his support in Normandy. The captain of Cherbourg, Ferrando d' Ayens had set off to welcome him home, at the head of a company of men at arms and archers. For his part Charles V deputed the Sire de Vignay and Pierre de Villers to travel to St Sauveur for discussions with Sir John. We do not know what was agreed, but ostensibly Chandos co-operated in the royal effort to restore law and order. Robert Ducluzeau considered that Chandos's own subjects in Lower Normandy greeted his return with high hopes; but Delisle's account of the local history would lead one to a different conclusion; and a study of the relevant documents does lead one to wonder whether the welfare of the local population was ever at the top of Chandos's agenda. He was after all an English knight, who must have had orders from his King and the Prince, even if we do not know the terms. Normandy was a maelstrom of competing interests – English,

French and Navarrese. In the late 1360s, Norman politics was further complicated by the return from Spain of some of the Free Companies who had fought there for the Prince. During the course of 1368, some of these men, led by John Creswell and Robert Birkhead, set up bases in Château-Gontier in Anjou. Vire, in Normandy, was attacked by a Company led by 'Hodgkin Russell, Folquin the German and Thomelin Bell. They occupied the town for a period of some six weeks, between 2 August and 13 September.

Chandos's possession of St Sauveur had been confirmed by King Jean II; but Jean had died in 1364; and there was no personal bond between Sir John and the new French king, Charles V. Instead of assaulting the English Free Companies, Chandos arranged for their departure by negotiating a large ransom, while agreeing (in August 1368) to provide continuing 'protection' for the local area. He received 15,000 francs, payable in three instalments, for protecting the local population for a period of six months between July and Christmas 1368 (*pour garder et tenir paisibles les gens du Clos de Costentin*). For this, Delisle accused him of 'odious' hypocrisy, since he took the view that Chandos was essentially engaged in a very large protection racket. He also pointed to a sinister letter dated 22 August 1368, from the Captal de Buch, asking Chandos to discuss a proposed treaty between the Gascons, the English Free Companies and the Navarrese.

The account books of the King of Navarre confirm that relations between the garrison at St Sauveur and the Navarrese garrisons in other parts of the Cotentin remained close throughout the whole of the 1360s. For example, they ate and drank together in Cherbourg on Sunday 28 May 1368, and had dinner the following day at Valognes. Charles of Navarre's officials recorded that they provided food and drink on the Monday, but the food on the Sunday was provided by the garrison at the castle of Cherbourg.²⁶⁷

Chandos had agreed to provide protection for local people for a period of six months, starting in July 1368; but in November he left for the South-West, leaving John Cocking in charge at St Sauveur. To say the least, this was not re-assuring for the people of the Cotentin; and their fears turned out to be justified when mercenaries from Château Gontier entered the peninsula. The raiders even attacked Cherbourg, and must have ridden past the gates of St Sauveur to get there. The Abbot of Cherbourg sent a letter of protest to Chandos, which is recorded in the Navarrese accounts:

To 'Navarre', king of heralds of his Lordship, on the instructions of the Abbot of Cherbourg, dated 18 December 1368:

For going to see Sir John Chandos in Guienne, to inform him how the companies which were at Château-Gontier had overrun [*couru*] the country of

²⁶⁷ Izarn, 343. It was easier to account for what had been spent on the dinner at Valognes, since a guest-list or *placement* of some kind had been prepared

the Cotentin, and tried to take the town of Cherbourg, and how they had captured several prisoners and taken them back to Château-Gontier; and to point out that he had guaranteed the peace of that territory:

20(?) francs.

These events might be regarded as unfortunate; but Delisle saw them as a clear breach of the agreement which Chandos had entered into, indeed as compelling evidence of either culpable negligence, or deliberate treachery, on Sir John's part. He may have been right: the continuing existence of Navarrese garrisons, and the return of the English Free Companies, may not have been unwelcome from Chandos's point of view. He must have known some of the captains involved; and they gave him a plausible excuse for raising the money required to maintain his own establishment at St Sauveur.

After the French declaration of war in May 1369, Charles V ordered Amaury de Craon, his commander on the Loire, to take action against the English garrison at Château Gontier and the English enclave at St Sauveur. De Craon advanced north and had no difficulty in retaking the first, because the English were forewarned of his approach and vacated the fortress – indeed some of them now joined their compatriots in St Sauveur. De Craon then reached St Sauveur, in August, where he was joined by contingents from Lower Normandy and Brittany and by both Marshals of France; and he laid siege to Chandos's castle. At this point, in June 1369, there is even a suggestion that Sir John returned to St Sauveur to help to defend it. Charles V even issued orders to the *bailli* of Caen and the Viscount of Falaise that they should be extra vigilant, lay in supplies of food and munitions and employ all available men on guard duty, 'in view of Sir John's approach'; but there is no hard evidence that Chandos did arrive; and in any event the siege of St Sauveur was broken up when it was realised that the attackers lacked a proper siege train. Confusingly, there is also evidence that an agreement was reached at this time between the French and John Cocking, the captain of St Sauveur, under which he received a large ransom.²⁶⁸

The situation changed after Chandos's death. The Navarrese accounts show that his successor as captain of St Sauveur, Thomas Catterton, signed a fresh agreement to protect the counties of Valognes and Carentan for a period of six months from St John the Baptist's Day in June until Michaelmas 1370; but also that the garrison of St Sauveur now included at least four Englishmen (William Hilton, Geoffrey Walton, Robert Mitton and Henry Brown), who are described as 'captains of the men of the Companies'. The poachers had evidently turned gamekeepers.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Delisle, 151, *Preuves* 169; Sumption III, 31.

²⁶⁹ Guillaume Hilletonne, Guiffroi Valletonne, Robert Mitton, Henri Brun. Delisle, 150-1, *Preuves*, 169; Fowler MMI, map at 229; 234-6; Izarn, *Compte* 36, 219, 223, 303, 319, 343-4, 351.

The Defence of Quercy and Rouergue

Chandos was back in Bordeaux by the 12th January 1369, when Edward III wrote to inform the officials of Aquitaine of the new treaty of alliance which he had negotiated with King Peter of Aragon.²⁷⁰ The English would need allies if they could find them, because they were now faced with a formidable coalition of French forces. Charles V of France had three brothers and each was given a role in the assault on England and English possessions. Philip, Duke of Burgundy was given the task of invading the English mainland, while Louis Duke of Anjou and John Duke of Berry were to attack Aquitaine. It was decided to invade on several fronts. Realising that the provinces which were furthest from Bordeaux, and which had only recently come under English rule, would be the most difficult to defend, Louis therefore invaded Quercy and Rouergue, and made rapid progress. In fact, it was always necessary to use force, because many towns and districts were willing to revert to French allegiance without a struggle. As a result, the Prince's administration began to collapse as soon as the Duke's officers made an appearance.

It was Chandos's job as Constable to defend the Principality, but this was no easy task. In the beginning he commanded purely local forces, while the reinforcement he hoped for from England proved inadequate: the expeditionary force which arrived, commanded by Prince Edmund of Langley, Earl of Cambridge and John Hastings, Earl of Pembroke, consisted of no more than 1,000 men, and the commanders were young and inexperienced. Chandos therefore decided to supplement his 500 'regular' troops, with recruits from the *routier* bands of the Great Company. His chief recruiting agent was Perducas d'Albret, illegitimate brother of the Lord of Albret we have encountered already. The junior Albret brought his men down from the hills of Auvergne, to reinforce Chandos in Quercy and the Rouergue.

Chandos had his back to the wall; but he rose to the occasion and 1369 was probably his finest hour. Overcoming personal differences with the Prince and with some members of the English aristocracy, he emerged as an independent commander, and one with a sound strategy. Like many commanders before and since, he decided that attack was the best means of defence. The French had superior numbers and their offensive gathered momentum; but they did not know when and where Chandos would strike. All through the first half of the year, the consuls of Rodez (which had almost immediately reverted to French allegiance) were on the lookout for English troops. Their accounts records no less than three payments, made in January, February and July, to spies sent to Cahors and

²⁷⁰ Rymer's *Foedera*, 1830, III, II, 855-6.

Montauban, Albi, 'St Anthony', and Cahors again, 'to find out if Sir John Chandos was approaching' (*per saber de Moss. Joh. Sandos, se venia*).²⁷¹

Chandos established a garrison at Montauban at the beginning of March 1369. He occupied the fortresses at Moissac and St Nicolas-la-Grave, small towns to the North-West of Montauban and at the confluence of the Tarn and Garonne. From there he advanced up the Tarn towards Toulouse. The French came out of Albi and laid siege to Montauban; but the siege was unsuccessful, thanks to vigorous action by Chandos's deputy, Sir Thomas Walkefare, and Chandos's own harassment of the French siege lines. Nevertheless, by March 1369 Sir Thomas Wettenhall, who had been appointed Seneschal in Rouergue, had lost control of most of the province, though he seems to have held on in Millau.²⁷² Chandos was therefore reduced to employing guerrilla tactics. He commanded large bands of men rather than an army; and these spread out over a large area, moving north into the valleys of the Lot and Dordogne. Henri Denifle's great work, *La Guerre de Cent Ans et La Désolation des Églises, Monastères et Hôpitaux en France* (1899) concentrated on the damage done by the English in France, particularly to churches, abbeys and other religious institutions. He pointed out that the town of Réalville, near Montauban, changed hands three times in rapid succession in 1369. The result was to magnify the destruction several fold. At the end of the fighting, there was very little left of Réalville.²⁷³

Froissart relates that the Prince received some much needed reinforcements at this time from Sir Robert Knollys. Knollys was a Cheshire man, who had taken up residence in Brittany, 'where he had a fine and large estate', which included the castle of Derval, between Nantes and Rennes. He came down to La Rochelle by ship, with a contingent of around 60 English and many archers:

He found there Sir John Devereux, who commanded for the Prince of Wales, as high steward, Sir Thomas Percy being with Sir John Chandos. Sir John Devereux received Sir Robert Knollys with great joy and entertained him in the best manner he could. Sir Robert remained there two days, to refresh himself and his people. On the third day, he set out, taking the road to Angoulême, and continued his journey until he arrived there.

Knollys then joined with others and formed a force around 60 knights²⁷⁴ and 'five hundred archers and as many foot soldiers, all in high spirits eager to meet the

²⁷¹ Bousquet, 68-71. (The accounts were written in a southern French dialect).

²⁷² Denifle I, 545; Luce, VII, 120, 122; Sumption, III, chapter II. For Wettenhall, who was a Cheshire man, see Morgan (1987), 132. He is named as Seneschal of Rodez in a Papal letter of 1366: Cal. Pap. Reg. (Letters) IV, 25.

²⁷³ Denifle, I, 542-3.

²⁷⁴ Johnes notes that the numbers here are rather puzzling, but noted: 'We must suppose that many of the Prince's household were at the time of Sir Robert's arrival [already] with Chandos or Audley.'

French'. This was just as well since in the meantime Perducas d'Albret had been persuaded by the Duke of Anjou to 'turn French'. Knollys persuaded him to turn his coat again! Other mercenaries, who had taken the French side and were in Cahors, abandoned this place and moved against the priory of Duravel, which was a dependency of the great Abbey of Moissac:²⁷⁵

As soon as Sir John Chandos.... and the other knights attached to the Prince in Montauban, heard that Sir Robert Knollys was besieging the Companies in Duravel,²⁷⁶ they determined to march to his assistance; for it seemed to them that much glory might be acquired. Upwards of 300 hundred lances went from Montauban, leaving behind in garrison full 200...They pressed their march to arrive at the siege of Duravel. In their road, they came to a tolerably strong French town, called Moissac. It was only guarded by the townsmen, for there was not a gentleman in it. They sent their scouts to examine the place, who brought information that it was sufficiently strong, and that without a siege they could not well gain it. The leaders immediately called a council, to see what was best to be done; and they resolved in this council, that it would be wrong for them to stop at this place, which would interfere with their intentions regarding Duravel.

They therefore continued their march: it was but early morning; and they had not advanced more than a league from the place before they met four carriers' horses laden with provisions, who were immediately stopped and seized. They inquired whence they came, and whither they were going. The carriers truly answered, that they had come from Toulouse and were going to Moissac, with the intent of selling their provision. They were then questioned as to the estate of that town, and what was the force within it. The carriers, not daring to tell a lie, said, that the town was much distressed by a scarcity and they did not believe there were in it provisions for four days, if they should be besieged; and that there were no gentlemen in it, nor had it any defenders but the citizens. The chiefs then called a council, and determined not to march further till they should have conquered this town. They returned, and, keeping the provisions for themselves, gave the carriers their horses, telling them to go seek for more. They halted before Moissac, and encamped as if they meant to fix their quarters before it for a month. This first day they made preparations seemingly for an assault on the following, and pointed their cannon against the walls.

When the inhabitants of Moissac saw what was going forward, they were much frightened, knowing they could not long hold out; for they were in

²⁷⁵ Luce, VII, 145-9; 356-61; Denifle, I, 543.

²⁷⁶ Froissart has 'Durmel'; but I think he must mean Duravel.

great want of all sorts of provision; they opened a treaty with the English knights, which was soon concluded. By it they acknowledged the Prince of Wales for their lord, and agreed to hold the town from him forever, without fraud or treachery. On which they had peace granted, and nothing was taken from them. Sir John Chandos and the other knights, at the request of the inhabitants, appointed a knight called Sir Robert Mytton governor, with 20 men at arms and 40 archers to be retained and paid at the expense of the town. They then marched to Duravel, where Sir Robert Knollys and his army were. There was great joy at their arrival and thus all meeting together again. The newcomers united with their former friends in pushing on the siege with vigour.

During the siege of Duravel, there were many attacks, skirmishes and gallant feats of arms, for they were good and able men, as well those who besieged the place as those who defended it. Had they not been such skilful soldiers they could not have held out as they did. The English and their partisans who lay before it, did not gain much advantage, for they were overpowered in two ways: it rained night and day, which hurt both men and horses: added to this, there was such a scarcity of provision, they had great difficulty in procuring wherewithal to satisfy their hunger. A loaf was sold there for three old groats. They were distressed to obtain any even at such a price. Of wines, they had a sufficient quantity, which to them were of the greatest comfort. In this situation, they remained upwards of five weeks. When they perceived that they made no impression, nor were likely to take the garrison of Duravel, and that they remained there in a very comfortless state, they determined to raise the siege, and to march for the town and castle of Domme, which was situated in a richer country.

The English could not hope to defeat the invading French armies by recapturing the places which had already been overrun one by one: this would take too long. In addition, they could not rely on the Free Companies. (The Duke of Anjou gave short shrift to *routier* captains who fought for the English - he had two of them drowned in the River Garonne, and three more hanged and quartered). Moreover, the Anglo-Gascon siege of Domme only lasted a fortnight before Chandos realised that the besiegers were suffering worse privations than the besieged. He decided to send his herald to the Prince of Wales at Angoulême, to obtain fresh instructions:²⁷⁷

After they had besieged this place for fifteen days, and found they did not gain any advantage, nor were likely to conquer it, but were much straitened themselves, they determined to inform the Prince of Wales of

²⁷⁷ Sumption, III, 21-6.

their situation, who was at that time at Angoulême. Chandos the Herald was ordered to carry this message, who immediately set out and journeyed until he came to Angoulême where he found the Prince with very few attendants, for all his knights and squires were away on different expeditions. When Chandos Herald arrived in the presence of the Prince, he dropped on his knees and recommended to him his masters who had sent him, and whom he had left at the siege of Domme. He then related their situation most wisely, as he had been ordered to do, and gave him their letters of recommendation, which he had brought to the Prince. The Prince listened attentively to all that was told him, and said he would consider this subject. He kept the herald with him five days, and, on the sixth, he had letters delivered to him under the Prince's seal, who said to him on his departure,

'Chandos,²⁷⁸ salute from me all our companions.'

And the herald replied, 'Most willingly, my lord.'

When the herald set out, he took the road through Quercy.²⁷⁹

Meanwhile, back at Domme, Chandos had already taken to decision to abandon the siege. Having done so, he moved to the East, with the aim of gaining control of places which were more easily taken:

Soon after Chandos [Herald] had left his masters at the siege of Domme, Sir John Chandos, Sir Robert Knowles, Sir Thomas Felton, the capitai de Buch, Sir James Audley and the other knights, held a council and resolved to break up this siege, for they gained nothing; and to make an incursion more into the country, in order to conquer such towns and garrisons as had lately turned to the French through the means of the Duke of Berry and the Free Companies...

They decamped and marched from Domme, taking the road for Gramat, which immediately surrendered: the inhabitants turned again to the English the moment they came before it. The chiefs and the army remained for three days in Gramat, to refresh themselves, and during that time considered where they should go next. When they went away, they made for a fortress which the Companies had newly takes called Frons. As soon as the garrison perceived the English advancing with so great a force, and learnt that those of Gramat had become English they also changed their side, and swore that they would be faithful to the English; but they lied. The English continued their

²⁷⁸ The Prince meant the herald, not his master.

²⁷⁹ Luce VII, 147.

march, and halted before Rocamadour. The inhabitants had strongly fortified themselves, not having any inclination to surrender.

The English, having well examined the situation of the town of Rocamadour, and the countenance of its inhabitants, brought forward their engines and artillery and began to attack it with great vivacity and vigour. I can say, that many and sharp were the attacks: several were slain and wounded by the arrows from those within and without. This assault lasted one whole day. Towards vespers, the English retired to their camp, with the intention of renewing the attack on the morrow; but during the night those of Rocamadour, who the preceding day had severely felt the courage of their opponents, and how hardly they had pushed them, called a council. The wisest among them said that in time they must surrender and, if they were taken by assault, they would all be slain, the town burnt without mercy; and that, weighing the bad and good, they advised opening an immediate treaty with the English. This was soon concluded. They declared that from that day forward, they would be true to the English, which they afterward solemnly swore to observe. They were also obliged to supply the army with fifty horseloads of provisions from the town, during the space of fifteen days, which were to be paid for at a certain fixed price; and thus Rocamadour obtained peace.

On 11 May, Chandos and the Capital de Buch attacked Cahors, but they failed to take it and lacked the strength to mount a siege. On 19 May Chandos and Knollys tried to take Figeac, but once again the attack was a failure. Sir John must have realised that, despite his best efforts, he was failing to reverse the flow of the French tide. Towns were defecting to Charles V in alarming numbers and with startling speed; and sometimes, where he did succeed in recovering them, this was only for a short time. This happened at Villefranche-in-Agenais (Villeneuve-sur-Lot?), where he installed an English governor and an English captain, Robert Rous (Rowse?)²⁸⁰. Then Chandos Herald arrived back from his visit to Angoulême:

As these knights and their army were making incursions on the borders of Rouergue and Quercy, taking towns and castles, and distressing the whole country, Chandos Herald returned. He found them before a castle in Quercy, which they had hard pressed. When they saw the herald, they received him joyfully, and inquired what news he had brought. He told them that his highness the Prince saluted them all, and was very desirous of seeing them; and at these words he gave them the letters from the Prince, which the barons took and read. They found that, with many assurances of affection and friendship, he desired that Sir John Chandos, Sir Thomas Felton, and the

²⁸⁰ Luce, VII, 150; 360-1).

Captal de Buch should return to him at Angoulême; and that Sir Robert Knollys with his army, and all the Free Companies, should remain where they were to continue the war...

Before returning to Angoulême the English addressed the leaders of the English Free Companies, in a last-ditch attempt to enlist their full support:²⁸¹

'Gentlemen, you hear how our lord the Prince sends for us to come to his presence; for what cause we are as yet ignorant. We will therefore explain to you what we wish you to do in our absence. You will collect all your forces into one body, and with them pass the frontiers of Limousin and Auvergne, to carry the war thither; for without war you cannot subsist; and we swear and promise you faithfully, that whatever town, castle or fortress of France ye shall take and conquer, wherever it may be situated, and ye shall be besieged in it, we will fly to your assistance, and will cause the siege to be raised.'

Those who heard this promise replied,

'It is well spoken, and we will abide by it; for perhaps we may be obliged to have recourse to you.'

This appeal did not go entirely unanswered. We know for example that it was at this time (June 1369) that Chandos sent the *routes* commanded by Sir Robert Cheyney, John Chase and Hodgkin Russell to besiege Compeyre near Millau, the key to the defence of the Tarn; but, in the event, the English were heavily defeated there.²⁸² The 'irregulars' proved unable to achieve any more than the Prince's regular forces had done. The result was that the remaining English strongholds in Quercy and Rouergue were, by and large, left to their fate.

Very soon, only Millau remained loyal; but the consuls there entertained grave doubts about their position, now that Charles V's forces were on their doorstep. They consulted widely, and even obtained a legal opinion as to their position, from the most learned doctors of law at the University of Bologna. In their 'instructions to counsel' they admitted that they had done homage to Chandos as King's Lieutenant in 1361 and how they had homage to him again after the creation of the Principality. However, the opinion received from Bologna was that the King of France must have the right, in the last resort, to hear appeals emanating from his former dominions, notwithstanding what may have been agreed at Brétigny. Accordingly, Millau decided to surrender to the French, and did so at the end of September 1369.²⁸³

²⁸¹ Luce, VII, 153-4; 364-5.

²⁸² Fowler, MMI, 287, citing the Archives of Millau, no 332; Sumption III, 33-35.

²⁸³ Chaplain, 59-61, items 2 & 3; Sumption II, 579; 45-6 (for Millau).

Chapter 5

The End, 1369-80

The Defence of Poitou

The war continued to go badly. In the spring of 1369 the French re-conquered the English enclave of Ponthieu, on the Somme. Abbeville surrendered on 29 April and the port of Le Crotoy was stormed on 5 May. The remaining English garrisons in the county could only hold out for only a month, while refugees flocked to the refuge of Calais. In May the French also started to raid Poitou, 'by far the richest province of the Prince's dominions.'

Chandos was sent to defend Poitou. To begin with, he had the assistance of the English expeditionary force led by the Earls of Cambridge and Pembroke; and it was decided to launch an attack on the key fortress of la Roche-sur-Yon, a Valois enclave in English Aquitaine:

Some little time before, the Earls of Cambridge and Pembroke had also returned with their army, after the conquest of Bourdeilles, as you have before heard. The lords and barons rejoiced exceedingly at this meeting, and great entertainments were made by them.

They considered which way they should next march, to make the most of the season. They found, on examining the country, that there was near the borders of Anjou a fine and strong castle, called la Roche sur Yon, which was a dependency of Anjou: there they resolved to march, lay siege to it, and conquer it if they were able... The Duke of Anjou had appointed governor a knight called Sir John Blondeau,²⁸⁴ who had under his command many good companions, at the charge and pay of the Duke...

In the army of the Earl of Cambridge, with Sir John Chandos and the other barons, were some knights from Poitou well acquainted with the governor, and who in former times had been his companions in arms. These knights advanced to the barriers, and upon their faith and assurances held a

²⁸⁴ Sumption has Jean Belon: III, 31.

conversation with him, and talked the matter over so ably (for he was not a sensible man, though a valiant knight,) that he entered into a treaty to deliver up the castle, if he were not succoured, nor the siege raised, within a month; when he was to receive the sum of 6,000 *francs* for the provisions in it. The treaty thus entered into was ratified.

No relief was sent; so that, when the month was expired, the English lords summoned the governor to perform his promise, for which he had given good hostages. Sir John [Blondeau] did not intend to break his engagement: he said to his companions,

‘Since the King of France and the Duke of Anjou are determined to lose this castle, I cannot defend it alone.’

He therefore delivered it up to the English, who took possession with great joy. The governor received the sum of 6,000 *francs*, as agreed upon for the provision in the castle, which was well worth it: and he and his garrison were escorted to the town of Angers.

We now learn why Froissart thought that Blondeau was ‘not a sensible man’:

Instantly on his arrival, he was arrested by the governor of Angers, and thrown into prison; and, as I have heard, was the same night put into a sack, cast into the river, and drowned by the orders of the Duke of Anjou, for having accepted money to surrender a castle, which had been well provided, and was strong enough to have held out for a year, if the governor had chosen. Thus did the English gain the castle of la Roche-sur-Yon in Anjou, which they well garrisoned and strengthened: they then returned to the Prince of Wales at Angoulême.

English morale suffered a heavy blow when Chandos’s friend and constant companion Sir James Audley died around 23 August 1369; but the result was that Chandos was put in charge of the locality:

Soon afterward, at the request of the barons and knights of Poitou, Sir John Chandos, who was Constable of Aquitaine, was appointed Seneschal of Poitou, and went to the city of Poitiers, which he fixed on for his residence. He frequently made excursions upon the French, and kept them under such continual alarms, they never dared to venture abroad but in very large bodies.

Chandos decided to attack once more. He planned an expedition into the Loudunais, a salient of French territory on the Northern border of Aquitaine; and he requested the assistance of the Earl of Pembroke in the enterprise. One might have thought that Sir John would now receive the co-operation of all forces loyal to the Earl (who was a younger brother of the Black Prince), especially since he, Pembroke and Cambridge were all Knights of the Garter; but in the event the expedition was to suffer from petty jealousies, based on class:

Chandos, being Seneschal of Poitou, and a hardy and valiant knight, had a great desire to meet the French: he therefore did not remain long idle, but collected, during the time he passed at Poitiers, a body of men at arms, English and Poitevins, and said he would make a *chevauchée* with them towards Anjou, and return by Touraine, to look at the French who were assembled in those parts. He sent information of the expedition he meditated to the Earl of Pembroke, who was in garrison at Mortagne-sur-Mer with 200 lances. The Earl was much pleased with this intelligence, and would willingly have been of the party; but his attendants and some knights of his council prevented him, by saying:

'My lord, you are a young and noble knight, formed to excel: if you at this moment unite yourself with Sir John Chandos and his army, he will obtain all the glory of the expedition, and you will be only named as his companion. It is therefore more proper for you, who are of such high rank and birth, to act for yourself, and let Sir John Chandos do so on his part, who is but a knight-bachelor when compared with you.'

These and such like words cooled the ardour of the Earl of Pembroke, who, having no longer any wish to go, sent an excuse to Sir John Chandos.

However, Chandos did not give up so easily:

He ordered his rendezvous at Poitiers; from whence he marched, with 300 lances, knights, and squires, and 200 archers...The men at arms and archers marched boldly forth and in good array, as if going upon some grand enterprise, and, having passed through the province of Poitou, entered that of Anjou. When they were arrived in that country, they fixed their quarters in the flat parts of it, and sent out their light divisions to burn and destroy everything. They did infinite mischief to this rich and fine country, without any one attempting to prevent them; and they remained there upwards of fifteen days, especially in that part of it called the Loudunois. They retreated from Anjou down the River Creuse, which separates Touraine from Poitou; and Chandos, with his army, entered the lands of the Viscount de la Rochechouart, where everything, excepting the fortresses, was ruined. They

advanced to the town of La Roche-Posay,²⁸⁵ and vigorously assaulted it, but without effect; for there were excellent men at arms within it, commanded by Thibault du Pont and Helyons de Talay, who prevented if from being taken or injured.

The English continued their march to Chauvigny, where Sir John Chandos received information that the lord Louis de Sancerre, marshal of France, with a great body of men at arms, were at la Haye in Touraine. He was very desirous to march that way, and sent in great haste to the Earl of Pembroke to signify his intentions, and to beg of him to accompany him to la Haye in Touraine, and that he would meet him at Châtellerault.

Chandos Herald was the bearer of this message. He found the Earl of Pembroke at Mortagne busily employed in mustering his men, and preparing, as it appeared, to make an excursion. He excused himself a second time, by the advice of his council, saying he could not accompany him. The Herald, on his return, found his master and the army at Châtelleraut, to whom he delivered his answer. When Sir John Chandos heard it, he was very melancholy, knowing that pride and presumption had made the Earl refuse to be a party in this expedition, and only replied,

'God's will be done.'

He dismissed the greater part of his army, who separated, and he, with his attendants, returned to Poitiers.

From a modern perspective, what Pembroke did here – or failed to do - was quite extraordinary. By refusing to serve under Chandos on the grounds that he was an Earl, whereas Chandos was merely a knight, he seriously compromised the English position. As a result, Chandos was left in command of a motley force of his own retainers and Poitevins, which lacked a backbone. Yet Chandos Herald refrained from criticising Pembroke on this account, when he wrote his poem twenty years later. For the Herald, everything in the chivalric garden remained rosy. He even thought fit to describe the recalcitrant aristocrats in glowing terms:

The renowned Earl of Cambridge,
Who had a heart of a lion,
Him of Pembroke also,
Who had a heart both honest [*preux*] and bold.

²⁸⁵ Froissart names the town of La Rochechoart here, but this must surely be a mistake, since that is a long way to the South. It is La Roche-Posay which is on the Creuse: see Sumption III, 46.

With hindsight we can that, when he disappointed Chandos, Pembroke also turned down the chance to gain valuable military experience; and this became evident soon afterwards. In December 1369, the Earl moved into the Loudunois with only 500 men and set up camp near the village of Purnon,²⁸⁶ but promptly had to be rescued:

We will now relate how the Earl of Pembroke prospered. As soon as he knew that Sir John Chandos had disbanded his army, and was returned to Poitiers, he assembled his own forces, which consisted of 300 English and Poitevins, and marched from Mortagne. ... The Earl of Pembroke and his forces took the direct road to where Sir John Chandos had been, burning and despoiling all those parts of Anjou which the first had left, or which had been ransomed. They halted to refresh themselves in the Loudunois, and then took the road for the lands of the Viscount de Rochechouart, to which they did great damage.

The French who were in garrison on the frontiers of Touraine, Anjou and Poitou ... heard the whole truth of these two excursions, and how the Earl of Pembroke, who was a young man, would not, through pride, serve under Sir John Chandos. They therefore resolved to conquer him if they could; for they thought they should more easily defeat him than Sir John Chandos. They made, in consequence, a secret levy of their forces from all the garrisons...

The Earl was taken by surprise, something which would not have happened, one suspects, if Chandos had been in charge of the scouts:

The English and the Poitevins marched on without any thought or precaution, having heard nothing of these men at arms: they had entered Poitou with all their pillage, and came, one day about noon, to a village called Purnon, where they halted, after the manner of persons in perfect security. But when the servants were about to put the horses in the stable, and to prepare the supper, the French, who well knew what they were about, entered the village of Purnon, with their lances in their rests, bawling out their cry,

'Our Lady, for Sancerre the marshal!' and then overthrew all they met in the streets.

The noise became so violent, that the English ran to the headquarters with great alarm, to inform the Earl of Pembroke, Lord Thomas Percy, Sir Baldwin de Franville, and the others, that the French had suddenly attacked and surprised them. These lords were soon armed, and sallying out from their hotels, collected their men together; but they could not all assemble, for the

²⁸⁶ Moisant, 146; Sumption, III, 47. The *Chronique Normande*, 192.

numbers of the French were so considerable that the English and Poitevins were overpowered; and in this first attack, more than 120 were killed or made prisoners.

The Earl's men were now forced to retreat to a house which had once belonged to the Knights Templar. It lacked a moat and had only a stone wall by way of defences. They had archers – *English* archers, who had the reputation of being the best – and they were determined on resistance; but they had very little food and were clearly in danger of being overwhelmed. Eventually, Pembroke sent for help:

When it was dark, they entreated a squire, an expert soldier, and in whom they placed great confidence, to set out directly by the back-gate, and ride as fast as he could to Poitiers, to inform Sir John Chandos his friends how awkwardly they were situated, and beg they would come to their assistance; in the hopes of which they would hold out until noon; and, if he made haste, he might easily make this journey by early morning. The squire, who perceived the extreme danger in which all the lords were, very cheerfully undertook it, but boasted a little too much of his knowledge of the roads. He set out about midnight by the back-gate, and took the straight road, as he thought, for Poitiers; but it so fell out, that during the whole night he wandered about, until it was broad day, before he hit upon the right one.

The night passed but the French renew their attack at daybreak. In his desperation, Pembroke sent a second messenger to Chandos:

Between six and nine o'clock, after the heat of the attack, the French, indignant that the English had made so long a defence, sent orders to all the villages thereabouts to bring pick-axes and mattocks to undermine the walls, which was what the English were most afraid of.

The Earl of Pembroke called one of his own squires and said to him,

'My friend, mount a horse, and sally out from the back gate, where they will make way for you, and ride as fast as possible to Poitiers to Sir John Chandos, to tell him our situation and the imminent danger we are in: recommend me to him by this token.'

He then took off his finger a rich ring of gold, adding,

'Give him this from me: he will know it well again.'

The squire, who thought himself much honoured by this commission, took the ring, mounted the best courser he could find, and set off by the back gate during the attack, for they opened it for him. He took the road to Poitiers;

and, whilst he was making all the haste he could, the assault was carried on warmly by the French, and as vigorously opposed by the English: indeed, it behoved them so to do.

So, we may ask, what had happened to the first messenger in the meantime?

We will now say something of the first squire, who had left Purnon at midnight, and who, having lost his road, had wandered about all the night. When it was broad day, he knew his road, and made straight for Poitiers; but his horse being tired, he did not arrive there until about nine o'clock, when he dismounted in the square before the hôtel of Sir John Chandos and immediately entered it, having learnt that he was at mass: he approached him, and, falling on his knees, delivered his message.

Chandos's initial response was cool:

Sir John Chandos, who had not yet recovered his vexation at the Earl of Pembroke's refusal to join him in his expeditions, was not very eager to give him assistance: he coldly said,

'It will be almost impossible for us to get there in time and hear the whole mass.'

Soon after mass the tables were spread, and dinner set out. His servants asked Sir John, if he would dine:

'Yes' said he, 'since it is ready'.

Then he entered the hall, where his knights and squires had preceded him with water to wash his hands. As he was thus employed, and before he had sat down to table, the second squire from the Earl of Pembroke entered the hall, and, having knelt down, drew the ring from his purse, saying,

'Dear sir, my lord the Earl of Pembroke recommends himself to you by this token, and entreats you most earnestly to come to his assistance, and rescue him from the imminent danger he is now in at Purnon.'

Chandos took the ring, and, having examined it, knew it well. He then replied,

'It will not be possible for us to arrive there in time, if they be in the situation you describe.' He added, 'Come let us dine.'

Sir John seated himself with his knights at table, and ate of the first course: as the second was served, and indeed begun on, Chandos, who had much thought on this business, raised his head, and, looking at his companions, spoke as follows, which gave much pleasure to those around him:

'The Earl of Pembroke (a lord of such high birth and rank that he has even married a daughter of my natural lord the King of England, and is brother in arms, as in everything else, with my Lord of Cambridge) entreats me so courteously, that it behoves me to comply with his request to succour and rescue him, if it be possible to arrive in time.'

He then pushed the table from him, and, rising, said to his knights and squires,

'Gentlemen, I am determined to go to Purnon.'

This was heard with joy, and they were soon ready to attend him. The trumpets sounded, and every man at arms in Poitiers was mounted in the best way he could; for it had been speedily told abroad, that Chandos was marching to Purnon, to the assistance of the Earl of Pembroke and his army, who were there besieged by the French. When these knights and squires took the field, they amounted to upwards of 200 lances, and increased every moment. They marched with all haste.

The mere news of Chandos's approach was enough to make a difference in Purnon:

News of this was brought to the French, who had constantly been engaged at this assault from day-break until noon, by their spies, who said:

'Dear lords, look well to yourselves; for Sir John Chandos has marched from Poitiers with upwards of 200 lances, and is advancing with great haste and a greater desire to meet with you.'

When Sir Louis de Sancerre, Sir John de Vienne, Sir John de Beuil, and the others who were present, heard this, the best informed among them said,

'Our men are tired and worn down by their assaults upon the English, yesterday and today: it will be much wiser for us to make a handsome retreat with all we have gained, and our prisoners, than to wait the arrival of Sir John Chandos and his company, who are quite fresh; for we may lose more than we can gain.'

This plan was immediately followed, for there was not a moment to lose: the trumpets were ordered to sound a retreat: their men assembled in a body, and, having sent off their baggage, they themselves took the road to la Roche-Posay.

The English must also have received intelligence of Chandos's approach:

They said to themselves:

'Chandos must certainly be on his march, for the French are retreating, not daring to wait his coming: come, come, let us immediately quit this place and take the road towards Poitiers and we shall meet him.'

Those who had horses mounted them: and others went on foot, and several rode double. They thus left Purnon, following the road to Poitiers: they had scarcely advanced a league before they met Chandos and his army in the condition I have before told: some on horseback, some on foot, and some riding double. Much joy was shown on both sides at this meeting; but Sir John said, he was sorely vexed that he had not been in time to have met the French. They rode together conversing for about three leagues, when they took leave of each other and separated.

Sir John Chandos returned to Poitiers; the Earl of Pembroke to Mortagne, the place he had marched from; and the Marshal of France and his army to la Roche-Posay, where they refreshed themselves and divided their booty; they then retired to their garrisons, carrying with them their prisoners, whom they courteously admitted to ransom, as the French and English have always been accustomed to act towards each other.

Despite all Chandos's efforts, 1369 had been a very bad year for the English. Indeed, the success enjoyed by the French meant that some Englishmen lost all they had won in Aquitaine. One of these was Gautier (Walter) Spridlington, whom Chandos had appointed joint 'castellan and master of the waters and forests of Poitou' in 1361. He was captured and taken to a castle in Mirebeau in the Duchy of Anjou. His property was restored to its original owner, Jean Andrieu, who was himself a refugee from Gascony.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁷ AH de Poitou, 4, item 476; 90, item 506; 289 (n1). Much the same fate was suffered by the Poitevin Guichard d'Angle (c.1308-1380). See Robert Ducluzeau's biography and Sumption's article in ODNB.

Death by the Sword

Despite Chandos's best efforts to salvage something from the wreck of English Aquitaine, Charles V's forces pressed on with the invasion of Poitou. Just before Christmas 1369 the French occupied the Abbey of St Savin near Poitiers, and Chandos set out to recapture it. The attempt failed and he retreated as far as Chauvigny. Some of his men stayed with him, while others returned to Poitiers. On New Year's Eve, Chandos took around 40 men and set off in pursuit of a French force which was rumoured to be nearby. He caught up with it at Lussac-les-Châteaux and led his men in an attack. It was here that he was mortally wounded, and died next day, on 1 January 1370.

Froissart recounted the death scene at Lussac 'in almost ceremonious slow motion'.²⁸⁸ The episode became one of the most famous in his *Chronicles* and was depicted in the illustrations which were used to decorate the text of his manuscripts in the 15th century. It adds many vivid details to the bare bones of the story:

Sir John Chandos, being Seneschal of Poitou was seriously afflicted with the loss of St. Salvin: he was continually devising means to retake it, whether by assault or by escalade was perfectly indifferent to him, so that he could gain it. He made many nightly ambuscades, but none succeeded; for Sir Louis, who commanded in it, was very watchful, as he knew the capture of it had highly angered Chandos. It happened that, on the night preceding the eve of the New Year, Chandos, who resided in the city of Poitiers, had sent out his summons to the barons and knights of Poitou to come to him as secretly as they could. The Poitevins would refuse him nothing, since they loved him; and they obeyed his summons, and came to Poitiers. Sir Guiscard d'Angle, Sir Louis de Harcourt, the Lords de Pons, de Partenay, de Pinane, de Tannaybouton arrived, with many others. When they were all assembled, they were full 300 lances.

They left Poitiers in the night, and no one, except the principal lords, knew where they were going; but the English had scaling-ladders and all the other equipment they needed. They marched to St. Salvin; and were told what was planned when they arrived there. They all dismounted and, giving the horses to their valets, descended into the ditch. It was then about midnight. They were in this situation, and would very shortly have succeeded in their expedition, when they heard the guard of the fort blow his horn. The reason was this. That very night Carnet le Breton²⁸⁹ had come from La Roche-Posay, with forty lances, to St. Salvin, to request Sir Louis de St. Julien to accompany him in an expedition to Poitou. He therefore awakened the guard and those

²⁸⁸ Ainsworth, 92.

²⁸⁹ 'Keranloet' in Luce's edition of Froissart.

within the fort. The English, who were on the opposite side, ignorant of the intentions of this body of Frenchmen wanting to enter the fort, thought they had been seen by the guard, or that spies had given information of their arrival to the garrison. They immediately left the ditch, and said,

'Let us away; for this night we have been disappointed in our scheme.'

They mounted their horses, and advanced in a body to Chauvigny on the River Creuse, two short leagues distant. When all were arrived there, the Poitevins asked Chandos if he wished them to remain with them: he answered:

'No: you may return in God's name: I will today stay in this town.'

The Poitevins departed, and with them some English knights: in all, about two hundred lances. Sir John Chandos entered a hôtel, and ordered a fire to be lighted. Lord Thomas Percy, Seneschal of La Rochelle, and his men, remained with him. Lord Thomas asked Chandos if he intended staying there that day:

'Yes,' replied Sir John; 'why do you ask?'

'Because, sir, if you be determined not to go further, I shall beg of you to give me leave to make an excursion, to see if I shall meet with any adventure.'

'In the name of God, go then,' replied Sir John.

In the next scene, Froissart implies that Chandos foresaw his own death, for he was melancholy:

At these words, Lord Thomas Percy set out, attended by about 30 lances. Chandos remained with his own people. Lord Thomas crossed the bridge of Chauvigny, taking the longest road to Poitiers, having left Sir John Chandos quite low-spirited for having failed in his intended attack on St. Salvin. He continued in the kitchen of the hôtel, warming himself at a straw fire which his herald was making for him, conversing at the same time with his people, who very readily passed their jokes in hopes of curing him of his melancholy. After he had remained some time, and was preparing to take a little rest, and while he was asking if it were yet day, a man entered the hôtel, and came before him, saying,

'My lord, I bring you news.'

'What is it?' asked Sir John.

'My lord, the French have taken the field.'

'How dost thou know this?'

'My lord, I set out from St. Salvin with them.'

'And what road have they taken?'

'My lord, that I cannot say for a certainty; but it seemed to me they followed the road to Poitiers.'

'And who are these French?'

'My lord, they are Sir Louis de St. Julien and Carnet le Breton, with their companies.'

'Well, it is indifferent to me,' replied Sir John, 'I have not any inclination to exert myself this day: they may be met with without my interference.'

He remained a considerable time very thoughtful; after having well considered, he added:

'Notwithstanding what I have just said, I think I shall do right to mount my horse; for at all events I must return to Poitiers, and it will soon be day.'

'It is well judged,' replied the knights who were with him.

Sir John ordered everything to be got ready, and his knights did the same:

They mounted and set off, taking the road to Poitiers, following the course of the river. The French might be about a good league before them on this same road, intending to cross the river at the bridge of Lussac. The English suspected this from perceiving the tracks of the horses, and said among themselves,

'Either the French or Lord Thomas Percy are just before us.'

Shortly after this conversation, day appeared; for in the early part of January the mornings begin to be soon light. The French might be about a league from the bridge of Lussac, when they perceived Lord Thomas Percy and his men on the other side of the river. Lord Thomas had before seen them, and had set off full gallop to gain the bridge. They said:

'There are the French: they are more in number than we are; let us hasten to take advantage of the bridge.'

When Sir Louis and Carnet saw the English on the opposite side of the river, they also made haste to gain the bridge: however the English arrived first, and were masters of it. They all dismounted, and drew themselves up to defend and guard it. The French likewise dismounted on their arrival, and giving their horses for the servants to lead them to the rear, took their lances, and advanced in good order, to attack the English and win the bridge. The English stood firm, although they were so few in comparison with the enemy.

While the French and Bretons were considering the best tactics to adopt, Chandos arrived:

Chandos arrived with his company, his banner displayed and flying in the wind. This was borne by a valiant man at arms, called James Allen, and was a *pile gules* on a *field argent*. They might be about forty lances, who eagerly hastened to meet the French. As the English arrived at a small hillock, about three furlongs from the bridge, the French servants, who were between this hillock and the bridge, saw them, and, being much frightened, said:

'Come away: let us save ourselves and our horses.'

They therefore ran off, leaving their masters to shift as well as they could. When Chandos, with displayed banner, was come up to the French, whom he thought very lightly of, he began from horseback to rail at them, saying:

'Do you hear me, Frenchmen! You are mischievous men at arms: you make incursions night and day at your pleasure: you take towns and castles in Poitou, of which I am Seneschal. You ransom poor people without my leave, as if the country were your own; but, by God, it is not. Sir Louis, Sir Louis, you and Carnet are too much the masters. It is upwards of a year and a half that I have been endeavouring to meet you. Now, thanks to God, I do so, and will tell you my mind. We will now try which of us is the strongest in this country. It has been often told me, that you were very desirous of seeing me: you have now that pleasure. I am John Chandos: look at me well; and, if God please, we will now put to the proof your great deeds of arms which are so renowned.'

Froissart remarks on Chandos's eagerness to fight. Indeed, a man such as he, who had fought at Sluys, Crécy, Winchelsea, Poitiers and Nájera, may have come to think that the English (and Gascons) were practically invincible; but, if so, he was to discover, as almost every commander eventually does, that the fortunes of war are uncertain:

Sir Louis and Carnet kept themselves in a close body, as if they were willing to engage. Lord Thomas Percy and the English on the other side of the bridge

knew nothing of what had passed, for the bridge was very high in the middle, which prevented them from seeing over it. During this scoffing of Chandos, a Breton drew his sword, and could not resist from beginning the battle: he struck an English squire, named Simkin Dodenhale, and beat him so much about the breast with his sword that he knocked him off his horse on the ground. Chandos, who heard the noise behind him, turned round, and saw his squire on the ground and persons beating him. This enraged him more than before. He said to his men:

'Sirs, what are you about? How suffer you this man to be slain? Dismount, dismount'. And at the instant he was on foot, as were all his company. Simkin was rescued and the battle began.

We may note here that it was normal for English knights and men at arms to fight on foot. This was the classic 'English tactic', which had featured in all the great victories won in the set-piece battles of previous decades; but it was not so useful, perhaps, when a small number of men set out to defend a bridge.

Chandos, who was a strong and bold knight, and cool in all his undertakings, had his banner advanced before him, surrounded by his men, with the escutcheon above his arms. He himself was dressed in a large robe which fell to the ground, blazoned with his arms on white *sarcenet*, *argent*, a *pile gules*; one on his breast, and the other on his back; so that he appeared resolved on some adventurous undertaking; and in this state, with sword in hand, he advanced on foot towards the enemy.

This morning there had been a hoar-frost, which had made the ground slippery; so that, as he marched, he entangled his legs with his robe, which was of the longest, and made a stumble: during which time a squire, called James de St. Martin (a strong expert man), made a thrust at him with his lance, which hit him in the face, below the eye, between the nose and forehead. Sir John Chandos did not see the aim of the stroke, for he had lost the eye on that side five years ago, in the *Landes* near Bordeaux, when chasing a stag: what added to this misfortune, he had not put down his vizor, so that in stumbling he bore upon the lance, and helped it to enter into him. The lance, which had been struck from a strong arm, hit him so severely that it entered as far as the brain, and then the squire drew it back to him again.

It is amazing that Chandos did not die from this wound immediately. As it was, it did prove fatal:

The great pain was too much for Sir John, so he fell to the ground, and turned twice over in great agony, like one who had received his death-wound.

Indeed, after receiving the blow, he never uttered a word. His people, on seeing this mishap, were like madmen. His uncle, Sir Edward Clifford, hastily advanced, and striding over the body (for the French were endeavouring to get possession of it) defended it most valiantly, and gave such well-directed blows with his sword that none dared to approach him. Two other knights, Sir John Chambo and Sir Bertrand de Cassilie, were like men distracted at seeing their master lie thus on the ground.

The Bretons, who were more numerous than the English, were much rejoiced when they saw their chief thus prostrate, and greatly hoped he was mortally wounded. They therefore advanced, crying out:

'By God, my lords of England, you will all stay with us, for you cannot now escape.'

The English performed wonderful feats of arms, as well to extricate themselves from the danger they were in as to revenge their commander Chandos, whom they saw in so piteous a state. A squire attached to Sir John marked out this James de St Martin, who had given the blow; he fell upon him in such a rage, and struck him with his lance as he was flying, that he ran him through both his thighs, and then withdrew his lance: however, in spite of this, James de St. Martin continued the fight. Now if lord Thomas Percy, who had first arrived at the bridge, had imagined anything of what was going forwards, Chandos's men would have been considerably reinforced; but it was otherwise decreed: for, not hearing anything of the Bretons since he saw them advancing in a large body towards the bridge, he thought that they might have retreated; so that Lord Thomas and his men continued their march, keeping the road to Poitiers, ignorant of what was passing.

Though the English fought so bravely at the bridge of Lussac, in the end they could not withstand the force of the Bretons and French, but were defeated, and the greater part made prisoners. Sir Edward Clifford stood firm, and would not quit the body of his nephew. If the French had had their horses, they would have gone off with honour, and have carried with them good prisoners; but, as I have before said, their servants had gone away with them. Those of the English also had retreated, and quitted the scene of battle. They remained therefore in bad plight, which sorely vexed them, and said among themselves:

'This is a bad piece of business: the field is our own, and yet we cannot return through the fault of our servants. It is not proper for us who are armed and fatigued to march through this country on foot, which is quite against us; and

we are upwards of six leagues from the nearest of any of our fortresses. We have, besides, our wounded and slain, whom we cannot leave behind.'

Chandos's men managed to extricate themselves from the fight, though they fully realised the loss they had suffered:

These barons and knights of Poitou were struck with grief, when they saw their Seneschal, Sir John Chandos, lying in so doleful a way, and not able to speak. They began to grievously to lament his loss, saying:

'Flower of knighthood! Oh, Sir John Chandos! Cursed be the forging of that lance which wounded thee, and which has thus endangered thy life.'

Those who were around the body most tenderly bewailed him, which he heard, and answered with groans, but could not articulate a word. They wrung their hands, and tore their hair, uttering cries and complaints, most especially those who belonged to his household.

Chandos was disarmed very gently by his own servants, laid upon shields and targets, and carried at a foot's pace to Mortemer, the nearest fort to the place where they were. That gallant knight only survived one day and night. God have mercy on his soul! For not since a hundred years did there exist among the English one more courteous, nor fuller of every virtue and good quality than him.... he was mourned by friends of both sexes, on both sides of the sea.

Froissart even tells us what became of the man who killed John Chandos:

I heard that James Martin, he who had wounded Sir John Chandos, suffered so much from his wounds that he died at Poitiers.

In the Amiens manuscript Froissart adds that Jean [sic] de St Martin was neglected or even maltreated by the English, by way of revenge, and that he died as a result of this; but he insists that 'no good ever comes of treating prisoners other than in accordance with the laws of arms.'

In Cuvelier's writings, Bertrand du Guesclin is always the hero; but even Cuvelier finds time to praise Chandos. He tells us that Sir John was:

A knight who enjoyed great fame
And a man widely known as a loyal Englishman.²⁹⁰

²⁹⁰ *Chronique*, lines 18904-5.

In this version of events, Carnet the Breton (or ‘Kerlouët’ or ‘Karenlouet’) is one of du Guesclin’s regular companions, along with Guillaume Boitel,²⁹¹ and he is greatly outnumbered (at least to start with): we are told that he has only 50 men, and 18 archers. Chandos sallies forth from Poitiers to attack him at the head of 300 men, all well equipped and mounted on the finest horses. These men ride forward to attack Lussac, and Chandos urges them on; but Karenlouet reaches the bridge at Lussac first, and gains the advantage of fighting from a defensive position. Karenlouet speaks to his men, his watchword being the one used at Verdun over 500 years later ‘*Ils ne passeront pas!*’ When Chandos reaches the bridge, he speaks to his own men, telling them they are the best, and promises rich rewards for those who survive the fight; but he indicates that he knows full well that it will be difficult to storm the bridge, even with superior numbers:

‘Gentlemen, look in front of you!
I told you how it would be.
I swear by the God who created all
That, in all France, there are no better men than you,
And Karenlouet does not have men like you.
It will grieve me greatly if any man is killed this day
In doing his duty.
I know for certain that each man will sell himself dear;
But I will give each man who survives this day a gold coin’.

Thus spoke Chandos the great commander,
And what he said remained in men’s hearts.²⁹²

Chandos makes a last attempt to get the enemy to surrender:

‘Karenlouet...
What can 50 men do against more than 300
Who are better armed?
Don’t rush to your death, or drive your men mad,
But give yourselves up,
And first give up the livestock
You rustled since break of day.
And I swear to you by God who made Heaven,
I will let you and your men go
For half the ransom money
Which ought to be paid in all reason.
And to speak plainly,

²⁹¹ Vernier, 143, 165.

²⁹² *Chronique*, lines 19077-19086; *Chanson*, lines 20645-20654.

Those who could pay 100 gold francs,
Will be released for 50.'²⁹³

Karenlouet will have none of it. He completely rejects the idea of negotiations, asking what his peers du Guesclin, Olivier de Clisson and Audrehem would say, if he were to surrender.²⁹⁴

Thus the battle for the bridge begins, and the fighting is desperate and bitter. This is a minor encounter, relative to Crécy, Poitiers and Nájera, but an interesting one. Unusually, the French find themselves outnumbered (at least, this is how Cuvelier depicts the scene). In addition the French are amateurs by comparison with Chandos's veterans. Drawn from the lower orders, they use unconventional weapons, including stones. For their part, the English are used to being the underdogs, but they do not usually retreat. Yet Chandos starts to think of withdrawing:

'My God' said Chandos, 'Jesus himself must want to break us.
If it is *raining stones*, we cannot last much longer.'
When Chandos heard the stones cracking down
Something which the English found hard to endure,
He said to his men: 'We must look to our safety.
There is no shame in a body of men
Who have encountered what we have
In beating the retreat and giving some ground.
In the beginning, we may have been more than 300
Against their 50, but they must have been reinforced
By slingers from the rear.'

An Englishman named Anguelier stiffens Chandos's resistance at this point. He says the troops on the other side are of poor quality: they are 'varlets' who have come to help their masters and are incapable of making an independent attack. At this Chandos urges his own men to renew the fight, but is almost immediately wounded by an arrow. This is strange if true, because the longbow was the classic English weapon, little used by the French:

²⁹³ Chanson, lines 20666-20677.

²⁹⁴ Du Guesclin was a Breton and had been taken prisoner at Auray and Nájera. Olivier de Clisson (1336 – 1407) was another Breton, the son of a knight of the same name who had been put to death in 1343, for conspiring to surrender Nantes to the English. The younger de Clisson fought on the English side at Auray, where he lost an eye and won the nickname of 'Butcher' because his troops were ordered to take no prisoners. (He changed sides later on). Arnoul d'Audrehem (c. 1305 – 1370) was not from Brittany, but he had served there. He fought at Poitiers, where he was taken prisoner. Released with Jean II in 1360, he was captured again at Nájera. (He was freed in 1368, though he still owed the English ransom money from his capture at Poitiers).

There was a good Breton archer there,
Who shot a large arrow which hit Chandos with a crash,
With such force that it pierced his armour and
Embedded itself in the flesh, the blood spurting out.
When Chandos felt the wound
He was, as you will realise, incensed.

When he realised how badly he was wounded,
He quickly tore the arrow from his body.
The wound was not so deep or serious
That he would have died from it, in tragic fashion,
If worse had not followed on the field of battle.
Indeed Chandos gave no sign of the blow he had been dealt,
But cried out in a loud voice: 'Forward, my brave men!
Attack these French! Strike down and kill
Any man who will not surrender to us now.

Worse follows. The English take the bridge and they make Karenlouet their prisoner; but Chandos is struck a mortal blow with a lance. Whereas Froissart said that it was James de St Martin who killed Chandos, Cuvelier names him only as 'Aimery' – a common name in France.²⁹⁵

One Aimery, who was bold and brave
With great daring determined to aim for Chandos.
He seized hold of a lance made of bright steel,
Came up on Chandos equipped with this lance,
And so speared and pinned him,
That his breath was knocked from his chest,
So that neither hauberk nor *haqueton*
Nor helmet nor jack could protect him.
And the lance entered his body.

And when the good Chandos felt the blow
He cried out to his men, that they should come and take him away:
'Oh God! I am dead, this is the end!
Today is the day when I must meet my maker.
Farewell the king of England across the sea,
Farewell the lady I wish to marry,
Farewell the Prince who wishes to cross the sea.
Today is the day when everything falls apart.

²⁹⁵ My italics. *Chanson*, lines 20779-20793; *Chronique*, lines 1919214-19229; but in the verse *Chronique* the assassin is named as Alain de Guigneux.

It would be very surprising if Chandos really had the time (or the strength) to make a speech like this, at Lussac. It is much more likely that the words have been inserted afterwards by the poet; and this probably explains the reference to the 'lady whom Chandos wished to marry' – because, as far as we know, there was no such lady. She was probably no more than a literary conceit.

Cuvelier closes his account of the death charge at Lussac with a story concerning Chandos's brother, of whom so little is otherwise known. The background is that the English took several prisoners when they finally overran the French position at Lussac, and these included the Breton Karenlouet.

Chandos's brother was with him at this time, and the brother wanted to know who had dealt him the fatal blow. Chandos replied in his easy-going way [*debonnairement*] 'Good brother, it is no use asking me, for it can do me no good for you to know the answer'.

But his brother continued to question Chandos, so that eventually Chandos told him that it was a squire who had done the deed, and the man wore a black 'jack' covered with silver bells [*clochettes d'argent*]. Desirous of finding and killing the culprit, the brother went looking for him in the rooms where the prisoners were being held. But, when he heard what was happening, the English soldier who had custody of the squire made the latter turn his coat inside out, so that the man who killed Chandos went undiscovered.²⁹⁶

There is one more twist in the tale. Later French historians seem to have convinced themselves that the Frenchman who killed the great Chandos must have been more than a mere squire; and so Paul Hay du Chastelet (1592-1636?) wrote that he died at the hands of Sir Guillaume Boitel, who was one of du Guesclin's inner circle.²⁹⁷

The Fall of St Sauveur

At the end of 1369 the English established new outposts around the castle of St Sauveur, as well as in the nearby Benedictine abbey at Garnetot, on the right bank of the River Ouve, and at Eroudeville on the road to Montebourg. Although these places were captured within months by forces loyal to Charles of Navarre,²⁹⁸ St

²⁹⁶ Froissart thought that the English behaved very badly on this occasion, in letting their prisoner die of neglect: he thought it was 'ill done, for it is an improper thing to treat any prisoner other than as the law of arms requires.' N.A.R.Wright, in Allmand, ed., 20.

²⁹⁷ For Boitel, see the French and English versions of *Wikipedia*, and Vernier, 143, 165.

²⁹⁸ Delisle, 155-6.

Sauveur remained in English hands for some years; and on 10 November 1373 Edward III took the castle ‘into his [own] hands’. Sir Alan Buxhill was given a lease of the place, at an annual rent of 1,000 marks; and Thomas Catterton, who had been appointed by the courtier Lord Latimer in 1371, remained Captain.²⁹⁹ However, in July 1374, Charles V ordered his officers to attack the fortress again, as part of a wider campaign against the remaining English garrisons in the West of the French kingdom. Jean Froissart summarised the position as follows:

Not far distant [from Brittany] was the town of St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte, in which were Thomas Catterton, who was most expert and bold in the use of arms, Sir Thomas Trivet, Sir Alan Buxhill, Sir Philip Pechard, and the three brothers Mauleverier. These men had been ejected from Poitou and were holding St Sauveur out of love for Sir Alan Buxhill. Before the siege of Bécherel, these two garrisons overran Lower Normandy, and nothing could escape, but what was enclosed in forts, from being taken and carried to one or other of these towns. They ransomed the bishoprics of Bayeux and Evreux, in which the King of Navarre had connived, and reinforced them with men and provision from the garrisons he held in the County of Evreux. He was not in good humour with the King of France insomuch that the garrisons of Cherbourg, Cocherel, Conches, Breteuil, Évreux, and several others dependant on the King of Navarre, had much impoverished and ruined the country of Normandy.

Froissart makes it clear that Charles of Navarre and Charles V of France had now come to terms. This being so, English rule in St Sauveur was doomed.

However, about this period, the differences were accommodated between the two kings, and treaties entered into, through the mediation of the Count of Salzburg, who had made many visits to each party, and the Bishop of Évreux The two kings met in an amicable manner in the castle of Vernon, when they swore, in the presence of several of the great lords of France, peace, love, amity and alliance.... The King of Navarre put his territories in Normandy under the government of his brother-in-law the King of France.

Froissart relates how the French obtained the surrender of Bécherel in Brittany and then moved on to St Sauveur, whose garrison consisted of around 120 men:

St Sauveur was first besieged on the side next the sea by Sir Jean de Vienne, Admiral of France, with all the barons and knights of Brittany and Normandy. There was also a large army before it with plenty of everything.

²⁹⁹ Luce, VIII (1370-7), LXVII; Fillon, 9; Sumption III, 219.

These lords of France had pointed large engines against it, which much harassed the garrison.³⁰⁰

Jean de Vienne was to become one of the most successful admirals in French history. He was originally a Burgundian knight, but was made Admiral of France in 1373. He reorganised the French navy, started a programme of construction and created an effective coastguard. In 1385 he was to command a fleet of 180 ships, and succeed in landing an army in Scotland; but in 1374 he was still new to high command and Charles V failed to provide him with sufficient resources. The consequence was that St Sauveur held out a whole year, despite the fact that the French deployed an unprecedented number of siege guns. Chandos had used cannon in his last campaigns, but the French now subjected his castle to an unprecedented sustained bombardment. In the circumstances, the garrison did well to resist for as long as they did.

At the end of May 1375 a small fleet of 15 ships was organised in England to bring soldiers over to relieve the siege; but the expedition had to be cancelled. St Sauveur duly fell to the French, early in July 1375.³⁰¹

When the garrison of St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte heard that the Duke of Brittany and the English lords were arrived in Brittany, they expected them to come and raise their siege which they much desired, for they were greatly straitened by the engines, which day and night cast stones into the castle, so that they knew not where to retire from them. Having called a council they resolved to make overtures to the French lords, to obtain a truce for six weeks, until Easter 1375; and proposed that if within that time there should not come any relief, which might be sufficient to offer battle and raise the siege, they would surrender themselves, their lives and fortunes being spared, and the fortress should be given up to the king of France.

The surrender was not immediate because the diplomats on either side were engaged in talks, in Bruges, which eventually produced a truce; and this complicated the local agreement which had been reached at St Sauveur – or so the English thought:

[By the treaty of Bruges] each party was to keep... whatever he was then in possession of. The English thought that the capitulation respecting St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte would be voided by this treaty; but the French would not allow of this, and said the treaty did not affect the prior engagement concerning it: so that, when the day arrived for its surrender, the King of

³⁰⁰ Luce, VIII, LXVII, 118-9, 312.

³⁰¹ Cushway, 212.

France sent troops thither from all quarters. There were assembled before it upwards of 6,000 thousand knights and squires without counting the others.

Bertrand du Guesclin, who must have taken some personal satisfaction in attacking his old rival's home, now made a chilling announcement:

The French said that if the fortress was not surrendered, they would first of all kill their hostages, and secondly that they would launch attacks on the place which would be more ferocious than ever before. It was well within their power to take the place and when they had done so, they would show no mercy to anyone: everyone would be put to death. These words astounded Catterton and his companions. They discussed the matter and, having regard to the fact that there was no sign anywhere of any assistance being forthcoming, and that they did not wish at any price to lose the hostages, they decided to surrender.

Froissart relates the consequence:

St. Sauveur was given up to the French, but most unwillingly, for the fortress was very convenient for the English. The governor Sir Thomas Catterton, John de Burgh, the three brothers Mauleverier, and the English, went to Carentan, where they embarked in a ship, in which they put all which belonged to them, and sailed for England. [Du Guesclin] reinforced the town and castle of St. Sauveur le Vicomte with a new garrison, and appointed a Breton knight as governor. I heard at the time, that the king of France gave him the lordship of it.³⁰²

With hindsight the conduct of the garrison seems remarkably courageous; but Catterton did accept a payment from the French when he handed over custody of the castle. Though this was not unusual, it did give rise to suspicion in England.

Apart from a brief period when it formed part of Lancastrian Normandy (1417-1450), St Sauveur remained in French hands for 600 years; and it retained the name of *St Sauveur-le-Vicomte* throughout most of that time, though it was known as 'St Sauveur-sur-Douve' for a few years after the French Revolution. It is tempting to think that the continuing reference in the name to a Viscount establishes a link, however tenuous, between the modern *commune* and the knight from Derbyshire who held the title during the 1360s. However, St Sauveur had in fact been named after its *French* Viscounts, around the year 1040; and it probably reverted to that name after Waterloo because of the innate conservatism of the Normans and the

³⁰² Luce, VIII, 213-4. For an excellent map and account of the siege, see Sumption III, 218-36.

strong local influence of its Benedictine abbey, founded long before Chandos ever landed in France.³⁰³

The Battle in the Hall

When Edward III had taken possession of St Sauveur in 1374, he had insisted that Chandos's sister Elizabeth give him a 'quitclaim and surrender' of it; and on 18 December, she registered this transaction in the Exchequer; but, despite this renunciation, and despite the French re-conquest, Chandos's niece Isabella, and her husband Sir John Annesley, pursued a claim to the place, to a spectacularly bitter end.³⁰⁴ When the couple heard that St Sauveur had fallen to du Guesclin, they concluded that Captain Catterton must have betrayed the great bastion to the enemy. They could not accept what now seems obvious to us: that Edward and the Black Prince had bitten off more than they could chew in 1360, that the French had now regained the upper hand, and that the loss of St Sauveur had thereby become almost inevitable.

By 1376 it was clear that the War was going very badly for England; and the state of the public finances was so poor that Parliament, and particularly the House of Commons, demanded a thorough-going inquiry. Wide-ranging allegations of corruption were made against several of the King's ministers and favourites, including Lord Latimer, Richard Lyons and Alice Perrers, the King's mistress. One of the complainants was Sir John Annesley. He publicly accused Catterton of having 'treacherously sold St Sauveur to the French for money', while the Commons accused Latimer of having been party to the deal. Catterton came before the House of Lords, but there was insufficient evidence of the charge and no verdict was ever reached.³⁰⁵ Yet Annesley was not content to leave the matter there.

Thomas Johnes has a dramatic footnote in his edition of Froissart's chronicle:

Froissart has forgotten to add Sir Thomas Carington [sic] among the governors of St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte. Nothing was said against him until the reign of Richard II when he was accused of having treacherously given up this place by Sir John Annesley, who had married Sir John Chandos' niece: he challenged him to single combat, fought and vanquished him in the lists,

³⁰³ *Itineraire de la Normandie*, Louis du Bois (Caen, 1828), 557.

³⁰⁴ AH de Poitou, 42-3 item 490; CCR 47 Edward III, 597; Rymer, *Foedera*, 1745, vol III, part III, 14; 1830, III, II, 993; Delpit, item 256, p. 193. For the descent of the Chandos estates in England, see CIPM Edward III, which relates to the death of Sir Richard Damory of Thame. Sir John had only a life interest in the Kirkton estate in Lincolnshire and the Damory properties in Oxfordshire, which were therefore granted to others when he died. The properties where he owned the fee simple, or freehold, therefore passed to his three sisters and their heirs.

³⁰⁵ Sumption, II, 258, 259, 261.

formed in Palace-yard in the presence of the king. He was afterwards drawn to Tyburn, and there hanged for his treason.

An examination of the Patent Rolls and Rymer's *Foedera* shows that Johnes was essentially right, though the final outcome was not quite as he described. Annesley did insist on pursuing his case, and did want trial by battle; but this posed a difficulty, because the procedure was already outmoded and there were doubts as to whether it could still be invoked. At one point Annesley succeeded in having his opponent committed to prison, only to have him released again, on the intervention of Lord Latimer. At last, it was decided 'at an assembly of legal experts and senior knights' that 'in an overseas matter' it was entirely legal to fight a duel in England, provided that the Constable and Marshal had been notified; and a day was appointed for the fight to take place.³⁰⁶

The chronicler Thomas Walsingham regarded the trial by battle in the case of Annesley v Catterton as a sensation. He tells us that such a thing had not been seen in England for many years, and was 'a new spectacle'. He dwells sympathetically on Annesley's difficulties in bringing Catterton to justice. He has little time for Catterton, whom he regards as an upstart. The whole affair seems to show that English sympathy for the underdog is a post-medieval phenomenon.

Preparations for the big fight are made at Westminster. Great crowds assemble – some say that the numbers are greater than those which were seen at King Richard II's coronation, only three years before. The challenger, (Annesley) appears, mounted on his warhorse. His herald calls out the challenge three times, whereupon the accused (Catterton) rides forward. The rules of engagement are very strict and, at this point, Catterton dismounts but lets go of his horse. It runs up and down, putting its head and chest inside the barrier which forms the lists. This is regarded as a serious breach of protocol and the Constable confiscates the animal.

The details of the charge are read out by the Duke of Lancaster, John of Gaunt, who threatens to have Catterton hanged for treason if he does not 'admit' all of it. The crowd seems to be on Annesley's side. The parties square up to each other, and it is noted that Catterton is 'tall of stature', 'whereas the knight, even among men of average height' appears short. The customary oaths are sworn. Catterton declares (*inter alia*) that he is 'not aware of any magic practices by which he could gain a victory over his enemy, and that he is not carrying about his person any herb of stone or any kind of amulet, by which evil-doers are accustomed to triumph over their foes.' Annesley is not required to make any similar declaration. Prayers are said and the fighting begins.

The two men fight with lances, then with swords and finally with daggers, and they exhaust themselves in the process. When weapons have served their purpose, they begin to wrestle. Annesley knocks Catterton to the ground and tries

³⁰⁶ CPR 1377-81, 485; Rymer, *Foedera*, 1745, vol. III, part III, 96. The latter sets out the procedure adopted for trial by battle in some detail.

to leap on top of him, but is partially blinded by sweat and misses his opponent, landing on the ground. The squire now throws himself on top of the knight and the crowd began to sense that the end is near. King Richard calls a truce, but Annesley wants to carry on, despite the disadvantage he is under. Eventually, a truce is imposed.

It turned out that Annesley was not so exhausted as Catterton, despite being the smaller man, and he insisted, not only that the fight should continue but that, when it did, he should be put back in the same position as before, which was *underneath* his larger opponent. He even promised a large sum of money if this was allowed! The authorities eventually agreed; but, in the meantime, Catterton had lost consciousness and fallen from his chair, as if dead. He could only be revived when his supporters plied him with wine and water and removed his armour. Annesley was still keen to fight on. When Catterton revived a little, he approached him, called him a lying traitor and dared him to stand up and fight. At this, Catterton had to admit defeat, since he no longer had 'the understanding or the breath to reply'. It was proclaimed that the duel was over and that everyone should return to their homes; but then

The squire, as soon as he was carried to his bed, began to be delirious and his delirium lasted until about three o'clock the following afternoon when he breathed his last.

So ends the story of the last English captain of St Sauveur-le-Vicomte. Thomas Catterton's death was a brutal one; but Thomas Walsingham, for one, had no sympathy for him. He finished his account by telling us that 'this duel... was enjoyed by the crowd of the commons but a source of worry to traitors'. Annesley had indeed killed a man whom he regarded as a traitor; but it did him no good, because Catterton was no longer in a position to pay damages; and St Sauveur itself had been overrun by the French years five years before.

Yet the final outcome of Annesley v Catterton was not quite what we might expect. It is recorded in the Patent Rolls for 1385 that on May 26 Annesley and his wife were awarded a pension of £40 a year, out of the Exchequer; and the reason was given as follows:

When [John Annesley and Thomas Catterton] had fought together in the king's presence in that fight once, the King took the said suit into his own hands; in recompense for all the reward which the said John, on account of the said suit, or which the said John and Isabella, by reason of the said castle, can demand of the king, and also because the said John is now retained to stay with him, for life, in peace and in war.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁷ Walsingham, *Chronica Maiora*: 104-6; CPR 1381-85, 571.

Perhaps there was some compensation to be had then, after all, for the years of loyal service which John Chandos had given to the Crown, now that John Annesley was willing to continue the tradition. The monarch might yet decide to return to France with an army and, if he did, he would need men like these to support him.

Remembrance

According to Froissart, Chandos's body was taken from Lussac to Morthemer. Benjamin Fillon also thought that he was buried there, and that an alternative tradition that he was buried near Lussac was simply wrong.³⁰⁸ In Cuvelier's account the wounded Chandos was taken a further ten miles to Chauvigny and it there that he died, whilst it was Karenlouet the Breton (who evidently survived) who was taken to Morthemer:

Then John Chandos was taken to Chauvigny,
And he died there, as we read in the chronicles.
And Karenlouet was captured and taken
To Morthemer where there is a lord's castle
And others were taken to the rich city of Poitiers.³⁰⁹

There is nothing now at Morthemer to show that Chandos was taken there; but at one time there was an epitaph there, according to Sir Samuel Meyrick, a well-known 19th century antiquarian who helped to establish the Royal Armouries:

I, John Chandos, captain of the English
And an English knight, Seneschal of all Poitou,
Against the French king oft did fight
On foot and horseback; many slew;
Bertrand du Guesclin too
By me was taken in a vale.
At Lussac did the foe prevail;
My body then at Mortemer
In a tomb my friends inter,
In the year of grace divine,
Thirteen hundred sixty-nine.³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ Luce, VII, 206; 395; Fillon, 23. Ducluzeau believes that Chandos may have been buried there, in a chapel which has since been destroyed: see caption to plate XVI, opposite page 97.

³⁰⁹ *Chanson*, lines 20942-20944.

³¹⁰ Meyrick, 486; Froissart, ed. Johnes, vol I, 437, after Bouchet, *Annales d'Aquitaine*; ODNB (1917).

So much for conflicting accounts. What of the physical evidence? There is a tombstone or cenotaph, formerly at Lussac but now at Mazerolles, which has long been thought to be Chandos's. Can the tradition be relied on? Meyrick read a paper to the Society of Antiquaries on 5 April 1821, giving details of a journey undertaken by his friend Major Smith, who had investigated the claim. Smith found no trace of Chandos in Morthermer, but he did find the cenotaph, and included a sketch of it in his report. He confirmed that local people certainly took this to be Chandos's last resting-place; but he also wrote that it was not obviously so, since the design and construction of the monument suggested an earlier date, possibly in the 11th century.

Meyrick proposed a theory as to what might have happened. He thought that Chandos's English companions had buried him in a vault in the church at Mortemer, and erected a tablet to his memory there; but this had been destroyed shortly afterwards, in a fit of nationalist frenzy. However, the spot where Chandos had been killed had been thought worthy of commemoration, since it 'cast a ray of glory on the arms of France'. So, the local French chose an existing monument in the churchyard at Civaux, adapted it and placed it next to the banks of the river where Chandos had fallen. The cenotaph, long venerated by the French, and re-discovered by Smith, was therefore an act of piety, but nonetheless a fraud.³¹¹

Chandos has no grave or cenotaph in England. No part of his body was brought home for burial, as sometimes happened with the rich and the famous; but his death was certainly commemorated, and handsomely, by his fellow Garter Knights. The Statutes of the Order provided that the King was obliged to have 3,000 masses said for a deceased knight's soul, and that other members should provide masses according to their rank. In Chandos's case, his companions paid for at least 5,300 masses, though Sir John died intestate and made no such provision in a will. It is also clear that he was remembered much more widely because he was considered to belong to a 'great generation' and perhaps because his herald retained the name. For Chandos Herald became famous in his own right in the years after his master's death. In 1377, he was made King of Arms and, according to Sir Anthony Wagner (himself a long-serving King of Arms) occupied first place amongst English heralds. Further, his *Life of the Black Prince* was well received when it appeared in the 1380s, and has always been an important source for historians.³¹²

It took some time for the news of Chandos's death to reach England, and come to the attention of the relevant authorities in Westminster. How else can we explain the fact that, as late as 3 February 1370 the royal clerks were issuing letters, appointing John de Humbleton, Robert de Morton and Robert de Twyford as Chandos's attorneys for a period of a year, on the ground that the knight was still on the King's service in France?³¹³

³¹¹ Meyrick, *Archaeologia* XX, 484–495, esp. 489.

³¹² Barber, *Triumph*, 278; Wagner, 36.

³¹³ Gascon Rolls, C 61/83, 7, 8 & 12.

When he heard of it, the Herald thought that Chandos's passing was a disaster for the English cause in France:

And then after a very short time,
Chandos also passed from this life
At the bridge of Lussac, you may know.
Whereat was great loss and pity,
For the Prince, who was much vexed,
Was sorely dismayed at it.
But it is often seen to happen,
That when misfortunes arise,
One follows upon another;
Many times this is the case.

So then all the evils arose
And came after another
Upon the noble Prince,
Who lay sick upon his couch.
But, for all this, he thanked God
And said: 'All things will have their place,
And if from hence I may arise,
I will take good vengeance.'

The Herald also wrote about the French reaction to the news of Sir John's death:

When the French knew that Chandos,
Who had great worth, was dead,
They everywhere showed their joy
And made great rejoicings,
And said: 'All will now be ours,
As surely as the Pater-noster.'

Then King Charles of France
Sent without delay to Sir Bertrand du Guesclin,
Who had a heart of fine courage.
He was then in Spain,
Where he served the Bastard,³¹⁴
And told him that Chandos was dead.
Gladly did Sir Bertrand hear the news,
He returned into France.
With scarcely any delay

³¹⁴ Enrique of Trastamara.

He arrived at Toulouse.

There was the rich Duke of Anjou,
Who received him gladly
And with great kindness, and said: 'Sir Bertrand,
Well found are you, and in good time come.
We have great need of you,
For if you be with us,
We shall gain Aquitaine:
For it is well ascertained that
Audeley and Chandos,
Who have opposed us
Are dead; and the Prince,
Who little pleasure has,
Lies on his bed sick.
If you therefore advise it,
We are all ready
To march through the country.'

Robert Ducluzeau records another verse in which the French positively rejoiced at the news of Chandos's death:

*Le roi ne veut
Le prince ne peut
Chandos mort
Saint George dort.*

The [English] King has no will power,
The [Black] Prince has no strength,
Chandos is dead,
Saint George is asleep.³¹⁵

However, the reaction in France was more complicated than these verses would lead us to believe. Froissart's passage on the death of Chandos is ambiguous and suggests that there was admiration for the knight on both sides of the Channel:

When the Prince, Princess, Earls of Cambridge and Pembroke, and the other English knights in Guienne heard of this event, they were completely disconcerted, and said they had now lost every thing on both sides of the sea. Sir John was sincerely regretted by his friends of each sex: and some lords of France bewailed his loss. Thus it happens through life. The English loved him

³¹⁵ Barber (1979), 223; Vernier, 152; Ducluzeau, 174.

for all the excellent qualities he was possessed of. The French hated him because they were afraid of him. Not but that I have heard him at the time regretted by renowned knights in France; for they said it was a great pity he was slain and that, if he could have been taken prisoner, he was so wise and full of devices, he would have found some means of establishing a peace between France and England; and was so much beloved by the king of England and his court, that they would have believed what he should have said in preference to all others.

The historian Henri Denifle did not have much time for Froissart's suggestion that Chandos was 'mourned on both sides of the Channel'. He thought the French had good reason to rejoice when he died, since Chandos was 'the most redoubtable enemy'. However, if anything, Chandos has remained more popular in France than in England. His contemporary Henry Knighton mentioned him four times and called him 'the most famous knight of his time'; but he is *still* something of a local hero in Poitou, where there are commercial establishments, close to the putative place of burial, which are named after him.³¹⁶ Moreover, the modern biography by the Poitevin historian Robert Duluzeau takes the same favourable view of Sir John as Benjamin Fillon did in the 19th century. This contrasts with the position in England, where he was highly regarded in Victorian times, but is no longer widely admired or remembered.

The Gothic Revival led to a widespread renewal of interest in everything medieval, in Britain; and, before the study of history became part of the University curriculum in the second half of the 19th century, much romantic nonsense about the Hundred Years War, based largely on Froissart's Chronicles, passed for serious history. Examples of this can be found in the worlds of pictorial art and literature. Thus Benjamin West's *King John After the Battle of Poitiers* (painted for George III in 1788) and Jacques Leman's *Chandos at Cahors* both feature the knight in heroic posture. For David Murray Smith, who published his *Tales of Chivalry and Romance* in 1869, Philip VI and Jean II of France were both fools and villains, whereas Edward III, the Black Prince and knights like Chandos were to be admired. It was as simple as that; and Smith's account of Chandos's death in particular was very popular.

There has been a profound reaction in recent decades. In modern historiography, Chandos and his kind are often portrayed as little more than bandits, masquerading as Christian soldiers. As early as 1910, R. P. Dunn-Pattison remarked that the Black Prince's extravagance and rapacity was the cause of a revolt in Cheshire in 1353: royal agents aimed to screw every penny they could out of the unfortunate peasantry and Chandos was one of these agents. In the 1970s, the American historian Barbara Tuchman wondered whether Chandos and his fellow Garter knights, 'supposedly exemplars of magnanimity...felt any discrepancy between the ideal and the practice' of chivalry, and concluded that – if they did –

³¹⁶ Knighton (1997), 28, 170, 192, 194.

they left no indication of it.

In a series of entertaining books and television programmes Terry Jones has popularised the idea that chivalry was corrupt, decadent and hypocritical, at least by the 14th century. In his television *History of Britain* (2000) Simon Schama scarcely mentioned the Hundred Years War, or the Black Prince, except to condemn both. He described the War as the work of a ‘multi-national empire that was *Plantagenet Inc.*’ and the Prince as ‘the symbol of this happy state of affairs, give or take a few million bodies in the ossuary.’ In volume II of his distinguished history of that War, *Trial by Fire* (1999) Jonathan Sumption concluded that Sir John fought for honour as well as for profit; but that ‘money was the main engine of Chandos’s enterprise just as it was for most of his followers.’³¹⁷

Criticism like this is unhistorical. It judges Chandos by the standards of the modern world, when he lived in society which was organised very differently. Morality was based on the Catholic faith, personal loyalty to one’s lord and the rules of chivalry, rather than on the sovereign state, public international law and human rights. A more specific criticism is that we do not know enough about Sir John’s finances to draw up an accurate profit and loss account or balance sheet, which would enable us to make a judgement about the origins and extent of his wealth.³¹⁸ So far as they can be ascertained at all, Chandos’s gains were not unusually large and cannot simply be described as ‘plunder’. He received many rewards in the form of land; but the exact nature of the interests conveyed to him is unclear. (Land law was a good deal more complex in the late Middle Ages than it is now; and a property which he appears to have ‘owned’ may have been his for life only, or may not have been his beneficially at all. When it came to French property, Chandos’s tenure of land was always precarious, for reasons which had little to do with the law).³¹⁹ Moreover, medieval chronicles and official records have much to say about his profits of war but we lack the household accounts which would tell us about his expenditure. (Though we do know that he helped to endow a chantry chapel in Derby and may have founded a Carmelite monastery in Poitou).³²⁰

We should judge John Chandos, not by reference to the modern world, but in comparison with his better known contemporaries, for example Sir John Hawkwood, Sir Hugh Calvely and Sir Robert Knollys. Hawkwood sold his sword to the highest bidder and stayed in Italy from 1360 to 1394; Calvely tried to build castles in Spain; and Knollys became famous for his freelance campaigns in France.

³¹⁷ Tuchman, 139, 48, 263; Goodman, 47; Green, 84; Schama, 241-4; Booth and Carr (1991) Appendix 3, item 5; Sumption, II, 157.

³¹⁸ To take one of the few ‘facts’ which is known, the Exchequer was only able to balance its accounts with Chandos in 1361 by disallowing some £8,000: Prestwich, *Plantagenet England*, 330, citing TNA E 101/28/10.

³¹⁹ See the relevant entries in the CPR and CIPM.

³²⁰ Sumption’s phrase: II, 570; Fillon, 20.

Chandos remained a loyal servant of the Crown all his life. He stuck to his last and went down fighting, out of loyalty to his King and his Prince; and he deserves to be remembered for that alone. Jean Froissart, whom we have quoted so liberally, portrayed him as the greatest of English heroes, on account of his military skill and statesmanship.³²¹

³²¹ Richard Barber, in Palmer (ed), *Froissart, Historian*, 34.

Abbreviations and Sources

Abbreviations

- AH de Poitou: *Archives Historiques de Poitou*
Barber (1979): *Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince*
Barber, Triumph: Richard Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph* (2014)
Bardonnet: *Procès-verbal de délivrance à Jean Chandos*, L. Clouzot (Niort 1867)
BON: *The Boke of Noblesse*, William Worcester (c. 1475)
BPE: Hewitt, *The Black Prince's Expedition*
BPR: *The Black Prince's Register*
BSEL: *Bulletin de la Société des Études du Lot*
Cal.Pap.Reg.: Calendar of entries in the Papal Registers
CCR: Calendar of Close Rolls
CChR: Calendar of Charter Rolls
Chaplais: *Some documents regarding the... Treaty of Brétigny*
Chanson: *Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin de Cuvelier*
Chronique: *Chronique de Bertrand du Guesclin par Cuvelier*
C des R: *Chronique des Règnes de Jean II et de Charles V (Grandes Chroniques)*
CIPM: Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem
Comptes: see Favreau
CPR Calendar of Patent Rolls
CQPV: *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois*
Feudal Aids: Inquisitions and Assessments relating to Feudal Aids
Hayez: *Lettres Communes, Urban V*
Keen, ELMA: Maurice Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages*
Knighton 1895: *Chronicon Henrici Knighton* (HMSO 1895)
Knighton 1997: *Knighton's Chronicle*
Le Baker: *Chronicon Galfridi le Baker de Swynebroke*
Luce: Simeon Luce's edition of Froissart
MMI: Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, volume I.
Michel: *Le Prince Noir* (London & Paris 1883)
ODNB 1917: *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 1st edition
ODNB 2004: *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2nd edition
O.E.D.: The Oxford English Dictionary
OUP: Oxford University Press
POW: Richard Barber, *Edward Prince of Wales* (1978)
PRO: Public Record Office
TNA: The National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office)

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